

# A S H E S

W I T H O U T R E S E R V E

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MARIA THÉRÈSE O'CONNOR

PhD

2007

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W I T H O U T R E S E R V E

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## H E R P R O - N O M I N A L T R A C I N G S O F T H E S T R I C T U R E S O F S E X U A L D I F F E R E N C E

No guinea of earned money [money earned by the woman] should go to rebuilding the college on the old plan; just as certainly none could be spent upon building a college upon a new plan; therefore the guinea should be earmarked ‘Rags. Petrol. Matches.’ And this note should be attached to it. ‘Take this guinea and with it burn the college to the ground. Set fire to the old hypocrisies. Let the light of the burning building scare the nightingales and incarnadine the willows. And let the daughters of educated men dance around the fire and heap armful upon armful of dead leaves upon the flames. And let their mothers lean from the upper windows and cry, Let it blaze! Let it blaze! For we have done with this “education”!

Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*. Cited in Jacques Derrida, *Cinders*, p. 67.

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Perhaps, however, we have also passed by an essential opportunity. The uncanny thing is that we do not notice this at all and perhaps indeed never notice it; that it makes no difference to us if we pass it by, and that here in the halls of the university we can nevertheless hold just as important speeches as others who listen to philosophy and perhaps even quote Heidegger. And if instead of passing it by we attend the lecture, is the ambiguity then removed? Has something obvious changed? Is not everyone sitting there just as attentively or just as bored? Are we better than our neighbours because we comprehend more quickly, or are we merely more skilled and eloquent, perhaps because we have the philosophical terminology more at our fingertips than others on account of a few philosophy seminars? Yet maybe, despite all this, we lack something essential that someone else—it might even be some female student—perhaps precisely possesses.

Martin Heidegger, “Ambiguity in the Essence of Philosophy,” *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, p. 12.

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## ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Maria Thérèse O'Connor  
November 2007.

## A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

She effaces herself in the Ear of the Other and by the betraying signatures of her readers who forge her signing here, even at the risk of ingratitude, theirs and hers, in this acknowledgement at this very moment. She would want to return nothing to them but let it detour. All of the others would not have profited in this. Not one letter. To those whose debt has accumulated for me and to whom this dedication written here may never arrive: my supervisors, Elizabeth and Michael; my colleagues and especially Desna; my family who all lasted the distance, John and Clare, Catherine, John and Patrick.

And, *for* Mark.

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HER PRO-NOMINAL TRACINGS OF THE STRICTURES OF SEXUAL DIFFERENCE

A B S T R A C T

This thesis is centrally concerned with the texts of Jacques Derrida that have addressed directly the theme of sexual difference. Yet to say the thesis is centrally concerned with a philosophy that positions itself clearly as one that deconstructs centrality and its trajectory of return, is to face the crisis or *chiasmus* of my concern. The thesis is not returned to Derrida. If the question of feminism for Derrida is a question from the margins, from interruptions, *of* the trace and *of la cendre*, ashes, the question of sexual difference is primordially and originally that of the undecidability of the name, signatory, and textual border. She would not have appeared here. Therefore she cannot return.

There are two frames to this research that can be recognized in the chapter sequence of the thesis. Initially I develop a preparatory engagement to a questioning of the ontology of sexual difference, with Chapters 2 and 3, with a questioning that broaches the metaphysics of the feminine with respect to the texts of Derrida, Heidegger and Cixous in particular and further engages with *Écriture Féminine*, Levinas and feminist responses to Heidegger and Levinas. However, this broader questioning is undertaken in order to develop a sharper focus on the writings of Derrida that address Heidegger's ontological difference, Levinas's ethics before being, and a more originary questioning of sexual difference. The second frame and predominant focus of the thesis is on Derrida's approach to the metaphysics of the feminine with four pivotal texts by Derrida from the late 1970s and early 1980s examined in Chapters 4 to 7. Each addresses a questioning of difference and the metaphysical tradition, under difference's many names: ontological difference, sexual difference, *différance*, and engages deconstruction's encounters with Nietzsche & Heidegger (*Spurs*); the psychoanalysts Abraham & Torok ("Fors"); Levinas ("At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am") and Hegel (*Glas*).

In bringing together these four texts, my aim is to emphasize the significance of a double deconstructive movement of transgression and restoration, as this research's politico-ethical acts of writing and reading for an *otherwise* discourse on sexual difference. This *otherwise* discourse has always already been produced *with* phallogocentrism and remains critical for the inventing of thresholds across philosophy, literature and their others. The *ashen* Preface enkindles a paradigmatic figure as deconstructive trace of sexual difference in writing and reading practices. A Postscript questions the binding to institutional laws constitutive of disciplinary practice while the fiery trace in Derrida's writing on Kafka's law concludes on the ash-laden edges of Blanchot's unavowable work.

## P R E F A C E

### C A : C h i f f r e   d ' A f f a i r e s   ( H e r   T u r n o v e r ) <sup>1</sup>

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1 The title to the Preface engages a play with multiple registers. Throughout the thesis we attempt to engage persistently with a Derridean questioning of economy, as “restricted” and “general.” The former relates to what we place under the heading of the calculable, with its ledger balance of profit and loss, its capital and speculation that is as much an effect of the text as it is an understanding of truth as adequation. The second refers more to what Derrida engages as the “general text” which engages the operations of deconstruction and a contamination of the boundaries that would be in place for the law of the household to take effect. Throughout our thesis we come to re-iterate this play of disseminating a balance ledger or the reserves of a treasury or archive. *Chiffre d'Affaires*, abbreviated *CA*, refers to the turnover or sales made by a business. It implies the tallying up of the whole of an enterprise to ascertain its profitability. *Chiffrer* as a verb refers to a range of practices engaging with the calculable, including to measure, figure, add up, assay, but also to encipher or encrypt, and to monogram. The monogram signature of this thesis is itself constituted on an affair of the ear, on the hearing of an undecidable *Sa* or *Ca* in the determinations of the profitability of this enterprise. Who is it returned to, this turnover? To *Sa* (her) to *Ca* (an it is)? Our aim in this Preface is to immolate this as a question, as a question of the return. It is precisely his question that opens the trajectory of the circle. Her angle would have already contaminated his calculations. She returns nothing, here in this text, at this self-same moment. *We* need to say something immediately about a “we” that courses through the text of this thesis, a dislodging of the univocity of an egoistic or authorial “I,” and a refusal of a unified collectivity of the “we” of a common voice or community of agreement. Neither the singularity of an original position nor the subsumed agreement with a community of scholars, our text’s “we” aims at an abrasion to the neutrality of a being-in-common, and aligns with a complication of the paths of return that inscribe the circle of disciplinary closure. Our word-thing, secreted in our text is a homophonic play across languages, an impossible I/We, or the impossible bind, double bind or stricture of the saying of this doublet. Our word-thing alliterates a series: Knee/Knell/Kelle/Crypt/Quelle. It is launched in the *Je/Nous*, the *genou* or knee, in which we also hear the *gen*, the *gens* of *Je/Nous*, or the genus, genres and genders of an undecidable I/We. Our secret place, our wish word, would reside in the flexion of a knee, or two, *genoux*, perhaps a *faire du genoux à quelle* or an *être sur les genoux* — the last man or last metaphysician rubbing his metaphysical flexion against the non-metaphysical. Surely there is here the madness of the day, astride Blanchot’s silhouette of the Law in her knee’s contact that would be his (at least) impossible community of the I/We.

ELLE NE PARLE PAS L'INNOMMÉE OR TU L'ENTENDRS  
 MIEUX QUE MOI AVANT MOI EN CE MOMENT MÊME OU  
 POURTANT SUR L'AUTRE COTÉ DE CET OUVRAGE  
 MONUMENTAL JE TISSE DE MA VOIX POUR M'Y EFFACER  
 CECI TIENS ME VOICI MANGE – APPROCHE-TOI – POUR  
 LUI DONNER – BOIS

(SHE DOESN'T SPEAK THE UNNAMEABLE YET YOU HEAR  
 HER BETTER THAN ME AHEAD OF ME AT THIS VERY  
 MOMENT WHERE NONETHELESS ON THE OTHER SIDE  
 OF THE MONUMENTAL WORK I WEAVE MY VOICE SO AS  
 TO BE EFFACED THIS TAKE IT HERE I AM EAT – GET  
 NEARER – IN ORDER TO GIVE HIM/HER – DRINK)<sup>2</sup>

Cette chose dont on ne sait rien, ni quel passé porte encore cette poussière grise de mots, ni quelle substance vint s'y consumer avant de s'y éteindre (savez-vous combien de types de cendres distinguent les naturalistes? et de quel ‘bois’ telles cendres parfois rappellent un désir?), une telle chose, dira-t-on encore qu’elle garde même une identité de cendre?

(This thing of which one knows nothing, knows neither what past is still carried in these gray dusty words, nor what substance came to consume itself there before extinguishing itself there (do you know how many types of cinders the naturalists distinguish? And for what “wood” such cinders sometimes recall a desire?); will one still say of

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<sup>2</sup> Jacques Derrida, “At This Very Moment In This Work Here I Am,” trans. by Ruben Berezdivin, in *Re-Reading Levinas*, ed. by Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991) pp. 11-50. The French original “*En ce moment même dans cet ouvrage me voici*” first appeared in a collection of essays, *Textes pour Emmanuel Levinas* (Paris: Editions Jean-Michel Place, 1980). It was reprinted in an expanded version in, *Psyche: Inventions of the Other* trans. by Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007) pp. 143-190. Derrida with this text is responding to Emmanuel Levinas’s own writing on Derrida, “Wholly Otherwise” also published in *Re-Reading Levinas*, pp. 3-10. This text is addressed initially in this thesis in Chapter 3, and forms the central moment of engagement for Chapter 6. It becomes the pivotal text for Simon Critchley in his engagement with Derrida’s ethics, in his *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999). Critchley places central importance on the ethical responsibility in the saying of “Bois,” the final word of Derrida’s text. See “*Clôture/Readings I: ‘Bois’ – Derrida’s Final Word on Levinas.*” pp. 107-144.

such a thing that it (*elle* — she) even preserves (is the very guard, the self-same guard of) the (an) identity of the cinder.)<sup>3</sup>

— “Bois,” “drink,” our desire would have been not to return it to her, to “*elle*” as the homophone of E.L. or EL would have rung in our ears, but rather to fail to return it, send it elsewhere, allow for the loss, the lack of its destination. She would not have arrived here but elsewhere with another homophone, another ringing in the ear, another invention of an Other. I would have wanted to have it returned to “Bois,” to “wood,” to what, for example, Simon Critchley never once considered a possibility of return. He would have wanted her to (finally) have her name but I would have wanted the gift, “Bois” to already have been burnt.

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3 Derrida, *Cinders*, trans. by Ned Lukacher (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1991). This text is a translation of *Feu la Cendre*, a text initially published by Derrida in the journal *Anima 5* (December 1982). It was re-published in 1987 with the addition of a Prologue and excerpts of passages from previous Derrida texts (*Dissemination*, *Glas*, *The Postcard*). It was simultaneously published as a book and as a cassette tape recording in the series “*Bibliothèque des Voix*” by *Editions des Femmes*. The recording engages multiple voices, those of Derrida and Carole Bouquet. Derrida comments directly on the disseminating plays that are enacted between text and voice and between sexed voices, the necessity to decide on what is open with respect to several interpretations. The Lukacher translation has an accompanying essay by the translator, “Mourning Becomes Telepathy.” This essay draws out the multiplicity of interconnecting references to many Derrida texts, both those cited directly by Derrida and those alluded to. Lukacher touches an uncanny resonance for this thesis in his address to Trakl’s “Ghostly Twilight”: “Forever rings the sister’s lunar voice / Through the ghostly night.” The Trakl text is engaged by Heidegger on the theme of “Spirit is flame” on the “stiller, brighter earliness” that is the silent saying of the opening to language, and further engaged by Derrida in *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. by Geoffrey Bennington & Rachel Bowlby (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1989). This fire of the spirit we read along with Hegel’s ancient burning and original sacrifice of spirit to itself, its self immolation for itself that we encounter in Derrida’s *Glas*. But Lukacher emphasizes Trakl’s sister here, the ring (*Glas*) of her voice to the Evening Land, site of one generation, one kinship, one flesh, one gender, translating *ein Geschlecht* (*Cinders*, op. cit., p. 4). Again Lukacher will reference *Geschlecht* in relation this time to Derrida’s reading of Heidegger’s Da sein as pre-dual sexuality in “*Geschlecht*: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference,” *Research in Phenomenology* 13 (1983): p. 72, & pp. 78-79. Our concern particularly in Chapter 4 is with this Derrida text, and our understanding of what Derrida implies in the between of a pre-differential rather than pre-dual sexuality. *Geschlecht* was an on-going project for Derrida, and constituted four (at least) stagings. This “project” has been commented on by John Sallis and Nancy Holland. Sallis notes, referring to “*Geschlecht*: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference” and “*Geschlecht II* : Heidegger’s Hand” [trans. by John P. Leavey, Jr., in *Deconstruction and Philosophy: The Texts of Jacques Derrida*, ed. by John Sallis (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987) pp. 161-196.]: “Both texts are published in French in *Psyché: Inventions de l'autre* (Paris: Galilée, 1987), which was published simultaneously with *De l'esprit* [Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question]. A third text (“*Geschlecht III*”) was distributed to the other participants in the conference at Loyola but was not read; it has not been published. Even the third text breaks off short of completion, and the *Geschlecht* project as a whole remains incomplete. *De l'esprit* leaves open the possibility of its continuation.” *Diacritics* 19 (nos. 3-4, 1989) 27. Nancy Holland updates the story a little. She includes Derrida’s “Heidegger’s Ear: Philopolemology (*Geschlecht IV*)”, trans. by John P. Leavey, Jr., and published in *Reading Heidegger*, ed. by John Sallis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991). She also references a footnote in Derrida’s *Politics of Friendship* that suggests that *Geschlecht III* is “forthcoming.” We still await. See Nancy Holland, “Introduction II—Specific Contributions,” in *Feminist Interpretations of Martin Heidegger*, ed. by Nancy J. Holland and Patricia Huntington (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001) pp. 43-50, p. 50.

—Derrida wrote that first “Bois” in 1980 and the second in 1982. How would we come to understand the intertwining, the interlacing, the weaving of a “Bois” and a “Bois” between “drink” and “wood”? He would have already encountered Celan’s ashwords. He would have had *il y a la cendre*, that ancient still to come. He wrote a text on Paul Celan: *Shibboleth for Paul Celan*, first presented in the United States (1984) and then in France (1986), already in English before French.<sup>4</sup> We read: “There are cinders, perhaps, but a cinder is not” (“Il y a la cendre, peut-être, mais une cendre n'est pas”). This remainder seems to remain of what was, and what was just now; it seems to feed or drink from the source of being-present, but it comes out of being, it uses up in advance the being on which it seems to draw. The remnant of the remainder — the cinder, almost nothing — is not a being that remains, if at least one understands here a being that subsists.”<sup>5</sup>

—It is Celan, then: *Mit der Aschenkelle geschopft* (Drink with the ash-ladle). “Drawn with the ladle of cinders / from the trough of Being” (What is drawn, inhaled, drunk (*geschopft*) with the ladle (*Kelle*, literally, source or fountain) of cinders (*Aschen*), comes out of the trough of Being).<sup>6</sup>

In 1982 Jacques Derrida published a short philosophical prose-poem titled “*Feu la Cendre*.” This title may be translated in a number of ways. “*Feu*” translates to “fire,” hence “Fire the Cinder,” as in perhaps, burn the cinder, cinder the cinder as the cinder is always divisible, is divisibility. It is also means in French being late, even as in the expression “the late Jacques Derrida.” Hence it has a translatability as “Bereaved, the Cinder” or “Mourning the Cinder.” He wrote “*Feu la Cendre*” as a response to what had already been encrypted for his *psyche*, his inventions of the Other, his texts, for twenty years, an expression that came from no-one, “*il y a là cendre*,” literally, “cinders there are” or “there are there cinders.” It was lodged in the dedication and acknowledgements at the close of his 1971 publication, *Dissemination*.

Moving of itself, forming itself wholly therein, almost without remainder, writing denies and recognizes its debt in a single dash. The

<sup>4</sup> Derrida’s “Shibboleth for Paul Celan” was originally presented at a conference in 1984: an International Symposium on Paul Celan at the University of Washington, Seattle, translated by Joshua Wilner and published in *Midrash and Literature*, ed. by Geoffrey Hartman and Sanford Budick (New Haven: Yale University press, 1986). It was published in French in 1986 by Éditions Galilée in an expanded and revised version. In 1994 the first complete translation of Derrida’s book-length essay appeared in English as *Sovereignities in Question: The Poetics of Paul Celan* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994). An extract from the Derrida text appeared in *Acts of Literature*, ed. by Derek Attridge (New York & London: Routledge, 1992) pp. 370-413.

<sup>5</sup> Derrida, *Schibboleth Pour Paul Celan*, trans. by Ned Lukacher and quoted in “Mourning Becomes Telepathy,” op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Lukacher, op. cit., p. 13.

utmost disintegration of the signature, far from the centre, indeed from the secrets that are shared there, divided up so as to scatter even their ashes.

Though the letter gains strength solely from this indirection, and granted that it can always not arrive at the other side, I will not use this as a pretext to absent myself from the punctuality of a dedication: R. Gasché, J.J. Goux, J.C. Lebensztejn, J.H. Miller, others, *il y a là cendre*, will recognize, perhaps, what their reading has contributed here. December 1971.<sup>7</sup>

In 1987 he had re-published his *Feu là Cendre* in an edition that included extracts from texts he had written prior to 1982 that had within their crypts his concern with *ash* as a question of the trace, and his concern with a homophonic undecidability between *là* and *la* when it comes to cinders, that is a question of the gender of the cinder, the switching of sex that is the cinder, the “there” and the “she” that is the undecidable trace of the trace:

More than 15 years ago a phrase came to me, as though in spite of me; to be more precise, it returned, unique, uniquely succinct, almost mute. / I thought I had calculated it cunningly, mastered and overwhelmed it, as if I had appropriated it once and for all. / Since then, I have repeatedly had to yield to the evidence: the phrase dispensed with all authorization, she had lived without me.

She, the phrase, had always lived alone.

The first time (was it the first time?), more than 15 years ago, at the end of a book, *Dissemination*, in the acknowledgements, where a book is dedicated, offered, rendered up to those who, known or unknown, have already given it to you in advance, the sentence in question imposed itself upon me with the authority, so discreet and simple it was, of a judgement: “cinders there are” (*il y a là cendre*).

*Là* written with an accent grave: *là*, there, cinder there is, there is, there, cinder. But the accent, although readable to the eye, is not heard: cinder there is. To the ear, the definite article, *la*, risks effacing the place, and any mention or memory of the place, the adverb *là* ... But read silently, it is the reverse: *là* effaces *la*, *la* effaces herself, himself, twice rather than once.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. by Barbara Johnson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972) p. 366. Derrida thus commences *Feu là Cendre*: —And near the end, at the bottom of the last page, it was as though you had signed with these words: “Cinders there are.” I read, reread them; it was so simple, and yet I knew that I was not there; without waiting for me the phrase withdrew into its secret.” *Cinders*, op. cit. p. 31.

<sup>8</sup> Cinders, op. cit., p.21.

Derrida references directly and indirectly in *Feu la Cendre* a number of his texts, including *Spurs*, *Glas*, *The Postcard*, “Fors,” “At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am,” (“ATVM”) “Shibboleth for Paul Celan,” “Telepathy” and *Given Time: Counterfeit Money*.<sup>9</sup> We engage in a prefatory way with *Cinders* precisely because it is a text whose traces haunt our discussions throughout this thesis, though we burn it here. We do not mention this text outside of this Preface, outside of this *hors d'oeuvre*, this outwork.<sup>10</sup> As cinders, she marks what is to come with the most ancient still to come as we aim to explore the textual traces of Derrida’s question of sexual difference. She effaces herself in a place marked out in its incalculability.

Our itinerary interlaces with that of *Cinders*: His and our concern in *Glas* with Hegel’s holocaust as the first burning, the ancient light and roar of its sacrifice; his and our concern with Nietzsche *contra* Heidegger on the first and last step (*pas*) of the metaphysician we encounter in *Spurs*; his and our concern with the *mors* and *mort* of the bit of the word, incorporated and introjected in the cryptic partitioning of the Other, language in its dental stricture and structure, anguish, English, *Anglisch* and the angle that refuses its becoming curve, its becoming annular and *anniversal*. And the inter-twining of *Cinders* and “ATVM.” We have already suggested the secret of the

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9 *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, trans. by Barbara Harlow (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1979); *Glas*, trans. by John P. Leavey, Jr. & Richard Rand (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1986); *The PostCard: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1987); “Forward: Fors: The English Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok,” trans. by Barbara Johnson, in Nicolas Abraham & Maria Torok, *The Wolf-Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonomy*, trans. by Nicholas Rand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986) pp. xi-xlviii; “At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am,” trans. by Rubin Berezdivin, in *Re-Reading Levinas*, ed. by Robert Bernasconi & Simon Critchley (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991) pp. 11-50; “Shibboleth for Paul Celan,” op. cit.; “Telepathy,” in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other*, trans. & ed. by Peggy Kamuf & Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007) pp. 226-261; *Given Time: I Counterfeit Money*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

10 If it was the final word of *Dissemination* that opens the spacings of *Cinders* to our text, we recognize the opening of *Dissemination* as a detour of the cinder, making this reference here impossible as an annulment of his text in a circle or circuit of inscription. He wrote: “This (therefore) will not have been a book.” “Hors Livre: Outwork Hors d’Ouvre Extratext Foreplay Bookend Facing Prefacing.” *Dissemination*, op. cit., pp. 1-59, p. 1. How would one cite this, tally it up, with or without its graphics, its faces and changing faces but also sizes, fonts as they say, perhaps even *Kelle*, which we would read undecidably here as font, fountain or source but also as cellar, crypt or vault. But also, in the ring of homonymy, as knell and kneel. She rings this font before the knell of being, this prefacing foreplay on the *Anglisch* promise, anticipating its breaking. She is the contaminating contamination of its word. But perhaps she belongs most of all to another ringing, that of *Quelle*, of the “What is she?.” And, before the law she kneels, silhouetted with Blanchot by *she* as a law whose knee he would want to touch in that madness of the day.

secreted gift that already immolates itself as the first burning. And then, there is the fall of the cinder. Cinders fall (to the tomb):

That is what is owed to the fire, and yet, if possible, without the shadow of a sacrifice, at noon, without debt, without the Phoenix, thus the unique phrase comes to set into place, in the place of no emplacement, the place solely of incineration. The sentence avows only the ongoing incineration, of which it remains the almost silent monument: this can be “there,” *là*—<sup>11</sup>

But also:

—If a place is itself surrounded by fire (falls finally to ash, into a cinder tomb), it no longer is. Cinder remains, cinder there is, which we can translate: the cinder is not, is not what is. It remains *from* what is not, in order to recall at the delicate, charred bottom of itself only non-being or non-presence. Being without presence has not been and will no longer be there where there is cinder and where this other memory would speak. There, where cinder means the difference between what remains and what is, will she ever reach it, there?<sup>12</sup>

Her profit would have been that she took nothing, that she is the taking of a not-taking, that her turnover is no longer that of the calculable, but nor would it simply be what is incalculable. It is the contamination of every calculation with non-calculation. What remains is the remnant that must no longer remain: “a pure place was marked out” (*un lieu pur se chiffrait-il*).<sup>13</sup> *Chiffrer* means to put a figure on, to assess, but also to encode, to monogram, to encrypt with a signature, secret or otherwise, perhaps in numbers. It also means to number pages. *Chiffre d'Affaires* refers to turnover, profit or sales made; it is abbreviated as CA, homophone of *ça* and *sa*, another disseminating of places (indicatives of this, that, it and so on) and woman, of her place:

—Who is Cinder? Where is she? Where did she run off to at this hour? If the homophony withholds the singular name within the common noun, it was surely “there,” *là*; someone vanished but something preserved her trace and at the same time lost it, the cinder. There the cinder is: that which preserves in order no longer to preserve, dooming the remnant to dissolution. And it is no longer the one who has

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

disappeared who leaves cinders “there”; it is only her still unreadable name.<sup>14</sup>

Her sentence hides in its ring, in its register, a tallying up of the innumerable, in the silent “s” of *cendres*, of what has never been written yet is re-membered: “A faulty version to be buried, as do the Jews when a manuscript has wounded the name of God ... this “there” from now on signified that the innumberable lurks beneath the cinder. Incubation of the fire lurking beneath the dust.”<sup>15</sup> Would Derrida here be wounding the name of God? Would cinder be the name for the contamination of the promise for the proper name of being, contamination of the double bind of not being able not to speak of the name of the name? Would this liturgy of burying the fault not be what Derrida does in “ATVM,” in his ingratitude to Levinas, in Levinas’s own proximity to Heidegger where he most wanted to avoid the same, in what is held silently in the Saying as the name of the name, for Levinas, *Illeity* as the name of the name? Would Cinders offer the ashen ladle from the gift already immolated, wounding, in the incalculability of its tallying, the ancient anterior of *Illeity*, a masculine God? Would one bury it as a body or have it burnt?:

In order to make my question better understood, I shall take a detour around what he tells us of the name of God, in the nonneutral commentary which he proposes. According to the treatise *Chevouoth*, it is forbidden to efface the name of God, even in the case when a copyist would have altered the form. The whole manuscript then has to be buried. Such a manuscript, E. L. says, “has to be placed into the earth like a dead body.” But what does placing in earth mean? And what does a “dead body” mean, since it is not effaced or destroyed but “placed in the earth”? If one simply wanted to annihilate it—to no longer keep it—the whole thing would be burned, everything would be effaced without remains. The dys-graphy would be replaced, without remnant, by orthography. In inhuming it, on the contrary, the fault on the proper name is not destroyed, at bottom one keeps guard of it, as a fault, one keeps it at the bottom.<sup>16</sup>

Yet this annihilation by fire would not, still, be a sacrifice. She would have already given to drink the ash. *La Cendre* remains in the remnant of the fired cinder, divided and always divisible, without remains but not without:

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14 Ibid., p. 33 & p. 35.

15 Ibid., p. 59.

16 “ATVM,” op. cit., p. 44.

—I understand that the cinder is nothing that can be in the world, nothing that remains as an entity [*étant*]. It is the being [*l'être*], rather, that there is — this is a name of the being that there is there but which, giving itself (*es gibt ashes*), is nothing, remains beyond everything that is (*konis epekeina tes ousias*), remains unpronounceable in order to make saying possible although it is nothing.<sup>17</sup>

Would she, *la cendre*, then be without fault in effacing the name of God? She *l'être*, ringing again with *lettre*, is the contamination of a first writing, already burnt, a burning holocaust without sacrifice contaminating the pure *Gedicht* of an originary silence that opens language, on the side of a meditation on being itself and no longer on being via the intermediaries of beings. The great sacrifice of language is the immolation of everything for the sake of that earlier burning as the opening to language itself. Her contamination would block, for example, Heidegger's impossible sacrifice of the question of beings to being.<sup>18</sup> Being's proper name is a site of fire and ash.

For Heidegger, as for Levinas, language's promise, its word is the promise of the first name, the originary name. This would be the pure word, the faultless word, the uncorrupted word that names being or *illeity*. Yet the structure of the promise, the

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17 *Cinders*, op. cit., p. 73. The French expression *il y a*, like the German *es gibt*, expresses the verb to be in its effacement. Literally, “it has there,” the expression expresses “there is” just as the German expression expresses “there is.” *Konis epekeina tes ousias*, cinders beyond being or presence, is the re-inscription of Plato's *agathon epekeina tes ousias*, the good beyond being. See ibid., footnote 73, p. 79.

18 Throughout this thesis with discussion concerning Heidegger, I have decided to follow the following styles for the two key Heideggerian terms, “being” and “Da sein.” These terms have been variously styled, from publication to publication, as “Being” with a capitalized “B” and more generally as *Dasein* or italicized, *Dasein*. I am following Joan Stambaugh in her translation of *Being and Time* in using a lower-case “B.” And I am doing so in concurrence with her argument: “Capitalizing ‘being,’ although it has the dubious merit of treating ‘being’ as something unique, risks implying that it is some kind of Super Thing or transcendent being. But Heidegger's use of the word ‘being’ in no sense refers the word to something like *a* being, especially not a transcendent Being. Heidegger does not want to substantivize this word, yet capitalizing the word in English does tend to imply just that. The later words for being, *Ereignis*, (‘appropriation,’ ‘belonging-together’) and *Das Geviert* (‘the Fourfold’) express *relations* that first constitute any possible *relata* or things, and thus confirm this nonsubstantializing intention.” See Stambaugh, “Translator's Preface,” in *Being and Time*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996) pp. xiii-xvi, pp. xiv-xv. With respect to “*Dasein*,” I am not following her guide (nor, then, Heidegger's wish for the word to be hyphenated as *Da-sein*). In *Being and Time* the word remains “un-translated” or untranslatable to English. While the “hyphen” would have enabled a folding of our own reading of “hyphen” throughout our thesis as the hymen's graphic of sexual difference, and thereby would have enfolded a Derridean figure at the heart of a Heideggerian “existence,” our more pressing aim was to put forward the “blank” of Derrida's “Double Session” as the trace of a pre-originary trace of *diffrance* of and to ontological difference as sexual difference. As openness-to-being, *Da sein* cannot be “collapsed” to or be mistaken for “Man,” or the being who is a human being. We have left it non-italicized, thereby deferring indefinitely its return to a foreign language, yet we maintain the capitalizing of the “*Da*,” in the originary founding of a proper in the “there.”

promise of the promise is that it is breakable, is to break it. She, cinders names not this name, but this corruption. She plays with the torment, the sacrifice done to speak the proper name. She anticipates the broken promise. Her being is in what has been that first burning but is unrecoverable, without remains returnable to someone or something. She abandons in her play, making it inevitable and necessary to invent new versions of the Other (*La Cendre*), without sacrifice, and thus new versions of others. No sacrifice brings an Other to presence. No investment, no profit, save for the contaminations that would erase from the ledger all debt but also all capital:

—No, you treat his phrase like the accumulation of surplus-value, as if he speculated on some cinder capital. It is, however, a question of making a withdrawal, in order to let him try his luck on a gift without the least memory of itself, in the final account, the remains of a body, a pile of cinders unconcerned about preserving its form, a retreat, a retracing only without any relation with what, now, through love, I just did and I am just about to tell you—<sup>19</sup>

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19 Ibid., p. 75 & p. 77.

## C H A P T E R   I

### I n t r o d u c t i o n : M e t h o d s   a n d   A r c h i v e s

My interest ... continued to relate to the same question: how is it that philosophy finds itself inscribed, rather than inscribing itself, within a space which it seeks but is unable to control. ... How is one to name the structure of this space? I do not *know*, nor do I know whether there can ever be what may be called *knowledge* of such a space.<sup>1</sup>

Because it is unfamiliar and above all not something actual, a dialogue that is a philosophizing is rarely or never at all attained among those who busy themselves with philosophy, yet do not philosophize. So long as this elementary readiness for the intrinsic perilousness of philosophy is lacking, a confrontation that is a philosophizing will never occur, no matter how many articles are launched against one another in journals. They all want to prove their own truths in the face of one another, and

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1 Derrida, "The Time of a Thesis: Punctuations," in *Philosophy in France Today*, ed. by Alan Montefiore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) pp. 34-50, p. 50, quoted in John Sallis "Introduction," *Deconstruction and Philosophy: The Texts of Jacques Derrida*, op. cit., pp. xi-xv, p. xii.

in so doing forget the single, actual, and most difficult task of driving one's own Dasein and that of others into a fruitful questionableness.<sup>2</sup>

“here, the *squaring of the circle* is the uniting of the masculine sex and the feminine sex into a whole, just as it is possible to unite into a single figure the framed circle or the circle squared” ... “... he who follows the philosophers through winds and tides ought necessarily to set off in quest of the philosopher’s stone, the squaring of the circle ...”<sup>3</sup>

## S e c t i o n   |

### « M e t h o d s »

#### Differences: Knots and Interruptions to the Sexual Question

The three brief introductory citations to this introductory chapter on methodology and key literature each present a fundamental enigma that requires pursuing. Hardly the same enigma. But perhaps the enigma of the same. I would pose the kernel of an *aporia* suggested in these three citations thus: does a thesis punctuate? This is *my* posing here, on the borderline to a “thesis” as a crisis or critical encounter with “fruitful questionableness.” *Does a thesis punctuate?* Does the thetic interrupt, puncture, tear or make legible what will come to have been seamed as its moment? Or rather are the thesis and punctuation in confrontation? Perhaps it is the thetic that is a seamed semblance, whose seam opens with the enigma of the punctual. What is punctuation in and of the thetic? These questions have gripped me in my approach to the task of thinking a thesis of and on sexual difference precisely as an opening to thinking the radical betrayal of thinking in the work of the thetic. We come no closer to the presentation of a proposition on the question of sexual difference. Rather, the

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2 Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. by William McNeill & Nicholas Walker (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995) p. 20.

3 Derrida, “The Crossroads of the “Est” in *Dissemination*, op. cit., p. 353.

question of sexual difference, in its questionableness, opens to the space of that space about which Derrida doubts there will ever be knowledge.

Section 1, on methods, commences with outlining the initial research question and approach, and the series of transformative moments that led to its final procedural methods and structures for modes of exposition. However, it should be stressed at the outset that from the preliminary proposal for this research I had intended to work with the philosophical approaches of deconstruction. Hence this section engages primarily with those “methods” we tend to associate with deconstruction, according to the usual caveats concerning the fact that deconstruction is not a method or procedure that can be formally, universally, or de-contextually elucidated. That is to say, deconstruction as performative is the each-time differing of context in (this text’s) citationality, repetitions or reading, in the very possibility of saying that this text is the same (for example, for three examiners). Equally, or co-primordially, it is the deferring of the closure to the question of its meaning, as the open dehiscence of the as-structure of being.

### Methods I: Preliminary Rehearsal

As a concise statement, the aim of this thesis is to locate fundamental structures and systems of phallogocentric metaphysics, as a way to understanding the deep and fissured complexities around sexual difference in relation to language. This “locating” follows deconstruction’s paths, as a trembling of the keystones of those structures and systems. The aim, then, is to elucidate, with particular texts of Derrida’s, an inventing of otherwise thinking of sexual difference.

This thesis began with a very precise question: *Where is She?*<sup>9</sup> It was sub-titled *An interventional drawing over the engendered subject of woman*. The precision lay in its form as a question, as a questioning form that would ultimately lead to an hypothesis on the “whereabouts” of woman as an inscribed entity within the structuration of language and within our (Western) history of philosophy (metaphysics). Deconstruction’s notion of phallogocentrism alerts us to this structure as inherently

gendered and as a privileging of masculinity. That is to say, from an ontic position the form of the question as to whether “She,” “Woman” is locatable offers, perhaps, a precision in the sense that it suggests determinacy. We make a number of casual and obvious remarks about this question. It is a proposition; it is a well-formed syntactically correct statement in the question form. Secondly, as propositional, it engages language as representation, as the re-presentation of a world adducible, knowable and real. That is to say, one may expect an answer. It is true, the question is interpretable: I may be asking someone about someone they know, and they may say: “Oh, she’s in the bathroom!” It may also be a more general or generalisable question: how are women adequately represented in, say, the discipline or discourse of medicine or visual arts.

We are aware, for instance, of the writings of feminist scholars such as Griselda Pollock or Linda Nochlin, scholars who are able to write texts with titles such as “Why are there no great women artists?” Such a question, “where is she?” would be a starting point for such an enquiry, in its most general critical, archival and contestatory engagement with the doxa of orthodox art history. It may, in another vein, be a rough and ready version of the question-form often favoured by Heidegger. He might have one day asked (perhaps to Hannah Arendt) “How goes it for woman?” meaning what is the heart of the matter concerning woman, not as a biologically defined entity within the sciences, nor as a culturally defined entity within cultural philosophies, but in itself as a primordial disclosure of its being in the world. What is the “da” of the Da sein of Woman?

In relation to this latter Heideggerian questioning, what if “Where is She?” was taken to be neither a propositional syntactical form of language, nor one that would be circumscribed by representational frameworks of language? What if the “She” does not confirm the doxa of gender, traditional feminist engagements with erasure of women’s history and so on, but radically interrogates the very possibility of gender. What if we took recourse to write “She” as Heidegger came to write Being under erasure. We would cross “her” out even as we were compelled to activate “her” language being. This would suggest that language is something other than a communicative medium and that gender is something other than a decidable relay between biological determinism and ideological constructions. Therefore, to approach

the question *Where is She?*, one would first need to question the very epistemological (philosophical) principles of questioning, such as propositional logic, statement, truth as adequation, that have appropriated language, speech, and writing in particular, as mere (transparent) tools for communicative action. One would need to write a form of contestation to the paradigm of communication, to think “otherwise,” transgress the unitary thinking of metaphysics and its ideological constraints. One would need to take up a *theory and practice* of analysis, critique, commentary, writing and reading that radically interrogated, radically re-inscribed as contestation to these forms of knowing. One would at the very least need to cast one’s fate to the winds and the tides, chase after the philosopher’s stone and have a go at squaring the circle, uniting the sexes within a whole.

### Genu—cision: Why Are There Beings At All Instead Of Nothing?<sup>4</sup>

Why did we not commence with the question “Why is She”? After all, is not the “Why” question for Heidegger the most fundamental, the most primordial question concerning being: “Perhaps it strikes only once, like the muffled tolling of a bell that resounds into Dasein and gradually fades.”<sup>5</sup> But what is this “Why” question for Heidegger? How is it asked? “Why—that is, what is the ground? From what ground do beings come?”<sup>6</sup> Does this then mean that the “Why” question is more primordially

4 This subheading, *genu-cission*, and the following two, *genu-fiction* and *genu-session*, perhaps deserve a comment. The French “genou,” is a masculine noun that translates the English “knee.” It is also a homophone in French for “I/We,” as in “Je/Nous.” See footnote 1 of the Preface for further amplification of our thetic knee-fetish. We gain the English word “genuflection” from this French etymology, as in the flexing, bending of the knee, which is also subjugation, a formal and public display of homage or humility but also a bending under the force of law. We bend “Je/Nous” in more than one way in order to approach the question of sexual difference, just as we strain to hear from the ear of the other resonances of kneel and knell, *Kelle* and cellar or crypt, but also the feminine *Quelle*, a feminine what is? With each of our entry portals inscribed between the knees, we bend our methodological tract to the limitations of our processes, firstly to the “cision,” incision or decision, the cut that cut us loose for the “leap” or “spring” to a primordial questioning of an open possibility of sexual difference. Our second is more a knee-jerk to a particular, though we see dominant, project of feminism with respect to its sifting of the texts of philosophy for contaminants. The litmus *ph* balance of this project would be the disciplinary ground of feminism as such. Our response is a guarded approach to the fiction of this always already inscribed eaves of the feminist. Her intactness would have always already followed the hymen’s graphic. Our third moment, attuned to “circumfession” contrives the *as if* of the foreskin and hymen, as if the impossible “I/We” constituted an originary saying as a pre-originary difference to *diffrance* as such.

5 Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000) pp. 1-2.

6 Ibid., p. 3.

a question of “ground”? “To seek the ground: this means to get to the bottom.” But then our question is not concerned with being but with “She.” And it is not concerned with “Why” but with “Where.” So, are we wasting our time here discussing Heidegger and fundamental ontology? Isn’t “She” a particular being, and isn’t “Where” as location, more primordially disclosed in the “Why” of the being of where-ness?

However, we see with Heidegger’s questioning an opening to our question in its essentiality. Heidegger asks “Why the Why? What is the ground of this why-question itself, a question that presumes to establish the ground of beings as a whole?”<sup>7</sup> The question is posed, but posed how and by what? “Then we discover that this distinctive why-question has its ground in a leap by which human beings leap away from all the previous safety of their *Dasein*, be it genuine or presumed.”<sup>8</sup> *Da sein* is for Heidegger openness to being, and also the *da*, there of being, that the being of a being is its thereness, its worlding or worlding of its surrounding world as being as a whole. Human being, primordially disclosed as openness to being, as *Da sein*, is disclosed in an ontological disclosure of spatiality as the finite *da* of existence, the thereness of being. Hence, our “where” question opens for us the horizon of possibility for asking the “why of why” in general.

Ontological difference for Heidegger will fundamentally distinguish between the ontic disclosure of spatiality, whereness or orientation as measurement and an ontological, and therefore primordial where of being, as the opening to the asking of the “why of why.” Our question of “She” discloses our locatedness with respect to the primordiality of ontological difference as such, and asks whether sexual difference as a question of woman, opens ontological difference as such to a more originary questioning. Hence, “Where is She?” is not seeking to avoid an opening that opens Heidegger’s “Why” of being or disclosure of ontological difference, but rather attempts to follow a path that leads to this questioning in its leap or spring.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

## Genu—fiction: From the Margin of the Margin

Though women are omitted from the canons of philosophy, these texts inscribe the nature of woman. Sometimes the philosopher speaks directly about woman, delineating her proper role, her abilities and inabilities, her desires. Other times the message is indirect—a passing remark hinting at woman’s emotionality, irrationality, unreliability.<sup>9</sup>

In this preface to a feminist interpretation of Heidegger, Nancy Tuana, general editor of a “Re-reading the Canon” series of feminist interpretations of philosophers, goes on to discuss the canon and processes of canonization as well as strategies for canon-transformation. We need to see what is fundamental to this project, as it may very well have something intrinsic to say about our own approach. Tuana states:

A question we must keep in front of us during this process of re-reading is whether a philosopher’s socially inherited prejudices concerning woman’s nature and role are independent of her or his larger philosophical framework. In asking this question attention must be paid to the ways in which the definitions of central philosophical concepts implicitly include or exclude gendered traits.<sup>10</sup>

This series includes texts we cite in our thesis, particularly *Feminist Interpretations of Jacques Derrida* and *Feminist Interpretations of Emmanuel Levinas*. Our initial reaction to this project of canon-transformation is one of skepticism, not because projects of resistance to canonicity, engagements from the margins, are futile or unnecessary—they are extremely necessary—but rather for the stated tactics of the project, as if one would read the “larger philosophical framework” for signs or symptoms of contamination by a “socially inherited prejudice.” It reads like a grand project of “cleansing,” or “rehabilitation.” And, indeed, one would then encounter the philosophical text as a pragmatic assaying of the philosophical ore for its usefulness for feminism, for the lode it can deliver. For example:

I set out to determine whether a reading of Heidegger’s essay on Trakl informed by Irigaray and Derrida could offer indications that following links between sensible transcendentals, sexual and radical difference,

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<sup>9</sup> Nancy Tuana, “Preface,” in *Feminist Interpretations of Martin Heidegger*, op. cit., pp. vii-ix, p.vii.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. ix.

could be productive for feminism. The reading I have just given answers both yes and no.<sup>11</sup>

It seems to us that the project of canon-transformation in strategic situations such as this necessarily needs to maintain in its sights an always already determined or determinable framework of feminism as such in order to assay the texts of philosophy for their productivity with respect to the project of feminism. We find this problematic in the extreme and draw attention to it precisely for the manner whereby our strategic interests withdraw from such a strategy. Already our question should make this difference clear. The project of re-reading and transforming the canon seems necessarily to know where “She” is in order to see the extent to which “She” is assailed or assured by the text of philosophy. Our project of “reading” differs fundamentally; our understanding of the project of the archive that inscribes canons differs fundamentally, and the question of “woman,” of the feminine, feminism, of gender is fundamentally a question of the question, rather than the mission of securing the ground for the sake of a project always already inscribed.

In this sense, our project does not align with a “feminist interpretation of ...;” it does not align with a disciplinary border or frame we would nominate as “Women’s Studies,” “Philosophy,” “Cultural Studies” or “Cultural Philosophy,” “Literature” or “Literary Studies.” The project does not find a home in my teaching disciplines of art and design. Rather the project interrogates genres and opens with a watch-word, the aphorism from Novalis that Heidegger invoked to his students in the opening lecture of his lecture course on *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*:

“Philosophy is really homesickness, an urge [*Trieb*: drive/instinctual drive] to be at home everywhere.” A strange definition, romantic of course. Homesickness—does such a thing still exist today at all? Has it not become an incomprehensible word, even in everyday life? Has not contemporary city man, the ape of civilization, long since eradicated homesickness?<sup>12</sup>

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11 Ellen T. Armour, “‘Through Flames or Ashes’: Traces of Difference in *Geist’s Return*,” in *Feminist Interpretations of Martin Heidegger*, op. cit., pp. 316-333; p. 330.

12 Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, op. cit., p. 5. This turning to the poet on the fundamental attunement of philosophizing was often emphasized throughout Heidegger’s writings on the essence of being.

For these reasons we do not write this thesis from out of the core of a disciplinary concern, nor from the core of a feminist or feminine archive in literature, philosophy or cultural theory. If the texts of Derrida are central, it is precisely because deconstruction and *differance* resonate, attune to the homelessness of philosophizing.

### Genu—fession: So Woman, Then, Will Not Have Been My Subject

Is it enough, then, to suggest that our methodological approach is deconstructive? Certainly, from our initial question, the initial thesis title, our thesis was to incorporate four crucial moments, each of them forming four chapters residing in this question *Where is She?*, a kind of crossroads of the “*est*,” or another encounter of the fourfold, an opening of the beloved triangles of Pythagoras, Christianity, Oedipus, Dialectics, a spreading of their legacies to an indeterminate fourth side, an open fourth:

Even though it is only a triangle open on its fourth side, the splayed square loosens up the obsidianity of the triangle and the circle which in their ternary rhythm (Oedipus, Trinity, Dialectics) have always governed metaphysics. It loosens them up; that is, it de-limits them, reinscribes them, re-cites them (“*4.84 (... that comes from the fact that the line now no longer closes up into a point or a circle ('science is the circle of circles') and also no longer rejoins its own repetition ...)*”)<sup>13</sup>.

Each mark was to initiate a moment of enquiry (a form of explanatory exegesis) and deconstructive interpretation into the history of Western metaphysics. That is, the thesis title *Where is She?* posed four key moments of engagement: firstly, a question of spacings and spatiality circumscribed by any question of “where” that would have opened to the enigma of spatiality we noted in the first of our brief citations opening this chapter, and would have been echoed, for example, in texts such as Derrida’s “Khora.”<sup>14</sup> Secondly, there is the “*est*,” the “*is*,” the copula, coupling term which substantiates the thesis title as a question in its propositional form. That is, the thesis posed the very possibility of any asking of “She” in propositional language, and

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13 Derrida, “The Crossroads of the ‘Est’” op. cit. pp. 352-353.

14 Derrida, “Khora” in idem, *On the Name* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995) pp. 89-130.

therefore was to engage in a deconstruction of the copula “is.” The third moment presented the impossible possibility of writing “She” other than through dissimulation, untruth or play as the binding-unbinding of the written erasure of her inscription. The fourth moment presented the question of the question, the very question of what it is to question in metaphysics and in the deconstruction of metaphysics, a spreading of the legacies of metaphysics that would always already have come to proposition her. This fourth moment was an opening to a questionableness of ethics as it has been circumscribed in metaphysics and in its deconstruction.

The four moments were clearly not segmented or unrelated. Each inflects performatively on the other three, just as in its propositional form, the question “Where is She?” can be said to have meaning. These four performative moments commenced with and were interlaced by the question of the question and its relation to an ethics of sexual difference. It is Derrida’s text “Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas” that most directly broaches the question of the question with respect to the possibility of philosophy and its relation to non-philosophy and to ethics.<sup>15</sup> He literally introduces this text with this question:

It may even be that these questions [concerning the meaning of the death of philosophy] are not philosophical, are not philosopher’s questions. Nevertheless, these should be the only questions today capable of founding the community, within the world, of those who are still called philosophers; and called such in remembrance, at very least, of the fact that these questions must be examined unrelentingly, despite the diaspora of institutes and languages, despite the publications and techniques that follow on each other, procreating and accumulating by themselves, like capital or poverty. A community of the question, therefore, within that fragile moment when the question is not yet determined enough for the hypocrisy of an answer to have already initiated itself beneath the mask of the question, and not yet determined enough for its voice to have been already fraudulently articulated within the very syntax of the question.<sup>16</sup>

This question of a community of the question provided Derrida with the context for deconstructing the ethics philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas in relation to Levinas’s distance from and proximity to the Western tradition of philosophy. Derrida

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15 Derrida, “Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas,” in *Writing and Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978) pp. 79-153.

16 Ibid., pp. 79-80.

considers ethics and philosophy (in as much as it has a future) in terms of a “community of the question” and it is Levinasian ethics that presents the most formidable question of ethics for Western metaphysics and in this sense a radicality of the community of the question as one grounded in identity and the same. This precisely poses a question of ethics that arrives before any question of being. Hence, a radicalising of the “question” as such coincides with a dismantling of Western metaphysics’s priority of being.

The thesis is no longer titled “Where is She?” and no longer systematically works through the fourfold structure of this sentence structure in its metaphoric and metonymic axes. The transformative moments that constituted the practices of research are enigmatically traced in the current title “Ashes / Without Reserve.” Without a doubt, “She” is still there to be read, written into the title. But so is “he,” as is also all the “shes” “as *hes*.” These *ashes* without reserve, without the determination of the proposition, which is to say without the determination of the scientific, the systematic and the numerical, methodologically unpick the metaphysical bindings of “Where is She?,” and disseminate the project according to innumerable oscillations in determining or delimiting the play of ashes as the general trace of the trace, in our legibility, scriptability and citationality. “Ashes” are the indeterminable traces of something that gave of itself an originary illuminating, that burned. But already our preface has opened an orientation to these concerns. The thesis structure now follows different paths.

### **The Double Frame of the Metaphysics of the Feminine**

There are two frames to our research that can be recognized in the chapter sequence of the thesis. Initially we develop a preparatory engagement to a questioning of the ontology of sexual difference, with Chapters 2 and 3. With this we are commencing with a question that broaches the metaphysics of the feminine with respect to the texts of Derrida, Heidegger and Cixous in particular. This frame engages with *Écriture Féminine*, Levinas and feminist responses to Heidegger and Levinas. However, we undertake this broader questioning in order to develop a sharper focus on the writings

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of Derrida that address Heidegger's ontological difference, Levinas's ethics before being, and a more originary questioning of sexual difference. In this sense, the second frame, and predominant focus of the thesis, is on Derrida's approach to the metaphysics of the feminine.

Hence, with Derrida, we approach the question directly in engagements with four texts by Derrida that each has an essential concern with sexual difference, with Chapters 4 to 7. Why have we undertaken this path? Why a preparatory engagement and then an engagement proper? In responding to this we need to ask from where does our question spring, our question concerning an ontology of sexual difference as the possibility of an otherwise writing of woman? It springs, certainly, from a concern with women, with what happens to women. Our question doesn't come out of nothing or no-where, but from a concern for women. But this says very little. Do we mean any particular women, women in general, women as a history of women, or women's histories as written? Do we mean a discipline that emerged within my lifetime we name feminism or women's studies, that would sit alongside other disciplines such as psychology, computer science or philosophy? When our concern is with "woman" and not "women" do we mean a universalizing question, an ahistorical and global question concerning all women? Are all women at some essential level the same? Is this what a "being" of "woman" means? From another vantage point, and in terms of an interpretation of a questioning of women, or a historicizing of women, there are volumes of writings, in many languages engaging with philosophies of women, cultural production and women, class and race struggles, and perhaps centrally, patriarchy and women's struggles. Methodologically, how are we approaching our question such that we are open to or closed to these multiple series of concerns for women? Can we be concerned with them all?

We are concerned with an ontology of sexual difference. Is this also a concern with women, or would the question of "woman" be a detour from this central concern? How are the question of sexual difference and the question of "woman" related? Is one more original than the other? Is one derivative? What is ontology? More acutely, if ontology is a philosophical orientation to questioning, as opposed to, for example, a scientific or cultural orientation, how do we understand *this* questioning? Would it, for

example, be immured from a question of sexual difference that would always already orientate a philosophical questioning?

I am outlining here, with a series of questions, what I necessarily considered to be the essential terrain for a preparatory analysis of an ontology of sexual difference as an orientation to a philosophical questioning as ontological, and as always already invested with gendered relations. Equally, the preparatory analyses need to engage with and delimit the history of the practices of feminism or women's studies, in order to approach that which is essential for our questioning. We need to engage with the series of key thinkers who would contribute to our questioning, and move some way along the path of thinking in order to gain a vantage point as to what an approach to an ontology of sexual difference would require. This vantage point opens our perspectives on four texts by Jacques Derrida, that have an essential concern with an ontology of sexual difference, where "ontology" is understood as a Derridean deconstruction of Heideggerian ontological difference as *différance*, or as a pre-originary difference to ontological difference.<sup>17</sup>

This necessitates an orientation to a series of thematics concerning metaphysics and its closure as a Heideggerian questioning of the meaning of being and as a Derridean response to Heidegger. Equally we are orientated to a conjunctural questioning of metaphysics and feminism, as the coincident concern with the forgetting of being and the forgetting of woman. Our engagement with feminism is principally focused on this as a fundamental orientation to an ontology of sexual difference. In a second preparatory moment we further engage with feminism as an encounter with ontology, in a confrontation between Heidegger and Levinas. This engagement approaches this confrontation from the vantage point of feminism itself.

Via our initial engagement here a space opened for "thinking difference" as an *ethical relation* otherwise than as being. Post feminism and *Écriture Féminine* have engaged closely with the ethics philosophy of Levinas in considering this space for "thinking

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<sup>17</sup> The four Derrida texts are: *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, op. cit.; "Fors," op. cit.; "At This Very Moment In This Work Here I Am," op. cit., abbreviated "ATVM"; *Glas*, op. cit.

difference.”<sup>18</sup> And it is particularly Chapters 2 and 3 which deal with a questioning for “thinking difference” as a working through the differences of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Levinas, Blanchot, Derrida and *Écriture Féminine* as a method of *preliminary rehearsal* for thinking through our question, a necessary rehearsal that traces the contours for thinking difference *before* sexual difference, difference constitutive of sexual difference, as preparation for responding to the four Derrida texts.<sup>19</sup> The possibility of thinking sexual difference can no longer be thought through any disciplinary framework that simply neglects or refuses without negotiation deconstructive strategies for elaborating a critique of Western metaphysics, which includes both the philosophical tradition but also the everyday of thought and language that has structured our thinking on sexual difference. We would suggest this deconstructive critique begins with Nietzsche and Heidegger even though it is the work of Derrida that has *forged* its name “deconstruction.” Thus, with Chapter 4, *Spurs* becomes our first angle of entry into the textual-accounting, the ledger without return,

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18 See in particular Tina Chanter, *Time, Death, and the Feminine: Levinas with Heidegger* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

19 In many ways *Where is She? An Interventional Drawing Over the Engendered Subject of Woman* still exists in the margins where the same manoeuvres and methods take place in the place of no emplacement, no resting ground, without return, without reserve. *She* has not been adequately “represented” in feminist critical theory, insofar as (A)*She(s)* is under a process of constant erasure through the returning of “her” to an economy of phallocentric language. That is to say, any question of the “representation” of *She*, in as much as “representation” is caught in ontic analyses, will always already produce “her” as a deficit in language’s return to phallocentrism. Hence, the thesis engages with deconstructive, literary and psychoanalytic approaches to language and subjectivity such that representation and the role of language in representational structures are radically interrogated. The impetus of *Écriture Féminine* to performativity, and the engagements of post-feminism in poststructuralism have critical purchase coincident with the dismantling of structures of representation. The importance of *Where* is crucial as it seeks to determine a space for *She*, one which questions the presupposition of the Platonic locale of *What(ness)*. In as much as the Platonic “what is” inaugurates the Western metaphysical tradition, it does so precisely by coinciding being and identity, or the identity of beings in their being. Hence, beings in their becoming are subordinated to the *eidos* or *logos* of being. This process inscribes the fixity of identity. If the question of the question poses a “community,” it is not a community of the Self-Same, constituted by an identity that would provide a locale. Rather, it would be an impossible community, an “inoperative community,” a community constituted on the spacings of difference. See, for example, Jean Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, trans. by Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland, and Simona Sawhney; ed. by Peter Connor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991) and Maurice Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community*, trans. by Pierre Joris (Barrytown: Station Hill Press, 1988). Three spacings of “difference” establish the horizons for a thinking the “*W*here” of “(A)*She(s)*” in the deconstruction of the “is-ness” to Being, which is constitutive of the closures of Western metaphysics. Firstly, there is the spacing or differential tracing of ontic-ontological difference. Secondly, there is that spacing constitutive of sexual difference; and thirdly, there is the proximity and distance between Anglophone feminism and *Écriture Féminine*. Again, these moments are not segmented, but are rather performatively interlaced as a “community” of the question. Hence, a major question in this research concerns the *ethics of performativity* as an ethics of sexual difference. An ethics of interruption integral to *clôture* reading opens a space for assaying the redeeming qualities of *performative* practice (see discussion that follows here on *clôture* reading and the critical approach of Simon Critchley).

or the taking of not-taking of Derrida's textual enterprise. *Spurs* engages an opening of a fourth to the triumvirate of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Woman, who would have been both Derrida's subject and not his subject.

Are we, in our approach to the question of sexual difference, becoming filial to deconstruction? Perhaps our research is nothing more, nothing less, insofar as a method of mimesis carries on the moving chain or network of *his* work as work that frustrates the desire "to get to the point."<sup>20</sup> We may want to firstly, then, deconstruct this notion of what it is to follow Derrida, i.e., to be a good, loyal "subject." We emphasize, in our reading of "ATVM" in Chapter 6, the necessary relations between the double stricture of deconstructive commentary and interpretation as a necessary incoherence and betrayal for opening a text's repressed meanings. Derrida here emphasizes the complicity of fidelity and betrayal as response and responsibility to the other, as a non-return of what is given to encounter. This would coincide with an impossible saturation of context as closure of meaning necessitating decision with respect to a question of meaning and the activation of contingency, accident and errancy, through which the non-intentional may be disseminated through discourse.<sup>21</sup> Derrida suggests in *Monolingualism of the Other* that one must "invent in your own language if you can or want to hear mine; invent if you can or want to give my language to be understood."<sup>22</sup>

So, are we suggesting more than just a mimetic method? It would be a peculiar mimesis, one that emphasized betrayal, grafting, parasitical hosting and supplementarity, a mimesis of the blanks emphasized in *Dissemination*'s "Double Session."<sup>23</sup> Derrida's reference to inventing in one's own language implies that a faithful interpretation of him is one that goes beyond Derrida. He installs invention as a necessary component of any deconstructive reading. And yet we have recourse to quote him *verbatim* precisely on the question of moving from/to him in another invented language. Are any of our readings of the *four* texts deconstructions? This

20 *Dissemination*, op. cit., p. xvi.

21 See also Derrida, "Signature Event Context" in idem, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. by Alan Bass (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1982) pp. 307-330.

22 Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other or the Prosthetic of Origin*, trans. by Patrick Mensah (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998) p. 57.

23 See *Dissemination*, op. cit. pp. 173-286 but also "The Filial Inscription" in Plato's Pharmacy, pp. 84-94.

would suggest that deconstruction is a style, method or procedure, that something *is* or *is not* deconstructive. If Derrida once had recourse to an architectural metaphor to say the meaning of deconstruction, as the “trembling of the keystone” of the institution, not in order to bring down the structure but in order to locate the moment of structural stability as the most fragile moment, then deconstruction is an each-time engagement with assuredness, decisiveness, the naturalization of meaning, even within the texts of Derrida, and perhaps most pertinently within the texts of Derrida.<sup>24</sup> Again, this is elaborated in Chapter 6 with respect to the impossibility for knowing those precise moments where one leaves the order of commentary and moves into a more “violent” interpretative phase, where one moves from inspecting the arch or institution to soliciting it, trembling it in order to locate the keystone. It is precisely on this notion of *not* separating out the readings that makes it impossible to actually speak of a “work” of deconstruction. That is, there is no neat border crossing between his text and my text. It is the reader who signs the author’s name, each time giving a text its propriety, authority, proper belonging to a community of questioning. We will also shortly come to speak of these undecidable borders in relation to the *supplementary* logic that performs its chiasmic path across the collection of these texts.

## Methods 2: Close Readings—Readings on Closure

It is perhaps more accurate to suggest that our readings of Derrida’s four texts constitute a doubling of the double. We understand this from the approach to deconstruction taken by Simon Critchley and his notion of *clôtural* reading.<sup>25</sup> In his

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24 See Derrida, “Force and Signification,” in *Writing and Difference*, op. cit., pp. 3-30; esp. p. 6: “Structure is perceived through the incidence of menace, at the moment when imminent danger concentrates our vision on the keystone of an institution, the stone which encapsulates both the possibility and the fragility if its existence.”

25 Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction* op. cit. Critchley suggests: “*Clôtural* reading is double reading extended to include the analysis of closure in the question of ethics. A *clôtural* reading analyses a text in terms of how it is divided against itself in both belonging to logocentric conceptuality and achieving the breakthrough beyond that conceptuality. ... *Clôtural* reading articulates the ethical interruption of ontological closure, thereby disrupting the text’s claim to comprehensive unity and self-understanding. ... A *clôtural* reading of a text would consist, first, of a patient and scholarly commentary following the main lines of the text’s dominant interpretation, and second, in locating an interruption or alterity within that dominant interpretation where reading discovers insights within a text to which that text is blind.” Ibid., p. 30. *Clôtural* reading, in its double engagement from commentary to interruption, is a move from the securing of the closure of a text to meaning to a disruption of any such closure. This may be thought of as a move from ground to ungroundedness, or from ground to abyss, as would be suggested firstly in Heideggerian dismantlement of ontology as “*destruktion*” or “dismantling” and

book *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas* Critchley's readings weave a double reading style across a text's moment of response and responsibility applying emphasis to a reading of deconstruction as a Levinasian ethics of reading. "Clôatural Readings I: "Bois"—Derrida's Final Word on Levinas" engages specifically with Derrida's "ATVM."<sup>26</sup> Critchley's work is significant for its amplification on an inherent "ethics" at work in deconstruction in response to our relation to the other. Two things need to be separated out here in order to account more accurately for our approach. Critchley's readings separate out, with *Clôatural Readings I & II*, the performance of a double reading of Derrida on Levinas and Levinas on Derrida.<sup>27</sup> I return to our notion of the double of the double where our own readings locate a displacing text, a para-text, for and against our reading on the "dominant" text. That is, for grafting and tracing the questioning of sexual difference in reading across *Spurs* we performatively engage it with Derrida's "*Geschlecht*: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference."<sup>28</sup> "Fors" is counter-wise supplemented in our *clôatural* reading, within its very partitioning. "Fors" concerns the partitioned crypt as the failed work of mourning, secreted from a self within a self. "Fors" concerns equally the installed unconscious of another within my unconscious as the ghost of the other. We engage this text's partitioning moments as the doubling doubled of our own reading. "ATVM" is read against Critchley's "Clôatural Readings I: "Bois"—Derrida's Final Word on Levinas" and *Glas* is engaged with Rodolphe Gasché's "Strictly Bonded" from his *Inventions of Difference*.<sup>29</sup> Our "Postscript" reads across Derrida's seminar "Women in the Beehive," and his "Before the Law" from *Acts of Literature*.<sup>30</sup>

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subsequent to this, in Derrida's processes of deconstruction. *Clôatural* reading, in its performative doubling, and in its return to textuality in an ethics of dislocation, would hence be a move from "content" transmitted in commentary to "style" as dissimulating play.

26 Ibid., pp. 107-144.

27 Ibid., pp. 145-187. *Clôatural* Reading II concerns Critchley's close reading of Levinas's "Wholly Otherwise" as a response to Derrida.

28 Derrida, "*Geschlecht*: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference," op. cit.

29 Rodolphe Gasché, "Strictly Bonded," in *Inventions of Difference: On Jacques Derrida* (Cambridge, Mass. & London: Harvard University Press, 1994) pp. 171-198.

30 See Derrida et al. (1984). "Women in the Beehive: A Seminar with Jacques Derrida" in *Subjects/Objects*, (Spring, 1984) pp. 5-19; reprinted (1985) by Brown University and *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 16:3, pp.139-157. The seminar was audio-taped and transcribed. Derrida requested that the printed text be "authorized but authorless." And Derrida, "Before the Law," trans. by Christine Roulston in *Acts of Literature*, op. cit., pp. 181-220.

It is not only this doubling effect on the double bands that we are referring to but also that supplementary reading that opens up in the interstices, hiatuses, chiasmic weavings, angles of entry and invariable knots and interruptions to the threads or seams of metaphysics that work their way across the four texts and into the postscript. We have attempted in Chapter 7, concerning *Glas*, to discuss this *happening* in relation to the coincident presentations and re-contextualizations that are the strategies of *Glas* precisely in our reading of Derrida's reading of Hegel's pre-dialectic constriction as a dwelling between speculative thought and suspended remainders. Critchley's *clôtural* style inevitably poses the question as to whether, in adding *his* reading, he is at risk at foreclosing the double session. In response we offer a series of comments pertinent to our methodological orientation. Firstly, we have already alluded to the impossibility of such foreclosure with respect to invention and blurring of boundaries between one text and another and, indeed, this is the very principle of *closure* with which Critchley's thesis is working. Interruption is maintained regardless.

Secondly, in the “ethics” of deconstruction, which we have readily appropriated from Critchley, or to put in a somewhat subtler manner, that has confirmed and articulated for us our own motivations and convictions, in *closure* the paradoxical economy of ingratitude as an ethics of acknowledgment for the critical resources that reside in a text's most transgressive-restorative moment is one of the great lessons of deconstruction. That is to say, if our thesis research began with approaching feminisms that radicalized thinking sexual difference and yet returned language to a communicative medium for gender determinations between science and culture, we needed to approach our question on sexual difference from a more oblique and yet critical angle with respect to phallogocentrism. That is, our thinking on differing difference *per se* needed to sharpen our focus. Differing difference exists across philosophy, literature and psychoanalysis opened to *diffrance*, in relation to the metaphysical values of unity, identity, presence, permanence, foundation, structure and essence.

Derrida's *diffrance* gathers a conceptual thinking on differences *per se*.<sup>31</sup> That is to say, in these four texts this gathering includes Heidegger's ontological difference,

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31 See Derrida, *Diffrance* in *Margins of Philosophy*, op. cit. pp. 1-27.

Abraham's & Torok's phenomenologico-literary psychoanalysis (their cryptonomy and anasemic programme), Levinas's ethical difference as an "otherwise than being" and Hegel's "differentiating relation," *differente Bziehung*. We engage the point of radical transgression of each moment of difference *and* the moment where each thinker restores a metaphysics of presence and in doing so restitutes that which they were so motivated to dislodge. Derrida's readings, through the movements of *différance* and its activation of undecidables such as trace, hymen, supplementarity, reserve, proper, *fors*, excess and *pharmakon*, disseminates those closure points or moments of restitution to metaphysics of these radical thinker's resources. These openings give our traces of sexual difference. In our method here of *Close Readings—Readings on Closure* we have therefore traced the contours of the *release* points of *différance* as a non-reductive reading of sexual difference opening a potential otherwise discourse through other discourses and, in their reliance on metaphysics, on difference. We conclude our thesis-postscript with emphasis on possibilities offered by deconstruction as law-making, as an affirmative condition for different approaches as "differences": a *sending* on Derrida's notion of the "gift" as the condition for radical theoretical possibilities offered as ways of questioning.

### Methods 3: Grand Styles — Textual-accounting & the Taking of Not-Taking

*Turnover:* The "ethical" movement of writing and reading deconstructively comes from a reading that is not conventionally about, for instance, summing up a text's themes, affirmations and so on nor looking at the biographical details of an author's life outside the text. There is no outside to the text, as we emphasize in Chapter 7 with respect to the strategies of *Glas*.<sup>32</sup> Rather, deconstructive reading is an impropriety to the authority of a text and in this sense is the imposition of the improper to any

<sup>32</sup> This well worn Derridean "axiom," "there is nothing outside of the text," originates from his writing on the "dangerous supplement" in *Of Grammatology*: "Yet if reading must not be content with doubling the text, it cannot legitimately transgress the text toward something other than it, toward a referent (a reality that is metaphysical, historical, psychobiographical, etc.) or toward a signified outside the text whose content could take place, could have taken place outside of language, that is to say, in the sense that we give here to that word, outside of writing in general. That is why the methodological considerations that we risk applying here to an example are closely dependent on general propositions that we have elaborated above; as regards the absence of the referent or the transcendental signified. *There is nothing outside of the text* [there is no outside-text; *il n'y a pas de hors-texte*]. See "... That Dangerous Supplement," in *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974) pp. 141-164, p. 158.

author, through activating precisely that which is out of *control* in the controlled forces of an authorial propriety (and its weakness) of language. In our own textual economy the attempt is for a reading both *forceful* and *weak* without hierarchy, without return. In the following *ledger* of stylistic strategies we wish to reveal our motivation for the thetic approach. Deconstructions latch on to a writer's motivations at times forcefully and playfully but always (one hopes) for the movement of productive critical reading, which is to say to question the question of a community of questionableness. Our motivations, our intentions, perhaps our willing or our needs, are stating themselves always paradoxically, contradictorily, argumentatively, passively, obtusely. They are always intertwined with the *other's* text which we sign and a textual economy of otherness that is beyond comprehension, truth as correctness, presence or saturation of meaning. Our stylistic ledger is somehow meant to account for a methodology that we are as yet still not able to name:<sup>33</sup>

- Paradigm of the Trace: Fiery trace to ashen edges
- Supplementary Reading
- Styles & Aisles
- Decomposition & Ashes
- Contre-Abyme
- Caesura & Hiatus
- Tracing Strictures (stricture-against-stricture)
- Feminine Operation

As mentioned in our abstract and prefatory encounter, grafted from Derrida's *Cinders*, we trace the contours of her turnover of and in each of the *four* texts, her turnover of sexual differences, through an oscillatory weave across restricted and general economies, what we have come to name above as the movements across transgressive and restorative moments. We attempt to keep buoyant a disseminating play across restrictive and general economies as the contaminations of sexual differences that refuse the trajectory of return of the circle, or the closure of determination, terminology or terminus, hence as a play of the innumerable when it comes to sexes. As we state in our preface: "She returns nothing, here in this text, at this self-same moment." This economy of non-economy, an advance that does not remain, as divisibility that scatters centrality, has the logic of the *cinder* (as her

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<sup>33</sup> Deconstruction as a dual "methodology," a double gesture of reading and writing, double science, is also a deconstruction of the notion of methodology with respect to the ideal of a methodological strategy that consists of an observer being absolutely exterior to the object, text etc being examined.

turnover) mimed in the radicality of Heidegger's thinking on Da sein as asexual. *Spurs*, for example, points to Heidegger's silence on the issue of sexual difference in Heidegger's own reading of Nietzsche.

We trace this silence as a fundamental attunement to Heidegger's understanding on the forgetting of being. Primordial forgetting thereby becomes, in Heideggerian terms, for our reading (as the *cinder* trace) a silence on the forgetting of sexual difference, a silence as the forgetting of sexual difference. Our *cinder* economy of an advance that does not return reveals the critical resource in the moment of Heidegger's silence on sexual difference in his fundamental thinking on forgetting being. Heidegger's restorative moment of a metaphysics of presence as a (silent) phallogocentric and humanist thinking of Da sein (ontological difference) according to our reading across *Spurs* and “*Geschlect*: sexual difference, ontological difference” offers a space for thinking a more radical notion of (his) silence as the critical offering of an otherwise discourse or thinking on sexual difference. This silence that finds correspondence in what we discuss in some depth as the forgetting of “forgetting” opens a closure in metaphysical thinking in its non-metaphysical *rubbing*. This articulation of rubbing the non-metaphysical against the metaphysical maintains the *cinder* tracing of the four readings to its ashen edges in our postscript.

We leave open the path the cinders trace as a possibility for an affirmative ethical demand of deconstruction *as* law(making): deconstruction's “joint-appointment” that mimics the tracing of transgression and restoration as an ongoing and necessary condition for a responsibility to the other. That is to say, via a literary and philosophical coupling, Kafka meets the Academy, Blanchot, and the time of the story *as* adjournment. Discourse of the law as delay, *differance*, deconstructive law(making) events, invents and performs the double acts of “entitlement” in the annulling force of (the) Law's inaccessibility; an annulment of opposition. This condition of annulment is doubled in the shattering language of Blanchot where he suggests madness—(incoherency, non-serious, dysfunctional contingencies, i.e., all that works against the constraints of writing existing within legacies of metaphysics in our paradigm of

communication)<sup>34</sup>—is present in every language and leads to the possibility of language’s rupture with its(same)self: “rupture that only *another* language would allow to speak (without, however, *communicating it* [my italics MOC]).<sup>35</sup> Her pro-nominal tracings (*cinders*) of the strictures of sexual difference are the ashen edges of what is non-communicable or non-communicative: *another* speaks sexual differences. This is ultimately the ungrateful offering of our thesis—to be, to be *be—fore* the other.

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34 We acknowledge here the strategies of *Glas* and also the work of Gregory Ulmer that calls for inventions of or interventions in traditions of academic writing. Concepts such as “intertranslatability” of different types/forms of writing as invention (applied grammatology, mystery, heuretics, post(e)-pedagogy, textshop, chorography, popcycle etc). See, for example, *Applied Grammatology: Post(e) Pedagogy from Jacques Derrida to Joseph Beuys* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985); *Teletheory: Grammatology in the Age of Video* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

35 Blanchot, *The Step Not Beyond*, trans. by Lycette Nelson (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), p. 46. Whist we end our thesis on the ash laden edges of Blanchot’s “non-communicative” language of madness that ruptures the self-same language (of metaphysics): a rupture that only *another* language would allow to speak (without, however, *communicating it*), we would like to preempt (again) a reading in not reading with our emphasis on *Glas* and its faux Möbius Strip. That is, Derrida warns us against the default return in reading the end of *Glas* as its beginning as there have been some interpretations of *Glas* that read the end phrases as the return to its beginning insofar as they seem to pick up on the “first” phrases of *Glas*. Derrida insists here that this formation of a Möbius strip is false and that a “caesura or hiatus prevents ... such a band or strip from turning back on itself.” And in fact breakages {bris} occur, repeat and disseminate throughout the workings of *Glas* not just at its *beginning’s end* or *end’s beginning*. From this we caution a reading of madness in relation to our *cinder* as the most well-worn trope of woman as hysterical. That is, in our trajectory from our opening, our pre-prefatory Virginia Woolf citation, with an older generation of women (mothers of tradition, madwomen in the attics) leaning from their windows and cheering on the inferno, have we ended in the madhouse of language as the attic of the house of being and all its metaphysical representatives or are we suggesting another route, a path suggested by Derrida in his “Cogito and the History of Madness,” that we take the more Nietzschean path and “follow the madman down the road of his exile.” (*Writing and Difference*, op. cit., p. 36.) No, it is not a choice of either/or but rather the trace of the *cinder* (of her turnover, of sexual difference). One finds in Blanchot’s madness a shattering of the concept of madness written about in “Cogito and the History of Madness” with respect to its history as a rational discourse which binarises reason and madness. Blanchot’s and Derrida’s *discourses* on language are radically different and raise different questions situated in-between the either/or scenario. As Ulmer states in “Sounding the Unconscious,” what Derrida learns and reveals about Foucault’s thinking is the lesson “that there are crises of reason in strange complicity with what the world calls crises of madness. ... between the two ways ... the way of the logos and the non-way, the labyrinth, the *palintrope* in which logos is lost; the way of meaning and the way of nonmeaning; of Being and non-Being.” (*Glossary*, ed. by John P. Leavey, Jr. (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1986) p. 30.)

## S e c t i o n   2

### « A r c h i v e s »

#### Where is She? or « So Woman, Then, Will Not Have Been My Subject »

*It* would follow a law or a temporality, a time or a law of time, a regulation of the future anterior. It would, and by “it” I precisely mean that which we would want to know. Research is the work of the future anterior. It is what we would come to have known and the archive is the lining to the methodological structuring of this movement. The archive is now what we can say we have surveyed in order to know what we required to survey in order to know. The archive was hardly already there, in secret, veiled, concealed and waiting for our hand to lift the veil. We forged the archive in every homophonic sense of that word. And yet, we are subject to its law. Already from Derrida, from the archive we are given its law: commencement, commandment and consignment. But, as Derrida stresses, there is a place, a *there*, of the archive and there is a law or authority of the archive, hence what he has termed a topo-nomology which is “in truth patriarchic.”<sup>36</sup> Would the consigning, depositing, the “gathering of signs” according to functions of identification and legitimation, would these procedures, their methods and axioms be always already gendered? Would, then, the question of sexual difference not be one that would necessarily need to deconstruct the very question of that which would be consigned as the grounds of research, the place of referentiality, the *techne* of retrievals and the *nomos* or law that commands the authority of the reference?

But are we really talking here of an archive? *Archive Fever* had as its context the Freud Archive, just as we imagine at this very moment there are those who are charged with beginning (or perhaps concluding) to organize the Derrida Archive that Derrida had already mentioned in the film *Derrida*, the one established at the University of California (Irvine). Are we not exaggerating things to suggest that our literature review

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<sup>36</sup> Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. by Eric Prenowitz (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1996) p. 3.

constitutes an archive, or that our bibliography extends and systematizes what is otherwise discursively enumerated here as our “archive”? We recognize this but do not want to give up the term. We emphasize in a deconstruction of the structuring laws of the archive, that the supposed unity, order and systematicity of the gathering of referentiality and citationality for this thesis is ungrounded, that archives are unstable precisely because their supposed origins conceal the trace-structures of their dissemination. The text-effect of a thesis is to activate these laws of commencement, commandment and consignment. My aim here is to stand before the law in order to elucidate the future anterior of the gate that I would always have been able to go through save for the guardian of the gate, and to emphasize not the context saturation of our literature, but the halting deferrals to its completion and the path-splitting differing that has hived off shelves of books to some other series of projects.

### Great Expectations

An expectation, the proper one perhaps, for research that takes as its central focus certain grounds for questioning sexual difference would be that sufficient feminisms had been surveyed and critiqued. And yet this research appears to take into consideration a narrow band of the thick strata of this terrain. We have already preempted such an expectation by suggesting above that this thesis is concerned with a deconstructive approach and so immediately any notion of what is proper, central and conclusive, indeed exclusive to the question of sexual difference is an implicit concern in our analysis. Deconstruction provides a framework for working on fields of enquiry and *their* discourses that preempt the naturalized and predetermined figures and objects for knowing and the structural grounds for their differences. We have therefore avoided or refused to enter legitimately through the *formal* entry points to the “discipline” of sexual difference that suggest feminisms and *their* grounds contain answers. Rather, our thesis does not engage with knowing as a correct procedure, where *answers* are provided in the form of conclusions, statements, propositions or truth as correctness/adequation. This is not to say that these forms of knowing are not important for us as measures for understanding indeed how our thinking, for instance, on the question of sexual difference has been shaped. This is a shaping that we have

suggested belongs to a metaphysics of presence whose principle tropes or metaphors such as light, appearance, opposition, fixity and comprehension (proper) are constitutive of how the question of difference per se has been construed in the West.

Indeed, without a rigorous understanding of the legacies of metaphysics our project would not be able to deconstruct and activate the potential openings in metaphysical thinking's closure. And as we have already suggested above, the methodological import of Critchley's project, on the proximal encounter with the closure in Levinas's thinking as a return to metaphysical thinking, provides critical and transgressive openings to its grounds. Further, these elliptical moments between returning and shifting metaphysical grounds are precisely the moments for deconstructions. Critchley's text makes this particularly poignant in the name of an ethics at work (akin to Levinas) in these deconstructions — an ethics, a name Derrida would not nominate, however, that rather convincingly articulates a crucial register for our thesis, as a responsibility toward the other.

That is, each of the four Derrida texts we encounter as moments for close readings on the question of sexual difference are critically resourced via this double movement we have named earlier as transgression and restoration to a metaphysics of presence. While *Spurs*, *Fors*, “ATVM,” *Glas* deal with more than just one thematic moment of closure (at the point of a thinker’s most radical transgression) in his exposure of traces, patterns of incongruities which motivate a text’s course, our readings *single* out sexual difference and continue on a supplementary reading as an amplification of *this* “ethics.” The question of sexual difference is not either a primary or secondary concern in each of Derrida’s four texts; we would not want to read them this way. We will come to point out later the significance for choosing the assemblage of the four texts but would like to suggest in a preliminary way Derrida’s reading of “woman” as a complication to the question that (sexual) differences offer as a responsibility to feminism and its others. It is precisely this moment of responsibility that concerns us in each reading for an otherwise discourse on sexual difference via the deconstructive strategies we have addressed in our methodologies above.

## Feminism and Metaphysics

To return to the question of exclusions or rupture points (punctuations of entry) to the proper of feminism in relation to sexual difference, this thesis could have followed a similar tack and applied a close deconstructive reading of four texts by radical feminist philosophers from, for example, *Écriture Féminine*. We nominate here *Écriture Féminine* as they, via the work of Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray, among others, constitute a significant reference field for our Chapter 2, *Feminism and the Closure of Metaphysics*. This reference concerns an alignment of feminism and deconstruction with respect to the question of the structuration of language within our history of philosophy as a structure that is inherently gendered, as a privileging of masculinity. We suggest that *Écriture Féminine* is indebted to the radical engagements with metaphysics of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida, as well as the psychoanalysis of Freud and continued with the work of Jacques Lacan. And, more recently, we witness for feminism a concern with the going beyond Heidegger of Levinas. In proximity to *Écriture Féminine* we find our debts to deconstruction and its others named above and hence, in a rather schematic unfolding of Kristeva's, Irigaray and Cixous, we recognize a rather ironic coupling of each thinker's movements to the radical positions of Heidegger, Nietzsche and Derrida under the latter's notion of "strategic bet."<sup>37</sup>

In Chapter 3 we engage a close reading of an Anglo-American feminist philosopher, Tina Chanter, in order to engage the radicality of her thinking on the question of sexual difference with respect to Heidegger and Levinas. Chanter stresses, in her preface to *Time, Death and the Feminine*, that a *metaphor* of sexual difference overtly orchestrates Levinas's critical response to Heidegger.<sup>38</sup> But, the metaphor of the feminine activated in patriarchy eludes Levinas. For Chanter the status of the nominals 'masculine' and 'feminine' will end up becoming the kernel of a problem for any reading of Levinas: does he reference empirical, corporeal woman in the 'feminine' or something accessible only through metaphors? Secondly, the difference of death of other or my death will become the crucial difference for Chanter between Levinas and Heidegger, or Levinas's major objection to Heidegger. Each has a different

<sup>37</sup> For the notion of "strategic bet," that this thesis more than gambles on, see Derrida, "The Ends of Man," in *Margins of Philosophy*, op. cit., pp. 109-136, especially pp. 134-135.

<sup>38</sup> See *Time, Death and the Feminine*, op. cit., p. xiii.

understanding of primordial time and it is in an engagement with Chanter's text that we locate this crucial difference between death and time and its implications for a discussion on sexual difference.

Our own reading of a Heidegger/Levinas confrontation will run against the grain of Chanter's overall position. We recognize Chanter analyses via Levinas that ontology privileges a coincidental framing of identity, the same and the question of being. This coincidental framing overcomes the alterity of otherness, essential for Levinasian ethics before being. We offer a more radical reading of Heidegger to deepen the complexities around difference. This discussion focuses on Heidegger's more complex and radical notion of the same and belonging in relation to identity and difference. This pivotal complexity engages us across a series of key Heideggerian texts: *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, *Being and Time*, *Basic Problems in Phenomenology* and crucially *Identity and Difference* which first alerted us to the complex overturning of a metaphysics of identity with his radical emphasis on belonging and the non-identity of same.<sup>39</sup> This engagement prepares a necessary way for our reading of *Spurs* with respect to the complication of Heidegger's silence on sexual difference in relation to Da sein's asexuality. Through our reading of another Chanter text, "Antigone's Dilemma," we are able to fold in our concerns with her reading of sexual difference in relation to the threads drawn in *Time, Death and the Feminine*.

Chapter 3 concludes on a radical questioning of the non-existence of woman, i.e., "woman" outside of all metaphoricity and language, outside of that which inaugurates exchange economy as such. This question is posed in relation to an ethics of writing, a spatio-temporal (impossible) priority, critically resourced from what has already been discussed: Levinasian ethics (welcoming the stranger, radical alterity) that comes before being, Derrida's gift, Heidegger's *geschlecht*, thinking is *handwerk* (thought, thought thinking as a priority, and of a different order to conceptual grasping) and

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<sup>39</sup> Heidegger, *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, op. cit.; *Being and Time*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh (Albany: SUNY, 1996); *Basic Problems in Phenomenology*, trans. by Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982); *Identity and Difference*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2002).

Maurice Blanchot's "The Essential Solitude" as an unconditional *before*.<sup>40</sup> At stake in our preliminary rehearsal for our close reading of the four Derrida texts are some crucial background engagements or strategic bets Derrida has already placed: "Violence and Metaphysics" we have already mentioned. It was pivotal for Critchley and Chanter in their Levinas engagements, and in their commentaries on Derrida's "ATVM" and it is significant for us for an understanding of relations between writing, discourse, sexual difference and ethical difference. We address it in Chapters 2 and 3, and again in Chapter 6.

Many of the texts in *Re-Reading Levinas* deal with Derrida's "ATVM" and Levinas's "Wholly Otherwise." We also cite Irigaray's "Question to Emmanuel Levinas: On the Divinity of Love" which concerns Levinas and Heidegger on the question of being and otherness in relation to sexual difference.<sup>41</sup> Derrida's notion of the gift, that stems from our reading of "Violence and Metaphysics," in the context of our reading of "ATVM," becomes pivotal in our analysis for weaving together the complexities around the non-existent existence of sexual difference as a disruption to and refusal of a mastery of thinking. It yet takes this thinking and reconstitutes that which *could* constitute a circle of return, to the metaphysical priority of presence. Without *understanding* this complex trace that is not visible but is revealed via the incongruities where the metaphysical and non-metaphysical rub up against each other in a text, deconstruction would be just another path to comprehension. Deconstruction is not out to destroy any of the radical thinking on which it *writes*. Rather, it faithfully marks the work as a responsibility to its other, as an "ethical" homage for the critical resources *they* offer for thinking difference otherwise. However, and crucially, it will not return the gift to the other: its fidelity is its betrayal.

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40 See Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. by Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2001); Derrida, *Given Time*, op. cit.; Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* trans. by J. Glenn Gray and Fred Wieck (New York: Harper Collins, 2004); Blanchot, "The Essential Solitude", in *The Station Hill Blanchot Reader, Fiction & Literary Essays*, trans. by Lydia Davis, Paul Auster & Robert Lamberton (Barrytown : Station Hill, 1999).

41 See Levinas, "Wholly Otherwise," in *Re-Reading Levinas*, op. cit., pp. 3-10, also published as "Jacques Derrida: Wholly Otherwise," in *Proper Names*, trans. by Michael B. Smith (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996) pp. 55-62; Irigaray, "Questions to Emmanuel Levinas: On the Divinity of Love," in *Re-Reading Levinas*, op. cit., pp. 109-118.

## Betraying the Cause & Effect

Having concluded the rehearsing of our preparatory rehearsal, we return in order to betray our question of inclusion in our exclusions of more feminisms. Why not, then, do close readings of four texts by Cixous, Irigaray or Kristeva, (or equally one of each plus another from the group of *Écriture Féminine*) in order to reveal their moments of restoration in transgression? Without a doubt, these could have been readings that would have *equally* revealed the relations between language, writing and the inherent phallogocentrism at work in metaphysics. Could this have been more responsible? *It would have been the proper path to take for discussing the “disciplinary” issues of sexual difference.* However, our tack or our tact is anything but proper (for our sails and veils). Let’s tack a little. In his *La Parole Soufflée*, Derrida initially broaches a cleave between the clinical and the critical, the cleave between psychoanalysis and literature.<sup>42</sup> He finds their unitary moment in the recourse each has in order to proceed to locate the example, the case study, that particular whose structural mechanisms will extend to the discipline as a whole. He will, in the course of engaging here with Antonin Artaud, suggest the extent to which Artaud eludes the possibility of being made an example of, and here Derrida will begin to read Artaud and Heidegger together in the trembling of metaphysics’ recourse to presence, and the recouping by metaphysics of their projects.

Would “woman” then be my subject? What would I take as my case study? To whom would I file my clinical report? In what discipline and under what subject heading would we confine ourselves symptomatically to women on women. Would we locate her, essentially, quintessentially, then, in the hysterical bride, in his trope of her as the trope of woman? The destruction of patriarchy as the secret reserve or perseverance of what is desired by feminism will only destroy his patriarchal house in order to (re)inhabit it. It is this text on ‘mad’ Artaud, who forever was in fear of having his words stolen, that opens up the question pivotal in our reading of *Spurs* on the impossibility for Derrida in the end to name woman: “so woman, then, will not have

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42 Derrida, “*La Parole Soufflée*,” in *Writing and Difference*, op. cit., pp. 169-195.

been my subject.”<sup>43</sup> *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography Transference Translation* is a key text for us, particularly for “Choreographies,” an interview with Derrida conducted by Christie MacDonald.<sup>44</sup> The interview focuses on the question of woman in *Spurs* and offers, on the one hand, an historiographical gesture with respect to feminism and its others, and on the other hand, the irreducibility of sexual difference in the context of a discussion on Heidegger and his existential analytics of Da sein. “Choreographies” alerted us to a pivotal essay Derrida wrote after *Spurs* in response to Heidegger’s silence on the question of sexual difference, on the discussion of Da sein as asexual, “*Geschlecht*: sexual difference, ontological difference,” that is embedded in our reading of *Spurs*.<sup>45</sup>

However, we emphasize McDonald’s caveat with respect to our own aligned position on the proper to feminisms: “It should be noted that I do not ask the following questions in the name of any specific feminist group or ideology. I do nevertheless owe a debt to longstanding conversations on the subject of “Woman” and “Women” with, among others ...”<sup>46</sup> McDonald, like Cixous, and like this writer, cautions on the dangers of uttering “woman” or “man” without the trap of one’s thinking being co-opted into some ideological theatre. Revealed partially in our reading of Chanter, we testify (not prove) to the ground-breaking philosophical thinking that has had a significant impact on particularly Anglo-American feminist philosophical circles. Chanter is the editor of *Feminist Interpretations of Emmanuel Levinas*, a significant anthology which includes Irigaray’s “The Fecundity of the Caress.”<sup>47</sup> We reference Irigaray in Chapter 6 in relation to Critchley’s dependency on the proper of woman who writes *as* woman. Stella Sandford is also included in the Chanter edited volume and her book *The Metaphysics of Love* is also important in Chapter 6 for her close analysis of the complexity of reading Levinas and the feminine within the context of

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43 *Spurs*, op. cit. p. 121.

44 Christie McDonald, “Choreographies” trans. by Christie McDonald, in Derrida, *The Ear of the Other: Otobiographies, Transference, Translation*, ed. by Christie McDonald (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1985) pp. 163-186.

45 “*Geschlecht*: sexual difference, ontological difference,” op. cit.

46 “Choreographies,” op. cit., p. 163.

47 Luce Irigaray, “The Fecundity of the Caress: A Reading of Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, ‘Phenomenology of Eros,’ in *Feminist Interpretations of Emmanuel Levinas*, ed. by Tina Chanter (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001) pp. 119-144.

what is precisely at stake in *his* project.<sup>48</sup> It is in many ways a *corrective* to what she describes as the many default readings by feminisms of Levinas's notion of the "feminine," for the way in which the discourses of feminism reduce it to a corporeal and cultural ideological notion. Of course, she is also aware of the currency of this default and where Levinas's work is faulty also in this regard. We note that Sandford, as with our reading, finds problematic assumptions in Chanter's own reading of sexual difference.

Chanter's work, we suggest, has led to significant preparation for some of the grounds for our readings, in particular Chapters 3 and 6 in their concern with confrontations between Heidegger and Derrida and then Levinas and Derrida. Would we want to construe Chanter as our example there, as our case study of Anglo-American feminisms? Is it feminism that is at stake? Rather, we suggest our project necessarily betrays the stakes of feminism in its fidelity to the question of woman, a question we never cease to interrogate as the question of her not being our subject. The aim of the thesis is to enquire into the fundamental structures and systems erected in the name of phallogocentric metaphysics, as a way to understanding the deep and fissured complexities around sexual difference in relation to language. More or less than an enquiry, the aim of the thesis is to deconstruct those structures and systems, and to elucidate with particular texts of Derrida's, an inventing of otherwise thinking of sexual difference.

That is to say, our motivations for a deep questioning of metaphysical thinking and the binary of sexual difference we discuss in relation to 'the problem of closure' is not simply for inventing a new hypothesis on its overcoming. Rather, we investigate in order to contaminate — or locate the moments of self-contamination — the Derridean trace where the metaphysical rubs up against the non-metaphysical. Our Preface reads Derrida's *Cinders* for the ash of its ghosts that haunt all of our writing. More critically, our idiosyncratic and idiomatic style in this *preface* performs the temporal logic of the cinder as an advance that does not remain, as divisibility that scatters centrality and disseminates the 'there' and 'she' whereby the undecidable trace of the trace of the cinder becomes our paradigmatic figure of the trace (*par excellence*). The cinder falls

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48 Stella Sandford, *The Metaphysics of Love: Gender and Transcendence in Levinas* (London & New Brunswick: The Athelone Press, 2000).

into a place of no emplacement, no resting ground, where ongoing dissemination marks Derrida's gift of [deconstructive] textual-accounting as a taking of not-taking, without reserve. But here her turnover, no longer of the calculable, contaminates every calculation with non-calculation. This is why it is *our* paradigmatic figure of the trace of sexual difference whereby a logic of the metaphysical and non-metaphysical articulates its path, as if one may simply demarcate the metaphysical and the non-metaphysical by the spatial figure that would be essential to metaphysics, that of an inside-outside and its bounding. This would be a logic of the impossible, of the squared circle, of the whole of sex.

As suggested, via a deconstructive textual-accounting in an exposure of the traces (patterns of rupture and incongruities) otherness and perhaps an inherent “ethics” as responsibility for the other, conditions metaphysical opposition as an excess to its own thinking. Certainly this excess is examined in our close readings. But perhaps it is the textual-accounting, the taking of not-taking that is traced most significantly in our reading of *Glas* in Chapter 7. Particularly it is the work of Rodolphe Gasché that has guided some of our thinking on Hegel’s bond of thinking and Derrida’s re-contextual scene on Hegel’s contradiction in this chapter, in relation to the excess point and angle of entry that reveals an excess to thinking not able to be assimilated into speculative dialectics.<sup>49</sup> Gasché’s essay “Strictly Bonded” is essential binding for our thinking on *Glas*.<sup>50</sup> *Spurs* also articulates Derrida’s *speculation* on the dialectics of non-dialectics in a tracing of a thinking that has drifted into the logic of non-oppositional thought: “But—if the form of opposition and the oppositional structure are themselves metaphysical, then the relation of metaphysics to its other can no longer be one of opposition.”<sup>51</sup> And from our reading of *Glas* we have a significant re-framing (*parergon*) of the column-structure (hangings, fallings, contagions, undecidables). Monumentality crumbles and among *its* ruins (what remained futures) are different angles which oppose opposition in their activation of interlacing, of incalculability. And yet this de-composition manages, in opposing opposition, to keep *Glas*’s Hegel and Genet a-part although contagion works its spur with different thematic angles and interlaced discourses. *Glossary* is also a significant text that has led or driven our

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49 Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambridge, Mass. & London: Harvard University Press, 1986); *Inventions of Difference*, op. cit.

50 Gasché, “Strictly Bonded,” op. cit.

51 Derrida, *Spurs*, op. cit. pp. 117 & 119.

thinking of *Glas* in relation to Derrida's thematic and formal recontextualisations with respect to the disciplines of literature, philosophy and psychoanalysis.<sup>52</sup>

The question of appropriation in relation to feminism and metaphysics has already been broached and yet it is precisely the law of the proper, propriation, appropriation that becomes a major point of contention throughout the thesis; it is a central conceptual framework for grounds of deconstructive questioning in relation to metaphysical values. What law governs the jurisdiction of sexual difference as a mode of enquiry? If feminism is the proper place for such enquiry then already our logic has dismantled such an approach. That is, our angle (i.e., a point of entry of enquiry that becomes a crucial method articulated differently in *Spurs*, "Fors," "ATVM" and *Glas* for our own strategy of reading and analysis on re-articulating a potential otherwise discourse on sexual difference) has been to activate otherness (to feminism and metaphysics, metaphysical feminisms) through deconstructive enquiry.

We commenced this chapter with our *chiasmus*, the necessary ellipses or eccentric pathways of working centrally with Derridean texts in order not to return (the work) to Derrida. It is perhaps for this reason that the *centre* of the thesis, its buried core, opens our approach to entry itself, as the *Anglisch* angling of our spur, and this lies in the crypt of Chapter 5, constituting our engagement with "Fors." We emphasize Derrida's ongoing engagements with psychoanalysis across a series of texts, though with "Fors" he approaches directly the literary-mytho-poetic psychoanalysis of Abraham and Torok in order to deconstruct the works of mourning and memory, as the narrative of what never happened. Sexual difference is least *named* here, though for this reason, in its withdrawal, it is most named. This central pivot of the thesis, precisely through the workings of the crypt, builds the thesis on its disseminating moments. From its buried partitions, it constitutes the cipher and mortgage that stakes the strategic bets of our otherwise saying of sexual difference.

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<sup>52</sup> *Glossary*, op. cit. See particularly John P. Leavey, Jr "This (then) will not have been a book ..." and Gregory L. Ulmer "Sounding the Unconscious".

## Four Texts—Why These?

As we alluded to earlier, perhaps we could have nominated any four texts (by another) that *demonstrated* a radical and “deconstructive” departure from metaphysical thought, particularly when the question of sexual difference “appeared” to be at stake. And then, with these texts, we could have “performed” our own deconstructive strategy of reading and analysis. But is this what we want to do, to demonstrate, to show or point out through analysis a deconstructive departure from metaphysics and feminism? We have recourse in our work, on a number of occasions to reference a notion of “resistance” that Derrida discusses in the contexts of analysis and psychoanalysis. This resistance, with its economy of the double bind or double bind, the stricture of the knot of analysis, is crucial to our gathering precisely four Derrida texts, in order to demonstrate where “demonstrate” leans more to resistance than to manifestation.<sup>53</sup> It was the writing of Cixous that opened this resistive terrain for us, her writing or her dreaming for Derrida on separation and reparation, on the double bind of the annulations of the insect, the cut that does not sever and the *contretemps* of the twos.

We align most strongly with the work of *Écriture Féminine* and in particular the work of Cixous, as we suggest in Chapter 2. Cixous and Derrida have a strategic bond.<sup>54</sup> In many ways Cixous, like *Cinders (la cendre)*, is a ghost-at-work in the work through her often cited ant dream that makes its way into our reading.<sup>55</sup> This dream she gave to Derrida and it brought to us the significant theme of reparation—separation. Although this was never specified explicitly in Derrida’s four texts, it becomes synonymous to many of the textual controversies we choose to heighten in our readings. For example, with *Glas* separation—reparation becomes the stricture-against-stricture that is not in the order of Hegelian negativity but rather appears in *Glas* as a force of the irruptive

<sup>53</sup> See “Resistances” in *Resistances of Psychoanalysis*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf, Pascale-Anne Brault, & Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998) pp. 1-38.

<sup>54</sup> On the strictures of their bindings see for example the innumerable knots of passion of analysis in their joined texts: *Veils*, trans. by Geoffrey Bennington (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); but also Cixous, *Portrait of Jacques Derrida as a Young Jewish Saint*, trans. by Beverley Bie Brahic (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004) and Derrida, *H.C. For Life, That is to Say ...*, trans. by Laurent Milesi and Stefan Herbrechter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

<sup>55</sup> Derrida, *Excerpt 1: Jacques Derrida, ‘Fourmis’, Lectures de la Différence Sexuelle*, in Hélène Cixous, *Rootprints: Memory and Life Writings*, trans. by Eric Prenowitz (London & New York: Routledge, 1997).

event of the gift. This gift is pre-ontological, pre-dialectical but is part of the structural context of the ontological and dialectical. That is to say, that which is excluded (i.e., pre) from conditions (dialectics, ontology), structures them.

This reading of separation—reparation and similarly stricture-against-structure differs from Hegelian work of the negative through *temporal* differentiation. What we come to write about in Chapter 7 on *Glas* emphasizes this temporal differentiation via the two negatives of Hegel and Derrida. It builds upon discussion in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 with respect to Derridean *temporal* difference in the terms *coup de don, es gibt, future-anterior, reserve, remainder, excess, sendings, propriation, la cendre, pure cadeau* and our *be-before* (for-itself of exchange economy). We title Chapter 7 the “Not—Yet” as a summary scripting of this temporal difference. Separation—Reparation of sexual difference conveys the same tensile activity of this *stricture*—double bind in the sense of being forces pulling in opposite directions by chiasmic tensions, by strangulation, as the constricting of the throat produces the first phoneme of *Gl(as)*—and is a parodying double of Hegelian *sublation*, but subverts it, and is itself doubled by other terms.

These neo-logistics, though they frequent many of Derrida’s texts, they do not repeat an argument. Rather, as we discuss in Chapter 7, Derrida invents their differences according to each singular context or force of argument — at any one time, in any one text they have shifted in approximation to the order or structural terrain at work in the work. Derrida’s lexemes displace the possibility of saying the said of what they are, in terms or relation to consciousness, experience or representation. They offer the ingratititude of a refusal to return to *their origin*. Rather they are structured by chance, unpredictability, a future-to-come and incalculability, yet are conditioned by the laws of different beliefs (e.g., metaphysics, Christianity, Judaism). Or as is stated in *Dissemination*: “Derrida’s text is constructed as a moving chain or network, it constantly frustrates the desire to ‘get to the point.’ ... Derrida’s writing mimes the *movement* of desire rather than its fulfillment, refusing to stop and totalize itself, or doing so only by feint.”<sup>56</sup> For this reason also we read together four texts by Derrida in order to activate a deconstructive “programme” or “logic” as a diagrammatic or topo-

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56 *Dissemination*, op. cit., p. xvi.

logo-graphical demonstration for the inventions of (sexual) differences traced (and not represented) in our readings. We wish to frustrate the desire, through a *mimatology* of deconstructive play, for getting (back) to any point of metaphysical self-same (phallogocentric) presence.

More strategically, it is crucial to be familiar with Derrida's work, as we suggest in Chapter 6, with respect to knowing the multiple contexts (political, literary, philosophical, historical, and so forth) which determine a given text or are determined by that text in order to practice deconstruction. This would be to follow Critchley in firstly to produce a "faithful commentary" on a text and, secondly, in order to leave the order of commentary to produce a *genuine* otherwise reading as a condition of betrayal, disruption and dislocation of the first order in its refusal of the text's closure. These two forms form the double-reading of deconstruction. The practices of deconstructive double reading are only gleaned through reading Derrida's work closely in order to reinterpret its value, and perhaps thereby betray it, for one's own research and methodological pursuits. In order not to become a simulacrum of deconstruction(s)—could this ever be a possibility given deconstructive law as invention without return—one would not have recourse to the castrating *truth* of deconstruction, but precisely to its simulations.

### Rags Petrol Matches

The four texts have an historical proximity to a particular moment of 1970s feminism that has been alluded to in our Methods section. Each text is written in the 1970s save for "ATVM" which appeared in 1980. Yet the four have in common for this research a radical inscription that for us offers a contestation to those modes of academic writing that have been modeled on classical models of thought, to logocentric paradigms of thought. While this is not an explicit intention *stated* in these texts or by its author, certainly there have been those who have signed the work as such. For example, concerning *Glas* Ulmer suggests:

*Glas* is not composed in the conventional manner of the academic book because it is explicitly an anti-book, written as an alternative to the

classical model of the book. Derrida has argued in *Of Grammatology* and elsewhere that the Book as such reflects a certain model of thought based on Platonic, and ultimately logocentric, paradigm of thought, one with which the restriction of writing to communication is consistent.<sup>57</sup>

Ulmer's essay is addressed to those interested in "testing the replicability, the scientific value, of this experiment in a new academic writing."<sup>58</sup> Perhaps these four texts were in a preliminary sense nominated not for what they held *together* as a consolidating force for prising the question of sexual difference. But rather, without preempting or predetermining any such unity as the together of a belonging, the texts were gathered in an isolated way for their singular styles. Initially they attached themselves (reparations) to my *signature* for precisely how they demonstrated sexual differences across regions of style or genre and here genre and gender interlace an otherwise discourse to the traditional academic model of the disciplinary.

The question of *presentation* has been a vexing one and has proceeded according to a temporality of the future anterior, as we have already intimated as the time of the archive. *Dissemination*'s leitmotif has offered an opening, echoed in the *Glossary* text of Leavey: "*this (therefore) will not have been a book*," written in the future anterior. We play this act of *dissemination* in our final thetic moment "Postscript" with the question of deconstruction *as* law articulated and activated via Derrida's "Before the Law" and his seminar "Women in the Beehive."<sup>59</sup> These open our reading to the laws of the academy, and the doubling of appointments as a liminal play of strategic bets with respect to academic propriety, inclusion and authority. But what do we learn from *Dissemination*? *Dissemination* is a text that activates some key thinking on a critique of Western metaphysics, supplementary readings, styles of signifying in the syntactical, mobilization, elliptical and enigmatic beginnings and endings, disseminating forces of grammatical, thematic, anagrammatic plays. Further, as *Positions* reiterates, *Dissemination* is a text that puts to work an otherwise logic from the binary oppositional logic inherent in Metaphysical thought. We have referenced from all sections of *Dissemination*: "Outwork, prefacing", "Plato's Pharmacy" and from "The Double Session" and "Dissemination" as a means for forcing the hand (so-to-write) of

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<sup>57</sup> Ulmer, "Sounding the Unconscious," in *Glossary*, op. cit. p. 29.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>59</sup> See Derrida, "Before the Law," op. cit., and "Women in the Beehive," op. cit.

this otherwise logic as an otherwise programme for reading and writing sexual difference.

Yet Derrida's most influential text for us is perhaps *Writing and Difference*, though the key motif for us of "strategic bet" emerges from his "The Ends of Man."<sup>60</sup> We suggest this because it is Derrida's seminal text with respect to a writing which traces the transgressive and restorative moments in the writing of some of the most radical philosophical, psychoanalytic and literary thinking in relation to an otherwise thinking to a metaphysics of presence. *Writing and Difference* would thereby be a necessary lesson for our own strategic betting and textual-accounting for reading the otherwise deconstructive logic for (reading and writing) sexual difference. Indeed, we cite on many occasion those texts which have a particular reference to the thinking of Freud, Husserl, Heidegger, Hegel, Levinas, Foucault, Bataille, Blanchot and Artaud. Yet another question arises that returns us to the question of the proper of feminism and "her" others. This is a question of the contemporary, the current trend or wave of feminism that we have already framed as a synchronic register between deconstruction and feminisms. *Spurs* initially came as a response by Derrida delivered in the 1972 symposium entitled "Nietzsche Today?" Derrida interpreted the second word of the title by choosing to speak on Nietzsche and women, "La «femme»—*le mot fait époque*," Derrida says in 1972. The French expression "*faire époque*," translates in English as "marks an era." The era marked by the word "woman" was the "today" in which Derrida speaks. Jane Gallop suggests: "like the feminism with which it was contemporary, *Spurs belongs* [italics mine MOC] to the era [1970s feminism] of 'woman'."<sup>61</sup> Certainly Gallop's paper engages with the question of the plurality of "women" as a way of shifting (her) perception(s) of a universalized and dated presuppositional thinking proffered by the singular "woman" of *Spurs*. However, my response does not entirely accord with the responses to *Spurs* by feminisms of the 1970s, 80s, 90s that can be gauged via a text like *Derrida & Feminism* which has taken into consideration the "critique, correctness and seductions" perceived by Gallop *et al* as *Spurs'* offering to feminism.

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60 Derrida, "The Ends of Man," op. cit.

61 Jane Gallop, "Women' in *Spurs* and Nineties Feminism," in *Derrida and Feminism: Recasting the Question of Woman*, ed. by Ellen K. Feder, Mary C. Rawlinson and Emily Zakin (New York & London: Routledge, 1997) pp. 7-20; p. 7.

My focus returns to Gallop's statement but with emphasis on the word *belonging* of woman rather than the "women" who "belong" to the discourses of feminism(s). We have articulated in Chapter 3 via our reading of Heidegger, the shift in emphasis on this notion of *belonging* in its relation to the notion of *together*. Heidegger emphasizes the belonging rather than together in relation to identity, being and the same, essentially that the same does not co-inside with the identity of being, and that precisely because we emphasize *belonging*, it may emerge only out of the most radical encounter with what does not as yet belong.<sup>62</sup> That is to say, our belonging as an event of identity (and not difference or *différance*) only becomes a question when we are threatened by a not-belonging constitutive of a monolithic and metaphysical understanding of identity as self-presence.

Feminism, it could be suggested via Gallop's proposition, like the feminism on which she is looking back [70s – she classifies herself as belonging to 80s feminism] together with *Spurs* belongs to the era of "woman". How much has it shifted in this respect? Perhaps the disciplines of Derrida and Feminism, in their encounter or confrontation, over the grounds of *Spurs*, for example, throw up critique, correction and seduction as the institutionally determinable and determined responses on behalf of securing the margins. Indeed, in the for and against of Derrida, in Feminism's approach to the centres and margins, recourse to security in a philosophy of the margins is precisely to centralize the margin itself as a truth seeking, and therefore castrating move. Shoring up feminism with Derrida is equally the undermining of both. The spatial-temporal logic of "for" or "against" on the question of sexual difference is both deconstructed by *Spurs* and offers our thesis's initial point (angle) of entry on an otherwise discourse on sexual difference.

Why are there so few readings on these four Derrida texts by women, or men for that matter, included in our work? We have mentioned both Chanter and Sandford already with explicit reference to our reading of "ATVM." What is it to suggest a moment of "originality," already deconstructed as an archive-effect, which would come from stepping beyond the *proper* boundaries for cultivating a deeper enquiry into the unknown of sexual differences. If not "originality," then invention or eventing as an

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62 See Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

opening to a possibility that has eschewed the technique of conscious exclusion of what would be otherwise than that which Heidegger would suggest as the “present-at-handness” of “woman”. This becomes for this writer an ethico-politico-poetics of responsibility to feminism and its others, the other feminisms yet to come or become recognizable. This ethico-politico-poetics of responsibility extends to deconstruction and its law for an otherwise logic to the binary metaphysical oppositional thinking of “man” and “woman.” We have by now exhausted this question of propriety and yet we feel a necessity to suggest that for all our impropriety we end our thesis with perhaps the most ontic and accessible engagement on the question of sexual difference in our bringing *together* deconstruction and feminism. Is this our default, our betrayal of our betrayal, which would then be fidelity to our non-fidelity? You might want to consider in your assessment, adjudication or judgement of our faults what we say on the matter in relation to the logic of the fault discussed in Chapter 6. Are we still in debt? Have we returned toward another scene of reserve? Then again, a reserve is also an enclosed and partitioned property, often set aside for non-productive ends, also in some places called a close.

The Möbius strip is a powerful figuration of the economy, of the law of reappropriation, or of successful mourning-work that can no longer, in the writing of *Glas*, toll a knell {sonner un *glas*} which is its own (its *glas*) without breakage {bris} and debris. The debris of this band is not even the last or the first; it repeats and scatters the debris of a *bris de verre* {glass breakage} or of a mirror {glace}, and it has a multiple occurrence in the book (impossible to count them: it is always, at least, once again a piece of the name of Jean Genet’s mother: Gabrielle, of my name, of all the numerous brilliant objects and words, or of that which bridles and unbridles the horse and the “cavalier phantasm” of the *genet*, the Spanish horse that plays a very important role in all of this {ça}—the last words are “debris de,” of all the *dé*, *dés* {die, dice, or sewing thimbles}, *dais* {dais, or canopy} [for example “*dais de l’oeil révulse*” {canopy of the upturned eye}]—<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Derrida, “*Ja, or the faux-bond II*” in *Points ... Interviews, 1974–1994*, ed. by Elisabeth Weber, trans. by Peggy Kamuf & others (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995) pp. 51-52.

## C H A P T E R 2

### Feminism and the Closure of Metaphysics

Writing is the passageway, the entrance, the exit, the dwelling place of the other in me—the other that I am and am not, that I don't know how to be, but that I feel passing, that makes me live—that tears me apart, disturbs me, changes me, who?—a feminine one, a masculine one, some?—several, some unknown, which is indeed what gives me the desire to know and from which all life soars.<sup>1</sup>

According to a law that can be formalized, philosophy always appropriates for itself the discourse that de-limits it.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Cixous, *The Newly Born Woman*, trans. by Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986) pp. 85-86.

2 Derrida, "The Supplement of Copula," in *Margins of Philosophy*, op. cit., pp. 175-205, p. 177.

### Introduction: The Closure of Metaphysics & The Question of “Woman”

Between these two short quotations we may read all manner of *aporias*, between, on the one hand, the shaky grounds of a writing suggested by Cixous, a disturbing passing of a self radically undecidable in any reflexive questioning of its being and, on the other hand, a kind of auto-shoring-up by philosophy of the grounds of its self-certainty.<sup>3</sup> In what follows in this chapter we want to be guided by a questioning of the difficult relations between writing, language and philosophy in the face of a naturalised supposition that philosophy’s writing is the transparent inscription of meaning. Equally we want to be grounded in how a question of the possibility of sexual difference opens a space for considering something fundamental to a question of ethics as an act of writing in the face of a naturalized supposition that sexual difference, in however it may be thought, would be derivative of a more originary thinking of difference as such.

We want to proceed initially by investigating a particular Heidegger-Derrida nexus on the question of being and the capacity to *say* being, to inscribe being in the entity or being of language. With this concern we are able to recognize the complicity between, on the one hand, the delimitation of philosophy in the shoring-up of its self-certainty and, on the other hand, a history of metaphysics engaged by Heidegger. We further emphasize the manner whereby Heidegger and Derrida each makes a decisive break with the language of metaphysics in terms of a radical question of difference. For Heidegger, this difference is constitutive of the withdrawal of being in ontological difference. For Derrida this difference is constitutive of the supplement. Our argument is that in each instance and in the face of the originary saying of difference both accounts in their difference coincide with how feminist philosophy has at times recognized within the patriarchal structures of language the saying of woman. Woman will be either a radical concealment and withdrawal or a radical supplementarity. Our aim is not to reduce or return the work of feminist writing to a master discourse of masculine philosophy but rather to open an horizon of *difference* that alerts us to the multiple

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<sup>3</sup> We have already commented on the “we” of our thesis that is perhaps further amplified in the double registers of reflexive undecidability and an auto-shoring up. This would be so, not simply between a supposed “I” and a “We,” but would constitute the *aporia* that always already made an innumerable “we” or an innumerable between of the twos with any “I” as such.

engagements of separation and reparation that seem to constitute the double scene of the closure of metaphysics and the question of woman.

This chapter is in two sections. The initial section, “The Metaphorical Priority of Being,” engages with Heidegger’s understanding of ontological difference and the withdrawal of being, drawn particularly from his *Introduction to Metaphysics* and with Derrida’s deconstruction of the proximity of Da sein and being in his text “The Ends of Man.”<sup>4</sup> Derrida’s strategies provide us with an itinerary by which to engage in the stakes of *Écriture Féminine*, exemplified in the texts of Kristeva, Irigaray and Cixous. With this section, “On Feminism: Language & Sexual Difference,” discussion of *Écriture Féminine* presents an undoing or overturning of our philosophical tradition particularly at the level of a concern with language as inherently gendered. We may recognize, despite the divergence of their guiding questions, a certain coincident moment of *Écriture Féminine* with the recent philosophical tradition that is concerned with a closure, end, destruction or deconstruction of Western metaphysics. This returns us to the core of a question concerning language, writing and difference with respect to the question of sexual difference. The discussion will engage directly with how “difference” and “the same” may be thought or inscribed with respect to our philosophical tradition, and the extent to which the philosophies of *Écriture Féminine* are able to radicalize this tradition either from within it, using the resources of that tradition against itself, or from without. Following from two “strategic bets” and their interlacing outlined by Derrida, recouped from Nietzschean and Heideggerian legacies, we recognize a coincident strategic moment in each of the strategies of Kristeva, Irigaray and Cixous with Derrida.

This initial discussion of the philosophical approaches to the closure of metaphysics in relation to *Écriture Féminine* is extended in Chapter 3 to engage with the critical intervention of the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, with respect to the priority of the question of being in ontological difference and the priority of ethics over sexual difference.

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4 Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, op. cit.; Derrida “The Ends of Man,” op. cit.

## S e c t i o n   I

### T h e   M e t a p h o r i c a l   P r i o r i t y   o f   B e i n g

#### Effacement of Being

Fundamental for Martin Heidegger, being, in its ordinary sense, has been forgotten, layered over in and as the history of Metaphysics by such naming of being as “*eidos*,” “appearance,” “becoming,” “thinking” and “value.” All that possibly remains of being for us is “an empty word and an evanescent significance.”<sup>5</sup> In an effort to recoup some remnants or traces of the “ordinary” questioning of being’s essence, Heidegger’s call for remembrance is via a calling to the origins of Western philosophical language, itself grounded in the reflections that the classical Greeks had on the Greek language via such formal systems as grammar. Heidegger’s call here is that the essence of language reveals fundamental questions circulating around Metaphysics’ thinking of being and its *determining influence on the whole West*:

Above all we must consider the fact that the definitive differentiation of the fundamental form of words (noun and verb) in the Greek form of *onoma* and *rhema* was worked out and first established in the most immediate and intimate connection with the concept and interpretation of Being that has been definitive for the entire West.<sup>6</sup>

That language is a thing (an *essent*) and the fact that it has been made accessible and delimited in a definite way meant for Heidegger the revealing of the validity of such an undertaking. The way in which it was carried out depended on the fundamental view of being that guided the thinking. If for Heidegger language is the “House of Being” we

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5 Heidegger, “On the Grammar and Etymology of the Word ‘Being’,” *Introduction to Metaphysics*, op. cit., p. 53.

6 Ibid., p. 60.

get a sense that he was referring to the essence of language as a dwelling place for being's essence. Recouping of the essence of language is grounded by being's essence.<sup>7</sup> We know that for Heidegger *essence* is a fundamental *question*, a primordial disclosure that is closer to a being's being, or is being itself in and with respect to any entity in the world. We also know his concern for *essence* in general that has with the history of Western metaphysics been directed on a course that conceals any originary thinking of being. Heidegger enquires into the essence of being, via the essence of language and, in turn, via the origins of *Greek* language. This implicates both a questioning of grammatical forms and an enquiry into what linguistics reveals about the etymology of words. It concludes on two major points:

1. The grammatical examination of the form of the word had this result: in the infinitive, the word's definite modes of meaning are no longer in effect; they are blurred. The substantivisation completely fixes and objectifies this blurring. The word becomes a name for something indefinite.
2. The etymological examination of the meaning of the word had this result: what we today, and for a long time previously, have called by the name "Being" is, as regards its meaning, a blending that levels off three different stem meanings. None of these is evident definitively and on its own within the meaning of the word anymore. This blurring and blending go hand in hand. The combination of these two processes provides a sufficient explanation for the fact from which we set out: that the word "to be" is empty and its meaning is evanescent.<sup>8</sup>

### Being as Void and as Abundance

Being is many "things", or many "ways." It is in all things, and beings belong relationally speaking to being:

Every verb, and not just every verb but also every substantive and adjective, all words and articulations [inflections & infinitives] of words, say Being... For every word as such is a word "of" Being, in fact a word "of" Being not only insofar as it talks "about" Being or "of" Being but a word "of" Being in

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<sup>7</sup> See Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," trans. by Frank Capuzzi, in *Basic Writings*, ed. by David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge, 2000) pp. 343-364 for discussion on language as the house of being, and Derrida's "The *Retrait* of Metaphor, in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other*, op. cit., pp. 48-80, for a discussion on the strategic decidability of the metaphor for naming being's housing, especially p. 69 ff.

<sup>8</sup> See Heidegger, "The Grammar of the Word 'Being,'" in *Introduction to Metaphysics*, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

the sense that Being expresses itself in each word and precisely in that way keeps its essence silent.<sup>9</sup>

“*Being as the Void and as Abundance*” — it is “as” this and that, at the same time in relation to void and abundance, that in this small word “as” we are given over to Heidegger’s notion of relationality of being to beings.<sup>10</sup> We should remember here that ‘as-ness’ has its roots in *metaphor* — to say something *as* something is to liken a thing to another thing; this is the heart of metaphor. It becomes the other. This ‘as-ness’ abounds with remembrance or assertion to the epoch of technicity (modernity) where *representation* dominates our “World Picture”, is *as* our world picture.<sup>11</sup>

The emphasis on “as” as opposed to “is” lies in a disrupted space to remember what is forgotten in the way that it is indifferently spoken about:

Being is the most said, not only because the “is” and all the forms of the verb “to be” are perhaps most often expressed, but because in every verb, even when its conjugated forms do not use the word “Being,” Being is nonetheless said. What is most said is at the same time the most reticent in the special sense that it keeps its essence silent, perhaps is reticence itself.<sup>12</sup>

And so we hear in the timbre of Heidegger’s language that being is being spoken and written about incessantly, excessively, abundantly to the point of indifference and yet it is in the veils of such language that it conceals itself. It lies reticently, silent as in a void, avoiding being exposed to what it cannot be. We encounter here the centrality of Heidegger’s thinking on the forgottenness of being, his central motif of revealing being’s essence through how in any given epoch it has been concealed. Hence, just as he emphasized “The essence of technology is nothing technological,” so too, the essence of

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9 Heidegger, “Being as the Void and as Abundance,” in *Nietzsche Volume IV: Nihilism*, trans. by Frank A. Capuzzi (New York: Harper & Row, 1982) pp. 188-196; p. 193.

10 We recognize for Heidegger the “as” structure for saying the meaning of being, that being *cannot* be said. This is emphasized by Derrida in “The Ends of Man,” where he suggests that we may look to the decisive choice of metaphor engaged by Heidegger in saying the meaning of being. The question of metaphor and the as-structure of saying being, engaged via the “what is” of metaphor, are also broached by Derrida in “The *Retrait* of Metaphor,” op. cit. His opening thesis here is that ironically Heidegger says almost nothing on metaphor as such, and Derrida wants to make something of the withdrawal of being and the withdrawal of a saying of metaphor as such with the text of Heidegger.

11 See Heidegger, “Age of the World Picture” in idem, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. by William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977) pp. 115-154. See also Jacques Derrida “White Mythology: Metaphor and the Text of Philosophy,” in *Margins of Philosophy*, op. cit., pp. 207-272.

12 Heidegger, “Being as the Void and as Abundance,” op. cit., p. 193.

metaphysics is nothing metaphysical and the essence of being is nothing present.<sup>13</sup> This silence, this void, this nothing, is what Heidegger describes as a place that has no ground, unlike beings:

We occasionally wonder whether this or that being is or is not; often consider whether a particular being is one way or another. Being, without which we can never wonder about beings in any respect whatsoever, offers us a reliance whose reliability cannot be surpassed anywhere. And yet Being offers us no ground and no basis — as beings do—to which we can turn, on which we can build, and to which we can cling. Being is the rejection [*Ab-sagel*] of the role of such grounding; it renounces all grounding, is abyssal [*ab-gründig*].<sup>14</sup>

Heidegger is emphasizing that in naming who and what we are, with assuredness, through the property of language, or that which gives propriety over us, this naming is fundamentally a ruse in some desire for fixity, for knowing for certain. Yet in the act of securing our identity “to be,” to say what we are, or what something is, we are covering over being. With Heidegger’s “Being as the Void and as Abundance” we address the pivotal theme of the un-sayable and un-nameable quality of being.

### Abundance in the Saying

Firstly, *differentiation* at all times and places “in every comportment and every attitude is the path that leads from beings to being and from being to beings.”<sup>15</sup> Heidegger offers us the “image” of the river (of *differentiation*) where on one bank stands beings and the other being. And yet he is careful to remind us that “images” are unreliable and will keep us from the experience of what we call the *differentiation*. Two things are poignantly revealed and complementary here in Heidegger’s thinking. Firstly, we are not going to find our “isness,” the question of being, via the sense of sight as the privileged sense of Western metaphysics on a fundamental belief in *presence* as the qualifier of being.<sup>16</sup> Secondly, being is relationally revealed. That is, difference mediates relationality itself and is the between (essence) that causes us beings as entities in the

<sup>13</sup> See Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology,” in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, op. cit., pp. 3-35.

<sup>14</sup> Heidegger, “Being as the Void and as Abundance,” op. cit., p. 193.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 188.

<sup>16</sup> See *Introduction to Metaphysics*, op. cit., p. 61 for Heidegger’s amplification on this point.

world “to be,” i.e., to have being. *Differentiation* is a path that is ungrounded (and let us return and rely on Heidegger’s image here, taken from Heraclitus (a river is moment); one cannot step into (or know) the same river twice. And so to return to the paradox of differentiation: being, without which we can never wonder about beings in any respect whatsoever, offers us a reliance whose reliability cannot be surpassed anywhere. The ungroundedness of being *offers reliance and reliability that is unsurpassable*. This constant reliability as *ungroundedness*, is abundance. Heidegger emphasizes this in the following ways, keeping in mind always the un-name-ability and un-say-ability of what it “is”: “‘Being’ now just counts as the sound of a word for us, a used-up term. If this is all we have left, then we must at least attempt to grasp this last remnant of a possession. This is why we asked: how does it stand with the word ‘Being?’”<sup>17</sup>

The uniformity of this used-up though often unused “is” conceals a rarely considered abundance behind the sameness of the sound and shape of the word. Heidegger offers a range of examples that provide a “correct” understanding, that is, a grammatical disclosure, or the meaning of the word “is”. However, the question of abundance is cited in the realm of poetry, where a phrase from Goethe emphasizes something that simply has no propositional directional logic to it. That is, the “is” in Goethe’s line “Over all peaks / is peace” conceals the *abundance* of meaning, whereby a kind of trembling occurs:

Strange how we waver here with our paraphrase [Over all the peaks / is peace], hesitate, and finally just let go, not because this is too complicated and hard to understand, but because the verse is said so simply, even more simply and uniquely than any other, ordinary “is” that mixes itself inconspicuously and constantly into everyday saying and talking.<sup>18</sup>

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17 Ibid., p. 77.

18 Ibid., p 94. Heidegger’s fundamental question of metaphysics “Why are there *essents* (existents, things that are) rather than nothing?” goes into a short digression into the grammatical forms and etymological roots of the word “being” to reveal the essence of being in Greek thinking through how Western grammar sprang from the reflection of the Greeks on the Greek language. The determination of the essence of language, the very inquiry into it, is regulated at all times by the prevailing preconception about the essence of being and about essence itself. And yet Heidegger warns us: “Whenever a more original relation to language still stirs, one feels how dead these grammatical forms are as mere mechanisms. Language and the study of language have gotten stuck in these rigid forms as if in a net of steel. Beginning with the spiritless and barren language instruction in the schoolroom, these formal concepts and grammar-book labels become empty shells for us, understood and understandable by no one.” Ibid., p. 56.

And so, poetry in its abundance of forms or breaking from formal grammatical concepts affords the “is” *still more*. Heidegger emphasizes that the “is” more immediately interpreted still reveals abundance for its ability to open up multiple points of view and hence: “the uniformity of “is” and “to be” thus proves to be a gross illusion that simply fastens on the identical sound and spelling of the word.”<sup>19</sup> This is Heidegger’s formal look (a logical and grammatically correct view). It is more than that, more than “multivalence.” Being resides in all words; it is both *indefinite and trivialized* and yet *understandable and understood*.

### Voided Saying

For Heidegger, *being*, through the multiple interpretations of *is*, has an abundant essence. Would this mean that there is an abundance of essence in being? In looking at it another way we also see the possibility of “is” and “being” in their indeterminacy as *empty*:

But—one could now object—the “is” is certainly meant in a manifold way. But that has nothing at all to do with the “is” itself; it simply depends on the manifold contents of the assertions, whose contents refer in each case to a different being: God, earth, cup, peasant, book, famine, peace over the peaks. It is only because the “is” in itself remains indeterminate and empty in its meaning that it can lie ready for such a manifold use, and can fill and determine itself “according to the situation.”<sup>20</sup>

Heidegger wants to point out that we have something to celebrate with the void, the empty container of words because the essence of a thing is not what it appears to be, as the saving power of a kind of *universality*. Thus being’s essence as empty, indeterminate and able to be transferred quite literally into any contexts of superficial vacuity *is* the alerting to: “a long-accustomed way of thinking that thinks “Being” as the most universal determination of all, and that therefore can admit the manifold only as

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19 Heidegger, “Being as the Void and as Abundance,” op. cit., p. 190.

20 Ibid., p. 95. These are the statements Heidegger had just quoted to demonstrate the variety of ways “is” was utilized: “We say, “God is.” “The lecture is in the auditorium.” “This man is from Swabia.” “The cup is of silver.” “The peasant is in the fields.” “The book is mine.” “He is dead.” “Red is the portside.” “In Russia there is famine.” “The enemy is in retreat.” “The vine disease is in the vineyard.” “The dog is in the garden.” “Over all the peaks / is peace.” (ibid., p. 93.) Heidegger repeats a close version of this text in his Nietzsche lectures. See “Being as the Void and as Abundance,” op. cit., pp. 199-191.

the sort of thing that fills the vast empty shell of the most universal concept.”<sup>21</sup> In any questioning of *existents* we are to be made weary of the *universalisation* of a concept within which we place the entity.

Heidegger does not want to employ instruments for measuring or determining being’s essence, for example, through tools of abstraction or dialectics: “abstraction [is] the simplest of all instruments of thought, to explain what is most essential in everything to be thought and experienced. ... Dialectic is always introduced the moment opposition is mentioned.” But what is the instrumental mode of the Janus-head? It is neither essentialism nor opposition in the ontic sense.<sup>22</sup>

Here Heidegger goes through a series of binaries that abound with meaning outside of opposition but relationally are orientated; being as universal and singular: universal as *loss of distinction or never possessed any* and singular as *unique and cannot be attained by any being whatever*. Being has no counterpart. It is most intelligible and at the same time least comprehensible. It is used up and yet is unthought; it is reliable and ungrounded; it is most forgotten but most in remembering (which allows us to enter and inhabit the past, present, and future). It is most said (not only in “is” and all the verb forms of “to be”) but in all words. And because being expresses itself in each word and precisely in that way keeps its essence silent, it is the most said and most reticent.

### Comprehension is the Essence of Being’s Incomprehensibility

On what basis would we comprehend being? How can we apprehend or comprehend its invisible nothing, silent void, universal and multitudinous abundance in anyway that is not *ontically* instrumental, governed by objectivity, such that the attempt is one of subjective certainty? Heidegger’s question amounts to what “is there” outside of being from which we could attribute a determination of it? The nothing “is” indeterminateness itself and the most intelligible defies all intelligibility. Yet Heidegger does not apprehend or comprehend only through the path of differentiation :

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21 Heidegger, “Being as the Void and as Abundance,” op. cit., p. 192.

22 Ibid., p. 192.

Being is most in use; it is what we call on in every action from every standpoint. For we everywhere hold ourselves in being and comport ourselves toward beings. Being is used up and yet at the same time is unthought in its advent at every moment. It is rejection of ground and is that without which we can never wonder about beings in any respect whatsoever; it offers us a reliance whose reliability cannot be surpassed anywhere.<sup>23</sup>

In saying what being is, which is impossible through its indetermination to be named, it is the most intelligible and at the same time least comprehensible. The grounds for naming the “isness” of beings are thwarted by the orientation and relation between them and being: “Are they not opposites merely in the way we comport ourselves toward Being, in representing and understanding?”<sup>24</sup> This returns us to the centrality of the question of comprehension itself. Is it not our relation to beings? Our relation to being is a discordant one. In today’s epoch Heidegger is at pains to disclose that we are not in harmony, or rather we are in extreme conflict with being through multiple veils of concealment that have been placed through the different epochs of Western metaphysics and their fundamental relations to beings. Being in Western metaphysics has been thought as *a priori* to beings. Heidegger, in his project for the overturning of the forgetting of being, or the closure to metaphysics, emphasizes that the relation of being and beings, or ontological difference, is a more radical thinking of time and its temporal configurations. As we have witnessed via the recycled “image” of Heraclitus’s river, being and beings are essentially intertwined by the different currents and flows that make their relations that of ungrounded connections of difference.

### Differentiation and Supplementarity

We recognize the complexities and *aporias* for Heidegger in approaching the question of being, an originary differentiation of beings and being, and the un-name-ability and un-say-ability of being as the most abundant and the radically voided. Being has been primarily understood, comprehended and named within metaphysics as the presence of beings. We noted earlier the extent to which Heidegger approaches a question of the fundamental structures of language coincident with the most grounded approach to the question of being. Jacques Derrida engages in a parallel questioning as to the

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23 Ibid., pp. 192-193.

24 Ibid., p. 194.

fundamental structures of language and thought, and in doing so engages with a differentiation in terms of supplementarity as a fundamental working of difference with respect to Western metaphysics. We may provisionally pose the question, in the light of our reading of Heidegger: is being in its withdrawal and un-name-ability a supplement in Derrida's understanding of difference?

In *Of Grammatology* Derrida writes: “It is the strange essence of the supplement not to have essentiality: it may always not have taken place. Moreover, literally, it has never taken place: it is never present, here and now. If it were, it would not be what it is, a supplement, taking and keeping the place of the other.”<sup>25</sup> We may say it would amount to the most abundant and the most voided, the comprehensibility of which would be its incomprehensibility. It is an undecidable concept (the supplement), tracing its pervasive operations throughout the text. The effect is to deconstruct, for example, the binary difference of nature and culture, showing that culture does not supplement nature but that nature is always already a supplemented entity. The point is that since the term ‘nature’ needs its opposite ‘culture’ in order to exist, the supplement is always already there. Or if being is fundamentally understood as originary differentiation to beings, it is radically always already there to be thought *after* thinking the presence of beings as their possibility in unconcealment. It is not simply that the supplement *comes after* but that the supposed priority of the term nature is itself supplementary. The process of supplementarity is the working of *differance*, difference and deferral. We follow here a discussion by Derrida on philosophy’s supplementarity to linguistics, particularly concerning the logic of the copula which is also the founding of Logic and Grammar. This discussion coincides with that we had on Heidegger’s engagement with the void and abundance of the copula as a connecting word, especially a part of the verb “to be” connecting a subject and predicate.<sup>26</sup>

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25 See Derrida, “... That Dangerous Supplement,” op. cit., especially pp.144-145. Derrida draws on the supplement as the most abundant and the most voided of terms. He also offers “supplement” as substitution for *differance*.

26 Derrida, emphasizes, *contra* Heidegger, that difference or the “dangerous supplement” is pre-originary with respect to ontological difference, that Heidegger will ultimately return to metaphysics with a recourse to a transcendental signified in his originary difference that returns to being. In this respect, Derrida’s *differance* is more radical, as a difference preceding Heidegger’s question of being as such as the question of ontological difference. For this reason, we are not suggesting a collapsing or equivalence of their projects with respect to difference.

In this text Derrida offers us what philosophy can only ask itself of itself, the question of being in the determining of a principality of presence through a being determinant on another; the copula of copulas *to be*. To ask “what is being?” is premised on classical philosophical discourse and language. And is that a language held in reserve under the systematic reserve of a lexicology, a grammar, a set of signs and values? In his text “The Supplement to Copula,” whose title also reads “Philosophy Before Linguistics,” Derrida poses the reserve as a site for revealing the deferral/difference of the questioning of being premised on subject/predicate relations that prepare the limitations of philosophy’s discourse and reveals how metaphysics is synonymous to presence, being over becoming:

... singularity ... along the lines of the following turns: whoever alleges that philosophical discourse belongs to the closure of a language must still proceed within this language and with the oppositions it furnishes. According to a law that can be formalized, philosophy always reappropriates for itself the discourse that de-limits it.<sup>27</sup>

It is interesting to arrest in the title the *before*, “Philosophy before Linguistics.” It is an act of turning, an act of belonging or becoming whereby without one the other could not exist in a supplementary way. To be is to be for(e) the other. We can read these moves of Derrida’s in a multiplicity of ways through the turn that turn the phrases which gesture toward the premise of parasitically of laws that formalize themselves under certain kinds, genres or formal principles of discourse, so that they may survive. In this sense, philosophy is a *singular* discourse that remains singular in law under the guise of reappropriating for itself the discourse that de-limits it and extends it:

Nietzsche was more aware (in a discourse more violent and more explicit) than any other on these linguistic constraints, of the being enclosed in a language re-appropriated by the law of (appropriation of) philosophical discourse. He defined the law of language or of the signifier as a “slavery” from which one must be freed, and, at the most critical or “overturning” moment of his enterprise, he remains a philosopher, shall we say, *provisionally*: “Logic is only slavery within the bonds of language (*die Sklaverei in den Banden der Sprache*). Language, however, has within it an illogical element, metaphor. (“*Truth* is an army of metaphors”) Its primary force operates (*bewirkt*) an identification of the nonidentical (*Gleichsetzen*

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<sup>27</sup> Derrida, “The Supplement to Copula: Philosophy before Linguistics,” op. cit., p. 177.

*des Ungleichen*); it is therefore an operation of the imagination (*Wirkung der Phantasie*). The existence of concepts, forms, etc. rests thereupon.<sup>28</sup>

The philosophical illusion of “truth” is the forgetting of the “arbitrary” nature of language in compliance with the order of signs, an over-identification with the bonds of language: “Has not philosophy always recalled the arbitrariness of the sign in order to posit the contingent and superficial exteriority of language to thought, the secondariness of the sign in relation to the idea, etc?”<sup>29</sup> For Nietzsche, it is with illusion, i.e., the forgetting of this arbitrary designation formalized by codes and inscriptions in language, that one determines her/his quest (desire) for the possession of “truth.” This is obedience to laws that are formal in their exteriority, and yet all a word can be for Nietzsche is the expression of a nerve-stimulus in sounds. The rest, the meaning, is only the affect from the use of arbitrary metaphors:

Let us note here as a touchstone that the diagnosed illusion bears upon the value of the “is,” which has as its function to transform a “subjective excitation” into an objective judgement, into a pretension to truth. A grammatical function? A lexicological function? This is a question that will be determined later.<sup>30</sup>

Nietzsche posed syntax as the greatest criminal here. It would support the entire metaphysical edifice. Returning to the Derrida quote: “According to a law that can be formalized, philosophy always reappropriates for itself the discourse that de-limits it,” we see Derrida’s move to reveal strategies of those radical thinkers (Nietzsche and Heidegger) who wish to *extend* the discourse on and of philosophy. That is, those thinkers appeal to philosophical schemas, in the arbitrariness of the sign or the emancipation of thought as concerns language, as a critical operation against metaphysics, a textual strategy and stratification that must be analyzed in *practice*. To quote Heidegger from the “Letter on Humanism”:

Metaphysics ... very early on in the form of Occidental ‘logic’ and ‘grammar’ seized control of the interpretation of language. We today can only begin to descry what is concealed in that occurrence. The liberation of

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28 Ibid., pp. 177-178.

29 Ibid., p. 178.

30 Ibid.

language from grammar into a more original essential framework is reserved for thought and poetic creation.<sup>31</sup>

And elsewhere, recalling that *Being and Time* remained incomplete: “Here everything is reversed. The section in question was held back because thinking failed in the adequate saying of this turning and did not succeed with the help of the language of metaphysics.”<sup>32</sup> Each thinker here remarks in his own turn, in the best over-turning that language permits, fundamental concepts and categories of reason that philosophers hold onto as though they “naturally” belong to the realm of metaphysical certainties.

### The Severance of Language and Thought

The impossibility of adequately saying is at once suggestive and immensely problematic. Does it, for example suggest the separation of language and thought which would then make accountable as the most difficult and pressing of questions the very possibility of their reparation as the possibility of the adequacy of language to thought. Derrida engages in a deconstruction of the binary thought/language via a close reading of the linguist Emile Benveniste and in particular Benveniste’s thesis on the limitation of Aristotelian categories imposed by the constraints of the Greek language, to reveal the *aporias* that surface in their linguistic analysis:

These questions are raised neither to emphasize what are doubtless secondary links in Benveniste’s demonstration, nor to object to his discourse, but merely to indicate an example of the aporias that appear to engage anyone who takes on the task of defining the constraints which limit philosophical discourse; for it is from the latter that the noncritical notions which are applied to its delimitation must be borrowed. Benveniste acknowledges this elsewhere: and here he acknowledges that he must immediately criticize as metaphor or “image” a great classical opposition, inherited from philosophy, but that nevertheless was as the center of the passage just cited: ‘To speak of the container (form) and the contents is to simplify. The image should not delude us. Strictly speaking, thought is not matter to which language lends form, since at no time could this ‘container’

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31 Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism,” op. cit., p. 218. Quoted in “The Supplement of Copula,” op. cit., p. 179.

32 Ibid., p. 231.

be imagined as empty of its ‘contents,’ nor the ‘contents’ as independent of their ‘container’<sup>33</sup>

Derrida notes that with Benveniste there are three major presuppositions that are inherently problematic in their generality. They all concern a certain “historicity” of concepts. The first is the givenness of the natural binary of language and thought, the binary that Derridean supplementarity deconstructs. The second is the lack of questioning around *categoriality in general* on the basis of which the categories of language and categories of thought may be dissociated. The history of philosophy or science activates or invents the category precisely when the opposition of language and thought seems impossible. And thirdly, with respect to the saying of being, the Aristotelian language/thought couple worked to determine the structure of language in that they are determined as answers to the question of knowing how being *is said (legeται)*; but also, how *being* is said, how is said “what is,” in that it is, such as it is:

a question of thought, thought itself, the word “thought” which Benveniste uses as if its signification and its history went without saying, in any case never having meant anything outside its relation to Being, its relation to the truth of Being such as it is and in that it is (said).<sup>34</sup>

### The Un-sayable ... The Un-namable

Our aim has been to provide a somewhat preliminary account of contemporary approaches to the Western metaphysical tradition that concern an overcoming of aspects of that tradition by recognizing that the question of being is not fundamentally or in its originary form a question of the identity or presence or self-sameness of being to itself but is rather a more radical thinking of difference. In this thinking, for Heidegger, being is revealed as the voided and abundant comprehensibility of its incomprehensibility. Being is unsayable and unnameable: “No matter how *loudly* and how often we say “is” and name “Being,” such saying and that name are perhaps only seemingly proper names for what is to be named and said.”<sup>35</sup> Being radically withdraws in its disclosure. Its disclosure is its withdrawal. For Derrida, Heidegger’s language of

33 “The Supplement of Copula,” op. cit. p. 181.

34 Ibid., p. 182.

35 “Being as the Void and as Abundance,” op. cit., p. 193.

the unsayable is already caught in the metaphoricity of writing as the scripting tracing of the play of the supplemental as the undecidable openness to meaning. The supplement, the trace, *écriture* makes undecidable and the locus of deconstruction makes undecidable the priority that philosophy would want to give to thought over language, or the determination, in its finality, of the obverse. As preliminary, we have engaged with these approaches to the question of being, to the question of difference and to a questioning of language, writing and thought in order to introduce a predominant approach to the question of woman, engaged by feminist philosophy, which has as its kernel of analysis the structuration of language within our history of philosophy as a structure that is inherently gendered as a privileging of masculinity. This privilege construes woman as unsayable and unnamable, as a radical withdrawal, to be located in the blanks and omissions, and to be a supplement to masculine desire. In what follows, we develop an account of feminist approaches to sexual difference from engagements with a philosophy of language, themselves indebted to the radical engagements with metaphysics of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida, as well as the psychoanalytic work of Jacques Lacan, and the going beyond Heidegger of Levinas.

There are many feminisms, many discourses of feminism. Recognizing the reductive logic of the category “feminism,” we suggest that a broad range of feminist practice foregrounds a question of “woman” as a question framed by a metaphysics of presence which is also to say a question of being approached *ontically* as a question of the categories of those beings that are in the world. The analyses that follow confine themselves to a counter position, or to a feminism categorically titled *Écriture Féminine*, that attempts to complicate the ontically derived category of “woman” through an interrogation of the metaphysical tradition, such that the difference constitutive of sexual difference will not operate on the singularity of a binary, nor will it necessarily be reducible or secondary to ontological difference. And, thirdly, the binary that would operate between a naturalized notion of real women and language as saying a thinking or representing of women is radically undone or complicated precisely by the supplement.<sup>36</sup>

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36 Hence we note from Derrida two opposing structures or strictures of the supplement, the logic of the double bind that strictures supplementarity. On the one hand, the supplement is the “*fullest measure of presence*” wherein *techne* in general as artifice and as opposed to *physis*, will “come as supplement to nature.” On the other hand, “the supplement supplements,” thus adding only to replace. It will bring to culmination only by means of an economic register of the deficiency of an anteriority: “Compensatory

## S e c t i o n 2

### O n F e m i n i s m : L a n g u a g e & S e x u a l D i f f e r e n c e

... the operation of language is organized at a metaphorical level by the phallus, and Cixous argues that therefore woman is always excluded from this operation, as her relation to the phallus is always one of lack.<sup>37</sup>

#### A Topographical Model

We want to offer a way of structuring our account of a feminist engagement with an ethics of writing in terms of language and sexual difference by briefly returning to our previous, preliminary discussion on an overturning of metaphysics in its emphasis on particular Heideggerian and Derridean strategies. In doing so, we want to access some concluding remarks made by Derrida in his text “The Ends of Man” in relation to Heidegger and the possibility of deconstruction.<sup>38</sup> This discussion on the ends, finality or telos of “man” indeed has more than a little bearing on any project such as the act of writing in an *Écriture Féminine*, that would pose the radical displacement of such ends derived from metaphysical humanism. In alluding to Heidegger’s insistence on the withdrawal of being, Derrida emphasizes that, like Nietzsche’s “chaos,” “becoming,” “force,” being cannot be said, cannot say itself. Derrida stresses here the metaphoricity at play, the decisive choice of metaphor or system of ontic metaphors for the saying of

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and vicarious, the supplement is an adjunct, a subaltern instance which *takes-(the)-place.*” See “... That Dangerous Supplement,” op. cit., pp. 144-145.

37 See Keith Green and Jill Le Bihan, “Feminism, Literature and Criticism,” in *Critical Theory and Practice: A Coursebook* (London & New York: Routledge, 1996) pp. 228-270; p. 245.

38 Derrida, “The Ends of Man,” op. cit.

being, the deconstructive recourse in Heidegger's text to dislocating while producing it any notion of the presence of the present, and the significance precisely of the dissimulations of metaphysics in the text of philosophy. This is no more so than on the question of the proper, which would be the nearest, the nearing of nearness, nearness as the truth of being and the figure of return, the proper as the belonging in proximity of what returns.

Recourse to metaphors on the proper itself, on the propriety and appropriateness of the proper, as the nearing nearness is itself a recourse to errant deviation, as metaphor is precisely that figure that moves us away from what we are properly saying. This concern with language, metaphor, nearness and the proper, at the heart of the very capacity to inscribe the question of being will be decisive in a Nietzschean reading of Heidegger's "near and far." Derrida stresses that for Heidegger the proper as the nearest, proximity as the inseparability of Da sein and being, does not relate two beings, as in a substance and its predicates, but rather the *meaning* of being and the *meaning* of man. At stake in the nearing is the securing, sheltering of Da sein and the securing preserving of being.<sup>39</sup> This co-property of man and being is the security of the near. And in this proximity Heidegger will restore or resuscitate metaphysics' "we" in the equivocality of the ends of man. Da sein's finitude, its being-for-death risks its end in forgetting the thinking of being, its proper end. Its other end is the oblivion of *humanitas*, in metaphysics and technology.

In concluding under a heading "strategic bet" Derrida suggests two choices, two strategies of deconstruction, two strategies questioning being human. One maintains the familiar terrain, repeating founding concepts but using what is already available against the edifice itself. This would suggest we cannot get outside of metaphysics except by using the most privileged concepts of metaphysics, particularly the conceptual pair inside/outside itself. Hence we deconstruct from an inside that complicates the very conception of containment. The second strategy suggests we make an abrupt break, change terrains, yet only to find language reinstates the oldest concepts on our new

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39 Ibid., p. 133.: "Therefore, if 'Being is farther than all beings and is yet nearer to man than every being,' if 'Being is nearest,' then one must be able to say that Being is *what is near* to man, and than man is *what is near* to Being. The near is the proper; the proper is the nearest."

terrain. This paleo-nomic effect effaces the radicality of any rupture, restores interiority at the point of an exterior.

On these two, Derrida suggests:

... choice between these two forms of deconstruction cannot be simple and unique. A new writing must weave and interlace these two motifs. Which amounts to saying that one must speak several languages and produce several texts at once... what we need, perhaps, as Nietzsche said, is a change of "style"; and if there is style, Nietzsche reminded us, it must be *plural*.<sup>40</sup>

Hence, under a heading “the difference between the superior and the superman” Derrida distinguishes in Nietzschean terms a Heideggerian and a Nietzschean strategy. The first, of the Heideggerian type, is abandoned to his distress in the last movement of self pity, guarding the house, maintaining a propriety over a familiar terrain. The latter, who in Zarathustra is not the last man, awakens, leaves without turning back to what he leaves behind, burns his texts and erases his traces, abandons the house and its proper terrain. “His laughter is directed at a return neither as a metaphysical repetition of humanism nor as a memorial or guarding of the meaning of Being. His call is for an active forgetting of Being.”<sup>41</sup> Derrida poses a new equivocality on the “eves” of man: “Is Heidegger’s truth of Being the last sleeping shudder of the superior man? Is the eve the guard around the house or the awakening of the day? Perhaps we are between these two eves which are also the two ends of man.”<sup>42</sup>

We thus see the possibility of three approaches that would constitute three spatial topographies, or three engagements with a question of threshold as a question of difference. One would work primarily from the “within” of the limits of a terrain in order to reconstitute that terrain from its own resources. A second would exit, move beyond, in an effort to found a new law without the resuscitation of the languages of the old. A third, perhaps a weave, a new writing interlacing these two motifs, would work on the threshold or limit, recognizing the binary closure and return to the same of either of the other two strategies. In our following account of *Écriture Féminine*’s engagement with language, patriarchy and sexual difference, we will come to identify three

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40 Ibid., p. 135.

41 Ibid., p. 136.

42 Ibid.

predominant positions or processes or “strategic bets” that more-or-less coincide with these three nominated by Derrida as philosophy’s recourse to an outside of metaphysics.

One strategy recognizes the hegemony of phallocentric patriarchy at the level of the structuration of language but equally recognizes the fragility and aporias of such a structuration and the multiple possibilities of tactical reversals. It is perhaps the early work of Julia Kristeva that marks such a manoeuvre from within. One may equally recognize in the work of Lucy Irigaray that even the blanks and omissions in patriarchal language that signify the trace of woman are marked in their representability by masculine desire. Rather, Irigaray’s strategic bet is to exit and establish a feminine law. A third, liminal and threshold position would be recognized in the *écriture* of Hélène Cixous. Our aim in what follows is not to give fixity or identity to feminism precisely at the moment of challenge to this but rather to explore these three tendencies or directional movements, their intersections, relations and differences, as well as their relations to dominant patriarchal, psychoanalytic and philosophical legacies. We will come to recognize the extent to which Kristeva, Irigaray and Cixous each has recourse to the inter-weave of strategic bets.

### Saying Feminism Properly

Women merely ‘equal’ to men would be ‘like them’, therefore not women. Once more, the difference between the sexes would be in that way cancelled out, ignored, papered over.<sup>43</sup>

If you are woman, you will resemble ideal woman; and you will obey the imperatives that mark your line. You will channel your desires, you will address them where, how, and to whom it is proper. You will honour the laws.<sup>44</sup>

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43 Luce Irigaray, quoted in Susan Sellers, *Language and Sexual Difference: Feminist Writing in France* (London: Macmillan, 1991) p. 71.

44 Ibid. These two quotations, from Irigaray and Cixous establish the entry portals to Seller’s chapter “Theories of Sexual Difference,” pp. 71-93.

Who is authorised to speak or write, properly, of this name, in this name? Can a man write about women? Would that not make woman his “subject”? Can a man write like a woman? Would that not be more masculine mastery, one more masculine usurpation or co-optation of what is properly feminine, one more move men make against women?<sup>45</sup>

With our previous discussion on Derrida’s engagement with Heidegger on metaphysical humanism, we want to emphasize a crucial deconstructive moment for Derrida in locating Heidegger’s conflating and complicity of the near and the proper precisely as a return to a metaphysics of presence, even in recognition of the complications Heidegger will make concerning an ontological distancing understood as temporal ec-stases. We are alerted here to the recourse of classical metaphysics to approximate, if not make coincidental, the nearing of nearness and the proper, perhaps even that one cannot be thought or said without the other. Moreover, any question of the essential, essence, propriety or property of a being will be said within an horizon of disclosure that thinks the near and the proper. For this reason we note Derrida’s insistence that Nietzsche will have recourse to a thinking of being not assimilable to Heidegger precisely from a Nietzschean differentiation of the near and the far on the question of an affirmation of being’s *forgetting*. We also note here that it is precisely this problem of the near and the far with respect to a question of the proper that will activate most crucially Derrida’s reading of Nietzsche on the question of woman in his text *Spurs Nietzsche’s Styles*.<sup>46</sup> It comes down (or does it?) to the question: what being (*essentia*) is the most proximal, the nearest, to the proper of the being, which is to say, the opening, unconcealing, of the question, “what is woman?”? If we have alluded above to a topographical bounding as the schema of our analysis, its spacings or differential drifts will be circumscribed by or will circum-navigate (but do these amount to the same thing?) And would their difference amount to the most radical disclosure of sexual difference?) the near and the far on the proper saying of the feminine?

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45 John Caputo, “Dreaming of the Innumerable: Derrida, Drucilla Cornell, and the Dance of Gender” in *Derrida and Feminism: Recasting the Question of Woman*, op. cit., pp. 142-143.

46 Derrida, *Spurs Nietzsche’s Styles*, op. cit. See Chapter 3 of this thesis, “«SPURS» On For-getting: Sexual Difference-Ontological Difference” for our extended discussion of this text.

### Kristeva: Renovations ... Revolutions

The near and the far on the proper saying of the feminine: what we ask of language, in the proper of its being, marks on a page that make present a relationality of reader to writer; a space of white that comes into its being through the inscription of graphic registers. In this questioning to language, we present openings to woman that, as clarified above, bring to the surface a question of threshold as a question of difference. Kristeva's threshold is a movement through to the other of linguistic correctness. Her aim as presented in her doctoral thesis *Revolution in Poetic Language*, published in France in 1974, was to disrupt formalized codes and structures embedded in the paternal code through an attendance (silent and attuned) to what is repressed so that a radical otherness may be heard (woman's voice).<sup>47</sup> Her project designates a careful listening and works within the existing phallogocentric system intent on scratching upon its walls for a hopeful release of the "echo of our lost jouissance."<sup>48</sup> It is perhaps her question of the repressed with respect to a question of sexual difference that also marks her most tentative move in relation to a potentially other *poetic* language. For Kristeva, this difference of the sexual other that is the feminine or woman is too inscribed, too constructed such that the depths for *knowing* a before-the-law of paternal word may lead to an illusory terrain.

So her limit is marked by language's proximity to the *phallus* that is simply embedded too deeply and one must work to revolutionize through what firmly exists. Time for a revolution in (writing) poetic language as a strategic bet to challenge and unsettle the symbolic masculine law has meant working from within its logic. However, the genre of poetry breaks most radically from the scientific imperative of linguistic discourse that objectifies its study, denying acts of process: "Poetic language in particular, since it incorporates the unconscious and body-rhythms in a way other forms of language do not, offers a means of subverting the symbolic function by putting the subject in *process* — with himself as well as with the law."<sup>49</sup> Her argument hones in on the illusion that structures a metaphysical search for an originary moment that demarcates the unequivocal, that adduces the decidable. Yet the inscription of its logic is so deeply

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47 See Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. by Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984) and Seller's discussion in Sellers, op. cit. pp. 48-51.

48 Sellers, op. cit. p. 14.

49 Ibid., p. 51.

embedded in its structuration by masculine desire and in turn embedded within our thinking, that any radical break by women writers to move beyond its borders would risk a non-communication long associated with (female) hysteria or madness: “Relegated by the symbolic to the position of ‘excessive or transgressive other’, it is, Kristeva stresses, only as this is designated by the symbolic function that ‘the feminine can exist, speak, think or write itself for both sexes.’”<sup>50</sup>

### The Subject in Process: Splitting and Desire

To backtrack a little, Kristeva began her 1973 article for the *Times Literary Supplement*, “The System and the Speaking Subject,” with the following observation, crucial to the thesis of her *Revolution in Poetic Language*:

What semiotics has discovered in studying ‘ideologies’— myths, rituals, moral codes, arts etc — as sign-systems is that the *law* governing, or if one prefers, the *major constraint* affecting any social practice lies in the fact that it signifies, i.e., that it is articulated *like* a language. Every social practice, as well as being the object of external (economic, political, etc.) determinants, is also determined by a set of signifying rules, by virtue of the fact that there is present an order of language; that this language has a double articulation (signifier/signified); that this duality stands in an arbitrary relation to the referent; and that all social functioning is marked by the split between referent and the symbolic and by the shift from signified to signifier coextensive with it. ... What semiotics has discovered is the fact that there is a general social law, that this law is the symbolic dimension which is given in language, and that every social practice offers a specific expression of that law.<sup>51</sup>

In relation to our Heideggerian-Derridean nexus, we may emphasize that Kristeva’s semiological approach is an anti-humanism in the sense that it seems to ultimately refuse any notion of an immanent human causality with respect to language and meaning. Her break is also decisive with a Structuralism whose focus is on language as social code confined strictly to the territory of the support or bearer of the social contract. Structuralism was at a loss when it came to play, pleasure or desire, that is, precisely with

50 Ibid., p. 74.

51 Kristeva, “The System and the Speaking Subject,” *Times Literary Supplement*, 12 October 1973, pp. 1249-1252, p. 1249. Also in *The Tell-Tale Sign. A Survey of Semiotics*, ed. by Thomas A. Sebeok (Lisse, Netherlands: The Peter de Ridder Press, 1975) pp. 47-55, p. 47; and in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. by Toril Moi (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986) pp. 25-33, p. 25.

those aspects in and of language that seemed to be transgressive of social codes.<sup>52</sup> In this Freud was decisive for the break his work was able to make with the Western *episteme* and its assumed centrality in the *cogito*. For Kristeva of the 1970s, the theory of meaning was at a crossroads:

Either [linguistics] will remain an attempt at formalizing meaning-systems by increasing sophistication of the logico-mathematical tools which enable it to formulate models on the basis of a conception (already rather dated) of meaning as the act of a transcendental ego, cut off from its body, its unconscious, and also its history; or else it will attune itself to a theory of the speaking subject as a divided subject (conscious/unconscious) and go on to attempt to specify the types of operation characteristic of the two sides of this split; thereby exposing them, that is, on the one hand, to bio-physiological processes (themselves already inescapably part of signifying processes, what Freud labeled ‘drives’), and on the other hand, to social constraints (family structures, modes of production, etc.).<sup>53</sup>

This theory of the split-subject in process Kristeva named “*semanalysis*,” conceiving of meaning not as a sign-system in its legacy to structuralism, but rather as a signifying process. Kristeva maintained two productions in the process, that of a “geno-text” and that of a “pheno-text.” The geno-text marks the radicality of her “renovation” or “revolution,” in its delineation as the articulation of the drives or articulatory effects constrained by the social code but not reducible to the language system. The pheno-text is the signifying system as the symbolic order. Her semanalysis was concerned with determining what she referred to as the semiotic disposition, the presence of the geno-text within the pheno-text constitutive of poetic language or other ruptures to signifying practices. The semiotic disposition constitutes the various deviations from the grammatical rules of language, such as articulatory effects that revert the pheno-text to its phonic base, which is to say, to its drive-governed bases of sound-production. The semiotic disposition is also constitutive of over-determinations of a lexeme by multiple meanings: syntactic irregularities in ellipses, indefinite embeddings and so on, accountable, for Kristeva, in terms of Freud’s primary processes of condensation and displacement or metaphor and metonymy.

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<sup>52</sup> In this regard see also the decisive text by Derrida, “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences” in *Writing and Difference*, op. cit., pp. 278-294. This text was decisive for its deconstruction of the structuralism of Claude Lévi Strauss, and in its initial delivery in English at the Baltimore conference, *The Structuralist Controversy*, for the coinage of the term “post-structuralism.”

<sup>53</sup> Kristeva, “Four Types of Signifying Practice” *Semiotext(e)* Vol. 1 (No. 3., 1975).

Signifying *practice* for Kristeva is always mutually inclusive of an acceptance of the symbolic law together with the transgression of that law for the purpose of renovating it. The moment of transgression is the key moment in practice. We can only speak of practice whenever there is transgression of systematicity, which means a transgression of the transcendental ego coterminous with the transcendental signified, doubly constitutive of the unified subject:

The subject of the practice cannot be the transcendental subject, who lacks the shift, the split in logical unity brought about by language which separates out, within the signifying body, the symbolic order from the workings of the libido (this last revealing itself by the semiotic disposition). Identifying the semiotic disposition means in fact identifying the shift in the speaking subject, his capacity for renewing the order in which he is inescapably caught up; and that capacity is, for the *subject*, the capacity for enjoyment.<sup>54</sup>

### The Semiotic *Chora*: Place of No-place

The concerns of the semiotic disposition, the production of the geno-text, this splitting of the symbolic limit refers to operations heterogeneous to meaning. These operations are pre-meaning, pre-sign (or trans-meaning, trans-sign), bringing us back to processes of division in the living matter of an organism subject to biological constraints and social norms. It is not the case that we can simply replace signifying systems with considerations of biological codes as these very biological codes have been modeled on language. Yet semiotics can only *postulate* this heterogeneity, for in its very speaking of it, it homogenizes the matter. The specificity of this heterogeneity, as pleasure and transgressing, is preserved only in signifying practices themselves. The division between geno-text and pheno-text is rearticulated by Kristeva in terms of the semiotic-chora and the symbolic. The “chora” is to be distinguished from a disposition, a representation or a sign. The “chora” is not a position which represents something for someone, as with a sign; nor is it a position which represents someone for another position, as with a signifier. The semiotic chora is a materiality of vocalizations, gestural eruptions, chromatic registrations, sphincter gapes in the pleasured body that are to *become* the position of the signifier.

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54 Ibid.

Yet Kristeva stresses that there is a regulation of the semiotic, even if it is not that of the law of symbolic order, what she refers to as an objective prescriptive regulation provided by natural and socio-historical constraints, such as biological sexual difference familial structure.<sup>55</sup> Thus the always already symbolic social organization impresses its constraints, in mediatised form – the body of the mother, support of pre-oedipal activity, which takes on the function of mediation with regards to the symbolic law and orders the semiotic *chora*. The symbolic is structured as a break in the processes of *significance* or heterogeneity, and in this establishes the identity of a subject as the condition of propositionality. This break Kristeva calls the ‘thetic’ stage, necessary for any “I” to speak such that within a symbolic space subjects and objects are distributed in a combination of positions (theses) that are open. The thesis marks the break in heterogeneity that conditions the possibility of truth specific to language. All transgressions of the thetic, renovations or revolutions constitutive of the poetic and pleasure, will be an overstepping of the frontiers of truth and falsity.<sup>56</sup>

### Positioned at Cross-roads: Deciding the Undecidable

Yet, this moment of disruption, unsettling and challenging to phallogocentrism is never quite the destructive character that detonates the symbolic. And if we were to draw on Walter Benjamin’s destructive character who always positions *himself* at cross-roads, perhaps the field where *symbolic* “traps” lay may not necessarily be all that discernable. For Benjamin it was not the rubble, as so much touching of the materiality of the signifier, but rather that of the way leading through it that was always the stakes in destruction.<sup>57</sup> That is to say, an intersection provides one with both decision and indecision—for we can only move in a *different* direction at junctural moments. Decision happens in the recognition of the undecidable as its impossible possibility. Kristeva’s logic “borne from within” does not *hope* for a radical other “order” but a tenuous yet tenacious unsettling as some decidable *aporia*, key to its heart, as an affect (of language) crosses the threshold of metaphysical approximation whilst still retaining its logic.

<sup>55</sup> See Kristeva, “Revolution in Poetic Language,” in *The Kristeva Reader*, op. cit., pp. 70-136, esp. “The Thetic: Rupture and/or Boundary,” pp. 98 ff.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> See Walter Benjamin, “The Destructive Character” in *Reflections*, trans. by Edmund Jephcott and ed. by Peter Demetz (New York: Schocken Books, 1986) pp. 301-303.

This oxymoronic motif of the decidable aporia claims another space “outside time,” an illogical *space* with amorphous boundaries, a lacking of any clear demarcation that avoids provisions for temporality and which has a truth that as yet cannot be given expression. Kristeva is specifying the potentiality of such a site’s *existence* excavated via exclusory means through women’s exclusion from rule of the word and thereby suggesting a “truth” of women — “an echo of our lost *jouissance*” — that cannot be either true or false according to phallogracy but rather “outside time.” And in this respect we trace both her psychoanalysis and deconstructive moves through the logic of non-existence (of woman) that coincides with Jacques Lacan’s famous pronouncement: “Woman does not exist.”<sup>58</sup> Lacan’s disclaimer qualifies that the categorization (of woman) is firstly, (like man) an illusion via the inscription/intervention of language, and secondly, this logic, ordered by the phallus, constructs her through an economy of masculine desire. Coupled here with the strategy of a Lacanian frameworks exists a Derridean argument (“time out of joint”) that language has demarcated the horizon of our knowing the world and it is with language that the greatest potential for disclosing difference exists.<sup>59</sup> Derrida and Kristeva nominate the potential for revolutionary games in the law(s) of language, a potential for affecting fixed logic where truth becomes the pulverized undecidable; a movement [i.e., truth effect] that reveals marginalized spaces and suppressed blind-spots, what Derrida names as the operation of *différance*.<sup>60</sup>

Kristeva’s coincidental operation here to *différance* does not proclaim her allegiance to Derrida and deconstruction.<sup>61</sup> Rather, and by comparison, her operation could be

58 See Jacques Lacan, Seminar XX *Encore: On feminine Sexuality*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. by Bruce Fink (New York & London: Norton, 1998) p. 11. See also an extended discussion of this in relation to Lacan’s ethics of psychoanalysis in Joan Copjec, *Imagine There’s No Woman* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2002).

59 See in particular Derrida’s text on Hélène Cixous which plays on a theme of “time out of joint” or a “*contretemps*”: “Excerpt 1: Jacques Derrida, ‘Fournis’, Lectures de la Différence Sexuelle” in Hélène Cixous & Mireille Calle-Gruber *Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing*, trans. by Eric Prenowitz (London & New York: Routledge, 1997) pp. 119-127. This text establishes the core locus for discussion that follows in this chapter.

60 Kristeva stresses the radical breaks being made with phenomenological approaches to language and linguistics, starting from the subject of enunciation/transcendental ego. She refers her readers to a series of (then) key emerging texts, “especially” Derrida’s “Supplement of Copula,” *Of Grammatology*, and *Speech and Phenomena, and Other Essays on Husserl’s Theory of Signs*. Certainly at the time of writing *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Kristeva was leaning to Derrida. See The Kristeva Reader, op. cit., p. 92, and esp. footnote 10, p. 125.

61 See ibid., footnote 11, p. 125.: “The term ‘chora’ has recently been criticized for its ontological essence by Jacques Derrida: *Positions*. annot. And tr. Alan Bass ..., pp. 75 and 106, n. 39. In fact, on page

construed as that of a return to something too (un)familial (too empirically masculine) via a default logic that closely resonates with “scientific imperatives” that, in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, she problematises due to their dominant framing of linguistics. Motivated by a form of control over language, she argues that this empirical approach turns language into an object. Sellers, for example, suggests this to be a type of discriminatory effect that in Kristeva’s thinking excludes the bodily heterogeneous “drives” that influence and impel the language user.<sup>62</sup> Deconstruction is also gathered into this “objectivism” whereby Kristeva suggests that Derrida’s strategy has a bias towards the *material* components of language and ignores the heterogeneous “drives.” It is with her claim of difference to Derrida that we may pose the paradoxical position that reconfigures or re-inscribes Kristeva’s privileging of “drives” that *belong* to a body proper. This “proper” of the body, what belongs to it, is a return to the proximity or nearness of what belongs, itself approximate to the metaphysical (and Heideggerian) thinking of presence that foregrounds the privileging of the conceptual pairs inside/outside, subject/object. Kristeva’s *body* in effect becomes the subject’s proper(ty) for territorializing what is material (what will become the signifier) and what is immaterial (bodily unconscious drives that speak the subject): “In this respect modern poetic language goes further than any classical mimesis — whether theatrical or novelistic — because it attaches not only denotation (the positing of the object) but meaning (the positing of the enunciating subject) as well.”<sup>63</sup>

We may now start to see a revolution revolving, circum-scribing, circum-navigating, back around its own bodily conflict marked by a material reality and immaterial unknown. It is this conundrum that discloses Kristeva’s most undecidable thetic moment, a conundrum that is caught up in the heterogeneous “drives” of the speaking subject that she conditions as the *semiotic’s* intervention within the symbolic order. This *semiotic*

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75 of *Positions*, Derrida accuses Plato of “ontologizing” a system that had “*rhythmos*” as a key term for both writing and rhythm, which is not to say that he may have extended Plato’s “ontologizing” to an “essentializing” of “*Chora*.” Footnote 39 is a reference to this in which Derrida suggests he “attempted to investigate the text of the *Timaeus* from this point of view, especially the very problematical notion of the *chora*.” It is also worth noting that collected in the *Positions* publication is an interview with Derrida conducted by Kristeva: “Semiology and Grammatology,” pp. 15-36. As well, we need to note Derrida’s text on *chora*, “Khora,” op. cit., but also Heidegger’s reference to *chora* in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*, op. cit. pp. 69-70: “Might not *chora* mean: that which separates itself from every particular, that which withdraws, and in this way admits and “makes room” precisely for something else?” Heidegger precedes Derrida in suggesting that concerning *chora*, “the essence of which we have barely grasped.”

62 Sellers, op. cit. p. 48.

63 *The Kristeva Reader*, op. cit., p.109.

distinguishes *process* from *object* in the being of language formation. It is a bodily condition inasmuch as it establishes itself in a pre-Oedipal existence before the *subject* acquires language and enters into the realm of the masculine symbolic. This pre-Oedipal infant state is a plenteous condition that acquires, in a first order, a bodily *language* charged by its biological drives according to physical need and in this respect it is the (m)other with whom the child initially *communicates*:

For Kristeva, the foundations of subjectivity and language are given by the mother, as rules and conventions of family and society are transmitted to the child through modulations in the mother's body and voice. These rhythms and articulations—received, echoed and mirrored by the child's own semiotic expression—thus form the basis for the symbolic.<sup>64</sup>

From this account we gauge a Kristevian threshold moment for the revolutionary formation of language as *process* in the realms of immaterial *speech* (drives, gestures, rhythms etc) that are however, *objectified* by the material condition (a type of governance not dissociable from constraints constitutive of the Symbolic) of language without body! And it is in the effects of such governance that Kristeva suggests, through the process of *semiotic* disturbance via the speaking subject, that this speaking subject is also an affect of the Symbolic. Kristeva clearly sees this paradox of bodily drives that are in turn structured by the culturally inscribed practices of the m/other. Inscribed here is precisely the circle of return to the proper from which Kristeva would have wanted to break free, as it is precisely this circle that constitutes the ground of structuralism from which Kristeva was making her break with respect to the excess constitutive of the semiotic. It is in this circular motion that we draw on the Heideggerian double-bind of closing the door on metaphysics only to stand guard—and, after all, a door closed is only one such end (or eve) that demarcates already existing exit and entry points.

### Outside the Law: Gender's Undecidable Genres

I am a woman. I am a being sexualized as feminine. I am sexualized female. The motivation of my work lies in the impossibility of articulating such a statement: in the fact that its utterance is in some way senseless, inappropriate, indecent. Either because **woman** is never the attribute of the

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64 Ibid., p. 51.

verb to be nor **sexualized female** a quality of being, or because **am a woman** is not predicated of I, or because **I am sexualized** excludes the feminine gender.<sup>65</sup>

I am trying . . . to go back through the masculine imaginary, to interpret the way it has reduced us to silence, to muteness or mimicry, and I am attempting, from that starting-point and at the same time, to (re)discover a possible space for the feminine.<sup>66</sup>

### Exit: An Affirmation of Being's forgetting

What would a feminine law, a feminine symbolic suggest? What would it *take* to be? How can one imagine this unimaginable woman? The question of woman for Luce Irigaray is a quest in the realms of the unimaginable, the undecidable, a space and time that is a future-to-come, offering quite unrecognizable relations *between* the sexes. But it is the in-between of the now which marks Irigaray's point of exit, where one sex is left to their own laws of economic sameness and an-other sex take their leave from the "Empire of the Same" into the unimaginable. Irigaray's "other" sex is that which is appropriated under the categorization of woman: "woman is never anything but the locus of a more or less competitive exchange between two men."<sup>67</sup> This is an exit that marks a potentially new terrain for more fluid and undecidable relations to occur. It is in this respect that Irigaray has some kind of proximity to a Nietzschean impetus for forgetting the tyranny of a closed system (metaphysics and the structuration of language) that denies the plurality of becoming, over the desire for fixity on proper figures on which to hang illusory origin(s).

With an overarching concern for designating language as the locus for the appropriation of "woman" through masculine desire, Irigaray cannot be accused of an essentialised reading of women as some Anglo-American feminism claims.<sup>68</sup> Her project is rather an

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65 Luce Irigaray, "Questions," in *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985) pp. 119-169, p. 148.

66 Ibid., p. 164.

67 Quoted in Sellers, op. cit., p. 75.

68 The accusations of "essentialism" tend to be made from recognition that Irigaray sees an inherent conflict in the strategic interests of women elucidated in complicity with masculine language or practice. Hence those feminist practices that locate struggle at the level of equality within the law or economy, that seek to establish a gender-neutrality with respect to fundamental rights for all recognise that Irigaray's

exit from such positions emphasizing the trap of such discourse. To be an essentialised anything would be a deferral to a masculinised system that privileges the original, the intrinsic, the natural(ised). Material claims that characterize some Anglo-American feminisms with their *real* struggles (economic, ideological and political) that mark a multiplicity of feminisms and groups of women (differences according to race, socio-economic class, religion or age) are both cries for equality, and they exist in *real* now-time. Irigaray's unimaginable feminine law is located in a future-to-come; and her call is a call to *all* who answer now hesitantly to the name "woman."

In a strategy of exit, Irigaray's Nietzschean *forgetting* has established a writing practice that has worked over and through the masculine imaginary from that starting-point and at the same time for an approach that breaks from it. In this respect her move is a duplicitous action, a kind of turning upon the well-trodden terrain, in order to cultivate a new "feminine" direction. Her exit, as we have stated, is a separation imagined in order to stimulate a future-to-come. This cultivation, a turning of terrain already firmly cultivated by the masculine symbolic, has meant she, more so than Kristeva or Cixous and others who practice *Écriture Féminine*, distrusts the marginalized and repressed spaces, the gaps between the words.

She links this appropriation of the feminine to language. In language, she argues, signs acquire meaning through asserting their 'spatial distinctness' from other signs, and by 'decisively cutting up the whole matter of language', including the blanks. She suggests that in the same way that the feminine has been silenced and used to bolster the masculine sexual and social imaginary, so, in language, the existing space has been employed to create the (masculine) subject's (self-) assertions. 'Those things that are not said or said between the lines', she writes, 'have already been given meaning', with the effect that 'the "subject" will thus be able to exploit the other, fragment her, speculate her—and find in her nothing but the same sameness'.<sup>69</sup>

Irigaray's mistrust of even the blanks (however much she has promoted a kind of re-texturing to them through her writings) differs from many of those who practice *Écriture*

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position essentialises non-negotiable differences between women and men that would necessitate an agency of more-than-one law. See, in particular, Sellers pp. 75 ff.

69 Sellers, op. cit. p. 79. Sellers is quoting from "Volume-Fluidity" in Irigaray's *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. by Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985) pp. 227-240, p. 235.

*Féminine* such as Cixous and Derrida. Cixous takes her lead from a deconstructive thinking with respect to supplemental meaning entailed in the “gaps,” spacings or traces in writing. This supplemental meaning is uncontrollable and is the effect of the *other* in language that disrupts the logic and boundaries of our present conceptual thinking (and it is this *other* of language that *is écriture* [a feminine writing]). In relation to Cixous, Sellers suggests:

... one of the ways (feminine) writing can bring into existence a new order is for the writer—and the eventual reader—to pay attention to the (silent) spaces — the ‘not-said’ — of the signifying operation. ‘Writing is working; being worked; questioning (in) the between (letting oneself be questioned) of same and of other’... she stresses that (feminine) writing must include the (symbolic) (re)presentation of this questioning by allowing those elements which do not adhere to the rigid codes of the masculine to speak.<sup>70</sup>

Irigaray adheres to a different strategy: “How, she asks, can women begin to designate ourselves, when the only spaces open to us are those of ‘deficiencies’ and ‘lacks’? How can we ‘touch’ ourselves and each other when our bodies have been ‘cut up’ and our pleasures denied, or else appropriated by a system that regards even our virginity as something to be penetrated and possessed?”<sup>71</sup> Her urge is for another economy based on relations between women that describe a different kind of love with its emphasis on openness, multiplicity and fluidity of women’s sex, and where “nothing is privileged.” A future where “nothing is privileged” is key to her feminine economy that imagines a non-hierarchical articulation of differences where any type of appropriation or specularization of an other is denied, i.e., the refusal of subject/object binaries and thereby of possession per se:

In such an extreme (language) form that it would preclude any distinction of identities, any establishment of ownership, thus any form of appropriation.<sup>72</sup>

An Irigarayan exit would mean a thinking other-wise, another type of wisdom based on a refusal of properties (love, wish, affection, delight, interest, profit) — a radical new kind of *desire* that is not espoused by the current phallogocentric psychoanalytic model of Freud and Lacan. The ethics of her new language reach into the community of another order

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70 Ibid., p. 144. Sellers is quoting Cixous, *The Newly Born Woman*, op. cit.

71 Ibid., p. 116.

72 Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, op. cit. p. 134.

where it will benefit all in a celebration of difference: “to cast phallocentrism, phallogratism, loose,” so that it will “no longer, all by itself, circumvent, circumscribe, the properties of anything and everything.”<sup>73</sup>

So long as men claim to say everything and define everything, how can anyone know what the language of the male sex might be? So long as the logic of discourse is modeled on sexual difference, on the submission of one sex to the other, how can anything be known about the “masculine”?<sup>74</sup>

In an attempt to demonstrate this unimaginable feminine language, Irigaray’s writing articulates both the difficulties of using language to establish the unimaginable together with the potential for new figures. In the preface to *This Sex Which Is Not One* she does a re-reading of Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking Glass* drawing on the motif of specularization (the ideal is in the eye of the beholder of the Speculum). The text (and here we are speaking of multiple texts) alerts the reader firstly to something quite other than the original story and something quite intrinsic to its becoming whereby both Irigaray’s voice and Carroll’s voice become indiscernible, suggesting *Alice* and her questioning of “who am I?” has gone “behind the screen of representation,” vanished to “the dark side of the moon.” Irigaray’s move furthers this distance between Alice (woman) and representation by leaving behind the original story’s measuring devices, particularly the looking glasses. Any sense of perspective has taken leave of its senses which brings us to the space of beyond recognition, an indiscernible, non-categorisable style that pulverizes the logic of language.

Here we recall Kristeva’s emphasis on a kind of madness of non-communication if we are to write beyond the borders of the current system, for “our” language is steeped too highly in acculturated masculine desire, and thus we will be relegated by the symbolic to the position of “excessive or transgressive other.” Also in this respect Irigaray warns us of the dangers of such difference, of being too different for the present system with an emphasis on the non-existence of such a style as yet:

The text ends in darkness, since neither she (*Alice?*), nor ‘I’ (the author?  
Irigaray? the reader?), can live, either on *this* side — where she is made use  
of and suppressed — or on the other since this does not, as yet, exist: ‘we

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73 Ibid., p. 80. (“The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine”)

74 Ibid., p. 128.

*would have needed*, at least, two genres', the text stresses, an alternative optics, an other style, a different way of proceeding.<sup>75</sup>

We sense plurality in the form of a third strategic bet as suggested by Derrida, the strategy of the weave and interlace of the other two motifs, that of the immuring of a renovation of metaphysics from the stuff of its privileged language and the exit from metaphysics only to encounter the old tropes again on the outside. This third strategy would constitute a working on both the inside of the inside and the outside of the outside where boundaries become increasingly diffuse and indiscernible, where the very notion of boundary is not something that divides and separates but rather holds and moves like Irigaray's very notion of mucous that mediates these *two lips that are not one*.

It is impossible to say that her text (the pre-text of the preface to *The Sex Which Is Not One*) has not reached this kind of mucous and fluid writing. Certainly the text is more than "one" and pulverizes any notion of author(ity) and "identity-to-self." It is her cautionary tale as the preface; the before warning of what a future-to-come might entail in the body of the essays in *The Sex Which Is Not One*. Each essay is a body that speaks of difference, not quite recognizable as is *Speculum of the Other Woman*. In the section from *Speculum of the Other Woman* entitled "*La Mystérieuse*" (The mystic-mysterious-hysterical-feminine one), Irigaray approaches language at its limit, identified with a tradition of the "mystics." Looking back at languages traditionally associated with women, she sees in the visions and writings of the mystics the model of a language already attempting to express what is repressed by the "dry desolation of reason."<sup>76</sup> She suggests that mysticism offers a means of escape from "disciplines" of knowledge, philosophy and science, since its tenets involve a "flowing out" in which subject and other "mingle," and in which "consciousness is no longer master." Irigaray documents the almost insurmountable obstacles that have confronted those who have attempted to follow the mystic's path. Firstly, she argues, language is itself "unfit to translate" the mystic's vision, which, given the predominance of philosophic discourse, can only "at

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75 Sellers, op. cit. p. 137.

76 Irigaray, "*La Mystérieuse*" in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, op. cit., pp. 191-202.: "This is the place where consciousness is no longer master, where, to its extreme confusion, it sinks into a dark night that is also fire and flames. This is the place where "she"—and in some cases he, if he follows "her" lead—speaks about the dazzling glare which comes from the source of light that has been logically repressed, about "subject" and "Other" flowing out into an embrace of fire that mingles one term into another, about contempt for form as such, about mistrust for understanding as an obstacle along the path of jouissance and mistrust for the dry desolation of reason. Also about a "burning glass." Ibid., p. 191.

best be stammered out.” Secondly, the very forces that conspire to create this discourse cancel and invalidate their mystical state. Already “caught” within an alien system of (self-)representation, the mystic’s words, Irigaray stresses, are (re-)subjected to the “configurations and chains” of that system and made to conform to its prescriptive unity.

Irigaray’s future-to-come we imagine is without exchanges between self and other, a spending that depletes the stores of the current system. Her exit is radical but it is a non-radical radical that splits without breaking — a fluid motion — where shift has not been calculated as in the propositional logic of plans. This would be an exit that has already occurred but not *taken* place, as her writing’s *turn* “at the same time” suggests. A plurality of styles co-exist announcing an indiscernible, non-categorisable deficiency of an unfit language system, where translations happens in what is not translatable. And it is here that several languages, some that as yet have not been given “proper” names, live. Irigaray’s warning of an unimaginable space for feminine language, given we are too deeply bound by the present order, defaults here to the same linear logic, a temporal condition that designates compartmentalized space—a real to the outside, a restoring interiority—at the point of exteriority. Is there not a contradiction that amounts to a future that is nearer to her than a coming, that is to say, a future of the already existence of her imagined exit, a firm other-space outside of existing phallogocentrism that just happens to be bound by her temporal logic, based on fluidity. What we are suggesting here is that Irigaray has already imagined *the two lips that are more than one* scenario bound by a giving, abundant fluidity that makes sexual difference quite un-decidable according to a masculine schema. This fluidity that permeates her logic would anesthetize the more urgent attempt to break out and awaken a new kind of condition that has broken from the break (*per se*).

Hence we get a sense of a certain impasse, passage or passivity that may yet be read as a radical passivity in her essay “An Ethics of Sexual Difference.”<sup>77</sup> In resonance with her reading of philosophy in other essays of the book of the same name, “An Ethics of Sexual Difference” concerns of questioning of the supposed neutrality of the texts of science, the neuter of an assumed universality, and the sexualized masculine that is the

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<sup>77</sup> Irigaray, “An Ethics of Sexual Difference,” in *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, trans. by Carolyn Burke & Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1993). pp. 116-132. Other sections of this book focus on a critical engagement with key (masculine) thinkers in the Western philosophical tradition: Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, Merleau-Ponty and Levinas.

speaking of their discourses, coupled with the silence of the feminine as if its “I speak” has no recourse but to a masculine economy, constitutive of a split in science between truth and life:

What is the origin of this split imposed and suffered by science? Is it a model of the subject that has not yet been analyzed? ... Such questions clamor to be answered, or at least raised, from somewhere outside, from a place in which the subject has not or has scarcely begun to be spoken. An outside placed on the other slope of sexual difference, the one which, while useful for reproducing the infrastructure of social order, has been condemned to imprisonment and silence within and by society. It remains true that the feminine, in and through her language, can, today, raise questions of untold richness. Still, she must be allowed to speak; she must be heeded.<sup>78</sup>

From this outside, this “other slope” of sexual difference, Irigaray will maintain a relation to sexual difference of radical difference, of a difference irreducible yet bridgeable. The “bridge” which she mentions often in her essays in the “Ethics” book, is neither the reducibility of difference to a moment of the same nor a transgressive renovation or revolution with respect to difference, as if the sexes might, in a choral semanalysis, become pre-coded. Her “revolution” is that of a feminine “law,” a feminine speaking subject at once irreducible to masculinity and yet in maintenance of and constitutive of a reciprocity of a “love of the other.” But, isn’t the bridge precisely the metaphor *par excellence*, at least in certain Kantian and Heideggerian texts, for the old language of nearing, proximity, belonging and return?<sup>79</sup>

### Armour — Amour

... she gives in writing, she gives to write, she advances to the dream, she advances on the dream, she nourishes herself with dream but also she strides *on it, towards it*, she goes to, gives herself up [*serend*] to it, in advance, while as for me ['*fourmi*' —my addition], I stride to the interruption of the dream or rather to a certain separation/reparation of the dream ... Hélène, as for her,

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78 Ibid., pp. 125-126.

79 The Kantian privilege is most explicit in the architectonics of the *Critique of Judgement*, a veritable bridging of the abyss that separates pure and practical reason. See Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. by James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). Heidegger will come to favour the bridge as the exemplum for an understanding of the regioning of the fourfold outlined in his “Building, Dwelling, Thinking,” in *Basic Writings*, op. cit., pp. 343-364.

lets the gift of the dream breathe in her writing. It is as if her dream were at home there.<sup>80</sup>

### Style's Plurality: The Double-Scene of *Écriture* (All the Eves/tous les deux)

This section opens with a quote about a woman (Cixous) and her writing, by a man (Derrida) in his writing that mentions the “gift of a dream” about sexual difference. In this dream referenced in Cixous’ *FirstDays of the Year*, the reader (a man—Derrida) receives (in the Derridean sense of the gift, a gift that does not take) something of *contretemps* that translates as the in-between.<sup>81</sup> Here we should take time and look closely at the mark(—), that is the *cut* of the *in* and *between*. For Derrida this cut is both “both (but) cut and (but) non-cut, separated but (and) non-separated, no sooner cut than repaired.”<sup>82</sup> This *Story of Contretemps* / “against-time” is the story of both cuts: a cut that separates and a cut that joins and repairs. It is a cut that is never completely a/part. Derrida emphasizes “strangulated” here. An ant has a body which is marked, ph(r)ased, strictured by an annular multiplicity of rings, which cut it without cutting it, divide it without slicing, differentiate without dissociating it. In this respect there belongs something between the body of writing and the sexes that is “strangulated”—the aporia that marks sexual difference and impacts on us all.<sup>83</sup> It is an in-between that has a *turn* that cuts up old ground and in the *same* move “makes say what is in reserve.” With Derrida’s reading of sexual difference given by Cixous’s writing, we experience the double scene of sexual difference where, on the one hand, withdrawal of the other happens when the “*Reparation* and *Separation* remains all alone,” and, in a second scene, “between the two there is the between,” which opens in the instant someone enters, some “one”:

... *all the twos*, ‘reparation’ and ‘separation’, the one and the other, the reparation which doesn’t separate itself from the separation, that is from the irreparable separation, the irreparable separation of the pair disparate in its very appearance ... what makes *tous les deux* inseparable includes also the

80 Derrida, “Excerpt 1: ‘Fourmis’” op. cit., p. 125.

81 Cixous, *FirstDays of the Year*, trans. by Catherine A.F. MacGillivray (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997). On the gift, see Derrida, *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*, op. cit. See in particular, “The Time of the King,” pp. 1-33, for the peculiar logic of the gift that would amount to the impossible: “Not impossible but the impossible. The very figure of the impossible. It announces itself, gives itself to be thought as the impossible. It is proposed that we begin by this.” Ibid., p. 7.

82 Derrida, “Excerpt 1: ‘Fourmis’,” op. cit. p. 122.

83 Ibid.

separation which unites them, the experience of distancing or inaccessibility which conjoins them still.<sup>84</sup>

This turn we are alluding to here, of the two acts of the ‘cut’ graphically inscribed by the hyphen of the *in* and *between*, is an important deconstructive act in which something in the mark of Derridean undecidability with respect to sexual difference is registered. Derrida has given to Cixous (reparated), with a writing that performs a supplementary acknowledgement that sexual difference is always, in this thinking, *plural*. We draw significant attention to this act of the *cutting* to return to something important with respect to the supplement and the question of woman (as radical supplementarity) in Derrida’s radical question of difference per se (constitutive of the supplement). In the act of the third strategic bet where the choice here is one of an in-between of the two forms of deconstruction (Heidegger and Nietzsche mentioned earlier with respect to the “Ends of Man” — where woman is in the plural as an imagining of the *Eves* (both guarding and leaving in the same moment) — Derrida acknowledges Cixous’s writing as that which is speaking several languages (of sexual difference) to produce several texts at once. This plurality of style is conjoined by Derrida’s writing that writes *further* into the margins where the radicality of difference (reparation/separation) and the between of *tous les deux* brings sexual difference into the arena of the undecidable. Here we too are exemplifying a notion signified by the somewhat enigmatic title given to this section, “Armour — *Amour*” with respect to practices of feminine/feminist philosophical writing. For *Écriture Féminine*, in the first instance “she” is figured too immovably through the “armoured” masculine structuration of language, that to write other-wise is an impossibility. And in the second instance, “*Amour*” is an act of *love*. Both Cixous and Irigaray nominate *love*, albeit with differences, as a strategy for writing our differences.<sup>85</sup> *Armour — Amour* nominates the double scene of writing as a strategy that shores up as it leaves the shore, that builds in its un-building, that locates its structures in order to undo structuration, that makes un-decidability neither a lack nor an absence but an excess of the future as justice.

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84 Ibid., pp. 123-124.

85 See, for example, with Irigaray, “Love of Same, Love of Others,” in *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, op. cit. pp. 97-115. For Cixous see, for example, “The heart is the human sex / Better (at being) human,” in *Rootprints*, op. cit., pp. 31-35.

In other words, and with respect to the choreo-graphical encounter of Derrida and Cixous, *tous les deux*, the third strategy of an *Écriture Féminine* holds open (separate) the first two (of an inside and outside earlier outlined) for the excessive *arrival* of a future that is in constant movement for the acknowledgement of interruption that is reparation. This kind of move is certainly most akin to the writing of Cixous who would speak of such an act, as that of a “love between.” And what of Hélène’s dream? This dream is the undecidability of sexual difference that comes in the *form* of an “ant” that is imperceptibly black (an adventure of reading and interpretation — *it* crawls with thousands of meanings) and therefore, the “ant” that is Cixous’s writing-practice (of a body-written), that is Derrida’s dream of an interruption that knows not what it interrupts only that it does so, like a gift (of duty without duty) that gives without knowing (this gift is the radical supplementarity that *is* sexual difference):

(In parentheses, I note that all words are ants ... we must draw all the conclusions for sexual difference: as soon as words join in, as soon as they are a party to sexual difference or sexual difference has a brush with them, here is my hypothesis, as soon as there is sexual difference, there are words or rather traces *to read*. It begins *in this way*. There can be traces without sexual difference, for example with asexual living things, but there cannot be sexual difference without trace, and this holds not only for ‘us’, for living things we call human. But from here on, sexual difference is to be interpreted, to be deciphered, to be decoded, to be read and not to be seen. Readable, thus invisible, the object of testimony and not of proof — and in the same stroke problematic, mobile, not assured — it passes by, it is in passage, it passes from the one to the other, by the one and the other, from *l’une* to the other like *une fourmi, un fourmi* of a dream.)<sup>86</sup>

Writing is the passageway, the entrance, the exit, the dwelling place of the other in me—the other that I am and am not, that I don’t know how to be, but that I feel passing, that makes me live—that tears me apart, disturbs me, changes me, who?—a feminine one, a masculine one, some?—several, some unknown, which is indeed what gives me the desire to know and from which all life soars.<sup>87</sup>

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86 Derrida, “Excerpt 1: ‘Fourmis’,” op. cit., p. 121.

87 Cixous, *The Newly Born Woman*, op. cit., pp. 85-86.

We re-turn [*contretemps*] (through repetition) to the beginning of the chapter and its opening quotation from Cixous in order to read the in-between of the passageways of these quotes above and see there something invisible that conjoins this section's "*tous*" of armour and *amour* [*tous les deux*]. Between these two, in their separation and binding we have the +R (*plaisir* but also *plus d'air*, that oscillates between "more air" and "no more air") constitutive of the remainder in deconstruction's general economy constitutive of every excess. The supplement of the + is neither derivative nor secondary, which is to say, the remainder is never simply a left-over. But nor is pleasure that which comes before. The +R of sexual difference is not of a time according to a before and after, but rather a contre-temps, time out-of-time. Nor is it immured within an interior nor constitutive of an exteriority as remainder, but is the operation of an inter-weave.<sup>88</sup> We draw attention here to a deconstructive supplementary address of *sexual difference* that performs language in the plural (styles, voices, *genders*) — the *tous les deux* — to reveal a writing practice of excess and undecidability, neither a lack nor an absence. We have emphasized this excess through the writing strategies of Cixous and Derrida, a choreographed dance they perform together and apart so that there is always left open (in the in-between) an excess of supplementary readings. That is to say, we are witness to, without alibi, in an excavation of their writing, Cixous's gift—not the gift for gift, "gift and counter-gift," belonging to patriarchal economies of property and exchange—for Derrida with respect to the un-decidability of sexual difference. *Tous les deux* marks this moment of epiphany for Derrida, where his 'I' becomes a 'he' that is more excessive than that language which nominates masculinity: "It is an epiphany in my language and in the world that is tuned to it."<sup>89</sup> This invisible concatenation, well attuned to the *styles* of reciprocity that conjoin separation and reparation, *marks* the future as justice. The "impossible" of justice, if it exists, would be constitutive of an ethics whose priority and originary difference was sexual difference. An ethics of sexual difference, or sexual difference as an ethics of writing nominates a time: "when one must (duty without duty) forgive the gift for interrupting the circle of revenge or breaking the mirror of resentment, where one risks no longer knowing that giving knows how to receive."<sup>90</sup>

<sup>88</sup> See for a discussion of the +R of pleasure and the remainder: Derrida, "+R (Into the Bargain)" in *The Truth in Painting*, trans. by Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987) pp. 149-182. We may also remember Irigaray's reading of Heidegger as the philosopher who forgot "air," as the "*plus d'air*" (post) metaphysician. See Irigaray, *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger*, trans. by Mary Beth Mader (London: The Athelone Press, 1999).

<sup>89</sup> Derrida, "Excerpt 1: 'Fourmis,'" op. cit. p.125.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 120.

### Sexual Difference Before the Law

Let us re-turn here by beginning with a turn, a style, a *turn-style* where we are in the activity of crossing over and re-crossing back, revolving and re-evolving. This act, as excavated above, is not a fence-sitting but an opening to conditions that allow an undecidable entry and exit, or indiscernible inside to outside, where the terrain's threshold is something like an awakened guard constantly on the move. We have suggested earlier that this third strategy — that produces a change of "style" — interweaves and produces several languages and texts at once, a plurality of voices that are in the one moment both vigilant of those structural foundations already in place and awakened to something other that cannot be named. This amorphous description describes the deconstructive writing practice most fostered by Cixous who, *indebted* to Derrida, makes the deconstructive *undecidable* the *contretemps* of a future-to-come. Like Kristeva and Irigaray, Cixous has found Lacanian psychoanalysis a useful model with respect to the limitations produced via its phallocentric logic that impacts directly on the structuration of language organized according to masculine desire.

For Cixous her desire, recognized in the strategies of *écriture*, is for alternative readings of woman that explode the masculine law founded on hierarchical binary oppositions. She draws attention to the power economy accorded to such spatialised and metaphorical binaries that appropriate woman and place her in the position of lack (or absence). Cixous (like Derrida) is *indebted* to Heidegger for unconcealing the (im)possibility of getting outside the language of metaphysics. This is a position that is shared also by Kristeva and Irigaray to different degrees but they converge as well on a "revolution" or "dream" of an unimaginable future-to-come of a *feminine law* that would reside in a new language. It is in this respect that Cixous's writing moves secretly (as in an unconscious dream) through the existing system, secreting her own pleasures along the way.<sup>91</sup> This secreting secret (with respect to the maternal body) has a resonance with Kristeva's pre-oedipal *semiotic* that is full of pleasure-seeking bodily impulses and

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<sup>91</sup> See Sellers, op. cit., p. 145: "She stresses the role of the unconscious in writing [Derrida calls it "her" *dream*], which, she suggests, brings an other voice that disrupts any claim to a single or objective 'truth', and provides a 'jewellery-box' of alternative meanings, possibilities and directions for the writer to consider: 'these pearls, these diamonds, these signifiers that flash with a thousand meanings, I admit it, I have often filched them from my unconscious'."

desires.<sup>92</sup> Irigaray's perception of a fluid indiscernible thoroughly spent scripting is another supplementary register that draws upon both Kristeva and Cixous. All three recall bodily activity and it is Cixous whose proximal metaphoricity turns literal where all manner of *speaking* body conflates woman, sexual difference and writing. It is in this respect that the (well-coined) description *writing-your-body* becomes synonymous to the writing-practice of *Écriture Féminine*.<sup>93</sup>

Cixous sees this body of *écriture féminine* as not exclusively woman's body but suggests biological differences play an important role in determining our choice of gender economy, and provide a potential impetus for transforming the (patriarchal) status quo. The terms 'masculine' and 'feminine'; inscribed through patriarchal rule, she reads as nominal positions —“marker positions” — whereby the ‘masculine’ demarcates an allegiance to the law, and the ‘feminine’ in *her* difference is willing to risk its prohibitions. Cixous suggests that at present women, because of the position to, which we are relegated and the way this position is confirmed socially and culturally as well as politically, are more likely to adopt a feminine response than men. The point for Cixous is that we all perpetually fluctuate between different gender roles, sometimes assuming defensive, masculine postures that seek to close-down, appropriate and control, at

92 See ibid., p. 140.: “More emphatically than Kristeva, Cixous believes the non-repression and inclusion of the maternal body in writing presents a link with the pre-symbolic plenitude between self and m/other, and hence a way round the loss, exile and perpetual alienation of the masculine schema.” We can see here that Cixous’s strategy for a possible feminine language is caught up in motherly love — a love that gives (without the desire to appropriate). But is this a love so innate that it is a condition from outside the masculine symbolic? Or is it a love that is a giving without taking precisely conditioned on the laws of masculine desire whereby to be wholly other (i.e. the strange counter-condition of masculinity) is to refuse the logic by positioning oneself in the opposite of ...? This question is of course, a question that creates a pathway for thinking that is about leaving the house of the law altogether i.e. the Nietzschean strategy that concludes all we have are bodily impulses combating against the multitudinal outside significations operating in the symbolic. The radicality of his thinking is that there is no outside to symbolic registers. For Nietzsche, the unconscious also operates at the level of an affect of symbolic intervention. See Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, trans. by Daniel W. Smith (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997).

93 See ibid., pp. 139-140.: “For Cixous, ‘writing the body’ has three specific components. Firstly ... she urges women to break from the restrictive appropriated determinations of women’s experiences [of our bodies] via the masculine economy, and to express our discoveries in writing: ‘women have almost everything to write about femininity: about their sexuality, that is to say, about the infinite and mobile complexity of their becoming erotic’. She believes women’s inscription of our ‘awakenings’ will ‘burst’ the partitions and codes of the masculine symbolic, opening this up to other possibilities. Secondly, Cixous argues that language is itself a bodily function. Speaking and writing involve translation of thoughts through a complex network of chemical messages, nerve impulses and muscle movements, and Cixous suggests that this physiological activity, together with the ongoing body functions of breathing, pulse, the momentum of the body drives, stress and hormonal changes, influence our use of language. She believes a writer’s attempt to repress these activities is both a falsification of the nature of the writing process, and an attempt to control meaning in compliance with the dictates of masculine law. Thirdly, paralleling Kristeva’s work on the power of the pre-symbolic *chora* to affect the subject in language, Cixous emphasizes the role of the mother’s body in feminine writing. For Cixous the pre-Oedipal rhythms and articulations of the mother’s body continue to influence our adult experience, and like Kristeva she believes the inscription of these rhythms is a primary factor in preventing the codes of the patriarchal symbolic from becoming rigidified and all-powerful.”

other times accepting a more open, feminine response willing to take risks, and at other times combining elements of each.<sup>94</sup>

In this respect Cixous finds in the act of writing these elements of otherness become multifaceted whereby the categories of masculine and feminine no longer sit in opposition or neatly align with phallogocentrism. *Écriture* becomes the wholly other where the “I” locates the “other in me” where permission is accessed to not know who “I” am and yet *know* “me” and where the “strangulation” of sexual difference acknowledges its parts. She writes: “As soon as you let yourself be led [by writing], as soon as you let yourself go [beyond the codes of the masculine symbolic], words diverge [and] meanings begin to flow.”<sup>95</sup>

*Tous les deux:* ‘I ... reserved myself two places in the text (so as to be able to slip constantly from one to the other (we/qui) ... I abandons herself. I abandon myself. I surrenders, loses herself ... the author of what I describe is not me, it is the Other.’<sup>96</sup>

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94 Ibid., p. 81.

95 Cixous from “*La Venue à l’écriture*” cited in ibid., p. 143.

96 Cixous from *Le Livre de Promethea* cited in ibid., p. 147.

## C H A P T E R   3

### S a y i n g   D i f f e r e n c e   O t h e r w i s e :   B e f o r e   B e i n g

#### Introduction: Difference, Identity and Temporality

In Chapter 2 we established a guiding question that concerns a coincidental reading of particular delimitations to metaphysics and the saying of “woman.” With Section 1, “The Metaphorical Priority of Being,” we saw that in Heidegger’s project on being and Derrida’s strategic thinking of the supplement we may recognize within the thinking otherwise of metaphysical closure the possibility of, if not the closure of metaphysics, then its radical destabilization, dehiscence or for Heidegger at least, an abyssal leap as a leave-taking.<sup>1</sup> The question we have posed circulates, moves or revolves around the prior question of co-incidence, as if co-incidence may be a simple matter of recognition. We recognize identities as the same, as if the “withdrawal” of being and the “supplement” of copula are the same as the “withdrawal” and “supplemental” saying of “woman” in the patriarchal legacy of metaphysics, as if “withdrawal” and “supplement” nominated in the destabilization of metaphysics could co-incidentally

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<sup>1</sup> On Heidegger’s “leap” as a leave-taking from metaphysics, see Heidegger, “The Principle of Identity,” in idem, *Identity and Difference*, op. cit., pp. 23-41.

nominate another name for “woman,” in an economy of identities that would complicate infinitely the demarcation of difference that would separate identities and differences. We recognize that co-incidence, if it happens, if it is at all possible, already implicates spatial and temporal coordination, already may in fact and naively imply the most classical of metaphysical closures in presence. What better name to give to the certainty of knowing than the metaphysical closure of self-presence to oneself, the co-incidence of self-presence? This would name a spatiality in which we are able to recognize the absolute proximity of a self to one-self. It would also name a temporality wherein we recognize the moment, the now, the immediacy of a present, present to itself, or at the very least, in mediated experience, have a co-incidence between the mediate and the immediate.

Hence, with Chapter 2 we engaged, under a rubric of “strategic bets,” the possibility of a spatiality of the co-incident, in the impossible proximity of the proper, in the proper say of “woman.” Haven’t we already realized what is at stake here without properly delineating it? Doesn’t the co-incidence of “closure” and the “proper” name the same thing, at least in metaphysics, which is to say, at least in thinking properly? Or, to put things differently, doesn’t the “leap” out of “closure” coincide with the impropriety of thinking. And would this “impropriety” of “thinking” not be yet another name for “woman”? And yet, still, here, co-incidence here co-incides with itself, which is to say, have we moved or are we able to move except properly and proximally? The spatial strategic bets of section two attempt an escalation of the aporias that themselves seem to escalate here as a kind of debris of the house of being.<sup>2</sup> We recognize the complexity in Derrida’s “strategic bets” as the undecidable moves to be made, staying indoors, renovating the interior; or abandoning the house, moving on, only to find you need to live somewhere and are more than likely to pick up a piece of real-estate just like the one you left behind; or a liminal move, perhaps the dawning of the recognition that the interior already, uncannily, has more of the outside in it than you know what to do with, and this opens the possibility of dissimulating both interior and exterior with a plurality of styles.

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2 On language as the house of being, see in particular Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism,” op. cit., p. 217: “Thinking accomplishes the relation of Being to the essence of man. It does not make or cause the relation. Thinking brings this relation to Being solely as something handed over to it from Being. Such offering consists in the fact that in thinking Being comes to language. Language is the house of Being. In its home man dwells. Those who think and those who create with words are the guardians of this home.”

In Section 2, “On Feminism: Language and Sexual Difference,” in perhaps a generalized way, and possibly for the sake of a kind of short-hand, we suggested that Julia Kristeva works the interior, notwithstanding her pivotal recognition of the *chora* as some kind of uncanny excess of colour swatches and furniture catalogues, whose heterogenous play and pleasure will be brought to an abrupt halt by the thetic moment of the style police. In a similar generalized way we suggest that Lucy Irigaray recognizes that the house always already implies its master, that there is no escaping within the building codes of a patriarchy that lodges woman in his place, the bind of woman to his law. She would want to move next door but into something we would hardly recognize as habitation, in the sense that it would not so much be a renovation of a place, but rather a rewriting of the building codes themselves to allow for a new law of interiority and exteriority, a new law that allows for a displacement of the statics of orthogonal constructions, a kind of marine or mucous dwelling for which the expression “envelope” becomes more a verb than a noun. But she has more than a few problems finding the materials except in the debris of his many houses. But then, this work of debris is a kind of liquefaction.

In a third moment we complicate the “twos,” all of the “twos,” the twos that would be the interiority of an exteriority, that would be Kristeva and Irigaray, that would be identity and difference or the proper and closure, that would be the “to be” or “not-to-be” of metaphysics and of sexual difference. In this third moment is it Cixous or is it Derrida who becomes the subject of our engagement? Are we able to say, and what would the making-decidable actually signify? We may already recognize two (at least) possible readings, one a radical conservation or shoring up of meaning, a kind of resolution we may recognize in any project of domestication, or giving “woman” “his” place, lodging her in his. The other reading we would say is impossible, dehiscent, disseminating. When “moments” come in threes we cannot help but think *sublation* (are we helpless precisely when coincidence (chance recognition) and the proper coincide for us?), the overcoming of negation in its negation: Kristeva and Irigaray will differ most radically precisely on the matter of the same, on what is precisely coincident and assimilable one to the other. That is to say, they do not most differ in where they are most different, unassimilable, but precisely where they coincide, as in

the escalator of sublation, in the identity of identity and difference. And Cixous will attain the synthetic moment of negation of their negation precisely by differing to the same of their identity, as the identity of their difference. It is all too easy to read this short-hand of *Écriture Féminine* in three brief episodes within this conservation of meaning, within, perhaps, an already assumed or naturalized reading of Derrida's "strategic bets" according to such a conservation of an Hegelian kind.<sup>3</sup> Cixous/Derrida presents us with our cake, sliced and served. All the twos, between them, between reparation-separation, no trace without sexual difference ... no sexual difference without trace.

But, of course, Derrida hardly had Hegel in mind when he proffered his strategic bets. He was thinking of Heidegger, but more poignantly, or co-incidentally, Irigaray's "marine lover," Nietzsche. [As an aside, what is it not to have Hegel in mind? Isn't this what Hegel precisely thought as the superiority of his system?] Nietzsche burns the house to the ground and walks away, or at least he says he does, which may or may not amount to the same thing. For the moment a default reading of a naturalized Hegelian kind that distributes positions across a series of spatial registers seems difficult to dislodge, or rather, all too easy to understand, which is generally the same thing. For this reason we broach a question of temporalization as the co-terminous concern of coincidence or the proximity of the proper, keeping in mind that establishing a relation between spatiality and temporality may well be an infinite vanishing point (a spatial metaphor) as a task that proved vexing for Heidegger.<sup>4</sup> Temporalization will be broached in a reading of Heidegger with and without Levinas, or Levinas for and against Heidegger. The reading is strategic. We have recognized the sheer complexity of engaging with a question of the proper as it weaves inside and outside of metaphysical closure and hence the conundrum of both saying "woman" and the sheer impropriety of saying "woman" textured in this weave. Heidegger's radicality with respect to time and being, and Levinas's recognition if not renovation of

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3 In what follows we discuss aspects of Hegel's dialectics, particularly in relation to the reading of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* by Alexander Kojève. With Chapter 7 we focus on Hegelian dialectics as a pivotal concern for Derrida in *Glas*.

4 We are emphasising here the "retraction" undertaken by Heidegger, in his lecture "Time and Being" regarding his "attempt" at deriving spatiality from temporality in *Being and Time*: "The attempt in Being and Time, section 70, to derive human spatiality from temporality is untenable." See "Time and Being," in *On Time and Being*, trans. by Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972) pp. 1-24., p. 23.

Heidegger's ec-static temporality, allows us to think the proper, co-incidence and saying from a significantly different vantage point, and one to which feminist philosophy has not been indifferent.

In this chapter we engage particularly in a double reading of Levinas, firstly with Section 1, "The Same and the Other," in conjunction with Heidegger and a feminist critique of both philosophers in their difference. With Section 2, "Writing's Responsibility," we encounter Levinas in a second reading, this time with Derrida and a response by Derrida to Levinas that we cannot separate from his reparation to Cixous.

## S e c t i o n   I

### T h e   S a m e   a n d   t h e   O t h e r

The kind of being which belongs to the Dasein of Others differs ... from the readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand ... they are like the very Dasein which frees them, in that *they are there too, and there with it* ...Being-in-the-world, the world is always the one I share with Others.<sup>5</sup>

Levinas thinks that Heidegger's effort to rework the Cartesian distinction between inner and outer, between mind and body, between cognition or thought and exteriority, results in a failure to remain true to the concretion of the ethical relation with the Other.<sup>6</sup>

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5 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, op. cit. pp. 154-155, quoted in Chanter, *Time, Death and the Feminine* op. cit., p. 97.

6 *Time, Death and the Feminine*, op. cit., p. 86.

### An Hegelian Aporia: Identity and the Same

We do not want to necessarily become lodged in the absolute of the Hegelian logos. Hegel is not our concern. Yet, we're the one who brought him up, if only to point to the off-ramps recognized by Heidegger and Levinas on Hegel's trajectory to the end of history. Hence the need for a short rehearsal of the Hegelian version of identity and the same, via a small inflection to Alexander Kojève, prior to saying something on the same in the languages of Levinas and Heidegger.<sup>7</sup>

For Hegel, a concept is an identity — identity of things being the same — for example, the concept “dog” for all dogs as identical. Identity cannot be thought except as differing from the different. Difference is what enables identity to be itself, that is, the same as the other of the other. By definition, the concept is different from the thing — but if too different it would no longer be the concept of this thing, but an erroneous concept of it. Thus, the concept without the thing would not be true, but an imaginary representation. If Nature is the name of all those things of which concepts enable us to think in varying degrees of identity, then identity of the concept with itself is conditional on natural things outside concepts. The concept would not be itself without this other (the thing), that is to say, nature is the position of the concept outside itself, in exteriority. The concept, in order to be truly a concept, must posit itself as different from itself and make itself into a thing. Similarly, a thing must also be other than itself, that is, identity dependent on difference and that which differs from the thing is precisely the concept. That is, the thing is posited as concept. Here we get a sense of the absolutism of Hegelian interiority and exteriority, their mutuality and self-referentiality. This passage from nature to logos, for Hegel, is the emergence of mind. As Descombes suggests regarding Kojève’s thinking:

Even while it remains a thing, indeed in order to remain so, any thing which is capable of becoming the concept of itself, i.e. is capable of conceiving its own identity, is *certainly the absolute, not only as substance (thing) but as subject*

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<sup>7</sup> See Alexander Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*, ed. by Allan Bloom, trans. by James H. Nichols, Jr. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993) p. 174.

(consciousness of self, knowledge of its own identity). And that is what Hegel called *Geist* or Mind.<sup>8</sup>

Kojève acutely locates the totalizing framework in Hegelian absolute knowledge. It does not lie so much in an absolute subject negating the negation of an exteriority but rather the fact that the knowledge of the world developed by the philosopher will be absolute provided it can be established that it is knowledge of a subject, of an ego. The subject of philosophical discourse on the world should be the world itself; the object should be the philosopher, a shift from “Man speaks of Being” to “Being speaks of itself in the discourse which man holds on Being.”<sup>9</sup> Heidegger and Levinas will each approach this annihilation of the negative of an Hegelian absolute primarily by rethinking the work of the negative itself in the finitude of death. Each will also approach the question of the same within an economy of identity and difference in a manner that challenges the Hegelian framework. It is precisely the radicality of a thinking of the “same” with respect to difference, that enables the Derridean strategies to operate according to a more radical “spacing” or play of absence than Hegel’s “negative.”<sup>10</sup> As we will see, for Heidegger and Levinas and a reading of each for feminism, their “overcoming” of Hegelianism may be understood in part with how each thinks the “same.”

In an interview with Emmanuel Levinas, “Intention, Event, and the Other,” conducted in 1989 with Christoph von Wolzogen, Levinas is questioned on his notion of “the same” and “the other.”<sup>11</sup> I want to quote this passage in full, in part for the complex subtly Levinas suggests in thinking any question of “relation” but primarily because there is nothing more fundamental for Levinas in establishing his difference to Heidegger than on his thinking of “the same.” And, as we will come to see, it is on

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8 Vincent Descombes, “The Humanisation of Nothingness (Kojève),” in *Modern French Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) pp. 9-54, p. 40.

9 Ibid., p. 41.

10 See, for example, Derrida, “The Pit and the Pyramid: Introduction to Hegel’s Semiology,” in *Margins of Philosophy*, op. cit., pp. 69-108.: “The self-presence of absolute knowledge and the consciousness of Being-near-to-itself in logos, in the absolute concept, will have been distracted from themselves only for the time of a detour and for the time of a sign. The time of the sign, then, is the time of referral. It signifies self-presence, refers presence to itself, organises the circulation of its provisionality. Always, from the outset, the movement of lost presence already will have set in motion the process of its reappropriation (pp. 71-72). In Chapter 7 we undertake an extended discussion on the Derridean “negative,” and Hegelian “negation.”

11 Levinas and von Wolzogen, “Intention, Event, and the Other (1989),” trans. by Andrew Schmitz in *Is It Righteous to Be?* ed. by Jill Robbins (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001) pp. 140-157.

this question of “the same” that their understanding of temporality most significantly differs. This difference is explored by Levinas in part in relation to sexual difference. Indeed the partiality of his reference to sexual difference implies all manner of complexity as to undecidable readings of metonymic if not metaphoric tropes of the feminine.

Q.: Now, you speak of the same, *le même*, and of the other *l'autre*.

E.L.: *Le même*: “I” in its limited sense, “I” as completely other than the other. Not because I feel certain inexpressible things, not because I have, as one says in English, a *secret*, a *mysterium*, an immanence which is my world. Certainly not in this sense. Rather, “I” am straightaway delivered over and obliged to the other. Only when I speak of justice, an ethics of the multiplicity, do I come to terminology, to the logos of the term.

Q.: But what is so remarkable is that in my connection to the other, I always already have a relation to him. I even understand him. But also, exactly as you say, I am absolutely separated from him through that which you name his “secret.”

E.L.: *Le même et L'autre* in this sense is, for example, difference. Yes. But I just barely allow myself to designate this as a “relation.” I always put the word—when I remember to—in quotations, because “relation” rests on the ground of an ensemble. In the totality, there are “relations.” I have an expression: non-indifference. In French one can say, I am non-indifferent to someone. The double negation in “non-indifference” signifies difference; this expression is extremely important to me. This is something completely other than a “relation,” which always presupposes a together, a universal genus.

Q.: But isn’t relation both unity and difference?

E.L.: “Relation” is always so. And then there is something utterly other that is non-indifferent to me. I thought about this when I spoke of the feminine in *Time and the Other*, where the erotic is the relation to the completely other.<sup>12</sup>

This brief excerpt is significant for the emphasis Levinas gives to a coincidence of “the same” and “identity,” an “I” completely other than the other. But it is complicated for the swerve Levinas will bring to an understanding of something other than “relation,” a non-indifference that is the possibility of “relation” that comes before the “together” of relation. The “I” in this sense as the other of the other is the non-indifference of the

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12 Ibid., pp. 147-148.

same to the other as a difference not yet constitutive of a relation. The feminine becomes the locus of re-membering “the erotic” as the non-indifference or *relation* (not in inverted commas [are they forgotten or not this time?]) to the completely [but non-totalised] other, in an interview that recollects the other time, the time of *Time and the Other*. Levinas thought about this, then. But does his recollection of the then of his thinking mean he is thinking of it now, thinking the feminine secondarily as an example of a thinking of non-indifference or primarily as the dislocation of difference? As we will come to see, this question of the primacy or secondariness of the feminine for Levinas will be all his doing and un-doing within a certain band of feminist discourse.

We are yet faced with the complexity of Levinas’s “the same and the other” that refuses the Hegelian law of identity and difference, or the absolute and totalizing subject. Of course for Levinas this totalizing subject is the subject of justice, of the logos of the term, of the adding up that is terminology. Yet this subject is inaugurated and interrupted in the face-to-face of non-indifference to the completely other, to the ethical. And Levinas will insist from the beginning that for Heidegger Da sein is this totalizing self, that Heidegger does not, or cannot, think Da sein otherwise than as the same, the “I” of *Jemeinigkeit*, the “I” of mineness that inaugurates authentic Da sein and finite, ec-static temporality.<sup>13</sup> Levinas gives this mineness the name of “the same.” And he will differ most radically from Heidegger on all of the implications for thinking and being from the point of view of the other who interrupts the same. It is for this reason, in order to explore more closely an understanding of “the same” in Heidegger’s thinking, for the sake of a conversation between Heidegger and Levinas on the “same” that we turn to Heidegger’s short text, “The Principle of Identity,” a meditation on Parmenides’ fragment, “For the same perceiving (thinking) as well as being” which Heidegger re-writes as “thinking and Being belong together in the Same and by virtue of this Same.”<sup>14</sup>

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13 See especially *Totality and Infinity*, op. cit., pp. 45-48 where Levinas sharply distinguishes between Heideggerian ontology and his project: “In subordinating every relation with existents to the relation with Being the Heideggerian ontology affirms the primacy of freedom over ethics. To be sure, the freedom involved in the essence of truth is not for Heidegger a principle of free will. Freedom comes from an obedience to Being; it is not man who possesses freedom; it is freedom that possesses man.” Ibid., p. 45.

14 Heidegger, “The Principle of Identity,” op. cit., p. 27.

We seem to have here all of the keys to Levinas's reading of Heidegger. Or, do we? Heidegger quickly complicates things in his own way. He emphasizes that metaphysics finds identity as a characteristic of being: "the unity of identity forms a basic characteristic of the being of beings. Everywhere, wherever and however we are related to beings of every kind, we find identity making its claim on us."<sup>15</sup> Hence Heidegger suggests we interpret "Sameness" as a belonging together as identity. But he suggests the Parmenides' fragment offers another thinking: "The key word in Parmenides' fragment, the Same, remains obscure. We shall leave it obscure. But we shall at the same time take a hint from the sentence that begins with this key word."<sup>16</sup> For Heidegger it comes down to how we read "belonging together" according to a metaphysical tradition that thinks identity as a belonging to being, or according to a "leap" out of a belonging to metaphysics. This would be a "belonging together" of "thinking" and "being" in the Same. "The Same" is not being, is not thinking (man) and is certainly not identity metaphysically thought. Heidegger takes a strategic bet on a play of italics: do we read here a *belonging* together or a belonging *together*? The default of metaphysics resides in the latter, concerned with the together that will come to govern any belonging. One immediately recollects Levinas here on "relation" that always already implies a together, a totalizing of some kind. Heidegger rather emphasizes a question of "belonging." What is "belonging" in fact is his question: "Of course, we must still ask what "belong" means in that case, and how its peculiar "together" is determined only in its terms."<sup>17</sup> The difficulty, suggests Heidegger, is that as soon as, for example, we ask what belonging in the Same means for thinking and being, what is their belonging, we need to ask a prior question: what is man?; what is being? such that their belonging is determinable and we return to the emphasis on the together and coordination of terms in their unity.

What instead, he suggests, if we begin to think the stake in the belonging itself: "Man's distinctive feature lies in this, that he, as the being who thinks, is open to Being, face-to-face with Being; thus man remains referred to Being and so answers to it. Man is essentially this relationship of responding to Being, and he is only this. This 'only'

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15 Ibid., p. 26.

16 Ibid., p. 28.

17 Ibid., p. 29.

does not mean a limitation, but rather an excess.”<sup>18</sup> We might even say this responding, response, is a responsibility to being precisely not as a relation to being in the sense that there is already a determination of being, but prior to any such determination as a response as non-indifference. Prior to the together of any determination of being, man as openness to being is the priority of a non-indifference to the “it gives,” the “it gives” that is the giving of the open as such, the Same.<sup>19</sup> The face-to-face of man and being is prior to any determination of man or being. The face-to-face is a non-indifferent belonging, a responding to what is wholly otherwise, that is the open. And being is nothing other than the arriving, presencing in the openness of man, presence: “This does not at all mean that Being is posited first and only by man.”<sup>20</sup> Prior to the metaphysical grasping of the together of man and being, prior to all relations is the face-to-face of a belonging as an openness to appropriation, to the *es gibt*, the it gives. The Same is not a principle of identity founded in the coincidence of being and thinking (Hegel), the together or relation of their belonging, but is the radical disclosure of a belonging that is prior to the metaphysical determination of being, that is the openness of thinking to what is wholly otherwise as an obligation. In perhaps one of the most difficult passages in this text, Heidegger gives a summary account: “The doctrine of metaphysics represents identity as a fundamental characteristic of Being. Now it becomes clear that Being belongs with thinking to an identity whose active essence stems from that letting belong together which we call the appropriation. The essence of identity is a property of the event of appropriation.”<sup>21</sup> But we see now how things hinge on how we might possibly understand this time of the “prior” particularly if the stakes for Heidegger resound in “presence” for the sake of the open.

Hence, we have rehearsed the complexity of Heidegger’s thinking of identity and the same in order to prepare our reading of temporality in both Heidegger and Levinas, particularly in terms of the refusal Levinas will make to Heideggerian thinking precisely on the totalizing it implies with respect to identity and otherness. We hope

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18 Ibid., p. 31.

19 On the “it give” see in particular “Time & Being,” op. cit., p. 5: “In this way, the manner must become clear how there is, It gives Being and how there is, It gives time. In this giving, it becomes apparent how that giving is to be determined which, as a relation, first holds the two toward each other and brings them into being.”

20 Heidegger, “The Principle of Identity,” op. cit., p. 31.

21 Ibid., p. 39.

to emphasize how a belonging yet exists between Heidegger and Levinas in spite of the difficulty of recognizing the relations of a togetherness. This emphasis on belonging rather than the together or a logos of the term, as a concern with the tracing of a separation-reparation, a severance of belonging and together that questions their proximity or co-incidence, will spill over into concerns with the complexity of Levinas's accounting for temporality and sexual difference in the face of Heidegger's apparent indifference (which may yet be thought of as a non-indifference) to sexual difference.

### Being for Death: Mine or the Other's

The following readings of Heidegger and Levinas are far from neutral engagements with each thinker. Rather we are engaging them precisely through a reading of *Time, Death and the Feminine: Levinas and Heidegger*, by the American feminist philosopher, Tina Chanter.<sup>22</sup> Yet our reading of them will run against the grain of Chanter's overall position. Three preliminary comments are worth making: (i) Chanter stresses in her preface that the *metaphorics* of sexual difference overtly orchestrate Levinas's critical response to Heidegger, but that they equally elude Levinas. For Chanter the status of the nominals "masculine" and "feminine" will end up becoming the kernel of a problem for any reading of Levinas: does he reference empirical, corporeal woman in the "feminine" or something accessible only through a metaphorics?<sup>23</sup> (ii) "Not only is death (like the feminine) mysterious and essentially unknowable; it is also primarily the death of the other that is significant for Levinas,

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22 Chanter, *Time, Death and the Feminine: Levinas with Heidegger*, op. cit.

23 Ibid., p. xiii: "In taking on the philosophical inquiries of Levinas and Heidegger into time and death in a context that strives to give them their due, but which also takes seriously the need to think through their relationship to feminist theory, I am not bringing together two mutually exclusive domains. The metaphorics of sexual difference overtly orchestrate Levinas's critical response to Heidegger, but it also operates in ways that elude Levinas, whose self-commentary on other aspects of his own writing is so prevalent and so arresting. The way in which the feminine functions in Levinas's texts, often in an explicitly subordinate or supporting role to the dominant themes, would appear to exceed or refuse to be contained by the very structures that might seem to keep it in check." The question of metaphor, essential here for Chanter, such that she would be able to decide between the metaphorical and the non-metaphorical, is non-straight-forward. We have already alluded to the "as" of metaphor as the abundance and void of the saying of being. Equally, in Chapter 4, and in relation to a Derridean reading of Nietzsche on woman, the question would be how, and at what point, does the veil of metaphor fall. See in this regard, Derrida's "White Mythology: Metaphor and the Text of Philosophy," in *Margins of Philosophy*, op. cit., pp. 207-272 and his "The *Retrait* of Metaphor," in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other*, op. cit., pp. 48-80.

rather than my own death.”<sup>24</sup> This difference (death of other or my own death) will become the crucial difference for Chanter between Levinas and Heidegger, or Levinas’s major objection to Heidegger. As the phenomenon of death construes an understanding of primordial time for both Levinas and Heidegger, each has a different understanding of primordial time. For Levinas it intimately relates to the question of the Other, which in his exposition he genders.<sup>25</sup> Hence Levinas’s understanding of death and primordial time implicates some discussion of sexual difference. Equally, one might say, we can read Heidegger and Levinas differently on the basis of how their discussions of death and time (crucial for each) implicate a discussion of sexual difference (Levinas) or doesn’t (Heidegger). (iii) “More fundamental than the oblivion to which Western philosophy has allowed the question of Being to fall prey, is its persistent privileging of ontology over ethics, or the same over the other.”<sup>26</sup> We find that Levinas, and Chanter’s emphatic reading of Levinas, tend to suggest that identity, the same and being are synonymous, that the privilege of ontology or the question of being is to find the same, identity in being as the overturning or overcoming of the alterity of otherness. In reading Heidegger on “The Principle of Identity,” we recognize the extent to which he opposes a coincident reading of identity and being, and the extent to which difference, alterity is primordially constitutive of the same.

### Being, Time and the Same

Da sein’s being in the world is primordially different to the being in the world of things. For Da sein, its being in the world is its way of being as its proximity to the being of its world or horizon of disclosure. Things are for Da sein ready-to-hand in that things that are disclosed are done so in Da sein’s underwayness in its project, i.e., things are for-the-sake-of.<sup>27</sup> Where we encounter things that are not useful or question

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24 Chanter, op. cit., p. xv.

25 See especially “The Dwelling,” in *Totality and Infinity*, op. cit., pp. 152-168: “And the other whose presence is discreetly an absence, with which is accomplished the primary hospitable welcome which describes the field of intimacy, is the Woman. The woman is the condition for recollection, the interiority of the Home, and inhabitation.” Ibid., p. 155.

26 Chanter, op. cit. p. 7.

27 See, in particular, Section 18 of Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, “Relevance and Significance: The Worldliness of the World,” pp. 77-83: “This primary ‘what-for’ is not just another for-that as a possible factor in relevance. The primary ‘what-for’ is a for-the-sake-of-which. But the for-the-sake-of-which always concerns the being of *Da-sein* which is essentially concerned *about* this being itself in its being.” Ibid., p. 78.

them outside of usefulness, they are present-at-hand. Ontically we tend to take the question of things correctly in their present-at-handness, when we survey, measure and inquire into the nature of things in themselves. Present-at-handness constitutes truth as correctness, and constitutes metaphysics as an ontology of presence, that things *are* originally and correctly in that they are present before us. Hence, time is privileged as the present in that being is privileged as the beings that are. Time, as in “what is time” is itself considered as a being. This circularity of the question of time presupposed as a question of being that already implicates time, dominant from Aristotle, is what inaugurates the question of *Being and Time*: to pose another question of time than that of time’s being (before ontology?, prior to being? Otherwise than being?)<sup>28</sup> Both ready-to-handness and present-at-handness are important in developing an understanding of ontic-ontological difference as each of them requires a more fundamental ontological engagement, which means a more concrete engagement with being-in-the-world, or within Da sein’s horizon of disclosure.

Chanter does a double reading of Heidegger critiquing him from a feminist position with respect to corporeality, bodies and others.<sup>29</sup> Hence, in spite of an emphasis given by Heidegger and forcefully acknowledged by Levinas as to an analytics of Da sein being an analytics of a concrete being in the world, Da sein seems, for Chanter, to be a disembodied being for whom a futural engagement with a project and possibility is all important. Da sein is not sexed, does not have race etc., and Chanter reads this via its aporia on this account to be white, middle class, masculine and Christian. With respect to her second reading of Da sein with an emphasis on temporality, there is a tension with the first reading. Levinas will be located in a space opened between these

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28 In section 2 to *Being and Time*, Heidegger alerts us to the trap of a circular structure for the determination of the formal structure for the question of being. See *Being and Time*, op. cit., pp. 3-7. It is worth emphasising though, on the question of ecstatic temporality as the meaning of being, that Heidegger precisely concludes *Being and Time* with these three questions: “How is this mode of temporalizing of temporality to be interpreted? Is there a way leading from primordial *time* to the meaning of *being*? Does *time* itself reveal itself as the horizon of *being*? Ibid., p. 398.

29 Chanter, op. cit., p. 75: “On the surface it would seem that a far-reaching feminist critique of Heidegger could be launched. Such a critique would consist in exposing a normative bias that is built into his ontological method in such a way as to cover over its prejudices [white, male, Eurocentric, Christian, nationalist]. Once the normative assumptions of Heidegger’s discourse are uncovered, it would become possible to see not only that Heidegger neglects feminist concerns when treating certain topics, but how his philosophy is formulated in such a way as to render such concerns irrelevant.” Though Chanter commences with a provisional “on the surface,” it does not seem as if there is another plane of analysis than this. One notices a double move, staying on the surface here while “exposing” what Heidegger “cover[s] over” as prejudice, digging into Heidegger while keeping our heads above ground.

two readings. There are problems with Chanter's surmise on the first reading. She would have wanted perhaps for Heidegger to mention corporeality with respect to Da sein. The problem as I see it is deeply embedded in her and possibly Levinas's engagement with the Cartesian legacy. To already speak of corporeality is to work with the distinction to non-corporeality that makes some good sense in the complexity of a Levinasian frame, though reduced by Chanter too much to a binary.<sup>30</sup> Heidegger's Da sein is neither corporeal nor ideation but the difference itself that would make the horizontal possibility of either, and hence is neither too little body nor too much mind.<sup>31</sup> Da sein is its modes of horizontal disclosure with respect to its concrete body, corporeality and others; its "mineness" is this disclosure that allows being with others as a primordial, fundamental relation for Da sein's being.<sup>32</sup> Her second reading with an emphasis on temporality will ultimately be returned to the first, as temporality will be opened to disclosure in the mineness of Da sein's being for death to the exclusion of the other. Hence Levinas is inserted between the two readings as the opening to the other that neither the being of Da sein nor the temporality of Da sein can allow for.

In the introduction to *Being and Time*, Heidegger suggests that he will engage fully in Aristotle's philosophy of time, which has not been dislodged in the history of philosophy. It consists primarily of two parts: that time is an infinite series of repetitions of now moments and that time moves in one direction only. Heidegger

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30 See Heidegger's discussion on Descartes in his *Nietzsche*, for an account of Descartes that does not simply establish the binary of subject and object, corporeality and non-corporeality emphasised by Chanter. In particular, see Heidegger's discussion in "The Cartesian *Cogito* as *Cogito Me Cogitare*," in Volume IV: Nihilism, op. cit., pp. 102 ff. Heidegger emphasises a reading that implicates *percipere* and *cogitare* such that for Descartes the *cogito* is a bodily action of representing, a seizing of a thing as much as it is a thinking.

31 See, for an example of the "material world" inscribed in Heidegger's phenomenal being-in-the-world, the description of a table in *Ontology: The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, trans. by John van Buren (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999). He offers two descriptions of a kitchen table from the viewpoint of present-at-handness and Dasein's facticity. The first appears under a heading "An inaccurate description of the everyday world," and presents a table as an abstracted generality. The second, under a heading "A description of the everyday world on the basis of going about dealings in which we tarry for a while," suggests: "What is in *the* room there at home is *the* table (not "a" table among many other tables in other rooms and houses) at which one sits *in order to* write, have a meal, sew, play ... That part is damaged. It now stands in a better spot in the room than before—there's better lighting, for example ... Here and there it shows lines—the boys like to busy themselves at the table. These lines are not just interruptions in the paint, but rather: it was the boys and it still is ... there that decision was made with a *friend* that time, there that *work* written that time, there that *holiday* celebrated that time." Ibid., pp. 67-69.

32 See Heidegger's *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, op. cit., for a discussion of "being-with" with respect to stone, animal and Da sein. See, for example, Section 49, pp. 201-208, concerning the ability to transpose oneself into another being (animal, stone and man).

suggests that even Bergson, in spite of his thinking of the *duree* (duration as lived experience) does not dislodge the fundamentals of Aristotelian time. But, Heidegger never actually gets to discussing Aristotle in detail in *Being and Time*. His discussion is confined primarily to a lengthy footnote towards the concluding sections of the text.<sup>33</sup> So *Basic Problems in Phenomenology* (1927) became his address to Aristotle's text on time.<sup>34</sup> While our ordinary understanding of time is that of an infinite succession of nows, Da sein's temporality is finite. Hence, ontological difference may be considered fundamentally as a difference between our usual notion of time and originary temporality.

Our finitude shapes our very access to and understanding of temporality. Thus while our average, everyday understanding of time thinks time as an infinite series of now moments, divided into no-longer nows, now and not yet now, Heidegger suggests that what may be revealed as primordial or fundamental to a disclosure of temporality in terms of past, present and future is a recognition of Da sein's finitude and hence the finiteness rather than infinity of time. The *ecstases* of temporality will be developed from the starting point of an understanding of Da sein's finitude as fundamental. By finitude, Heidegger means that death is certain. But a difficulty for Heidegger is to recognize death no longer as the not-being or nothing that awaits life, but more fundamentally how Da sein, or openness to being recognizes death as its "ownmost possibility" as primordially constitutive of Da sein's "mineness." In this sense, Da sein is "being-for-death" in that fundamental relations of Da sein to being in the world are constituted in this primordial relation. While Da sein is fundamentally being-with-others, death for Heidegger is more originally the mineness of Da sein constitutive of no relation with the other; in this sense primordially constitutive of a mineness such that the other is other. Being for death is not for Heidegger a morbid contemplation of one's inevitable end, nor a kind of delight in one's mortality. Rather, Heidegger was faced with a problem, in *Being and Time*, as to how Da sein could have any horizontal disclosure of being as a whole if Da sein was fundamentally and primordially openness or possibility. That is to say, how could the primordial disclosure of mineness and otherness happen without a finitude to the infinitude of Da sein's openness to being?

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33 See for a discussion on this Aristotelian reference, Derrida, "*Ousia* and *Gramme*: Note on a Note from *Being and Time*" in *Margins of Philosophy*, op. cit. pp. 29-68.

34 Heidegger, *Basic Problems in Phenomenology*, op. cit. See, on Aristotle and time, Genevieve Lloyd, *Being in Time: Selves and Narrators in Philosophy and Literature* (London: Routledge, 1993).

Death is the fundamental horizon of finitude, as that event of fundamental certainty for Da sein. It is death's certainty in the otherwise openness of Da sein's possibility that is constitutive of the primordial disclosure of being as a whole, itself the possibility for mineness and otherness to be unconcealed.<sup>35</sup> There is no solicitude in death, suggests Heidegger, no-one can experience my death. This becomes a significant stumbling point for Levinas (and Chanter).

Chanter suggests that what remains unquestioned for Heidegger is that the world belongs to Da sein.<sup>36</sup> We need to question her closely on this! What does it mean to say “the world” with respect to Da sein? Da sein is its way of being as its openness to being, or the thereness of its being, the concreteness of its horizontal disclosure of what is. In this sense there is no totalizing world that belongs to Da sein but rather Da sein’s horizon of belonging is to the openness of being’s disclosure. We have already encountered in our discussion of Heidegger on belonging the difficulty he has in approaching this notion. Ontically it is straightforward, and Chanter has no problem hinging together the togetherness of belonging of beings. For Heidegger, the question of belonging is approached ontologically as the unconcealing of the meaning of being. Da sein belongs to its horizon rather than the world belongs to Da sein. Da sein does not own things but rather is a way of being such that relationality to things is disclosed in its possibilities. Hence “mineness” is not the closure of subjective possession but resolute openness to possibility. Her reading of course is an excavation of Levinas’s critical response to Heidegger in his own going beyond Heideggerian ontology. Chanter goes on to discuss Da sein’s “isolation” in the emphasis Heidegger gives to “mineness.”<sup>37</sup> It is on this that Levinas will most strongly disagree with Heidegger, as it seems to constitute at the most primordial or fundamentally concrete level of Da sein’s *existenz* that Da sein is severed from a relation to the other, that Da sein is

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35 See *Being and Time*, op. cit., Division II, Part 1 on “The Possible Being-a-Whole of Dasein and Being for Death,” pp. 219-240.

36 See Chanter, op. cit., pp. 97-98: “First, and most immediately, Heidegger tends to describe others as if they were a characteristic or attribute of Dasein’s world, with the result that others might be included in the world, but the world is always Dasein’s world.”

37 Ibid., p. 106.: “In the end, Heidegger’s Dasein stands alone against the world, resolute in its finitude. Dasein’s isolation is uncompromising. It begins and ends in the closed circuit of Dasein’s own self-understanding.” Perhaps, for a moment, Chanter actually believes that her understanding of Heidegger, Levinas or whatever else that is constitutive of her worlding, might not be her own self-understanding, which is to say the responsibility of her doing!

fundamentally totalizing. While Levinas's engagement needs close scrutiny,<sup>38</sup> Chanter's discussion seems again to be humanist. Remember that Da sein is openness-to-being or proximity to being, and not "man." Levinas will emphasize that for Heidegger being-with in the final analysis is being-with being in general, proximity to being. This being-with is not a relation with others but a reduction of the other to the same, to the question of its being. Hence Levinas is against Heidegger's primacy of freedom over ethics and Western philosophy's primacy of the same.

In her discussion of the role of solicitude and resoluteness in Da sein's ownmost possibility Chanter rehearses the salient moments for Heidegger's account of being-with-others and the failure in Heidegger's analysis of genuinely accounting for others.<sup>39</sup> Heidegger suggests: "Dasein is authentically itself only if it projects itself, as being-together with things taken care of and concerned being-with ..., primarily upon its ownmost potentiality-of-being, rather than upon the possibility of the they-self."<sup>40</sup> Chanter suggests that Heidegger provides no concrete clues as to how solicitude may condition the possibility of any existent whatever. He will continually return to the individualizing of Da sein in its relation to death, its "freedom towards death" "primarily unsupported by concerned solicitude." And on resoluteness, which alerts Da sein as the "'conscience' of others," there are two moments of discussion, one concerning the relation of resoluteness to something fundamental to ecstatic temporality and the other focusing in a related way to being-with.<sup>41</sup> This discussion is important for how it becomes tangential to Levinas on temporality but moves away. Resoluteness discloses *Gewesenheit*, the primordiality of "having been" constituted in a future of a past "not lived." The authentic future of having been, Heidegger terms "future of resoluteness." This relation to a temporality of having been, a past that is primordial and foundational is crucial for Levinas as the time of the other.

However, Chanter stresses that Heidegger will close down and subordinate *Gewesenheit* to *Jemeinigkeit*, or mineness, hence closing down a possibility of opening

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38 See Levinas, *God, Death and Time*, trans. by Bettina Bergo (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000). The first part of this text comprises a lecture course offered by Levinas on "Death and Time." It engaged closely with Heidegger on the theme of "being for death," and extended to commentary on Da sein, but also on Kant, Hegel, Bergson and Bloch.

39 See Chanter, op. cit., pp. 158-162.

40 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, op. cit. Division II, Part. 1, Section 53, p. 243.

41 Chanter, op. cit., p. 159.

resoluteness to a genuine otherness. Though, this would be on the basis of thinking *Jemeinigkeit* with a residual understanding of “mineness” as ego, identity or an “I” constitutive of a Levinasian “same.” On the second point, Heidegger suggests: “Resoluteness brings the self right into its current concerned Being-alongside what is ready-to-hand, and pushes it into solicitous Being-with Others. ... When Dasein is resolute, it can become the ‘conscience’ of Others. Only by authentically Being-their-Selves in resoluteness can people authentically be with one another – not by ambiguous and jealous stipulations and talkative fraternizing in the ‘they’ and in what ‘they’ want to undertake.”<sup>42</sup> Again, Chanter will emphasize here the extent to which Heidegger stresses the freedom of Da sein in order to be-with, rather than the more complex relation in Levinas of a freedom always burdened with responsibility.

For Levinas, “time comes to me from the other, in the midst of my concrete and egoistic enjoyment of life.”<sup>43</sup> Again there is emphasis on time and the other: “The relationship with the other is time.”<sup>44</sup> But not time as continuum. The relation of the face-to-face cannot be an immediacy dissolved into a higher unity of time. His text “Diachrony and Representation” is a key piece of writing on this.<sup>45</sup> Time does not compromise the alterity of an immemorial and unrepresentable past nor the alterity of a future. Hence we see how Levinas works with, in some respects, the radicality of temporality thought by Heidegger with respect to Aristotelian time. But he also thinks beyond or in difference to Heidegger as well. The past cannot be adequately thought by reducing it to history and the future cannot be anticipated by gathering it into presence. We need to understand in this why Chanter placed some emphasis on a close reading of Heidegger’s notion of resoluteness as a fundamental relation to the other and a fundamental relation to ecstatic temporality. She stresses how Heidegger closed down a radicality that was possible in thinking resoluteness with respect to

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42 Heidegger, op. cit. pp. 344.

43 Chanter, op. cit. p. 179. Chanter is here making reference to Levinas’s *Totality and Infinity*, op. cit., and particularly Section II, Part B: “Enjoyment and Representation, pp. 122-143.

44 *Totality and Infinity*, op. cit. See in particular, “Enjoyment and Nourishment,” pp. 127-130.

45 Levinas, “Diachrony and Representation,” in *Entre Nous: Thinking-of-the-Other*, trans. by Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) pp. 159-178.: “This meaning of a past that has not been my present and does not concern my reminiscence, and of a future that commands me in mortality or in the face of the other—beyond my powers, my finitude, and my being-doomed-to-death, no longer articulate the representable time of immanence and its historical present. Its dia-achrony, the “difference” of diachrony, does not signify pure rupture, but also non-in-difference and concordance that are no longer founded on the unity of transcendental apperception, the most formal of forms, which, through reminiscence and hope, join time up again in re-presenting it, but betrays it.” Ibid., pp. 175-176.

otherness and time, in favour of returning it to “mineness.” This is a crucial difference between Heidegger and Levinas. Levinas retains from Heidegger the ultimate importance of death. But he radically alters the meaning attached to it. For Heidegger death is my ownmost possibility to the exclusion of others; for Levinas death is the Other, and comes from the other. The kernel of Heidegger’s and Levinas’s difference: for Heidegger authentic death severs relations between Da sein and its others. For Levinas death can constitute this relation. And this is possible for Levinas because relations between others are fundamentally ethical rather than fundamentally ontological relations.

### Time and the Other

Levinas proposes, in short: “To think death starting from time — and not as in Heidegger — time starting from death”<sup>46</sup> The genuine core is not the priority of death or time but how a fundamental disclosure of death for Heidegger is “mineness” and for Levinas is the Other. The difference has to be settled on the vexing question (quite decisive for Levinas and Chanter) as to whether Da sein’s “mineness” is the radical exclusion, annihilation, of the other, in the face of Heidegger’s own understanding that fundamentally Da sein is being-with others. From “mineness” disclosed in being-for-death Heidegger will disclose primordial time as the ecstasies of temporality, a temporality more originary than that of metaphysic’s presence. Levinas, indebted to the original thinking of Heidegger on time, works very differently. His question is how does the existent come to be out of the anonymous that there is, (*il y a*) and in this thinks “the instant” as a time out of time, as a birth (rather than commencing with death) of the existent (very roughly his rethinking of Da sein).<sup>47</sup> This coming into oneself is a response to the other, a responsibility before one’s being. Death for Levinas is always murder, mysterious and radically from the Other. It is not anticipated. The Other is time and death and is thought from Levinas’s originary understanding of time, indebted to but a radical break from Heidegger’s.

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46 See Levinas, “Death and Time,” in *God, Death and Time*, op. cit. Hence Levinas emphasises, *contra* Heidegger: “Here, death takes a meaning other than the experience of death. It takes the meaning that comes from the death of another person, of what concerns us therein. A death without experience and yet dreadful: does that not mean that the structure of time is not intentional, that it is not made up of the protentions and retentions that are the mode of experience?” Ibid., p. 10.

47 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, op. cit. See in particular “I and Dependence,” pp. 143 ff.

We recognize in Chanter's engagement that for Levinas the relation between ontology and ethics cannot be addressed without taking up the relationship between ontological difference and temporality.<sup>48</sup> With respect to how Heidegger and Levinas will account for this difference, she stresses that it may reveal the importance of corporality in Levinas's philosophy and the importance of sexual difference which structures Levinas's recasting of ontological difference and time, crucial to his critique of Heidegger. The question remains, though, with respect to Chanter's reading, to what extent does sexual difference structure Levinas's recasting of ontological difference and time, or to what extent does his rethinking of Heidegger, his proximity and distancing as a recasting, structure his thinking of sexual difference? One might also be mindful of the comment in passing by Irigaray in a reference to Heidegger: "The whole historic or historial analysis of philosophy shows that being has yet to be referred to in terms of body or flesh (as Heidegger notes in 'Logos,' his seminar on Heraclitus)."<sup>49</sup> This question is significant in that Levinas is important for feminist thinking in that philosophy here addresses both corporeality and woman. Yet, Chanter emphasizes the extent to which this address to sexual difference presents a repetition of patriarchal divisions of gender, with the feminine concerned primarily with intimacy, dwelling and the erotic while the masculine is concerned with exteriority and inheritance.

Hence, ontological difference is cast in terms of sexual difference: active/passive and in terms of existent/existing as an ambiguity of the present, an evanescence as an essential form of beginning, resulting in something that turns into an existent and can be formed into time. Mastery is associated with the present as virile and as representation; loss of mastery is associated with suffering, death and love as the feminine. In Chanter's summary, the feminine for Levinas becomes a "before time."<sup>50</sup> Sexual difference is

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48 Chanter, op. cit., p. 39. See also Brian Schroeder, *Altared Ground: Levinas, History and Violence* (New York & London: Routledge, 1996) and Levinas, "Interview with Francois Poire (1986)," in *Is It Righteous to Be?* op. cit., pp. 23-83.

49 Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, op. cit., p. 86. See Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking*, trans. by David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi (New York: Harper & Row, 1975) pp. 59-78.

50 Chanter, op. cit., pp. 41-43. She is making reference here to Levinas's *Time and the Other, and Other Essays*, trans. by Richard Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987): "Levinas wants to rehabilitate a notion of the present that does not simply fall prey to the idea of mastery that caused Heidegger to question the privilege of the present. Above all, it is the ambiguity of the present that Levinas is at pains to emphasise. 'It is essential,' says Levinas, 'to grasp the present at the limit of existing

referenced by Levinas for good or ill: for good in the sense that philosophy accedes to bodily sensation and the feminine is not the supplement to being; for ill in that Levinas will come for Chanter to repeat all of the masculinist frameworks of women: home, maternity, intimacy.<sup>51</sup>

Pivotal for Levinas is the “*il y a*”, existence, and interruption of the instant (i.e. interruption of the anonymity of being by the irruption of the instant): interrupting the existent in existence.<sup>52</sup> We see in *Totality and Infinity* that recollection is a responsibility to intimacy as the instant of irruption. It is crucial to recognize the complexity of Levinas’s thinking of time here in relation to Heidegger. Heidegger’s original thinking was to think time outside of metaphysics’ presence as the *ecstases* of time. Levinas recognizes this clearly and is not restituting a notion of presence with his notion of the “instant” particularly as the “instant” is a time out of joint, a time out of time. However, Levinas does think that Heidegger, in so resolutely undoing a metaphysics of presence, concealed his thinking to a temporality of the “instant.”<sup>53</sup>

Recollection instantiates a being with itself, its unfreedom in its never apart from itself. Intimacy’s interruption of existence is what Levinas names the feminine other.<sup>54</sup> It dwells the existent, and from this dwelling the existent becomes an ego, representing, totalizing self in its freedom, in the light, ontology, violence. But more fundamental than its being, this existent is ethical responsibility, for in its being it has the “I think” of

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and the existent, where, in function of existing, it already turns into an existent.’ (TO52). Here we are returned, once more, to the ontological difference. By ‘positing the present as the mastery of the existent over existing, and in seeking in it the passage from existing to existent’ (TO54), Levinas wants to retain the complexity of the presencing of the present both as ‘pure event that must be expressed by a verb’ — analogous to the verbal sense of being — and as a being ‘already a something, already an existent’ (TO52) — analogous to Dasein, the being that exists.” Ibid., p. 42.

51 We may consider, for example, how Irigaray emphasizes in sexual difference that men and women both need to coincide with both this and that but not as an overcoming of difference, while Levinas will come to emphasize the difference of feminine and masculine as ontological structure. Irigaray mentions “bridge” many times. We see how Levinas emphasizes radical alterity, unless we could think of “bridge” as an otherwise than being in responsibility that maintains the abyss of the other person as being.

52 See the many references by Levinas in the interviews in *Is it Righteous to Be*, op. cit., where he suggests the *il y a* is a horror. Also we see this in *Totality and Infinity*: “Against the anonymous there is, horror, trembling, and vertigo, perturbation of the I that does not coincide with itself, the happiness of enjoyment affirms the I at home with itself.” See *Totality and Infinity*, op. cit., p. 143.

53 Chanter notes that some Heidegger commentators have suggested that Heidegger may have yet developed a temporality of the “moment.” We may also begin to think Levinas’s “instant” in relation to Benjamin’s “now-time.” Both operate as a fundamental interruption to a continuum.

54 Levinas, “The Dwelling,” in *Totality and Infinity*, op. cit.

the idea of the infinite.<sup>55</sup> As an egoistic “I” the infinite is, unrepresentably, the other face in a face-to-face of existence. This infinity (a correlate but not conditioned by totality) is the interruption to an ego self, a “shame” at one’s freedom in responsibility to the other, a break in totality such that the totalizing self is yet a lack: the Other, from on high is the teacher. Desire is pivotal here in a philosophizing that breaks radically from Heidegger’s. This Other from on high (the name of God) this other face is what Levinas names masculine. Levinas here works against the tradition of metaphysics that posits the Other as freedom: to think the Other in terms of light. The Other for Levinas, as more fundamental than being, is night, and in this sense, a violence done to the totalizing freedom of an ego.

In his engagement with Descartes on the sensate and irrational body, Levinas develops three axioms (rather than propositions): To be conscious (sensate) is precisely to have time; to be a body is to have time; the ambiguity of the body is consciousness.<sup>56</sup> Hence we get a sense that time for Levinas is thought from the sensate body of existents in distinction to Heidegger’s *Da sein* being-for-death. This ambiguity of body is crucial to work through: this is on the one hand a corporeal existence that affirms its independence in a happy dependence on need. The existent’s freedom is as well its responsibility for itself but it is resourceful in its capabilities and capable of not only fulfilling need but being happy in its enjoyment of “food, walking, fresh air or drinking coffee.”<sup>57</sup> Levinas suggests *contra* Heidegger, that *Da sein* does not simply take a walk for the sake of *Da sein*’s project; the existent takes a walk for the sake of taking a walk. But the ambiguity happens in dwelling which makes possession possible, and hence the risk of loss and betrayal. Dwelling allows being at home with itself a delay and postponement. The body is primary or original equivocation. This equivocation hovers between “enjoyment” and dwelling, the latter instantiated by the feminine other in intimacy. Here we get to the core of the issue on time and the feminine in Levinas’s thinking: a feminine that allows the appropriation of a domain for me and the Other that calls me into question. In this the temporalization of the feminine is fundamental, as originary, to the temporalization of the Other as masculine, a priority of the feminine. Yet, this “priority” of the feminine is also ambivalent. The early Levinas of

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55 Ibid., “Transcendence as the Idea of Infinity,” pp. 48-52.

56 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, op. cit., p. 166.

57 Ibid., “Enjoyment and Representation,” pp. 122-142.

*Totality and Infinity* seemed to make such a priority clear. The later Levinas re-engages the feminine as intimate instantiation of dwelling, and places exclusive emphasis on the maternal, primarily on the maternal delivery of the son for the father.<sup>58</sup>

We may recognize the importance of the difference Levinas establishes between “hypostasis” and the *il y a* in relation to Heidegger’s ontological difference.<sup>59</sup> “Hypostasis” is the existent brought to itself in the “instant” (which is not the presencing of the present) and the *il y a* is anonymous being, that there is as such. This is in some way a parallel to ontic/ontological difference though really has little to do with it, as difference construing the possibility of what differs in each case is remarkably non-coincident as a non-coincidence of how each construes primordial time. Chanter emphasizes how Levinas avoids a notion of fallenness with respect to corporeality; and *existenz* for Levinas is not “for-the-sake-of living (ontological), it *is* living (sincerity). We see here an emphasis on the distinction between Heidegger’s *Da sein* as an open possibility (futural) and Levinas’s existent happy in nourishment of needs. Hence for Heidegger the world is an ensemble of tools, for Levinas it is an ensemble of nourishments. In enjoyment for Levinas there is a loosening of the bond between the self and the ego. The “I” is chained to itself as a tragic element of the ego, riveted to its own being as its own responsibility for its own being, its unfreedom in its egoistic freedom. Yet the “I” can live at a distance from its captivity by the “there is.” “The world offers me a time in which I traverse different instants ... where all is given but where everything is distance.”<sup>60</sup> With the introduction of time and the possibility of distance, the “I” encounters the other, and with it the freedom to act with sincerity or not.

Life is in excess of representation, a happiness beyond being, an enjoyment that cannot be captured by representation. Here we return to the ambiguity of the body mentioned earlier. The body is a thing and it is a “for itself.” It is a simultaneity of

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58 See Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or, Beyond Essence*, trans. by Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1998).

59 See Chanter’s discussion of this, in Chanter, op. cit., p. 87.

60 Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, trans. by Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978) p. 84, quoted in Chanter, op. cit., p. 90.

presence and absence:<sup>61</sup> “This is the paradox and essence of time itself proceeding unto death, where the will is affected as a thing by the things — the point of steel or by the chemistry of the tissues (due to a murder or to the impotency of the doctors) — but gives itself a reprieve and postpones the contact by the against-death of postponement.”<sup>62</sup> We see here with Levinas time as a postponement of death, where death is an Other, mysterious and murderous. Passivity is a waiting/postponing/infinite patience. Levinas will emphasize that for Heidegger being-with is not a relation with others but a reduction of the other to the same, to the question of its being. Yet, as we have already argued, Heideggerian identity and the same are more complex than ontology’s recourse to find identity and the same derivative from the question of being.

For Levinas ethics is critique beyond theory and ontology, calling into question my spontaneity (freedom) by the Other. My freedom discovers itself murderous in its very existence. Hence Levinas suggests that morality begins when freedom, instead of being justified by itself, feels itself arbitrary and violent. We have here the crux or *chiasmus* of Levinas’s thinking in a way because of the difficulty of working through it. The ethical relation is a “relation without relation.” Indeed, Levinas prefers not “relation” but “religion” in that ethics is a bond between the same and the other without constituting a totality. We already have a sense of this in the interview excerpt that opened this section of the thesis. This is the difficulty: ethics is nothing without responsibility for the other, i.e., a relationality of responsibility that is non-reciprocal precisely in that the other is not the other person by name and identity, not the other as being at all and one is not in this relation a being with others as in a being with other beings. One is in a non-reciprocal relation of being-with the infinite as in a responsibility that is infinitely to the other as such but not as being. It is the infinite in me that opens me as more than my totality and that opening is not to any being in itself but to what is other, as in excessive to me, which is as well me as an excess to my totalizing being. Yet, consider here Heidegger’s thinking of the belonging in which

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61 Consider here the Levinasian “trace” in relation to the trace developed in Derrida’s *Différance*. See Levinas, “Meaning and Sense,” in idem, *Basic Philosophical Writings*, ed. by Adriaan T. Peperzak, Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996). pp. 33-64. See in particular, Section 9: “The Trace,” pp. 59 ff. See also Derrida, *Différance in Margins of Philosophy*, op. cit., pp. 1-28.

62 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, op. cit., p.229.

‘man’ is an excess that is prior to the questions “what is man? what is Being?”. This excessiveness is otherwise than being, prior to and an opening to being.

When Levinas uses the term “religion,” he opposes this to “politics.” Politics will always see as primary a reciprocal relation of recognition towards equality. Religion is Desire and not a struggle for recognition. Desire originates from the Other: “the welcoming of the Other” that Levinas understands in the way that Descartes describes the idea of infinity.<sup>63</sup> Levinas approaches the question of shame in terms of one’s shame for one’s freedom: “The shame for oneself, the presence of and desire for the other are not the negation of knowing; knowing is their very articulation. The essence of reason consists not in securing for man a foundation and powers, but in calling him in question and inviting him to justice.”<sup>64</sup> In terms of the “relation that is not a relation” we recognize the difficulty but also see the extent to which one could begin to engage with Heidegger in a similar way or recognize that perhaps not so much separates Heidegger and Levinas on this point.

We recognize why Levinas so clearly separates ethics and politics. Politics is an engagement from the dwelling and in terms of freedom and possession. Politics is a relation with other beings with all of the implications of ontology, totality and identity. Ethics comes before politics, and in as much as freedom is violence and ontology is light and violence, politics is war.<sup>65</sup> Yet Chanter sees a problem in Levinas so decisively separating ethics and politics: i.e., she sees a supposedly neutral and apolitical ethics and this could lead Levinas into a problem field that “plagues” Heidegger’s philosophy.<sup>66</sup> Chanter sees feminism as a political and ethical engagement, even an ethico-political engagement (one thinks again of humanism). I think there is an impasse here for Chanter in that she wants Levinas’s “other” to

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63 Ibid., p. 62. For further discussion on Levinas’s understanding of the relation of desire to the Other, see *Levinas and Lacan: The Missed Encounter* ed. by S. Harasym (Albany: SUNY, 1998). Chanter’s text in this volume is “Reading Hegel as a Mediating Master: Lacan and Levinas,” pp. 1-21.

64 Ibid., p. 88.

65 See Levinas’s powerful Preface to *Totality and Infinity* that sets the stakes for politics: “We do not need obscure fragments of Heraclitus to prove that being reveals itself as war to philosophical thought, that war does not only affect it as the most patent fact, but as the potency, or the truth, of the real. In war reality rends the words and images that dissimulate it, to obtrude in its nudity and harshness.” Ibid., p. 21.

66 Chanter, op. cit., p. 144: “The difficulty is whether Levinas, in his extreme caution about the alleged totalising tendency of all politics, does not either deprive himself of effective means to combat the kind of thinking that leads to Nazism, or fall prey to the illusion that he can offer an apolitical ethics whose apparent neutrality is in fact pervaded by a specific political agenda.”

ultimately be some other person whereas for Levinas this would be amounting too much to an ontological reduction of otherness.<sup>67</sup>

The difference between ethics and politics or enjoyment, the diachrony of the “instant” and representation, the synchrony of totality, is further understood in Levinas’s distinction between the “saying” and the “said.” Saying calls for the said out of the very same necessity whereby the saying refuses to be contained by it. This is a distinction that governs by undoing itself, a disorganizing and disruptive force.<sup>68</sup> There is the trembling, oscillation, the vacillation, the breakup, rupture or interruption of consciousness *and* its ability to tie together again each hiatus in order to produce a continuous narrative out of the diachronic, to impose simultaneity upon different times, to join together the tears that interrupt the fabric of being. Here we get a sense of the temporality of the saying and the said in relation to the ambiguity of the body and the difference of hypostasis and the *il y a*. This self is the diachrony of the different times of the instant as the hypostasis of an existent’s enjoyment in existence. This self is also a freedom that is an ego’s totalizing and representing in the simultaneity of a continuous narrative, hence the importance of interruption as the hiatus of the *il y a*, the time out of time of a saying that calls for the joining up of the interruptions in or as the said: separation/reparation as an ‘ecstases’ of temporalization, as a difference primordial and originary and inseparable from some

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67 Chanter approaches Heidegger from the viewpoint of his failed politics, and his emphasis on fundamental ontology as pre-ethical. She also, as we have just intimated, sees a danger for Levinas in not embarking on an ethico-political engagement instead of establishing a fundamental (ethical) distinction between the face-to-face of the Other and justice as the terminology of politics. We have claimed in Chapter 1 that our project also opens to an ethico-political engagement with sexual difference. However, our address comes from Blanchot and the radicality with which he approaches the question of a community of difference as a just politics. Our project of ethics and politics has little in common with the humanism that grounds Chanter’s cautionary call. Chanter serves well those who want, before the law, to proclaim their equality. Our ethics and politics will more radically solicit the law as deconstruction, and justice as that which cannot be deconstructed, as the impossible that opens to a *coup de don* and pre-originary difference that Derrida opens to the separation and reparation of the innumerability of sexes.

68 Chanter draws a suggestive parallel between this aspect of Levinas’s thinking and Kristeva’s distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic. See, Chanter, op. cit., footnote 5, p. 282. However, it would be difficult to sustain an argument that Kristeva’s distinction between the semiotic and the symbolic engages in a thinking of the ontological difference. Certainly, the introduction of the saying and the said, in a response to Derrida’s deconstruction of *Totality and Infinity*, is a continuation of Levinas’s radicalising of Heidegger’s ontological difference. See Derrida, “Violence and Metaphysics,” op. cit. Levinas’s response to Derrida established his publication, *Otherwise than Being or; Beyond Essence*, op. cit. But see also “Jacques Derrida: Wholly Otherwise,” op. cit., pp. 55-62. Also in *Re-Reading Levinas*, op. cit. pp. 3-10.

articulation by Levinas of sexual difference.<sup>69</sup> His formulation of the instant is his counter-approach to Western philosophy's determination to spiritualize the self. The instant is a materialism in restituting a substantiality, particularly working against a tradition since Hegel.

We may note a paradoxical character of the existent, in relation to the ambiguity of the corporeal we have mentioned earlier. The mastery the existent exercises on existence and the weight of existence on the existent, a free being no longer free because it is responsible for itself: "The freedom of the present finds a limit in the responsibility for which it is the condition. This is the most profound paradox of the concept of freedom: its synthetic bond with its own negation. A free being alone is responsible, that is, already not free. A being capable of beginning in the present is alone encumbered with itself. The definitiveness which comes to pass in the present is not then initially connected with time; it is an intrinsic mark of the present."<sup>70</sup> We conclude with a very important though dense passage from Levinas. Note his distancing from Hegel on labour (in as much as Levinas focuses on fatigue as a time of delay or hesitation) and the significance of the interval:

If the present is thus constituted by the taking charge of the present [mastery the existent exercises on existence], if the time-lag of fatigue creates the interval in which the event of the present can occur [the weigh of existence on the existent], and if this event is equivalent to the upsurge of an *existent* for which *to be* means *to take up being*, the existence of the existent is by essence an activity. An existent must be in act, even when it is inactive. This activity of inactivity is not a paradox; it is the act of positing oneself on the ground, it is rest inasmuch as rest is not a pure negation but the very tension of a position, the bringing about of a here. The fundamental activity of rest, foundation, conditioning, thus appears to be the very relationship with being, the upsurge of an existent into existence, a hypostasis."<sup>71</sup>

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69 How do we encounter the saying and the said of sexual difference in Levinas and in general? This question becomes the key theme of Chapter 6 of this thesis, and is introduced in Section 2 of this chapter.

70 Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, op. cit., p. 79. We may begin to think here of a relation of the trace to that of this intrinsic mark not initially connected with time.

71 Ibid., pp. 35-36.

### Responsibility's Priority as the Temporality of Sexual Difference

Let us pick up something crucial in this final quotation above, something that may be a little overlooked, something that concerns a spatializing of temporality for Levinas. The “interval” as the hiatus of a paradoxical act of inactivity, a fatigue, is the “bringing about of a here” in the hypostatic “upsurge” of an existent in existence, the interruption of an “instant” in the diachrony of existing, to be opposed to the totalizing of an egoistic representation. The instant as a time out of time, an ec-static temporality, a “before time” that is an obligation to the feminine other in intimacy, an ethics of responsibility to recollection of the intimate other. This “here” in hypostasis is, in dwelling, an opening to being, ego, totality and the possibility of the I think of the infinite as the face-to-face, interruption of one’s totality in shame and responsibility for the Other “on high,” the masculine other. This “here” of intimacy’s dwelling is to be opposed to Levinas’s repeated reference to Pascals’s “place in the sun” as the here of totalizing ego, in all of the representational possibilities of place, position, here or there. The “here” of the “upsurge” of existent in existence, this “feminine” locale of “here,” this place of “woman” is prior to representation, prior to the placing of the feminine, prior to representation as such.

And how would the Da of Da sein be thought? Would it be distributed into one or the other of Levinas’s spatial “divisions”? Would the “there” of there-being constitute a totalizing, a belonging to mineness of the “world”? Or would any here or there for Heidegger be thought in the “reach” of the four dimensions of ec-static temporality that makes possible the open or clearing as such?<sup>72</sup> Dwelling, for Heidegger, needs to be thought in the perennial “homelessness” implied in the “open” or “clearing,” which is to say in the Same thought as the belonging of thinking and being, perhaps the originary “property” of appropriation. Certainly, the concrete disclosure of Da sein’s Da is no more representational than it is hypostatically present.

We return to Tina Chanter again, but this time in an essay appearing in the collection *Re-Reading Levinas*.<sup>73</sup> In her “Antigone’s Dilemma,” Chanter addresses a series of concerns that in some way tie together the strands of what has unfolded above, in

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72 On the four dimensions of ec-static temporality, see Heidegger, “Time and Being,” op. cit., p. 15 ff.  
73 See Chanter, “Antigone’s Dilemma,” in *Re-Reading Levinas*, op. cit., pp. 130-148.

order to lead to our concluding section in this chapter, “Writing’s Responsibility.” Chanter opens her text with a discussion on a seminar at the University of Warwick with Julia Kristeva at which Kristeva’s essay “Women’s Time” was being discussed.<sup>74</sup> Jacques Derrida was also present and a question was posed to Derrida: “Is Jacques Derrida a feminist?” Important for Chanter is the fact that it was a man who asked the question. How so? And how would the import of the gender determination of the questioner here be relevant for us in the discussion of spatiality and temporality that has preceded us? Chanter moves to another scene, another time and place, another questioner of Derrida, this time a woman, who questions Derrida, in relation to his text *Spurs* that suggests there is no such thing as an essence of *the woman*.<sup>75</sup> She asks: “If the question of sexual difference is not a regional one in the sense of subsidiary [to ontology and truth], if indeed ‘it may no longer even be a question’ as you [Derrida] suggest, how would you describe ‘woman’s place?’”<sup>76</sup> Derrida replies with a certain digression, a digression to temporality and historicity, to a question of history and whether there is, ever, a “history” of woman: “Perhaps woman does not have a history ... [there is] perhaps a completely other history: a history of paradoxical laws and non-dialectical discontinuities, a history of absolutely heterogeneous pockets, irreducible particularities, of unheard of and incalculable sexual differences.”<sup>77</sup>

Chanter thinks this discontinuous time in relation to Kristeva’s “Women’s Time” as well as Levinas’s rupture of totality. And we would suggest Derrida may also have had in mind something of Heidegger’s powerful rethinking of historiology in his thinking of historicity. Derrida goes on though: “This is a question that you could translate *ironically* by saying that in my view there is no one place for woman ... it is without a doubt risky to say that there is no place for woman, but this idea is not anti-feminist, far from it; true, it is not feminist either.”<sup>78</sup> The elision happens between historicity and locale, between a certain thinking of the time of “continuous progress” and the

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74 The seminar was held in May 1986. Kristeva’s “Women’s Time” trans. by Alice Jardine and Harry Blake, is published in *The Kristeva Reader*, op. cit., pp. 187-213. It was initially published as “Le temps des femmes” in 33/34: *Cahiers de recherche de sciences des textes et documents*, 5 (Winter 1979) pp. 5-19. Moi suggests that this is one of Kristeva’s most important essays “from a feminist perspective” as she directly addresses the relation between feminism and femininity.

75 Derrida, *Spurs Nietzsche’s Styles*, op. cit. The following chapter of this thesis undertakes a detailed reading of this text.

76 Chanter, op. cit., p. 130.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid., p. 131.

propriety of place, via an irony and translation, an ironic translation or translating irony, where “irony” needs to be read as the instability of all narrative, the deconstruction of semantic closure.<sup>79</sup> An ironic translation, or translating with irony would already pose the possibility of the unintelligible, the “there is no one place,” the “heterogeneous pockets,” the “unheard of and incalculable” in general and as such. A translating with irony would in this sense, as a trans-lating, a dislocation from one to another, be the place(es), times, styles of “woman.”

Yet Chanter gets the point and doesn’t, gets to the point precisely in the slip of the spur’s disseminating. She (correctly) surmises that everything is staked on a kind of who speaks:

Depending not only on whether the questioner is a man or whether the respondent is a woman, but also whether, if the questioner is a man, he asks the question as a man, and if the respondent is a woman, she answers as a woman. That is, whether the man asks the question from his own time, the time of history as progress, and whether the woman answers from her own time, a time which cuts across history.<sup>80</sup>

One senses there is no irony with Chanter here, as if something is decidable as to the “mineness” of a gendered determination, the mineness of a temporality and the distribution of locutionary positions within a discursive exchange. And one is more than a little curious as to the determination of the coincidence and propriety of the proper in the coincidence of being one’s own gender, particularly the contestation if not condemnation we see in Chanter’s problem with Heideggerian “mineness.” Chanter continues with her own version of the “strategic bet” whose undecidability, in the mineness of what she herself insists on, if minimally, as *her* position as a woman, is occasioned by the questioning of the priority of the writing of woman over the “woman-question” as such:

Whatever it means for a man to want to write like a woman differs significantly from what it means for a woman to want to write like a woman. I

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79 On irony and deconstruction, see in particular, Avital Ronell, *Stupidity* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002). See also Richard Rorty, “From Ironist Theory to Private Allusions: Derrida,” in idem, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) pp. 122-137. Critchley comments negatively on Rorty’s approach to the irony in Derrida’s project. See Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, op. cit. footnote 21, p. 242.

80 Chanter, op. cit. p. 131.

would want to insist on this [the future conditional is curious at this point as if even before writing this (as a woman wanting to write as a woman?) she knew it was not what she would insist on at all, as if the continuity of the narrative or argument would be ironically undone in the tense of a future to come — are we able to make decidable in the rift of tenses whether or not Chanter wanted or not at this moment to here in this text write *like* a woman?]. One might say that the question of woman, the woman-question, is one which would have to be addressed before one could begin to answer the question about what it means for a woman to want to write as a woman. But if, as Derrida has written, “there is no such thing” as “the essence of *the* woman or the sexual difference” in the same way that “there is also no such thing as an essence of the *es gibt* in the *es gibt Sein*, that is of Being’s giving of the gift” (S 120/121) is it impossible to raise the question of woman? If there is no history of woman, in the sense of history as continuous progress, perhaps, after all, the writing of woman would have to be questioned before woman can be questioned. Perhaps this writing would provide a way of raising an impossible question. If there is no woman as such perhaps the writing of woman is precisely the place to look for her, precisely where the question of woman raises itself.<sup>81</sup>

Just to make sure we do not mistake her writing for irony, a kind of double-move on Derrida’s Nietzschean irony, at this moment in her text, after presenting the undecidability of strategic bets on woman herself as a question or the writing of woman as a question, Chanter makes no mistake: “The question [of the writing of woman] would raise itself in different ways depending on whether it is a man’s text or a woman’s text.”<sup>82</sup> This return to origin is curious, in that the origin would yet be decidably gendered in the face of a disseminating force as to decidability. The problem in part is Chanter’s slip into the singular, unitary discourse of place: “perhaps the writing of woman is *precisely the place* to look for her.”<sup>83</sup> If there is place, it will always be in the plural; if there is precision, it will be the refusal of styles; if there is a reading of “the writing of woman” it will be heterogeneously displaced across three (at least) plays of the double genitive, an undecidable of possession, a masking of mineness in the plays of its truths. Are we speaking of the *writing* of woman, as in the capacity or competency or lexicography or even calligraphy of textuality, if not all of the associated prosthetics to writing we may associate with tele-technologies of graphisms, including typography and photo-graphy as a kind of writing?

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81 Ibid.

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid.

Are we also speaking of the writing of *woman* as if the signifier had at some time or place reached or maintained a certain semantic saturation such that a con-text found its secured closure. Do we know what “woman” means? As in do we know how a signifier-signified relation happens at all, if it happens at all? And would this signifier of signifiers at times play a particular anchoring point for a certain dissemination of the impossibility of anchoring as such, in a kind of reversal of the signifier “man” whose symbolic economy is one of pivotal anchoring as such. And, hence, when it is mobilized as such in this semantic play is it ironically an anchored closure to a signifying chain or is it the impossible writing of unanchoring? And then there is the writing of woman, the text of woman, signed and certified by this particular gender, as if we may hold in suspension the sheer undoing of the certainty of being able to write or sign as a woman in the face of the other two readings of this small lexeme.

Notwithstanding the wanting to decide the dependency of difference on the decidability of gender, Chanter moves on to an interrogation of the writing by Derrida, “At this very moment in this work here I am,” a reply to Levinas, in which Derrida writes (Levinas) like a woman.<sup>84</sup> It is to this text we turn in the section that follows concerning undecidability and ethics as writing’s responsibility.

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84 Derrida, “At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am,” in *Re-Reading Levinas*, op. cit. pp. 11-50. As well as addressing this text in Section 2 of this chapter, it becomes our primary concern in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

## S e c t i o n 2

### Writing's Responsibility: Ethics Before the Hand

#### Introduction: Levinas *Beforehand*

Any introduction, preface or foreword that precedes a text alerts us to the cryptic engagement with precedence, with what comes before. Any “before” is conditionally cited from an after. To speak of a “before” is always to be placed or place oneself in an aftermath. To say there is an ethics before the hand is to already have the hand in hand such that a certain retro-action allows for a coming before. Indeed, the “before” presents ambiguously a spatial and temporal undecidability. Are we standing somewhere in front of someone’s hand, outstretched or secreted behind a back? Are we saying there is a time before we had hands? This undecidability is neither sheer novelty nor necessarily something to decide once and for all. It is, perhaps, the locus or *topos* of difference or *differance*, as the positing of a temporal and spatial locution as possibility. We may cite, initially and prematurely, before we are ready really to deliver anything, a short text by Jacques Derrida on this *topos* of the crypt, or the cryptic topology of a self cleaved in an undecidable difference of the propriety of keeping itself secure, keeping itself safe, shoring its identity, its genus, species, sex. In short we cite a cleaving that disengages all of the assuredness of what we will come to discuss in what follows as *Geschlecht*, the securing order of species, sex and nation:

What is a crypt? No crypt presents itself. The grounds [lieux] are so disposed as to disguise and to hide: something, always a body in some way. But also to disguise the act of hiding and to hide the disguise: the crypt hides as it holds.<sup>85</sup>

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85 Derrida, J., “Foreword: *Fors*: The English Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok,” p. xiv. “*Fors*” becomes our pivotal text for Chapter 5 of this thesis.

But before we move too quickly, too hastily into an act of encryption that becomes absolutely impermeable, too hidden, let us attempt to link this chain of aporias on the before, before we return to the moment of interruption marked firstly by Derrida's refusal of Levinas's writing for Derrida, "Wholly Otherwise," as the responsibility of his response to Levinas in "At this Very Moment in This Work Here I Am," ("ATVM") that remains an act of radical generosity that is Derrida's gift.<sup>86</sup> And after such an interruption we may continue to enter into Derrida's topology of the crypt that gives grounds for refusal.

Ethics does not have an essence, its "essence," so to speak, is precisely not to have an essence, to unsettle essences. Its "identity" is precisely not to have an identity, to undo identities. Its "being" is not to be but to be *better than being*. Ethics is precisely ethics by disturbing the complacency of being (or of non-being, being's correlate). To be or not to be, Levinas insists, is *not* the question.<sup>87</sup>

We begin to read immediately from this quotation an anterior positioning that describes Levinasian ethics as something unrecognizable to the metaphysical positing of something that "was" or "is" suggesting that Levinasian ethics could never have been the same as an onto-theological thinking. Ethics here is a placement of agency without essential character but rather an attunement to being disturbing or should I say, disturbing being. Levinasian ethics takes nothing for granted inasmuch as it suggests its priority over being is to unsettle being, to come before we ask the question of what it is to be. This condition describes the spatial borders of ethics as something akin to an anteriority, that is not calculable by calling forth the question of "what is," for the sake of knowing ourselves. And so, to ask "what is ethics?" does not heed to the unsettling motion that Levinas's thesis demands. The asking of the "what is" is to enter into the metaphysical prioritising of ontological essentialising for the sake of moving grounds-for-knowing forward. It is precisely this forward motion that Levinas would deny as ethical. "What ought to be" is not ruled by that which we know for certain, rather it is radically different or wholly-otherwise of being *beyond essence* where movement is not a prescriptive motioning forward characterized by propositional logic. Levinas asks

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86 Levinas's "Wholly Otherwise" and Derrida's "ATVM" are both published in *Re-Reading Levinas*, op. cit., pp. 3-10 and 11-50 respectively.

87 Richard Cohen, "Introduction," in Levinas, *Ethics & Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo*, trans. by Richard Cohen (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1985) p.10.

of being, as a knowing of the before being, in the first instance, “Do I have,” he asks, “the *right* to be?”<sup>88</sup>

We have explored a kind of spatial condition that allows for a prioritizing of ethics *before* being. And it is a radical spatial gesture that conditions Levinasian ethics situated both at a distance and in the same moment in proximity. This irreducible *spatial* condition is perhaps most poignantly encapsulated in the temporal beforeness that is distinguished by the Levinasian *saying* in difference to *the said*. It is in our saying that our relation to the other accedes to the radical alterity of the other, a moment when we are not ourselves, when my response to you is an *interruption* of myself. This moment of *interruption* is radical for its ability, via language, to enact Levinas’s most contestable position for the acknowledgement of ethics before being.

The radicality of this *before* is its spatial-temporality:

The responsibility to respond to the other is, for Levinas, precisely the inordinate responsibility, the infinite responsibility for being-for-the-other *before* oneself — the ethical relation. What is said [*le dit*] can always be unsaid, re-said or revised — it is the *saying* [*le dire*] of it, the intrusion it effects, the *interruption* (my italics) it inserts into continuities, as well as the passivity it calls forth, beneath identity, that accomplishes the *priority* and *anteriority* of ethics. The only alterity sufficiently other to provoke response, to subject the subject to the subjection of response — which for Levinas is subjectivity itself,<sup>2</sup> and the meaning of meaning, the event of ethics — is the absolute alterity of the other person encountered in the excessive immediacy of the face-to-face.<sup>89</sup>

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88 On the “beyond” of “beyond essence,” Cohen suggests: “one must understand the subjectivity of the subject *beyond essence*, as on the basis of an *escape* from the concept, a forgetting of being and non being. Not of an ‘unregulated’ forgetting ... but a forgetting that would be an ignorance in the sense that nobility *ignores* what is not noble.” Cohen, *Ethics and Infinity*, op. cit., p. 15. He goes on to suggest: this kind of “ignorance is not blind, it knows too much, more than it can comprehend, more than what can be comprehended — an infinite responsibility before others.” Ibid. Such an “abundance” of knowing carried as infinite responsibility is neither light nor heavy, is too light and too heavy because it is both rejection of the concept and rules surrounding it and an awareness for the possibility of rejection to occur. It is not a defiant act but rather a *beforeness* that does not prepare itself to be ignorant but allows itself to be so. This lack of preparation is perhaps the ethical call that halts the excessiveness of knowing for the sake of moving forward—as though this is a direction at all! We see for Levinas that subjectivity is conditioned by activity that is *interruption par excellence* and returns us to the disclosure of ethics as disruptive and unsettling (of being, essence, representation, idealization, formalization, thematization,) that is to say, ethics is outside the logic and error of ontology.

89 Ibid., p. 12.

## A Moment of the Supplement: Wrestling with the Other

To utter the final word – ‘Bois’ – is to nourish the hunger of the other, and is akin to the tearing of bread from my own mouth. I *interrupt* (my italics) my ego through fasting and breaking the other’s fast (cf. *AE72 OB* 56).

‘Bois’ – ‘drink’. What is being given here? What is being offered to drink? Derrida’s final words on Levinas are the following:

**I WEAVE MY VOICE SO AS TO BE EFFACED THIS TAKE IT  
HERE I AM EAT – APPROACH – IN ORDER TO GIVE HIM/HER  
(*LUI*) – DRINK (*BOIS*).<sup>90</sup>**

To wrestle or to embrace implies a body’s hand (even two or more) in contact with another. Wrestling or embracing, it could be said, is handwork as Heidegger would say of thinking.<sup>91</sup> The question that guides us as a fore-word, a motion or gesture of beforeness, is the question: What comes before the hand?<sup>92</sup> Any thinking in general,

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90 Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, op. cit., p. 108. Critchley notes that this final word “Bois” (from Derrida’s ATVM, this act of effacement through the textual voice is an ethical act and one that is incredibly generous in its movement and placement: “Derrida’s final word on Levinas offers the gift of drink to the other, a giving which, as I will show, describes the generous movement of the ethical work. Derrida’s final word on Levinas describes the ethical work, where Derrida’s text is given to Levinas. ... The work must be sent out from the Same to the Other without ever returning to the same. ... ‘Bois’ is the very event of the ethical work, the giving to the stranger without hope of return or remuneration. Derrida’s final word on Levinas is the first word of responsibility, the establishment of the ethical relation.” (pp. 108-109) The writing for the Other (as in Derrida’s writing for Levinas as an act of Levinasian ethics) refuses to return to its origins, refuses the closure of a metaphysics of presence in every return that installs the belonging of the proper as the place of return. It refuses a return to the Same and in doing so enacts the Derridean “gift” (that cannot be recognized as such as in an *exchange* from one to the other; Derrida’s gift is always the unconditional giving) whereby ingratitude marks the disruption and unsettling of origin per se. This act of ethical textual effacement is an ungrateful work that takes and moves relations of knowing who *gave* place (time & space). Rather, this “gift” traces as it takes, and takes as it traces and cannot be recouped in the recognition of the Self that embarked on a writing *for*, although the writing is *for*. If the work works it will not be recognizable (rather it will be a *faulty* text): “However, the only way in which a text *for* Emmanuel Levinas can be written which would return Levinas’s act of radical generosity is by being *ungrateful* and by writing a *faulty* text. Ingratitude is the only mode in which one can write a text *for* Levinas if that text is going to maintain the ethical structure that Levinas’s work sets to work.” Ibid., p. 109.

91 See Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* op. cit. See in particular pp. 16ff: “We are trying to learn to think. Perhaps thinking, too, is just something like building a cabinet. At any rate, it is a craft, a ‘handicraft.’”

92 “Fors,” the foreword Derrida wrote to *The Wolf Man’s Magic Word*, op. cit., is at once an introduction to and an interpretation of Abraham and Torok’s phenomenological psychoanalysis. The first section of Derrida’s essay delineates the topographical features of Abraham and Torok’s notion of “crypt” and arrives at a formulation for the “displacement” or shift in position he has announced: “... the walled surfaces of the crypt create an innermost heart of hearts ... which is an excluded outsider inside.” The paradoxical aspects of this spatial disposition are epitomized by a semantically double-edged word, *fors*, potentially meaning (when modified with the appropriate adjectives) the “innermost heart” or “conscience” (*le for intérieur*) and the “temporal” or “outward” jurisdiction of the church (*le for extérieur*). Derrida’s use of plural (*fors*) might indicate an amalgamation, but actually refers to another, prepositional meaning (namely, “save,” “except for,” “outside of”) that is intended to

any comprehension or “grasping” of ideas or things, may imply the body’s embrace or wrestle, a gesture always determined by the act of the proper, propriety, appropriation in the proximity of hand to hand or even hand to eye.<sup>93</sup> Implicit in this gesture, this reaching out, is not necessarily what one might expect in an act of giving and yet we must remember all acts of giving-taking are reliant on an economy of giving. We are speaking here of a “gift” that does not give, as Heidegger would say of being, that it gives, or indeed that does not require the reception of taking that always implicates the body within an economy of its surrounding constructed world of handy things. Central to our concern is the question of what comes before the hand, approached via Derrida’s notion of the gift as the *impossibility* of the gift existing in a foreword (or a moving forward), as the before of a hand caught up endlessly in an undecidable act of embrace and wrestle. Derrida’s *gift*, as a dehiscence of deconstruction, withdraws from a return economy of giving and taking, wrestling and embracing.<sup>94</sup> We could, for example, dissimulate the privileging of “*le main*” of “*maintenant*,” the hand that marks the self-presence of every now, displaced or disseminated perhaps by *le genou*, the undecidable “I/WE” of a knee/kneel/Kelle/knell/quelle? in the moments of its turn.

Deconstruction it can be acknowledged is not a concept or act but rather event; event’s gifting and gift’s event of difference. It is here that we can locate a framework for the notion of ethics of the before. Deconstruction is synonymous with our framework for ethics and, subsequently, the gift. Derrida’s “gift” arrives as the unconditional, or what we term throughout this reading as the responsibility of non-responsibility. This response to non-responsibility opens questions of response’s “after” as an ethics “before” the hand, before hand-work-thinking housed within the orders of or calls to ontological difference. We en-gage and gauge this response to non-responsibility with respect to Levinas and Heidegger, as complications of the logocentrism of Western metaphysics, after Derrida “phallogocentrism.” What we pose here as before the

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underscore what Derrida perceives to be the principal contribution of the notion of the crypt: its deconstruction of binary inside and outside. Hence, here, any notion of a movement forward, implicates the *chiasmus* of a Derridean *fors* and the complication of a simple before and after binary presupposition, i.e., the before is always encrypted within the event of an after.

93 Consider, for example, Heidegger’s emphasis on the hand in his discussion of “circumspection” in the readiness-to-hand and presence-at-handsness of handy things. See *Being and Time*, op. cit., pp. 62 ff.

94 For further reading on Derrida’s gift, see *Given Time: I Counterfeit Money*, op. cit. In this text Derrida deconstructs the economy of the gift, such that the “gift” would be the “impossible,” as another signature for deconstruction itself.

hand is a responsibility to the unconditional, what one could claim as a notion close to Levinasian ethics in terms of radical alterity. This alterity is a “welcoming the stranger,” not through a reach of the hand, as that implies a knowing or recognition of someone, something, which can never be strange and therefore always recognizable. The stranger is someone, something that can never be described, recognized, and therefore never refused, because it comes before us, before a meaning of being.<sup>95</sup>

### The Not Taking/Giving Place of Woman: Intractable Traction

Here we are primarily concerned with an interrogation of the possibility of inscribing “woman” as such, a question that precedes any question of embrace or wrestle. Or more precisely, and performatively, the “as such” of “woman” as entity is perhaps always already prefigured in the possibility of the reach of the hand, or the distantiation of distance circumscribed by the body’s surrounding world. It is an exploration firstly, therefore, of a non-taking, a move away and before any taking/receiving dichotomy that plays itself out in laws of exchange. And, of course, woman has always been described both within feminism and theories of desire as that entity for exchange. Hence, the question of the gift posed by Derrida opens to the question or possibility of a questioning of sexual difference as an ontology of ethics. This question or possibility of a question aims to keep suspended, deferred or delayed the giving of a resolute horizon concerned with an answer. Rather, it aims to pursue the primordiality of a pre-ontological questioning of sexual difference.

However, we are suggesting that for Derrida the gift is the impossible. It would resonate with the ethics of Levinas that comes before a being that is primordially disclosed as an “it gives.” Yet, we simultaneously suggest the possibility of sexual difference, the priority of sexual difference to ontological difference and to language as the house of being. The impossibility of this possible lies in the register as to whether

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95 See Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, op. cit., especially Section I “The Same and the Other.”: “The absolutely other is the Other. He and I do not form a number. The collectivity in which I say ‘you’ or ‘we’ is not a plural of the ‘I.’ I, you—these are not individuals of a common concept. Neither possession nor the unity of number nor the unity of concepts link me to the Stranger, the Stranger who disturbs the being at home with oneself.” Ibid., p. 39. This understanding of community points to the *violence* that Chanter proposes in wanting to imbricate Levinasian ethics and justice under the rubric of an ethico-political engagement.

sexual difference may then be said to exist.<sup>96</sup> If after (or is it before?) Heidegger, language is the house of being, and being is the “spring” or “ground” of the Western metaphysical tradition, being thereby is always already logocentric, and for Derrida this is a privileged phonocentrism and a privileged phallogentrism. Sexual difference is thereby, after the fact, as much a construct founded on masculine desire as is gendered difference. “Masculine” desire is perhaps a tautology, that is, would we not say they are the same? To preface desire with “masculine” is to infer that there is a “feminine” desire that is somehow housed outside of language. At the very least it would pose the equally vexing question as to what desire would be *before* it is masculine (or feminine), and hence what would desire *become* once it is gendered. And we know that sexual difference has always been a secondary concern for metaphysics, subordinated by ontological difference thereby returning ontological difference to the domain of a neutered “it”; a generalized subject within a community of “he’s”. Or, as Levinas nominates it, “*Illeity*.” *Il-leity* is Levinas’s community, where he/“He” is bound in an ethical relationship bound by me to the “*I*” from across the “*toi*” — I am bound in an ethical relationship of the *Il-leity* from the singular to plural.<sup>97</sup>

Sexual difference defers “naturally,” which is to say according to a law of genre, gender, species or race, some *Geschlecht*, to the domain of the feminine ruled by the proper.<sup>98</sup> Critchley indicates where Derrida refuses the work of Emanuel Levinas for its return to the Same and the Said, a counter-act to Levinas’s ethics of radical alterity. Derrida’s ethical move is allowing for a dehiscence of the work in its sendings to the other without return, allowing it to perform the ethical. This is what Derrida has named, as an act of dehiscence, an act that exceeds the proper name of Emmanuel Levinas itself and opens itself to that which comes before and after nominalization.<sup>99</sup> Derrida finds that for Levinas the work returns to the name of the same and the said,

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96 There are numerous texts where Derrida plays with syntactical and semantic gendered registers inherent primarily in the French language. He does so to explore the problematics (or impossibility) of gendered and sexual difference housed within a phallogocentric tradition. In becoming woman in texts, through syntactical manoeuvres, such as with “ATVM” and as well *Spurs*, Derrida raises questions around the impossibility of sexual difference. Woman speaks but only through the language inscribed for her, subscribed by patriarchal desire.

97 See Critchley, “*Clôture* Readings I: ‘Bois’ – Derrida’s Final Word on Levinas,” in *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas*, op. cit., p. 115. This text will become central for our reading of “ATVM” in Chapter 6.

98 Derrida’s texts on *Geschlecht* are important for our concern. His *Geschlecht I*, op. cit., is engaged with in our discussion of *Spurs* in Chapter 4.

99 Critchley, op. cit., p. 110.

through the subordination of sexual difference to ethical difference by enclosing the “he” and the “she” in the name of *Il-ity* in the economy of the same. Critchley sums up the exposition in this way, which it should be noted, leads to more questions of his own:

The question now becomes: If ethical difference is sexually indifferent, then ‘how can one mark as masculine the very thing that is said to be anterior or still foreign to sexual difference?’ (ECM 52). It has already been established that if Levinas’s work works, then it is precisely to the extent that it allows the trace of Illeity, the ‘Il’ of the wholly other, to glimmer in the face of the Other (Autrui). Now, if this ‘Il’ is sexually neutral, how can it be marked with a masculine pronoun? The silent slippage that occurs between ‘child’ and ‘son’ reveals that the supposed neutrality of ethical difference is marked, in Levinas’s work, by a certain priority of the masculine. The sexual indifference of ethical difference treats masculinity and neutrality as synonyms. However, these are not the only pair of synonyms at work here, because by making sexual difference a secondary to ethical difference and by marking the latter with a masculine pronoun, the secondary status of sexual difference becomes synonymous with the secondary status of the feminine. The problematic that ultimately guides the second moment of reading, [which is Derrida writing as a woman, a performative play on the initials of E.L, ‘Il’ as he, and ‘Elle’ as She] is given in the form of a question. The woman reader writes:

[Enter Derrida as woman:] I come then to my question. Since the work is under-signed by the Pro-noun He (before he/she certainly, but He is not She), could it be that in making sexual alterity secondary, it becomes, far from letting itself be approached from the Work, his or the one that says itself there, the mastery, mastery of sexual difference, posed as origin of femininity? Hence mastery of femininity?<sup>100</sup>

And so both Derrida and Critchley are clearly posing a line of questioning that ask: does not the supposed sexual neutrality of ethical difference lead ineluctably to a mastery of sexual difference and synonymously, a mastery of the masculine over the feminine? If this is the case, then how can Levinasian ethics be considered ethical?<sup>101</sup> This is clearly one of the complications around the positing of sexual difference, and why a notion such as the “non-existence” of sexual difference has been raised by Derrida. In what follows we will get a sense of how the non-existence of this existent is broached by Derrida, particularly with respect to Heidegger’s activation of *Geschlecht*.

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100 Ibid., pp. 134-135.

101 Ibid.

Levinas's hand has inscribed a sexual indifference to ethical difference and so in his concepts of *welcoming the stranger* or *radical alterity* which be-come before Heideggerian being, one assumes that "she" must be the other to the wholly other of "he." This is an escalation, an escalator, that carries us upwards, an uplifting supposedly without the breath or *soufflé* of spirit, a relationship of course that in Levinasian style spirals from the spring of *Il-liety*, and in this sense we can see that Levinasian ethics does not come before the hand; he has not gifted unconditionally to the Other, as the stranger he welcomes he knows too well, thereby confounding his notion of radical alterity, and like the little spiral mechanisms on motorized stairways and their handrails, always returns us to the same.

### Idol Hands and the Death of God

On the other hand, let us turn to another hand, Derrida's hand on Heidegger's, to probe or another probe to hand, to turn to an outside where the hand may respond to the gift of unconditional responsibility. It is a subtle unseeable or unsayable gift, an almost nothing-resonance we allude to that may lead one's hand to gesture ethically. We are referring here to Derrida's essay "*Geschlecht II: Heidegger's Hand*".<sup>102</sup> When Heidegger spoke of the hand, as in *handwerk* as thinking, this is aligned with his understanding of being as unconcealed by *Da sein*, where the hand (and body) manifest being in beings as the hand thinks before being thought. It *is* thought, thought thinking. This is clearly in distinction to the notion of the hand thought as an organic part of the body intended or destined for grasping, taking hold, indeed for scratching, even for catching on, comprehending, conceiving, owning, taking hold of; all that has been conceived of as the metaphorical realm of thought, i.e., an economic order of propriety and property. Derrida states: "If there is a thought of the hand or hand of thought, as Heidegger gives us to think, it is not of the order of conceptual grasping."<sup>103</sup> Heidegger was not interested in *knowing* this way, or rather, thinking via the hand is a thinking not to know, but to think. Heidegger's difference from the order of conceptual grasping may suggest an ethics before the hand via the hand that reveals a thought thinking, a revealing we may liken to the act of dehiscence that takes no object

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102 Derrida, "*Geschlecht II: Heidegger's Hand*", op. cit., pp. 161-196.

103 Ibid., p. 172.

for its object, no binary of profit or gain, a hand that comes *before* the hands of exchange. Derrida writes: “rather this thought of the hand belongs to the essence of the gift, of a giving that would give, if this is possible, without taking hold of anything.”<sup>104</sup> Let us try to tease out the complications here with a little textual interlacing (*entre(e)lacement*). It does seem that Heidegger’s “lack” of grasp opens something before the hand, but this little loosening of the grip has its own cryptic enclave. To comprehend or not ... is that the question? Or, for Heidegger, is it rather the question of learning in a turning to a not-grasping of things, and hence another “better” or “ethical” (a word not much liked by Heidegger) com-pre-hension. Heidegger’s gain is always within the stakes of the authentic. What would it mean to be before (or beyond) the authentic and inauthentic? Here we interlace a series:

The crypt is thus not a natural place [*lieu*], but the striking history of an artifice, an *architecture*, an artifact: of a place *comprehended* within another but rigorously separated from it, isolated from general space by partitions, an enclosure, an enclave.<sup>105</sup>

Heidegger continues, “we are here attempting to learn thinking (*Darum versuchen wir hier, das Denken zu lernen*).” But what is learning, in French *apprehendre*? The response, untranslatable in its literalness, passes through a very subtle craft work, a work of the hand and of the pen among the words *ensprechen*, *Entsprechung*, *zusprechen*, *Zuspruch*. Let me, instead of translating, roughly summarise: to learn, *apprehendre*, is to relate what we are doing to a correspondence (*Entsprechung*) in us with the essential (*wesenhaf*).<sup>106</sup>

‘Bois’ — ‘drink’. From across the wide line space that divides two paragraphs and two voices, the feminine Other responds in responsibility: I knew. In listening I was nonetheless wondering whether I was comprehended (*comprise*), myself, and how to stop that word: comprehended (*comprise*).<sup>107</sup>

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104 Ibid., p. 173.

105 Derrida, “Fors,” op. cit. p. xiv.

106 Derrida, J. “Geschlecht II Heidegger’s Hand,” op. cit. pp. 169-170.

107 Critchley, op. cit. p. 130.

## Inher@nacy of a People: Cunning of the Hidden Hand

Let us traverse the scene a little further. On perhaps another hand, Derrida reveals a rather singular Heideggerian backdrop for viewing Heidegger's hand, tied in part to the word *Geschlecht* in the title of his essay. *Geschlecht* is a German word that can refer quite generally to the inherency of a people. It thereby encompasses the concepts of gender, sex, kind, species, family. In drawing upon this concept of *Geschlecht* Derrida ultimately ties Heidegger's hand up in the contexts of nationality and sexual difference. In the former context, Heidegger's politics are addressed in his thinking of the hand that metaphorically gestures as an act of resistance against professionalisation, which at the time of writing referred to the technologization of University studies, something we are all too familiar with today. And secondly, Derrida emphasizes the particular national context for Heidegger of National-Socialist emphasis on technical productivity alluding to the hand's effacement in the industrial automation of modern mechanization.<sup>108</sup> With the latter context of sexual difference tied to *Geschlecht*, Heidegger binds the notion of thinking to a thought or to a situation of the body, the body of *man* (of human beings) that is caught again in the logic of language's indifference to sexual difference. Heidegger uses the word *Menschheit* to conflate the concept of human and man (the contemporary notion *person* has its origins in this old German word for mankind). Derrida reveals a dimension of *Geschlecht* as sex or sexual difference that comes *before* what is said or not said about the hand. There is a taken-for-grantedness in Heidegger's thinking which comes before thought, a taking that takes with his concept of the hand that has a predetermined sex indifferent to the difference. It is marked by a kind of dogmatism that Derrida aligns with humanism. He particularly refers here to Heidegger's dogmatic binary opposition of distinguishing Apes' *Geschlecht* and Humans' *Geschlecht* in Heidegger's "Apes, for example, have organs that can grasp, but they have no hand."<sup>109</sup>

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108 See Heidegger, "The Self-Assertion of the German University," [The Rectoral Address] trans. by Karsten Harries in *The Heidegger Controversy*, ed. by Richard Wolin (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1992) pp. 29-39. See also Jacques Taminiaux, "The Origin of 'The Origin of the Work of Art,'" in idem, *Poetics, Speculation, and Judgement: The Shadow of the Work of Art from Kant to Phenomenology*, trans. by Michael Gendre (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993) pp. 153-170 for a discussion of the Rectoral Address along with Heidegger's *The Introduction to Metaphysics* on the development of "The Origin of the Work of Art."

109 Derrida, "*Geschlecht II*: Heidegger's Hand," op. cit., p. 173.

The bringing together of the taken-for-granted-thought thought that is circumscribed in Heidegger's language is what obviously takes from the gifting concept of Heidegger's hand that thinks before thought. Caught up in this setting is language. How can one not be within the double bind of an inside of language's pre-thought thought especially when the old Germanic idiom, which Heidegger defers to, is rooted in Greek origins? Heidegger's Greek is an originary language revealing being prior to the inauguration of metaphysics's translations and translatability of being in the epochs of the West's forgetting of the question of being, a lost object for the saying of being, untranslatable even into the philosophical language of German. Derrida remarks on what for Heidegger is the singularity of thought in that *Heidegger refers only to one hand* in a concept of *Geschlecht* that offers so many openings:

Thus, when Heidegger writes: “*Der Mensch ‘hat’ nicht Hände, sondern die Hand hat das Wesen des Menschen inne*”: “Man ‘has’ no hands, but the hand occupies, in order to have in hand, man’s essence,” this supplementary precision does not just concern, as we saw in the first instance, the structure of “having,” a word Heidegger places in quotation marks and whose relation he proposes to invert; it concerns the difference between the plural and the singular: *nicht Hände, sondern die Hand*. What comes to man through  $\lambda\omega\sigma$  or speech (*das Wort*) can be only one single hand. Hands, that is already or still the organic or technical dissipation.<sup>110</sup>

Derrida will go on with this text to explore Heidegger’s saying of *Geschlecht*, in relation to the poetic writing of Georg Trakl and a primordial saying originally Greek and Christian. Here he will emphasize silence for Heidegger in the authentic approach to saying in listening. *Gedicht* is unspoken, silent, to be distinguished from poems which themselves say and speak in proceeding from *Gedicht*.<sup>111</sup> Derrida concludes *Geschlecht II* on a hanging question, one that returns Heidegger’s undoing of the covering of being in the epochs of metaphysics, to the singular unity of the hand:

Just as Heidegger requires a unique and gathering site for Trakl’s *Gedicht*, he must presuppose that there is one single site, unique and univocal, for THE metaphysics and THE Christianity. But does this gathering take place? Has it a place, a unity of place? That is the question I shall leave

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110 Ibid., p. 182.

111 Ibid., p. 187.

suspended thus, before the *chute*. In French one sometimes calls the end of a text *chute*. One also says, in place of *chute*, the *envoi*.<sup>112</sup>

Let me run ahead of myself again, to a more-than-one of place, or move seemingly in a random kind of scatter, like ants before a rainstorm, anticipating something that is about to change. Let me move to another two-hander between Jacques and Hélène (Cixous) and Hélène's (to be entirely taken over by Derrida) *fourni*. We refer here to Cixous's dream of the ant that turns from she to he, whose difference is to be *read* in the trace, to be read, deciphered, decoded, between the two, always transforming. And we shall return to this story of reading always the trace of sexual difference between the twos.<sup>113</sup> But first let us return to the trace of *Geschlecht* between the two hands of Heidegger and Derrida. Derrida writes:

(This last remark should serve for me as a transition [he is referring to the more complex dialogue that could be had on sexual difference and Heidegger's indifference to it; but it is always implicit in this text] if I had the time, toward this word, this mark “*Geschlecht*” that we could now [*maintenant*] follow in another text. I shall not give this part of my lecture [*conference*], which should have been titled “*Geschlecht III*” and whose (typed) manuscript has been *photocopied* and distributed to some of you so that discussion of it might be possible. I shall confine myself then, if you would kindly grant me a few minutes more, to a very cursory sketch.)

I just said “the word ‘*Geschlecht*’: that is because I am not so sure it has a determinable and unifiable referent. I am not so sure one can speak of *Geschlecht* beyond the word “*Geschlecht*”—which then is found necessarily cited, between quotation marks, mentioned rather than used. Next, I leave the word in German. As I have already said, no word, no word for word will suffice to translate this word that gathers in its idiomatic value stock, race, family, species, genus/gender, generation, sex. Then, after saying the word “*Geschlecht*,” I amended or corrected myself: the “mark ‘*Geschlecht*,’” I clarified. For the theme of my analysis would come down to a sort of composition or decomposition that affects, precisely, the unity of this word. Perhaps it is no longer a word. Perhaps one must begin by gaining access to it from its disarticulation or its decomposition, in other words, its formation, its information, its deformations or transformations, its translations, the genealogy of its body unified from starting from or according to the dividing and the sharing of the word’s morsels. We are

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112 Ibid., p. 194.

113 See Derrida, “Excerpt 1: ‘*Fournis*’,” op. cit.

going then to concern ourselves with the *Geschlecht* of *Geschlecht*, with its genealogy or its generation. But this genealogical composition of “*Geschlecht*” will be inseparable, in the text of Heidegger I should interrogate now, from the decomposition of human *Geschlecht*, from the decomposition of man.<sup>114</sup>

The inseparability of decomposition in the human and man is the genealogy Derrida is referring to as being’s being implicitly indifferent to sexual difference, and so the implicit decomposition of man and human in Heidegger’s genealogy is caught by the bind of the hand that writes and returns thought to the Same via the decomposition of man and the hand that wanders or thinks before thought. Before we move to another double handed move that resonates quite clearly with a Heideggerian/Derridean thought from the outside and binding of return to the Same within the decomposition of man, we may wish for the following trace to be read, mentioned or re-mentioned, re-membered and re-peated before *un/e fourmi*...

### Partitioning Sexuality of the Body Proper: *Contretemps — Tous les Deux*

The ant is a dream, a *gift* from Hélène Cixous, a grammatical gender interlacing of *une fourmi* (a female ant) and the dream’s masculine ant (*un fourmi*). And Derrida never loses the homophonic play in the impossible translation of *fourmi* as “for me”:

In parenthesis, I note that all words are ants, and in this way insects, we must draw all the conclusions for sexual difference: as soon as words join in, as soon as they are a party to sexual difference or sexual difference, there are words or rather traces *to read*. It begins *in this way*. There can be traces without sexual difference, for example with asexual living things, but there cannot be sexual difference without trace, and this holds not only for “us”, for the living things we call human. But from here on, sexual difference is to be interpreted, to be deciphered, to be decoded, to be read and not to be seen. Readable, thus invisible, the object of testimony and not of proof - and in the same stroke problematic, mobile, not assured - it passes by, it is in

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<sup>114</sup> Derrida, J. “*Geschlecht II*: Heidegger’s Hand,” op. cit., p. 183. On the word’s “morsels,” we emphasize a reading across “Fors,” concerned with the *mors*, the bit, in an alimentary or elementary incorporation or introjection, which would resonate with mort, ciphered mortgage, and the more complex bits, morsels that interlace the columns of *Glas*. See Chapters 5 and 7 for further (de)composting of these morsels.

passage, it passes from the one to the other, by the one and the other, from *l'une* to the other like *une fourmi* of a dream.<sup>115</sup>

This aside, beside any taking of sides, the gift from Cixous to Derrida happens where a singularity becomes plural, where one must be two, “all two of them” (*tous les deux*), chance happening in and for this anabasis of time to have a chance of happening, “between the two of them” all the twos (*tout les deux*). If “it” passes, if “it” is in passage, this “it” is separation-reparation, that joint, joining whose leave, or leavening is sexual difference, that joint that is “*contretemps*,” time out of joint:

... my other hypothesis being that there are no appointments without the space of the *contretemps*, without the spacing of the *contretemps*, and there is no *contretemps* without sexual difference, as if sexual difference were *contretemps* itself, a *Story of Contretemps*. One of the effects of *Contretemps* today is that, among other things, Hélène furnished me *unknowingly* with the word *fourmi*, giving it to me thus. Her dream gave it to me without knowing what it was doing, without knowing what I would do with it, without knowing period, because one can only give without knowing.<sup>116</sup>

### Saying and the Said: Blanchot's Auto-Affective Wrestle

In this space of the *not* to be seen, but also the step (*pas*) to be seen, as in a step not beyond, not before us or after us, between the twos, and within the trace of reading, as trace is neither given nor taken, we may begin to read the analogy of Blanchot's silence in his writing from “The Essential Solitude.”<sup>117</sup> Silence obviously implicates another part of the body, a listening body, that aligns more closely with Heidegger's (poetic) hand listening to language speaking, the hand which is thought thinking before thought has been thought or owned by the economy of a said. Blanchot writes:

The writer belongs to a language no one speaks, a language that is not addressed to anyone, that has no center, that reveals nothing. He can believe he is asserting himself in this language, but what he is asserting is

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115 Derrida, “Excerpt 1: ‘Fourmis’,” op. cit., p. 121.

116 Ibid., p. 124.

117 Maurice Blanchot, “The Essential Solitude,” op. cit. See also *The Step Not Beyond*, op. cit.

completely without a self. ... Where he is, only being speaks, which means that speech no longer speaks, but simply is—dedicates itself to the pure passivity of being.<sup>118</sup>

What is it to be completely without a self in the act of writing? We get a sense here of something that comes before the hand, that is a thought from the outside of the having thought itself, and this is where we locate a resonance between Heidegger's Hand, Levinas's radical alterity, and Derrida's gift of unconditional responsibility. Space does not permit us here to engage fully in the complex interlacings of Derrida's reception of Blanchot nor the complexity and complicity of Blanchot and Heidegger on a series of themes and of Blanchot and Levinas on the neutrality and passivity of the "il," the indeterminate "he," "it" already commented on above with respect to Levinas and *illeity*.<sup>119</sup> The opening we find here through the silence that requires a listening to *nothing* through an act of reading the traces in Blanchot's language, is an act that suggests the site of sight does not take priority, a gift that comes before *eidos/logos*, logocentrism housed in a metaphysics of presence. If for Heidegger the "House of Being" is Language, then perhaps we can pick up on a tonal resonance between Heidegger's homelessness and Blanchot's essential solitude that is situated before the hand. A revealing of Heidegger's homelessness becomes a site where non-responsibility for responsibility or unconditional responsibility (that is the becoming before Blanchotian Self) is an act whereby the "I" of the one who writes moves from the singular position to a position of "we." Within this impossible, unavowable, community of this "we," one loses one's *self*. So, to return to the original question: What is it to be completely without a self in the act of writing? Perhaps it is to listen to the "I" disappearing into the silent void where language's echoes of appearance and images occlude, and resonance is *myself* writing having become no one, Blanchot's "neutrality and effacement of the world." One hears only through the self-authority of silence. It is important to register here that "authority" (everything we encompass in the proper, identity and propriety) comes from the self via the "permission" that nothing will be revealed. This is an act of distancing distance so that in the blind void one becomes unconditionally responsible for the dehiscence of possibility.

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118 Blanchot, "The Essential Solitude," op. cit., p. 407.

119 See, for example, Derrida "Living On • Borderlines," trans. by James Hulbert, in *Deconstruction and Criticism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979) pp. 75-176; Blanchot "The Gaze of Orpheus," in *The Station Hill Blanchot Reader*, op. cit., pp. 437-442; Thomas Carl Wall, *Radical Passivity: Levinas, Blanchot and Agamben* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999).

So, to belong to a language no one speaks is to belong to a language of silence that reveals nothing, where only *being* speaks, which means that speech no longer speaks, but simply *is*. In the hand that writes in this way, that is, an act of writing that performs to reveal the act in and at work for a tracing that precedes the possibility of speaking, Blanchot's silence comes to the fore. What does this mean to reveal thought through Blanchot's silence?: "The source of this silence is the self-effacement to which the person writes is invited."<sup>120</sup> Western Metaphysics is rooted in the power of the word, arranged in the light of day, where the philosopher's quest is to reveal truth through representative qualities, signs, veils, knowledge, mastery. In "The Essential Solitude," Blanchot gives us an analogy of the hand that *doesn't* write as belonging to this world of mastery, the hand that can intervene just when it has to. Mastery, then, consists of the power to stop writing, to interrupt what is being written. Being written or writing that reveals being is an act of constancy, where the hand that writes pervades into the depths of the silent void, a site where self-consciousness cannot *exist* through the act of self-effacement. This hand that writes is oblivious to the hand that watches, ready to intervene, interrupt, pounce upon the "sick" hand so that property of the self is regained.

The writer's mastery does not lie in the hand that writes, the "sick" hand that never lets go of the pencil, that cannot let go because it does not really hold what it is holding; what it holds belongs to shadow, and the hand itself is shadow. Mastery is always the achievement of the other hand, the one that does not write, the one that can intervene just when it has to, grasp the pencil and take it away. Mastery, then, consists of the power to stop writing, to interrupt what is being written, giving its rights and its exclusive cutting edge back to the instant.<sup>121</sup>

Resonance abounds here with Levinas in the difference, fundamental and decisive for ethics, between the saying and the said. The Levinasian saying is neither recoupable as a knowing nor an opening onto the world. Before being, prior to being, it inaugurates in its impossibility the question of being as such. Hence saying, prior to being is the void of self face-to-face in the welcome, open and unconditional. Blanchot's writing equally effaces a world and a self. If the said instantiates an

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120 Blanchot, "The Essential Solitude," op. cit., p. 406.

121 Ibid., p. 405.

unbridgeable gulf to saying for Levinas, the wrestling hands of Blanchot seem more proximate but their difference is equally irreducible. And perhaps Blanchot differs from Heidegger on this point more than on any other, that hand work is forever divided, complicit with the place of a contra-diction and a *contretemps*, a place coincident with a body, unaccountable to and unassimilable in the mastery of language, or what elsewhere we have tried to convey with the notion of comprehension/apprehension.

### Fragile: Handle With Care

In our reading here one could pose quite consciously the question of Derrida's own hand. That is, does Derrida get his own hand in? This is to suggest a question concerning a kind of taking from critiques such as the one I have recounted on Heidegger's hand, a taking for some ends. The double move in deconstruction is one that is a giving in the act of taking. For example, it is by now commonplace to read in a Derrida text that he is never given enough time for the time he needs for exposition, commentary, critique or deconstruction: "one could go into this more given time." Time is finite, and the broader one goes only exemplifies more contexts, complexities and deviations. The double move is in the act of giving through the refusal of the responsibility for the other. Responsibility in this refusal is an act of ethics as it does not implicate the order of taking and giving (in the ontic sense, which is to say in the economy of ontic/ontological difference as metaphysics would have it, and thus, as well, in an ontological sense). It rather disrupts the economy: any economy based on acts of propriety, ownership, things guided by capital. Here we would want to register a certain overdetermination of capitalization, an inflation of the capital, an economy that recognizes nothing but capitals as in the pursuit of names and things that are proper, a mastery of thinking, comprehending by taking the other's "thoughts" and possessing them, re-using them, re-constituting them, in the circle of return that constitutes the metaphysical priority of presence.

Derrida refuses this position, and the bind of a "refusal" that yet maintains the propriety of a "gracious" refusal, as in turning down a gift with a "thanks but no

thanks,” and does not comprehend, reconstitute, but rather performs the double act with other’s thought thought-through, ungraciously, the revealing of dogmatisms, for instance, slippages, and in this revealing, he reveals the other hand at work. At stake, perhaps, is the openness of the question of the being of human with its complexities and contra-dictions. And here we might locate the notion of contradiction as the very axis (position(s)) on giving and taking, a kind of non-responsibility in the economic sense of order, as contra-dictions take no fixed position, and thereby an unstable ground [*lieu*] is revealed, *topos* of a crypt.

To refuse the responsibility of others means that it is without meaning to take from others, such taking (and therefore a giving) being the very constitution of the impossible. And therefore what is given, or gifted in the Derridean sense is nothing (Blanchot) based on ownership, i.e., capitalization. This is a complex engagement with violence and the escalation (mechanized or otherwise) of violence. What is the agency therefore of this act of refusal which would at the same time (*a contretemps*) be the most ethical, the most “generous” of acts? What is it to refuse (which is not the same as the question of avoidance)? What are we refusing in the act of refusal, which is to say in the non-refusal of a certain act? What is revealed in the refusal is rather the act of not knowing which makes it an act of dissemination. This is the ethics of refusal, of not knowing, or the response of non-responsibility or responsibility founded on the unconditional.

Such a reading of violence in the face-to-face of an other’s encounter of violence marks Derridean *ethics*, as it marks his engagement in the impossibility of sexual difference. To conclude, I want to draw on two key moments of an apparent escalation of violence precisely as the moment that most radically marks Derrida’s deconstruction. This is a refusal of humanist ethics constitutive of a moral subject unquestioned in metaphysical priorities of shoring up presence and being, the self-presence of being to its self, which is to say, an encrypted economy of phallogocentrism. The two moments return us to texts already cited: firstly Derrida’s escalation of ethics and violence in his response to Levinas and then, as a concluding moment, the sealing of a certain violence of separation in a return to the architecture of the crypt we introduce with “Fors.”

### Buried by His Own Hand

I WANT TO MOVE NOW TO THE ‘FINALE’ BRINGING IN THE CONCEPT OF STILLBORN / CRYPT AND MASTERY OF FEMININITY VIA “DERRIDA’S HANDS” I.E. INCEST; THE ONLY POSSIBILITY OF SHE IS VIA THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF AN OUTSIDE OF THE ECONOMY OF THE SAME. FINAL PASSAGE: DERRIDA’S AMBIGUOUS NOTION OF THE STILLBORN; (FUTURE ANTERIOR) AND WOMAN AS THE CRYPT WHICH IS UNGRATEFUL, BUILT ON VIOLENCE, FAULTY AND THAT WHICH DOES NOT PRESENT ITSELF: HIDES AS IT HOLDS.<sup>122</sup>

We encounter the enigmatic and extremely difficult concluding section of Derrida’s response to Levinas, a text that plays uncannily a repetition of another text, or we could say one text encrypted in another. Derrida has refused what Levinas offers but in order to be ethically faithful to Levinas, to acknowledge by failing fidelity in a fidelity. The response compounds the impossible partition between any saying and a said. Derrida is woman, at least using a French grammar that locates the locution as that of a woman speaking, a complicity that resonates and rebounds precisely on the locutionary *potentia* of Levinas as capital, as the capitalization of the proper name E.L. Hence “*elle*,” “she,” speaks a crypted division of sexual difference, concerning a certain auto-affectivity of insemination, generation and faultiness of being-for-death, yet a faultiness whose double scene or logic is precisely that recoupable by Levinasian ethics. There is a stillborn, whose being was mute, an event of incest, being put into the earth, a crypt, in order to decompose thereby returning the fault to a certain illegibility of the same:

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122 In order to locate the striking disseminating play at work in this, see Critchley’s *clôturel* reading of Derrida’s response to Levinas in *The Ethics of Deconstruction* previously cited. In particular the final pages 140-141, in the final section 3.4, “How the Work is Given to Levinas.” It performs with a rather “strange” final paragraph from Derrida’s “At This Very Moment” where deconstruction overtly references the *crypt*. See also, for an extended analysis of the texts in question, Chapter 6 of this thesis, “Interlacings *Entre-(EL)-lacement*.”

HERE AT THIS VERY MOMENT I ROLL UP THE BODY OF OUR INTERLACED VOICES CONSONANTS VOWELS ACCENTS FAULTY IN THIS MANUSCRIPT ... I MUST PLACE IT IN THE EARTH FOR YOU – COME LEAN DOWN ... IT'S OUR MUTE INFANT A DAUGHTER PERHAPS OF AN INCEST STILLBORN ... IN THE BOTTOMLESS CRYPT THE INDECIPHERABLE STILL GIVES ITSELF TO BE READ ... WE MUST HAVE A NEW BODY ANOTHER WITHOUT ANY MORE JEALOUSY THE MOST ANCIENT STILL TO COME ... TAKE IT ... APPROACH ... ‘*BOIS*’<sup>123</sup>

But we must recognize how this violent scene engages in the question of response to the violence of the crypt itself, how the question of ethics and sexual difference is locatable on a close and double reading of the buried fault, the faultiness of the fault, the project of reparation of the fault or the recognition that the fault is the possibility of difference, that the fault is no-one’s fault, as in a “it’s not your fault ... I know ... no, it’s not your fault” which is neither the ownership, nor comprehension, nor responsibility for the faultiness of the fault, but rather the recognition that if anything is to happen, it happens on faults. The crypt is the violent construction of the decomposition of faults as the hiding, securing or keeping safe of the other, as with the other of the self as the possibility of the self, a hiding and securing from faultiness as the burying of the lines of slippage. Derrida’s violence is marked in the faultiness of an approach to the secure chamber of the crypt, violence directed to the very instantiation of violence that founds the crypt. If we speak of sexual difference, it is the crypt that amplifies the self-securing identity of difference itself that echoes difference only as the faint hum of an after-effect of univocal singularity. Hence, violation of the crypt is the faulty act that acknowledges that the indecipherable still gives itself to be read. This is a violation not returnable to masculine desire or the security of the self-presence of the same:

Before turning our minds to the break-in technique that will allow us to penetrate the crypt (it consists of locating the crack or the lock, choosing the angle of a partition, and forcing entry), we have to know that the crypt itself is *built* by violence.<sup>124</sup>

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123 Derrida, “ATVM,” quoted in Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, op. cit., pp. 140-141.

124 “Fors,” op. cit., p. xv.

## C H A P T E R 4

### «SPURS» On For-getting: Sexual—Ontological Differences

This double dissymmetry perhaps goes beyond known or coded marks, beyond the grammar and spelling, shall we say (metaphorically), of sexuality. This indeed revives the following question: what if we were to reach, what if we were to approach here (for one does not arrive at this as one would at a determined location) the area of a relationship to the other where the code of sexual marks would no longer be discriminating?<sup>1</sup>

We recognize the task of expanding the horizons of sexual difference beyond what Cixous has cautioned as an *impossibility* within our time, given that the simple utterance of “woman” or “man” becomes too rapidly trapped within an ideological theatre.<sup>2</sup> We recognize here a danger, if not violence, because any hint of a *return* might reconstitute the very binary value that has codified sexual difference through its discourses: wisdom, knowledge, metaphysics, philosophy of life or of existence. This would constitute a returning move which ultimately will become a central tenet for discussion in this chapter with respect to Heidegger’s ontological difference in the

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1 Derrida, “Interview: Choreographies,” op. cit., p. 184.

2 See Feder, et al., *Derrida & Feminism*, op. cit., p. 110 and also p.159, fn.18. With this chapter we aim to probe the question of difference deposited among (at least) two sexual and ontological, where opposition is called *decomposition*, from Derrida (1983) “*Geschlecht*: sexual difference, ontological difference,” op. cit., p. 83.

existential analytics of Da sein as asexuality. We are alerted to such dangers via deconstruction's questioning on difference (sexual and ontological) brought into play specifically by Derrida in his text *Spurs Nietzsche's Styles/Éperons Les Styles de Nietzsche* and, in more explicit depth in 1983 with *Geschlecht: sexual difference, ontological difference*.<sup>3</sup> Returning to Cixous, this entanglement of sexual difference in all its ideological permutations, its age-old cultural determinations, is almost "unanalyzable." So, would the move here suggest to *forget* the task of disentanglement or what Derrida has posed as a task of *decomposition*, to somehow seal-off the babbling of discourses on sexual difference that would amount to a kind of deafness — a silence where tranquility is but a ruse reminiscent of logocentrism?<sup>4</sup>

In Chapter 2 we discussed Cixous's approach to writing sexual difference, a position that clearly does not encourage deafness, but rather interrogates existing borders that have reduced sexual difference to its theatics. Returning to this notion of an expansion of sexual difference(s) and *its* borders that go beyond "our time", what

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3 Derrida, *Spurs*, op. cit. *Geschlecht: sexual difference, ontological difference*, (1983), is written at least a year before Derrida presented a seminar in Paris under the title "Philosophical Nationality and Nationalism" which continued to focus on Heidegger's thought in relation to the term *Geschlecht* (a word, as we indicated in Chapter 3, that can be translated by sex, race, species, genus, gender, stock, family, generation or genealogy, community). However, Derrida's term *Geschlecht* requires an analysis of *decomposition* to break up its un-translatability, which reflects a discourse too unified and totalizing in effect. See our Preface, footnote 3, for a commentary on *Geschlecht I-IV* and beyond.

4 While in this chapter we focus on a Heideggerian phallogocentrism, here the allusion is also to Jacques Lacan's examination (via the Schreber case) of the relation between thought and language in his proposal of *Inner Speech*, i.e., "hearing-one-self-speak" See, for example, Lacan, *The Language of the Self: The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis*, trans. by Anthony Wilden (New York: Delta, 1968) but also *Glossary*, op. cit., pp. 39-43. Derrida, in "Cogito and the History of Madness" (*Writing and Difference*, op. cit., pp. 31-63) deconstructs a logocentrism within the "archeology of silence" of Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* — in this instance for not staying silent with respect to an analytics against reason by presenting the reason (logos) of madness; a writing of another history that worked too conventionally within historical discourse: a discourse that is rational (see *Writing and Difference*, op. cit., p. 36). Derrida is indebted to Lacan's analysis where all subjects are engaged in a "hearing-one-self-speak," a double discourse that engages both a constant interior monologue — a kind of sonority that is always present and an exterior discourse (the ego's) on reality. Lacan's hypothesis here suggests that this allows *man* to conceive of his own autonomy; a self-secured shored-up ongoing dialogue within himself, producing a constant discourse on liberty (which Lacan elaborates in his theory of psychosis: this is a delusion of one's own irreducible autonomy as an individual — further this relation to the ego is susceptible in the subject of producing delirium). A philosophy of presence and consciousness becomes destabilized in these terms of *hearing-one-self-speak* where identity equals self-alienation and where Derrida identifies conditions for logocentrism: "... by virtue of the historical enunciation through which philosophy *tranquilizes* [my italics] itself and excludes madness, philosophy also betrays itself ... [the choice and division of philosophy between the two ways separated by] Parmenides in his poem, the way of logos and the non-way, the labyrinth, the *palintrope* in which logos is lost; the way of meaning and the way of non-meaning; of Being and non-Being." *Glossary*, op. cit., p. 39. What has been suggested in Chapter 2 of this thesis, "Feminism and the Closure of Metaphysics," is that *Écriture Féminine* has chosen tactics of decomposing phallogocentrism through a careful listening [*Glas*] and accession to the way of the *labyrinth*.

might be suggested here is that this *beyond* is in fact not an ordered priority that exists somewhere after the fact of all analyses, and that these unimaginable codes are unrecognizable not in a future to come, but are situated between all oppositions, all such choices. This alludes more toward sexual difference as the difference of differences (or at least the difference that raises the question of thinking difference and its abyssal origins—the origin of meaning that cannot “have meaning”)<sup>5</sup>, which finds correspondence to both Derrida’s *difference* and Heidegger’s *genesis*.<sup>6</sup> And further,

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5 “I do not know. Must one think “difference” “before” sexual difference or taking off “from” it?” Derrida, *Choreographies*, op. cit. p.172.

6 We may consider the difference between Heidegger’s ontological difference and Derrida’s strategy of *différance* for marking out the movement of such difference. There is an indebtedness and deconstruction involved in relation to Heidegger’s difference with *différance* for questioning the origin of difference (a questioning that lies outside the thinking of metaphysical relations as oppositional). In what is later emphasized as the silence (as interruption) of Heidegger that opens up the possibility for a powerful (unsaid as yet) discourse on sexual differences, we emphasize the silent “*a*” of *différance*:

... the *a* of *différance*, therefore, is not heard; it remains silent, secret, and discreet, like a tomb. It is a tomb (provided one knows how to decipher its legend) is not far from signaling the death of the king.” (SP, p.132) We “hear” this *same silence* in the *a* of *Glas* (as hesitancy, interruption, (con)striction) that will be examined in Chapter 7. *Différance* is neither a *word* nor a concept (SP., p. 129) and is also “the pre-opening of the ontico-ontological difference” (Derrida, “Freud and the Scene of Writing”, *Writing & Difference*, 1978, p. 198) and in this sense along with the belonging of being and beings (of ontological difference) it cannot be read as a form of presence. This is the  *sameness* but not *identical* (SP., p. 129) of Heidegger’s originary difference that marks ontological difference by the belonging of being and beings; a belonging (the ‘of’) termed as *genesis*; a coming forth (*Herkunft*). It is the movement of this difference in the withdrawal of being as it reveals itself as other, not reducible to what is present, permitting beings the difference: “Difference is a movement that never presents itself and can never present itself because it is what first opens up the space in which the presencing of beings that are present occurs. Traditionally, movement is the presence of the absence of presence; but here even this absence of presence is absent. Genesis is the never-present presencing, rather than the present that is not-yet present or no-longer present.” Walter A. Brogan, “The Original Difference,” in Derrida and *Différance*, ed. by David Wood & Robert Bernasconi, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988) p. 35.

This movement of coming forth that marks the difference of differences finds resonance here to the trace (*Spur*) as *différance*. Yet, Derrida would not have it as such a simple *relation* given that in his essay *Différance* he deconstructs the provocation in the proposition of the *proper* that is the *belonging* in the ‘of’ of being and beings that constitutes ontological difference and at the same moment marks the forgetting of the difference (being and beings) by metaphysics; a forgetting that is somehow *traceless* or “a disappearance of the trace of the trace.” According to Heidegger, in the oblivion of being by metaphysics, being keeps to itself. The distinction collapses. It remains forgotten. This forgetting of the trace in Heidegger’s own proposition in the oblivion of being, marks for Derrida erasure in its structure that ends up producing a corresponding logic of difference as the same as metaphysics: “The erasure of the early trace (*die frühe Spur*) of difference is therefore the “same” as its tracing in the text of metaphysics. This latter must have maintained the mark of what it has lost, reserved, put aside. The paradox of such a structure, in the language of metaphysics, is an inversion of metaphysical concepts, which produces the following effect: the present becomes the sign of the sign, the trace of the trace. It is no longer what every reference refers to in the last analysis. It becomes a function in a structure of generalized reference. It is a trace, and a trace of the erasure of the trace.” (*Margins of Philosophy*, p. 24) Ontological difference still traces metaphysics and metaphysics is thereby still comprehended in the language of Heidegger’s thinking. On the other hand, and this is *différance*, Heidegger’s belonging can be read outside of the metaphysical text: “It is certain that the trace which ‘quickly vanishes in the destiny of Being (and) which unfolds ... as Western metaphysics’ escapes every determination, every

suggests it may be *knowable otherwise* but not necessarily ever recognizable as representation would have it.<sup>7</sup> The hypothesis then is to excavate the trace of sexual difference across coinciding moments on *forgetting*. Precisely, these moments on *forgetting* recall Heidegger's central project with respect to the question of the *forgetting* of being. Derrida's approach to Heidegger's ontico-ontological difference and its complicity with a metaphysics of presence is engaged with in this chapter according to a series that opens from Derrida's *Spurs Nietzsche's Styles*. This text approaches Heidegger from a Nietzschean question of sexual difference and *Geschlecht I*.<sup>8</sup> The series is: *language, style, discourse, attunement, reserve, propriation* and *decomposition*. This coincidental framing of *sexual difference* and *forgetting* is precisely an attempt to reveal their *proximity* as an approach to *diffrance*, revealing as a logic of the labyrinth that values *reason* within a kind of madness or as

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name it might receive in the metaphysical text. It is sheltered, and therefore dissimulated, in these names. It does not appear in them as the trace “itself.” But this is because it could never appear itself, *as such*. Heidegger also says that difference cannot appear as such. There is no essence of *diffrance*; it (is) that which not only could never be appropriated in the *as such* of its name or its appearing, but also that which threatens the authority of the *as such* in general, of the presence of the thing itself in essence. That there is not a proper essence (*Diffrance* is not a “species” of the genus *ontological difference*) of *diffrance* at this point, implies that there is neither a being nor truth of the play of writing as such as it engages *diffrance*.” (*Margins of Philosophy*, pp. 25-26). The trace cannot appear, only the logic of its path mimed in deconstruction.

7 In an interview with Derrida, Christie McDonald questions the notion of “woman’s place,” and how Derrida might see a change in ‘place’ in the future from the more deeply inscribed “representations of woman” that still currently exist: Derrida replies, “I do not know if it is to a change in representation that we should entrust the future.” See “Interview: Choreographies,” op. cit., p. 182. Derrida goes on to suggest that the question of representation (especially with respect to woman) is at once too old and too new, that woman’s body has been so deeply inscribed that to add more marks to the body could only complicate the “place” of woman (and, indeed, why just one place). It is also too new because as yet, her marks are not *self-scribed* and, so would representation be the ‘place’ to start. Perhaps, there is another kind of position to think through.

8 See Derrida, *Spurs*, op. cit. and *Geschlecht I*, op. cit. In the early (1970s) collection of interviews published as *Positions*, Derrida acknowledges his debt to Heidegger (perhaps, more than any other thinker in making possible his own project), and in doing so deconstructs moments where Heidegger’s texts reveal a belonging to metaphysics. On page 10 he singles out the ontico-ontological difference as an example. Derrida acknowledges that the syntactical and lexical resourcing in Heidegger’s language, of the language of metaphysics, is also Heidegger’s own *deconstructive act*: “one must do [use the host language] at the very moment that one deconstructs this language.” (ibid., p.10.) However, he still locates metaphysical holds: “Now among these holds, the ultimate determination of difference as the ontico-ontological difference—however necessary and decisive this phrase may be—still seems to me, in a strange way, to be in the grasp of metaphysics. Perhaps then, moving along the lines that would be more Nietzschean than Heideggerian, by going to the end of this thought of the truth of being, we would have to become open to a *diffrance* that is no longer determined, in the language of the West, as the difference between being and beings. Such a departure is doubtless not possible today, but one could show how it is in preparation. In Heidegger, first of all. *Diffrance-fourth*—therefore would name provisionally this unfolding of difference, in particular, but not only, or first of all, of the ontico-ontological difference.” See “Implications: Interview with Henri Ronse [1967],” in *Positions*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981) pp. 3-14.

the un-thought of thought or the untruth of «truth».<sup>9</sup> Outside of this kind of representational or conceptual paradigm exists the dream that Derrida alludes to in his dream of the *Innumerable* that returns us to a time *forgotten*, a beyond all recognizable codes of sexual difference, that exists in a shifting destiny, an existence proven because the dream of innumerability (beyond the figure 2) itself exists: “Does the dream itself not prove that what is dreamt of must be there in order for it to provide the dream?”<sup>10</sup>

9 With the labyrinth, we are thinking of Nietzsche’s ear from Derrida’s “Otobiographies,” in *The Ear of the Other*, op. cit. pp. 3-38; but also a Nietzschean Bataille and his own labyrinthine house of being as the spacings of language (See Denis Hollier, “The Labyrinth, the Pyramid and the Labyrinth,” in *Against Architecture: The Writing of George Bataille*, trans. by Betsy Wing (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1989) pp. 57-73). In *Spurs* the quotation marks « » signify the convention where one’s *text* is taken out of its *original* context [Nietzsche, Heidegger] and also, at the same time via re-inscription, they allude to moments of parody and simulation (sometimes both at once) in the way one’s original text may be interpreted but also in the way the text is re-inscribed into the text of another [Derrida’s]. This text mimes the performance of the « » as both an act of repetition (and thus suspension) and the difference that is produced through writing as *iterability* (See on the *iter*; Derrida, “Signature Event Context,” in *Margins of Philosophy*, op. cit. pp. 307-330). The nuances across *Spurs* and this text aim to produce another (*non*)body that marks the beginnings of a “new” passage through sexual difference and ontological difference (the course that *Spurs* opens up but as yet is unmarked by decidable laws). Of course, the quotation marks also emphasize the themes of *Spurs* and what is being discussed here with respect to the *proper, appropriation, signature* and the fall (*tombe*) out of the proper and text via writing as iteration. See *Spurs* p. 127 under the section “I have forgotten my umbrella” for a playful summary on the fragment “quote” by Nietzsche and the *veritable beehive* of critical questions that Derrida applies to the finding and expropriating of this *lost* (non)fragment. That is, this *veritable beehive* of critical questioning that comes via the relations of reading to writing is a threat to the assured horizon of a hermeneutic question.

10 See Derrida and Conley, “Voice II...,” *Boundary 2*, Vol.12. (No.2. 1984) pp. 68-93 (*On Feminine Writing: A Boundary 2 Symposium*). Derrida was interviewed by Verena Conley over an extended period on the theme of feminine writing: Her opening question posed: “In a recent interview, in a discussion on sexual difference, you let yourself be carried off by a dream of a different relationship to the other and you write...”. She then quotes an extended reply from Derrida to a question posed by Christie McDonald in the interview “Choreographies” from *The Ear of the Other*: “This double dissymmetry perhaps goes beyond known or coded marks, beyond the grammar and spelling, shall we say (metaphorically), of sexuality. This indeed revives the following question: what if we were to reach, what if we were to approach here (for one does not arrive at this as one would at a determined location) the area of a relationship to the other where the code of sexual marks would no longer be discriminating? The relationship would not be a-sexual, far from it, but would be sexual otherwise: beyond the binary difference that governs the decorum of all codes beyond the distinction masculine/feminine, beyond bisexuality as well, beyond homosexuality and heterosexuality which comes to the same thing. As I dream of saving the chance that this question offers I would like to believe in the multiplicity of sexually marked voices. I would like to believe in the masses, this indeterminable number of blended voices, this mobile of non-identified sexual marks whose choreography can carry, divide, multiply the body of each “individual”, whether he be classified as “man” or as “woman” according to the criteria of usage. Of course, it is not impossible that a desire for sexuality without numbers can still protect us, like a dream, from an implacable destiny which immures everything in the figure 2. And should this merciless closure arrest desire at the wall of opposition, we would struggle in vain: there will be never but two sexes, neither one more nor one less. Tragedy would leave this strange sense, a contingent one finally, that we must affirm and learn to love instead of dreaming of the innumerable. Yes, perhaps; why not? But where would the dream of the innumerable come from, if it is indeed a dream? Does the dream itself not prove that what is dreamt of must be there in order for it to provide the dream?” (ibid., p. 184.) We return to this notion of destiny in the section “Propriation as forgetting «forgetting»,” where destiny finds its correlation in the movement of

(lest we)

But first, what is it that we are exactly naming here with respect to this notion of *forgetting*? Heidegger's "stubborn mutism" needs careful address. Heidegger's silence (on sexual difference) is now what cannot be forgotten regardless of whether it *appears* that Heidegger has simply forgotten sexual difference in the question of the forgetting of being in his existential analytic of Da sein. *Spurs*' moment of remembrance and our use of the motif of forgetting calls for the care of deconstruction that *Spurs* takes in relation to the *proper, propriation, appropriation, belonging*. That is, *forgetting* and its *remembering* cannot be recognized here as either a forgetting or a remembering and this either-or would therefore not constitute a totalizing presence but rather signals the spacing-mark-trace of an iter-ability, of interruption.<sup>11</sup> This resonates with a *forgetting* of Maurice Blanchot: "To forget what holds itself apart from absence and apart from presence, and nonetheless causes both presence and absence to come forth through

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Heidegger's appropriation—and destiny's shifting would be a movement that finds its critical resources from within ontological difference. See "Voices II ...," pp. 69-71 and "Choreographies," pp. 184-185.

11 Derrida is well known for his questioning on the problematic binary of speech and writing, on the secondary and supplemental role that writing has held in the history of philosophy, concomitant with the primacy of speech and the voice with respect to a metaphysics of presence. Equally, writing's fate was to be effaced in its legibility as the transparent container of meaning returned to a speaking subject, with the erasure of all of the inscription marks that would have been excessive to phonic registers. It is in "Plato's Pharmacy" in *Dissemination* that Derrida engages an extended deconstruction of the naturalized hierarchy in the binary speech/writing. It is in this text that Derrida introduces Plato's deconstruction of writing in the *pharmakon*, undecidably cure and poison, undecidably that which aids memory and that which aids forgetting. It is in this undecidability that the binary speech/writing confound their simple opposition. This is not an ironic gesture insofar as writing was deemed the *enemy* of memory as accounted for in Plato's *Phaedrus*; as writing manifests externally from the mind and allows forgetfulness to enter into the soul through *amélétésia mnémées*, due to a decline in activating memory. I am not asking the reader to drink from the river of Lethe (forgetfulness), to which we shall return, in Chapter 7, to this realm of the Night. In *Dissemination*, Derrida notes that for Plato writing is formed as an opposition (to itself): internal memory, *mnémées*, and external memory, *hypomnésis*, and that the external form of writing is helpful for memory but not internally. Internal memory is the source of knowledge and knowledge the source of immortality, and truth is produced internally (dialectically from within) from logic: "Plato thinks of writing, and tries to comprehend it, to dominate it, on the basis of *opposition* as such. In order for these contrary values (good/evil, true/false, essence/appearance, inside/outside, etc.) to be in opposition, each of the terms must be simply *external* to the other, which means that one of these oppositions (the opposition between inside and outside) must already be accredited as the matrix of all possible opposition." Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy: The Pharmakon," in *Dissemination*, op. cit., p.103. Forgetting «forgetting» is thereby a marker of this interruption of an oppositional logic as a marker of spatio-temporal incomprehensibility, i.e., where remembrance and forgetting are not recognized by reason, grasping, logic: "And if one got to thinking that something like the *pharmakon*—or writing [forgetting]—far from being governed by these oppositions, opens up their very possibility without letting itself be comprehended by them." (ibid., p.103.) Then this would be the strangeness of *forgetting*.

the necessity of forgetting: this is the movement of interruption we would be asked to accomplish”<sup>12</sup> This movement of interruption is the forgetting of «forgetting», where Heidegger’s question of the forgetting of being produces his silence proximal to a self-concealing that confounds its (question’s) temporal origins. It is precisely Heidegger’s silence (surrounded by much *chatter* about sexuality from Plato through to Nietzsche) where, in fact, he may be working with discourses of sexuality, or at least this will be one of Derrida’s strategic bets on a Heideggerian *Gedicht*. That is to say that the potential for silence as interruption contours a spacing out of a powerful discourse (*otherwise*) on sexual difference.

What if Heidegger’s *silence* is a kind of “Grand Style” and it is *forgetting* that marks its attunement?<sup>13</sup> This is not the forgetting of inauthentic Da sein (that is marked by «forgetting» of omission or negligence) but rather a forgetting that finds its proximity to the attunement or mood of anxiety (being-thrown towards death) where there is no sure ground to stand on.<sup>14</sup> This is the abyssal locale that we will attempt to negotiate (and inscribe) here in the name of forgetting that marks a passage through sexual difference and ontological difference. Perhaps ontological difference as such offers a method (via silence and attunement) for discoursing differently on *diffrance*. Derrida suggests:

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12 Blanchot, “Forgetting, Unreason,” in *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. by Susan Hanson (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) p.195.

13 We are alluding here to Heidegger’s writings on Nietzsche and his account of “The Grand Style.” See Heidegger, “The Grand Style,” in *Nietzsche Volume 1: The Will to Power as Art*, trans. by David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper Collins, 1991) pp. 124-137. Heidegger interprets Nietzsche’s Grand Style as the whole of the artistic actuality, a movement that unifies rapture and beauty, creation, reception and form wherein “the grand style; the essence of art becomes actual,” wherein art comes to its essence, that which is proper to art. (ibid., p.137.) And further: “art places the whole of *Dasein* in decision and keeps it there (the unification of flagrant contradictions in *Dasein*).”(ibid., pp. 125-126.) What decision (oppositional, contradictory, etc.) is (pre)occupied in the silence of Heidegger? If for Nietzsche art and its grand style open up the possibility of “regeneration,” might we suggest for Heidegger the essence of *Dasein* traces a regenerating path back-toward something obscure, as in his own perception of style, woman, art, etc., unmarked and silent, the least of which is form-giving. (ibid., p. 129.) This would be the silence that unifies the Grand Style with repression. By “attunement,” Heidegger is referring to one of the primordial disclosures of Da sein’s being. See *Being and Time*, op. cit., Section 29, “Da-sein as Attunement,” pp. 126-131; and also *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, op. cit., on an extended discussion on attunement and fundamental attunement as a primordial disclosure of Da Sein. See Part One, “Awakening a Fundamental Attunement in our Philosophizing,” pp. 58-168.

14 See *Being and Time*, op. cit., Section 53, “Existential Project of an Authentic Being-toward-Death,” pp. 240-246.

What if “sexuality” (Heidegger’s quotation marks re-cited) already marked the most originary *Seibstheit*? If it were an ontological structure of ipseity?<sup>15</sup> If the *Da* of *Dasein* were already “sexual”? What if sexual difference were already marked in the opening up of the question of the sense of Being and of the ontological difference? And what if, though, not self-evident, neutralization were already a violent operation?<sup>16</sup>

We have conflated Heidegger’s silence with forgetting. Is this concealing silent suspicion a revealing of forgetting as an *attunement*, or rather a basic mood, where (sexual) difference does the attuning? This will be one such argument that is traced throughout here under this name of *forgetting* situated beyond the binary of «forgetting» and «remembering».

### Forgetting: Nothing Settled

In a kind of thrown-ness toward the end of *Spurs*, the reader is reminded under the sub-heading “I have forgotten my umbrella” that we will never know for certain the thesis at stake, for words forgotten in their isolation, re-membered by the path of hermeneutics.<sup>16</sup> That is, the destiny of Nietzsche’s isolated fragment in quotation marks «I have forgotten my umbrella» found by another in Nietzsche’s unpublished writings has significance insofar as it is grafted into Derrida’s text. This is a significant performative act to remind us of how to read or *to not read* within the limits of differences between writing and style. In *Choreographies*, perhaps Derrida’s most renown and overly schematic explication of *Spurs* in relation to the questions it raised for feminism (of the time) around sexual difference, he suggests a deeper enquiry may be found: the fragment being just as important for the position on the *whole* that can only be made up of fragments which can never saturate just any one context.<sup>17</sup> This is

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15 Derrida, *Geschlecht*, op. cit. p.74.

16 The use of the term “thrown-ness” of the reader is a reference to Da sein and the analysis that follows in relation to the proper. The thrown-ness of Da sein implicates belonging and order, just as the reader of this thesis is thrown into a re-assembled reading of *Spurs*—that becomes the paradox of *forgetting*. Or what is revealed by the *general* structures of Da sein is an implicit order (what Heidegger tends to preserve) that renders an account of the predicates made use of by all discourse on sexuality: “There is no properly sexual predicate; there is none at least that does not refer, for its sense, to the general structures of *Dasein*.” Derrida, *Geschlecht*, op. cit., p.82. By “thrown-ness,” Heidegger refers to Da sein’s falling prey to the “they self,” becoming entangled in idle talk, curiosity and ambiguity, and being “sucked into the eddy of the they’s inauthenticity.” See *Being and Time*, op. cit. Section 38: “Falling Prey and Thrownness,” pp. 164-168.

17 See Derrida, “Signature Event Context,” in *Margins of Philosophy*, op. cit., pp. 309-330, on the non-saturation of “context” and the opening of the *iter* to difference: “The semantic horizon which

the structural limitation in writing, limitation of a book as structuring totality.<sup>18</sup> To be more precise, Derrida has suggested that he has re-created a Nietzschean scene with respect to a question of woman (feminism, dogmatism, philosophy, truth) via formalizing movements and typical moments throughout a very broad and diverse body of Nietzsche's texts. In a filial relation, *Spurs* performs throughout this scene, that is plural in style (Nietzschean, Derridean, Heideggerian at  ) and such affiliations make a *scene* that is, perhaps, more disturbance than idyll, more *ressac* (backwash) than vision at a distance, but yet not impossible to be carried along impromptu via its “inventive incalculable choreographies”: “Since these typical features (of *Spurs*, of Nietzsche's writing) are and must be unstable, sometimes contradictory, and finally “undecidable,” any break in movement of the reading would settle in a counter-meaning, in *the meaning* which becomes counter-meaning.”<sup>19</sup>

Derrida's defense of a plurality of Nietzschean styles, which may leave a reader unstable, on a path of irreducible undecidability, is a reaction against dogmatism, specifically the “naïve” default of a kind of feminism that has coincidence with the way and figure of the dogmatic philosopher with *his* alignment of man and truth. This is Nietzsche's reaction to feminism, not woman or women.<sup>20</sup> Further, Derrida cautions

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habitually governs the notion of communication is exceeded or punctured by the intervention of writing that is of a *dissemination* which cannot be reduced to a *polysemia*. Writing is read, and ‘in the last analysis’ does not give rise to a hermeneutic deciphering, to the decoding of a meaning of truth.” Ibid., p. 329.

18 Hence we mention again *Dissemination*'s leitmotif: “This (therefore) will not have been a book.” We may also reference from *Writing and Difference* “Edmund Jabès and the Question of the Book,” pp. 64-78 and “Ellipsis,” pp. 294-300 that returns us to the writings of Jabès on the limits to the book, with its cryptic final signature: “Opening the third part of the third *Book of Questions*, thus begins the song on *distance and accent*: ‘Tomorrow is the shadow and reflexivity of our hands.’ Reb Derissa.” Ibid., p. 300.

19 “*Ressac*” appears in *Spurs*, as an attempt at translation for what Derrida suggests is an untranslatable play on words. Derrida is quoting a key passage from Nietzsche that commences “Am I only ear and nothing else besides? Here I stand in the ferment of the backwash ... .” It is this second sentence that presents the untranslatability from the German (*Hier stehe ich innitten des Brandes der Brandung*). *Brandung* expresses a conflagration akin to *Brand*, which expresses, for example, a branding iron. Derrida follows Klossowski in translating *Brandung* as *ressac*; or backwash, back-surge we associate with the to-ing and fro-ing of waves, their arrival and return. And here there is an opening to Heidegger, or a Nietzsche *contra* Heidegger on the thinking of return, hence a thinking of belonging and the proper. Harlow, in the English translation misses the scene with her translator's choice of “surging of the breakers.” See *Spurs*, op. cit., pp. 42-43. Also, for the quotation, see “Choreographies,” op. cit., p. 170.

20 Ibid., pp. 63 & 65: “For it is the man who believes in the truth of woman, in woman-truth. And in truth, they too are men, those women feminists so derided by Nietzsche. Feminism is nothing but the operation of a woman who aspires to be like a man. And in order to resemble the masculine dogmatic philosopher this woman lays claim—just as much claim as he—to truth, science and objectivity in all their castrated delusions of virility. Feminism too seeks to castrate. It wants a castrated woman. Gone the style.”

us in “Choreographies” that too commonly readers have halted (felt restrained) by the abundance of phallic forms in *Spurs* (style, stiletto, rocky outcrop or headland, the spur, bowsprit, umbrella etc) ignoring what he describes as:

the difference between style and writing or the bisexual complication of those and other forms ... *to not read* the syntax and punctuation of a given sentence when one arrests the text in a certain position, thus settling on a thesis, meaning or truth. This mistake of hermeneutics, this mistaking of hermeneutics—it is this that the final message [*envoi*] of “I forgot my umbrella” should challenge.<sup>21</sup>

And, without being in danger of breaking the movement of this dance, *forgetting* now becomes an entry point, partly for what Derrida’s project inscribes with respect to the effects of iterability in the double inscription of the name “Nietzsche.”<sup>22</sup> The absences referenced in the naming of the proper have significance for what *Spurs* choreographs as writing’s performativity as iterability, a double structure of the *as*, the as ... as.<sup>23</sup> That is, the *ressac*, the backwash of accumulation of the notions of propriety, the proper and appropriation, through *Spurs*, is a movement as disturbance of ontological difference without simply inverting its order. This movement, which actually begins (to swell) just before “I have forgotten my umbrella” at *Le coup de don* focuses on Derrida’s gift and in particular, perhaps, an impossible idea of the gift as the possibility for maintaining an *essential* relationship to sexual difference. Derrida presents a

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21 Ibid., p. 113. With respect to the process of *propriation* in relation to limits of onto-hermeneutics: “And the question of proper-ty (*propre*) has only to loom up in the field of economy (in its restricted sense), linguistics, rhetoric, psychoanalysis, politics, etc., for the onto-hermeneutic interrogation to reveal its limit.” Also we need to take into consideration here, on the question of restricted and general economies of the text, Derrida “From Restricted to General Economy A Hegelianism without Reserve” in *Writing and Difference*, op. cit., p.251-277: “The blind spot of Hegelianism, around which can be organized the representation of meaning, is the point at which destruction, suppression, death and sacrifice constitute so irreversible an expenditure, so radical a negativity—here we would have to say an expenditure and a negativity without reserve—that they can no longer be determined as negativity in a process or system. In discourse (the unity of process and system), negativity is always the underside and accomplice of positivity.” Ibid., p. 259.

22 But would this reference constitute an affiliation to Nietzsche, a return to Nietzsche that would be a return to the metaphors that join *logos* and the father in a discourse of the filial. Derrida suggests that this metaphor must be questioned, incessantly for the “permanence of a Platonic schema that assigns the origin and power of speech, precisely to logos, to the paternal position.” See “The Father of Logos,” in *Dissemination*, op. cit. pp. 75-84, and discussion of this in *Glossary*, op. cit., pp. 51-55.

23 The double structure of the “as ... as” may be read in relation to Derrida’s insistence in “Signature, Event, Context” that writing effects as inability to exhaust the event; the context is never fully saturated. See for a discussion of this, Derrida’s “Afterword: Towards an Ethics of Discussion,” trans. by Samuel Weber, in *Limited Inc*, trans. by Samuel Weber and ed. by Gerald Graff (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988) pp. 111-154; and also a discussion of “Signature, Event, Context,” by Ulmer in *Glossary*, op. cit., pp. 23-27.

question of the decidable, or more originally, a question of the decidability of the question:

For not having posed the sexual question, or at least for having subsumed it in the general question of truth, Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche has been idling offshore (but we began with the enigmas offshore) ever since it missed the woman in truth's fabulous plot-ting. For hasn't it just been sighted that the question of sexual difference was not at all a regional question in a larger order which would subordinate it first to the domain of a general ontology, subsequently to that of a fundamental ontology and finally to the question of the truth of being itself? Indeed, may it no longer even be a *question*?<sup>24</sup>

This discussion of Heidegger and Nietzsche in *Le coup de don* finds Nietzsche's dissimulating woman lodged in the core of Heideggerian appropriation: "The order of Heidegger's thought is, however, regularly disoriented by an oblique movement which inscribes truth in the process of propriation. ... Even as [the process] is carried away of itself by its desire, it founders there in the waters of this its own desire, unencounterable—of itself. It passes into the other."<sup>25</sup> In the *Choreographies* interview, Derrida responds to a question on Heidegger's ontology and feminism by returning to this discussion of Heidegger and Nietzsche. He offers a further articulation of Heidegger's thinking as the legacy of a thinking of woman:

One wonders whether sexual difference, femininity for example—however irreducible it may be—does not remain derived from and subordinated to either the question of destination or the thought of the gift (I say "thought" because one cannot say philosophy, theory, logic, structure, scene or anything else; when one can no longer use any word of this sort, when one can say almost nothing else, one says "thought," but one could show that this too is excessive).<sup>26</sup>

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24 *Spurs*, op. cit., p. 109.

25 Ibid., p. 117. The expression *le coup de don* remains untranslated in the English version. In a preface to *Spurs*, Stefano Agosti suggests that *le coup de don* needs to be read, like other key Derridean terms, as an undecidable that locates the embeddedness of deconstruction. He parallels this expression with Derrida's application of *pharmakon*, mentioned earlier in relation to his deconstruction of Plato's texts on writing. Crucially, he suggests an emphasis with this expression of reading or listening to a *silence*: "There is a *coup de don* which silently resounds from out of these pages. Should it be interrogated or submitted to reflection's labor that one might discover what it is saying? The adjacent context provides a semantic sound box wherein this *coup*, even if not fixed, might at least give rise to itself. The *coup de don* is equivalent to the *pharmakon* and those other signs which, themselves neither words nor concepts, support Derrida's operation." (ibid., p. 3.)

26 See "Choreographies," op. cit. p. 172. For an extended discussion by Derrida on destination and the subordination of woman, see his "The Purveyors of Truth," *Yale French Studies* No. 52 (1975) 31-113; also published as "*Le Facteur de la Vérité*" in *The Post Card*, op. cit., pp. 411-496. This text

In this vein, the gift and its relation to sexual difference as a disruption to Heidegger's ontology cannot be *forgotten* here. The aim therefore is to explore this gift with respect to Heidegger's forgetting in the guise of a neutrality of sexual difference within the meaning of Da sein and ontological difference. This is the place of a coincident ontic recourse of simply forgetting one's umbrella and an ontological *forgetting* of being in the habit of *appropriation*, *propriation*, the *proper* of sexual difference. Yet this double inscription of forgetting may be seen to coincide with the place of a further double inscription of the proper in the name of *Nietzsche*, and then, on analysis, we come to recognize all the twos and *tous les deux* which need (lest we ...) their return (*ressac*). What are we entitled to read in this word «*Nietzsche*»? What can we profit by it? Does a proper name mean anything? Referring here to the title *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles / Éperons: Les Styles de Nietzsche* there is always more than one *Nietzsche* at play. At the level of translation we have both the English and French columns in cohabitation within the book, whereby all manner of meanings may arise in the absence of any message (the text differs from itself) or the intended message misunderstood (the text defers from itself) or what we have already referenced as the structure of the double “as,” writing as iterability.<sup>27</sup> Further, we may forget whose styles are being referred to in the title: the philosopher named Friedrich *Nietzsche*,

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constituted Derrida's first significant discussion of the psychoanalytic theories of Jacques Lacan, and was a reply to Lacan's text on E.A. Poe's “The Purloined Letter.” In his text, Lacan establishes (famously) that the letter always reaches its destination, and it is this destiny of the signifier that will be the constituting factor in the placements and distributions of sexual difference. Derrida (also famously) concludes his text on the fact that the letter does not always reach its destination. “The Purveyor of Truth” has been cited and echoed in almost every subsequent text by Derrida that has engaged the question of psychoanalysis, and became the central motif for his publication *The Postcard*. It was not simply a coincidence, or chance encounter that Lacan commenced his text on the Purloined Letter with a reference to Heidegger's *The Essence of Truth*. Derrida is keen to read a Heideggerian crutch in Lacan's itinerary and not just for the homophonic ring of *lettre* and *l'être*. Destination and the gift, from the above quote, of course, constitute the essential Heideggerian determinations of the meaning of being. On the gift, see also Derrida's *Given Time*, op. cit.

27 The text of *Spurs* was originally titled “*La Question du style*,” and as a paper was first published in the proceedings of the colloquium, *Nietzsche Aujourd' hui?*, that took place in 1976. Re-titled as *Éperons: Les styles de Nietzsche*, the paper was republished as a book in four languages—the original French alongside translations in Italian, English and German. The French version alone was published as a book in 1978 by Flammarion. The French and English versions from the 1976 four-language edition were published in 1979 by the University of Chicago Press as *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles/Éperon: Les Styles de Nietzsche*. The English translation by Barbara Harlow for the 1976 four-language edition reappears in the 1979 American bilingual edition. All references, unless otherwise noted, will be to the 1979 bilingual edition. “The Question of Style” was originally translated by Ruben Berezdivin and published in *The New Nietzsche*, ed. by David B. Allison (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1985). An altered selection and re-translation of “The Question of Style” by Berezdivin appears in *Feminist Interpretations of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. by Kelly Oliver and Marilyn Pearsall (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press) pp. 50-65.

renowned for his plural discursive writing styles and / or Martin Heidegger's *Nietzsche*, Heidegger's four volumes on this philosopher.<sup>28</sup> *Spurs* is a text of intervals, moments of betweens, between a multiplicity of twos: there are the two columns of languages with French and the English translation and with a German third interspersed. There are the two (at least) interpretations of Nietzsche, the performative «hermeneutics» of Derrida's assemblage from a broad and diverse range of texts of Nietzsche, alongside the Heideggerian “confrontation” with *Nietzsche* as a relation to the question of style. This further provides a coupling with respect to the structural unfolding of the book: *Spurs* is structured by two distinctive stylistic moments. The first, a reading of Nietzsche's allegorizing style with respect to woman, truth, art and philosophy. The second begins with “*History of an error*” which initiates the “second” *Nietzsche*, Heidegger's *Nietzsche* which takes on quite a different style.<sup>29</sup>

This is Derrida's *interpretation* of Heidegger via Heidegger's *Nietzsche* that draws attention to a serious lacuna revealed in Heidegger's style in relation to sexual difference and its coincidence to ontological difference as property of metaphysics.<sup>30</sup> It becomes a question of how *this* difference is situated between the twos. A third moment within the interval of Derrida's own deconstructive style dissimulates a Nietzschean *fall* onto Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche, to present Nietzsche's *Heidegger* if only to settle accounts.<sup>31</sup> Each pairing producing a third operation (Derrida's) that exceeds, and arises from, an immuring of two and it is with this third

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28 Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, op. cit.

29 See *Spurs*, p. 71. We have already noted Heidegger on Nietzsche's «Grand Style». We might add here that Heidegger's style becomes grand precisely for its *reserve*, what it reserves or holds in reserve, for its resilience with respect to its silences, prudence and, perhaps, arrogance at having made *no* mention of sexual difference: “Sexual difference, it was said, could not rise to the height of ontological difference. If one wished to find out what height is in question, the thought of difference not rising to any, the silence would not be lacking. That could then be found arrogant or, precisely, provoking, in a century when sexuality, common place of all babbling, has also become the currency of philosophic and scientific “knowledge,” the inevitable *Kampfplatz* of ethics and politics. Not a word from Heidegger! It could even be found a matter of grand style, this scene of stubborn mutism at the very centre of the conversation, in the uninterrupted and distracted buzzing of the colloquium; for in itself it has a waking and sobering value ... Is it imprudent to trust Heidegger's manifest silence?” Derrida, *Geschlecht*, op. cit., p. 66.

30 Hence, Derrida will draw out Heidegger's sailing with Nietzsche to the point of apparent capsise on the overturning of Platonism. At that moment when Heidegger should have pursued Nietzsche to the nether side of metaphysics, he takes recourse to critique, to a form of question that returns to the safer harbour of metaphysics: “Heidegger is here pursuing the Nietzschean operation into the very reaches where it exceeds metaphysics and Platonism. But at the same time it would seem that what he is after there is in fact a form of question more proper to a hermeneutic, and consequently philosophical, order, indeed the very order that Nietzsche's operation should have otherwise *put out of order*.” *Spurs*, op. cit., pp. 81 & 83.

31 Ibid., p. 73.

moment that we here realize a possibility for finding an “outside” to the economy of the proper (in the classical sense of give and take, of economic interest via its very own *impossible* logic), an “outside” or what Derrida names as the *before* that is in excess of origin.<sup>32</sup> The *before* as excessive origin is the path of origin’s deconstruction in relation to Heidegger’s question of the *forgetting* of being, the deconstruction of «forgetting», *forgetting* as the belonging of sexual difference to the *before* of difference as such.<sup>33</sup>

### Re-Memberance and Truth (the Path of the Neuter)

Derrida’s economy of the gift [*le don*] situates itself between or beyond the complex relations or polarities of the ontological and the ontic, ontology and anthropology, being and metaphysics or for Levinas’s ethics, ontology and metaphysics. Rather, the passage between ontological difference and sexual difference, according to Derrida is no longer possible according to these polarities.<sup>34</sup> How, then, does Derrida’s gift [*le don*] disturb these binary markings? The attempt here would be to read across the relations that mark some of the most radical turns in ontology (Heidegger’s ontological difference) and metaphysics (Levinas’s ethics as first philosophy, a topic that is dealt with in Chapter 6) within Derrida’s gift economy. Both Heidegger’s and Levinas’s projects (that are, as we have seen, coincident though not reducible to one another around the themes of death and time) are significant for questions raised with respect to sexual difference either via its Heideggerian exclusion or Levinas’s undisguised

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32 We see in “Choreographies” where Derrida poses the question of an order of succession, which would also be a question of origins, and the undecidability of this: “One wonders whether sexual difference, femininity for example—however irreducible it may be—does not remain derived from and subordinated to either the question of destination or the thought of the gift.” See “Choreographies,” op. cit., p. 172. We recognize here a distinct parallel to the question Derrida will have drawn out with regards to Heidegger’s ambivalent prioritizing of being and *Ereignis* in “Time and Being,” op. cit. (See footnote 37 this chapter). We recognize with this logic of the breakdown or breakup of a meaning to order, a logic of an outside of the be-before.

33 In order to question difference or to have a concept of difference, alterity, otherness, the unknown, difference is secondary to or has been produced by the truth of sexual difference; truth *not* suspended – i.e., truth in the sense *Spurs* suggests: “«Truth» can only be surface. But the blushing movement of that truth which is not suspended in quotation marks casts a modest veil over such a surface. And only through such a veil which thus *falls* [my italics] over it could «truth» become truth, profound, indecent, desirable. But should that veil be suspended, or even fall a bit differently, there would no longer be any truth, only «truth»—written in quotation marks. *Le voile/tombe.* [the veil falls or the veil/tomb, i.e., two possibilities for truth, to subtly reveal itself or to be buried alive]. (*Spurs*, op. cit., p. 59.)

34 See “Choreographies,” op. cit., pp. 180-181.

inclusion. Let us suggest up front that both maintain an order complicit with the discourse of Western metaphysics with its prioritizing of masculinity as neutral originariness or first order, as that which Derrida terms phallogocentrism. Why, then, does Heidegger almost never speak of sexuality or sexual difference?: «For not having posed the sexual question, or at least for having subsumed it in the general question of truth, Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche has been idling offshore (but we began with the enigmas offshore) ...»<sup>35</sup> How adrift is his thinking that it remains so powerfully *silent* on this question? Indeed, this amorphous locale that drifts is a drift that allows too much distance from the *correctness* of a metaphysics of presence.<sup>36</sup> Could this offshore distance, as a relation of language and style, their proximity or coincidence in the voice, for example, suggest figures of denial in the orders given in relation to propriety, propriation, the proper, and reveal proximity as the reserve of metaphysics? That is, it is in Heidegger's language of belonging, in the “it gives,” “being-for,” “*Dasein* is *Mitsein* with *Dasein*,” where perhaps a naïve proposition or contradiction arises in such statements as: “The logical relations of order are meaningless” *given* that language is hosted by a prioritizing.<sup>37</sup> It is in the deconstruction of the proper in Heidegger's thinking that another kind of economy on his thinking is thought. *Spurs* activates its weave firstly by opening onto the scenes of sexual difference, scenes that lead back to Heidegger's elision via the proper of Da sein and the default ontohermeneutic logic that resides within the neuter, what will be referred to within this system of thought as the *path of the Neuter*, that returns, via its forgetting (as a

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35 *Spurs*, op. cit., p. 109.

36 Derrida's *Geschlecht* offers an explicit reading of Heidegger's existential analytics of Da sein in relation to the question of sexual difference and its proximity to ontological difference, via Heidegger's lecture course given at the University of Marburg Lahn in the Summer Semester of 1928. In the course, according to Derrida, Heidegger gives some justification for the silence of *Being and Time* on the question of sexuality, in a paragraph from the course devoted to the “Problem of the *Sein und Zeit*” (§ 10) published in *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz*, *Gesamt-Ausgabe*, Volume 26: “This neutrality means also that the *Dasein* is neither of the two sexes. But this a-sexuality (*Geschlechtlosigkeit*) is not the indifference of empty invalidity, the annulling negativity of an indifferent ontic nothingness. In its neutrality, the *Dasein* is not the indifferent person-and-everyone (*Niemand und Jeder*), but it is originary positivity and the power of being or of the essence, *Mächtigkeit des Wesen*.” Here we should note two key moments in this text with respect to the spatial metaphorics of Heidegger's enigmatic positioning “off-shore”: The first can be located in the title of Derrida's text referring here to the German term *Geschlecht* and the problem of translation we have previously noted. “Decomposition,” thus, is the approach and in this sense it is spatio-temporal analytics. Secondly, this enigmatic drift that is far too distant from shore, what Derrida suggests in *Geschlecht* and in *Spurs*, is neither an omission nor a negligence but rather is interpreted here as proximal to the attunement of forgetting in relation to silence, a spatio-temporal locale as attunement.

37 See *Spurs*, op. cit., footnote 17, pp. 157 & 159 for Derrida's engagement with Heideggerian *Ereignis* from “Time and Being” as a fundamental question of prioritizing being, with being belonging to *Ereignis* and *Ereignis* belonging to being. An ordering becomes meaningless, or outside the question of meaning.

repression), sexual difference back into the economy of the Same: «[a] *before* [where] it [*neutre*] there was no sexuality».<sup>38</sup>

### Economy of the Gift: Beyond the Horizon of Being of Heidegger's Hermeneutics

It is perhaps with the *use* of the word *for* that Derrida strikes his simplest yet most abundant move (*coup de don*) in deconstructing *propriation*. The value he attributes to this mere word allows for all kinds of excess that go beyond the binary of give and take (*for* coincident with simulation, but how could simulation be thought outside of the co- of the incident?). Let us observe the double-scene of *propriation* as excess and beyond the horizon of being. Woman is given her Nietzschean figure via an *already* formalized law, a law that houses *his* three styles of «woman/truth»: “He was, he dreaded this castrated woman [falsehood]. He was, he dreaded this castrating woman [truth]. He was, he loved this affirming woman [truth as untruth].”<sup>39</sup> Derrida comments:

Either, at times, woman is woman because she gives, *because she gives* herself, while the man for his part takes, possesses, indeed takes possession. Or else, at other times, she is woman because, in giving, she is in fact *giving herself for*, is simulating, and consequently assuring the possessive mastery for her own self. The *for* which appears in the «to-give-one-self-for,» whatever its value, whether it deceives by giving only an appearance of, or whether it actually introduces some destination, finality or twisted calculation, some return, redemption or gain, into the loss of proper-ty (*proper*), this *for* nonetheless continues to withhold the gift of a reserve. Henceforth all the signs of a sexual opposition are changed. Man and woman change places. They exchange masks *ad infinitum*.<sup>40</sup>

This rather duplicitous *twirl*, staged in the swapping of masks, is something of a ruse or what Derrida has later in this section (*Le coup de don*) suggested as a transcendental snare within the logic of the proper: «In such an affair the male, in his credulousness and naivety (which is always sexual, pretending even at times to masterful expertise), castrates himself and from the secretion of his act fashions the *snare* of truth-

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38 *Spurs*, op. cit., p. 111.

39 Ibid., p. 101.

40 Ibid., pp. 109 & 111.

castration».<sup>41</sup> An act of dissimulation opened by the impossibility of the proper of woman, woman does not exist within this law of the proper that marks the discourse of ontology and the entire history of metaphysics: “Propriation is all the more powerful since it is its process that organized both the totality of language’s process and symbolic exchange in general. By implication, then, it also organized all ontological statements. The history (of) truth (is) a process of propriation.”<sup>42</sup> Woman does not exist because

41 Ibid., p. 59. This is not the proper passage that follows on to the *transcendental snare* (which follows on p. 111) but rather an earlier passage that marks the course of Derrida’s tracing of the *proper* and *truth* in its relation to the *reserve* (secretion), a reserve economy that has a fuller discussion in footnote 42 following and draws a closer proximity to a double economy of *propriation* as the undecidable that escapes both dialectics and ontology. Derrida also at this moment makes reference to Lacan’s «point de caption» as the points for privileged signifiers in the anchoring of the chain of signifiers to signifieds. The privilege of the “points” will be within an economy that Derrida will refer to as one that installs a transcendental signifier in the phallus: “(Perhaps at this point one ought to interrogate—and «unboss»—the metaphorical full-blown sails of truth’s declamation, of the castration and phallo-centrism, for example, in Lacan’s discourse).” (ibid., pp. 59-61.) The *snare* is also Derrida’s warning around relations of (hermeneutic) reading and truth finding. Here we are focused on Heidegger’s silence with respect to sexual difference and rely on Derrida’s (rare) findings of where the elision resides and sexual difference is occupied by Da sein’s asexuality. Derrida warns us of his own potential *snare* in such a finding suggesting that the reading machine (mentioned in *Spurs* also, see p. 131: this is the “sewing-up machine” of hermeneutics that needs to be programmed with care (*poiesis and techne*): “Will what is thus ascertained later [Derrida’s analysis in *Geschlecht*] be deranged from it pretty philological assurance by some known or unedited passage when, while searching out the whole of Heidegger, some reading machine will hunt out the thing and *snare* [my italics] it? Still, one must think of programming the machine, one must think, think of it and know how to do it. Relying on which words? Only on names? And on which syntax, visible or invisible? Briefly, in which signs will you recognize his speaking or remaining silent about what you nonchalantly call sexual difference? What do you think by those words or through them?” (*Geschlecht*, op. cit., p.66.) Derrida is suggesting the Heideggerian ontological difference has a (perhaps grand) style of silence that interrupts Modernity’s more common place utterings on sexuality. On this non-said style, Derrida locates the contours of Heidegger’s sexual discourse and, in doing so, warns against the trap of reading an analytics of Da sein as a fundamental anthropology (“given rise to so many misunderstandings and mistakes regarding its pretended “réalité-humaine” or human reality as it was translated in France.” (ibid., p.67.) This fundamental anthropological reading bears no sexual mark. (The “pretty philological assurance” refers here to a “polysemic rich” account Heidegger retraces in language some thirty years later with the word *Geschlecht*). And yet, later in *Spurs*, Heidegger’s prudence that re-inscribes the theme of sexuality, in rigorous fashion, within an *ontological questioning* [my italics] and an existential analytics becomes its very own metaphysical *snare*: “As soon as it is not placed upon a common *doxa* or a bio-anthropological science, the one and other sustained by some metaphysical pre-interpretation, sexual difference remains unthought. But the price of that prudence? Is it not to remove sexuality from every originary structure? Deduce it? Or in any case derive it, confirming all the most traditional philosophemes, repeating them with the force of a new rigour? And that derivation, does it not begin by a neutralization whose negativity was laboriously denied? And once the neutralization is effected, does one still arrive at an ontological or “transcendental” dispersion, at that *Zerstreuung* (distraction) whose negative value was so difficult to efface?” (ibid., p. 79.)

42 Ibid., p. 111. The notion of *reserve* in *Spurs* is a complex sign of a double scene. That is, what is this gift of a reserve that gets withheld, that implicates a reserve of reserve? We might start to see that this reserve of the reserve is an attempt by Derrida to suggest the *before* of sexual difference, before the law of propriation and its question of belonging and priorities that always prefigures the question of difference in its logic. Is therefore this reserve of the gift of reserve, a withholding from a difference that could exceed this very law of propriety: an excess outside of symbolic exchange? Perhaps, yes, both a withholding that is more originary than property, something *conserved* that is a-sexual which is not to say it is not sexual differences, it is just not know *for naming*. Thus the gift of reserve without being withheld is always, still within the logic of exchange, a safe-keeping, a conserving, a debt, a husband, and

whatever constitutes the *value* of existence woman is foreign to, and due to this foreign *currency* or the reserve of the gift that is withheld, a reserve in reserve: «propriation is a sexual operation, but *before* it there was no sexuality».<sup>43</sup> Are we certain of this *before*? Is Derrida suggesting that the radicality of the question of property and all the vulnerability that is exposed in the question “What is?,” to be given assurance, is the most originary breach or arche-writing, that the economy of the gift in its undecidability is the origin of sexuality, an operation that comes more powerfully before «the veil of truth or the meaning of being»: “What if ‘sexuality’ already marked the most originary

yet at the same moment, within the propriety of such laws, we must not forget that *reserve* also infers shyness, modesty, a secretiveness, a distance. Again, this is the betrayal or secret of language, writing and style which makes possible another kind of scene for thinking the possibility for the truth (of woman), «Truth» of the veil/tomb that falls, suspended and lifted or modesty of the indecent: “But the blushing movement of that truth which is not suspended in quotation marks casts a modest veil over such a surface. And only through such a veil which thus falls over it could «truth» become truth, profound, indecent, desirable. But should that veil be suspended, or even fall a bit differently, there would no longer be any truth, only «truth»—written in quotation marks.” (*Ibid.*, p. 59.) Here we have the allusion of a double-revelation in the one moment if the *fall* is done with a movement of reserve anything else might in fact reveal too much of an either/or scenario. And so it is this kind of secretion or secret within language’s own reserve (or what Derrida names *différance* and *trace*) that is being referenced here in *Spurs* as “the transcendental snare.” One should also be aware that the veil is also ripped *in the end* by the stlyate spur. (*Ibid.*, p. 107) We will reserve our further discussion concerning Derrida and the secret (that marks the desire of totalitarianism; a desire to seal up all secretions. See, for example, Derrida and Ferraris, *A Taste for the Secret*, trans. by Giacomo Donis (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001) and the film *Derrida Elsewhere*, directed by Safaa Fathy (New York: First Run/Icarus Films, 1999). The space of the secret is a safe-keeping, a territory with a border and identity marker. However, with respect to the *reserve of the gift* and what is therewith withheld, one only has to read in the final lines in “Choreographies” what has been anticipated earlier by the economy of Derrida’s dreaming on the Innumerable: “Does the dream itself not prove that what is dreamt of must be there in order for it to provide the dream? Then too, I ask you, what kind of dance would there be, or would there be one at all, if the sexes were not exchanged according to rhythms that vary considerably? In a quite rigorous sense, the *exchange* alone could not suffice either, however, because the desire to escape the combinatory itself, to invent incalculable choreographies, would remain.” (“Choreographies,” op. cit., pp. 184-185.) What is in reserve is *desire*. What is the reserve of reserve is *incalculable /sublimation of desire or sublimation of sublimation/* and that would suggest, a *beyond or before* of ex-change itself. A production or the processes of *propriation*? See in addition, Derrida “Resistances” in *Resistances of Psychoanalysis*, op. cit., pp. 1-38. Derrida frames deconstruction as a concern with the double-bind or “the stricture of the double bind,” as understood particularly in *Dissemination* or *Glas*, and “especially of a *remaining* that is *not* and that does not stem from ontology any more than it lends itself to dialectical sublation. A remaining [*restance*] that, as we shall see, cannot be adequately identified with the resistance that it makes possible or that presupposes it.” (“Resistances,” op. cit., pp. 29-30.) Derrida suggests that this knot of the double bind cannot be undone: “one can only unbind one of its knots by pulling on the other to make it tighter in a movement I have called *stricture*.” (*Ibid.*, p. 36.) These knots one endures in “passion,” what Derrida engages with as “thousands and thousands of knots of passion” (there is no single double bind or unity to *the* double bind: it is disseminating and dehiscent). This folded *before* of a remaining as reserve, this reserve of a reserve, this dissemination of knots of passion, is the deconstructing opening to all programs and causalities and the originary possibility of responsibility as such, and the possibility of taking place: “Without this double bind and without the aporia that determines it, there would only be programs and causalities, not even fated necessities, and no decision would ever take place. No responsibility, I will go so far as to say no event would take place. Not even analysis. Not even the place.” (*Ibid.*, p. 37.) Our argument here, for this attention to “Resistances” is to suggest that “reserve” as “desire” for Derrida engages in a deconstruction of the “language” of “desire” constitutive of Lacanian psychoanalysis.

43 *Ibid.*, p. 111.

*Selbstheit?*”<sup>44</sup> Sexual difference only comes into question through the discourse and desire on appropriation, expropriation, mastery, servitude, etc. Any horizon of *before* can only be gauged by a thinking that protraction is a sexual operation. And it is this horizon that is the *gift* of *Spurs*, an economy beyond the horizon of being on the possibility for *securing* a passage between ontological difference and sexual difference via the *trace* and *supplement* of the gift. If we are to *take* this word head on, the *before* is both the *to-be-for* of existence, to ask what being’s meaning is. It is also the *before* of such questioning, where the question of sexual difference or difference *per se* is impossible according to this logic. The reserve (withheld) in the “*for*” of sexual difference is thus what is not known or *known* otherwise.

Before returning to the notion of the *before* in *Spurs*, which is in fact a *passage* between the binary codes of sexual and ontological difference beyond interpretation marked by a (bio-graphical desire as) style (a stately spur, *éperon style*), something more needs to be revealed about the path of the neuter in Heidegger’s ontology. This returns to the economy of Derrida’s gift as a sexual operation in relation to language and movements found in such neologisms as *hymen* and *invagination*, a resexualising of discourses (philosophical, theoretical etc), which have been too neutralizing. We have seen that Heidegger’s Da *sein* is this neutralizing effect and in *Spurs* Derrida describes Heidegger’s skirting around the issue of woman and her abandonment.<sup>45</sup>

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44 *Geschlecht*, p. 74.

45 *Spurs*, op. cit., p. 85. “Skirting” the woman refers to a reading undertaken by Heidegger of a significant passage by Nietzsche, “The History of An Error: How the ‘True World’ Finally Became a Fable,” in *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. by R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968) pp. 40-41. In six stages, Nietzsche accounts for the history of metaphysics, from Plato to Nietzsche or from Plato to Platonism to the overturning of Platonism. The second stage, that of Platonism, as distinct from Plato (the first stage “I Plato am the truth”), constitutes the fundamental separation of truth and appearance, and the “becoming Woman, becoming Christian” of truth. In his close analysis and commentary of each of the six stages, Heidegger recounts Nietzsche’s phrase “becomes woman” but fails to register it or comment on it, while he is fairly exhaustive on most other aspects of the text: Nietzsche’s text reads (the italics are his): The true world is unattainable for the moment — promised to the wise, pious, virtuous: “Progress of the idea: it grows more refined, more enticing, more incomprehensible — *it becomes woman*, it becomes Christian ....” (*ibid.*, p. 41.) Platonism: the supersensuous (Idea) breaks with the sensuous world of appearances. “Idea” is that which is beyond this world.

Heidegger suggests here:

The supersensuous is no longer present within the scope of human existence, present for it and its sensuous nature. Rather, the whole of human existence becomes this-worldly to the extent that the supersensuous is interpreted as the “beyond.” In that way the true world now becomes even truer, by being displaced even farther beyond and away from this world; it grows even stronger in being, the more it becomes what is promised and the more zealously it is embraced, that is, believed in, as what is promised. (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Volumes I & II, op. cit., p. 205.)

Heidegger's commentary on Nietzsche's six epochs of metaphysics, "History of an Error," that marks the second epoch as Platonism, inscribing and underlines woman: "*it becomes female*," fails to analyze this notion of the idea's becoming-female.<sup>46</sup> And it is this evasion that we find in *Spurs* as *Heideggerian* hermeneutics' failure to read, locating Heidegger's *reading* of Nietzsche idling offshore. He is *off-shore* as well with the question of man's being as a capacity to question his own existence. Man's being defined by *Da sein* ("to be there"), is both a being (*seindes*) and a being-conscious of it and so transcendent. Heidegger's ontology opens a questioning of the conditions or the way that things have of being and the *Da sein* gives meaning to the being of things (beings). Man's specific being is caught up in the consciousness of his own existence and the meaning of things that correspond to his world (man's definition of the world), a world whereby he is always in the process of becoming and is not a definitive thing but rather an existence in the process of meaningful existence (ontological difference): "The *Dasein* is neither the human being, nor the subject, neither consciousness nor the self [*le moi*] (whether conscious or unconscious) — these are all arrived at after the *Dasein*. ... Heidegger reminds us that the *Dasein* is neither an anthropology, an ethics nor a metaphysics."<sup>47</sup> Derrida pointing to Heidegger's phallogocentrism as a rare and even strange reference, describes this silence on sexual difference as neither a sign of negligence nor omission: "The pauses coming from his silence on these questions punctuate or create the spacing out of a powerful discourse."<sup>48</sup> Derrida goes on to suggest that it is a discourse (of denial) that goes out of its way (adrift) to avoid all accepted forms of security in classical ontology, anthropology, the natural or human sciences, and yet, stretched to its limit *falls* back (*ressac*) this side of such values as the opposition between subject/object, conscious/unconscious, mind/body etc.<sup>49</sup>

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The "true world" at a distance and by that distance seduces us — we zealously embrace it for its promise, for what it says it gives and gives for. It is a phantom: the inauguration of Platonism in the becoming woman of the idea. The only concession we would offer Heidegger here is his zealousness of embrace: "it is embraced" as a masculinist encounter with the becoming woman of truth. Neither grasped nor held, she is not sensuous but supersensuous, idea at a distance, not known but embraced as one embraces a *belief*.

46 Ibid.

47 "Choreographies," op. cit. p. 179.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid. With respect to this powerful discourse that is marked by the silence, the pause, we have already noted in a series of footnotes a running commentary concerning this. Thus in a falling back, please refer to footnote 29 on the *Grand Style* of Heidegger as silence, a "stubborn mutism" amongst or in the centre of all the many conversations had on sexuality, footnote 30 in relation to the falling back onto the side of a phallo-logo-centrism, and footnote 41 with respect to the *transcendental snare* in relation to Heidegger's silence.

### **Gift of a Reserve— Nietzsche's Hymen's Graphic**

To interrupt with silence, this would be the strange logic of the reserve or remainder and the structure of the stricture of the double band. Among the babbling of conversations on sexual difference would *Da sein* be an ear, nothing but an ear finding itself in the surging backwash, the throw-back, thrown back—ready for a “call,” an interpretation (interruption) on interruption that marks the potential for a powerful discourse on sexual differences (in the plural and beyond the binary markings)? What Derrida is marking-out is an amorphous locale that coincides with a question of style: Heidegger’s style of silence (prudence) which is neither an omission, nor negligence, but rather amounts to a reserve. And, as we’ve de-ciphered, reservations have their gifting potential for what they do not return to us as recognizable. That is, this silence on the sexuality of *Da sein* did not omit the possibility of *Da sein*’s sexuality. Far from it. But the silence interrupts and thereby marks out in Heidegger’s language an effacement of *positive* sexual binary in order to annul a determinable response to the primordial disclosure of *Da sein* (in its project). It is left suspended, undecidable. And for this reason Heidegger’s discourse on the existential analytic of *Da sein* as asexual neutrality is in (a) place that is circumspect taking-care-of, that is far from negligent. Further it is this silent *style* that finds its resonance in the spatio-temporal attunement of forgetting discussed earlier. In this way, Heidegger is responsible, through the bringing together of a question of silence to style, for opening up the potentiality for another path of language on sexual differences, a *Gedicht* of sexual difference, silence as a genesis of an originary opening of sexual difference before all difference. Derrida suggests we must also pay heed to the dangers where prudence becomes a kind of abstinence and where the question of forgetting is forgotten. The Heidegger reference:

This neutrality means also that the *Dasein* is neither of the two sexes. But this a-sexuality (*Geschlechtlosigkeit*) is not the indifference of empty invalidity, the annulling negativity of an indifferent ontic nothingness. In its neutrality, the *Dasein* is not the indifferent person-and-everyone (*Niemand*)

*und Jeder*), but it is originary positivity and the power of being or of the essence, *Mächtigkeit des Wesen*.<sup>50</sup>

Derrida's summation of Heidegger's analysis above concludes by suggesting Heidegger has sexualized ontological difference in the name of Da sein and thus fallen back on the side of sexual difference and its binary codes. Derrida is aware that he too has used a discourse that is sexualized for deconstructing the neutrality of philosophical discourse with such terms as *hymen* or *invagination*.<sup>51</sup> In his own attempts he has inscribed a new marking or tracing of border regions or margins of philosophy and language, limits to categories and concepts that invent and assail in the one “blow” (*coup*) this “enormous problem” of ontological difference *and* sexual difference uncovered here, for example, in Heidegger's thought.<sup>52</sup>

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50 See “Choreographies,” op. cit., p. 180; and refer also to footnote 36 in this chapter of the thesis. As previously noted, Derrida quotes the Heidegger passage from the 1928 lecture course that addresses problems with *Being and Time*, and emphasizes from this that for Heidegger it is not the case that Da sein has no sex, is deprived of sexuality, but that the opposition or binary would be ontically determinable. The opposable marks of sexual difference are not existential structures. The Heidegger reference is *Sein und Zeit*, Gesamtausgabe, Band 26, No.10, p.171 ff.

51 See “The Double Session,” in *Dissemination*, op. cit., and “Living On • Borderlines,” in *Deconstruction and Criticism*, op. cit.

52 Derrida's summation is as follows: “The analysis emphasizes the positive character, as it were, of this originary and powerful a-sexual neutrality which is not the neither-nor */Weder-noch/* of ontic abstraction. It is originary and ontological. More precisely, the a-sexuality does not signify in this instance the absence of sexuality—one could call it the instinct, desire or even the libido—but the absence of any mark belonging to one of the two sexes. Not that the *Dasein* does not ontically or in fact belong to a sex; not that it is deprived of sexuality; but the *Dasein* as *Dasein* does not carry with it the mark of this opposition (or alternative) between the two sexes. Insofar as these marks are opposable and binary, they are not existential structures. Nor do they allude in this respect to any primitive or subsequent bi-sexuality. Such an allusion would fall once again into anatomical, biological or anthropological determinations. And the *Dasein*, in the structures and “power” that are originary to it, would come “prior” to these determinations. I am putting quotation marks around the word “prior” because it has no literal, chronological, historical or logical meaning. Now, as of 1928, the analytic of the *Dasein* was the thought of ontological difference and the repetition of the question of being; it opened up a problematics that subjected all the concepts of traditional Western philosophy to a radical elucidation and interpretation. This gives an idea of what stakes were involved in a neutralization that fell back this side of both sexual difference and its binary marking, if not this side of sexuality itself. This would be the title of the enormous problem that in this context I must limit myself to merely naming: ontological difference and sexual difference.” (“Choreographies,” op. cit., p. 180.) And this summation from *Geschlecht*, p. 72.: “... it is sexual difference itself as binary, it is the discriminative belonging to one or another sex, that destines or determines to a negativity that must then be explained. Going a bit further, sexual difference thus determined (one over two), negativity, and a certain “impotence” might be linked together. When returning to the originality of *Dasein*, of this *Dasein* said to be sexually neutral, “originary positivity” and “power” can be reconsidered. In other words, despite appearances, the asexuality and neutrality that should first of all be subtracted from the sexual binary mark, in the analytic of *Dasein*, are in truth on the same side, on the side of that sexual difference—the binary—to which one might have thought them simply opposed. Does this interpretation sound too violent?”

This interlacing of differences situated beyond the *propriation* of existence where language no longer designates figures for the feminine or the masculine—(“assuming that anatomy in this instance is the final recourse”— undoes the certainty of binary markings as such and in general. Such a passage-way for Derrida is an “obscure area” or a “deformation of space” no longer opened according to familiar poles: originary/derived, ontological/ontic, ontology/anthropology and so on. Rather difference is extended beyond itself and re-inscribed within itself, construing a space we have already alluded to in relation to a dream on the *Innumerable* that posits a beyond of the figure two (but also immures difference between the figure two) in the reserve of desire for incalculable combinations. It is this notion of the incalculable located in the realm of desire that remains (or arrests) the course of *propriation, exchange*, as the undecidable.<sup>53</sup>

### Propriation As Forgetting «forgetting» (On the Path of the Incalculable)

Heidegger’s project re-members being’s forgottenness in the region of ontological difference and yet what has been shown already is that his project goes far offshore from metaphysics, «forgetting» the *forgetting* of woman or the question of sexual difference. It is not so much that sexual difference needed to be part of his project but rather the repression or what is being termed here as the «forgetting» of *forgetting* (in the path of remembering being differently) is a revealing also of woman’s abandonment. And, in this space between, she is no longer on-board Heidegger’s “destructive retrieve” of metaphysics, nor *safely* ashore the secured ground of metaphysics; her absence signifies something incalculable.<sup>54</sup> The hypothesis here is that in deconstructing Heidegger’s path of the question of «forgetting» in *forgetting* sexual

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53 The undecidability of exchange or what was alluded to earlier as the *reserve of the reserve* might very well be that of the *gift-gift* (gift-poison): the price of a *pharmakon*, or the *coup de don*, as suggested in *Spurs*, op. cit., p.121.

54 Heidegger’s “destructive retrieve,” his *destruktion* or *abbau* approaches the question of the meaning of being as a task of retrieving a more originary saying of the meaning of being, as this saying has been covered over through the successive epochs of metaphysics, and being has been named successively as idea (*eidos*), reason, spirit, will and so on. The epochs of metaphysics, from Platonism to Nietzsche, have forgotten how to listen to the sending of an originary saying of being. Nietzsche’s overturning of Platonism culminated metaphysics as this forgetting. Derrida’s “*Envois*” engages a deconstruction of Heideggerian destining of the sendings of being, and a Heideggerian task of sacrificing the beings that are for an uncontaminated listening for the pure call of an originary saying of being. See “*Envois*,” in *The Post Card*, op. cit., pp. 1-256.

difference that amounts to a repression in re-membrance, not only is Heidegger's *Nietzsche* an example of «castration» (as the language of opposites, oppositions) in his cutting away from any commentary on the significance of the «it becomes woman», but in his attempt at following through on the Nietzschean (feminine) operation (to exceed metaphysics and Platonism), he in fact, falters (or founders).

It is this horizon of his critical questioning with respect to the possibility of a Nietzschean overturning of Platonism that we locate Heidegger's own reliance on metaphysical oppositions in the relations of woman and truth in the path of *propriation*. In singling out the question of woman in the «it becomes woman» Derrida points to the process of the idea as a form of truth's presentation constituting a “history” that is inclusive of truth and woman in their simulations but a history wherein philosophy (I Plato am the truth) alone is unable to decode these processes. Here is the divide between the Nietzschean true and apparent worlds where the first (Plato) gives way to the second (Platonism): “... here where the becoming-female of the idea is the presence or presentation of truth, Plato can no more say «I am truth». Severed [castrated] from himself, he has been severed from truth.”<sup>55</sup> However, in the examination of *propriation* the conundrum would be what is the *proper* of *propriation*'s discourse? That is, in order to deconstruct *propriation* one cannot simply get outside of its law given it has furnished the totality of language's processes and symbolic exchange. And at the same time *propriation* is the *withholding* of the gift of reserve a withholding reserve as the incalculable and the undecidable. The in-between of these two pathways belonging to *propriation*'s movements, another (third) discourse, is not available to direct question: “Equally naïve though would be to conclude that, since the question of proper-ty (*propre*) is no longer a derivative of the question of being, it is thus available to direct examination.”<sup>56</sup> Yet, we are also reminded that the

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55 *Spurs*, op. cit., p. 87.

56 Ibid., p. 113. Derrida comments that if *proper-ty*'s discourse is questioned from within the limits of one's own secure discourse: “that does not expand on this problem, that settles comfortably into its own private domain, this discourse also never departs from the onto-hermeneutic presupposition, but remain in its pre-critical relation to the signified, in the return to the presence of the spoken word, to a natural language, to perception, visibility, in a word, to consciousness, and its phenomenological system. Such a risk, of course, doesn't date from yesterday, but it is once again immediate.” We get a sense here that Derrida is elaborating on writing as supplementary (arche-writing, originary breach, *diffrance*, displacement, etc.) to any discourses on *proper-ty*, *propriation*, *exchange*, *give*, *take*, *debt*, *price*, etc., — Such a coinciding exists here across this notion of writing, *propriation* and “what Nietzsche is calling the style's form and the no-where of woman.” (See *Spurs*, op. cit., p. 121.) Not to mention also the

critical resources of ontological difference (Heidegger's) cannot simply be dispensed with given its [de]limit within a general ontology.<sup>57</sup> Derrida suggests, rather, in reading Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche within the realms of a plurality of meaning in terms of *belonging* (proper, *propre*) Heidegger's own project opens up "by a certain dehiscence": "Its irruption here though does not mark a rupture or turning point in the order of Heidegger's thought."<sup>58</sup> Rather the dehiscence is marked by Heidegger's style of thought (which, as we've learnt, is not the same thing); a style that is "disorientated by an oblique movement which inscribes truth in the process of propriation."<sup>59</sup> The argument here by Derrida is that via a deconstruction of propriation (and its gift of reserve), what belongs to Heidegger's own thought is abyssal at the level of a *Spurian* reading of *propriation* as it is *propriation's* (non-fundamental) structure that structures Heidegger's opposition of truth and non-truth (*Eigenlichkeit und Uneigentlichkeit*).<sup>60</sup> What belongs to this dehiscent reading is the existential analytic of an opposition. Truth and non-truth sink and founder in the non-fundamental, once superficial and bottomless, abyssal structuring of proper-ty: "Even as it is carried away of itself by its

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inherent performative act *Spurs* inauguates in its undecidable play across the *proper of Nietzsche styles* (Nietzsche's, Heidegger's, Heidegger's *Nietzsche*, Derrida's, etc.).

57 The questions (critical resources) of Heidegger offered in relation to the question of metaphysics that Derrida is inferring and later (in *Spurs*) uses as the proto-example, are in relation to the even more powerful question of propriation in Heidegger's *Nietzsche*, which Heidegger applies to the question of belonging ("as") in relation to "truth/logic" of *sequencing* in the interpretation of being; i.e., *Ereignis* as being or being as *Ereignis*, and neither combination in their propriety sequence fall outside of a metaphysical logic. Rather, Heidegger points to the "real thought of the question and its import" when considering their relations: "*Ereignis is not the supreme encompassing concept in which everything is included and under which Being and time might be arranged. The logical relations of order are meaningless here. Inasmuch as it is in the quest of Being itself that we think and pursue what is proper to it (seinem Eigenen), it proves itself to be the gift of the destiny of presence, a gift which is accorded through the reach of time* (Gabe des Geschicks von Anwesenheit). *The gift of presence is the property of the movement of Ereignis.* (Die Gabe von Anwesen ist Eigentum des Ereignis.)" (*Spurs*, op. cit., footnote 17, p.159, quoted from *Zeit und Sein*. See "Time and Being," op. cit., pp. 21-22.) What is proper in Heidegger's thought is the path of the question being pursued in order to arrive at the destiny of the gift, i.e. *what gives* or, what will later be discussed and described as the "it gives" that is *appropriation*.

58 Ibid., 117.

59 Ibid.

60 This *spurian* reading of Heidegger's existential analytic is furnished by Heidegger's development of being in relation to *giving* (*Geben*) and the *gift* (*Gabe*) from *Time and Being* (*Zeit und Sein* 1962) whereby he "submits the question of Being itself to the enigmatic operation of the abyssal gift (*le don s'endette/le don sans dette*). In his development of the *es gibt Sein* Heidegger demonstrates that the *giving* (*Geben*) and the *gift* (*Gabe*), which in fact amount to nothing (to neither a subject being nor an object being), cannot be thought of in terms of Being. Because they constitute the process of propriation, the *giving* and the *gift* can be construed neither in the boundaries of Being's horizon nor from the vantage point of its truth, its meaning." (*Spurs*, op. cit., p. 121.)

desire, it founders there in the waters of this its own desire, unencounterable—of itself. It passes into the other.”<sup>61</sup>

The profundity of such a deconstructive analysis of *propriation* lies in the final blow of the gift (*le coup de don*) insofar as we have learnt that metaphysical law belongs to the law of propriation and in this context *propriation* is the discourse and structure of metaphysics and demarcates the desire for opposition itself (possess/possession, subject/object, mind/body, man/woman, etc.). That said, metaphysics is *floating* (as *Spurs* offers with the question of sexual difference, metaphysics exists as the subordinated heights in its relation to simulation and the apparent world) *unencounterable*—of itself. This would suggest a moment of non-recognition that is caught in its own web without knowing quite how the law itself could betray itself or host a secret in reserve. This moment of non-recognition is what *this* [but which?] text is calling «forgetting» [of the true *essence* of] *forgetting*, where re-membrance itself secretes the absence of truth as non-truth (woman is figured here as one such absence), or what Derrida has pointed to (in the above quote) as the passageway into the other. The hyphen (or perhaps hymen’s graphic) that marks this foundering of the *unencounterable—of itself* is not an act of neutrality in its non-recognition, but rather a movement that is beyond calculation (as any passing into the other outside of the psycho-analytics of desire and fantasy could suggest).<sup>62</sup> It is a passing that Derrida warns us is not a movement into a new metaphysics (of property), but rather the possibility of non-opposition itself: “But—if the form of opposition and the oppositional structure are themselves metaphysical, then the relation of metaphysics to its other can no longer be one of opposition.”<sup>63</sup>

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61 Ibid., p. 117.

62 If we recognize there is a lesson to be learned from Derrida’s “The Purveyor of Truth” as a response to Jacques Lacan’s engagement, in “The Seminar on the Purloined Letter,” with woman, desire and the essence of truth, it would have something to do with an undoing of the determinable in two senses. On the one hand, and opposed to Lacan, Derrida will have disseminated the indivisibility of the letter crucial for Lacan’s transcendental signifier. On the other hand, and again in opposition to Lacan, Derrida suggests that while the letter may reach its destination, it also may not. The effects of the possibility of detour affects every arrival of truth: “—this is why we insisted on this key or theoretical safety bolt of the Seminar: the atomistique of the letter—is what puts in jeopardy and leads astray, with no guarantee of return, the remnant of anything whatever: a letter does not always arrive at its destination, and since this belongs to its structure, it can be said that it never really arrives there, that when it arrives, its possibly-not-arriving torments it with an intense divergence.” “The Purveyor of Truth,” *Yale French Studies*, op. cit., p 107.

63 *Spurs*, op. cit., pp. 117 & 119.

Another name, or at least example, cited in *Spurs* that coincides with the *unencounterable—of itself* or what has been deciphered here as a mode of non-recognition, is the proper of language in its production of *untranslatability*. And in the far reaches of Derrida's analytics within the *abysses of truth* we find the significance of the untranslatable in Heideggerian thought. This untranslatable circumscribes itself into the surfaces and unfathomable depthless depths of the *proper* of the *gift* or «*le coup de don*» that in turn reveals a moment of ontological undecidability. We would recognize here the *as* of an *as*, a gift-logic, inscribed by the hymen's graphic that “defies translation,” where property and propriation are that which is proper to no-one and nothing, where the “it gives Being” and “it give Time” is appropriation itself, neither within ontology nor temporality.<sup>64</sup> As Derrida says:

Truth, unveiling, illumination are no longer decided in the appropriation of the truth of being, but are cast into its bottomless abyss as non-truth, veiling and dissimulation. The history of Being becomes a history in which no being, nothing, happens except *Ereignis'* unfathomable process. The proper-ty of the abyss (das Eigentum des Ab-grundes) is necessarily the abyss of proper-ty, the violence of an event which befalls without Being. Perhaps truth's abyss as non-truth, propriation as appropriation/appropriation, the declaration become parodying dissimulation, perhaps this is what Nietzsche is calling the style's form and the no-where of woman.<sup>65</sup>

The unfathomable process of *Ereignis* that belongs to *appropriation* or the *gift* (the “gift of the destiny”) coincides here within a deconstruction of *propriation* via Derrida's *gift-economy* [*coup de don*] which is affirming of woman (or sexual differences) in the “undecidable oscillation of to give oneself/to give oneself for, give/take, let take/appropriate.”<sup>66</sup> And therefore this undecidable play alludes to a

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64 Ibid., p. 119. On the untranslatability of the hymen's graphic, we note from “The Double Session” that circulates the hymen's undecidable folds: “But in the same blow, so to speak, the fold ruptures the virginity it marks as virginity. Folding itself over its secret (and nothing is more virginal and at the same time more purloined and penetrated, already in and of itself, than a secret), it loses the smooth simplicity of its surface. It differs from itself, even *before* the letter opener can separate the lips of the book.” (“The Double Session,” op. cit., p. 259.) Derrida footnotes here the “anagrammatic, hymenographic” play between *livre* [book] and *lèvres* [lips].

65 Ibid., pp. 119 & 121.

66 Ibid., p. 121 and footnote 17, p.159, on the “gift of the destiny ...” in relation to the movement of *Ereignis* that reveals Heidegger's thought on *appropriation*. Heidegger discusses *Ereignis* in a series of key texts. See, in particular “The Question Concerning Technology” (QCT) and “The Turning” both in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. by William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977) pp. 3-35 & pp. 36-52. See also *Time & Being*, op. cit. On p. 32 of QCT we read: “As the one so needed and used, man is given to belong to the coming-to-pass of truth [i.e. *Ereignis*, or what will later be translated as “appropriation”]. The granting that sends in one way or another into revealing is as such the saving power [i.e. the saving power from the “greatest danger”]. For the saving

reading of Heidegger's *appropriation* as not too far from the Nietzschean “feminine operation” whereby in the forgetting of «forgetting» woman *as appropriation's* dehiscence *as dissimulation* itself, bursts forth from the repressive region of ontological difference to open up a clearing between this region and sexual difference: “There is no such thing as a gift of Being from which there might be apprehended and opposed to it something like a determined gift (whether of the subject, the body, of the sex or other like things—so woman, then, will not have been my subject).”<sup>67</sup> Here between the hymen's—graphic is a passage between sexual difference(s) and ontological difference that finds a *body* that has not been marked by the discourse of *propriation* and *subjectivity* (yet *exists* because of it); where *bodies* are not recognizable—and woman is not the subject.

### Lost Property: Forgetting as Wholly Inaccessible

*Spurs'* final act «I have forgotten my umbrella» is the “veritable beehive” of critical questions that open onto acts of reading and their relations to writing. Such criticality performs an act of disarmament (routed) upon the sail-makers and *Schleiermachers*, veil-makers working within the horizon of the hermeneutic sail.<sup>68</sup> *Spurs* rips through

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power lets man see and enter into the highest dignity of his essence. This dignity lies in keeping watch over the unconcealment—and with it, from the first, the concealment—of all coming to presence on this earth. It is precisely in Enframing, which threatens to sweep man away into ordering as the supposed single way of revealing, and so thrusts man into the danger of the surrender of his free essence—it is precisely in this extreme danger that the innermost indestructible belongingness of man within granting may come to light, provided that we, for our part, begin to pay heed to the coming to presence of technology.” Heidegger has just mentioned *Ereignis* in the context of a “saving power,” in suggesting the indestructibility of the granting of belonging. And just prior to this (pp. 30-31) he has intimated that what endures primarily out of the earliest beginnings is what grants. Note 26 on p. 32 reads: “Here and subsequently in this essay, ‘coming-to-pass’ translates the noun *Ereignis*. Elsewhere, in ‘The Turning,’ this word, in accordance with the deeper meaning that Heidegger there finds for it, will be translated with ‘disclosing that brings into its own.’” And, of course, in “Time and Being” the term is translated as ‘event of appropriation.’ Where Heidegger introduces the notion of *Ereignis* towards the close of QCT as the “saving power,” it is in “The Turning” that he most fully explores this notion for a thinking of Enframing as the concealing of a belonging of human beings and Being. In this context he uses the expression “in-flashing” as in a lightning flash that reveals the clearing or openness of Being that is human being, and this revealing of a clearing is the revealing of the “greatest danger.”

67 Ibid.

68 Note that in French, “sail” and “veil” both translate as *Voile* yet have different genders: *le voile* - Veil (*masculine*) and *la voile* - Sail (*feminine*)— signifying sexual difference as heterosexual opposition. Derrida is playing as well with the coincident name of veil-maker and *Schleiermacher*, its German translation. Schleiermacher, of course, was the early 19<sup>th</sup> century German theologian who inaugurated the process of hermeneutics. What Derrida does not mention, though, and given the significance of the veil to his text, and his reading of Heidegger on Nietzsche with respect to cuts and omissions, is the reference Heidegger makes to Schleiermacher in his commentary on the fourth of Nietzsche's fables

these fabrics (of opposition as the example of the *hermaphroditic spur* suggests) in order to suggest that any reading is an act of taking possession but at the same moment there is no guarantee that a saturated context of meaning, «true» meaning (in the hermeneutic sense), will have arrived. Rather they, reading and writing, are cut adrift. The destiny of the Nietzschean *unpublished* fragment, “I have forgotten my umbrella,” suspended in its proper quotation marks, is here displayed as having no assured destiny let alone a discernable point of departure.<sup>69</sup> One possible *destiny* that is arrived at within the operation of the spurring stylate (the style’s form and the nowhere of woman) is within the passage of the *wholly inaccessible* where woman and writing coincide: the economy of the “undecidable oscillation of to give oneself/to give

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from “History of an Error,” and the play he makes on that very name as “veil-maker.” Nietzsche’s fourth stage: “The true world—unattainable? In any case unattained. And as unattained also *unknown*. Consequently, also, not consolatory, redemptive, obligating; to what could something unknown oblige us?” (Gray morning. First yawning of reason. Cockcrow of positivism.) Heidegger is discussing this in relation to Nietzsche referencing the overcoming of German Idealism. He suggests: “In that regard Nietzsche on one occasion observes of Leibniz, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and Schopenhauer, “They are all mere Schleiermachers” (XV, 112). The observation has two edges: it means not only that these men are at bottom camouflaged theologians but also that they are what that name suggests—*Schleier-macher*, makers of veils, men who veil things.” See Heidegger, *Nietzsche* Volume I, op. cit. pp. 206-207. Then, again, perhaps Derrida does make a *veiled* reference to this episode when he writes: “Reading, which is to relate to writing, is to perforate such an horizon or the hermeneutic sail. Thus, according to Nietzsche’s story and as it is cited by Heidegger, the Schleiermachers and the veilmakers are routed.” (*Spurs*, op. cit., p. 127.) With respect to the forgetting of the umbrella, we note Derrida’s performative dissimulation of the (non)fragment of Nietzsche’s forgotten umbrella:

Everyone knows what «I have forgotten my umbrella» means. I have (the verb to have (*verbe avoir*)—even if it is used here as an auxiliary and although the fact of my having an umbrella is further marked by the possessive adjective) an umbrella. It is mine. But I forgot it. I can describe it. But now I don’t have it anymore. At hand. I must have forgotten it somewhere, etc. I remind myself of my umbrella. An umbrella is that sort of thing that, just when it is really needed, one might either have or *not have any more* (*n’avoir plus*). Or else one still has it when it is no longer needed. Simply a question of the weather at the time (of *temps*, time and/or weather). Such a stratum of readability could eventually be translated with no loss into any language which disposes of a certain material [hermeneutic sails and veils for instance]. It is true that this material is not just the sign «umbrella [woman etc]» in a given language, nor is it even the «object»’s presence in that culture. But because this material consists in fact in an enormous operation, this stratum of readability admits not only of translation but also of much more elaborated operations. A «psychoanalytic» decoding, for example, could be proposed which would ultimately, after a detour via certain generalities, of course, relate it to Nietzsche’s idiom. The umbrella’s symbolic figure is well-known, or supposedly so. Take, for example, the hermaphroditic spur (*éperon*) of a phallus which is modestly enfolded in its veils, an organ which is at once aggressive and apotropaic, threatening and/or threatened. One doesn’t just happen onto an unwonted object of this sort in a sewing-up machine (*machine à recoudre*) on a castration table.” (ibid., pp.129 & 131).

Nothing is sewn-up neatly with the material of the hermeneut’s sail-veil cloth but rather every act of reading potentially here (and this is with or without the generalities of psychoanalysis) is one of severing and secreting meaning from the fall (*tombe*) of the signature (writing as iteration). See ibid., p. 127 and footnote 21, p. 161, on the *disqualification of the signature’s structure* (*la signature/tombe*).

69 We have already mentioned Derrida’s questioning of the destining of what arrives in his encounter with Lacan and the purloined letter, and the series of follow-ups he made on the possibility of the non-arrival of the letter. This is particularly the topic of *Envois*, in *The Postcard*, op. cit.

oneself for, give/take, let take/appropriate.” We have discussed this already and yet it is in the re-capturing of this lost property or unpublished fragment that Derrida wants to stress the possibility for a “feminine operation” in *forgetting* possession(s) per se: “And as far as the unpublished piece goes [like that of woman], it is indeed still a matter of *reading* it, its *what for*, or why, like a woman or like writing, it passes itself off for what it passes itself off for. No fold, no reserve appears to mark its transparent display. In fact, its content gives the appearance of a more than flat intelligibility.”<sup>70</sup>

The hermeneutic law is overturned here by the dissimulation of «truth» where there is no *reserve* for the digging to find a true origin of meaning, where what is forgotten is the *proper* of [the] possession. I have forgotten my possession yet remembered its forgetting and in this process its lost-identity (no longer in hand) is revealed as that which, perhaps, was never mine: “It knows of no proper itinerary which would lead from its beginning to its end and back again, nor does its movement admit to any center.”<sup>71</sup> Such an analysis reveals that a multitude of readings (psychoanalytic, hermeneutic, etc.) of this forgotten, i.e., unpublished (published elsewhere) fragment, which seeks to find closure in meaning (“the belief that this unpublished piece is an aphorism of some significance”) is but a ruse—an operation of forgetting interpretation’s interpretation, that this found left over (remainder, *restance*)—this (non)fragment is not caught up in any “circular trajectory.”<sup>72</sup> It (She) is the unpublished fragment written (sutured) within codes of proper existence that come from the reaches of these hermeneut-ontologist’s thoughts (which include the psychoanalytic principles of reading and writing), that escapes in the remainder: “structurally liberated from any living meaning, from any decidable meaning. There is no end to its parodying play with meaning, grafted here and there, beyond any contextual body or finite code.”<sup>73</sup>

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70 *Spurs*, op. cit., pp. 127 & 129.

71 Ibid., p. 131.

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid., p. 133.

### Forgetting: the Still Undisclosed (PS: After-Thought)

Of course, one is too aware that in writing such a text that warns its readers of any danger of totalizing effects in meaning, that danger is always on the edges (that are clearly discernable) of a totalizing hypothesis, that somehow the deconstructive move (*un pas encore*) is an enactment of «I have forgotten my umbrella», not to mention the double fold of the reading carried out here. What have you as a reader already forgotten? What might be slipping from what you already thought you had made sense of? Perhaps, it is this slipping of memory, this forgetting that holds a reserve [a remainder, *restance*] for re-reading differently, re-assembling something else. And in this respect memory (its essence) is not an assurance for totality or assuredness, but rather it is *forgetting* that has its movement in “undecipherability.”<sup>74</sup> The other point to note is that perhaps the text has no use for a reader and in this respect is like an umbrella that one simply doesn’t like to carry around or care about or need, because there is no wish for any rain or the climate is simply too secure for such forces of nature (which could amount to the same thing)—*forgetfulness* will (e)reign(is) (and thereby break the hermeneut’s circle).<sup>75</sup> Such forgetfulness is also the plurality of styles: “lost maybe in the abyss between them” is the «forgetting» of forgetting as woman, sexual differences and writing.

Perhaps, if Derrida had «truly remembered» the true facts around the spurring event he was once witness to with respect to «I have forgotten my umbrella,» facts that have been verified by witnesses, this unpublished fragment may not have made its way into

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74 Derrida’s other point on this dangerous terrain is to ask what if the aphorisms, concepts and words in Nietzsche’s texts that he has selected in the writing of *Spurs*, were selected for reasons whose history and code he knows alone? What if even he fails to see the transparent reason for such a history and code? ... What if the text will remain:

If it is really cryptic and parodying (and I tell you that it is so through and through. I might as well tell you since it won’t be of any help to you. Even my admission can very well be a lie because there is dissimulation only if one tells the truth, only if one tells what one is telling the truth), still the text will remain indefinitely open, cryptic and parodying. In other words, the text remains closed, at once open and closed, or each in turn, folded/unfolded (*ployé/déployé*), it is just an umbrella that you couldn’t use (*don’t vous n’auriez pas l’emploi*). You might just as soon forget it, as if, over your head like that, you never heard tell of it. As if you didn’t even heed me, since I have said nothing you could heed anyway. It is easy for you to think that you can rid yourself of this umbrella, either because it hasn’t rained or else just because you don’t like it (*pour autant qu’il n’a pas plu*).” (*Spurs*, op. cit., pp. 137 & 139.)

75 Or they may, for example, have a raincoat: If there is an umbrella, there is always more than one style of *for-and-against the rain* (umbrella translates in French as *parapluie*: *para* meaning both for and against, as in *paradox*, *parachute*).

*Spurs*.<sup>76</sup> Or would it have pursued its course somewhat differently? Or perhaps, it is because he has been reminded, four years on (from 1973) via another route that a central tenet for *Spurs* became *on forgetting*: Anyhow, it is still forgotten but remains, and the decidability of *forgetting* is truly undecipherable: “Would the forgetting of a being (an umbrella, for example) be incommensurable with the forgetting of Being?” This final question in *Spurs* by Derrida marks another moment of his forgetting even though he has both read and quoted the text on the last two pages of *Spurs*, he no longer recalls this text by Heidegger from *Zur Seinsfrage*, on the essence of forgetting. This is a text that brings into play (recalled by *Spurs*) all the tropes and movements (veils, Nietzsche’s “feminine operation,” *actio in distans* that is the hymen’s graphic—suspension, woman, the double-scene of woman as not a discernable identity, the interval’s cadence, the out-distancing of distance etc). Let us quote this passage of the Nietzschean ‘feminine operation’ (*actio in distans*) that can also find resonance to Heidegger’s *Entfernung* (distance), before returning to Derrida’s forgotten *Heideggerian spurious* moment recalled in a postscript:

Perhaps woman—a non-identity, a non-figure, a simulacrum—is distance’s very chasm, the out-distancing of distance, the interval’s cadence, distance itself, if we could still say such a thing, distance *itself*. Distance out-distances itself. The far is furthered. One is forced to appeal here to the Heideggerian use of the word *Entfernung*: at once divergence, distance and the distantiation of distance, the deferment of the distant, the deferment, it is in fact the annihilation (*Ent*) which constitutes the distance itself, the veiled enigma of proximation. The remote proximity in *Entfernung*’s outbreak gives way to truth, and here, woman [or the non-Being of being] too, of herself, averts.<sup>77</sup>

What cannot be recalled in *Zur Seinsfrage* by Heidegger, is re-called in *Spurs* under another kind of reading re-inscribed to make way for the possibility of an opening between sexual difference(s) and ontological difference(s), where woman and being coincide, in the still undisclosed passage of the *essence* of forgetting:

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76 See the first PS in *Spurs*, op. cit., p. 139, in which Derrida recounts an incident “five” years ago in disagreement with a certain hermeneut who in passing had presumed to ridicule the publication of Nietzsche’s unpublished manuscripts. «They will end up» he said, «publishing his laundry notes and scraps like ‘I have forgotten my umbrella’». Nevertheless, Derrida says, he has no recollection of the incident. “Even today (1.4.1973).”

77 Ibid., pp. 49 & 51.

Being remains absent in a singular way. It veils itself. It remains in a veiled concealment (*Verborgenheit*) which itself veils itself [*actio in distans*]. In such a movement then consists the essence of forgetting ... Inasmuch as it is a concealment, however, it is no doubt a protective concealment which safeguards the still Undisclosed. ... It is habitual to consider that to forget, to be forgetful, is exclusively «to omit» and that the omission is a human condition (of man represented for himself [woman here is outside of representation and, as we know Heidegger always skirted around her]) which is commonly found. We are still far from determining the essence of forgetting. Precisely there where forgetting reveals itself to us in its full extent are we still only too vulnerable to the danger of understanding forgetting as but a human fact. Thus, in a thousand ways, has the «forgetting of Being, [Woman, Sexual Difference]» been represented as if Being [etc.] (figuratively speaking) were the umbrella that some philosophy professor, in his distraction, left somewhere. Forgetting, then, not only *attacks* the essence of Being (*das Wesen des Seins*) inasmuch as it is apparently distinct from it. It belongs to the nature of Being (*Sie gehört zur Sache des Seins*) and reigns as the Destiny of its essence (*als Geschick seines Wesen*). (*Zur Seinsfrage* 17.5.73).<sup>78</sup>

Perhaps, forgetting here is Heidegger's ontic-ontological undecidable, and what needs further to be decided on, after the deluge (so to speak) is the forgetting of «forgetting» in the still undisclosed, where being, woman, forgetting, etc., are not our subjects.

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78 Ibid., pp. 141 & 143.

## C H A P T E R   F I V E

### «FORS» De (com) position on Foreign Grounds (An Ethics of Difference-to-Come)<sup>1</sup>

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1 A preliminary note on style: with Chapter 5 «*FORS*» the writing takes an apparent obfuscation in its style. It could be described as a series of false starts. These false starts or obfuscating moments in the text elicit a notion of warding off, parrying (as mentioned in *Spurs* as the *stylate* spurring style). This warding off amounts to an avoidance of argument, a warning around the necessity for an un-decidable programme (with respect to successfully concluding on any stable ground for knowing the self or other that at the same time concludes that self and other are the impossible). The style may seem like an insidious act of encroachment, as a reflexive or performative tactic, to reveal the hostility implicit in either of the psychoanalytic approaches of *introjection* or *incorporation* to mourning. What is put to the test is the responsibility of writing and reading (the text's otherness, or the ghost that inhabits the *fors* of Derrida's text "Fors") inherent in the styles, by emphasizing the necessary resistance needed to successfully mourn as an acknowledgement that the other (the other's otherness, true foreignness) can neither be preserved as a foreign entity (incorporated) nor introjected fully within. Derrida's responsibility towards the other is about respecting (their otherness, their ghost) by giving emphasis to impossibility as resistance (a site of resistance: see "Resistances" in *Resistances of Psychoanalysis*, op. cit.). One has to acknowledge this resistance (thousands and thousands of knots of passion as the double bindings or bandings of styles). And so to return to the question of style(s), we might start to read the emphasis on obfuscating, false starts, parrying and warding off, via the stylate's spur, as styles of resistances. This could be seen as a writing on a crypt, as the writing from within, writing from the inside (of the text), which is therefore neither expositional nor working across level ground. The *ghost* below refers to the distinction made in the text between the theory of the "crypt" and the theory of the "ghost," with the latter being a more complicated topography. The "ghost" is that effect of another's crypt in my unconscious. The "ghost" is the moment of ethics as that site outside the governance of the Id (ego) that is indecipherable and, yet "speaks" through me. The ghost in the crypt of "Fors" is the question at stake. How has it secreted itself into the text of *The Wolf Man's Magic Word?* Is the agency of the ghost of "Fors" an ethics of displacement? This would be the lines for thinking through in the labyrinthine and hidden style of this writing [but which?]. Lastly, the footnotes are here the most expositional ground, in part as a strategy for displacing grounds (overburdening the hierarchical parameters) and, perhaps, also as an attempt at producing more than one crypt as the production of several styles.

I am my father and my mother; I am my dead father and my living mother. I am their crypt and they both speak to me. They both speak in me so whatever I say, they address it to each other. ...

When it's a text that one is trying to decipher or decrypt using these concepts and these motifs, or when one is looking for a ghost or a crypt in a text, then things get still more difficult, or let us say more novel. I say a ghost *and* a crypt: actually the theory of the "ghost" is not exactly the theory of the "crypt." It's even more complicated. Although it's also connected to the crypt, the ghost is more precisely the effect of another's crypt in my unconscious.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Derrida, *The Ear of the Other*, op. cit., pp. 58-59. The context of these two quotes (the first is Derrida quoting Nietzsche) is Derrida's reply to Eugenio Donato: *A Third Logic* in the "Roundtable on Autobiography," a roundtable discussion that followed on from Derrida's paper "Otobiographies: The Teaching of Nietzsche and the Politics of the Proper Name," in *The Ear of the Other*. Donato is clarifying a certain deconstructive path in relation to a *third logic*; Derrida's use of the crypt, as the operation that shatters a certain dialectical movement in relation to an economy that puts in play the living dead and does not permit any sublation of the cadaver. This "living dead" is "an irreducible doubleness" and "split dialectic of the negative" of a divided self which the crypt alludes to, a self occupied by another's crypt in the unconscious. This ghost is decipherable at the level of language, and more precisely, as language(s) it(them)self(ves) as the body that passes through as a site of irreducibility at the level of (sexual) difference. Nietzsche says as much: "There, this is who I am, a certain masculine and a certain feminine. *Ich bin der und der*, a phrase which means all these things. You will not be able to hear and understand my name unless you hear it with an ear attuned to the name of the dead man and the living feminine—the double and divided name of the father who is dead and the mother living on, who will, moreover, outlive me long enough to bury me. The mother is living on, and this living on is the name of the mother. This survival is my life whose shores she overflows. And my father's name, in other words my patronym? That is the name of death, of my dead life." (*ibid.*, p. 54.) This is an irreducible doubleness because Nietzsche names two types of laws (two sexes, life and death, but as Derrida suggests, he has not only inherited these two laws, but many other things [that his parents are]. (*ibid.*, p. 53.) These relations between the dead father(s), signature, inheritance (of concepts etc) and the living mother (the one who hears-reads-interprets, i.e., the ear of the other that signs (*ibid.*, p. 51.), "survival as the ultimate addressee in the phantasm, because he writes *for her*" (*ibid.*, p. 53.); she is also the spring of language as both the mother tongue and Nietzsche's *feminine operation* as the displacement or decomposition of discernable identity, beyond subjectification etc., referred to in our previous chapter «Spurs». This is what is at stake in both *Otobiographies* and "Fors" (also in other Derrida texts; and such a conversation will make its way back via *Glas* in Chapter 7). "Fors" questions inheritance and invention (as displacement or what is referred to in this chapter and the previous as "de(com)position") in relation to signing i.e. the law of the proper (testament and signification) and, perhaps, what Derrida alludes to here as "novel" (i.e. Abraham and Torok's theory and practice of the crypt). This register gives emphasis to the locus of a *ghost* as sexual difference inscribed in "Fors." This ghost of sexual difference, as another's crypt in the unconscious of "Fors" is not specific to *this* text. Rather, our hypothesis is that it marks all texts as the (irreducibly doubling) plurality of an address across what Nietzsche sites as the dead-father and mother-who-lives-on." (*Ear of the Other*, op. cit., p. 58.) Ultimately at stake in this exhumation with respect to an acknowledgment of a ghost as sexual difference are the consequences with respect to *them* becoming the signatories of the work. This would suggest texts are written *for*, i.e., addressed to both the living and the dead (singularly and, perhaps, always and in general).

## A Ghost on Foreign Grounds as An Ethics of De (com) position

—What is hidden? What is safe? Are they presupposing of the other?

When the question “What is a crypt?” followed by “What if I were writing on one now?” opens Jacques Derrida’s essay “Foreword: *Fors*: The English Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok,” we are immediately drawn into a spatio-temporal scene with respect to textuality.<sup>3</sup> Before this question of this opening “What is a crypt?,” a question that in its repetitive form acquires a partitioning effect on its text, comes a series of quotes that is suggestive of *a crypt* as the interruptive performance between noun and verb. The narrative given by the performance of these quotes is suggestive of a drama that circumscribes relations between language and trauma, a drama of translation that happens between the threshold of what is hidden and safe, conscious and unconscious, translatable and foreign, fantasy and reality. Derrida’s essay is partitioned by an interpretation of Nicholas Abraham’s and Maria Torok’s concept of the crypt, which complicates psychoanalytic relations between the conscious and unconscious (via their ana-semic programme given here under the name cryptonymy) and his own notion of the crypt staged through a de(com)position of inside and outside boundaries via his magic (ghost) word “Fors.”<sup>4</sup> What is hidden and safe is not *necessarily* safe or hidden; this is the economy belonging to the cryptic principle of “Fors.” What is both hidden and kept safe is at the same time being written on. Derrida’s writing on the crypt is an act constituent of the crypt and its ghosts<sup>5</sup>.

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3 Derrida, “Foreword: *Fors*,” op. cit.

4 “Fors,” pp. xi-xii: With his translation, Nicholas Rand states that he tried to convey this double-edge meaning by translating *le for intérieur* as “the inner safe” and by using the word “safe” to mean, among other things, “except for.” Another thing the title “Fors” suggests is *Foreword* (*Hors-livre*), which is in fact the function of this text: It was written as an introductory essay to the book by the late analyst-poet-translator Nicolas Abraham and his colleague Maria Torok entitled *Cryptonymie: Le verbier de l’Homme aux loups* (Paris: Aubier-Flammarion, 1976) typically referred to here as *The Magic Word*. This book is a collection of analytical writings dealing mainly with the “Wolf Man,” a Russian émigré who was a patient of Freud and other analysts and who, late in life, wrote his own memoirs (translated into English by Muriel Gardiner as *The Wolf-Man by the Wolf-Man*. (New York: Basic Books, 1971). Freud’s analysis of the Wolf man, which is reprinted by Gardiner, can be found in Volume 17 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works* under the title “The History of an Infantile Neurosis.”

5 It would be helpful now to give an explicit account of the distinction between the theory of the ghost and crypt according to Abraham and Torok’s economy in order to determine the significant angle we need to employ for a theory of the ghost in relation to writing and sexual difference: “Although the

What is *this* crypt? What is the word-thing, like Derrida's word-thing *Fors* that becomes the *tropo*-graphy of this text?<sup>6</sup> If like "Fors" it resides in the titular head (cryptonymy) this is where one finds a place of entry into this chapter's crypt. Yet, it is more an after-word, after the word "Fors" itself that we graft our trope from the word-thing *Anglisch*.<sup>7</sup> Already I have alluded to the Derridean proximity of writing to the complex weave of inside and outside spatio-temporal relations, a weave performed through the name (*fors*) of *his* crypt.<sup>8</sup> In keeping with the metaphorics of the crypt, this chapter's aim is to attempt an archeological exhumation of the *crypt*, activated in "Fors," as a further (yet otherwise) dia-grammatology of the terrain, or passage-ways between sexual difference(s) and ontological difference(s) in order to question the potential for a radical other discourse on sexual difference. Further, it is suggested that under the name "ontological differences" with its formation of a plurality, we are

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words "ghost" [*santōnie*] or "haunting" are sometimes unavoidable in designating the inhabitants of the crypt within the Self [Id, Ego] (the living dead as "foreign bodies in the subject"), one must rigorously distinguish between the foreigner incorporated in the crypt of the Self and the ghost that comes haunting out of the Unconscious of the other. The ghost *does* have a place in the Unconscious; but "he" is not an effect of repression "belonging" to the subject "he" comes to haunt with all kinds of ventriloquism; he is rather "proper" to a parental unconscious. *Coming back to haunt* [*la revanche*] is not a return of the repressed. Whence the strangeness of its analysis, the uselessness or impotence, sometimes, of transference. No ghost effect is pointed out in *The Magic Word*. It nevertheless remains in spite of their strict difference, *ghost* effects and *crypt* effects (of incorporation) were discovered nearly simultaneously, in the same problematic space and the same conceptual articulations: What is in question in both a secret, a tomb, and a burial, but the crypt from which the ghost *comes back* belongs to someone else. One could call this a *heterocryptography*. This heterocryptography calls for a completely different way of listening from that appropriate to the cryptic incorporation of the Self, even if it is *also* opposed to introjection and even if the "fantomogenic" words, in their verbal or nonverbal form, *also* follow the path of allosemes. The heterocryptic "ventriloquist" speaks from a topography foreign to the subject. See "Fors," footnote 21, pp. 118-119.

6 Ibid., p. xiii.

7 Ibid., p. xii: "The word "Anglisch" [*anglés*] is a portmanteau word combining "angled" and "English." The expression also alludes to the French poet Mallarmé's strange book *English Words*, in which lists of words are grouped according to their initial sound in order to demonstrate the "motivation" of the sign, the non-arbitrary relation between the signifier and the signified, the essential core of meaning conveyed by letters alone."

8 According to Rand, the authors' discovery of cryptonymy offers an approach that aligns well with Derrida's deconstructive procedures, particularly in their contradictory "topography of inside outside": "Derrida's interpretation of Abraham and Torok's concept of the crypt consists of describing a contradictory "topography of inside outside" (*topique des fors*). Considered in this light, Abraham and Torok's discovery could easily join the ranks of Derrida's own antiphilosophical concepts and deconstructive procedures." (ibid., "Translator's Introduction," p. 1xviii.) The textual metaphorics of "Fors" deconstruct the psycho-analytical constructions of inside and outside binaries with respect to conscious and unconscious relations and their pivotal relation to death with respect to notions of *introjection*, *incorporation* and imminent mourning. Derrida uses the notion of the crypt for playing out metaphorical associations to death and law in his principal use of the word *fors* (i.e., "the tribunal of conscience" as subjective interiority together with "except for, barred, saved" as the production of an exteriority). This is a more radical de(com)position of the laws operating within Abraham and Torok's psychoanalytic discourse.

referring in this chapter, explicitly to psychoanalysis and its discourses on sexuality that share some fundamental ground with the philosophical project of phenomenology.<sup>9</sup>

In Chapter 4 there was a focus on Heidegger's fundamental ontology as ontological difference and as the most radical thinking with respect to ontology. Further, the attempt there was to reveal the critical resources of ontological difference in relation to deconstruction and Derrida's question around another kind of discourse on sexuality that goes beyond philosophy's phallogocentrism and the binary that has codified sexual difference through its discourses. In this sense, the attempt here is to similarly reveal critical resources provided by the psychoanalytic framework of Abraham and Torok for an *otherwise* discourse on sexual difference. Specifically their contribution has offered a critique of some basic Freudian tenets in their approach to psychoanalysis as a theory of readability (interpretation extending across the disciplinary borders of literature, philosophy (in particular phenomenology) and psychoanalysis. For Abraham and Torok psychoanalysis establishes its signifying processes and the production of meaning through what they term “cryptonymy” and Abraham's theory of the “anasemic” structure or programme.<sup>10</sup> Explicitly Abraham

9 “The cultural-intellectual presence of psychoanalysis was undoubtedly partly responsible for directing attention to ‘the sexual’ as an existential, rather than simply biological phenomenon, and for relieving the discourse surrounding it of its knee-jerk moralism, thus making these [kinds of] philosophical analyses possible.” Stella Sandford, “Feminine/Female/*Femme*: Sexual Difference and the Human” in *idem, The Metaphysics of Love*, op. cit., p. 40.

10 “Fors,” footnote 1, p. 117.:*Ana* indicates: (1) upward, (2) according to, (3) back, (4) backward, reversed, (5) again; *semic* indicates “pertaining to the sign as a unit of meaning,” “Anasemia” is thus a process of problematising the meaning of signs in an undetermined way. *Anasemias* is to be the general title of Nicolas Abraham's collected works. In “Fors” the topos of the crypt is used to approach the question of psychoanalysis, its methods and discourses, relations of analysis and analysand. On the anasemic structure see pp. xxxii – xxv; its relation to the “inaugural event” of trauma p. xxxiii; and “the *anasemiac* program systematized under the name of arch-psychanalysis” p. xxxii. The anasemic programme produces through *other* means of language (poems, fictive monologues, quasi-autobiographical forms) the “original event,” that which may have been, “really took place,” the “deciphered” poem of what took place without taking place, without having been present, “of what has never been.” There is a memory left of what has never been, and to this strange remembrance [*anamnèse*] only a mythical narrative is suitable, a poetic narrative, but a narrative belonging to the age of psychoanalysis, arch-psychanalysis and anasemia, “as fantastic as a fairy tale,” perhaps, but “as rigorous as mathematics.” (*ibid.*, p. xxxiii.) The vast anasemic space is the space of translation: “Each time the poetic translation or the psychoanalytic interpretation clears a new path for the other, orients the other without any unilateral privilege.” ... But the poetic translation is not an *application*, nor a *verification*, a follow-up; it belongs to the process of analytic deciphering in its most active, inaugural, ground-breaking phase. And this analytico-poetic transcription does not put the presumed author of a text on the couch, but rather the work itself. Nicolas Abraham often insists on this: “The privileged patient is none other than the poem,” (*The Case of Jonah*); “the work of art (and not the artists!).” The anasemic space is worked through from all directions, invested with the scientific value of mythical tales, with analytico-poetic transcriptions, with the project of a new psychoanalytic aesthetic and a new theory of poetic rhythm or rhyme, with a metapsychological remodeling, etc.

and Torok's interlacings of disciplinary discourses engage an archaeological exhumation of the between of discourses and, in this respect, we may find the term psychoanalytic *differance* useful for cultivating here our critical spacing: sexual difference—psychoanalytic difference.

The deconstructive move with “Fors” is to dismantle a dominant psychoanalytic binary established by Abraham and Torok with the relation between *introjection* and *incorporation*. Derrida suggests more paradoxical associations between the two(s), a complication that demonstrates the deconstruction of an inside and outside binary via notions and elements that deal with the *foreign* and *mimesis*.<sup>11</sup> We find here proximity to our reading of *Spurs* with respect to a correspondence of truth and simulacrum (the *for* that is the reserve), forgetting and silence, propriation and decomposition in the

11 We have already noted that the binary inside/outside is for Western metaphysics the matrix of all binarisation, as every binary will always already assume or require the spatial topology and metaphor, or “as” structure, of an inside and an outside in order to establish the separation of its negative term. “Fors” presents Derrida’s two versions of self-and-other relations structured by death. The first locates the notion of psychoanalytic *introjection*, a love for the other in me, and then *incorporation* that keeps the other as a foreign body within my own body. Abraham and Torok consider imminent mourning operates at the level of *introjection* of the other. *Incorporation* (keeping a separate other person inside the self) is seen as abnormal response to mourning and turns to a pathological condition. Derrida seeks to dismantle the “tyranny” of the binary, suggesting another reading whereby *incorporation* could in fact lead to a more respectful position maintaining the other’s alterity. What is maintained is a difference and heterogeneity. See for a discussion on this, *The Ear of the Other*, op. cit., p. 57. *Introjection* could be seen as an act of assimilation and consummation of the other (another kind of “repetitive” death cycle). And this for Derrida implies an act of betrayal to the other. Derrida is interested in dismantling a dominant thought around introjection as “eminent” mourning (“denomination” is its “privileged” medium. Incorporation keeps *still* [my italics], speaks only to silence or to ward off intruders from its secret place.” “Fors,” p. xvii.) by explicating the potentiality of *incorporation*: “What the crypt commemorates, as the incorporated object’s “monument” or “tomb,” is not the object itself, but its exclusion, the exclusion of a specific desire from the introjection process.” (ibid., p. xvii.) “Fors” also suggest the paradoxical associations across the two (one, of course, cannot keep them binarised or separated as neatly as any rule of objectification allows *for*)—rather a kind of mimicry or duplicity is inherent in these states of each other within (anasemia of reading as) the new concept of incorporation as *cryptic*: “With the real loss of the object having been rejected and the desire having been maintained but at the same time excluded from introjection (simultaneous conservation and suppression, between which no synthesis is possible), incorporation is a kind of theft to reappropriate the pleasure object. But that reappropriation is simultaneously rejected: which leads to the paradox of a foreign body preserved as foreign but by the same token excluded from a self that thenceforth deals not with the other; but only with itself. The more the self keeps the foreign element as a foreigner inside itself, the more it excludes it. The self *nimes* [simulacra – my addition] introjection.” (ibid., p. xvii.) This movement, described by “Fors,” of the Self *nining* introjection suggests that if we do not acknowledge the dead (other), we keep the foreignness of them excluded from ourselves — and sever any potential change or shift for an engagement with them. This refusal (keeping the foreignness of them excluded) is a kind of fetishisation (a kind of mummification — interesting cryptonymy “mummy”) — the dead other is truly life-less. *Introjection* and *incorporation*, (in mourning), are both impediments when it comes to the “otherness of the other.” Responsibility to the other is acknowledging this refusal (as respect). See also Derrida’s *The Work of Mourning*, ed. by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), and *Memoires for Paul de Man*, trans. by Cecile Lindsay, Jonathan Culler, and Eduardo Cadava (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

failure to read as hermeneutics' failure. Our aim is to bring to the fore (the veil slips) the *foreign* elements in “Fors” to reveal their correspondence to an analytics of reading (an anasemia of reading) which focuses on dysfunctions and aberrations, i.e., limits to orthodox approaches to communicability, translatability, interpretation and meaning. *Foreignness* will become the central tenet of this chapter, the spatio-temporal motif of this crypt as hosted by the tropo-graphical *anglisch*.

### Breaking In: A Moment of Anguish

In an act of strange re-memoration [*ananuèse*], a *backwash* from our preceding chapter, there is a certain gesture which involves the fall of a modest veil, over the superficial knowing that is truth suspended («truth»). In this gesture there are two possible outcomes depending on the subtlety with which the veil is cast: one fall (*voile*) reveals the truth of untruth and with the other fall (*tombe*) truth lies buried alive.<sup>12</sup> Further, we assert that the possibility of the *modest* veil coincides with a complex notion of *reserve* that operates within the economy of exchange and also has the potential to exceed it. The latter possibility is, as suggested, still produced from within the economy of exchange, but is housed within a space of the secret as a safe-keeping, a territory with a border and identity marker, what has been termed a reserve of reserve. This analysis finds here its proximity to the principle of *fors* as the *inner safe* indicating both “the tribunal of conscience” (an interiority) and “except for, barred, saved” (the production of an exteriority). In Chapter 4 our concern has been for figures of *truth* in relation to the discourse of exchange, of *propriation* and *capital* as a spatio-temporal analytics with respect to the question of an otherwise discourse on sexual difference, a discourse produced through the reserve, the deferment and secretion proper to language. Our concern here is with an exhumation on Derrida's crypt “Fors,” where we locate (again) within the law of propriation the secret(ed) economy of an excess (reserve, hidden, silent, magic) that marks a *body* of (sexual) difference. This is a locale we are naming *foreign* for the complex relation it has to *differance* (with respect to relations between self and other in *death*, prohibition, castration and pleasure). Again, like the *reserve*, *differance*, etc., what is *foreign*

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12 See Chapter 4, footnotes 33 and 42 on the truth of untruth discussed in *Spurs*.

belongs to the law of pro priation, produced from it and before it. This event of the crypt is marked by trauma as the *originary breach* marking all possible difference.<sup>13</sup> And so, *trauma* in and of language (propriation's law) with its proximity to the *foreign* shall here be our site of de(com)position for excavating the possibility of a sexually-otherwise.

Further, *Spurs'* notion of reserve alludes to the reserve of reserve as desire, an (unconscious) reserve that is incalculable and that would suggest a beyond or before of ex-change itself yet still a production or the process of pro priation itself. What exceeds the law of exchange is produced from within it. This act of re-memoration, like the strange memory left of what has never been, *as* in a dream; the “deciphered” (dream, poem, fictive, *recit*) analytico-poetic transcription (*anasemic* programme) of what took place without taking place, without having been present, “of what has never been” — this memory left (in credit) of what has never been is the strange re-memoration [*anamnèse*] belonging to the age of psychoanalysis: of poetic translation.<sup>14</sup> Both the

13 We find significant relations between writing, trauma and difference within the concept of Derrida's notion of *Arche-writing*, a writing or what writing introduces as an *originary breach* that affects/distresses everything that values self-presence and closure of meaning. That is, writing is the signification of infinite referral, where meaning itself never “fully” arrives — it can never be saturated in one context (*Signature Event Context*, op. cit.). In this respect we can begin to coincide the locus (event) of the crypt, “built by violence ... whose marks are at first soundless,” (“Fors,” p. xv.) with the *originary breach* (noun and verb: birth, the feminine, *fault, cleave, interruption, misdeed, violate, break, open, breach in the sea wall, breach of law*). Writing's movement as a spatio-temporal analytics described for example by Derrida's neologism *differance* — *spatially*: writing *differs* (from itself, split by the absence it makes — writing as a mnemonic device; we write because we may forget; it absents us — we write to one who is absent from us) and *temporally* writing *defers* where meaning is always on the go (past, present, future) — further explanation is given to the text, future meanings layered upon it and thus shifting it. In one of Derrida's seminal statements “there is nothing outside of the text,” he is not emphasizing just semiotics and linguistics but rather *differance* as a *sign*, or hint, or evidence of something of a more common/inherent *distressful* encounter in life that acts on everything such as the *body* and our perception of life. In Chapter 7 we return to this statement by Derrida for further amplification. *Arche-writing* is an account of an *originary breach*. See *Of Grammatology*, op. cit., pp. 1-65 and 141-165, “*Differance*,” op. cit., and as well with respect to the deconstruction of the binary speech/writing see, *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, op. cit., especially pp. 60-70.

14 See “Fors,” p. xxxii. We are preparing the way for a possible otherwise discourse on sexual difference and in this respect, like Derrida's dream upon the innumerable, something has provided the desire and if the desire is produced then already, as fictive as it may seem, sexually otherwise “outside” of the figure 2, is the inherent contradiction of desire that complicates what has not been and what has been. In relation to this contradiction of desire, Derrida writes in “Fors” that this is the third position and its relation to a “fantasmatic double(ness),” where each fantasy is in a process of being “double and opposed.” (“Fors,” p. xv.) It is precisely this notion of the something coming from nothing (as in the double meaning of cipher: a writing as an act of coding, symbolizing, representing etc out of nothing, *a mere cipher*, a non-entity, a nobody, something that has never been *actualized or coded* — this is of course the *pharmakon of writing*). The allusion here is to the question of ontology in relation to the analytico-poetics (of psychoanalysis) in relation to writing. How can some *thing* not be be? Writing allows the potential for repetition of the original sense (of the original trauma) through “communication” (deciphering) and with this grows the risk of “forgetting” and loss of sense. These

reserve of reserve (as desire), which suggests a beyond or before of exchange, and the *ana-semic programme* that indicates multiple directions in and of the cipher (upward, according to, back, backward, reversed, again) produce an excess of meaning.<sup>15</sup> We will name this excess as *in credit* for the purposes of this analysis, in order to bring these two moments into closer proximity. This notion of being *in credit*, ultimately termed *mortgage* in “Fors” (the third partition or position) will come to represent and operate as Derrida’s major critique of Abraham and Torok’s analytico-poetic transcription, and perhaps “the age of psychoanalysis” in general. At the same time the *mortgage* (in credit) offers up Derrida’s position on the space of translation, of interpretation, of deciphering that complicates closure on intended meaning, on the saturation of context through a deconstruction of the binaries inside and outside, conscious and unconscious: “No intention [statement] can ever be fully conscious, or actually present to itself.”<sup>16</sup> The nuances inherent in this text, this crypt that writes on the crypt of “Fors,” like *fors*, appropriate and are entangled within the discourse of exchange, of *propriation*. We signal in advance (to be returned) that this *credit* is always operating in a kind of excess, a *credit* which finds equivalence in the concepts of *propriation, appropriation, law, proper* as *gift* discussed throughout Chapter 4. This “concept” of credit will give a return as stylate or stiletto, a missive or missile less interested in a balanced ledger than in the instrument that scratches in the figures, and more particularly, the slant of the nib, the angle of entry. The complex weave of the reserve held in the word-thing *for(s)* compounds the spur of recollection in the name of *forgetting* and its relation to *rememoration* and *propriation*. We intend a reading between the two *for(s)* to be kept in reservation, in a hiding that we would oppose to any cut of separation designated by a discourse on lack. The *hiding* we have already

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irreducible absences characterize the specificity of writing, (see *Glossary*, op. cit., p. 35.) where the lack of, or castration from, the lost object turns into an excess. This is the double meaning of the cipher in “Fors,” p. xxxvi.

15 Again, retrieving from Chapter 4, we may consider the untranslatable phrasing from Nietzsche, the *Hier stehe ich inmitten des Brandes der Brandung*; and the cipher of the *Brandung*, the “here I stand in the ferment of the backwash,” (*ressac*), the translating of what is yet untranslatable, approximating the ciphering of the cipher, if not the siphoning of the signifier, the *ressac*, excess of returns, reversals, backward movements. The *Brand*, mark, is an untranslatability of the marking of a mark, a firebrand, or emblazoner. See footnote 19, Chapter 4.

16 See Derrida, *Limited Inc.*, op. cit. This text includes (i) Derrida’s “Signature Event Context,” (ii) a summary of the reply by John R. Searle, “Reiterating the Differences,” and (iii) Derrida’s reply to Searle, “Limited Inc.” As well, it includes (iv) a further discussion by Derrida on the whole episode. Within this exchange there emerges clarity around Derrida’s understanding of the disseminating and dehiscence of language that is yet not reducible to polysemy, ambiguity or contradiction.

encountered is the modest veil that falls (*voile/tombe*) on their (all the twos) encryption to produce the *English* word.<sup>17</sup>

We have already noted that *English* [anglés] is a *portmanteau* word combining “angled” and “English,” and alludes to Mallarmé and the motivation of the sign. This motivation of the sign may equally be related to Abraham and Torok’s *verbarium*, the essential core of meaning conveyed by letters alone.<sup>18</sup> In this chapter a “narrative” is produced through the motivation of the sign *English* and a story foretold particularly within the third partition of “Fors,” subtitled: “The Cipher (Mortgage).” This is the beginning of Derrida’s writing on Abraham and Torok’s cryptonymy, hidden, perhaps, by the former two partitions (“*Les Lieux*” and “Death”). Combined, they offer Derrida’s commentary on Abraham and Torok’s analytic-poetic approach. In the third moment, “The Cipher (Mortgage),” we begin to read Derrida’s own interpretative critique on their work and start to discern what is at stake in “Fors”: a principle of break-in-tactics into the *Angish* language proper to Abraham and Torok’s crypt. *Angish* becomes the proper language of trauma (of anguish); and the trauma of language (proper) lodged in the multilingual and polysemic ciphers.

In our text’s writing-on, the motif (and motive) of *English* performs a task of marking out the movement of this crypt. Already, too hastily, we explicitly read the word *anguish* given in the current section-title of this chapter, set alongside the tactic of

17 This *tombe*/fall presents the paradox of that which reveals the truth and buries alive, or encrypts, covers over truth. We encounter this *fall*, for example with Hegelian semiology, discussed by Derrida with respect to Hegel’s recourse to the pyramid as the metaphor, structure and architecture of the sign, in “The Pit and the Pyramid: Introduction to Hegel’s Semiology”, in Margins of Philosophy, op. cit. pp. 69-108. And then there is also Heidegger’s recourse in *Being and Time* to engage in the revealing of the primordial disclosure of authentic Da sein precisely via an analytic of the falling-prey of inauthentic Da sein. We have previously discussed this in relation to “thrownness.” And, thirdly, we recognize in Derrida’s seminal essay, *Différance* that he has recourse to a graphematics of the letter “A” that echoes Hegel’s tomb, and the activating of the Greek tragedy, *Antigone*. Remember, his essay commences with “I will speak, therefore, of a letter [remembering as well the homophonic register of *la lettre* and *l’être*]. Of the first letter, if the alphabet, and most of the speculations which have ventured into it, are to be believed.” “*Différance*,” op. cit., p. 3. We read a little further on: “The *a* of *différance*, thus, is not heard; it remains silent, secret and discreet as a tomb: *oikesis*. And thereby let us anticipate the delineation of a site, the familial residence and tomb of the proper in which is produced, by *différance*, the economy of death. This stone—provided one knows how to decipher its inscription—is not far removed from announcing the death of the tyrant.” (ibid., p. 4.) We encounter this fall also in *Glas*, in the teetering columns erected by Derrida on Hegel and Genet. We discuss this account of the fall in Chapter 7. For an extended discussion by Derrida of “fall,” see “To Usher in the Fall,” in “My Chances/Mes Chances,” trans. by Irene Harvey and Avital Ronell, in *Taking Chances: Derrida, Psychoanalysis and Literature*, ed. by Joseph Smith and William Kerrigan (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984) p. 4 ff.

18 See “Fors,” p. xii.

breaking in, an allusion already made toward the trauma in and of language in relation to its law of propriation. We coincide here in *this* title *this* notion of trauma (*anguish*) to the act of violence and betrayal that we locate in “Fors” as the crypt’s economy: “the crypt is always built on violence.”<sup>19</sup> Most at stake for our concerns is the word *angle* and its paradoxical associations with violence and translation, difference and self, death and fantasy, as a way of opening onto the “narrative” between trauma and language with respect to sexual difference. The *angle* of the fall (*voile/tombe*), the revelation of truth unmasked whilst buried, is where we fold Derrida’s performative tactics of break-in with respect to an *angle* demonstrated here and played out in “Fors,” in this supplementary reading as a critique of difference. That is, within the metaphoric play of the word *angle* we read all manner of Derridean textual controversies in the singling out of words: *différance, supplément, pharmakon, gift, castration, hymen, cut, column, relève, separation-reparation*. This series has a direct relation with our discussion on sexual difference, opening procedures for a critique of a metaphysics of presence. One cannot say simply they belong to our discussion, are proximal to our discussion, for it is precisely this series that approaches the question of propriation, belonging and proximity as an undoing and abandonment, abyss and un-decidable. Derrida’s own deconstruction of presence is through a deconstruction of consciousness.<sup>20</sup>

To be more explicit, in keeping buoyant our central question in Chapter 4, and in following an analysis of *différance* and its relation to a critique of difference for an otherwise discourse on sexual difference, *Anglisch* becomes a cryptic word-thing for a critique of sexual difference as absolute difference. That is, through an analytics of writing that reveals repetition (iterability), forgetting and de(com)position in the act of writing-on (instantiation of the crypt), the “ground” becomes something foreign. We emphasize that the crypt is founded on a violence reparation to trauma and anguish and to difference, to the cut that breaks every sign structured by absence. Hence through the movement of *différance* the cut structured by language will reveal blood as the trace that is left over from every mark making (*Brand*), blood that is at once foreign and familial produced via the difference that is never consummated: “The bleeding [*sanglant*] detached is also repetition, delegation, mandate, delay, relay,

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19 “Fors,” p. xv. See also discussion of “Fors” and the crypt in Chapter 3 of this thesis, particularly the concluding section, “Buried by His Own Hand.” The crypt in relation to Derrida’s reading of Levinas in “ATVM,” op. cit. will be discussed at length in Chapter 6.

20 See *Of Grammatology*, op. cit., p. 70.

adherence, etc.”<sup>21</sup> We are constructing a critique that may ultimately reside in showing, on the one hand, that sexual difference does not exist and, on the other, that existing discourses proper to sexual difference are in credit, indeed in excess (of hidden narratives) for thinking sexually otherwise, “where its crypt keeps an undiscoverable place,” a place rightfully otherwise.<sup>22</sup>

### Traces of Blood (Unconsummated Difference)

Why “Fors”? Do we still ask why this text for the concerns of this research project? What can be established in the first instance is that “Fors,” perhaps like “all” of Derrida’s texts, is marked by sexual difference which would also be its *psyche-analysis*, its resistances of psychoanalysis.<sup>23</sup> In this respect any text (in general) could have

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21 See *Glossary*, op. cit., p. 35. Blood, like the *pharmakon* presents the un-decidability of property and identity engaged in Chapter 4 with the discussion of *Geschlecht*. We could also consider Derrida’s *sangulant* as the untranslatable mark in the hymen-ation of the graphic of sexual difference.

22 See “Fors,” p. xii. This non-existence of sexual difference coincides with a point made in our earlier chapter with respect to the relation between woman and ontology where the discourse on being has forgotten woman or reduced sexual difference to an economy of the Same. The *question* of woman’s existence does not exist as it is asked from within the framework of patriarchal representation and subjectivity.

23 In *Positions*, op. cit., Derrida responds at some length to a question posed to him on his *silence* with respect to his position on psychoanalysis. Rather than respond directly to this important question, Derrida prepared a post-script text so to speak, inserted as a lengthy footnote in *Positions* (footnote 44, pp. 107-113). He commences with a commentary on Lacan and the Symbolic, as a kind of *neutrality*. However, this silence extends more pointedly to what Derrida names as: “the *still to come* theoretical articulation of the new general question of the gram—and specificity of each text (a question that then becomes effervescent)—with the question of psychoanalysis.” (*ibid.*, p. 83.) Derrida’s texts open onto the question of psychoanalysis as a new theoretical spacing to be taken up by any reader, alluded to in his response: “... is it entirely useless to recall first that since *Of Grammatology* (1965) and “Freud and the Scene of Writing (1966; in *Writing and Difference*) all my texts have inscribed what I will call their psychoanalytic import? From which it does not follow that all the previous texts did not also do so (“Force and Signification,” “Violence and Metaphysics,” “*La parole soufflée*,” etc. [all in *Writing and Difference*]”). (*ibid.*, p. 83.) Since the *Positions* interview and postscript footnote, Derrida has written explicitly on Lacan and psychoanalysis. See for example, “The Purveyor of Truth,” already mentioned as a response to Lacan’s “Seminar on the Purloined Letter”; “My Chances/*Mes Chances*; op. cit., pp. 1-32; “Envois” in *The Postcard; Archive Fever* and *Resistances of Psychoanalysis*. We would also recognize the collection of essays Derrida bound under the title *Psyche* to be concerned with a general economy of psyche-analysis. It is in “Resistances” in *Resistances of Psychoanalysis* that Derrida deconstructs the concept and terminology (*logos* of the term) “analysis” as the *ana* pertaining to *lys*is or the interminable and undeterminable, in-soluble knot of an *ana* as return to the elementary, originary or simple, the essential as with what cannot be broken down further; and the lytic, breaking down, untying, dissolution. In short, for Derrida, Freud did not invent a new concept of “analysis” but subjected his invention to the “tribunal of traditional analysis, before its norms and its laws.” (“Resistances,” pp. 19-20.) The question of sexual difference has *always* been a more explicit concern for Derrida, if we figure-in the *centrality of phallogocentrism* as his encounter from the margins. Thus there is no real parity between this (1971) *silence* on the subject of psychoanalysis and the contaminations of sexual difference in Derrida’s “general text.” There is nothing outside this “general” text and hence if there is such a thing

been our case.<sup>24</sup> Yet, what needs clarification is what *Fors* is not for. The *case* of the Wolf Man, which *Fors* is in part a commentary on, is not what is at stake here with respect to Abraham and Torok’s “science of cryptological interpretation.”<sup>25</sup> However, at stake in our reading is the compositional structure of analyses (with its analysis on composition) *made up* from Derrida on Abraham and Torok’s cryptonymy of Freud’s long study of the Wolf Man. More explicitly, at stake is its topographical disclosure of relations between *truth* and *desire, fiction (récit)* and *testimony, trauma* and *recovery, self* and *other* as a series of interweaving relations that produce the textual scene of encryption, of crypt building, of crypt upon crypt. The Wolf Man was a case that Freud devoted entirely to a major work *The History of an Infantile Neurosis* marking a distinction between psychoanalysis and other forms of psychic treatment during its (psychoanalysis’s) infancy.<sup>26</sup> What will be produced in our decompositional movement across “Fors” is a supplementary hypothesis on what takes place and does not take place in and through language with its forces of propriation. The assemblages of analyses reveal a tri-partitioning structure, *Topoi (Les Lieux)*, Death (*Atopos*), and The Cipher (*Mortgage*), a third position that produces Derrida’s *crypt*. The three demarcate Derrida’s deconstructive movement with respect to the textual enterprise of language and its relation to trauma:

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as deconstruction, it is because it has always already inaugurated the possibility of the movements of difference, what elsewhere we have named the “feminine operation” and the «truth» of woman. However, the point to be made is this: within the *scriptions* of all Derrida’s texts there is the reading-for sexual difference (as essentially (*ana*) and, breaking from (*lytic*), psychoanalysis) — the *still to come* as a potential-for a new general question of the gram [writing]— that would be a new *anahiein* (resistance to analysis). With the specificity of each text a question then becomes effervescent—with the question of sexual difference.

24 Are we being simply rhetorical here or do we really question why we are working on or for this text? After all, an introductory chapter has already established the itinerary of four Derrida texts from the 1970s as the *inter-(el)-acement* of the theses (positions) taken in *my analysis*, and my resistances to a certain logico-epistemological *palaeonym*, an old name we use perhaps too casually to describe this writing: *thesis*.

25 “Fors,” p. xv.

26 See “Translator’s Forward,” in *The Wolf Man’s Magic Word*, p. lii.: “The History of an Infantile Neurosis was intended to shore up the cardinal tenets constituting psychoanalysis as Freud had invented it—the unconscious, infantile sexuality and the Oedipus complex—against attacks by his former disciples, Jung and Adler, both of whom disputed the primacy of infantile sexuality and the Oedipus complex. The Wolf Man’s case was called upon in the context of this debate to demonstrate three interconnected axioms that, to Freud’s mind, epitomized the distinction between psychoanalysis and other forms of psychic treatment: (1) neuroses in adults result from the vicissitudes of infantile sexuality; (2) a childhood neurosis, possibly unnoticed, must have preceded the adult one; and (3) finding disturbing factors in the progress of infantile sexuality and elaborating them through transference leads to their dissolution, that is, to a cure of the adult neurosis.”

Neither a metaphor nor a literal meaning, the displacement I am going to *follow* here obeys a different *tropography*. That displacement takes the form of everything a crypt implies: *topoi*, *death*, *cipher*. These things are the crypt's *same*. They can be neither dissociated nor hierarchically ordered. They do not form a multiplicity of separable predicates, the contingent or essential attributes of a crypt. Their being together did not just happen; their *unity* is irreducible only with respect to the crypt they constitute through and through: The unity is only *thinkable* from out of *this* crypt, here.<sup>27</sup>

From out of *this* crypt (*fors'* crypt) is produced our *thinkable* supplementary hypothesis, a reading that unites these three moments (the Same, a unity) via decomposition that starts with the third, Cipher (Mortgage), and all its significant over-determinations constitutive of its very law of property, credit and reserve. That is, we *start* our *close* reading at the final partition on the proper of textual enterprise and trace back through the text in order to re-cover-over the lost-object of sexual difference.<sup>28</sup>

27 "Fors," pp. xiii-xiv. These three implications of crypt(onymy) that belong to the displacement belonging to the *anasemia* programme with respect to a non-literal *and* non-metaphorical reading is an attempt to "grasp through language the very source from which language emanates." The entire research operates from out of a phenomenon as a symbol: "as an allusion to that without which no meaning, neither literal nor figurative, could come into being." (ibid., p. xxxii.) Further to these three pivotal words that the crypt implies, we find "three more words in connection with anasemia: the *narrative account* [*le récit*], the *angle*, and the *sepulcher*." (ibid. p. xxxiii.) These three words also implicate the crypt's anasemic concepts and thus form supplementary *tropographical* readings from within the crypt of "Fors" in a kind of pairing of each three. That is, within the *narrative account* we find a mode of decipherment, an impossible and indescribable accounting for the *original* event (of trauma) that is no way literal. This is the first concept of the anasemic programme. The *angle* alludes to the interrupted directions of the analytical process in order to go back to the source of meaning (*ana*), a source Derrida suggests would be *preoriginal* (i.e., pre the original event, pre-linguistic, the source from which language emanates). The *angle* is very much about a procedure of entry into the *topoi* [*les lieux*] of the crypt, whereby a diversion tactic (anasemic angulation) is created: "a mytho-poetic arch-psychanalytic science that diverts its account toward *another* event that takes place where it has never been." (ibid., p. xxxiv.) And the third anasemic concept concerns the *sepulcher* (death) where the diversion to another place accounts for the loss of the object's source as *preoriginal* in the sense that it has never been there because "... the trauma of tearing away, even before the distinction between mourning and the refusal or sickness of mourning does not simply play one role among many. It is 'from out of' [*depuis*] the possibility of this 'loss' or of the 'death' of the subject (these words to be read anasemically), from out of the possibility of a sepulcher, in one form or another, that the entire theoretical space is redistributed. A fortiori in the case (of the Wolf Man) where the trauma did not take place only once: One can less than ever dispense with a narrative account." (ibid., xxxiv)

28 See Abraham and Torok, "A Poetics of Psychoanalysis: 'The Lost Object: Me,'" *SubStance* 43 Vol. XIII (No. 2., 1984) pp. 3-18. We are opening onto an analysis of the third position (engaged more fully when discussing Derrida's analytics of displacement) as a seemingly reductive trace back (*ana*) to the origin of *our* lost object (of sexual difference), a pathway marked out by hermeneutics and phenomenology, but detoured by deconstruction and the arch-psych-analytic of Abraham's anasemic programme. Our aim in such a procedure is to reveal the paradox of recovery in relation to trauma and language. One act of recovery produces another act of recovery whereby what is *lost* is both *lost further* and *enhanced* as it accumulates another text, layer, meaning, narrative, another logic of the double bind or double band, where in pulling one string to loosen, another tightens. We recognize the economy of the *stricture* exemplified in *Glas* and *Dissemination*. This movement thereby produces a third position

Abraham and Torok operate a cryptic economy between the discourses of psychoanalysis and literature and “Fors” produces a third economy hidden within these grounds, what could de-fault as the allegory of anasemia and deconstruction. Their proximity (belonging, propriation, a-propriation from out of the crypt, constituting the mortgage of (n)either) breaks in as it breaks apart the enterprise of analysis, its laws and tribunals and, for this reason, invents another question of *psyche*, an-other between psychoanalysis of deconstruction. *Psychoanalysis* will not be placed under analysis as such, or rather our analysis is not itself psychoanalytic. “Fors” offers a critique with respect to the question of textual enterprise in relation to deconstruction and the anasemic programme. *Text* takes place secretly (hidden) “marked” by libidinal forces where contradiction (prohibition and forbidden pleasure: *jouissance*) do not say *themselves* and are at first *indelibly marked* as pre-linguistic, then encrypted. This textual enterprise re-marks on encryption constitutive of all deciphering, reading, comprehension and meaning (analysis per se). Without “desire and its contradictory forces nothing would be comprehensible.”<sup>29</sup> And in this respect the textual enterprise engages with a movement across the “violence of mute forces that would be setting up the (en)crypt(ion) ... passing from one part of the divided Self to the other.”<sup>30</sup> This double-scene of encryption and decipherment locates Derrida’s deconstruction and Abraham and Torok’s anasemic programme in their thinking through *trauma* (death, introjection and incorporation) and its partitioning effects on the self and other. That which is not nameable, pre-linguistic, secret and hidden, survives in language as artifice or artifice as language. “Fors” therefore offers up a supplementary exhumation on the cryptic forces inherent in Abraham and Torok’s anasemia of interpretation (reading) that find correspondence to the textual scene of deconstruction.

The desire of the authors, Derrida notes, is to save the case (crypt) of the Wolf Man for their own analytic enterprise, what ends up being the crypt of an analysis of

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that has agency with respect to relations between a spatio-temporal decomposition on sexual difference in the production of a *credit* or *reserve* that is somehow always in a *foreign currency*. Thus, we also recognize the ghost of the Other’s crypt inside this text here. We cannot avoid the strangulation, the currency exchanges, and the reserve bids for revaluations.

29 “Fors,” p. xv.

30 Ibid.

psychoanalysis.<sup>31</sup> “A foreign body is working over *our* household words” that belongs to the conventions of psychoanalytic discourse, its laws of translation, interpretation, decipherment.<sup>32</sup> This foreign body invents its own language, not housed within a reading programme that would be termed phenomenological and hermeneutic or that would find a capacity to discover based on a reassuring tracing back to origins.<sup>33</sup> This *foreign body* of *anasemic* analysis and invention belongs (again a Same and unity built by the crypt, which is to say by partitioning violence) to sexual difference as that case (crypt) of an otherwise (encrypted) discourse characterized by desire, trauma, artifice and a partitioning effect: origin of (a) difference that cannot present itself; a *thing* encrypted *by* the crypt and *in* the unconscious and thus grasped only through language and by the very source from which language emanates. Through this logic, termed by Abraham and Torok “the intrapsychic forces of desire,” we find the locale of our foreign body or textual enterprise as that economy that suggests sexual difference does not exist “in person” but rather only as the *source* of language and its inventions, foreign to any conventional discourses on sexual difference and their translatability, cryptic structure of the ultimate “referent” from which springs necessity as such. The “established” text of sexual difference transforms into an “invented” text, whereby “the

31 Ibid., p. xxiv. See also pp. xxvi-xxvii.: “(... all the analysts known or unknown to him [the Wolf Man] will have participated) or the *myth* (reconstruction of an immemorial origin, *in illo tempore*), or *translation* (circulation among types of writing, corporeal marks, whether verbal or not, which form a more or less [as always] idiomatic corpus and which call for the production of *another* kind of writing to translate them).” Why all these forms, Derrida asks?: “That necessity, it seems to me, springs in the final analysis from the *cryptic* structure of the ultimate ‘referent.’ The referent is constructed in such a way as never to present itself ‘in person’ not even as the object of a theoretical discourse within the traditional norms. The Thing is encrypted. Not *within* the crypt (the Self’s safe) but *by* the crypt and *in* the Unconscious. The ‘narrated’ event, reconstituted by a novelistic, mytho-dramatico-poetic genesis, never appears. It requires, in addition to the temporality of deferred action on which *The History of an Infantile Neurosis* so frequently insists, that ‘transphenomenal’ approach we recognized earlier as the most continuous movement of this research.” This says everything about the endlessness of disclosing an original event (through language): it never appears “in person” only in the ongoing assemblages of analysis (translations and betrayals) that are characterized by a fictive mode and agency: “If fiction already opens the possibility of an ‘original,’ the account that ‘translates’ the original must for its part move forward ‘in the mode of fiction’; even if the story cannot be reduced simply to a fiction, it is like an ‘imaginary voyage’.”

32 Ibid., p. xxv.

33 Phenomenology and hermeneutics are referenced heavily throughout “Fors,” the former for, firstly, its influence on Abraham’s anasemia (as transphenomenal arch-psychanalysis, the phenomenon recognized as a symbol and by that very fact requiring a transphenomenal complement) and, secondly, as a corrective to the common ground that psychoanalysis and phenomenology shared in general. “Corrective,” Derrida points out, as psychoanalysis found philosophy (in general) and phenomenology (in particular) to misrepresent “analysis.” See, on Derrida’s own reading of the philosophical legacy on analysis, “Resistances,” op. cit. Hermeneutics’ tracing back to an origin is problematic for a reading that acknowledges all trauma is encrypted and it is encryption’s form that allows for the emergence of a transphenomenal subjectivity where temporality, language and being cohabit to reveal something about our intrapsychic forces (of desire): “to grasp through language the very source from which language emanates.” (ibid., p. xxxii.)

original is only an asymptotic place of ‘convergences’ among all the possible translations and betrayals,” where *deferred action* is the fiction that covers (over) what can never be recovered (the trauma of sexual difference) but is re-covered all the same (artifice as otherness silently surviving).<sup>34</sup> This paradox of a no-place marked by a deferral of sexual difference at the same time reveals the fantasy or fictive origins and inventions of *its* languages. We would want to think this mytho-poesis along with Abraham within the vaulted and condemned sites brought to being across an *anasemic* and deconstructive textuality — sites prepared by what we will term or come to recognize as *archaic language*.<sup>35</sup>

34 Ibid., p. xxvi. In a discussion of *The Wolf Man’s Magic Word* from *The Ear of the Other* we note that Derrida’s text can be dealt with in a straight-forward manner as a text on the relations between self and other structured by death. Deconstructing the conventions of psychoanalysis locates the binary of “normal” mourning existing through the process of *introjection* (a love for the other in me) in stark contrast to *incorporation* (that keeps the other separated inside the self; a foreign body so-to-speak). Derrida seeks to dismantle the naturalized hierarchy of this *introjection* and *incorporation* binary whereby *incorporation* could in fact lead to a more respectful position and heterogeneity. (see *The Ear of the Other*, op. cit., p. 57.) *Introjection* on the other hand could be seen as an act of assimilation and consummation of the other (a return of the Same). For Derrida this implies an act of betrayal to the other. Derrida is interested in dismantling a dominant thought around *introjection* as “normal” mourning: “denomination” is its ‘privileged’ medium. Incorporation keeps still, speaks only to silence or to ward off intruders from its secret place.” (“Fors,” p. xvii.) “Fors” also suggests paradoxical associations across the two whereby a kind of *mimicry* of *duplicity* is inherent in a crossing of one with the other (*anasemia* of reading *as*) within the new concept of *incorporation* as *cryptic*: “With the real loss of the object having been rejected and the desire having been maintained but at the same time excluded from *introjection*, *incorporation* is a kind of theft to reappropriate the pleasure object. But that reappropriation is simultaneously rejected: which leads to the paradox of a *foreign body* preserved as *foreign* but by the same token excluded from the self that thenceforth deals not with the other; but only with itself. The more the self keeps the foreign element as a foreigner inside itself, the more it excludes it. The self mimics *introjection*.” (ibid., p. xvii.) This movement of the *Self*-miming *introjection* (i.e., *artifice*) suggests that if we do not acknowledge the dead (other *as* other, sexual difference), we keep the foreignness of them excluded from ourselves — and sever any potential chance for engagement with them. This refusal, keeping foreignness excluded as a kind of fetish, leaves the dead other truly lifeless. Another name for this *fetishisation* is the “nostalgic vocation” of incorporation, whereby incorporation is never finished off, a cryptic incorporation of refused mourning. (ibid., p. xxi.) *Introjection* and *incorporation* are both impediments when it comes to the “otherness of the other” and responsibility to the other is acknowledging this refusal (as respect). For further reference also see Derrida’s *The Work of Mourning*, op. cit. and *Memoires for Paul de Man*, op. cit.

35 Axiomatic for the *anasemic* is that nothing exists that is not a symbol — the symbolized is always the symbol of an earlier symbol. (“Fors,” xxviii–xxix.) Abraham’s notion of *poetic truth* is precisely the *anasemic* reading that occurs when the text is put on the couch so to speak. That is where the *discourses* of the analysand and analyst are put under analysis: the Wolf Man’s discourse becomes a work of art and is answered with another work of art via the analyst’s discourse. Together they perform a mythico-poetic text about which Derrida suggests: “It is not yet the wall of a crypt, but only what separates still another form of rationality from a form of irrationality ... Thus understood, this [Anasemic] poetic truth neither leads us astray into the gratuitousness of literary estheticism, nor does it lead us back to the simple unveiling of a presence, to the intuition of the ‘thing itself’ of philosophers and phenomenologists. ... Further, the *anasemic* space is worked through from all directions, invested with the scientific value of mythical tales, with analytico-poetic transcriptions, with the project of a new psychoanalytic aesthetic and a new theory of poetic rhythm or rhyme, with a metapsychological remodeling.” (ibid., p. xxxiii.)

## Credit Due: A Textual Ledger (De-ciphering the Textual Enterprise)

“Fors” gives credit for *anasemic* space as that radical invention in deciphering the *ground of not-thought* via a heterogeneous pathway between phenomenology, psychoanalysis and literature.<sup>36</sup> Yet a particular unity also marks its essential limitations, named at one point under the heading “The Cipher (Mortgage)” by Derrida as a “linguisticistic” reading with respect to the mainly “verbal” nature of the cryptic operation.<sup>37</sup> This opens the third moment of engaging the textual enterprise of *The Magic Word* that ultimately leaves the *foreign body* of *incorporation* consumed by the *introjective* desire of the authors to *save* the case of the Wolf Man for their own *linguisticistic* pleasures which would make this *linguisticisticism* as well a hermeneutics lodged within the *verbarium’s* hermetics. The *mortgage*, on the one hand, is a credit or advancement made through the *living dead* in relation to a new theoretical textual arch-psychanalytic enterprise that has profited on rethinking *introduction* and *incorporation* as that relation which “commemorates ... the exclusion of a specific desire from the *introduction* process in relation to the *incorporated* object.”<sup>38</sup> And yet, on the other hand, in the case or crypt of *The Magic Word*, Abraham and Torok’s textual enterprise as *linguisticistic* or phono-centric refuses Derrida an “ethics” of refusal-as-respect (respect of the refusal in its acknowledgement) in the return of the foreign as *incorporation* to the same, *introduction*. “Fors” deconstructs these borders between self and other as the Self *mimicing* introduction and, in this respect,

36 Ibid., p. xxxii.

37 Ibid., pp. xxxvi-xxxvii. Under the call of “linguisticistic,” Derrida returns the momentum of Abraham and Torok’s enterprise to phonocentrism in a double move: (1) “The eventual autonomization of language strictly speaking, of *verbal* language, is comprehended, thus limited from the very beginning, from the first general premises, as an *oral moment* in the process of introduction.” And (2) “... the entire cryptonymy reconstituted by *The Magic Word*, would be entirely lacking in any functional relation either to the Wolf Man’s drama or to the drama of analysis, without the instigating force of the reconstructed or conjectured trauma, without the organization of libidinal forces ... .” The verbal function is derivative of these “constraining forces that do not require any verbalization.” (ibid., p. xxxix.). See also Derrida, “Force and Signification” in *Writing and Difference*, op. cit., pp. 3-30, for a deconstruction of the metaphysics of presence in a “linguisticisticism” that engages the formalism of the transcendental signified in any restricted economy of meaning.

38 Ibid., p. xvii. How do we consign to safekeeping the otherness of the other? Introduction, for example in the work of mourning, is a slow and laborious harbouring of the otherness of the other in me, the working through of real loss. Incorporation becomes another route when introduction fails. Incorporation is fast, immediate, fantastic, magical. It keeps safe the secret of the other lodged in me, secret of the real loss that has been rejected. Hence the paradox: “a foreign body preserved as foreign but by the same token excluded from a self that henceforth deals not with the other, but only with itself.” Ibid.

*incorporation* acts as a kind of theft whereby the foreignness of the dead, the otherness of the other, is excluded from my-self, a refusal that keeps safe the foreignness excluded, where the dead remains without. This process, a hindrance of *incorporation* and *introjection*, constitutes a refusal to acknowledge the otherness of the other and, for Derrida, responsibility towards the other, acknowledging this *refusal* as respect.<sup>39</sup> Derrida's allusion to a narcissism that resides in the limitations of Abraham and Torok's textual enterprise is directed precisely on this moment that refuses to acknowledge refusal that produces a kind of fetishisation of the word-thing: "verbal, even nominal material."<sup>40</sup> This textual pathology constitutes psycho-analysis in its phonocentric apparatus (*deux ex machina*) and blinded approaches to language.<sup>41</sup>

With a gesture of irony we have attempted to balance in this section's heading a pivotal imbalance that has produced a third moment or a third position. This third opens an ethics of refusal *and* respect, doubling the already double *credit-to-come* of *reserve, excess, silent secret* that is our *Anguish* of an otherwise discourse on sexual difference. In *credit* we find a strategy for thinking otherwise foreignness through respect. This acknowledges the foreign within us as foreign, as the ghost effect. What we can never know, we *know* through acknowledging refusal as respect for not knowing (or knowing otherwise). This analysis folds as it partitions the question of cultivating or preparing, or breaking into, a passageway between and through discourses. The question, partitioned, thwarts its proposing as the *between* is not a bifurcating difference as choice of path but a wholly otherwise saying as textual enterprises for a still-to-come otherwise discourse on sexual difference. It does so by posing the question: in what way did the textual enterprise of Abraham and Torok's anasemic programme reduce

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39 This economy of refusal as acknowledgement, a credit rating of deficit or a giving-for according to the feminine operation that is beyond all hermeneutics has already been broached (breeched) in Chapter 3, with respect to Derrida's engagement with Levinas on responsibility and ethics, and Chapter 4 with respect to a reading of Nietzsche, Heidegger, the "it gives" and "it gives for." This concern with refusal of the gift *and* debt is the central tenet of Chapter 6, following, and provides our supplemental reading of "Fors," through the passage-ways of a Levinasian ethics as the opening to a deconstructive moment of *The Magic Word*.

40 Ibid., p. xxxvii.

41 Derrida has emphasized on a number of occasions the phonocentrism lodged as a founding moment of psychoanalysis, and the repetition of this foundation in the psychoanalysis of Lacan. "The Purveyor of Truth" suggests this, as does Derrida's reference to psychoanalysis in *Positions* in his extended footnote 44. (*Positions*, op. cit. pp. 107-113.) Derrida will return in just about every text he devotes to psychoanalysis to the phonocentrism of Lacanian frameworks. Hence we could also here reference Derrida's "My Chances/Mes Chances," op. cit., and *Resistances of Psychoanalysis*, op. cit. Thus, with each of these texts we recognize the necessity for Derrida to deconstruct the metaphysics of presence that bounds psychoanalysis to its ground of the truth of «man».

the foreignness of the other to the same? That is, in the compositional structure of their cryptonymy, produced via the heterogeneity of discourses (phenomenology, psychoanalysis, literature), what return to “*another generation*” of thought is disclosed through their discourse and methods?<sup>42</sup> It is not that these *older generations* are problematic in themselves. Haven’t we already made the point around respecting the ghosts? Rather, it is that they seemingly go unacknowledged, kept foreign within the anasemic body, which marks a return to the same through repressive refusal. In order to locate the source of such a return we need to trace back through “Fors” to “Death (*Atopos*)” and the discussion on their *transphenomenological* project that began in 1961.

### Ghosts from Another Generation

The cryptic place is also a sepulcher where the Self houses its dead as dead, a thing kept alive, that goes on living *as* dead.<sup>43</sup> This act of preservation, which we have suggested above is a kind of *fetishisation* with its narcissistic properties, is what Derrida names a “nostalgic vocation.”<sup>44</sup> And this “nostalgic vocation” rests on a desire to save

42 “Fors,” p. xxxi. Under the “law of another generation” Derrida suggests that both Husserl and Abraham coincide, for example, in using the word “conversion” in discussing what psychoanalysis does to phenomenology, though the meaning of this word does not coincide. Yet, he suggests: “What has to be found out here is what happens when, beneath the paleonymy of inherited concepts, beneath the same old words, the ‘radical semantic change that psychoanalysis introduced into language [Abraham: ‘The Shell and the Kernel’] comes about. That change is never clear-cut, unequivocal, homogeneous.”

43 *Ibid.*, p. xxi.

44 *Ibid.*, footnote 13, p. 118.: “All incorporation has introjection as its nostalgic vocation.” This remark by Derrida is a deconstructive re-marking that alludes further to the contradictory relation between *introjection* and *incorporation* as a relay, or simulacrum, an appropriation that keeps *alive* the complex relations between Self and Other, conscious and unconscious, facilitated by the otherness of the other: “Nevertheless, it remains that the otherness of the other installs within any process of appropriation (even before any opposition between introjection and incorporation) a ‘contradiction,’ or better, or worse, if contradiction always carries with it the *telos* of an *Aufhebung*, let us call it an undecidable irresolution that forever prevents the two from closing over their *rightful, ideal, proper* coherence, in other words and at any rate, over *their death* (‘their’ corpse).” (*ibid.*, p. xxii.) This signals an economy of saving as a “nostalgic vocation” because we find a point of insoluble contradiction hovers in the desire to (not) know/have the other and thus to kill the other (otherness of the other) leading to a point whereby what is an intolerable scene of *trauma* is thereby encased by silence, by what can never be acknowledged (as a desire to murder the dead figures). In this silence, which consolidates the crypt as “the most outcast inner safe” (*ibid.*, p. xxiii.) the mimesis of incorporation as introjection is produced as a crypt that builds upon the crypt (of the most outcast inner safe). This mimetic effect is the only possible way (of the Self) for keeping the dead figures alive and safe (truly life-less) without revealing the trauma and its desire for *murder*. The hypothesis here is that the keeping safe is nostalgic because the desire to save is mixed with violence, silence, then forgetting and re-membering (as mimetic assimilation

and exclude at the same moment. How can the Wolf Man be saved? It is too late for him, Derrida notes, and further, the impossibility for further analysis in the absence of the any *true transference* would mean putting into question the “juridical code” of all documents that have *sentenced* the others (all analysts and analysands) involved in this case. Derrida notes with respect to *The Magic Word*:

The only occurrence of this now significant word *safe [for]* is in this chapter [*Chapter 7*, “The Turning Point: A Truthful Witness”] where we see sketched out, insofar as it is read with another kind of analytic attention and an anasemic vigilance, the whole politico-judicial scope of this “case.” To save, then, not the Wolf Man (he was born Christmas Day, 1886, and has just signed his memoirs) but his analysis. Plus two analysts: not Freud and Ruth Mack Brunswick but the co-signers of *The Magic Word*: ‘An irresistible force pulls us: to save the analysis of the Wolf Man, to save ourselves.’<sup>45</sup>

This desire for their decipherment as analysts invests in the *appropriation of analysis*, the (nominal) material for their cryptographic construction to take place as the crypt of analysis. This amounts to an investment in building:

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that is the undecidable irresolution that forever prevents the two from closing over their *rightful, ideal, proper* coherence). “Fors” exhumes and writes on the crypt of the book *The Wolf Man’s Magic Word* to reach into the depths of nostalgia inherent in the genealogy surrounding the production of Abraham and Torok’s programme of cryptonymy.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., pp. xxiii-xxiv. Derrida cites Abraham and Torok from their opening paragraphs of Chapter 2, “Behind the Inner World.” He emphasizes the secretion of the desire of the two into the plurality of a “we” that yet locates itself sealed in the third person:

The Wolf Man’s *drama* remains incomplete for its *hero*. But once set in motion, its *action* cannot be stopped; it must proceed *in us* inevitably to its *final outcome*. And here *our* dissatisfaction, spurred on by a providential *deus ex machina*, expounds, imagines, dreams. An irresistible force pulls *us*: to *save* the analysis of the Wolf Man, to *save ourselves*. With time the fourth act opens within us, stretches before us, and *in us* comes to fulfillment, bringing *salvation*.

### 1. An Impromptu Walk through a Verbarium: Cryptonyms and What They Hide

The authors arrived at this very juncture in the process of their writing, and planned to take up Freud’s text again with their point of view—incorporation—in mind, when it occurred to them to consult a Russian dictionary. (emphasis mine [Derrida’s]).

Caught up in the scene of all of the analyses (including The Wolf Man’s own memoirs) and the trauma located as *their dissatisfaction* with remains (of an incomplete *drama*), they remain incomplete without the resurrection of the living dead writings (the corpus of the Wolf Man’s analyses), which they must incorporate as that foreign body through the process of *their own cryptography*. What belongs to them is thereby an investment, a desire to *make* what is foreign (the *dissatisfaction* of the *incomplete case*) a part of them, their analysis (that invents a kind of mimetic otherness) in order to *save themselves*. This saving upon saving, crypt building upon crypt deciphering, coincides with the contradictory process of “undecidable irresolution” in the relay between self and other, incorporation and introjection. This would be the process marked out earlier in this hypothesis as *incorporation’s* mimetic effect of introjection. What is hidden, what is silent and cannot speak itself (kept in the most outcast inner safe) through the “anasemic vigilance” of their analysis, is perhaps, the desire to kill the Father(s) (other generations) of a “providential *deus ex machina*” known as psychoanalysis.

the analysis of a crypt, of course, of a cryptography, with its [own] language and its methods; but also, inseparably, the crypt of an analysis, its “decrypted” (deciphered) crypt, its crypt in the act of decrypting, the commemorative monument of what must be kept alive and seminally active. ... In saving itself, the force of their double desire is no less part of the scene. It is part of what is shown there and part of what, as is always the case with force, escapes representation.<sup>46</sup>

This is a much encrypted *economy* of (double) desire of crypt building and decrypting. Its programmes and practices, foreign to *itself* produce an “irresistible force ... to save the analysis.” Its kernel does not resemble any traditional psychoanalytic programme or literary analysis, yet explicitly referencing the works of Freud, Ferenczi, K. Abraham, Hermann, Klein, “poets from France, England and Hungary.”<sup>47</sup> Rather, Derrida states, “The feeling of foreignness ... is attached to the Thing they are occupied with.”<sup>48</sup> The Thing (the originary trauma of analysis itself) constitutes a *foreign* texture, weave, interlacement, a maze of cryptonymic effects in the multitude of languages that make up its scene (of translation).<sup>49</sup> The authors’ dissatisfaction leads to a refusal of the existing “catalogue of deciphered hieroglyphics.”<sup>50</sup> This is the very moment of the crypt’s genesis, of its embedded history whose laws are governed by the historically coded data that is in turn re-coded, rearranged, and reassembled into an inventive reconstituted hieroglyphic code.<sup>51</sup> This

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46 Ibid., p. xxiv-xxv.

47 “*The Wolf Man’s Magic Word* reads like a novel, a poem, a myth, a drama, the whole thing in a plural translation, productive and simultaneous.” (ibid., p. xxv.)

48 Ibid.

49 The book is translated from a maze of language sources: Freud’s original German analysis, poets from France, England, Hungary, the latter being the “mother-tongue” of the authors that in turn translate the Wolf Man’s real “drama” constituted out of a cryptic translation across the English of his nurse, Russian of his mother, sister and father and the transference with his German analyst. Further investment in the Thing comes in the form of their *intrasyMBOLIC* theory, a hermeneutic-hermetics. This is a theory of the crypt based on relations of the symbol (fractured) to the Symbolic (Self) as constitutive of Reality: “Thenceforth the wall to pass through will not only be that of the Unconscious (as is the case of the *single* word-thing or repressed cosymbol) but the angular partition within the Self. ... Within the crypt, in the Self, a ‘lucid, reflecting instance’ enlightens the crossing of the dividing wall and oversees the disguises, ‘each fragment being conscious to itself and unconscious to the “noncrypt” (what is outside the crypt)’ ... these are the particularities that govern the intrasyMBOLIC and not cosymbolic [i.e., belonging in the Unconscious] relations of the *word*. ” (ibid., p. xx.)

50 Ibid., p. xxv.

51 The allusion here is to a significant moment of simulacrum (*incorporation introjected*) whereby the authors, in order to invent and reconstitute the *incomplete drama* of the Wolf Man, mime *its hero*, just as the writer of fiction needs to inhabit the bodies of her fictional creations. What can never exist as the Wolf Man’s *real* drama, *exists* only as the transference of his *drama* into their own desires for saving or as Derrida suggests in relation to the original “drama” (the *incomplete* “drama” of the Wolf Man’s analysis): “in deciphering the monumental record of *his* [emphasis mine] history, in reconstituting the

is a history that is more than one, and also a “history” *as story* (novel, drama, poem, myth, translation). And, why is it necessary, asks Derrida, for all these forms? We are definitely now at the side of a burial site, witness to the burying of *evidence*, of the original trauma (the Thing) by the fictive agency. This gathering around the site of mourning gathers together the threads of our analysis in relation to the truth effect or effects of truth across the overlapping borders of *appropriation*, the *fictive, testimony* and *translation*. These conditions of effects of truth, structured by the crypt (and not within it) help to bury in the Unconscious the Thing (history itself as an incomplete drama, i.e., the old generations and their living dead corpus) as the *transphenomenal*

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hieroglyphic code (which he had to invent in order to say without saying the interdict).” (*ibid.*, p. xxiv.) The authors also invent through deciphering the monumental record, an invention that reconstitutes the cryptic assemblage of languages (analysis, fictions, polyglotisms) in order to say without saying the interdict. What is their interdict? What is said in the invention that cannot be said through its inherited laws of prohibition and with its foreigner excluded? The *kernel* we have suggested is located in the prohibitive laws of *incorporation* whereby *introjection* is praised as the normative, naturalized, position for mourning:

According to Freud ... the process of incorporation into the Self provides an economic answer to the loss of the object. The Self tries to identify with the object it has “incorporated.” Thanks to what Maria Torok calls “temporization,” the self recuperates its previous cathectic investments from the lost object, while waiting for a libidinal reorganization. Sealing the loss of the object, but also marking the refusal to mourn, such a manoeuvre is foreign to and actually opposed to the process of introjection. I pretend to keep the dead alive, intact, *safe (save) inside me*, but it is only in order to refuse, in a necessarily equivocal way, to love the dead as a living part of me, dead *save in me*, through the process of introjection, as happens in so-called normal mourning. The question could of course be raised as to whether or not “normal” mourning preserves the object *as other* (a living person dead) inside me. This question—of the general appropriation and safekeeping of the other *as other*—can always be raised as the deciding factor, but does it not at the same time blur the very line it draws between introjection and incorporation, through an essential and irreducible ambiguity? ... For Maria Torok, “incorporation, properly speaking,” in its “rightful semantic specificity,” intervenes at the limits of introjection itself, when introjection, for some reason, fails.” (*ibid.*, pp. xxvi-xxvii.)

*Incorporation* is therefore seen by the authors as the magic, secret, silent, fantasmic, unmediated language (which we read anasemically) that is produced at the limit of *introjection*. But are we at the limit of introjection here? Or is this limit more ambiguous than just a simple binary failure that then proceeds to the incorporative phase? Would this not suggest, as Derrida notes, that their reading is structured by a law (of normal mourning, *introjection*, and the implied binary of Reality and Fantasy)? This would be a law that fails to recognize another *impossible route* for mourning and yet is constitutive of it. Thereby an ambiguity must reside across these thresholds where what becomes (a porous) partitioning effected by and in the law and, yet foreign to its (introjective) Self, is not the lost object, but the exclusion of desire. “Desire” translates in this process as the “reappropriation of the other *as other*.” (p. xviii.) The pathways that criss-cross The Wolf Man’s original analysis and their own are at the thresholds of the “reappropriation of the other *as other*.” This is a complex weave of positions that adds to our “supplementary” hypothesis. Yet, how does this ambiguity of a leaking reserve find proximity with the kind of mortgage or credit needed for the economy of difference (foreignness or otherness of the other), which does not default to the reappropriation of the other *as other*? Rather, it would have everything to do with its economy of the *truth effect*, mime of the giving-for, as acknowledgement of this duplicitous process and its precise defaults to the Self-Same as *respect* (for the otherness of the other). We will return to this ambiguity of Self and Other in relation to Reality and Fantasy in terms of the investments made by the authors in their project on the (Intra)Symbol(ic).

approach.<sup>52</sup> This is an approach that is rigorous in its questioning around procedures for a new topographical definition of The Thing, Reality, Fantasy, etc. The *transphenomenal*'s internal contradiction lies in the desire for the truth of the original event that is itself constituted and constructed through the cryptonymic effects of translation. Their textual enterprise acknowledges an internal necessity within the translation effect in accounting for the original, an acknowledgement which “Fors” suggests: “leaves no freedom for reordering the story or for tampering with the internal necessity of the translations.”<sup>53</sup>

Hence the restrictions that, on the one hand, contain rigour in method and, on the other, refuse to acknowledge the other. Translation (convergences and betrayals) is the basis for this procedure and within their radical interpretative invention what cannot be contained or ignored would be the possibility for an-other order or mode of story. Tampering, we would suggest, is already a (contaminate and recessive) gene of this *transphenomenal* research seeded (ceded) from the *old generations* of psychoanalysis, phenomenology and literature. What appears as an explicit act of *tampering*, in the refusal of other in the proper to translation, is the *magic* found by Abraham in the English language in two respects: “The discovery of English as a cryptic language was a crucial step.”<sup>54</sup> English hosts the word *crypt* (a bit of luck for finding the perfect secret

52 Abraham and Torok's transphenomenal approach is that which, according to “Fors,” converts a traditional psychoanalytic approach to analysis, through its assemblage of other disciplines (phenomenology and literature) alongside its point of departure from them. What is at stake here is that the *transphenomenal* buries (the Thing) through its fictive mode of building and this building marks the structure of the crypt. That is, what transcends (the traditional psychoanalytic approach to) the phenomenon of the *trauma* (The Thing) is a shattering approach of all linear narratives via its fictive agency. The original event (of trauma) never appears as itself, only as a reconstituted form: “reconstituted by a novelistic, mytho-dramatico-poetic genesis.” (*ibid.*, p. xxvi.) The approach that “Fors” takes to the analysis of the *transphenomenal* alludes to the possibility of *truth* without *fiction* or, to put it another way, in the relations between *self* and language truth resides in all genres as forms of a *self*'s otherness. This is not truth of “objective” science that would apply to an empirical subjectivity but rather is a point of deconstruction with respect to notions of identity and self-presence and their relation to intentional communication. It constitutes a critique of logocentrism whereby all manner of spacings of the *self* occur across genres of writing and enunciation. The structure of *transphenomenal approach* and the *disappearance* of the original event is constitutive of this *self* that is never present to itself (a deconstruction of self-presence). This crypt, built from a translation of the “established” text (The Wolf Man's case, especially from Freud's *The History of an Infantile Neurosis*) into an “invented” text (*The Wolf Man's Magic Word*), performs the site of the *transphenomenon*, which marks the difference between the texts as a mode of fiction as translation: “The original ['established' text] is only an *asymptotic* place of ‘convergences’ among all the possible translations and betrayals.” (*ibid.*, p. xxvi.) “To be constrained by a certain internal logic in the original still remains the rule of translation, even if that original is itself constructed, by the structure of the ‘original’ event, as a ‘cryptomythic’ system.” (*ibid.*)

53 *Ibid.*, p. xxvii.

54 *Ibid.*

word that hides as it holds, a crypt within a crypt for the analysis *cryptorchidie*).<sup>55</sup> The English (speaking) players in both dramas are indeed crucial components of the psychoanalytic scene. However, from the point of view of an original *tongue*; a point of *original* translation, which language is nominated as original? In the case of the Wolf Man, we have since discovered the fictional enterprise in deciphering across three languages that inscribed his life, Russian, English and German. Why then is English held open as the potential other, the most foreign which contains the luck of a cryptonymy? But, this question comes too easily. In fact, the chance discovery of English and its cryptonymic effect was based on what was not found in the original “established” analysis. Nothing more, nothing less, perhaps.

### The Law of Another Generation: Hauntings

If this chapter (and thesis) is concerned with the possibility for *breaking* (or perhaps, we will be more modest than this, and suggest, preparing) new ground with respect to an otherwise of sexual difference, then deconstruction’s familiar (and initial) lesson (strategy) emphasizes the necessity for an acknowledgement of existing (old) concepts (and their logocentric inheritance).<sup>56</sup> This acknowledgement by deconstruction is not to *escape* the metaphysical concepts that reside in *its* language but rather to expose and displace what that language does not know it says, what can never be present to itself.<sup>57</sup>

55 “Fors” is referring to Abraham’s text “Psychoanalysis Lithographica,” by way of an explanation with respect to the anasemic programme’s investments in relation to its notions of *story* and *cryptonymy*. (See *ibid.*, p. xxvii.)

56 See, for example, “Out-Works,” in *Dissemination*, op. cit., on the paleconomy of philosophical terms. Also our discussion, in Chapter 2, on Derrida’s “strategic bets” with Heidegger and Nietzsche on the closure to metaphysics and that closure’s recouping of the language of metaphysics.

57 Abraham and Torok’s programme has some of its roots in Husserlian phenomenology and “Fors” exposes a contradictory mark of Husserlian temporal logic in what becomes emphasized as a “nostalgic vocation” in their work. That is, the contradiction resides in a default necessity for self-presence in their programme (that itself refers back to Abraham’s 1961 early work *On Symbol*) which begins by tracing backwards (as phenomenology’s reductive or regression method would do) through language as the concealing and revealing agent, to an origin of trauma (being) that is absent; an absent obstacle (to being) brought into the light by crytonymy. This process is described by Rand, translator of *The Magic Word*, as “an inquiry into and an eloquent ‘cure’ for one particular pathology: the impossibility for trace to speak.” (p. 1xix.) The “cure” in question that gives voice to the trace would not be able to account for the residual trace of an-other experience and in this respect decrees a nostalgia inherited by the ghost of the other of phenomenology. In *Speech and Phenomena*, op. cit., Derrida writes about this nostalgia in relation to Phenomenology’s “now” point, a moment that presupposes a saturation point in an experience itself (and the inherent contradiction in this concept) as there would be no other moment to compare the experience against itself (no absence in its presence). Derrida reveals that every “now” point is already undermined by the trace of difference (that of another *previous* experience), which

Or rather to undermine their naturalized hierarchies which they are unable to acknowledge themselves, what they cannot speak. A deconstructive strategy attempts to produce “a change of style” through positioning relations between commentary and interpretation, a style that, as we have noted, Derrida suggests will “speak several languages and produce several texts at once.”<sup>58</sup> We have suggested that the “Fors” crypt emphasizes the saving of the Wolf Man case and it does so by reinterpreting Abraham and Torok’s crypt in the spatio-temporal textual (and principal) neologism *fors*. Derrida’s word-thing works to activate the (*for* of the) *foreign* body that is the otherness of the other as a spatio-temporal move of resistance; a resistance to closing over the dead body of the other that both *introjection* and *incorporation* will attempt to do.<sup>59</sup> In the first section of “Fors,” Derrida’s own reformulation of Abraham and Torok’s topography of their crypt suggests a shift in position. It is a position that is pivotal as the (secret) agent of “Fors,” with respect to *respect* as the site of resistance *itself* that marks out a third moment: “The incorporated third is held in so as to be crossed out, kept alive so as to be left for dead; the excluded third parties are suppressed but for that very reason implicated, enveloped by the scene.”<sup>60</sup> What being (outsider) is being excluded in such a way that it produces a pocketed effect within its walls like a parietal graft?<sup>61</sup> The ghost or foreigner encrypted between partitions and

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prevents it from having any such self-contained “now” point. (See *Speech and Phenomena*, op. cit., p. 68.) In this respect the “nostalgic vocation” of phenomenology and Abraham and Torok’s cryptonymy (temporality) lie in relation to the impossibility for a self’s proximity to an instant and pre-transformative point. Derrida refutes the “living-present” in his conception of time as a future-to-come: “What is really going on in things, what is really happening, is always “to come.” Every time you try to stabilize meaning of a thing [a Word-Thing], try to fix it in its missionary position, the thing itself, if there is anything at all to it, slips away.” (See *Speech and Phenomena*, op. cit., p. 104. and *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, ed. by John D. Caputo (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997) p. 31.) The magic *Word-Thing* is never stable; it disseminates and its experience is deferral and difference.

58 Derrida, “The Ends of Man,” op. cit. Again, see Chapter 2’s discussion on this text.

59 See also Derrida, *Memoirs for Paul de Man*, op. cit., esp. pp. xiii-xv. This text in effect provides the deconstruction of the binary introjection/incorporation as Derrida engages with the radical absence of de Man. His short preface that moves between two scenes of the untranslatable exposes the word-thing to view. Thus he commences with the idiomatic *à peine* and the difficulty, even in French, to hear the “barely” or “hardly” at stake in what would otherwise be pain, labour, sadness, or as capitalized, death. And then Derrida makes enigmatic a translatability of *mémoire* in the plural, *mémoires* for Paul de Man. He emphasizes the gendered shift of *mémoire* from masculine to feminine, from the facticity of a memo, or even a dissertation, to the faculty of memory, to the trace of what may be remembered. And in the plural it may refer to souvenirs, things as memory traces.

60 “Fors,” p. xix.

61 “The parietal partitions are very solid.” (ibid., p. xix.) “Fors” uses the term *parietal* on a number of occasions to determine this cryptic enclave built through a desire to save the foreign body as foreign by the self that wishes not to acknowledge its foreignness, a result of incorporation’s mimesis of introjection (or false unconscious). What is at stake is what can never be known save for the desire for not knowing the other, as desire’s contradictory law would have it. Nothing can be known here and this is the unbearable site of trauma (the source) that produces the utterance in a language (saved) for reading

walled surfaces (of the incorporating or introjecting process) are epitomized by this double-*sided* neologism as an activation of the paradoxical relations between self and other. We have already emphasized the elliptical triad of “Fors”: (i) *le for intérieur* “innermost heart” or “conscience”; (ii) *le for extérieur* “temporal” or “outward” jurisdiction of the church, installs controversy at the level of plurality to reveal the contradictory forces of the inside outside topography; (iii) *fors* plural translates here as “save,” “except for,” “outside of.” We coincide this secret third moment as an ethical site of resistance for keeping alive the otherness of the other as the truly foreign ghost, “an undiscoverable place.”<sup>62</sup>

This is the moment of ethical disclosure in the text that acknowledges on *behalf* of the book the ancestral ghosts that are *saved* in order to construct Abraham and Torok’s topographical strategy. In the same moment, Derrida acknowledges their otherness as the offering of a textual strategy that is pocketed deep within his own deconstructive enterprise coinciding with the forces of language in relation to the meaning of (its) being: “To grasp through language the very source from which language emanates.”<sup>63</sup> The discoursing ghosts (phenomenology, psychoanalysis, literature, etc.), in forgetting the forgetting of their legacies but also in their spectral returns, dividends and profits, their credit lines and infinite reserves, provide a pivotal resonance for deconstruction’s strategic move on the old inherited concepts with which we started this section and on the otherness within them that is forgotten, that goes un-thought or repressed, that forgets its forgetting. The proximities inaugurated by the parietal provide further

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anasemically. When deconstructed it acknowledges trauma as pre-original, before knowing and beyond signification. This would also be the site and encounter of the Thing as the foreign *body* as the ghost’s unconscious, a thing that is both nothing and substantial, forceful and materialized. This encounter is related to a positioning on the topography and *tropography* of the crypt as that space produced by and of a “false unconscious” of the *divided self* (distinct from the Conscious and Unconscious common to the order of psychoanalysis). Derrida’s question takes form from *this* crypt’s effect as a spatio-temporal interrogation of philosophy, as intimated above, on the *first* principle of philosophy itself since it began in a form of questioning that requisitioned an origin: “what, originally, is a Thing?” (*ibid.*, p. xiii.); “In place of an-other here the first word is—crypt. Then it won’t have been, in principle, the first. It won’t have taken place as such. Its rightful place is the other’s. The crypt keeps an undiscoverable place, with reason.” (*ibid.*, p. xii.) *Parietal* provides the allusion to the cleft coincidental to sexual difference and the laws and forms of knowledge in every partitioning or bordering reference that implicates economy as such, as the law (*nomos*) of the household (*oikos*), the domestic or private spaces within the institutional whole (of, for example, a University or College) and, further, these private parts (dorms) nominate who is privy to them based on laws that govern the codes of sexual difference. See Derrida, “Living On • Borderlines,” op. cit., for further discussion on the partitioning of the living dead with respect to the literary works of Shelley (“Triumph of Life”) and Blanchot (*Death Sentence/The Arresting of Death*).

62 *Ibid.*, p. xii.

63 *Ibid.*, p. xxxii.

complication on the “ground of not-thought” [*impense*] of an otherwise discourse on sexual difference:

And yet the strange foreignness [that marks the semantic transformation of psychoanalysis foreign to phenomenology] inhabits the same words, disguises itself in the same language and in the same discursive system.<sup>64</sup> Whence the question asked in “The Shell and the Kernel”: “It is within this hiatus, within this non-presence of the self to itself, the very condition of reflexivity, that the phenomenologist is standing without knowing it, to scrutinize, from the point of view of this *terra incognita*, his only visible horizon, that of the inhabited continents. Whereas the domain of psychoanalysis is situated precisely on that ‘ground of not-thought’ of phenomenology.<sup>65</sup>

What now are our grounds, unmarked-by-thought regions of philosophy, psychoanalysis and literature in coming to the question of sexual difference? What is particularly significant in *this* locale is the tracing of difference and sameness we find in the figure of the ghost that makes its way across the *tropography* of these crypts.<sup>66</sup> Derrida suggests that “Fors” is not a principle of “mere wordplay, or syntax twisting,

64 We have now (at least) three concepts of the “same” operational: the same encountered in Chanter, from Levinas, that corresponds more or less to identity and a totalizing ego that Levinas equates with ontology. There is Heidegger’s encounter with the same in his thinking on Parmenides in “The Principle of Identity,” a “same” that is not reducible to that of Levinas and the Heidegger of Levinas. And there is the difficult principle of unity and the same that Derrida locates as built on and by the crypt, a Same that is reducible to neither Levinas nor Heidegger, but in a strategic bet we would say it locates itself on this side of the mystery of the same that inaugurates Heidegger’s question of being.

65 “Fors,” p. xxxii. Note here on the shift in the anasemic programme from the 1961 manuscript, Abraham’s *On Symbols* to the 1968 text *The Shell and the Kernel*, as a radical reworking through its relations between phenomenology and psychoanalysis. And have we forgotten what we have already noted Nietzsche saying concerning some encrypted inhabitations: “I am my father and my mother; I am my dead father and my living mother. I am their crypt and they both speak to me. They both speak in me so whatever I say, they address it to each other.” See Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, trans. by Nicholas Rand (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994).

66 Maria Torok, in her essay on the “exquisite corpse” significantly acknowledges the paradoxical economy of this “ground of not-thought” (within difference and the same). See Torok, “The Illness of Mourning and the Fantasy of the Exquisite Corpse,” in *The Shell and the Kernel*, op. cit., pp. 107-124. And Abraham’s “The Shell and the Kernel” suggests: “To note [acknowledge] this is already to designate, if not to resolve, the following problem: How can we include in a discourse, *any* discourse, that which, being the very condition of discourse, would by its very essence *escape* discourse? If non-presence, the core and ultimate reason behind all discourse, becomes speech, can it—or should it—make itself heard in and through self-presence? This is how the paradoxical situation inherent in the psychoanalytical problematic appears.” (Cited in “Fors,” p. xxxii.; see Abraham, “The Shell and the Kernel: The Scope and Originality of Freudian Psychoanalysis,” in *The Shell and the Kernel*, op. cit., pp. 79-98.) Derrida warns us of the inherent problematic here: “This problematic is indispensable to any revolution (theoretical or otherwise) that tries to define rigorously the strategy of its own discourse, the *form* of its own irruption or its break into traditional discursive spaces. The irruption itself cannot be reduced to that strategy alone, of course, but neither can it, without that strategy, without that new type of “critique,” protect itself against mystifications, obscurantism, and pseudo-revolutionary catchwords.” (*ibid.*, p. xxxii.)

not a gratuitous contamination of meanings; only the constraints of this strange topography. This topography has already produced the *necessity* of *this* [italics mine] kind of language, even before being described through its bizarre turns of phrase, its syntactical ambiguities, its outward resemblances.”<sup>67</sup> This indebtedness comes from the *foreign* place, the crypt of Abraham and Torok, before knowing what it speaks. The source from which their language emanates has enabled the necessity of the *languages* of “Fors.” Further, this translates into a spatio-temporal analytics that suggests *this* [but which? this one here?] foreign ground is structured by the crypt and not in it.<sup>68</sup>

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67 Ibid., footnote 9, p. 118.

68 Derrida refers to a “blank stone” that he places on the edge of the crypt as an ethical stone. He writes at the beginning of the foreword, before he starts his tactics of *displacement* on Abraham and Torok’s cryptonymy: “I’ll stop here, already (*vault* to a stop), settling down on the edge of the crypt the little blank stone of a scruple, a voiceless word for thought alone, on the sole path, in order to engage others to it, of a crypt.” (ibid., p. xiii.) The quote contains within it a note on his tactics of *displacement* that involves three conditions: *ethics*, *unthought thought* (though alone that does not desire decipherment), and the *face-to-face* acknowledgement of such unconditional thought for a future-to-come. This gesture resonates through the text of “Fors” as the keystone of an ethics at stake within our responsibility toward the other as a site of resistance in the acknowledgement of them as other (neither able to be assimilated nor excluded). Three (at least) stones thrown or places on margins by Derrida: (i) in “Force and Signification,” in *Writing and Difference*, op. cit., p. 6, the keystone of an institution, solicited, made to tremble but not collapse, as the labile, most fragile yet securing; (ii) reference to the blank stone of the crypt, in “Fors”; (iii) in “White Mythology,” in *Margins of Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 271, at the conclusion, the Philosopher’s Stone and the lithographer’s stone: “Unless the anthology is also a lithography. Heliotrope also names a stone: a precious stone, greenish and streaked with red veins, a kind of oriental jasper.”

## C H A P T E R   S I X

## « A T (V) M » Credit Machine Entre(ell)acement

Levinas's claim is that the subject as substitution [rather than *the irreplaceability of God*], as being-for-another, discovers a trace in the Other's face which is that of the 'Il', the *Pro-nom*, the 'Fore-name' of that which comes before all named beings but which marks each being with its seal. Thus Levinas does not dismiss the death of God and the critique of metaphysical transcendence, but rather introduces them as preconditions for the possibility of religiosity and morality.<sup>1</sup>

Every contesting and interruption of this power of discourse is at once related by the discourse. Thus it recommences as soon as one interrupts it. ... This discourse will be affirmed to be coherent and one. In relating the interruption of discourse or my being ravished by it, I retie the thread. ... And are we not *at this very moment* [my italics, J.D.] in the process of barring up the exit which our whole essay is attempting, thus encircling our position from all sides? The exceptional words by which the trace of the past and the extravagance of the approach are said—One, God—become terms, rejoining the vocabulary, and are put at the disposal of philosophers instead of unseating philosophical language.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, op. cit., p. 114.

2 Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, op. cit., p. 169, quoted by Derrida in "ATVM," in *Re-Reading Levinas*, op. cit., p. 21.

## Introduction: Interrupting

There are three moments in this chapter, interlaced perhaps by the motifs of the *chiasmus* and *mortgage* that at this very moment signify the doubling of a double articulation for our readings of an ethics of sexual difference. We have inherited these motifs in part from our previous chapter engaging “Fors,” whereby the crossing effect of the chiasmus diagrams the very moment of a displacement: “The first section of Derrida’s “Fors” essay delineates the topographical features of Abraham and Torok’s notion of “crypt” and arrives at a pithy formulation of the “displacement,” or shift in position, he has announced: ‘ ... the walled surfaces of the crypt create an innermost heart of hearts ... which is an excluded outsider inside.’<sup>3</sup> This excluded outsider-inside will become our threshold for an understanding of ethics belonging to a correspondence between Derrida’s deconstruction and Levinasian ethics. This correspondence circumscribes a “problem of closure,” that will be articulated through the work of Critchley, pivotal as a *shifting* terrain for the articulation of an ethical relation that is respectful of the irreducibility of sexual difference. “Shifting” terrain implies a temporality, what deconstruction names as time-out-of-joint, a focus here in our double reading of “ATVM,” as Derrida’s response to Levinas’s *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*.<sup>4</sup> The chiasmic double cross bears the ciphered mortgage of the partitioning of this text, made out of this text’s materials: the secret relays between our dreaming of necessity and its *entre (e)lacement* with analogy and alterity, faulty bodies, those false gods that have built the crypt itself.

The chiasmus of the double-edged word, *for(s)*, as “innermost heart” and “outward” jurisdiction and as a spatio-temporal encryption, is the complication of the closure of ontology, the Said, jurisdiction and the law. Yet *fors*, creating a third irregular logic in what exists as “save,” “except for,” “outside of,” is an irrecuperable moment of alterity,

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<sup>3</sup> Rand, “Translator’s Introduction,” *The Wolf-Man’s Magic Word*, op. cit., p. lxviii.

<sup>4</sup> “The time is out of joint.” —*Hamlet*. This epithet is the titular opening to Derrida’s *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*, trans by Peggy Kamuf (New York & London: Routledge, 1994). Derrida’s opening discussion of Hamlet in this text, and his analyses of *hauntology* would be an extension to his writings on the crypt, the ghost and the between of introduction and incorporation. (See *ibid.*, p. 10 ff.)

we would strategically bet as a Levinasian *Saying* as an ethics of interruption. While in the previous chapter we discussed the spatio-temporal economy of the *topos* of the crypt, and a reading of *fors* as an undecidable, along with others put to work by Derrida such as *spur*, *glas*, *pharmakon*, *supplement*, *différance*, here we are wanting to read a Levinasian ethical significance and in doing so draw closer parallels between Derrida and Levinas. For Levinas, the chiasmus becomes a (double) way of reading Derrida, as he does so in his text *Wholly Otherwise*, a response to Derrida that attempts “to draw Derrida into ‘a contact made in the heart of the chiasmus’.”<sup>5</sup> The chiasmus, etymologically constituted by the crossed lines of the Greek letter *Chi*, χ, scribes the double reading of deconstruction. In many ways Levinas’s reading of Derrida doubles Derrida’s reading of Levinas in “Violence and Metaphysics.” Thereby Levinas’s attempts, mimetically, a deconstructive move *safe with(in)* or *save for* its ethical imperative.<sup>6</sup> *Wholly Otherwise* locates both Derrida’s moment of reliance on ontology via the use of a discourse that “seems to offer an ultimate refuge to presence” as the Levinasian Said, and an opening up of the tradition to an otherwise than being as the Levinasian *Saying*.<sup>7</sup> Levinas’s chiasmus is the maintenance or interlacing of one reading with the other. Rather than separation, he maintains the *choice* of intersection as its heart as its ethical moment. This would be Levinas’s attempt at responding responsibly to Derrida for deconstruction’s offering. It is a demonstration of Levinasian ethics as performative reading whereby “the *Saying* is maintained within the Said as the permanent possibility of the latter’s interruption.”<sup>8</sup> Thus, the principal contribution of the crypt’s *fors*, like Levinas’s *chiasmic* heart, is acknowledgement (responding responsibility) for the relation of Self and Other, acknowledgement allowing for moments of interlacing and interruption, spatio-temporality and ethics.

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<sup>5</sup> Bernasconi, “Editors Introduction,” in *Re-Reading Levinas*, op. cit., p. xiii.

<sup>6</sup> Bernasconi suggest that *Wholly Otherwise*, being the only piece by Levinas to be devoted exclusively to Derrida, is a double reading that in the first part “stresses the dependence of deconstruction upon the tradition it deconstructs and the difficulties and aporias involved in trying to escape that tradition—arguments which are hauntingly analogous to those that Derrida raised in “Violence and Metaphysics”—then this only tells half the story. For Levinas goes on to argue that the ‘rigorous reflection’ that deconstructive reading practices also ‘lets us catch a glimpse of these interstices of Being where this very reflection unsays itself.’” (*Ibid.*)

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

This interlacing or double reading is further enacted by Derrida in “ATVM” as his way of maintaining the ethical interruption sought by Levinas. As a text that demonstrates Levinas’s subordination of sexual difference to ethical difference, as we have already noted in Chapter 3, its moment of ethical interruption is in Derrida’s refusal to return the work back to the economy of the Same, EL (Emmanuel Levinas) and instead gifts it to *elle* (She). Between a positional locution and a gendered pronominal, what comes before the name as the originary possibility of naming, between here and her, or between the *da* of a particular h(ear) and the *sein* of a neutralization or non-indifferent indifference of sexual difference, a *being* under erasure as the forgetting of its forgetting, I would want to have read as titular and capital: “**AT THIS VERY MOMENT IN THIS WORK HER I AM.**”<sup>9</sup>

The Derridean  $\chi$  Levinasian chiasmus has many significant doubling effects. A Levinasian Said may be read as that moment of commentary that also marks any deconstructive reading and with the Saying, the Said’s deconstructive interruption.<sup>10</sup> A

<sup>9</sup> We return to our concerns of Chapter 4 and the signing of sexual difference: “It concerns the other to whom, at bottom, I entrust my signature. The question is whether the difference constituting the other as other has, a priori, to be marked sexually. I don’t know. When I say ‘I don’t know,’ I mean that in order to ask the question as I have posed it, one must presuppose that the addresser himself or herself is determined before the other’s signature, that the sex of the addresser is itself determined before the other assumes responsibility for the signature. Well nothing seems less certain to me. I will go so far as to risk this hypothesis: The sex of the addresser awaits its determination by or from the other. It is the other who will decide once and for all. It may go one way one time and another way another time. What is more, if there is a multitude of sexes (because there are perhaps more than two) which sign differently, then I will have to assume (*I*—or rather whoever says *I*—will have to assume) this polysexuality.” (*The Ear of the Other*, op. cit., p. 52.)

<sup>10</sup> Of course one cannot neatly separate out the mode of commentary from the mode of interpretation or equally, though not reducibly, the Said and Saying. In deconstruction’s double session it is not necessarily obvious the moment where commentary leaves off and interpretation begins and, at the same moment, within commentary an interpretative operation always exists. Derrida aptly suggests: “in order to accede to another text, another’s text, one must assume, in a certain very determined manner, the fault, the weakness, not avoiding what the other will have managed to avoid, so as to make him/her appear in this withdrawing and in this redrawing.” (*ibid.*, pp. 48-49.) Derrida is talking here about the very structure of textuality whereby it is the other who “posthumously” signs another’s text; i.e., texts are themselves constructed by this testamentary structure. At the same moment in one’s act of commenting on a text we must “honour the other’s signature ... this gesture consists in hearing [their voice] as acutely as possible ... we have been entrusted with the responsibility of the signature of the other’s text which we have inherited.” (*ibid.*, p. 51.) Inherent to the structure of textuality, which involves, in a deconstructive move, the interlacing of commentary and interpretation, is the necessity for responsibility and at the same time a betrayal in the act of locating *faults*. And as we have recognized from “Fors,” every crypt is built by fault. *Betrayal* is the economy and technique of crypt building. In this chapter, we will come to write further on the significance of betrayal as an ethics of responsibility produced in writing. Similarly, we locate in Levinas’s style the interlacing of the Saying and the Said, where repetition (as in commentary) produces a text’s alterity: This could be best described by the word *Sériature* performed through the diagrammatic figure of a rope and its knots. Consider also here the knots of passion by which Derrida deconstructs psychoanalytic structures of desire, in *Resistances of Psychoanalysis*. Here a tension remains between the thread (the ontological Said), the knot (the ethical saying or interruption)

further *double* marks the heart of my chiasmus here in this text. There are two readings by Simon Critchley, critical engagements with what Critchley describes as “Derrida’s major but hitherto largely ignored essay” ‘At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am’.<sup>11</sup> They are both the *same* text, but offer different titles: “*Clôtural Readings I: ‘Bois’ – Derrida’s Final Word on Levinas*” and “*Bois*” – Derrida’s Final Word on Levinas”.<sup>12</sup> We could enumerate the differences in detail and relate them to the fact that the texts exist in different locales. One “version” exists in Critchley’s book *The Ethics of Deconstruction* which is a rigorous unfolding of Levinasian ethical resonances in Derrida’s deconstruction via an explication on “the problem of closure.” The other “version” exists in Critchley and Bernasconi (eds.) *Re-Reading Levinas*, which has published for the first time in English both Derrida’s “At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am” and Levinas’s “Wholly Otherwise.” In *Re-Reading Levinas* Critchley’s own essay is responsible to other responses to Derrida and Levinas across varying registers of deconstruction, feminism and psychoanalysis. Our grounding question here is whether these texts by Critchley are the same, given that word-for-word one might say they are identical apart from their location, their position, their “here in this work.” Would this neutralization of difference be a repetition of the *illeity* of sexual difference, or the indifference to the non-indifference of Da sein with respect to sexuality?

And our guiding question: would we say that across these two by Critchley there is some irreducibility of difference that we would want to excavate and bury, encrypt and exhume, while yet putting into the soil? Would the author of such a careful engagement with textuality, difference, ethics and response not have installed between the twos, all of them including themselves, something irreducible in the separation and reparation of the same, a difference that would resemble an ethics of sexual difference? Our own commentary on “ATVM” will build its crypt across these two

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and the hiatus (interruption of interruption etc ...). What is unbound, non-thematizable, and wholly other to ontology and logocentrism can be articulated only through a certain repetition of ontological or logocentric language, a repetition that interrupts that language. Levinasian textuality (and perhaps, textuality in general, the text) obeys a *sériatural* or *clôtural* rhythm of binding and unbinding which preserves the absolute priority of ethical obligation. See Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, op. cit. pp. 126-128.

11 Critchley, op. cit., p. xiv.

12 See Critchley, “*Clôtural Readings I: ‘Bois’ – Derrida’s Final Word on Levinas*,” in *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, op. cit., pp. 3-144; Critchley, “*Bois*” – Derrida’s Final Word on Levinas,” in *Re-Reading Levinas*, op. cit. pp. 162-189.

locales. However, in the first instance, in Section I, this commentary is largely testament to “*Clôtural* Readings I: ‘Bois’ — Derrida’s Final Word on Levinas” that takes into careful consideration Critchley’s thesis on the problem of closure in *The Ethics of Deconstruction*. Thereby Critchley’s own *clôtural* signing of Derrida’s “ATVM” activates here the textual performative doubling of the double. Our own signing is of two texts, “ATVM” and “*Bois*,” each containing their moments of response and responsibility to the Other. And we would repeat our movement here, yet again, on the double binding of ATVM, the stricture of an economy of the graft that has located this text across two sites: *Psyche Inventions of the Other* and *ReReading Levinas*.<sup>13</sup>

As we have pointed out, commentary is never an unequivocal or determinable operation. Yet we suggest Section 1, “Dreaming of Necessity: The Credit Machine.” be termed as a commentary, within the dimension of the Said, as a *first* reading that brings together the two contextual locales that induced the English versions of “ATVM.” With Section 2, “*Entre (el) lacement*,” our second moment will be a performative reading of “ATVM” via the different thetic styles of Critchley, Derrida and Levinas as these were explicated in Section 1. We could *formally* describe this as a reading that performs with Critchley’s project of *clôtural* reading, Derrida’s ethical maintenance of ingratitude to Levinas, which refuses the work returning to EL and Levinas’s ethical response of responsibility that interlaces the Saying with the Said in order that the maintenance of the former interrupts the latter. In such an attempt our own thetic style’s “performative” approaches aim to articulate what is revealed as a central tenet in the writings of Derrida as the *non-existence* of sexual difference, *as* the most ancient still to come, *as* an otherwise discourse on sexual difference. Section 3, “Analogy + Alterity: Faulty Bodies, False Gods,” approaches the buried crypt of the concluding “monumental liturgy” of Derrida’s concluding paragraph to “ATVM.” We witness the faulty and violent text on which Derrida partitions his ciphered mortgage and betrayal of Levinas as infinite responsibility to the Other. She is named as the most ancient yet to come, as pre-originary to originary difference.

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<sup>13</sup> See Derrida, “ATVM” in *Psyche Inventions of the Other*, op. cit., pp. 148-190; “ATVM” trans. by Rubin Berezdivin, in *ReReading Levinas*, op. cit., pp. 11-50. For the publication of *Psyche*, Derrida extended his text aiming at making it more accessible. Also note that Levinas’s “Wholly Otherwise” is also partitioned across two *topoi*. It appears in both *Proper Names*, under the title “Jacques Derrida: Wholly Otherwise,” and in *ReReading Levinas*.

## S e c t i o n   I

### D r e a m i n g   o f   N e c e s s i t y :   T h e   C r e d i t   M a c h i n e

When Derrida suggests sexual difference does not exist, existence *itself* is under interrogation. Sexual difference does not exist except, perhaps, in a dream on the innumerable, the one we spoke of earlier in Chapter 3. It is a dream that dreams of a different relation to the other, beyond the known or coded marks of sexuality, a multiplicity of sexually marked indeterminable number of blended voices, a mobile of non-identified sexual marks whose choreography can carry, divide, multiply the body of each “individual” whether she be classified as “man” or as “woman” according to the criteria of usage. It is a dream where sexual otherwise has an indeterminate location, where one simply does not arrive knowingly. Yet, it is just a dream, furnished by a great desire as *you*, Jacques Derrida, suggest: “Sexual difference, if there were such a thing, would be fabulous.”<sup>14</sup> Is this the *same* dream that Derrida suggests in his essay “Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas,” a response to Levinas’s *Totality and Infinity*?:

It is at this level [that of the possibility of our language and the nexus of our world] that the thought of Emmanuel Levinas can make us tremble. At the heart of the desert, in the growing wasteland, this thought, which fundamentally no longer seeks to be a thought of Being and phenomenality, makes us dream of an inconceivable process of dismantling and dispossession.<sup>15</sup>

Levinas has a project-dream that is fundamentally flawed, according to Derrida, structured by a fantasy that is produced through a lack of acknowledgement for the metaphysical concepts inherent in its own (ethical) discourse. *Totality and Infinity* is reliant on an ethical relation to the other as a linguistic relation itself grounded on the

<sup>14</sup> See *Rootprints*, op. cit., p. 120.

<sup>15</sup> Derrida, “Violence and Metaphysics,” op. cit., p. 82. We are aware of the reversals going on here. It is the thought of Levinas that makes *us* dream of an inconceivable. Would, then, the flaw of his project be the affect of the dream? Or would the dream be built by the crypt rather than the fault on which the crypt is itself built?

language of ontology (metaphysics, philosophy) for developing its own ethical language.<sup>16</sup> Levinas seriously redresses Derrida's deconstruction of the frame Levinas had drawn between ontology and metaphysics and the seeming reserve that metaphysics offered him as a *pharmakon* for the language of ontology. This he did in *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, to which we will be paying close attention. *Otherwise than Being* is Levinas's response to the violence of Derrida's "Violence and Metaphysics," and an attempt at self-critique of *Totality and Infinity*. The overarching claim that "Violence and Metaphysics" asserts is that Levinasian ethics, as framed by *Totality and Infinity*, is an attempt to overturn the ontological (metaphysical) tradition, the question of being, via its own ethical priority to being. Yet in doing so it necessarily presupposes the very ontological language of classical metaphysics in its procedure. This dependency on the tradition's critical and conceptual resources—Hegelian dialectics, Husserlian phenomenology and Heideggerian thinking of the meaning or truth of being—goes unacknowledged.<sup>17</sup> Or,

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16 Emmanuel Levinas's conception of the term "metaphysics" has a radically other meaning to orthodox interpretations, i.e., of a "metaphysics of presence." For Levinas, metaphysics signifies an exteriority or going beyond, an infinity where truth knows no bounds. Levinas instead will employ the term *ontology* to refer to the project of a metaphysics of presence that extends from Parmenides to Heidegger. Ontology and philosophy ultimately coincide here.

17 Each of these three thinkers Derrida will, at various moments, deconstruct with respect to the problem of metaphysical closure; i.e., how particularly their "transgressive" movements will inevitably return their projects to the restoration of metaphysical concepts. This oscillation between transgression and restoration is a necessity for shifting the very (traditional) ground for thinking metaphysics, but it is a shift, that can only succeed, according to Derrida, via the vigilance of an acknowledgement of such an oscillation, a movement close to Critchley's own project on the problem of closure (*clôture*). This movement of transgression and restoration corresponds to Derrida's notion of separation—reparation, which he will write about in "*Fournis', Lectures de la Différence Sexuelle*" as the production of sexual difference at the level of writing and reading:

as soon as words join in, as soon as they are a party to sexual difference or sexual difference has a brush with them, here is my hypothesis, as soon as there is sexual difference, there are words or rather traces *to read*. It begins *in this way*. ... from here on, sexual difference is to be interpreted, to be deciphered, to be decoded, to be read and not to be seen. Readable, thus invisible, the object of testimony and not of proof — and in the same stroke problematic, mobile, not assured — it passes by, it is in passage, it passes from the one to the other, by the one and the other. (*Rootprints*, op. cit., p.121.)

The problem of closure emphasized in the process of deconstructive readings rests upon the necessity for a reading that acknowledges in language the passage, or passing of non-closure enacted in writing's figures of undecidability or irreducible alterity. Or what Critchley understands as the *unconditional affirmation* in Derrida's work: "In a nutshell, there is nothing outside context (no transcendental signified), but the context itself contains a clause of non-closure, where what interrupts and motivates the limitlessness of context is the unconditioned, which is independent of a context in general." (Critchley, op. cit., p. 263.) Following Critchley, it is this unconditional language that names the ethical demand implicit in Derrida's work: "between 'separate' and 'repair', the one becomes two and then one with the other without ceasing to be *un séparé*, that is to say two beyond all arithmetic, separation *and* reparation, separation *as* reparation." (Again, these two words gifted to Derrida by Cixous in *Rootprints*, p. 122.)

as Critchley suggests: “Derrida identifies a devastating problem at the heart of Levinas’s project: the question of *language*.<sup>18</sup>

To return to the dream text (are we in fact able to leave it, completely or in part?) and the question around a coincidental framework from one (ethical) dream to another (on sexual difference), their proximity happens in their relation to language and its provisions. The question of *providing* the dream and its language(s) will be explored in the scenes of Levinasian ethics and its relation to Derridean deconstruction. Initially, this relation is borne by what deconstruction names as an *unaccredited* belonging to ontology and (phal)logocentrism in an attempt to break with *its* tradition. Derrida conceptualizes this as a problem of *closure* which is significantly different from the finality of *end*.<sup>19</sup> Critchley comments on the dream:

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18 Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction*, op. cit., p. 258.

19 We will be saying a lot more about this notion of closure and how we wish to innovate it through certain folding, faulting and partitioning operations. Regarding the distinction between “end” and “closure,” Critchley suggests that closure may be thought of spatially (a spatial boundary) and temporally (activity); a state of being prior to the end, whereby the end signifies the completion of an act and not the act of completion. Closure considered as *activity* articulates an event of delimiting that produces the appearance of a double, an inside-outside. Derrida inherits closure (by the means of the conceptual pair *clôture/ouverture*) as a strategy early on in his working through a Husserlian phenomenological relationship, whereby Husserl, Critchley points out, rejects “speculative closure” of philosophical discourse, i.e., closure based on arguments, conclusions, solutions, decisions etc) with respect to the idea that philosophy postulates a closed system. In Derrida’s work, *closure* signifies a finite totality which is continuously breached by a movement of infinitization/*differance*: “Now the idea or the project which animates and unifies every *determinate* historical structure, every *Weltanschauung*, is *finite*: on the basis of the structural description of a *world view*, one can account for everything except the infinite opening to the truth [the idea of philosophy as an infinite idea; truth as reason not factual truth], that is to say, philosophy.” (Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, op. cit. p. 160.) Philosophy thought of via this conceptualization of closure is an infinite task and yet Derrida recognizes that the notion of the infinite arises through mathematical idealization and, hence, deconstructs this notion (disrupting the Husserlian transcendental innovation with respect to the overcoming of the finite knowledge based on the objective ideality of the sciences). However it is at the very limit point, or what Critchley emphasizes as the “definite,” that a structural break or excess from within closed systems of knowledge occurs (what becomes termed by Derrida as the *undecidable*) and this is the problem of closure. One sees in this respect the temporal characteristic whereby closure is always unfolding “a moving limit that restores each transgression and transgresses each restoration.” (Critchley, op. cit., p. 80.) An undecidable moment occurs that detects the break (the flaw) in the totalizing circularity of logos. Derrida’s own deconstruction is reliant on metaphysical concepts in order to produce its readings or to do its work. The renovation of Husserlian phenomenology with respect to the problem of closure is a very good example of this, whereby Derrida ultimately displaces the undecidable moment of “closed” (blinded) theoretical assertions where phenomenology itself is a rigorous science that depends on the discourse of mathematics. Yet, Derrida inherits from Husserl this notion of *closure*, displaces it and this now more radical notion of closure becomes a key conceptual apparatus for his deconstruction of the metaphysics of presence as a project other than but according to a Heideggerian radical same that is the (Heideggerian) *end* of metaphysics. Hence, the essay “Violence and Metaphysics” in the textual binding *Writing and Difference* about which Critchley notes that all the essays in this work deal with the problem of closure, which would also be on the limit between belonging and not belonging. And this latter concern of “belonging” would have been our theme for Chapter 4, on the “for” of a Heideggerian giving and taking. Closure for Derrida then becomes the moment of a double-bind of belonging and

Levinas's dream of a non-totalizing ethical relation to the Other that is linguistic but which exceeds the totalizing language of the tradition, remains just that, a *dream*. Derrida calls it the dream of pure empiricism that evaporates when language awakens.<sup>20</sup>

Language awakens dream-existence to the existence of its non-existence, or to the locution of the dream as having existed, the end or closure of dreaming. This crucial paradox will return to us, phantom-like, continuously, as the necessity of what we might prematurely name as an ethics of sexual difference. The dream is the unacknowledged movement of (its) existence as non-existence. That is to say, if it is acknowledged as a dream it could only be through recognition of the language (of existence, ontology) that has provided it. Yet, as we have noted from Derrida, if there is the dream, there must be the thing, the word-thing we recognize from "Fors," magic perhaps, and undecidably belonging and not belonging to being: "Does the dream itself not prove that what is dreamt of must be there in order for it to provide the dream?" The process of being awoken into language points to its moment of non-closure, belonging and breaking through, as other to itself. It is not as if we do not signify in our dreams. Both the Levinasian dream-work of *Totality and Infinity* and the Derridean dream on the innumerability of sexual difference exist only in their

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break through, between the relations of (phal)logocentrism and its other: "For essential reasons, the unity of all that which lets itself be caught sight of today across the most diverse concepts of science and writing is, in principle, always more or less secretly determined by a historico-metaphysical epoch of which we only catch a glimpse of the *closure*. We do not say *end*." (from Derrida, "Exergue" to *Of Grammatology*, op. cit., p. 4, cited in Critchley, op. cit., p. 76.) This quote suggests the temporal activity of closure with respect to the deconstruction of a totality, an epochal totality (of *the history [per se]*) of metaphysics. Critchley poignantly suggests with respect to a disruption to the conceptual notion of epochal stasis as a paradoxical and continuous activity: "to catch a glimpse of the closure of the metaphysical epoch is already to have engaged in the latter's deconstruction." (ibid., p. 77.) Heidegger's *end* of metaphysics aligns with Derrida's notion of *closure* and thereby cannot be thought of as an end as conclusion to metaphysics. Rather, the project and foundations of metaphysics are being continued and carried forward into the future. According to Heidegger, metaphysics dissolves into the empirical and technological sciences which perform a scientific and methodological study of human beings and all that pertains to them. Forgetful, the sciences continue the metaphysical foundations and project — carrying it forward to its ultimate and total global domination. The *end* of metaphysics shows how much it has accomplished and how much it will accomplish in the future, the end of the end of metaphysics as the continuation of the metaphysical project. A final note in our lengthy footnote, from Heidegger: "The epoch of completed metaphysics (*vollendet Metaphysik*) stands before its beginning (*Beginn*)."(from "Overcoming Metaphysics" cited in ibid., p. 78.) The term "closure" employed by Derrida was intended to remedy the misreading of Heidegger's "end" as apocalyptic, eschatological and concluded. See "Of an Apocalyptic Tone Recently Adopted in Philosophy," trans. J.P. Leavey, *Oxford Literary Review*, 6, no. 2 (1984), pp. 3-37. Derrida speculates in reading across the tonal registers within philosophical discourse as to whether the entirety of philosophy is dominated by such complicity, i.e., end of the world, judgement, death etc— rather, than an end that Heidegger and himself both allude to as that *end* which continues indefinitely.

20 Critchley, op. cit., p. 259.

relationship (through language) to a non-existence within the tradition of metaphysics or Levinas's ontology, philosophy, the Same and Totality, a non-existence for what these dreams cannot concede as an existent that is firstly provided by the inheritance of philosophy's metaphysical tradition. We recognize that Derrida will here deconstruct the strict partition between dream and awake, between the traditional understanding of the unconscious at work in the dream and secondary revision of conscious thought. He will claim that such dreaming operates within the economy of the gift as undecidable legacy of a tradition and at the same moment a reserve, credit, mortgage, excess that cannot be *returned* in (the same) order to make its way (its passage).

As with Cixous's dream of the multiply gendered ant, discussed previously in Chapter 2, this is a gift economy that can only be read, interpreted, deciphered and not seen. This gift gives as a dream one gives without knowing "where one risks no longer knowing that giving knows how to receive."<sup>21</sup> And yet Derrida insists that there is a *knowing* involved insofar as one must know how to dream: "Enough to foil, in dream, the avaricious circle of absolute knowledge."<sup>22</sup> This recounts the movement described above for an acknowledgement of the enclosure (circle) that necessitates the dream's textual transgression and at the same time is furnished by the self-same interiority of this enclosure as the failure of the circle on its return. In other words, what is provided by the dream is the otherness of absolute knowledge, a circle that becomes another figure for knowing, distorted by its own folding back in on itself, invaginated, where the mastering of *its* (philosophy's) own limits (self-knowledge) is ruptured.<sup>23</sup> The dream

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21 See *Rootprints*, op. cit., pp. 120-121. As we have previously noted, and as a reminder, the grammatical gender in French for *fourmi* (ant) is female (*une fourmi*), while Cixous's dream involved a grammatically masculine ant (*un fourmi*).

22 Ibid., p. 120. We have previously referenced otherwise this *knowing* that foils the absolute, with respect to a knowing that knows how to programme the machine. See footnote 41, Chapter 4.

23 Critchley makes this point with respect to the spatial motif of the circle governing philosophy and epitomized by Hegel's totalizing system of Absolute Knowledge:

As the epigraphs to this chapter indicate, certain dominant moments of the metaphysical tradition have assigned a limit (*peiras*) to what is, and represented truth and Being as a well-rounded sphere which attains a flawless closure within which there is no possibility of twisting or distorting. The dialectical movement of the Concept (*der Begriff*) is such that the Hegelian *Auflerbung* traces the interior limit of a circle whose circumference comprises the totality of Absolute Knowledge. As Hegel remarks in the Introduction to the *Aesthetics*, the whole, or the organic totality, of philosophy is the coronet, or crown (*der Krone*) within whose sphere revolve the circles of the various disciplines, such as art. Philosophy is the circle of circles and maintains an encyclopedic development. For Derrida, logocentrism always desires to attain a unitary closure,

text becomes the other to the language of mastery and its desire for totality and closure: “But where would the dream of the innumerable come from, if it is indeed a dream? Does the dream itself not prove that what is dreamt of must be there in order for it to provide the dream?” We suggest that its existence is provided for in the very registers of language’s movements of alterity, as an existence otherwise articulated by the undecidable oscillation between the language of the tradition (metaphysics, conceptuality, philosophy, etc.) and the break of that tradition. It would be what we encountered in our chapter on *Spurs*, locating woman as the still *undisclosed* for she could not exist as (Derrida’s, etc.) subject. That is to say, woman appears bound to phallogocentric discourse of masculine desire that reduces her to an economy of the Same. She therefore does not exist in any ontological discourse within the circle of predetermined desire for mastery which is to say what returns and is capable of returning returns. The question of woman’s existence could not be posed within this discourse of self-sameness and with acknowledgment of this economy her *existence* becomes the point of alterity to the closure of mastery and mastery of closure.<sup>24</sup>

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where the distinction between inside and the outside, philosophy and non-philosophy, can be rigorously maintained. (Critchley, op. cit. pp. 73-74.)

We return to Derrida and Hegel in Chapter 7, in a reading of *Glas*, where Derrida belongs to a non-belonging of speculative dialectics.

24 Jacques Lacan’s notorious proposition that “woman does not exist” (especially notorious for feminisms), makes the same kind of point with respect to a critique of ontology. Joan Copjec reveals, in the introduction to her book *Imagine There’s No Woman: Ethics and Sublimation* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2002), a poetic logic within her book’s title — a title that plays off this *notorious* Lacanian proposition “Woman does not exist”— as a strategy to redress and unblock the shock value of the proposition and in doing so to reveal something more profound: an ethics of psychoanalysis from the theory of the drive and sublimation. However, it is a theory and an ethics that we would need to negotiate with deconstruction, if we are to acknowledge the repeated approaches to Lacanian psychoanalysis by Derrida that emphasize its containment within a metaphysics of presence. In Critchley’s terms, Lacan’s work has a problem with closure. Copjec suggests that if being is limited to appearances, to particular things (metaphysics of presence) then this is to overlook the existence of the real, which is precisely what makes an all of being *impossible*. This is fundamentally the critique of philosophy by psychoanalysis: “The whole and shareable being of the philosophers has, then, no place in Lacan, who thinks rather of nonbeing as partial objects of the drive, partial objects of satisfaction, that are unique to the subject, who must now be approached in a finite way, that is to say, *one by one*.” (*ibid.*, p. 7.) Lacan’s reworking of his phrase in *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, “Woman does not exist,” is now rephrased in *Encore* “Imagine there’s no Woman!”: “In considering feminine sexuality, Lacan returns to the problematic of ethics by returning to and now foregrounding the question of being that remained in the background in the earlier seminar. The famous formulation of a feminine ‘not-all,’ that is, the proposal that there is no whole, no ‘all’ of woman, or that she is not One, is fundamentally an answer not just to the question of feminine being, but to being as such. It is not only feminine being, but being in general that resists being assembled into a whole. Lacan leaves little room for ambiguity on this point when in the midst of making his argument about femininity, he pauses to remark, ‘Everything that has been said about being assumes that one can refuse the predicate and say ‘Man is,’ for example, without saying what. The status of being is closely related to this lopping off of the predicate.’” (*ibid.*, pp. 5-6, quoting Lacan, *Encore*, op. cit., p. 11.) Woman is therefore universalized; as predicate of “is” woman, like being, subsumed to philosophy by Man, does not exist, but more importantly, she, like being, for Lacan can never be discussed in the partial being of “sexed being” — this being is too

We left Woman (being *and* forgetting) as the undecidable rupture inherent in the system of language as the still undisclosed. And it is our task here, in this moment, to suggest how this still un-dis-closed trace “shows” itself in language. That is to say, the condition for sexual difference in its non-existence to show itself is precisely the (turning) moment between closure and non-closure as the Un-dis-closed. It is a showing alluded to earlier via Derrida’s writing on Hélène’s dream where sexual difference was to be interpreted, deciphered, decoded, read yet not seen, “object of testimony and not of proof ... it is in passage, it passes from the one to the other, by the one and the other.”<sup>25</sup> A temporal activity, it passes *from* and *by* the one to the other, in passage that is invisible in relations — an obligation in this very moment furnished by these (Levinasian, Derridean and Cixousian) dreams. This invisible *showing*, an in(di)visibility of sexual difference, has a corresponding movement to Levinasian ethics’ emphasis on the notions of the Saying and the Said. But also a showing that demands our careful reading of what Critchley names *clôturel reading* for writing’s betrayal. This is an interlacing across the relations of reading, writing and sexual difference as an ethical demand:

A practice of language, an enactment of writing at the limit of conceptual intelligibility, writing under the law of a necessity that risks incoherence in the name of thinking, a practice attentive to the aporias of closure, where ethics signifies enigmatically or undecidably.<sup>26</sup>

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disruptive, too cutting, and therefore undoes the wholeness of being. Copjec therefore requires us to think more carefully about the coincidence of Lacan’s “Woman” and “being” as partial —*one-by-one*. As she states clearly: “The imperative motivating this book was to take this proposition seriously by imagining there’s no Woman, imagining what the consequences are—for ethics—of the notion of being it implies.” (*ibid.*, p. 9.) With the nominalist or partialization of being effected by the three “languages” of Lacanian psychoanalysis (the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real) we may also start to see that there is a necessity for their disruption as a totalizing system in order to reveal what they ultimately conceal. Perhaps, this is concealment as such, as Lacan’s Seminar XXIII on the *sinthome* (and *lamella*) would suggest, as that fourth (irregular) knot that binds together (in its insistence for) the “harmony” of this tripartite structure (a Borromean discourse). That is, the *sinthome* does not exist (it is not a symptom to be deciphered) but rather is the demand of our own *jouissance* (enjoyment) that moves beyond interpretation. Woman in this respect could be viewed as the *sinthome effect* or the potential threat of disruption that demands the fourth knot in order to conceal concealment as such (of non-existence, i.e., beyond meaning where the limits of decipherment ex-ist). It is interesting here to also note that Levinas signified ethics with the use of other terms such as religion, sacrifice and (his most favoured term in his later work) holiness *la sainteté*. In between *la sainteté* and *sinthome* (‘saint homme’ Holy Man, ‘synth-homme’) we may start to read all manner of aporetic relations between ethics and the non-existence of woman. I am indebted to Laurence Simmons for making available his paper “Alfred Hitchcock as Slavoj Zizek’s Sinthome.” Unpublished paper, presented at the Centre for Lacanian Analysis, Auckland, 18 June 2007.

25 Cixous, *Rootprints*, op. cit., p.121.

26 Critchley, op. cit., p. 168 & p. 261.

As we have noted earlier, for Levinas, the ethical relation to the other is a *linguistic* relation produced via his conceptual coupling of two philosophical languages, the *Saying* and the *Said*. *Totality and Infinity* invents his conceptual ethical discourse, yet it is not until *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* that Levinas really innovates the *Saying* and the *Said* through a rigorous renovation to the former text as a response to Derrida's "Violence and Metaphysics." In the latter, we see more clearly the distinction between these two forces of language and their interdependent relations. The *Saying* and the *Said* will become important registers for what follows in our doubled readings of "ATVM." But initially a schematic overview is necessary for a careful orientation to our strategic relations to writing, reading, ethics and sexual difference. We have already found proximity to the dreams of ethics and sexual difference in revealing how each exists as a non-existent awoken by the language of metaphysical closure and ontology. This is not a simple binary of existence/non-existence but rather, as the problem of closure points to, a complex undecidable oscillation between belonging and non-belonging that in the first instance, we have recognized in the philosophemes of *Spurs* as well as the grounding questioning of Heidegger's "Principle of Identity." This couplet, belonging-not-belonging construes with "Fors" the fault or violence on which the crypt is built. Its invaginating invents the double plays and the doubling of the double plays of inside and outside, the mimesis of introjection and incorporation, within the real of the partitioning of the crypt. All of these need careful recognition. Levinas recognizes this necessity in Derrida's essay ("Violence and Metaphysics") and in an incorporation of its lessons provides a more innovative model of the *Saying* and the *Said* as a revealing of how the ethical articulates itself in the language of ontology:

... the *Saying* is my exposure — corporeal, sensible — to the Other, my inability to refuse the Other's approach. It is the performative stating, proposing or expressive position of myself facing the Other, whose essence cannot be caught in constative propositions. On the other hand, the *Said* is a statement, an assertion or constative proposition, about which the truth or falsity can be ascertained.<sup>27</sup>

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27 Ibid., pp. 259-260. Levinas suggests in *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, op. cit.: "Saying states and thematizes the said, but signifies it to the other, a neighbour, with a signification that has to be distinguished from that borne by words in the said. This signification to the other occurs in proximity. Proximity is quite distinct from every other relationship, and has to be conceived as a responsibility for the other; it might be called humanity, or subjectivity, or self. Being and entities weigh heavily by virtue of the saying that gives them light. Nothing is more grave, more august, than responsibility for the other, and saying, in which there is no play, has a gravity more grave than its own being or not being." (ibid., p. 46.) We would want to read with this exposition of "saying" and proximity, an engagement with

This is a temporal relation whereby the performative stating and contingent positioning of the *Saying* interrupts the constative correctness of the *Said*. Levinas is aware of the logocentric return when the ethical Saying (*le Dire*) is thematised under the ontological Said as was the case in *Totality and Infinity*. What becomes significant in *Otherwise than Being* is how the method of *reduction* enables Levinas to write, state or *say* this Saying within the parameters of philosophical enquiry.<sup>28</sup> That is to say within the *reduction* of the Said to the Saying, the philosopher is ultimately stating propositionally for an-Other. In this sense Levinas claims that an ethical dimension is inherent and comes before the Said in the ultimate *Saying* (of philosophical enquiry) addressed to the Other. He also terms this the face-to-face encounter that is an unconditional obligation to the Other, where my responsibility is for the responsibility of the Other. Critchley suggests:

To employ another model, one might say that the content of my words, their identifiable meaning, is the Said while the Saying consists in the fact that these words are being addressed to an interlocutor. The Saying is the sheer radicality of human speaking, of the event of being in relation with an Other; it is the non-thematizable ethical residue (AE 23/OB 18) of language that escapes comprehension, interrupts philosophy, and is the very enactment of the ethical movement from the Same to the Other.<sup>29</sup>

The residue or interruption is precisely that to which Levinas pays careful attention, in relation to the stylistic and semantic turns in his writing. This attention is with respect to the problem of ethical Saying that will be necessarily *betrayed* in the Said. And it will be precisely in the nuances of language marked by the activity of writing and reading where reduction of Saying to the Said locates betrayal as an ethical imperative. Betrayal, approximate to what has been emphasized already as the problem of closure, activates itself in writing (it is the very economy of writing) as an ethical

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belonging and a gravity that is beyond the question of belonging, as the gravure of an undecidable oscillation of the “for” of the other.

28 We need to again emphasize the distinction Levinas makes between philosophy and ontology in this context. Philosophy, as with his use of the word metaphysics, he sees as the *resistance* of the other to the Same, a point of resistance that manifests (shows) as the point of exteriority located in the face of the Other. Ontology is that totalizing system which is governed by an egoistic “hunger,” i.e., digesting the Other like food or drink ... “the movement of comprehension which takes possession of entities through the activity of labour ... which takes hold of (*prend*) and comprehends (*comprend*) entities in the virility of its acquisition and digestion of alterity.” See Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, op. cit., pp. 158-159 and Critchley, op. cit., p. 6.

29 Critchley, op. cit., p. 7.

demand, *thematizable* perhaps under this name betrayal, although this would be a misinterpretation as it is not the *betrayal* as or of a conventional mode of negativity that would sit in opposition to the conventions of morality or ethics. Levinasian ethics is more radical, requiring resistance or betrayal where disloyalty comes from one's inability to refuse the Other's approach—an approach that reduces the Sameness of the (ontological) Said, without return (as *its* interruption), into the Saying (that is unbound).

*Performative style* (the «feminine operation») becomes *our* subject as a proximity or belonging of Levinasian ethics and Derridean deconstruction, from one to the other, from “AT(V)M” to *Otherwise than Being* and back, with and without returns. And with the backwash of a particular credit line, in remembering an *old generation*, an older *genesis*, are we able to here h(ear) the *Gedicht*, the silent genesis of language, the *Gedicht* betrayed in *Gerede*, babble of the They? Is this too violent perhaps for an understanding of the Saying and the Said, too much of a betrayal by ontology of metaphysics, or too much a reflection of Heidegger's betrayal of Levinas on the question of answering the Call? For us, at least, our feminine operation would want to re-member all of their silences in the showing of ethical *Saying* as the “performative enactment of ethical writing.”<sup>30</sup>

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30 A preliminary note on Levinasian textuality: *Sériature* as the figure of a rope and its knots diagrams the structural and performative elements of Levinasian textuality: a tension remains between the thread (the ontological Said), the knot (the ethical saying or interruption) and the hiatus (interruption of interruption); what is unbound, non-thematizable, and wholly other to ontology and logocentrism can be articulated only through a certain repetition of ontological or logocentric language, a repetition that interrupts that language. Levinasian textuality (and perhaps, textuality in general, the text) obeys a *sériatural* or *clôtural* rhythm of binding and unbinding which preserves the absolute priority of ethical obligation. (See *ibid.*, pp. 126-129.) Critchley comments on Levinas's confounding style in *Otherwise than Being*: “With such an understanding of the structure of Levinas's work, one can begin to take proper account of Levinas's language, and in particular the writing style of *Otherwise than Being*: the endless repetitions, the ellipses, ambiguities and contradictions, the unexplained and often tangential footnotes, the strange and austere beauty of the prose, the rhapsodic effect of the clause structure in Levinas's extended sentences, the simultaneous didacticism and uncertainty of many of his propositions. These phenomena are not, I would claim, simply of secondary importance, due to Levinas's relentless obscurity, circumlocution, and inability to say what he means clearly and distinctly. Rather, they are of primary importance, for it is precisely in the play of binding and unbinding, the oscillation or ambiguity of the Saying and the Said, that the ethical Saying of Levinas's work is maintained. In an eagerness to extract an ethics from Levinas, one may overlook the very writing that makes the formulation of that ethics possible. We are only just beginning to learn how to read Levinas.” (*ibid.*, p.129.)

## Necessity

Having dreamt a little too long in this moment on the correspondences between languages of traditions and *their* transgressive innovations, to be deciphered but not seen, non-thematizable and yet written, we are abruptly awoken by two stern lessons of deconstruction. The first has already been touched on in footnote 10 of this Chapter that relays between deconstructions' (is there only one "Deconstruction")? commentaries and their interpretative modes.<sup>31</sup> Commentary here signals a reading that repeats the dominant interpretation of a text, with the interpretative mode articulated through repetitions as those which dislocate and deny closure, through that which the former's dominance is unable to say, or as yet cannot-be-thought (an exterior or marginal locale). Deconstruction demands, in the first instance, a responsibility to the signatures of the others through hearing and understanding *their* voices. At the same moment in the act of commenting on a text we must "honor the other's signature ... this gesture consists in hearing [her voice] as acutely as possible ... we have been entrusted with the responsibility of the signature of the other's text which we have inherited."<sup>32</sup> The *acuteness* with which we listen to the other's voice is the rigour demanded by deconstruction.<sup>33</sup> And we would want to oppose to this double science what has been a common misinterpretation and dismissal of it as non-philosophy, frivolous and apolitical. More and less than a *Gerede* and a *Gedicht*, a *Said* and a *Saying* is the subject of this exchange.<sup>34</sup>

31 See "Appendix 1," in *The Ethics of Deconstruction* where Critchley, in an auto-criticism to the first edition of the book, acknowledges his tendency to previously totalize deconstruction: "Appendix 1 The Ethics of Deconstruction: An Attempt at Self-Criticism," pp. 248-266.

32 *The Ear of the Other*, op. cit., p. 51.

33 We would want to associate this *acuteness* of the ear, the acute of acuteness, to the angle of entry for the break-in to the crypt, where Derrida suggests in "Fors" the necessity for choosing the angle: "A crypt, then, according to the angle of the words." ("Fors," op. cit., p. xxxvi.). The wish-word *Anguish*, in its anasemic exchanges orientates us to the acuteness of more than one ear.

34 See Peters and Trifonas, "Introduction: The Humanities in Deconstruction," in *Deconstructing Derrida: Tasks for the New Humanities*, ed. by Michael A. Peters and Peter P. Trifonas (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005) pp. 1-11. This text views Derrida as a highly significant contemporary political philosopher in relation to the questions he raises around the current state of the humanities and the role of the University: "Derrida maintains that the 'modern university should be unconditional,' by which he means that it should have the 'freedom' to assert, to question, to profess, and to 'say everything' in the manner of a literary fiction." (*ibid.*, p. 4.) This statement alone could be taken as anarchic and frivolous if one didn't rigorously *listen* for understanding the deeper significance of Derrida's project. This is the same claim made in *Deconstructing Derrida* suggesting that as one of the "world's most distinguished contemporary philosophers of both the humanities and *humanitas*," his work is cited in many philosophical and literary works as well as being the subject in many educational institutions. "This proves that his work is well cited though not necessarily universally acclaimed or appreciated. Both conservatives and members of the radical left have fiercely attacked his work. The

Rather than a “frivolous” act of saying anything at all, Derrida argues that the moment of “commentary” cannot be reduced to a pure and simple repetition of a text. Critchley suggests:

As a crucial caveat — there is an unavoidable need for a competence in reading and writing such that the dominant interpretation of a text can be reconstructed as a necessary and indispensable layer or moment in reading. ... Derrida goes on to argue that the moment of ‘commentary,’ or of the dominant interpretation, reflects a minimal *consensus* concerning the intelligibility of texts, establishing what a given text means for a community of readers. Although such a search for consensus is ‘actively interpretative’ Derrida adds, ‘I believe that no research is possible in a community (for example, academic) without the prior search for this minimal consensus’.<sup>35</sup>

The hermeneutic principle of fidelity is in the first *order* of deconstructive reading, extending for Critchley as far as an “ethico-political duty” as a deconstructive duty of scholarship.<sup>36</sup> Yet this first order alone cannot open the text up to a genuine reading as

former deny he is a philosopher and the latter dismiss his work as frivolous and apolitical.” (*ibid.*, p. 5.). It should also be noted that this *unconditional* of the University is crucial to an *ethics* of deconstruction addressed to unnamable alterity, i.e., to that which is yet to be thought in the language of philosophy.

35 Critchley, *op. cit.*, p. 24. He goes on to summarize this thinking on the necessary *minimal consensus* as discerned in a competence in reading and writing for a commentary: “Thus, although ‘commentary’ alone does not open a genuine reading, the latter is not possible without a scholarly competence in reading, understanding, and writing, ... without knowing the multiple contexts — political, literary, philosophical, historical, and so forth — which determine a given text or are determined by that text. This is what one might call the deconstructive duty of scholarship. I would go further and claim that there is a hermeneutic principle of fidelity — one might even say ‘an “ethico-political duty” (*un ‘devoir éthico-politique*) (*LI* 249/*Litr* 135) — and a minimal working notion of truth as *adaequatio* underlying deconstructive reading, as its primary layer of reading. If deconstructive reading is to possess any demonstrative necessity, it is initially by virtue of how faithfully it reconstructs the dominant interpretation of a text in a layer of ‘commentary’.” (*ibid.*, p. 24-25.) This is important with respect to methodology or procedure that we would also want to call deconstruction’s styles; i.e., Critchley emphasizes, for example, how Derrida quotes at such length and with such regularity in his writing (See both *ibid.*, p. 25 and footnote 35 p. 55.)

36 Critchley makes reference to “Afterword: Towards an Ethics of Discussion,” in *Limited Inc.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-160. The “Afterword” takes the form of a written reply by Derrida to a series of questions posed by Gerald Graff, the editor of the collection of texts under the title *Limited Inc.* The questions concern clarification and amplification on Derrida’s exchange with John R. Searle. In particular, Critchley makes reference to footnote 9, pp. 156-158. This is an extended footnote where Derrida criticizes Jurgen Habermas for Habermas’s failure to approach a reading of Derrida with sufficient scholarship at the level of commentary. Derrida is blunt: “That is false. I say false, as opposed to true, and I defy Habermas to prove the presence in my work of that “primacy of rhetoric” which he attributes to me.” (*ibid.*, p. 157.) Footnote 9 appears in Derrida’s response to a question concerning the policing, tribunals and politics of speech acts, and amplifies a deconstructing of Searle’s categorical distinction between the reality of “nonfiction standard discourse” and fiction: “The real question, or at any rate in my eyes the indispensable question, would then become: what is ‘nonfiction standard discourse,’ what must it be and what does this name evoke, once its fictionality or its fictionalization, its transgressive

we witness in the case of Derrida's "ATVM" wherein it is the condition of betrayal that comes in the form of ingratitude that marks the original or *genuine* otherwise reading of Levinas's *Otherwise Than Being*.<sup>37</sup> Thus it is this second moment, which occurs in the repetitive disruption and dislocation of the first order in its refusal of the text's closure, that deconstruction's second lesson is gleaned, a lesson that can be taken as a moment of ongoing self-reflexivity inherent in deconstruction's double reading.<sup>38</sup> That is to say, it is a deconstructive habit to inhabit those very texts that transgress the boundaries of their metaphysical origins, for instance, Heidegger, Levinas, Rousseau or Foucault and in doing so question the very act or motivation activating their transgression. A self-reflexivity operates with respect to Derrida's own question of orientation toward the potentiality of an opening in these texts carried in those very moments of their closing down, through a default to the inherited principles they carry in the name of philosophy. These principles of the tradition are those they are seeking to transgress and yet restoration takes place. Derrida's own discourse, likewise, is prey to the possibility of such a *necessary* double bind. Levinas's "Wholly Otherwise" points out Derrida's moment of reliance on ontology in a discourse that "seems to offer an ultimate refuge to presence."<sup>39</sup> The question, then, for any reader of such transgressive texts pertinent for deconstruction, according to Critchley, is: "why is the attempted transgression of philosophical discourse that has characterized so much of the work of recent decades both philosophically incoherent and still necessary?"<sup>40</sup> Critchley's *answer* ultimately suggests that the *necessity for incoherence* lies within the problem of closure (hence perhaps his emphasis on *clôtural* reading). Indeed, the problem of closure draws together, in a compelling way, antagonisms at the heart of politico-ethico-philosophical enquiry.

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'parasitism,' is always possible (and moreover by virtue of the very same words, the same phrases, the same grammar, etc.)?" (ibid., p. 133.)

37 With an emphasis here on "genuine" and "original" with respect to a reading, are we restituting for ourselves a metaphysics of presence, as if the "genuine" would be the most proximal, the equivalent, in an understanding of truth as adequation? Hence we need to emphasize a Levinasian swerve to *proximity* of the "genuine" as the gravity before the question of being or not-being of responsibility as such to the other. Equally we would emphasize the second moment, whose non-primacy needs to be read as an interlacement or logic of the supplement.

38 Wouldn't we want to deconstruct this notion of self-reflexivity? Well, yes in the sense that the reflexivity of a self is a way of being caught up in a system of old names for reading that we would associate with a tradition from the Cogito to a phenomenological-hermeneutic couplet. But then, would it not precisely be this couplet that posed a breech to a reflexivity of a quasi-Hegelian kind? See Chapter 7 in particular for a discussion on the reflex of Hegel.

39 Levinas, "Wholly Otherwise," in *ReReading Levinas*, op. cit. p. 5.

40 Critchley, op. cit., p. 258.

Perhaps, “antagonisms” are best summarized, in Levinasian terminology, between *totality* and *infinity*. At the heart of the Levinasian chiasmus that takes its lesson from Derridean deconstruction is the problem of *closure*. This chiasmus-closure demands the maintenance or interlacing of one reading with the other rather than a separation and here lies the necessity for incoherence. We will return to a Levinasian ethics of reading conceived by this notion of *interlacing* as it ultimately contaminates the strategy of our *own* reading of “ATVM,” as assembled proximity of the couple Derrida-Levinas. For now, we return to the “second moment” of deconstructive reading which is not easily determined from the first, a strategy of transgression that determines the *necessity* for a text’s transgression and its restorative phase. Critchley invents *clôture* reading as his own strategic bet. But we’ll appropriate from Derrida *entre(el)acement* as our magic word for *clôture*.<sup>41</sup> In what Critchley refers to as the second order of transgression, Derrida’s strategy is to employ his semantically undecidable words we have previously referenced and discussed, which articulate a double reading, as in “Fors” as the dislocating agency of a normative psychoanalytic discourse on mourning with respect to the processes of *introduction* and *incorporation*. And with “ATVM” there is the passage created in traversing/*travesting* the initials of Emmanuel Levinas, E.L., to produce a moment of irreducible alterity in the proper of *Elle* and thereby elevate sexual difference from its secondary status in Derrida’s reading of *Otherwise than Being*, to a primary concern.<sup>42</sup> Derrida employs the neologism *Entre(el)acement* to reveal his strategy for reading across the three distinct and yet interlaced voices of the pronouns *I* and *Elle* and the proper name E.L.

There are three textual voices woven into this text by a masculine reader, a feminine reader and the voice of the *proper* Emmanuel Levinas which Derrida performatively oscillates as the mediator (el) between the other two (inter – laced). This is not a moment of unnecessary conceit but rather “in this very moment” the Levinasian

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41 *Entre(el)acement* refers in “ATVM” to an ethical relation respectful of the irreducibility of sexual difference.

42 On the “elevation” of sexual difference from second to first, we are faced yet again with the legacies and reserves of metaphysics, in fact with the supposed great reserve of reserve in dialectics. Would this elevation be with or without *relève*, relief of the *Aufhebung*, supersedence of a difference between firstness and secondariness, would “sexual difference” name the identity of their differences and thereby return the binary back to its old names and manoeuvres? See Chapter 7 for our discussion on the supplement of *relève*.

ethical imperative, demanding the work *not* be returned to the self-Same, is under an obligation to its Other for what it *cannot* say itself. In this respect Derrida opens Levinasian ethics to the question of sexual difference in a re-questioning of the inherent patriarchy or phallogocentrism at work in Levinas's ethical difference. And at the same moment, while working within the enclosure of the ethical resources of Levinas's *Saying* and *Said*, Derrida locates critical openings in *Otherwise than Being* as a reciprocal gesture between Levinasian ethics and sexual difference.

The *necessity* for *incoherence* in “ATVM” is not to be found with the decipherable and decidable movement of sexual difference over and beyond ethical difference. Rather, it is in a reciprocal gesture, from one to the other, that this strange necessity for incoherency articulates itself. Yet, my *own* reading of this text differs from Critchley precisely on this point of *mutual ease* with which the “elevation” of sexual difference in “ATVM” becomes Said, over and beyond ethical difference. Critchley offers an economy too much reading like one of simple inversion, an effortless swap that would only reduce, retain or maintain Levinasian ethics to a point of the Same. However, this difference occurs at the level of the Said of the (Derridean) Saying in what we would describe here as a stylistic *tic* within the very logic of this *clôtural* reading. Critchley's *Saying* is perhaps too decidable on this very moment of the text's interruption. In our reading to follow it will be exactly at the strange, crypto-logical liturgy that ends Derrida's text that the differing of our readings will manifest as a performing of differences with respect to how sexual difference *signs* the work in an irreducible manner. This is not to say that our readings are significantly different. Nor, most definitely, is it that differences reside in the fact that one text is signed by a man and the other a woman.<sup>43</sup> No, rather these readings are reading-for different differences insofar as Critchley's *clôtural* reading is structured on revealing precisely the moments of closure via deconstruction's own proximity to Levinasian ethics. In revealing how Levinas's work works in the first moment and how it does not in the second that

<sup>43</sup> We would not want to resurrect that empirical difference that would supposedly precede all textuality, and would thereby countersign every text by the Same as an empiricism of the hand. This same-of-the-hand would at the same time be the exposition of forgery implied in every signature as the mark of the *iter*. But, then again, we would not want to simply draw a boundary between the natural and the artificial to entirely rule out the empirical *carte blanche*. At stake between all of the initial arguments, the arguments between the E.L.s, is perhaps this undecidability of oscillation between the closures/*clôtures* of the natural and the artificial (or *physis* and *techne* under the old generations) that we have previously alluded to under the name *sanglant* (as the untranslatable mark in the hymen-ation of the graphic of sexual difference. See Chapter 5).

diagrams Derrida's own textual strategy for giving the work to Levinas (that does not amount to a returning of the Same work), Critchley excavates the coincidence of a Levinasian-Derridean ethical opening. While Derrida's text clearly positions a fundamental discrepancy in Levinas's work with respect to sexual difference as secondary to ethical difference, Critchley's text deals with this *properly* (propriating, property, belonging as we have already encountered elsewhere as a hermeneutics of the castrating philosopher). I would argue that this propriety places sexual difference back on the side of something too decidable, too visible or what Derrida's own liturgical locution suggests as on the side of the “MONUMENTAL WORK.”<sup>44</sup> Of course this is *the* danger with any reading of a work that is performing on the ground of an already existing (deconstructive) double reading. Critchley makes this point quite clear on a number of occasions:

But how should *I* read the work of Derrida's work in order to maintain the interruption?<sup>45</sup> Does not the repetition implicit in *my* commentary foreclose any opening onto an ethics of sexual difference? How should *I* show gratitude to Derrida? ... my commentary upon Derrida's commentary upon Levinas undoubtedly conceals the opening that is so carefully prepared by a double, or *clôtural*, reading. However, and precisely through the double passivity of a commentary upon a commentary, such a reading, no doubt only in its interstices and hiatuses, may reflect some of the oblique rays of the deconstructive opening where the injunction is announced and the interruption is maintained.<sup>46</sup>

Could there be such a triple passivity with respect to *my* reading? Perhaps it is through the mediation of Critchley's own text, in the way he has “shown gratitude to Derrida,” that we respond with an ingratitude via drawing emphasis on what Critchley is only too attentive to with respect to a certain foreclosure on the ethics of sexual difference.<sup>47</sup> Critchley's own moment of closure, by his own analysis of (an ethics of) deconstruction indeed reflects clearly the oblique rays of a deconstructive opening. Is gratitude to Derrida what is really necessary here? Does not Derrida remind us in *Monolingualism*

44 “ATVM,” op. cit. p. 47.

45 The interruption is where: “the final word of ethical obligation is uttered by the Other, in this instance ‘She,’ who interrupts Levinasian ethics and sets Derrida’s work to work. Any consideration of the ethics of deconstructive reading must begin from this datum.” (Critchley, op. cit., p. 120.)

46 Ibid. Critchley does emphasize here a clearing of sorts, but one that would vantage us a dim view. Consider the attenuations that would propose the maintenance of a concealing: the double passivity of a commentary upon a commentary that only in its interstices and hiatuses, its gaps and fissures or interruptions, *may* reflect oblique rays. Hardly the light of the clearing, but then Critchley would subscribe to Derrida’s coincident alignment of light and violence.

47 Ibid., for Critchley’s discussion on his gratitude returned with fidelity to Derrida.

*of the Other* to be inventive in *our* language so that we may disturb the very notion of *our return* [*son; "chez elle"*], to invent in our voice in order that his work is able to be heard?<sup>48</sup> Indeed, the question of invention is implicit in how *gratitude* is revealed with respect to the ethical demand for *fidelity* inherent in deconstructive commentary. And, as suggested already, Critchley's own reading *invents* in its *clôture* practice, its project for locating an ethics within deconstruction at the level of closure. We *gratefully* carry on this legacy through the ethical demand of *ingratitude* in our interruption on the foreclosure of sexual difference that gives *irreducibly*. This giving effaces the clear rendition of voices as sexually determinable “female” or “male” suggesting, in terms of an interlacing of Levinasian Saying and Said, they are neither one nor the other but are *tous les deux*, “all the twos” *relationally* in their decipherment.

This *reciprocity* or *relationality* that our reading locates is never necessarily reliant on or determined by traditional discourses on equality.<sup>49</sup> It will be the task of this reading to reveal what we suggest here as an irreducible, indecipherable and ungrateful offering as the confounding of *choice*.<sup>50</sup> This is a *choice* that necessitates a non-choice: Levinas maintains a *choice* of interlacing an intersection as a coming into contact with the heart (its ethical moment) of the chiasmus as his attempt at responding responsibly to

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48 Derrida suggests: “Invent if you can or want to give my language to be understood, as well as yours, where the event of its prosody only takes place once at home, in the very place where its “being home” [*son :chez elle*] disturbs the co-inhabitants, the fellow citizens, and the compatriots? Compatriots of every country, translator-poets, rebel against patriotism!” *Monolingualism of the Other*, op. cit., p. 57.

49 The question of “equality” could be said to be the founding question of an Anglo-American discourse on feminism (and perhaps not just Anglo-American, perhaps even Levinasian) and the histories of feminisms are very much histories of the inventions of and substitutions for the meanings of “equality,” for what *equality* can never find itself equal to. “ATVM” approaches this question. Derrida quotes Levinas at length from “And God Created Woman.” Crucially, Levinas says: “How can the equality of the sexes proceed from a masculine property? ... There had to be a difference that would not compromise equity, a sexual difference; and consequently, a certain pre-eminence of man, a woman arrived later and *qua* woman as an appendix to the human. Now we understand the lesson: Humanity cannot be thought beginning from two entirely different principles. There must be some *sameness* common to these *others*: woman has been chosen above man, but has come after him: *the very femininity of woman consists in this initial afterwards (après coup)*.” Derrida then comments: “Strange logic, that of the ‘audacious’ question. It would be necessary to comment upon each step and verify that each time the secondary status of sexual difference signifies the secondary status of the feminine (But why is this so?) and that the initial status of the predifferential is each time marked by this masculinity that should, however, have come only afterwards, like every other sexual mark.” (*ibid.*, p. 41.)

50 This notion of a radical reciprocity as the ungrateful offering that is an obligation outside of an economy of choice or return of something to someone corresponds to Derrida’s notion of the gift that we have discussed in the previous two chapters. Here we may wish to disclose this gift as the confounding of choice, in relation to Heidegger’s pledge and Derrida’s sendings. Pre-ontological sendings do not originate. Critchley suggests: “Sendings are a self-deferring, differing web of traces that *do not* originate in the self, they do not originate but arise from the other, from others.” (Critchley, op. cit., p. 86.)

Derrida. It is a demonstration of Levinasian ethics as a performative reading whereby “the Saying is maintained within the Said as the permanent possibility of the latter’s interruption.”<sup>51</sup> This interruption is only ever possible in the reciprocity alluded to above, or according to what Derrida terms as the *Relational*. Relationality is understood as reciprocity between the first and second “moments” of repetition as we see in the *serial* style of Levinas, and in the deconstructive task of a double-reading:

For example, in “Le Nom de Dieu,” the first “moment” gathers together the continuum of a tissue that “envelops” the beyond in the same and forbids the interruption. Now, in the following phrase, yet still within the language of thematization, the other moment, the moment of the Other, marks the instance of the tear by a Relation which *will have made* “only possible” the continuum itself, that will therefore not have been (or have come to be) the continuum it seemed to be.”<sup>52</sup>

Derrida draws out here the future anterior of the *tear* and the absolute past anterior as a possible effect of the seam. The seam would only have come to be in the future of its tear. And we have already read in this condition of the “letting itself be contaminated” of a future anterior as an absolutely past anterior, Levinas’s logic of sexual difference and the temporality of an irreducibility of sexual difference yet reduced to a *sameness* as equity. It is the “logic” that Derrida deconstructs in the confounding of choice. He emphasizes that with the retaining of the traces of interruption of the saying in the said, with “the tears in the logical text sewn up by logic” in severing and retying, there is the retaining of the traces of interruption *despite itself* and one must retie the threads “despite oneself.” We would here want to read in the non-volition of a “despite oneself,” an engagement with the relation of sendings to justice.<sup>53</sup>

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51 Ibid., p. xiv.

52 “ATVM,” op. cit. pp. 26-27.

53 See Ibid., p. 27.

## S e c t i o n   2

### *E n t r e ( e l ) I a c e m e n t*

#### **Reminder Summary**

As we have already stressed, commentary is never a straight forward operation. We have suggested that Section One: “Dreaming of Necessity: The Credit Machine” may be considered commentary within the dimension of the Said, as a first reading that brings together the two contextual locales that produced the English version of “ATVM.” Section Two, or our second moment of reading focuses directly on an *interlacing* reading of “ATVM” via the differing thetic styles of Critchley, Derrida and Levinas that we have discussed in Section One. We could formally describe this second moment as a reading that performs with Critchely’s project of *clôturel* reading, Derrida’s ethical maintenance of ingratitude to Levinas, which refuses the work to return (only) to E.L.; and Levinas’s ethical response of responsibility that interlaces the Saying with the Said in order that the maintenance of the former interrupts the latter. In such an attempt our own thetic performative styles aim to articulate what is revealed as a central tenet in the writings of Derrida as the non-existence of sexual difference (as the most ancient still to come) as an otherwise discourse on sexual difference. In this reading of “ATVM” we are guided by the question as to how sexual difference articulates *itself* in the openings on transgressive-restorative closings within the textual scene. Yet what *grounds* this question is the impossibility or non-existence of sexual difference in the history of metaphysics, its writing and its concepts.

## Reading (Not Seeing)

How are we to read sexual difference “at this very moment”? Derrida has suggested earlier (at another moment in our text) that when the question of sexual difference arises there are words or rather traces *to read*: “Sexual Difference is to be interpreted, to be deciphered, to be decoded, to be read and not to be seen.”<sup>54</sup> This suggests sexual difference is always in passage, invisible and mobile, passing from one to the other, always *tous les deux*: “all the ‘twos’, all the couples, the duals, the duos, the differences, all the dyads in the world: each time there’s two in the world.”<sup>55</sup> For example, we could say a reader and a text. And finally, from this other moment, Derrida conceives in this invisible readability we encounter sexual difference as “the object of testimony and not of proof.”<sup>56</sup> In “ATVM,” Derrida’s own testimony on the work of Emmanuel Levinas traces sexual difference in its passing (though not assured) from one to the other.<sup>57</sup> This testimony of the “object” of sexual difference locates this passing from one to the other, by one to the other, in the activation of sexual difference’s interruption to the Levinasian Said. Hence a Saying that is ungratefully ethical or ethical in its ingratitude as it tears Levinas’s work from itself, from return, offering it up to *tous les deux*. “ATVM” is an offering to both EL and *Elle*, to *both* in the same very moment not giving it to either/or. It is not a simple matter of choice. It is “despite oneself,” sendings, a difficult matter of refrain, the undecidable and possibility of justice. This act of negotiation between the two is the confounding of choice (a choice of non-choice) articulated by Derrida as relationality. A non-choice

<sup>54</sup> See *Rootprints*, op. cit., p. 121.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>57</sup> Derrida makes a parallel move in “ATVM” to his “*Fournis*” text. He plays on the sexually marked body to be read (and not seen) as difference, as the deconstructive move upon the distributed grammatically proper. “ATVM” is precisely concerned with the deconstruction of the proper name (pro-noun *He* (*il*)) that under-signs She (*elle*) in Levinas’s work that makes sexual alterity secondary by transforming the initials of Emmanuel Levinas (E.L.) to be read as *Elle*. This gesture is not mere whimsy but (syn)tactical for its alerting to those moments of closure when the work returns to an economy of the Same (interrupting its ethical Saying). Derrida activates in Levinas’s very signature its inherently sexually marked alterity, and for this activation: “*he* would be the last one surprised by the fact that the other (of the whole system of his saying of the other) happens to be a woman, and commands him from that place.” (Derrida, “ATVM,” op. cit., p. 44.) This “*he*” reads as both the reader Jacques Derrida of Emmanuel Levinas, but also in the invisibility of sexual difference, in the very moment of Derrida’s writing (for) Levinas (in the passing of textual traces between the two of them), Levinas is here *now* commanded by that place. After this moment of writing this text, it will be simply impossible for Levinas (and all who have encountered this text), not to read his signature as a sexual marked body, as *entre(el)acement*.

maintaining Levinasian ethics *takes* from his work the “economy” of interlacing whereby “the Saying is maintained within the Said as the permanent possibility of the latter’s interruption.”<sup>58</sup> The Saying of sexual difference that resides in the name of the proper of E.L.’s signature maintains itself as the under-signed *Elle*, secondary position with respect to sexual alterity. The permanent possibility of the Said’s interruption occurs in Derrida’s steady maintenance of both EL and *Elle* thereby elevating sexual difference to a primary concern for ethical Saying. Reading sexual difference cannot therefore reside in the efficiency for naming, or recognizing who writes a text but rather in the relation between the two of reading and writing. That is not to say that in the act of writing we are not also always in relation with the Other who reads. It could perhaps be suggested that with the history of metaphysics a writing *for* the other that is sexually marked is unique. Indeed Derrida makes this point clear in his first major response to Levinas’s work, in “Violence and Metaphysics”:

*Totality and Infinity* pushes the respect for dissymmetry so far that it seems to us impossible, essentially impossible, that it could have been written by a woman. Its philosophical subject is man (vir) ... . Is not this principled impossibility for a book to have been written by a woman unique in the history of metaphysical writing?<sup>59</sup>

Stella Sandford uses this above quote to demonstrate there is an obvious masculine (sexual) specificity with respect to Levinas’s work that, perhaps, “marks him out as an honourable exception in a dishonourable and dishonest tradition.”<sup>60</sup> Hence Levinas’s work has been taken up by many leading contemporary women philosophers interested in [t]his kind of sexually overt specificity. Yet Sandford’s quoting of “Violence and Metaphysics” opens a questioning of Derrida’s text and its conclusion. Sandford’s strategic bets are either that Derrida is here offering a rather “unpersuasive” argument or that he is wrong. As she suggests on the first bet: “It would have taken a profoundly inattentive reader not to have noticed, until 1964, any other single text in the history of metaphysical writing that bore the stamp of its masculine provenance.”<sup>61</sup>

58 “Editors’ Introduction,” in *Re-Reading Levinas*, op. cit., p. xiv.

59 Derrida, “Violence and Metaphysics,” op. cit., p. 315. Derrida cites and refers to this passage in “ATVM,” p. 40. The citation is also discussed by Stella Sandford in *The Metaphysics of Love*, op. cit., p. 61.

60 Sandford, op. cit., p. 61.

61 Ibid.

And on the second bet: “It is not at all impossible that *Totality and Infinity* could have been written by a woman, and there is no necessity that a man should write like this.”<sup>62</sup> So, would Derrida have been so naïve here? Or is there something else at stake? Perhaps it has to do with what Derrida refers to as relationality and sendings, which would also be the structure of the letter (*la lettre, l’être*).

### Deconstruction’s Victims

The structure of the letter suggests not that the letter will never reach its destination, but that there is always already the possibility in its sending that it may not, that the letter will not always reach its destination, and thus will not always have reached its destination even before it is sent.<sup>63</sup> Derrida suggests that precisely because of this possibility of a not-arriving, what does arrive is itself partitioned by an undecidability as to what has or might have arrived, *despite itself*: “a letter does not always arrive at its destination, and since this belongs to its structure, it can be said that it never arrives there, that when it arrives, its possibly-not-arriving, torments it with an internal divergence.”<sup>64</sup> Perhaps Derrida was suggesting that with a history of metaphysical writings what arrives as signed “masculine” in the sense of an obviousness raised by Sandford, is yet tormented by the structural imperative of sendings. The curious question that Derrida’s reading of the uniqueness of *Totality and Infinity* is how it has escaped the structural necessity of the partitioning of the letter, how its closure of metaphysics destines an unequivocal arrival. But does he not also say this unequivocality amounts to the impossible of woman, “the impossibility for a book to have been written by a woman” which we would necessarily want to read with the litany or liturgy of Derridean “impossibles” that mark the *Gedicht*, genesis or silent saying of sexual difference. If Derrida suggests in this citation that “man” is Levinas’s “philosophical subject,” is “woman” to be *his* subject? What would a “philosophical” subject be as “man”? And as “woman”?

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62 Ibid., p. 62.

63 See Derrida, “The Purveyor of Truth,” op. cit.

64 Ibid., p. 107.

Returning to Sandford, she emphasizes (*contra* de Beauvoir, though will later revise her *contras*) the possibility of Levinasian honourability for dealing, at last, with the question of sexual difference within the tradition.<sup>65</sup> Our reading of Derrida on Levinas hears the question of a sexually marked voice through radical *dissymmetry*. This makes Levinas's work neither necessarily honourable nor dishonourable with respect to an otherwise silence or neutrality on the question of sexual difference within metaphysics. Rather, Derrida alludes to the impossibility for denying the readability of a sexually marked text within philosophy's tradition, a dissymmetry that clearly writes from a “masculine standpoint” as the sexually un-marked-marked Other to [his] woman, the *feminine* as *sexual difference*.<sup>66</sup> Both female (Sandford) and male (Derrida) readers of Levinas's work read the significant traces of sexual alterity in his writing as a man in relation to his ethics. Their differing readings, in markedly different styles, reveal inherent faults (or moments of closure) in Levinas's work where the feminine is opposed to the human in a way that the masculine is not.<sup>67</sup> It is easy to read or see that Levinas “writes like a man” due to an ideological position rather than a biological category and a woman too *could* have written *Totality and Infinity* given woman too has equal access to ideological constraints. But is this all Derrida is pointing (or not) to in his questioning: “Is not this principled impossibility for a book

65 Sandford, op. cit., p. 61. Sandford notes the dominance of philosophy written from a “masculine standpoint” and covered over by the tendency of the masculine to represent the absolute human type. She references Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* that emphasized this: “A man never begins by presenting himself as an individual of a certain sex; it goes without saying he is a man. The terms masculine and feminine are used symmetrically only as a matter of form, as on legal papers. In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral .... it is understood that the fact of being a man is no peculiarity.” (De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. & ed. by H.M. Parshley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972) p. 15, quoted in Sandford, op. cit., p. 60.)

66 Derrida elaborates further on this point in the final few pages of “ATVM” suggesting the feminine in Levinas's work is also described there as a figure of the wholly other: “And then, we have recognized that this work is one of the first and rare ones, in this history of philosophy to which it does not simply belong, not to feign effacing the sexual mark of his signature: hence, he would be the last one surprised by the fact that the other (of the whole system of his saying of the other) happens to be a woman, and commands him from that place” (“ATVM,” op. cit., p. 44.)

67 Sandford elaborates on this point particularly with respect to Levinas's two texts “Judaism and the Feminine Element” and “And God Created Woman” from *Difficile Liberté*. 2nd. ed. Paris, Albin Michel, 1976, that typically correspond to Levinas's conceptuality of the *feminine* in both *Totality and Infinity* and *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*. Concerning Section II of *Totality and Infinity*, she writes: “Levinas's claim ... that woman is able to (indeed, must) reserve her ‘full human personality’ in order to open up the dimension of interiority in the dwelling for the subject coded as masculine. Even if, as Levinas says, this is possible only because she does indeed have a full human personality to reserve, the consistently argued distinction between the feminine (as representative of sexual difference) and the human — the insistence that ‘man’ (*Ish*, Adam) represents the human as opposed to the specificity of the feminine/sexual difference — makes it difficult to see how this claim does not continually undermine and contradict itself. The fact is that the feminine is opposed to the human in a way that the masculine is not” (Sandford, op. cit., p. 62.)

to have been written by a woman unique in the history of metaphysical writing?"? We could argue that it is neither the biological nor ideological positions that are necessary foregrounded by such a question. Rather, it is the very structure of the question that opens up the ground of impossibility as a larger moment of critique. Levinas's discourse is ancient insofar as it brings a moment of inter-secting thinking across Judaic-Christian-Greek *epistemes* heightening through its discourse Judaic principles with respect to the *feminine element*. What is ultimately unique in this metaphysical history is perhaps the moment in metaphysical philosophy that draws back even further, anterior to the Greeks and into Judaism with respect to a philosophy of ethics.<sup>68</sup>

There are two other necessities that guide Derrida's questioning. Firstly, it is the reader who signs the work. It is not only a male reader (for example, Derrida) who remarks upon the works of Emmanuel Levinas but also a female reader of "Violence and Metaphysics" and "ATVM." If Critchley emphasizes that Derrida's interlocutors often construed themselves as victims, then Derrida's reader is obliged or demanded to respond to his provocations by opening further onto the secondary status of sexual difference in philosophy. I would argue that this provocative statement reveals two necessary elements. The first is that Derrida positions himself as a reader (signatory) that is both man and woman insofar as he is able to raise the significant question that corresponds to and is in recognition of the repression of sexual difference in the discourse of metaphysical writing. That is, woman of course could have written any other book in the history of metaphysics because the question of sexual difference does not arise within the neutral (phallogocentric) discourse of philosophy. Secondly, and as a question, in laying-bare the *ideological* content that marks sexual difference in the discourse of phallogocentric metaphysics, Derrida asks what role does this content play in Levinas's philosophical project? Certainly the role of the feminine is a crucial one within the contents of *Totality and Infinity* and continues to be in Levinas's later works. It is in the very signing by Derrida that Levinas's transgressive move within the history of metaphysics as writing on sexual difference is deconstructed for how it offers

68 See, for example, Hilary Putnam, "Levinas and Judaism," and Catherine Chalier, "Levinas and the Talmud," in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, ed. by Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp. 33-62, and pp. 100-118. See also and especially Claire Elise Katz, *Levinas, Judaism, and the Feminine: The Silent Footsteps of Rebecca* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003).

a new discourse on ethics precisely in relation to the (ancient) impossibility of sexual difference. Derrida first opens or responds to the transgressive yet restorative ground that “Violence and Metaphysics” activates, in its final word if one is to read the final footnote as this lasting effect with respect to sexual difference. “ATVM” follows in a more compelling and relentless manner. If the final footnote in “Violence and Metaphysics” wishes to signal the problem of return constitutive of discourse that desires within the circular economy of self-Same satisfaction, Levinas’s work epitomizes a radicality of return in its refusal of such totalizing principles:

Levinas acknowledges elsewhere that femininity is an ‘ontological category.’ Should this remark be placed in relation to the essential virility of metaphysical language? But perhaps metaphysical desire is essentially virile, even what is called woman. It appears that this is what Freud (who would have misconstrued sexuality as the ‘relationship with what is absolutely other,’ *TI*), thought, not of desire, certainly, but of libido.<sup>69</sup>

Levinas’s “respect for dissymmetry” signifies his moment of return to an “essential,” perhaps narcissistic (egoistic), value housed within metaphysical language.

### Beyond Substance: Analogical Method

This metaphysical virility is described by Sandford as “paternal fecundity” with respect to the necessary working out of the role of the feminine in Levinas’s central metaphysical claim. This claim is signified by such assertions as: “[t]he fecundity of the I is its very transcendence.”<sup>70</sup> Through the conflation of the feminine to sexual difference, Levinas ultimately reduces the feminine to a secondary position and subordinates sexual difference to ethical difference. Both man and woman in their

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69 Derrida, “Violence and Metaphysics,” op. cit., p. 321.

70 Sandford, op. cit. p. 63. See also the Katz, Charlier and Irigaray texts in *Re-Reading Levinas*, op. cit. We again emphasize that the term metaphysics is semantically transformed by Levinas, whereby his use resides in the context of his ethics in relation to the Other. That is to say, the relation with the Other is a metaphysical relation. Ethics is the *way to* metaphysics, as Sandford indicates in her “Introduction.” (*ibid.*, pp. 1-6.) We can therefore see the importation here of this *way* as the condition for undoing a metaphysics of presence as a subject-predicate non-relational proposition. Sandford’s *way* is to reveal a thinking of “transcendence” as first principle recognized via an experiential attestation or phenomenological elaboration as “ethics.” Metaphysics as in the “metaphysics of presence” is for Levinas simply either ontology or philosophy.

authentic humanity are responsible beings, yet sexual difference, as Sandford suggests, is not locatable within the structure of Levinasian ethical transcendence: “a failure explained by the compromising ‘content’ of sexual difference in its identification with the feminine. Accordingly, the structure of transcendence would now have to be sought elsewhere, and in *Totality and Infinity* it is found in [paternal] ‘fecundity’.”<sup>71</sup>

71 Sandford goes on to state:

It is also the case, however, the notion of fecundity is already present – albeit inchoately – in earlier texts, a fact which problematizes the alleged priority of the feminine, eros and sexual difference at any time. This is significant for two reasons. First, it bears witness to a remarkable continuity and philosophical consistency in Levinas’s work over a 50 year period in terms of the basic project of a metaphysics of transcendence. Second, it casts a different, critical light on the various feminist appropriations of the early discussions of the feminine which now need to be examined in this light. (ibid., pp. 65-66.)

It seems in this new light that leaving being by a new route, which is not the same as leaving being behind, but abandoning a certain [Parmenidean] thinking of being, transcendence is achieved only via the son, by a paternal fecundity. Whereas the feminine, underwritten by the (hu)man, only achieves transcendence via a sexuality, an *eros* as act that “takes place beyond all pleasure, all power, beyond all war with the freedom of the other, because amorous subjectivity is transubstantiation itself. This unparalleled relation between two substances, where a *beyond substances* is exhibited, is resolved [*se résout*] in paternity.” (Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, op. cit., p. 271, cited in ibid., p. 66.) We recognize, with Sandford’s reading, her argument with respect to reading Levinas whereby sexual difference fails transcendence, and paternal fecundity is the name by which metaphysical virility and egoistic recourse undersigns woman. Human being, through sexuality as *eros* – amorous subjectivity – allows transcendence via transubstantiation – resolved in paternity. See Sandford, “Paternal Fecundity: Sons and Brothers,” in *The Metaphysics of Love*, op. cit., pp. 64-81. Sandford engages as well with Chanter, with whom she will differ on crucial points, Chalier, who Derrida quotes in “ATVM,” and to whom Sandford aligns more closely, and Alphonso Lingis, Levinas’s major English translator. Critchley also suggests that Levinas in *Otherwise than Being* makes a possible shift away, or de-emphasizes paternal fecundity through a new emphasis on *maternity*:

Although the centrality of the paternalistic metaphor of fecundity is true of the works up to and including *Totality and Infinity*, one wonders whether this is also true of *Otherwise than Being*, in particular of what Levinas says of *maternity* – ‘gestation of the other in the same’ (AE 95/OB 75; cf. AE 130-9/OB 102-9) – as a metaphor for the substitution that characterizes ethical subjectivity. Although maternity is mentioned in *Totality and Infinity* (TI 278), the theme of fecundity (and the language of ‘ontological categories’) is absent from *Otherwise than Being*. Is one to conclude that Levinas’s work has become less paternalistic to the extent that it has become less ontological? A careful, sensitive approach to these issues has been broached by Cathérine Chalier in *Figures du féminin* (La nuit surveillée, Paris, 1982); see esp. pp. 126-33 and 139-49. Of course, the real issue at stake in the use of the metaphors of fecundity, paternity, and maternity in the description of the ethical relation is precisely whether these terms are metaphors at all. If, as Levinas insists (TI 279), these terms are not to be interpreted biologically or taken literally, are they to be understood metaphorically? What is implied in the metaphorical use of the biological language of fecundity and maternity?” (Critchley, op. cit., p. 144.)

On this point, Sandford suggests that it would be foolhardy not to question the rhetorical force of such metaphoricity with respect to the *feminine* or any other potential metaphorical language devices present in Levinas’s language: “He [Adriaan Peperzak in this instance] would not be foolhardy enough to argue that as a metaphor, the trope of the feminine has no connection whatsoever, no linguistic or cultural reference at all, to empirically existing women, as this would deprive the metaphor not just of its rhetorical force, but of its very sense: of any possibility of it functioning with any intended meaning at all. It seems to me that it would be reasonable to ask of any metaphor how it derives its force and what the implications are of its presence in a philosophical text.” (Stanford, op. cit., p. 47.) Stanford continues: “As Chalier says (*Figures du féminin*, p. 68), Levinas may indeed deny any reference to a being of the

### Absolute Anteriority: Unmarked Indifference — Sexually Marked

With “ATVM” Derrida interlaces what is already interlaced. There is the relation between sexual difference and the feminine, where the feminine is subordinate as contaminant, with respect to the “risk” it poses to the scene of unmarked indifference, represented better by the “son,” necessary for transcendence. This relation of a contaminated and risky feminine to sexual difference is itself related “to the alterity of a sexually non-marked wholly other.” That is, Derrida deconstructs the necessary purity of (hu)manity in relation to the wholly other as a sexuality repressed marked anterior condition. It is not the case that woman or the feminine is rendered secondary, derivative or subordinated by sexual difference. Derrida’s paradoxical hypothesis of transcendence *residing* within the schema of masculine subjectivity, or as Sandford noted, as ‘amorous subjectivity’ i.e., *eros*, as alluded to here by “the alterity of a sexually non-marked wholly other” marks a crucial and more elaborate critique of Levinas’s *vis-à-vis* the feminine with respect to his final footnote in “Violence and Metaphysics.” How is it possible, he asks, that one can mark as masculine the very thing said to be anterior, or even foreign, to sexual difference?

Let us schematically retrace Derrida’s thought, which poses anteriority as unmarked indifference, yet sexually marked. We start with a quote on how Levinas sees “The Work,” exemplary for situating his ethics, such that it is at work in relation to the Other:

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feminine sex, but, one does not therefore stop worrying or wondering. Davis, in *Levinas: An Introduction*, p. 61, similarly points out that ‘gendered vocabulary retains its connotations of gender even if we are told that it does not. ... [Levinas’s] language never escapes its socially conditioned context.’” (*ibid.*, footnote 40, p. 150.) Indeed the question of how the “metaphoricity” of Levinas’s language derives its force and what activity of meaning occurs within the boundaries of a philosophical text is central to Derrida’s “ATVM.” However, rather than a metaphoricity at play it will become more significantly a question of *analogy* that is broached in his text. Just as Levinas’s term “ethics” in some of his earlier texts finds proximity to, or is synonymous with, his terms “religion,” “sacrifice” and “holiness,” an analogy between the name of God and all other beings (man or woman) is easily locatable. The force would reside therefore in the first name (*Pre-nom*) *God* and the faulty body of humanity becomes a significant discourse for philosophy. (“ATVM,” *op. cit.*, pp. 40-44.) This notion of analogy will be discussed further in this chapter under the heading “Analogy: Faulty Bodies, False Gods,” particularly within the relations between sexual difference—the Other as the other sex, otherwise said as otherwise sexed—and the Other as wholly other, beyond or before sexual difference.

who can dispossess me of my work, take it or buy it, thus controlling my conduct. I am exposed to instigation. The work is vowed to this foreign *Sinngebung* from its very origin in me. ... Willing escapes the will. The work is always, in a certain sense, an unsuccessful act (*acte manqué*). I do not fully know what I want to do.<sup>72</sup>

For Levinas, we read that the discourse of exchange is to be refused within his work and within this non-economy his work is controlled by (or in the hands of) the other.<sup>73</sup> This is a cautionary note to Derrida which he (Derrida) inscribes within his own text and at the same moment in order to act ethically within the vulnerability of Levinas's gesture, he teases out the *return* economy that is insistent within the cycle of paternal fecundity. Perhaps this is the success(ive) gene in Levinas's work, caught between the Work being indeterminate in its destiny and yet it is precisely within the economy of paternity that the Work's destiny is prescribed. According to Levinas, The Work is not to be exchanged, returned etc: "The Work thought to the end requires a radical generosity of the movement in which the Same goes toward the Other. Consequently, it requires an *ingratitudo* from the other."<sup>74</sup> Ingratitude, as we have become aware already, is Derrida's strategy at this moment. The *wrought* Work of "ATVM" is obligated to the *female* reader in the location of a paradoxical act of negotiating what is non-negotiable, in the locale where The Work has already been given to, or was born(e) from, a sexually marked Other (child, "son"). Here we are alluding to the anteriority of paternity in the figure of child-son that in turn is the prefiguration of the father-God (something we return to in our section headed *Analogy*).

We testify here (as Critchley's *clôture* structure also attests) to where the Work of Levinas does not work: "*Il aura oblige.*"<sup>75</sup> The motivation residing within Levinas's work for a return to masculinity provides for "ATVM" the moment of its non-return.

72 "ATVM," op. cit., p. 38. Derrida is quoting Levinas from *Totality and Infinity*, op. cit., pp. 227-228.

73 We recognize from *Totality and Infinity* that, for Levinas, "economy" refers in general to that which makes the egoistic explicit "rending" of totality. It is a separation that is non-constitutive of reparation as its contrary event: To separate oneself, to not remain bound up with a totality, is positively to be *somewhere*, in the home, to be economically." See *Totality and Infinity*, op. cit., p. 175.

74 "ATVM," op. cit., p. 13. Derrida is quoting this line from Levinas from two sources, in which it appears identically: "The Trace of the Other" trans. by Alphonso Lingis, in *Deconstruction in Context*, ed. by Mark Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) pp. 345-359, and "Signification and Sense," in *Humanism of the Other*, trans. by Nidra Poller (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003) pp. 9-44.

75 Ibid., p. 11. "*Il aura oblige.*" (He will have obligated) is the first line of Derrida's text and becomes the crypt on which he will come to build his decipherment of the Levinasian interlacing of the Saying and the Said and of the absolute anteriority of the paternal fecundity as the sexually marked unmarked indifference.

This non-return, as interruption, is an ingratitude that must go beyond one sex in the opening up of Levinasian vulnerability as a site overflowing all possible context. The serial repetitions by Derrida of this opening line to “ATVM” emphasize Levinas’s own stress on a future anterior seriality:

*“Il aura oblige” ... but rather because of a certain *inside* of what is said and of the saying of what is said *in* the phrase, and which, from within, if this may still be said, infinitely *overflows* at a stroke all possible context —when the wholly other who will have visited this phrase negotiates the nonnegotiable with a context, negotiates his economy *as* that of the other.”<sup>76</sup>*

The conflation of the past and future (future anterior) at this very moment within this opening phrase, in repetition of “*Il aura oblige*” produces in Derrida’s text the demand for the Other in their re-visitation, as reader of the irreducibility of sexual difference, an economy *as* that of the other. In this way Derrida’s text is given relationally to *both* EL and *Elle as* both at the same moment. There is no necessary symmetry or dissymmetry here. This is partly what is non-negotiable at this moment and it is produced by the non-negotiability that has allowed anteriority itself to contain the masculine within the economy of the wholly other (“*his economy*”). The “son” referenced in *Totality and Infinity*, Derrida suggests, in later contexts (*Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*) carries traits that correspond to the Work. Further within this proximity we locate an egoistic subjective encounter whereby the Work that is produced in me is also Other [*autrui*] to me as is the case of the child-son: “I don’t have my child, I am my child. Paternity is a relation with the stranger who while being Other [*autrui*] ... *is* me; a relationship of the ego with a self which is nevertheless not me.”<sup>77</sup> Derrida poses a series of questions that query the prior privileging of the sexually marked child-son (child as son), which he alludes contaminates the very Levinasian proposition of an unmarked indifference—an alterity in relation to the wholly Other: “Why should the son be more or better than the daughter, than me, the Work beyond ‘my work’? If there were no differences from this point of view, why should “son” better represent, in advance, this indifference? This unmarked indifference?”<sup>78</sup>

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76 Ibid., p. 12.

77 Ibid., p. 39. Derrida is referencing Levinas from *Totality and Infinity*, op. cit., p. 277.

78 Ibid., p. 40.

We hereby abandon this line of thinking to its elliptical course, firstly, by bringing into the foreground the significant question of Levinas's *style* and a deconstructive performance with it as maintenance of an ethical interruption on sexual determinacy. Secondly, this course continues in the foregrounding of the critical link in "ATVM" between the Other as "other sex, otherwise said as otherwise sexed and the Other as wholly other beyond or before sexual difference."<sup>79</sup> This latter will be discussed in the section: *Analogy: Faulty Bodies, False Gods*. It places emphasis on the liturgical tone that combines (hu)man voice and (Judaic) God located in Levinas's Work, giving force here to the dramatic performative textual elements particularly poignant in the last pages of "ATVM."

### Serial Style: Anterior Voices

The first moment of address, through the opening line "—He will have obligated (*Il aura oblige*)," commands a leading role in its opening and closing of possible multiple textual voices within "ATVM." This functioning of multiple voices opens the significant question of communal relations between sexual and ethical differences. What we mean by "communal" relations will become more apparent below with respect to a sexually marked proximity between (hu)man(ity) and God (Levinas's *Illeity*), coupled with the question of substitution (being-for-another), and the trace (of *Il*) as the precondition for the possibility of (Levinasian) ethical difference. Critchley suggests that it is almost impossible to write proper names from a reading of "ATVM," to announce, for example, that the writer, Jacques Derrida, examines, discusses, states etc., that Emmanuel Levinas etc. It is almost impossible because the text's central agency concerns the performative engagements between proper-names and pronouns.<sup>80</sup> Simply stating who is speaking at any one moment mitigates the very ethical demand this text is *subjected* to (multiple voices, multiple readers). However, such foreclosure already exists in our reading and will continue to default as a matter of relational reading for a text that is both constative and contingent. So we signal this

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79 Ibid.

80 See Critchley, op. cit., p. 119.

now as both a caveat in this work and as a point of acknowledgment of the textual status of devices at work in this Work.

In the first instance, the text activates a central textual device with respect to the temporal arrangement of its initial subject (*Il*, He) positioned by the future anterior (or future perfect) phrase “—He will have obligated (*Il aura oblige*).” An articulation that proposes that the subject (He, *Il*) will have acted in the future by a certain time (compounding the future tense of an auxiliary verb with the past tense or participle of the main verb): “... there is the future anterior, which I shall have used frequently, having no alternative recourse. For example in the little phrase: ‘He will have obliged.’”<sup>81</sup> He, Derrida, has used the logic of the future anterior *frequently* and, having no other possible recourse, employs this line as the leitmotif of “ATVM.” The significance for such frequency of a future anterior is that it escapes the time of the present, while at the same very moment it points to a future (“aura”) and a past (“oblige”). As Critchley notes, the subject of the phrase, “*Il*,” cannot be said to be a subject present to itself; rather He/It is a subject that will have obliged in a time that is irreducible to the present. A future anterior is a temporality irreducible to a metaphysics of presence. For Levinas it escapes “ontology” and is the temporality of the trace of *Illeity*. It is perhaps the time of ethics.<sup>82</sup> But who is the “He” (“*Il*”) in that phrase? As Derrida writes “there are multiple chances, probabilities, you cannot avoid surrendering to them, so that the subject of the phrase, ‘*il aura obligé*,’ might be Emmanuel Levinas. Still it is not sure. ... It is drawn into the play of the irreplaceable *He* submitting itself to substitution, like an object, into the irreplaceable itself. He, without italics.”<sup>83</sup> There is nothing neutral in this discourse with respect to the “without italics” and we will quickly return to the irreplaceability of this non-neutral, non-italicized, *capital* “He” as it culminates as a central thetic agency of our reading. This first textual voice that enunciates the opening line would appear to be that of J.D. writing for E.L.: “Still *it* is not sure.” The textual voice announces all manner of uncertainties that offer multiple probabilities. Yet to understand more fully such ambivalence we need to set the first historical scene and the status for this text, “ATVM.”

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81 Ibid., p. 36.

82 Critchley, op. cit., pp. 115-116.

83 “ATVM,” op. cit., p. 13.

### Adequatio / Duty

This essay originally appeared in *Textes pour Emmanuel Levinas*, a collection of essays, written especially *for* Emmanuel Levinas, paying homage to the author and his works. In this respect a text *for* Emmanuel Levinas would have a predetermined interlocutor (E.L.). Derrida's quest in writing a text *for* Emmanuel Levinas is conditioned by the ethical imperatives that are constitutive of *his* (both Derrida's and Levinas's) work. That is, there is a complex task here in writing *for* Levinas with respect to his ethical structure whereby the work goes out generously from the Same (the proper E.L.) to the Other without ever returning to the same. Ultimately, at stake for J.D., is the question: How do I maintain an ethical interruption of homage that gives to E.L. in its non-giving? It must be given otherwise in an interruption to the economy of exchange that mediates return. J.D. must give excessively so, to more than just E.L as an interruption and deformation of return:

Suppose that in giving to you—it little matters what—I wanted to give to him, him Emmanuel Levinas. Not render him anything, homage for example, not even render myself to him, but to give him something which escapes from the circle of restitution or of the “rendez-vous.” (“Proximity,” he writes, “doesn't enter into the common time of clocks that makes the rendez-vous possible. It is derangement.”) I would like to do it faultlessly (*sans faute*), with a “faultlessness” (“*sans-faute*”) that no longer belongs to the time or logic of the rendez-vous. Beyond any possible restitution, there would be need for my gesture to operate without debt, in absolute ingratititude. The trap is that I then pay homage, the only possible homage, to his work (*oeuvre*), to what his work says of the Work (*Oeuvre*).<sup>84</sup>

Would *this* homage to the Work (*Oeuvre*) then perhaps be another kind of return as “the time of ethics”?<sup>85</sup> But it gets more complicated than just finding a way of responding responsibly to (in writing *for*) E.L. as maintenance of his project. The plurality of textually ambivalent voices circulates around the maintenance of an ethical imperative constitutive of a temporality that refuses restitution of debt operative within an economy of exchange. In this way, we are witness to a homage (*hommage, homme*-

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Critchley, op. cit., p. 116.

*age) in the Saying of Levinasian Said which we call Derrida's trap.* This is a snare that ultimately in its revealing of the work's limitations and potentiality locates another ethical de-limitation, a point of opening onto another at its *very moment of closure*. As Critchley notes: “To write a text *for* Emmanuel Levinas is to create a work that is neither *for* him nor *against* him, but one in which the modalities of *for* and *against* become inseparable yet inassemblable conditions for the possibility of ethical Saying.”<sup>86</sup> It is strange that Critchley's own *clôturel* reading of this text concludes by suggesting that the ultimate recipient of the work is *elle* (the female reader) as this would put back into play the economy of return structured by the binary modalities of *for* and *against*.<sup>87</sup> Derrida's Work works in the maintenance of ethical interruption by deconstructing an economy of exchange. This deconstruction is a more critical and fundamental questioning around what gives the economy of sexual difference in the discourse of ethical difference:

What gives (Leviansian ethical) exchange? We will come to recognise more clearly below, that the proper of *EI* (or *II*) as the Fore-Name (*Pronom*) as that which comes before all named beings and marks each being with its (sexually pre-coded) seal, opens up this very discourse on sexual exchange economy. An opening that Levinas describes as the trace of Illeity or an order of enigma which attempts to set forth that which escapes comprehension or thematization: ‘the otherwise than Being.’<sup>88</sup>

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86 Ibid., 112. We emphasize the repetition or seriality of the *for* of this thesis, emphasized in the “*for E.L.*,” that would already have been encountered in the *for* of Spur's feminine operation, and the *for* of an undecidable topological spacing of the crypt, the *for* of a deconstruction with respect to sexual difference.

87 However, in defense of his reading, this is not exactly how it finishes. Rather, according to Critchley, it is the man who *takes* up the faulty body, text, work — the work has been contaminated by the name of *elle* and thus becomes a faulty textual body — (of “*his* stillborn daughter”) offered by the woman reader and he embraces this faulty body *for* all its flaws (yet jealously so). The “imagined” older man who Critchley speaks of can be read across all manner of *e(l)e* (E.L., EI), logic of the ghosts and older generations, as the in-between pronouns of he and she in the interlacing of their proper, *entre(el)acement*. Still the text is ultimately not *returned* to E.L. Rather, as Critchley has suggested in his reading of the final word “BOIS,” the faulty body that “ATVM” obliges us to read is a performative ethical imperative. The faulty text is forwarded on (Derrida is effaced here) by the Other (“She”) toward the Other that we may wish to read (as E.L.) signified by Critchley's work via the rather dramatic action of the older man plunging his hands into the earth to take *his* stillborn daughter in *his* arms. This is the activity of an ethical demand, yet a closely guarded ethical response. Paradoxically we read all manner of “jealousy” in the urgency with which this act occurs whereby there is more than just one condition for such motivating force: “‘Bois’ — drink. This is not *Derrida's* final word on Levinas; it is not governed by *him* and his proper name. The final word of ethical obligation is always uttered by the Other, in this instance ‘She,’ who interrupts Levinasian ethics and sets Derrida's work to work.” (ibid., p. 120. See also pp. 140-141., as well as our final section that also attempts a close reading of the final and strange (enigmatic) pages of “ATVM” that further takes into more careful consideration Critchley's own reading.)

88 Critchley, op. cit. p. 114.

“ATVM” opens enigmatically. It is an enigmatic beginning not only for what has been discussed above with respect to temporality and homage. It is not a quote, yet, formally alludes to quotation. Derrida has *already* made this point: “Following a strange title that resembles a cryptic quotation in its invisible quotation marks, the site of this phrase “princeps” doesn’t allow you yet to know by what right *He* carries a capital.”<sup>89</sup> Why such an enigmatic opening with respect to the allusion of quotation? We have hinted already at the non-neutrality of the visible (now invisible quotation marks), non-italicised form (*He*), further pointing to a notion of irreplaceability. This is a form to which we need to keep *returning*, as it is a pivotal moment of (ethical) return in the text. It is a return that, perhaps, had never left, as formally instructed by this opening enigma itself? We shall put off this enigma for the time being, or speak of it otherwise in our question on quotation.

If the performativity of quotation exists here we source its textual agency in the question of Levinasian *serial* style as the appropriation of voices otherwise Said, Saying otherwise. That is, quotation marks another voice that is not necessarily that of the text’s signatory but rather is a strategic bet as Levinas’s style of interruption, maintaining his Saying within the Other’s Said. Here in this *style* we will end up revealing a correspondence to *masculine* lineage as Levinasian infinity (trace of *Illeity*) and its proximity to a serialisation marked by such textual performatives as quotation and repetition, as signified by Derrida’s term “*prince(p)s*.<sup>90</sup>

In Section One, we discussed a double bind, through the problem of closure that existed within those transgressional texts and their restorative moments within a metaphysics of presence. Levinas’s own work has been critiqued by Derrida for such restorative elements due to its reliance on the critical and conceptual resources of ontology that manifest in his logocentric discourse. Further, it has been noted that his work, since *Totality and Infinity*, has paid careful attention to the problematic of logocentric discourse and has been particularly addressed with respect to his conceptual framework of the Saying and the Said. We locate his strategy as the performative weave of interlacing voices, of the Saying with the Said to which

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89 “ATVM,” op. cit., p. 13.

90 Ibid.

—Derrida adds it is an obligation:

into a certain kind of binding (*lier*), not only with the Saying and the Said, but of Writing to the Said and of Saying to the written: ... an interlacing according to a serial structure of a singular type.<sup>91</sup>

Levinas's writing here becomes a moment for critical enquiry into how his work inscribes the *present said* via the linguistic resources of logocentrism or ontology:

only presenting itself in the name of a Saying that overflows it infinitely within and without, like a sort of absolute anachrony of the wholly other that, although incommensurably heterogeneous to the language of the present and the discourse of the same, nonetheless must leave a trace of it, always improbably but each time determinate, this one, and not another?<sup>92</sup>

—Critchley's commentary follows on from this, in the same vein via the textual interspersing of *Derrida's* voice:

How does he [Levinas] manage to inscribe or let the wholly other be inscribed within the language of Being, of the present, of essence, of the Same, of economy, etc. (?).

If the linguistic resources of logocentrism or ontology are the only ones available to us, and if the trace of Illeity is wholly other to the language of Being, what was called above the ‘dominant interpretation of language,’ then how does that which is entirely foreign to logocentric or ontological discourse enter into it? In order to explain this enigma (which is the enigmatic possibility of ethics [as a sexual pre-coded seal]), should one not reverse the question and ask oneself:

...if that language is not *of itself unbound* (*d'elle-même déliée*) and hence open to the wholly other, to its own beyond, in such a way that it is less a matter of exceeding that language than of treating it otherwise with its own possibilities.<sup>93</sup>

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91 Ibid., p. 16. We note that in this work at this moment we graphematically mark a binding of a separation and reparation, a hyphen that stitched a textual jump-cut, reading within this grammatical supplement the mark of sexual difference, the hymen's graphic. Critchley notes with respect to the hyphen in “ATVM”: “The horizontal dash that precedes the first word of the essay indicates that somebody is speaking; the quotation marks denote a voice that is not necessarily that of the text’s signatory. Turning the pages of the essay, one finds nine more of these dashes (*ECM* 27 (twice), 29, 30, 44, 45, 51, 59 (twice), each denoting a change in the persona of the textual voice.” (Critchley, op. cit., p. 119.)

92 Ibid.

93 Critchley, op. cit., p. 122. Both Derrida citations are from “ATVM,” op. cit., p. 17.

This would be the logic of the problem of closure and its potentiality that Critchley's own work has set to Work. Let us return now to the crucial distinction and yet conjunction of Levinas's and Derrida's economy in the question of writing as the event of giving for the Other. Testimony is offered around the complexity of writing *presently* yet otherwise that risks inscribing the wholly otherwise (Saying) in the Said yet through the Said. This is an effect which *absolves* the Said from itself. While Derrida clearly aligns with the potential force of Levinas's strategic negotiations around the Saying and the Said, at this very moment in the work (and perhaps, this *economy* is as omnipotent as the very rhetorical force of the Wholly Other, which his text deconstructs) an irreducible force of difference (which at the same moment exists within Levinasian ethics as the critical possibility for another resource on sexual difference) is at work:

Treating [language] otherwise, in other words to calculate the transactions, negotiate the compromise that would leave the nonnegotiable intact, and to do this in such a way as to make the fault, which consists in inscribing the wholly other within the empire of the same, alter the same enough to absolve itself from itself. According to me that is his answer, and that de facto answer, if one may say so, that response in deed, at work rather in the series of strategic negotiations, that response does not respond to a problem or a question, it responds to the Other—for the Other—and approaches (*aborde*) writing in enjoining itself to that for-the-Other. It is by starting from the Other that writing thus gives a place and forms an event, for example this one: “Il aura obligé.”

It is that response, the responsibility of that response, that I would like to interrogate in its turn. Interrogate, to be sure, is not the word, and I don't yet know how to qualify what is happening here between him, you, and me ... It would be rather his responsibility—and what he says of responsibility—that interrogates us beyond all the coded discourses on the subject.<sup>94</sup>

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94 “ATVM,” op. cit., p. 17. On the negotiable and the non-negotiable, see the interview with Derrida, “Negotiations,” in *Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews 1971-2001*, ed. & trans. by Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002) pp. 11-40. Derrida suggests: “I feel this reference to negotiation to be as much of a moral tyranny that weighs on me as I do a style or a manner of treating the double bind in order to avoid it, of passing very quickly from one pole to the other of the double bind. One cannot separate this concept and this practice of negotiation from the concept of the double bind, that is, of the double duty. There is negotiation when there are two incompatible imperatives that appear to be incompatible but are equally imperative. One does not negotiate between exchangeable and negotiable things. Rather, one negotiates by engaging the nonnegotiable in negotiation.” (ibid., p. 13.)

## Strategic Negotiations: From the Place of the (Wholly) Other

Starting from the place of the Other (*elle*) —He will have obligated, or as the text has just quoted above, as a strategy for Saying otherwise what (it, he) has already Said: “*Il aura obligé*.<sup>95</sup>” This is not a quotation from Levinas but rather a reference to the omnipresence of the trace of *Illeity*, which in Derrida’s essay becomes the form and trace of quotation as the already Said repeated otherwise. In this opening moment (after the cryptic title) we are given this non-quote as an allusive example of a deconstructive performative, an *offering* starting from the place of the Other via an enactment of Derrida’s performative mimetics as an activation of Levinasian serial style.<sup>96</sup> In the “spiraling movement” that Levinas’s references in *Otherwise than Being*

95 As Critchley points out, the opening phrase “*Il aura obligé*” to the knowledge of the textual voice in “ATVM” and to Critchley’s own knowledge has never appeared in Levinas’s work. Who the “He” is, in this opening line, can possibly be gained from the final passage in *Otherwise than Being*, a passage cited in “ATVM” (pp. 32-33): “In this work which does not seek to restore any ruined concept, the destitution and de-situation of the subject are not without signification: after the death of a certain god, dwelling in the hinter-worlds (*les arrières-mondes*), the substitution of the hostage discovers the trace — unpronounceable writing — of that which, already past — always ‘he’(‘il’) — does not enter into any present and to whom neither the names designating beings nor the verbs where their *essence* resounds are suitable — but who, Pro-name (*Pro-nom*), marks with his seal anything that can bear a name. (*Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, op. cit. p. 185.) See Critchley, op. cit., p. 113.

96 The essay’s “cryptic” title “At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am” is really the performative agent *par excellence* as it holds three separate quotations from Levinas as precise moments in his work that perform ethical interruption of the Said through the Saying, what we have cited above from Derrida concerning language and its binding-unbinding: “*of itself unbound* (*d’elle-même déliée*) and hence open to the wholly other, to its own beyond, in such a way that it is less a matter of exceeding that language than of treating it otherwise with its own possibilities.” (ibid., p. 17.) Derrida will quote at length passages from *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* as a way of revealing in Levinas’s writing the inherent *unboundedness* of language that (pre-)conditions the (ontological and logocentric) Said. By selecting these three phrases, “at this very moment,” “in this work” and “here I am,” Derrida’s text performs, in part, Levinasian serial style where Levinas considers his own writing to be ethically underway. A citation from Derrida’s essay quoting *Otherwise than Being* is the very moment in *his* text that Critchley begins his own analysis with respect to the problem of closure of this unbounded work: “Every contesting and interruption of this power of discourse is at once related by the discourse. Thus it recommences as soon as one interrupts it. ... This discourse will be affirmed to be coherent and one. In relating the interruption of discourse or my being ravished by it, I retie the thread. ... And are we not *at this very moment* [my italics, J.D.] in the process of barring up the exit which our whole essay is attempting, thus encircling our position from all sides?” (ibid., p. 21.) The metaphor of the retied thread, Derrida suggests, creates knots in the textual fabric of Levinas’s work that allows for the ethical Work to resume its relation to the Other via a careful weave of appropriating philosophical logos (*at this very moment*) that (rhetorically) “resumes into its web the history of all its ruptures.” (ibid.) *At this very moment* signifies multiple forms of contradictory address. It is what Critchley works with for an analysis of Derrida’s essay with respect to how, via Derrida, he reads Levinas’s work working as those moments of unboundedness or dehiscence for ethical interruption by the Saying in the Said. My reading focuses more closely on the non-neutral, non-italicized yet allusive form of quotation in “—He will have obligated (*il aura obligé*),” which might be compared to Critchley’s reading focusing on “At this very moment.” See Critchley, “How Levinas Writes his Work,” in Critchley, op. cit., pp. 121-129. The non-quotation status of —He will have obligated (*il aura obligé*) as it appears in Derrida’s essay is also of equal importance for our argument with respect to the priority of

as writing's performance of language oscillating between the language of the Said and the Saying, a residue of the unsaid Said remains.<sup>97</sup> Could this residue of the unsaid Said reside in the name of *I*lleity, as the fore-name (*pro-nom*) that comes before all Other names? And which we have paradoxically termed in our previous footnote as the *irreplaceable Saying*? The unsaid Said is a crucial element in the interlacing of the Saying and the Said as the ongoing performance for Levinas's *reducing* strategy that listens for the:

echo of the *otherwise*. The hither side, the preliminary, which the pre-originary saying animates, refuses the present and manifestation, or lends itself to them only out of time. The unsayable saying lends itself to the said, to the ancillary indiscretion of the abusive language that divulges or profanes the unsayable. But it lets itself be reduced, without effacing the unsaying in the ambiguity or the enigma of the transcendent, in which the breathless spirit retains a fading echo.<sup>98</sup>

Interlacing enacts interruption but not so as to overcome logocentrism or philosophical discourse *for good* but rather to reveal the ethical that is (k)not thematizable in ontological discourse but rather performed in it: "... any attempt to thematize ethical interruption will always retie the thread of philosophical discourse. Hence, Levinas asks himself whether, in thematizing ethical Saying within the ontological Said of a book, he is, *at this very moment*, denying the ethical

an irreplaceability of the non-neutral, non-italicized, capital He as an *irreplaceable* Saying that comes before and puts into play the subject as substitution as being-for-another, whence discovers a trace in the Other's face which is that of the "Il" (*I*lleity), the *Pro-nom*, the "Fore-name" (He) of that which comes before all named beings but which marks each being with its (sexual) seal.

97 Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, op. cit. pp. 31-45.

98 Ibid., p. 44. Perhaps it would have been more generous to quote the beginning section of this passage as it could afford the reader an easier entry into our point on *reduction of the unsaid Said by the Saying in the Said*. However, we are holding this enigmatic passage in reserve in order to further fold in our analysis of the more-so enigmatic "pre-originary" "unsayable saying" that forms the performative liturgical tone (or what we will describe as the voice of the sexually marked seal of the Wholly Other) in the final strange pages of Derrida's essay. Upon reflection, or as an after-thought, here is the beginning section to Levinas's passage:

To expose an otherwise than being will still give an ontological said, in the measure that all monstration exposes an essence. The reduction of the said unfolds in stated propositions, using copulas, and virtually written, united anew into structures [hence *at this very moment, in this work, here I am*]; it will let the destrueturing it will have operated *be*. The reduction then will once again let the otherwise than being be as an eon. As the truth of what does not enter into a theme, it is produced out of time or in two times without entering into either of them, as an endless critique, or skepticism, which in a *spiralling movement* [my italics] makes possible the boldness of philosophy, destroying the conjunction into which its saying and its said continually enter. The said, contesting the abdication of the saying that everywhere occurs in the said, thus maintains the diachrony in which, holding its breath, the spirit hears the echo of the *otherwise*" (ibid.)

breakthrough that *Otherwise than Being* attempts.”<sup>99</sup> Already we have alluded to the ethical as also preserved in knot form and further *at this very moment* occurs as the ultimate interruption where the Other (exterior to the Said) is engaged, listening, reading, now: “in *my present discourse (mon discours présent)* addressed to my interlocutors: inevitably across my idea of the Infinite the other faces me — hostile, friend, my master, my student.”<sup>100</sup> One *will have been obliged* therefore to interrupt the language of the tradition and bear it towards its own condition of possibility. Derrida asks, however, what is supplementing *his* (singular) discourse without retying: “How is this supplement of the knot to be figured?”<sup>101</sup> This supplement of the knot is described by Critchley as the “interruption to interruption, which cannot be thread (it is threadless) back into the ontological thread of the Said, or “atexture” (“hiatus”) as the threadless moment in the textual fabric.”<sup>102</sup> This atextural hiatus marks the moment of ethical priority within the text, not as a singular supplement but rather as serial or *sériature*, applying Derrida’s neologism: “Formally and thematically, Levinas’s work works as an interrupted series, or a series of interrupted interruptions, where the continuity is placed under erasure (*série + rature = sériature*) by the energy of an ethical interruption.”<sup>103</sup>

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99 Critchley, op. cit., p. 124.

100 Ibid., footnote 8, p. 142. Critchley is quoting Levinas from *Totality and Infinity*, op. cit., p. 81. He goes on to diagram how in Derrida’s essay the textual voices engage these two contradictory moments of interruption signified by the repetition in Levinas’s work of *at this very moment*. The first he states is the interruption or breaking of a thread that is retied in ontological thematization of the Saying within the Said. In the second moment the interruption of discourse although retied into the thread, is preserved as knots in the thread, and in addressing myself to the one who listens I break the thread. Each rendering of ethical interruption as knot re-mends the textual fabric otherwise. Any notion of an original fabric without wear and tear so-to-speak is allusive and Levinas’s work works because it has flawed the notion of a seamless discourse that is not going out beyond it-self to any other. Thereby in the *Flawed work* of Levinasian textuality we locate the agency of the *fault* or *faulty body* at work in Derrida’s essay. Further, these notions of rends and mends are described in Derrida’s essay as Levinas’s serial style: an unbound seriality of discourse. See Critchley, op. cit., pp. 125-129.

101 “ATVM,” op. cit., p. 28.

102 Critchley, op. cit., p. 127.

103 Ibid., p. 128. Derrida’s mentions of *sériature* in “ATVM” appear on pages 31, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41 and 44. Here *style* in the sense of both a formal and thematic efficacy is praised for what was earlier questioned as the necessity for an incoherence, emphasized in Section One. We have already alluded to Critchley’s account of Levinas’s style in this regard with repetitions, ellipses, ambiguities and contradictions, tangential footnotes, rhapsodic effect of the clause structure and so on. We refer again to ibid., p. 129.

## S e c t i o n   3

### A n a l o g y + A l t e r i t y : F a u l t y   B o d i e s ,   F a l s e   G o d s

Around this question, which I here abandon to its elliptical course, I interrogate the link, in E.L.’s Work, between sexual difference—the Other as other sex [I-he], otherwise said [anterior] as otherwise sexed [always sexed]—and the Other as wholly other beyond or before sexual difference.<sup>104</sup>

#### Other as Other Sex

We have come to read something irreplaceable by now in the phrase —He will have obligated (*il aura oblige*), where the multiple chances or probabilities read earlier in Derrida’s essay have been reduced to a more constant substitute: “It is drawn into the play of the irreplaceable *He* submitting itself to substitution, like an object, into the irreplaceable itself. He, without italics.”<sup>105</sup> The elliptical question written about in the above quote, posed from the interrogative position that links Levinasian ethical difference with the subordination of sexual difference asks what gives the Saying. Non-thematizable and beyond comprehension in the Infinite’s relation to the subject, the Saying has been thematically marked by the irreplaceability of He in the trace of Illeity: “Illeity describes my non-thematizable relation with the Infinite, the direction of transcendence; it does not buttress any positive theology.”<sup>106</sup> Levinas’s claim is that the

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104 “ATVM,” op. cit., p. 40.

105 Ibid., p. 13.

106 Critchley, op. cit., p. 114. Critchley goes on to make an excellent point here with respect to previous writing by Levinas that explicates more fully the notion of this direction of transcendence, its coming into being (masculine) named and its relation to being: “In the important 1965 essay ‘Enigma and Phenomenon’ (EDE 207-9/CPP64-6), Levinas opposes an order of presence and phenomenality (from the Greek *phaino*, to bring to light), in which entities are cleared and comprehended in their Being, to an order of the enigma (from *ainigma*, a dark saying or riddle), which attempts to set forth that which escapes comprehension or thematization: ‘otherwise than Being.’ For Levinas, the enigmatic ‘referent’ of ‘the otherwise than Being’ is expressed by the third person singular (masculine) pronoun (EDE 199), an enigma he seeks to describe by the term ‘Illeity’: ‘This way of leaving the alternatives of

subject as substitution, as being-for-another, discovers a trace in the Other's face which is that of the "Il," the *Pro-nom* as "Fore-name" (*Pré-nom*) of that which comes before all named beings but which marks each being with its seal. Ethical difference is that which is therefore beyond comprehension (*comprise*) yet comprehends in the mark of the *Il* as a precondition of the still or irreplaceable possibility of religion and ethics. Is it, therefore, in this way that Levinas's work writes itself into the language of being, of the present, or essence of the self-Same economy, in the economy that replaces the Wholly Other with Other as other sex? Derrida's homonymic play between the proper name of God as *EI* (in the Talmudic tradition) and *Elle* for the third person singular feminine performs on this Levinasian knot as a sexually marked residue of the Unsaid said in the giving of its saying. In doing so Derrida's essay interrupts the interruption of *Otherwise than Being* to reveal within the enigmatic darkness that finds alternatives to leaving being, some *light* in the personal pronoun of the third person *He*: At this very moment *He* becomes He of the non-neutral discourse, "without italics," irreplaceable, capital, *pré-nom* El (wholly other). This point on the non-neutrality of a discourse on ethical difference marks the significant point of transgression and violation where Derrida's essay leaves the order of commentary in the ungrateful response for the maintenance of ethical interruption by offering the text to *Elle* (and not E.L.).

### Otherwise Said As Otherwise Sexed: Fore-Name As An Irreplaceable Enigma

Otherwise said: —He will have obligated (*il aura oblige*), as so far discussed, *exists* in a temporality (future anterior) whereby the subject cannot be *said* to be present to itself (irreducible to a metaphysics of presence). Levinasian temporality escapes "ontology" and is the temporality of the trace of *Il-leity* — the time, perhaps, of ethical difference. Thereby, in a temporal condition hostage to grammatical invention, "otherwise said" *exists* in order that the wholly other maintains ethical interruption to the Said. However, within the enigma of Levinasian grammar otherwise said, a fundamental "Greek site" somehow remains present with respect to "a certain mutism of the

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Being — we understand it with the personal pronoun of the third person, with the word *He*. The enigma comes to us from Illeity.' (EDE 214/CPP 71)."

feminine.”<sup>107</sup> Levinas’s discourse reminds us that *logos* is not neutral and that language is not a simple mode of thinking. —He will have obligated: *otherwise said as otherwise sexed* reveals the mastery of femininity within ethical difference, according to the very logic of the crypt. Strangely, excessively, the crypt’s logic here reveals a paradoxical mastery (of-by the feminine) within the Levinasian strategy of reduction of the Said by the Saying of the wholly other. Always remaining is this residue of the unsaid-Said, or what Derrida evocatively describes as the “surfeit of un-said alterity,” evocative for the paradoxical economy registered within the Said (which the problem of closure carefully articulates) and with which the final passages of “ATVM” performatively engage. This is an engagement we would name here with our analysis of Derrida’s *cryptic economy* as a “liturgical monument.”<sup>108</sup> It is crucial to understand this cryptic logic for the opening within the closure of Levinasian ethical discourse and its strategy for *overcoming* metaphysical logocentrism. And further, within Derrida’s cryptic logic, we begin to see the application of Levinasian temporality and its faulty logic, “its unsuccessful act” marked by the first “Hostage” *signatory* in sexual difference as feminine difference:

I come then to my question. Since it (*elle*) is under-signed by the Pronoun He (*Il*) (before he/she, certainly, but it is not She), could it be that in making sexual alterity secondary, far from allowing itself to be approached from the Work, his, or the one said to be, becomes a mastery, the mastery of sexual difference posed as the origin of femininity? Hence mastery of femininity? The very thing that *must not have been* mastered, and that one—therefore—has been able to avoid mastering, or at least attempting to master? The very thing that must not have been derived from an *arche* (neutral, and therefore, he says, masculine) in order to be subjected to it? The aneconomical, that must not have been *economized*, situated in the house, *within* or *as* the law of the *oikos*? The secondary status of the sexual, and therefore, He says, of feminine difference, does it not thus come to stand for the wholly-other

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107 “ATVM,” op. cit., p. 42.

108 The reference to *liturgy* signifies in Derrida’s essay the description of Levinas’s work as being a small offering but one which has no investment in remuneration, “working without remuneration” and “a losing investment.” *Liturgy*, or its demand, is outside of the economy of calculation and gain: “it is ethics itself.” Derrida notes that E.L.’s liturgy of work should not even be *subordinated* to thinking as this would still be understood as economic calculation. Rather, what E.L.’s work has succeeded in doing, in the unsuccessful act it claims to be, is to have obligated us, before all contract of acknowledgment, to this dissymmetry which it has itself so violently and gently provoked ... the remarkable saying of the work. (See *ibid.*, pp. 38-39.) Such, for example, is the obligated female reader (*lectrice obligée*) within *this work* who may refuse the approach but who, perhaps, is already caught in the inside of the remarkable saying of the work, *a cryptic inside enclave within the saying*, which we read and discuss in a moment via Derrida’s description of *a surfeit of un-said alterity*. (*ibid.*, p. 42.)

of this Saying of the wholly other within the seriasure here determined and within the idiom of this negotiation? Does it not show, on the inside of the work, a surfeit of un-said alterity? Or said, precisely as a secret or as a symptomatic mutism? Then things would become more complicated. The other as feminine (*me*), far from being derived or secondary, would become the other of the Saying of the wholly other, of this one in any case; and this last one *insofar* as it would have tried to dominate alterity, would risk, (at least to this extent) enclosing *itself* with the economy of the same. Wholly otherwise said: made secondary by responsibility for the wholly other, sexual difference (and hence, He says, femininity) is retained, as other, within the economic zone of the same. Included in the same, it is by the same stroke excluded: enclosed within, foreclosed within the immanence of a crypt, incorporated in the Saying which says itself to the wholly other.<sup>109</sup>

The other of a wholly other, no longer sexually neutral, but determined by the pronominal *I*(He) incorporates the silence of un-said alterity, where host and hostage become more complicatedly interlaced, a complication within, and to, this economic zone of the same within the Saying to the wholly other, that somehow marks the outside of its faulty inside. This is a faulty inside locatable in Derrida's essay via the feminine textual voice's (or woman reader's) scrutiny of *itself* in the other of the Saying (of the wholly other), which disrupts the de-sexualized link to the wholly other that makes sexual difference secondary as femininity.<sup>110</sup> The other as Other (*Autrui*) is scrutinized therefore as "He," wholly other. In privileging the masculine, Levinas's work is faulty as it marks a perceived sexual indifference or neutrality of the wholly other.<sup>111</sup> According to this cryptic logic, Levinas's *serialized* discourse, with respect to

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109 Ibid., p. 38 and pp. 42-43.

110 Ibid., p. 43.

111 On the logic of the fault that marks the second moment of reading by way of dislocating the prioritizing of ethical difference to sexual difference, Derrida's essay pushes to the fore his deconstruction of Levinas's desire for risk-free and uncontaminated ethical purity in the relation of the face-to-face encounter, or what we have discussed earlier as *liturgy* as ethics itself which comes before thinking, before calculation in the remarkable Saying. (See footnote 108, this chapter.) As Derrida suggests in his final pages: "It has been shown above that ingratitude and contamination did not occur as an accidental evil. It's a sort of fatality of the Saying. It is to be negotiated." (ibid., p. 44.) In the fact that Levinas's work is open to be taken up and made hostage to the other (for example, Derrida, woman etc), contamination thereby belongs to the risk of writing, to ethical obligation, "an unsuccessful act" and to communication. (ibid., p. 38 and p. 44.) More significantly here is the presence of *fault* in E.L.'s work in its inscription of the Saying through the privileging of masculinity via sexual indifference or neutrality of the wholly other. The logic of the fault inscribes the risk of effacement of E.L. in Derrida's ungrateful response to Levinas's work, but more astutely for Derrida is the problematic inherent in Levinasian ethics for the risk involved in effacing God's name. Derrida reveals that it is His "Wholly Other" or Other (*Autrui*) name, that which *should not* be thematised, that finds its theme in the sexual prioritizing of masculinity. The Forename, the First-name(s) (*Pré-nom*) of God: "according to the treatise *Chevouoth*, it is forbidden to efface the names of God, even in the case when a copyist would have altered the form. The whole manuscript then has to be buried. Such a manuscript, E.L. says, 'has to be

the Saying and the Said in relation to his writing, reveals a faulty textuality beyond just the singularity of E.L. This is a fault made by sexual difference in the body (work) of E.L. that is incorporated within the Saying which says itself to the wholly other: “If his proper name, E.L., is in the place of the Pronoun (He) which pre-seals everything that can carry a name, it isn’t him, but Him, that my fault comes to wound in his body.”<sup>112</sup> This would be the supplementary logic of the crypt and its fault-lines where betrayals are revealed in the unconditional Saying of the other as Wholly Other.<sup>113</sup>

### The Supplementary Logic of the Fault – (Analogy on The Name ...)

So far, and we are already far into Derrida’s essay, we have learnt there can be no ethics without faults. This would be, perhaps, the ethics of deconstruction. That is to say, if ethics comes before thinking, before acknowledgement, without remuneration as the unsuccessful act of *liturgy*, how has sexual difference already been thought? Derrida’s faulty body offers up this unsaid-said under his ethical obligation of response. In a response as faulty offering to E.L. and *Elle*, he is obligated to re-mark on the sexual mark of *II* (He) as the trace of *Illeity* which pre-seals everything that can

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placed in the earth like a dead body.” (ibid., p. 44.) Critchley clarifies that Levinas in fact states it is not the whole manuscript but rather only the desecrated [faulty] page that is buried. See Critchley, op. cit., footnote 14, p. 144. Derrida points out that by placing it in the ground and leaving the body intact the work is not in fact effaced. To properly efface it the whole work would need to be burnt, a recurrent theme in “*Envois*,” in *The Postcard*, op. cit., and in *Feu la Cendre/Cinders*, op. cit., that opens onto our *Ashes*. Rather, through the process of inhumation: “the fault on the proper name is not destroyed, at bottom one keeps guard of it, as a fault, one keeps it at the bottom.” (ibid., p. 44.) Derrida’s logic of the crypt and the fault suggest that only over time will decomposition take place as in the work of mourning. The other as other will be kept on guard, a wounded, wounding, impossible utterance.

112 Ibid. Derrida’s wound is integral to his ethical responsibility to E.L., suggesting that if he were to destroy the fault that has allowed “traces of the wholly other to be exchanged without circulating or ever becoming present,” his text would need to have calculative ends. That is, it would need to have an ability to know how the other receives it and thus such a mode would describe the Said in its economy of return and comprehension: “If I wish to destroy or annul the fault, I would have to know what is happening to the text being written at this very moment, where it can take place or what can remain of its remains.” (ibid.) However, according to the law that governs this faulty logic, i.e., the Talmudic (*treatise Chevouoth*), Derrida suggests that if the fault is to lie buried, left to decompose, the “topic of such a faulty text remains highly improbable, like the taking-place of its remains in this theonymic cemetery.” (ibid.) Governed by such a God, and guarded by His *priests* would this not take (permanent) care of the remaining remains as the silence, the impossible utterance, the mutism of the feminine, that this text ‘At this very moment’ wishes to speak (of)? This is the *faulty text’s* dilemma: “If I now ask at this very moment where I should *return* [my italics] my fault, it is because of a certain *analog*.” (ibid.) Here God’s and Man’s (or Woman’s as a subsidiary of Man’s) names coalesce.

113 As we have emphasized elsewhere from “*Fors*,” the crypt is “built by violence ... whose marks are at first soundless” (“*Fors*,” p. xv.)

carry a name. Such pre-sealing creates for Derrida the supplementary paradox of *return* and *remains* of *his* own text within the logic of the fault.

Derrida's faulty text and its wound is integral to his ethical responsibility to E.L., particularly in that he would not have recourse to destroying the fault as a calculative end: “But things are more complicated” than this as *Totality and Infinity* marks the necessity for interrupting this analogy: “refusing to God any analogy with beings that are certainly unique, but who compose with other beings a world or a structure.”<sup>114</sup> However, Derrida has already interrupted the interruption of E.L.'s refusal for any analogy with God and Man: “Man, therefore, can be linked with this retreat, despite the infinite distance of the non-thematizable, with the precariousness and uncertainty of this revelation.”<sup>115</sup>

The faulty text of “ATVM,” he says, “will always, already, have taken place: as soon as I thematize what, in his work, is borne beyond the thematizable.”<sup>116</sup> Derrida's work in these final pages is a Work borne of contamination in the locating of E.L.'s contamination, where beyond absolution and resolution *his* faulty body lies: “As a woman, for example, and in reversing the dissymmetry, I have added rape (*viol*) to it.”<sup>117</sup> The wounding, wounded textual body of woman *speaks* after this link between God and Man has been contaminated. Derrida speaks of this contamination as the significant doubling that has been played out throughout the essay and discussed here with the phrase —He will have obligated. Finally, contamination is linked to jealousy between God and Man, E.L. and J.D.: “Everything I say concerns jealousy. The thought of the trace as put in seriasure by E.L., thinks a singular link of God (not contaminated by being) to jealousy. And the link to Him must be pure of all jealous economy. But this without-jealousy (*sans-jalousie*) cannot not jealously guard itself, and insofar as it is an absolutely reserved past, it is the very possibility of all jealousy.”<sup>118</sup> Becoming woman: “—She will have obligated” as the possibility for catching him (E.L. and J.D.), Him off-guard.<sup>119</sup> No more guarding, no more jealousy?<sup>120</sup> A faulty body

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114 “ATVM,” op. cit., p. 45.

115 Ibid.

116 Ibid., pp. 45-46.

117 Ibid., p. 46.

118 Ibid.

119 Ibid.

that is buried so far below (it is too abyssal) in the depths of the same —She will have obligated as the possibility of an ancient writing, feminine difference as the pre-sealment of E.L.’s work as the other of his other: “Here feminine alterity, as the other to the wholly other, ‘pre-seals’ Levinas’s work in such a way that it *does not* work for ‘Him.’ Levinas’s work can only go unto the wholly other on the condition that feminine alterity is circumscribed and inhumed.”<sup>121</sup> Here ethical alterity is maintained by circumscription and inhumation of feminine alterity and at the same moment reveals the logic of E.L.’s fault as the denial of alterity which encloses his work with the Same, an economy he has worked continuously to go beyond.

### Before Liturgy —Interruption to She

Critchley presents us with a perspective on the liturgical. Before a liturgy we imagine a mass body gathers, the communal body of a congregation. Is it a mass or a mass grave we gather around? —She will have obligated is interrupted by a textual voice that no longer hears or knows what the woman reader is saying. After all, her voice was only barely legible or rather “nearly illegibly” pre-sealing his work. Indecipherability interrupted by another textual voice: “—I no longer know if you are saying what his work says. Perhaps that comes back to the same ... I no longer hear your voice, I have difficulty distinguishing it from mine, from any other, your fault suddenly becomes illegible to me. Interrupt me”<sup>122</sup> Who is this “I” who interrupts the female textual voice that has interrupted E.L.’s work? A return to the Same of the masculine voice? A voice that is however, deformed and precarious, no longer knowing what “you” (the voice of feminine alterity) say and so no longer can *return* the Saying (of Levinas’s work) to the Said. Or rather, no longer knows if she is saying “something contrary [to

120 We have previously mentioned, concerning a certain end of Man, a question of the guard and the eve, a question of remaining guard of the house, or abandoning it for a future-to-come, and a series of strategic bets on the undecidability of deconstruction according to a particular weave as a multiplicity of languages: “Is Heidegger’s truth of Being the last sleeping shudder of the superior man? Is the eve the guard around the house or the awakening of the day? Perhaps we are between these two eves which are also the two ends of man.” (Derrida, “The Ends of Man,” op. cit., p. 136.) To suddenly capitalize on this eve, to suddenly capitalize her: “Eve,” would this amount to Him being off-guard? We supplement in Chapter 7 this logic of the Eve as guard or guarding eaves, as two of the ends of «man» recognized in the “hard working negative” of Hegelian dialectics; as well in our Postscript’s handling of Kafka/Derrida “Before the Law.”

121 Critchley, op. cit., p. 137. Critchley is referring particularly to “ATVM,” op. cit., p. 46.

122 “ATVM,” op. cit., p. 46.

Levinas's work] or you have written something wholly other.”<sup>123</sup> A voice that becomes plural: “I have difficulty distinguishing it from mine, from any other,” and so radically consumes all voices and in the process inter(el)laces both male and female voices to mark the complication with separating out the Saying from the Said. The performative moment *par excellence* of Levinasian *chiasmic* interlacing, the two moments of the saying and the said epitomized by Levinasian serial style are compounded by further contamination to produce a voice *unknowing, unreadable, undecidable* that demands its own interruption: “Interrupt me.”

## MONUMENTAL LITURGY

In this final passage we are present at the burial of the feminine other. A liturgy, as in the Levinasian unsuccessful act, that is ethics itself, is performed by an “I” that, perhaps, is the woman reader as Critchley has suggested.<sup>124</sup> However, perhaps it is the voice of J.D. together with E.L. as acknowledgment of his own unsuccessful act: “ ... but just as much with a fault of my own that I will not seek to resolve or absolve within the general necessity.”<sup>125</sup> Here in this final moment he is placing in the ground his *faulty text* knowing that it belongs in the ground *returned* to this theonymic cemetery: “as the fault will always, already, have taken place: as soon as I thematize what, in his work, is borne beyond the thematizable and is put in a regular seriasure within which he cannot not sign himself.”<sup>126</sup> However, in order to gift the work to E.L. in its altered state, it is significant that the “I” is that of the woman reader: —HERE AT THIS VERY MOMENT I ROLL UP THE BODY OF OUR INTERLACED VOICES CONSONANTS VOWELS ACCENTS FAULTY IN THE MANUSCRIPT.<sup>127</sup> Critchley questions: “How is one to comment on this strange final paragraph of the essay? Is it even capable of being read?”<sup>128</sup> Yet Critchley does comment, cogently; he does read, carefully. His reading is capable and convincing with respect to the themes

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123 Ibid.

124 Critchley, op. cit., p. 140.

125 “ATVM,” op. cit., p. 46.

126 Ibid., pp. 45-46.

127 Ibid. Note that the final 32 lines of the text, commencing with this citation, are graphically presented with the entire text capitalized, monumentalized as the inscription of and for a grave’s headstone.

128 Critchley, op. cit., p. 140.

that he has discussed with respect to an ethics of deconstruction and the problem of closure. These are themes which have been significantly folded and interlaced in my own analysis, so that while my critique would not want to separate out so neatly the textual voices as Critchley does throughout his “Clôtural *Readings I: ‘Bois’*,” our readings, together, at the end of the end reach a consensual moment. Perhaps this *consensus* happens partly through the mediated voice of Critchley’s “*Bois*.” It was this final word that became for me a first moment of encounter with Derrida’s “At this very moment.” However, a significant point of difference between our readings rests on the notion of *return* that is so integral to the deconstructive response Derrida gives and gifts to Levinas’s work. Our discussion on this moment of *divergence* forms the final note for this chapter. And so we quote at length Critchley’s reading on this strange *liturgy* that goes out from the Same to the Other:

The ‘I’ that speaks here is the woman reader. It is she who rolls up the interlaced voices and moments of reading into the body of the text. It is she who gives the text to Levinas by burying it in the earth: ‘I MUST PLACE IT IN THE EARTH FOR YOU – COME LEAN DOWN’ (46). It is she who calls (‘COME’) to the Other to lean down over the place where the gift is buried. One imagines a man and a woman leaning over a grave at a funeral and looking down at the earth. The woman speaks: ‘IT’S OUR MUTE INFANT A DAUGHTER PERHAPS OF AN INCEST STILLBORN’ (46). The faulty text that wounds the jealous body of the ‘Il’ is ‘Elle’, the stillborn daughter whose fatally flawed body is buried and allowed slowly to decompose, thereby rendering the fault illegible. ‘She’ is the faulty body, the inhumed stillborn daughter. ‘IN THE BOTTOMLESS CRYPT THE INDECIPHERABLE STILL GIVES ITSELF TO BE READ’ (47). The only way in which the daughter can be contained within ethical difference is by enclosing her within the bottomless crypt of the Same, within the economy that makes sexual difference secondary. The voice of feminine alterity speaks out from the closure of this crypt; the woman reader pleads, ‘WE MUST HAVE A NEW BODY ANOTHER WITHOUT ANY MORE JEALOUSY THE MOST ANCIENT STILL TO COME’ (47). The faulty text has been buried; the stillborn daughter decomposes within the crypt. Above, a woman’s voice weaves (*TISSE*) and effaces itself (*MY EFFACER*). The gift has been given; the text for E.L. has been *returned* [my italics] to ‘Elle’ and buried; ethical alterity has been maintained. The woman’s voice calls to the Other; ‘TAKE IT ... APPROACH’; she beckons to the Other to come closer and receive the gift. Again, one imagines a woman and a man leaning over a grave; the man, the older of the two, plunges his hands into the earth and takes his stillborn daughter in his arms: ‘BOIS’.<sup>129</sup>

129 Ibid., pp. 140-141.

## Point Of No Return

Is it already a “given,” the MONUMENTALITY of a sexually determined trace of *Il-leity* that pre-scribes before signing? In this moment are we all hostage to the Said of *its (Il, El)* Saying as the writing of an otherwise-than-being. Derrida’s essay argues for another way of writing that is *heteronomy*, that is an *otherwise than signing*.<sup>130</sup> And everything circulates on a question of returns and whether Derrida’s essay holds to a *return* economy that *his heteronomy* forms as a dehiscent reading. This dehiscence in the signings-readings-voices of the text gives to both *E.L.* and *Elle* and never returns to the economy of *il (illeity)* which marks the faulty body of a God. God’s contamination is (*his*) communing with man – a privileged masculine God and a liturgical community. This is the textual performative play within the neologism *entre(e)lacement*. Inter-laced we locate all manner of possible relations that have been exhumed in this text. The final lines in Derrida’s essay suggest an ethical offering where the work goes out to the other via the now revealed pre-sealed sexual trace of *Il-leity* that contains within it both “Him” and “Her”: “I WEAVE MY VOICE SO AS TO BE EFFACED THIS TAKE IT HERE I AM EAT – GET NEARER – IN ORDER TO GIVE HIM/HER – DRINK.”<sup>131</sup> –She will have obliged (*elle aura*

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130 “ATVM,” op. cit., p. 43.

131 Ibid., p. 47. For Levinasian ethics we emphasize yet again that his Work works against suppressing alterity and transmuting it into what he calls the Same (*le Même*). This is precisely the suppression that he sees that has predominated with ontology in the Western metaphysical tradition. Philosophy is the assimilation of otherness into Sameness, where the other is digested like food and drink. In the face-to-face encounter, the face of the Other (*autrui*), Levinas finds a point of irreducible alterity which resists philosophical logos. The self finds itself put in question by and obliged to respond to the Other. The relation of a reader to a text is this face-to-face encounter and Derrida’s essay seeks to refuse the process of comprehension, even of digestion, that so often betrays the ethical space opened in Levinas’s work. This final word “Bois,” “Drink,” in Derrida’s essay is an ethical imperative that Critchley has noted in his reading. Further it is a moment of undecidability that marks Derrida’s ethical strategy in deconstruction whereby the final word or offering is full of ambiguities (as is many of the lines in the final *liturgical* passage). The word signifies an openness whereby his text is offered for consummation or, should I say, is *an offering of consummation*. That is, the work has already a pre-digested element of the Same in that it has suppressed sexual alterity as a jealously guarded secret in which Derrida finds an inextricable *link*. In this way, the “*Bois*” in its giving to him, gives back to him this pre-digested pre-sealing of the *Il*’s trace. In giving to both “Him/Her” the essay has radically altered the *alterity*, whereby the Wholly Other is no longer neuter but sexually marked, where the capital, non-italicized, Him (*Pré-*

*oblige*) heteronomically happens as the possibility of an encrypted pre-sealed feminine difference as the inside of the Saying, as the other to the Wholly other as the a-sexed economy that pre-seals everything that can carry a name. In this respect the final lines of Derrida's essay contain the undecidable suggestive of going beyond a *returned* economy. That is, an “undecidable” economy is always already contaminated and contaminating as it works *excessively* from within the economy of the Same. This is the economy of the crypt, excess and the surfeit of un-said alterity.

### A Note To A Note In ‘Bois’

In a lengthy “footnote 10” to his “Clôturel *Readings I: Bois*,” Critchley suggests that the most significant difference between Derrida’s and Luce Irigaray’s approach to Levinas with respect the default into a patriarchal discourse is that Irigaray does not deconstruct, but rather writes as a woman.<sup>132</sup> By such a calculation as Critchley’s, we could read as implications firstly, that in order for a man to write as a woman he would need to deconstruct and secondly, a woman who writes a *feminist critique* is writing politically. Or, to say this differently, the question of sexual difference that is addressed by a woman needs to be political. With such readings, with this kind of reading of

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*nom*) has as Hostage Her, where *elle* is under-signed by the He (*II*). However, by working on the inside as the surfeit of the unsaid-said alterity, a reversal occurs whereby He before She becomes more he/she. In this latter move, the offering “*Bois*” has altered E.L.’s work and sexual difference becomes an irreducible moment for ethical difference. “*Bois*” in this respect has gone out toward the Other as the Saying, as Critchley states, quoting Levinas from *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*: “To utter the final word – ‘*Bois*’ – is to nourish the hunger of the other, and is akin to the tearing of bread from my own mouth. I interrupt my ego through fasting and breaking the other’s fast” (Critchley, op. cit., p. 108.) Again the woven voice is ambiguous given the play with Levinasian *serial* discourse as well as Derrida’s cognizance of the metaphoricity at play in the word “weave” and its problematic relation to the feminine: “*This heteronomy was writing the text from its other side like a weaver its fabric (ouvrage); yet it would be necessary here to undo a metaphor of weaving which has not imposed itself by chance: we know to what kind of interpretative investments it has given rise as regards to a feminine specificity which Freudian psychoanalysis also regularly derives.*” (“ATVM,” op. cit., p. 43.) Then again (and there are many examples in this *liturgy* on monumental surfaces, or what Levinas describes as the “square letters” (see “ATVM,” p. 45.)) “ambiguity and undecidability reign as soon as words join in, as soon as they are party to sexual difference or sexual difference has a brush with them.” (*Rootprints*, op. cit., p. 121.)

132 See Critchley, op. cit., p. 143: “... Irigaray identifies a double gesture, or deconstructive tension, in Levinas’s work, between two levels of discourse. On the one hand, the phenomenology of carnality and feminine alterity ... suggests ‘we are no longer in the order of metaphysics.’ On the other hand, the institution of ethics through fecundity and paternity reinscribes Levinas within the metaphysics of patriarchy and male subjectivity. ... ‘he clings once more to this rock of patriarchy in the very place of carnal love.’ ... The difference between Irigaray ... and Derrida is that she does not attempt to read Levinas deconstructively; rather she engages in a powerful, necessary and compelling feminist critique of Levinas which speaks with a woman’s voice.”

reading, or what is brought to reading, the pre-giving that opens any possibility of reading as such, one can gauge when the discourse on sexual difference is reduced to the binary of male and female in the name of the one who signs a text, singularly or multiply, with or without returns.

We have earlier mentioned, and in more than one place, these dangers of reduction remembering here that it is the reader who signs the work (Derrida) and that one is an interruption by the Other (Levinas). Does Critchley's own *pro-nominal* positioning here only reinforce the notion of sexual difference as a reduction of the other to the self-Same? He continues in "footnote 10": "Derrida is a man, and, furthermore, in the second moment of reading, a man speaking with the voice of a woman. But is such a mimesis, or mimicry, of the feminine by the masculine really plausible? Is it dangerous politically? Should it, too, become the subject of feminist critique?"<sup>133</sup> Is Critchley so certain that Derrida is a man if he is starting (writing) from the place of the other? Derrida himself has on numerous occasions suggested his uncertainty around the way he writes as a sexually marked being except to say that certain traces of invisibility, readability and testimony (without proof) exist in words when sexual difference brush with them: "sexual difference passes by ... from one to the other, by the one and the other."<sup>134</sup> Or to pose it very differently, which amounts also to the same, if sexual difference does not exist, the question of writing as a man or woman simply never arises. Or, on the contrary, poly-sexuality is forever underway:

The sex of the addresser awaits its determination by or from the other. It is the other who will perhaps decide who I am—man or woman. Nor is this decided once and for all. It may go one way one time and another way

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 143. Critchley leaves these questions suspended, preferring that his masculinity not contaminate the terrain of what clearly for him is an other. He defers and he refers his reader to a woman's voice, or the texts of a woman. In the first instance it is to Tina Chanter, and a text we have already encountered and commented on. Critchley says: "For a more subtle and stratified discussion of the question of the feminine in Levinas, with reference to wider feminist issues, see Tina Chanter, 'Antigone's Dilemma', in *Re-Reading Levinas*, 130-46 ... ." We have already suggested, regarding Chanter, that she would have wanted an each-way strategic bet on the question of the *genesis* of sexual difference, sincerely, and without irony.

<sup>134</sup> See *Rootprints*, op. cit., p. 127. We could point to many references where Derrida comments on the termination and determinability of his sex. Certainly, already we have referenced from *The Ear of the Other*, from "Fors," from *Spurs*. We could also cite "The Law of Genre," from *Acts of Literature*, op. cit., pp. 221-252. Like Sandford, we can surmise in its dumb simplicity that Derrida is a man precisely by suspending the question of meaning: what does it mean to be a man, for someone to say you are a man, what is the meaning, for example of the being of man, as if the question of being already had a determinable meaning, as if the question of the question already had a determinable meaning. Who or what gives in the question?

another time. What is more, if there is a multitude of sexes (because there are perhaps more than two) which sign differently, then I will have to assume (I—or rather whoever says I—will have to assume) this polysexuality. This is what I risk.<sup>135</sup>

And from “ATVM,” the definability of “man” or “woman” is ambivalently positioned: “If what I say remains false, falsifying, faulty, it is also to the extent that dissymmetry (I speak from my place as woman, and supposing that she be definable) ... .”<sup>136</sup> Critchley has in this instance chosen to sign Derrida as a “man that speaks with the voice of a woman.” I would suggest that this is precisely the essay’s deconstructive (snaring) moment exposed. That is, this *is* the moment of *return*, the strange trap that Derrida wishes to expose, in which he is fully ensnared, in Levinas’s ethical difference by way of *homage* (or *L’age Homme*) that is the impossibility of sexual difference within the economy of Levinasian ethics.

Yes, the work is offered to *elle* (as Levinasian feminine alterity interrupts metaphysics) but its privileged Work “clings once more to this rock of patriarchy in the very place of sexual difference.”<sup>137</sup> Therefore, the transparency of who speaks as a sexually marked being in Derrida’s essay performs the impossibility for signing the work (over) to She. So in Critchley asking the question as to whether *mimesis* of the feminine by the masculine should become the subject of *feminist critique* [my italics], one would have to ask the old question can a man be a feminist? And if so (one presumes a man, Critchley, is asking this question on behalf of feminism), is he able to critique in a “man’s” voice on the *mimesis* of a “woman’s” voice by “man”? Or is feminism best left to “woman” in the domain of the “political”? With all these conditions on who writes and in what discursive genre or gender, there is little surprise that when deconstruction writes on the scene of sexual difference, impossibility and possibility proceed along the path of separation and reparation, cut and join, tear and unite — what Derrida describes, taking from Cixous, as the mishap of the in between as sexual difference in passage: “*contretemps*. ”<sup>138</sup> It would also be what I have suggested above as the undecidable economy of the crypt. It is on this note that my critique of Critchley’s notion of *return* finds some significance with respect to the multiple

135 Derrida, *The Ear of the Other*, op. cit., p. 52.

136 “ATVM,” op. cit., p. 44.

137 Critchley citing Irigaray on Levinas, already cited in this chapter, footnote 132.

138 *Rootprints*, op. cit., p. 124.

offerings of Derrida's text to *Elle*: That is, the question of *return* arises only in Critchley's reading through his insistence that Derrida's deconstructive and ethical move is the ungratefully (k)not-returned *returning* work offered to E.L. through *returning* it to *Elle*. For example: "The form of this violation and transgression is the ungrateful response which maintains the responsibility of ethical interruption by *returning* [my italics] the text to 'Elle' and not to E.L."<sup>139</sup>

Any notion of *return* implies, in the first instance, an initial belonging, a point of departure, a non-ambiguity of the sender in any sending, and the text "ATVM" is quite clear in suggesting that the work belongs to E.L. and is written perhaps most profoundly in the name of *Il* or *El*. Although the work was locatable in the name of *Elle*, the textual voice altered insofar as a discernable location (for *return*) was never provided except within the economy of the Same. So, if we read Critchley's notion of *return* deconstructively, the belonging for *elle* only arises in the habitat of the Said. She is subsumed under the priority of ethical difference and whatever text is returned to her, it is in the revealing of a priority she is already conditioned by. This would be the *return* that Derrida's essay makes apparent to the woman reader *in* Derrida's ungrateful giving to He (E.L. *Il*. *El*). I quote at length:

Wholly otherwise said: made secondary by responsibility for the wholly other, sexual difference (and hence, He says, femininity) is retained, as other, with the economic zone of the same. Included in the same, it is by the same stroke excluded: enclosed within, *foreclosed* [my italics] within the immanence of a crypt, incorporated in the Saying which says itself to the wholly other. To desexualise the link to the wholly-other (or equally well, the unconscious as a certain philosophical interpretation of psychoanalysis tends to do today), to make sexuality secondary with respect to a wholly-other that in itself would not be sexually marked ("beneath erotic alterity, the alterity of the one for the other; responsibility before eros" [AE 113n, OB 192 n. 27], is always to make sexual difference secondary *as* femininity. Here I would situate his profound complicity with such an interpretation of psychoanalysis. This complicity, more profound than the abyss he wishes to put between his thinking and psychoanalysis, always gathers around one fundamental design: their common link to me, to the other as woman. That is what I would like to give them (first of all, to read).

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<sup>139</sup> Critchley, op. cit., pp. 129-130. There are numerous instances in his text where Critchley uses the expression "returns the text to *Elle*," particularly in his two *Clôtural*/readings.

Then the Work, apparently signed by the Pronoun He, would be dictated, aspired, and inspired by the desire to make the secondary, there by She (*Elle*). She would then under-sign the under-signed work from her place of derivable dependence or condition as last or first “Hostage.”<sup>140</sup>

Indeed, from this position of the under-signer of under-signed, we locate She, (*Elle*), as always belonging to the Work in very much the same position as an encrypted incorporated subject of the *fors* crypt. She is a “Hostage” where position of host and stranger become inextricably linked, where the dead remain alive and the living mourn what they cannot know. This *return* of the work, Derrida reminds us, is not a signing that affirms the conditions. Rather, the work is signed with a difference that cannot be reduced to the simple economy of a return or belonging but is *otherwise than signed*: “Not in the sense that undersigning would amount to confirming the signature, but countersigning the work, again not in the sense that countersigning would amount to redoubling the signature, according to the same or the contrary—but *otherwise than signing*.<sup>141</sup>

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140 “ATVM,” op. cit., p. 43. Two further points on quotation, undersigning, commentary and the (non)-neutrality of discourse. The first is with respect to Derrida *speaking as woman* and the manoeuvre by which he locates the instance of a woman’s voice via quotation that marks a shift from commentary to interruption or transgression. We encounter this female voice on page 42, via the long quotation from Catherine Chalier writing on Levinas. Derrida is opening onto the significant question of the She being undersigned by the Pro-noun He (*Il*) and in order not to efface her (before the full argument around *elle*’s effacement is made in Derrida’s essay) he effaces his own commentary to reveal the other’s (She) commentary on precisely his point. Secondly, to quote at length is again something of a performative and ethical imperative within Derrida’s essay. We note that this strategy draws attention to the way in which Levinas’s primary discourse, to (again) quote Irigaray, “clings once more to the rock of patriarchy in the very place of carnal love.” That is to say, E.L.’s voice is more than just the singular discourse of E.L. but is an accumulative effect of He:

It would be necessary to comment upon every step and verify that each time the secondary status of sexual difference signifies the secondary status of the feminine (But why is this so?) and that the initial status of the predifferential is each time marked by this masculinity that should, however, have come only afterward, like every other sexual mark. It would be necessary to comment, but I prefer, under the heading of a protocol, to underline the following: he is commenting himself, and says that he is commenting; it must be taken into account that this discourse is not literally that of E.L. While holding discourse, he says that he is commenting upon the doctors *at this very moment* (“the lines we are commenting upon at this very moment,” and further on: “I am not taking sides; today, I comment”). (*ibid.*, p. 41.)

141 *Ibid.*, p. 43.

## C H A P T E R 7

### «*Glas*» Written: Not—Yet

#### A Topo-logo-graphical Offering

*Glas* cross-cuts and interlaces, follows the structure and binding of separation and reparation, a double-binding and double banding that cuts together. It is our final text, for this concluding chapter, annulling our work, cutting it off without return to a beginning, without a circle of return. Its angular spur hollows the rift of an end without sacrifice. The topo-logo-graphy of this offering is the offer of an horizon, a *khorismos*, for incurring no debt, no obligation, no inciting for compensation. *Glas* (double)-binds our offering as a way in reading the singularity of each close reading demonstrated before.<sup>1</sup> *Glas* could, perhaps, be singled as exemplary within Derrida's *oeuvre* as that

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1 *Glas* alone, as the central motif, could govern alone a compelling study for a PhD and, perhaps, in this moment here, this could have been the approach for this research. But then she would have been returned to Hegel as the first *Klang*, the sounding of the first rays, the dawning of a day. She would then have been his: "... the moment immediately following both the flower of religion and the phallic columns, a moment that relieves them forthwith as it were, is Memnon, the resonating colossal statue that produces a *Klang* under the incidence of the sun's rays. The *Klang* announces the end of the flower

challenge to even the most radical conventions of *academic* writing and thereby the conventions of epistemology that philosophy has shaped. This radical gesture articulates, through its formal arrangement (both in its printed textual composition and excerpt-form that excise Hegel across Genet), a cross-cutting “programme” for its reading. Derrida’s inventions of differences or *others* here, his “phenomenology of spirit,” however demanding and precisely because of its demands, enables us a kind of consolidation for reading his chiasmic styles in relation to the “logic” of (his) arguments, contaminations of the calculability of his sense.

This consolidation in and for our reading, which we suggest offers the conditions of an example, could be termed a literary ten(s)or, concluded or terminated, bound to *literature*, that makes possible the inventions of differences as a question to philosophy. We unbind the tensor a little here only to constrict it there. We apply the pressure to a *philosophy* which has “shaped” our knowing, such as that around a question of sexual difference propositioned by metaphysics, appropriated, made proper and belonging to truth as adequation. We draw on, mark out, trace over, Derrida’s topo-logo-graphical compositional chiasmic “arguments” for *Glas* so as to exemplify or heighten what has already been drawn, marked, traced with respect to what we have already written. Each reading from Chapters 2 to 6 has formulated hypotheses in relation to the question of sexual difference supported by Derridean contradictions, paradoxes, undecidables, impossible possibilities, excesses within closures and orders of incalculability. Further, our questions have been thought through some of Derrida’s “classical” neologisms (such as *différance*, *pharmakon*, *gift*, etc.) as well as those lexemes of invention less canonical or proper to deconstruction.

However, to suggest *propriety* here at all would be to misrecognise inventions of differences accorded to each singular context or force of argument where these neologisms are in use — at any one time, in any one text they have shifted in approximation to the order or structural terrain at work in the work. Derrida’s lexemes displace the possibility to say what they are, in terms of or in relation to consciousness,

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religion and the phallic columns, but is not yet voice or language. This ringing, sonorous light reverberating as on a stone bell is already no longer mute, but not yet speaking.” *Glas*, op. cit., p. 3. Hence it is important in this topo-logo-graphical offering that the reader is given a clear sense of how *Glas* will be read for the purposes of this PhD topic. Indeed, *this* approach is precisely why *Glas* is our dissoluble points of interventions.

experience or representation. They offer the ingratitudo of a refusal to return to *their origin*. Rather they are structured by chance, unpredictability, a future-to-come and incalculability, yet are conditioned by the laws of different beliefs (metaphysics, Christianity, Judaism, etc.). Derrida has insisted on deconstruction's mobility many times suggesting that the neologisms at work are activated in their difference, through difference in any given textual situation. He also has insisted that deconstruction is the law.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, we would want to resist a neat gathering, or tight binding, of those lexemes that surface across our readings of the four texts that might suggest a mutual cohabitation (or final resting place) culminating in *Glas*. Rather through the exemplarity we source in *Glas* — this chiasmic motif of a literary-philosophico interlace of Derrida's difference-of-thought and thought-on-difference — we locate and overlay resemblances in and of textual compositional forces from our previous readings. We suggest that this ongoing overlay, this turnover and supplement or reserve — one could imagine here a textual practice that is *palimpsestuous*, oblique or lattice-like — are the conditions for reading sexual markings. This is a textual practice that on one level deconstructs the totality of the Book.<sup>3</sup> Our reading of *Glas* offers readings of *Spurs*, “Fors” or “At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am,” which is to say, within a temporality of the future anterior, what originally comes would have been already encountered in what is to come. The seam of a first reading is made only in the tear of what comes secondarily. “«*Glas*» Written Not — Yet” is the tear in what would have not made a step (*pas*) forward save for its cut. And in moving forward, in the stitching together of *Spurs*, “Fors” and “ATVM,” in their seam, their bind, we would have imagined the forces of annulment. She, secondarily annuls his primacy, refusing to fuse it into a wholly otherwise. She fuses, ignites it, destining it to *glas(h)*. The thesis can only be made in its unmaking.

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2 We engage directly with a reading of deconstruction as law in our Postscript.

3 Deconstruction of the book is a major concern of this chapter, in its engagement with *Glas*, and ongoing reference to *Dissemination*. See also *Glossary*, op. cit., a scholarship on Derrida's *Glas* that approaches the text from the perspective of the question of the book.

The question of how to read Derrida's deconstructive mobile textual practice becomes exemplary for how we read; for instance, how we read sexual difference.<sup>4</sup> The forces articulating Derrida's calculations of the incalculable, his “logic” or argument are *palimpsestuous* in *his* devotion to Hegel in order to betray the sacrifice, but perhaps only the sacrifice, of speculative dialectics (but, then what is left of spirit in dialectics other than its sacrifice of itself for itself?). Our reading of *Glas* is devotional, but this time to *him* (how does she hear him, how does he ring: —hymn —hymen?), in this overlaying (*palimpsestuous*) process that draw into proximity the motifs (figures and tropes) and lexemes emphasized in our previous readings of *Spurs*, “Fors” and “ATVM.” This performs the mobility, motility, lability of deconstruction and sexual difference. Derrida suggested in the early 1980s, around this period of writing these four texts, that Deconstruction and questions around sexual difference formalized through the emergence of Women's Studies programmes and Feminist Cultural Studies came up against the same resistances: “exactly the same people, and the same arguments, and the same schemes.”<sup>5</sup> Derrida extends this logic of resistance in suggesting that sexuality itself is at stake. Women's Studies and Deconstruction have a shared struggle formalized by deconstruction's conceptualization of phallogocentrism: “And it's not only a matter of concepts, of philosophical battle, but it's also a problem of how to write, how to behave in front of texts, in the institution, and of the relationship to literature and philosophy and so on.”<sup>6</sup>

4 We read in fragments. Our reading is never a chronological, historical, totalized account. Rather it is through excerpt and excision of one text juxtaposed against another. And one is always attached in some fashion to a reading machine, a reading-writing machine as reading and writing would only be separated under the most artificial, which is to say most “naturalized” and metaphysical conditions. Because one is attached to a reading-writing machine, always already and from the “origins” of languages, one is also always already possibly unattached; attached and unattached, this is the contamination of the dream of a pure and transparent surface to read. One never reads alone nor does one ever stop reading: “When you are preparing a seminar or a lecture, over a period of weeks, you see a body of letters in page form reappearing in front of you, at once objective, stable, independent, and yet floating, a bit fantastic – a body of letters that you no longer bear within you, and at any rate no longer completely within you like the more internal image of those old handwritten drafts. This display in fact returns the murmur of an echoing text that comes from out there, the ultrasound of oneself as another.” Derrida, “The Word Processor,” in *Paper Machine*, trans. by Rachael Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005) pp. 19-32, p. 27. Although Derrida in this text is referring to the contemporary technology of the word processor, he has elsewhere emphasized the necessity of tele-technologies in the sendings constitutive of the history of metaphysics.

5 See Derrida, “Women in the Beehive: A Seminar with Jacques Derrida,” *Subjects/Objects* (Spring 1984) 5-19; also in *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 16 (3, 1985) 139-157. Our references to this text are from *Differences*. See for this citation, p. 148. We return to this text in some detail with our Postscript.

6 Ibid., pp. 148-149. The relationship between literature and philosophy is a complex one in the setting of *Glas* and extends to our styles of reading. Does one choose between philosophy and literature? Is one forced to decide on Hegel or Genet as the column of one's choice? We echo another

As a text that reveals great admiration for Hegelian thinking through its deconstructive fidelity to Hegel's system of thought *Glas* works to intervene in the System but not in

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questioning of difference: "One must think of a pre-differential, rather than pre-dual, sexuality." (*Geschlecht: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference*, op. cit. pp. 78-79). Our reading focuses more so on the thematics of the Hegel column, on Derrida's exposition of Hegelian dialectics together with a vast array of other thinkers who in their different approaches attempt (but according to Derrida fail) to undo the Hegelian bond. In doing so it is not our intention to privilege the philosophical column over the more literary column — and of course, in our reading our styles of reading will find proximal effects between the relations of philosophy and literature. With respect to the formal layout concerns of *Glas* (which are discussed in more detail later) on first encounter there are two distinct columns, philosophical (Hegel) and literary (Genet). Our "natural" and initial reading is determined by their distinctness and independence, their identity in difference. This comes before "reading" what appears across them as otherwise texts, interlacing cross-references that mark and remark the blanks between columns. In focusing on the Hegel column and its themes what becomes significant is the way philosophical concepts mediate its relationships to its *Others*. And, it is precisely this notion of how philosophy positions and conceptualizes the Other that is significant for both deconstruction and our question of sexual difference as styles of writing and reading. As Rodolphe Gasché suggests in himself quoting Derrida from *Glas*:

That one column can be in the other, for instance (G, p. 36), presupposes the dialectical idea of negativity. It is precisely negativity that "erects one in the other" (G, p. 13), as Derrida argues on the occasion of his discussion of the paradigmatic familial relation of father and son in speculative thought. The same is the case with the assumption that one column would be the reverse of the other. "The possibility of turning upside down, of the upside-down erection, is inscribed in the cycle of the family stance," Derrida claims. It "describes the structure of the concept's nonconceptual conception" (G, p. 81). Any attempt to construe the movement between the two columns ... in terms of a turning into each other, of a mutual canceling out (or what has become known as self-deconstruction), is rooted in speculative logic's possibility that "absolute appropriation is absolute expropriation," and the other way around. This logic can "(re)turn itself at each instant into its absolute other," as loss or spending without reserve, for instance (G, p. 167), to better be itself in absolute expropriation. (Gasché, "Strictly Bonded," in idem., *Inventions of Difference: On Jacques Derrida*, op. cit., footnote 22, p. 276.)

We would be very cautious here about a reading that conditioned such a reversal given it is precisely the movement of Derrida's *negativity* which provides potentiality for reading when there is something sexual at stake. We have discussed Derrida's notion of an excess in the reserve, or the reserve of the reserve in our previous chapter, an economy or logic activated in *Glas* precisely within the blanks, the *dissonance* of the *knell* or *Klang* that conditions accidental betrayals. It makes Hegelian speculative logic less secure. Significantly, the potentiality activated in the blanks between columns, marking and remarking on and in each column, is productive of their radical alterity. Gasché notes:

a reading of *Glas* that would mobilize such relations [of absolute appropriation as absolute expropriation] would be monolithic, and extend the Hegel column to the whole text of *Glas*. In contrast, the reading that *Glas* calls forth is one of the quasi-virtual text *from which* the two columns emerge in their mutual distinction, but which is also the backdrop against which certain exterior accidents (quoins, judases, for example) *in* each distinct columns become visible, as well as a number of mutual contaminations. (ibid., p. 276.)

The monolithic scene of reading Gasché describes would be an all encompassing, all consuming logic (con)straining the Otherness *Glas* potentially activates. Derrida's "exteriority" that Gasché alludes to in his final sentence, in difference to Hegel's "exteriority," will be discussed in more detail as will the pivotal notion of Hegel's "constriction" for the strategic bets Derrida has placed in *Glas*. Our postscript to this thesis, that is also a writing for and to this chapter, offers an "after all, of the remains" (*reste*) column of analysis on deconstruction's law constructed out of the literary motif of Kafka's "Before the Law." What, we ask, is the effect of such an extended—*reste*—column for our styles of reading?

the undoing of the Hegelian bond. As Gasché emphasizes, the bond of thinking cannot be undone:

It is a question not of overcoming thinking's universalistic bent and its idealizing reduction, but of reading thinking against a backdrop of certain necessary possibilities from which it comes into its own, but which it also must remain unable to think if it is to remain thinking.<sup>7</sup>

With Derrida's repetition of Hegelian thinking *Glas* locates a *margin* to the bond of thinking, in an unthinking-thinking dynamic that is not locatable in Hegel's conception of margins, exteriority or negativity. And in this margin we would want to locate a notion of "deconstruction's law," or more accurately deconstruction as law (making) that occurs through iteration and re-contextualization. Hegel facing Genet is *Glas*'s most obvious re-contextual manoeuvre.<sup>8</sup> Our reading of *Glas* capitalizes this margin of Derrida's *negativity*, coined in this chapter's title as the "Not—Yet." Derrida's negativity is a negotiating and affirmative force, which denies relations to negativity as loss, contradiction, opposition or dialectical negation, the work of the negative as reason, as death, as the sacrifice of spirit.

His *negativity* produces, as non-opposition and through chiasmic, intertwining, interlacing compositional relations of textual practice, an affirmative law to the unconditional of sexual difference and of deconstruction.<sup>9</sup> Therefore it is Derrida's negativity as the unconditional that establishes our reading as performing the mobility of deconstruction and sexual difference. In this respect, this topo-logo-graphical pre-determination approaches the unconditional affirmative "yes, yes" of Blanchot.<sup>10</sup> A fidelity to Hegel in *Glas* opens for Derrida the margins of an affirmative negativity that

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7 Gasché, op. cit., p. 180.

8 See "Women in the Beehive," op. cit., p. 149 where Derrida suggests that deconstruction *cannot* be transgression of the law. Deconstruction "is" the law. It is an affirmation, and affirmation is on the side of the law. This notion will be discussed fully in our Postscript.

9 We would consider in terms of this strange affirmative negation the "a" of *differance* that opens in its taking away a dehiscence and disseminating play. We would further think this negativity in the emphasis Heidegger gives to the privative *a* in Heraclitus's *a-letheia*, the coming into un-hiddenness or the privative *a* in Anaximander's *a-peiron*, the un-bounded.

10 Derrida's *negativity* is indebted to Blanchot, acknowledged through his consistent reference made to Blanchot's literary-philosophical essays and fictions on law. See for example, Derrida's "Living On/Border Lines," in *Deconstruction and Criticism*, op. cit., and "The Law of Genre," in *Acts of Literature*, op. cit., in relation to Blanchot's "Death Sentence" and "Madness of the Day." Both Blanchot texts are published in *The Station Hill Blanchot Reader*, op. cit. This double affirmation of the "yes" to "yes," the affirmation of affirmation, will have come, without reserve, in the final moment of our Postscript.

refuses the project of escaping or undoing Hegel's System. It is precisely through a deconstruction of the inside and outside of the Hegelian absolute, that a renovation of the law becomes readable as a renovation of the unconditional affirmation of justice. Between Hegel and Kafka we construct our own pre-differential affirmations, to not choose between them. This unconditional offer closes as a final P.S. to Derrida facing "Before the Law." Kafka's parable is an important motif in Derrida's work and we pose its reading on the law of sexual difference *as* deconstruction *as* law — law has the structure of affirmation. Justice perhaps! Which may not be deconstructable.

### "Not – Yet" : On Negativity (Or Unthinking-Thinking)

#### Negotiation and Interruption<sup>11</sup>

We have hinted above that Derrida's negative is both affirmative and revealed as a processional articulation of the movements of deconstruction. In Chapter 6 we noted that deconstruction creates a chiasmic inter-lace, negotiating fidelity to a text and betrayal. Through iteration, interruption occurs. Fidelity takes (its) place in the premise that Western philosophy at heart is a system that desires completeness and proceeds in order to point to the interdependence and coherence of philosophical principles as the system of metaphysics. The thinker (Heidegger, Levinas, Hegel, etc.) carries on and redistributes these fundamental principles in their renewal and inventions. Derrida locates metaphysical restoration precisely in their most transgressive moments. That is, Derrida's agency of negotiation is at work on the limits to each writer's singular limit in order to reveal the necessary infinite at work in metaphysical unity as a system that articulates a desire (or need) for integrity. With deconstruction, at the same moment we witness the interruption of these singular texts,

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11 We again make a note on Derrida's understanding of negotiations and the double band of deconstructing the binary between negotiation and the unnegotiable, as well as the naïve naturalism that would suggest that negotiation and exchange are complementary acts. We note the affirmative gesture of negotiation in relation to its structure as *promise* and the shuttling between affirmation and the taking-up of a position, where promise/affirmation is discussed as non-dialectical, with position as dialecticity. Negotiation becomes that necessity between affirmation's non-dialecticity and the position's dialecticity: "There is the totally dialectical concept of negotiation, the standard concept of negotiation. I would shift it: the worst, the most necessary, or the most difficult in negotiation is the negotiation between what does not negotiate (and which is non-dialectical, nondialectizable) and dialectizable." See *Negotiations*, op. cit. p. 26.

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we witness these texts' own moments of interruption that attest to *both* a fidelity to integrity and a necessity for them to say something otherwise.

According to Derrida, this movement between integrity and disintegration within all philosophical texts is precisely the material substance of deconstruction, precisely this articulation of philosophical texts at cross-purposes with themselves which formulates the textual crossings of his arguments. Derrida's lexical—semantic, phonetic, anagrammatic ambiguous—operations fall on those terms that, on the one hand, are in need of integrity and yet, on the other (less obvious) hand, reveal a text's own self-destructive or disintegrative performance. These neologisms, lexical tropes or motifs do not *belong* to Derrida's vocabulary but rather belong to the activity of his argument provided by those texts he works on and in.<sup>12</sup> The *vocabulary* resides already within the textual fabric awaiting activation by the forces of a deconstructive practice. Again, this kind of fidelity and appropriation signals the forces of deconstruction as a legitimating (law-abiding) act that recognizes metaphysics as a system that is inherently open in its closure. Paradoxically, metaphysics encountered via deconstruction is inherently infinite, unconditional and affirmative. We suggest further that these movements of negotiation and interruption, integrity and disintegration, closure and clearing, describe the movements of Derrida's negativity (not negation) located in the styles of his “choice” of “lexeme” whereby each textual encounter leads to new lexical

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12 *A note on the lexical*: Firstly, *différance*, which Derrida has stated many times is neither a “word” nor a “concept” (see *Margins of Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 3., and *Positions*, op. cit., p. 40.) because *différance* is rather a motif that is “inscribed” by the double meaning beneath the signifier (i.e., *pharmakon*, supplement, etc.) by which the history of philosophy has tried to disqualify writing (its double meanings). That these double meanings “‘inscribe’ *différance* within themselves: they are always different from themselves, they always defer any singular grasp of their meaning.” (*Positions*, op. cit., footnote 5 p. 100.) Derrida suggests also that *différance* “does not prevent it from producing conceptual effects and verbal or nominal concretions” (but fractured nonetheless by “incessant work of its strange ‘logic.’”) (*ibid.*, p. 40.) Further, because of this fracturing and incessant “logic” it cannot be elevated into a master-word or a master-concept (like those of metaphysical elevation, such as the Hegelian *Aufhebung* or those other metaphysical principles of essence, truth, light, God, identity, origin, telos, proper name, presence, logos, Reason, etc.) as it is enmeshed in the work that pulls it through a chain of other “concepts,” other “words,” other textual configurations. Perhaps, we see that because of the “silent” (*a*) “logic” of *différance*, it would be inaccurate to account for the words, which Derrida works on, through and with as *belonging to his lexical vocabulary*. Derrida suggests in *Positions* that those doubled “words” have no taxonomical closure, and even less do they constitute a lexicon: “First, because these are not *atoms*, but rather focal points of economic condensation, sites of passage necessary for a very large number of marks, slightly more effervescent crucibles. Further, their effects do not simply turn back on themselves by means of auto-affection without opening. Rather they spread out in a chain over the practical and theoretical entirety of a text, and each time in a different way.” (*ibid.*, p. 40.) Rather than a lexical economy we would want to suggest the doubling effect explodes or explores the systematic and playful articulation of the “interval” where simulation (of lists, etc.), undecidables and dissimulation interrupt any notion of origin.

names and procedures for deconstructive, dis-intergrative mobility. Negativity articulates a moving *on*. Derrida's negativity describes something both limiting and infinite. *Both*, the finite and in-finite activate contrary modes of expression at the same time, in more than one style, as a weave of more than one text.

For a brief and apt example here of such textual controversy, *pas*, the French word for “step” can be used in a text to signify a movement forward or backward, progression or regression, and at the same moment, al(er)tered through its homophonic register, *pas* also means “no” or “not.”<sup>13</sup> *Éperons, fors, glas* are all examples of such neo-logicist controversy that further proliferate the “non-argumentative” discursive scene of Derrida’s “arguments,” a scene foreign to the more characteristically argumentative discourse inherent in literary and philosophical commentary.

### Unthinking-Thinking: Hegelian Negation and Derridean Negativity

Our step (*pas*) above describes a kind of moving *on* that contrasts with the Hegelian negative to reveal a “reading [of] thinking against a backdrop of certain necessary possibilities from which it comes into its own, but which it also must remain unable to think if it is to remain thinking.”<sup>14</sup> Unlike Hegel’s negative that is geared toward an absolute and determined system of thought, the inability to think “at this very moment” is precisely the moment that un-thought thought, by the other, is able to think difference. In contrast to Hegel, this suggests a negative which opens itself in its writing affirmatively toward the other and does so through the affirmation of unthinking or what we would more commonly term, chance or contingency. Derrida’s negative activates *contingency* as that which is inherently within the system of language, a dissipating and disseminating “system,” an infinite possibility of differences and deferrals—*diffrance*.<sup>15</sup> *Diffrance* expresses, like the doubtful thinking or rather

13 “*Pas sans pas*” is a phrase which is used by Derrida often in relation to the work of Blanchot and reveals itself to have no neat translation moment. See Blanchot’s *The Step Not Beyond / Le Pas Au-Dela*, op. cit.

14 *Inventions of Difference*, op. cit., p. 180.

15 From antiquity to “negative theology,” the notion of the *infinite* has always been expressed as a negative insofar as what cannot be expressed in finite terms cannot be expressed as positivity but only by an infinite series of negative predicates. Derrida’s *diffrance*, however, marks a blurred boundary or limit across a series of singularities but also goes toward the radical alterity of the other. Aligning

“movement of doubt” addressed in “Cogito and the History of Madness” an excess toward the positive infinite and is thinking *beyond* the determination of things or historically determined forms of classification.

### The Fall Into Time

In “Cogito and the History of Madness” Derrida broaches the traversal of our thinking beyond determinate things in a determined moment of “thought (*within* thought)” that provides a common union or a “zero point” understood, for example, in Descartes *Cogito*:

It is therefore a question of drawing back toward a point at which all determined contradictions, in the form of given, factual historical structures, can appear, and appear as relative to this zero point at which determined meaning and non-meaning come together in their common origin.<sup>16</sup>

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somewhat with Levinasian infinity in its Cartesian lineage, *differance* is not language determining the other as a violent system of finite thought. With *differance*, infinity becomes un-limiting and the affirmative possibility on the side of doubt, madness and dreams where thinking is still on-going, interrupting the classical and historical determinations of “reason” or “madness.” With this articulation of *differance*, we engage with Derrida’s deconstruction of Foucault’s *Madness and Civilization* as an archaeology of the birth of the asylum and the invention of the boundary between sanity and unreason. It is on a reading of Descartes’ “Evil Genius” of unreason who will be contrived in reason that they will fundamentally differ:

Invulnerable to all determined opposition between reason and unreason, it is the point starting from which the history of the determined forms of this opposition, this opened or broken-off-dialogue, can appear as such and be stated. It is the impenetrable point of certainty in which the possibility of Foucault’s narration, as well as of the narration of the totality, or rather of *all* the determined forms of the exchanges between reason and madness are embedded. It is the point at which the project of thinking this totality by escaping it is embedded. By escaping it: that is to say, by exceeding the totality, which—within existence—is possible only in the direction of infinity and nothingness; for even if the totality of what I think is imbued with falsehood or madness, even if the totality of the world up to and including the very contents of my thought, I still think, I am *while* I think. (“Cogito and the History of Madness,” in *Writing and Difference*, op. cit., pp. 31-63; p. 56.)

See also “To Do Justice to Freud: The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis,” in *Resistances of Psychoanalysis*, op. cit., pp. 70-118. Derrida resumes his discussion of the Foucault text and reiterates the kernel of his difference. *Glas* shows this *thinking* erring on the side of an *irrational* compositional system. The *irrational* system reveals *within* the systems of Hegelian, Marxian, Freudian thought a pre-oppositional mode *working* within each, operating between negotiation and interruption. It is important to acknowledge Derrida’s cross-cutting process in relation to what he describes as the “hyperbolic excess” of Descartes’ final stage of doubt and how this relates to the notion of *excess*.

16 “Cogito and the History of Madness,” op. cit., p. 56.

With respect of this “zero point” we *fall* from moments of un-limited infinite excess into the history of philosophy. This temporal movement of *fall* into the coordinates of historical determinations and beyond into the *excess* of unthought-thought, beyond time, paradoxically is provided in the ability to say anything, that is to say, in *speech*. We are therefore led back *into* time where speech lives by excluding Nothing, silence and madness. To quote Heidegger here:

Only if the letting stand against [*gegenstehenlassen*] of ... is a holding oneself in the nothing can the representing allow a not-nothing [*ein nicht-Nichts*], i.e., something like a being if such a thing shows itself empirically, to be encountered instead of and within the nothing.<sup>17</sup>

*Différance* would in the same moment attain a fidelity to the strange *nicht-Nichts*, the not-nothing of Heidegger’s “something like a being” that is yet encountered within the nothing but *instead* of the nothing. It would also betray Heidegger here for the resoluteness of salvaging a difference within the “instead” and in the “stand against” that would sacrifice the nothing in a not-nothing. The affirmation of *Différance* annuls the double sacrifice of Heideggerian ontological difference. Its negativity exceeds the relationality that for Heidegger would be the originary difference of the “instead.”

### Conflicts of Force: The In-stead of Hegelian Difference and *Différance*

With the “infinitude” of Derrida’s negative process, each point in the process is historically (singularly) locatable yet the process is not a totalisable one, but rather is always in *excess* of this determinate possibility. Historicity or historicality would not bring about the calculability of return. There would be no anniversary for the temporality of the singularity of each point. We may recognize a strong connection here between Heidegger’s understanding of *transcendence* and Derrida’s *excess*.<sup>18</sup> In

17 Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. by J.S. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962) p. 49.

18 Heidegger’s *transcendence* is a reworking of Kantian *transcendence* via Da sein as itself the movement beyond, in the sense of the crossing over of beings by which they become manifest and becomes objects. This “crossing over” is elaborated in “What is Metaphysics?”: “Being held out into the nothing — as Dasein is — on the ground of concealed anxiety makes man a lieutenant of the nothing. ... Being held out into the nothing — as Dasein is —on the ground of concealed anxiety is its surpassing of

*Positions* Derrida comments on his lexical “transcendentalism,” revealing at work a working against Hegelian determinism (speculative dialectics) and towards an infinite possibility of negotiations and interruptions, posited in the negative. That is, the *second* phase inscribed in the double-scene of writing of Derrida’s bifurcated writing practice within the philosophical or literary text, the *interval*, is set to work by undecidables.<sup>19</sup> These undecidable marks work to resist and disorganize philosophical and literary binary opposition: “*without ever* constituting a third term, without ever leaving room for a solution in the form of speculative dialectics.”<sup>20</sup> As this simulated, etymological serial play of lists would have it:

...(the *pharmakon* is neither remedy nor poison, neither good nor evil, neither the inside nor the outside, neither speech nor writing; the *supplement* is neither a plus nor a minus, neither an outside nor the complement of an inside, neither accident nor essence, etc; the *hymen* is neither confusion nor distinction, neither identity nor difference, neither consummation nor virginity, neither the veil nor the unveiling, neither the inside nor the outside, etc; the *gram* is neither a signifier nor a signified, neither a sign nor a thing, neither a presence nor an absence, neither a position nor a negation, etc; *spacing* is neither space nor time; the *incision* is neither the incised integrity of a beginning, or a simple cutting into, nor simple secondary. Neither/nor, that is, *simultaneously* either *or*; the mark is also the *marginal* limit, the *march*, etc.).<sup>21</sup>

Derrida warns us earlier in this text, as he moves through the procession of a “kind of general strategy of deconstruction,” of the necessity for moving carefully without

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beings as a whole. It is transcendence.” (Heidegger, “What is Metaphysics?” in *Basic Writings*, op. cit., pp. 89-110, p. 108.) Heidegger states that Being and the nothing do belong together, not because both — from the point of view of the Hegelian concept of thought — agree in their indeterminateness and immediacy, but rather because Being itself is essentially finite and reveals itself only in the transcendence of Da sein which is held out into the nothing. Further — and in direct relation to what we describe above as a movement between integrity and disintegration within all philosophical texts, the material substance of deconstruction, articulation of philosophical texts at cross-purposes with themselves — Heidegger writes: “Assuming the question of Being as such is the encompassing question of metaphysics, then the question of the nothing proves to be such that it embraces the whole of metaphysics. But the question of the nothing pervades the whole of metaphysics since at the same time it forces us to face the problem of the origin of negation, that is, ultimately, to face up to the decision concerning the legitimacy of the rule of ‘logic’ in metaphysics.” (ibid., p. 108.) Heidegger himself is defending negation outside of notions of representation and objectivity in the contemporary logic and sciences. The problem is whether negation is a logical function or whether it has ontological ties and is an indefinable element in judgement.

19 See *Positions*, op. cit., p. 43. Derrida defines “undecidables” as “unities of simulacrum, ‘false’ verbal properties.”

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

proceeding too quickly in the act of *overturning* hierarchical positions.<sup>22</sup> It is thus not surprising that this extraordinary sentence above *concludes* on the “*march*, etc” where “*marche*” translates as “march” as in a militant procession, but also as the less regimented mark of “step,” “degree,” “action of movement by walking,” in passing on in the interval’s margin. That is, one proceeds carefully without moving too hastily as the etymological play simulated above inscribes “concepts” which simultaneously mean either or neither of their classified meanings.<sup>23</sup>

The Hegelian *aufheben* (*relève*) is a resolution of any classical ideal of *logical* contradiction into resolution: “a resolution of contradiction into a third term.”<sup>24</sup> The Hegelian concept of *logical* contradiction (*Widerspruch*) is not the same as Derrida’s notion of contradiction. *Différance*, the process of differentiation permits a differentiated accounting for heterogeneous modes of conflict for contradictions:

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22 Ibid., p. 41.: “Therefore one might proceed too quickly to a *neutralization* that *in practice* would leave the previous field untouched, leaving one no hold on the previous opposition, thereby preventing any means of *intervening* in the field effectively. We know what always have been the *practical* (particularly *political*) effects of *immediately* jumping *beyond* oppositions, and of protests in the simple form of *neither this nor that*.” Particularly, perhaps, when it comes to the Hegelian system!

23 See ibid., footnote 11, p. 101. T.N.: “The series in French is *marque*, *marge*, *marche*. “*Marche*” in French has the sense not only of “march,” but also of “step,” “degree,” “action of movement by walking,” etc.” We also re-iterate what we have said a little earlier, concerning Derrida’s “negativity” as that which “moves on.” His negativity describes something both finite and in-finite. We have made reference to his play with the French *pas*.

24 Ibid., p. 43. *Relève* is Derrida’s translation of the Hegelian term *Aufhebung*, which means to preserve and negate in a spiritual “lifting up” to a “higher level.” *Erinnerung* is the “interiorizing memory” into which contradictions are “lifted up” (negated) and preserved. Crucially, *Aufhebung* has two contradictory meanings, all to the speculative profit in Hegel’s consideration as it makes possible the resolution of contradiction, the negation of negation in sublation. This contra-diction draws Derrida to Hegelian negativity precisely for the play of *différance* at work in the *Aufhebung*: “...there is nothing from which the *Aufhebung* cannot profit. However, as Derrida points out, there is always an effect of *différance* when the same word has two contradictory meanings. Indeed it is this effect of *différance*—the excess of the trace *Aufhebung* itself—that is precisely what the *Aufhebung* can never *aufheben* lift up, conserve, and negate. This is why Derrida wishes to constrain the *Aufhebung* to write itself otherwise, or simply to write itself otherwise, or simply to write itself, to take into account its consumption of writing. Without writing the trace, there could be no words with double, contradictory meanings.” See *Différance*, op. cit. T.N. footnote 23, pp. 19-20. See also corresponding footnotes on the *Aufhebung* and Derrida’s translation as *relève* in “*Ouisa* and *Gramme*,” op. cit., T.N. footnote 15, p. 43; and in “The Pit and the Pyramid,” op. cit., under a title “*Relever*—What Talking Means,” T.N. footnote 16, p. 88. All texts are from *Margins of Philosophy*, op. cit. Note that in the translator’s comment quoted above, Bass perhaps unwittingly works the *relève* of the *Aufhebung*. He suggests that “Derrida points out ... .” In his footnote 16, p. 88, he comments: “Derrida is also playing on the “ordinary” sense of *relever*, meaning “to point out.” He will come to demonstrate that to point out (*relever*) what talking means is to point out that it means *relever* (*aufheben*).” We would want to return but via the incalculable this *point* of the “pointing out” to the infinitude of the point in Derrida’s negative process in the cadence, step (*pas*), march (*marche*), fall (*tombe*) into time.

If I have more often spoken of conflicts of force than of contradiction, this is first of all due to a critical wariness as concerns the Hegelian concept of contradiction (*Widerspruch*), which, in addition, as its name indicates, is constructed in such a way as to permit resolution within dialectical *discourse*, in the immanence of a concept capable of its own exteriority, capable of maintaining what is outside it right next to it. To reduce *différance* to difference is to stay far behind in this debate. ... Thus defined, the “undecidable,” which is not contradiction in the Hegelian form of contradiction, situates, in a rigorously Freudian sense, the *unconscious* of philosophical contradiction, the unconscious which ignores contradiction to the extent that contradiction belongs to the logic of speech, discourse, consciousness, presence, truth, etc.<sup>25</sup>

Yet it would not be entirely the case that Hegel had not considered the unconscious, though clearly not in a rigorous Freudian sense. Yet it is precisely the sense in which Hegel did incorporate the unconscious that in a way constituted a spur to *Glas*, and leads us to emphasize an account of Derrida’s negativity in conjunction with a reading of “Before the Law.” Derrida fore-tells, rings the warning bell in “The Pit and the Pyramid: Introduction to Hegel’s Semiology,” dating from 1968:

In a work in preparation on Hegel’s family and on sexual difference in the dialectical speculative economy, we will bring to light the organisation and displacement of this chain which reassembles the values of night, sepulcher, and divine—familial—feminine law as the law of singularity—and does so around the pit and the pyramid. A citation as a touchstone: “But if the universal thus easily knocks off the very tip of the pyramid and, indeed, carries off the victory over the rebellious principle of pure individuality, viz., the Family, it has thereby merely entered on a conflict with the divine law, a conflict of self-conscious Spirit with what is unconscious. For the latter is the other essential power, and is therefore not destroyed, but merely wronged by the conscious Spirit. But it has only the bloodless shade to help it in actually carrying out *its* law in face of the power and authority of that other publicly manifest law. Being law of weakness and darkness it therefore succumbs to the powerful law of the upper world, for the power of the former is effective in the underworld, not on earth.”<sup>26</sup>

*Glas* suggests that Freud, along with a number of others, never did manage to extract himself from the Hegelian system, even if he did torment it in his effort to find a way outside. Would, then, Derrida’s strategic bet on a rigorously Freudian sense of the unconscious as that which ignores contradiction as *it* belongs to the logic of speech,

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25 *Positions*, op. cit., p. 101.

26 “The Pit and the Pyramid,” op. cit., footnote 7, p. 77.

consciousness and so on, would this adherence to Freud at this moment on the belonging of contradiction to the logic of consciousness be a feign of the *Aufhebung*, a feign of the *relève* in the “ordinary” sense of its pointing out, or would it be the pointing out of *relève* itself as the silent work of *Différance*?

### Dissemination Means Nothing

The irreducible and conflicting character of *différance* and the alterity inscribed in it resist Hegelian difference-as-contradiction that resolves the exteriorization of speculative dialectics into self-presence.<sup>27</sup> The marking (inscription) of *différance* at the “zero point” we spoke of earlier is where dialectics and the *force* of conflict intervene, negotiate and interrupt the reductive system of speculative contradiction. This is the scene of textual controversy we know as *Glas*.<sup>28</sup> This “zero point” is not

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27 See “*Différance*,” in *Margins of Philosophy*, op. cit. esp. p. 14: “I contend, of course, that the word *différance* can also serve other purposes: first, because it marks not only the activity of “originary” difference, but also the temporizing detour of deferral; and above all because *différance* thus written, although maintaining relations of profound affinity with Hegelian discourse (such as it must be read), is also, up to a certain point, unable to break with that discourse (which has no kind of meaning or chance); but it can operate a kind of infinitesimal and radical displacement of it.”

28 The initial mark we draw into proximity is the ‘*a*’ whose silence we have already noted in *différance* effecting the effacing of a “concept” and a “word.” The ‘*a*’ of *Glas* finds proximity to *différance* whereby attention is drawn to the act of listening or the silent and intervening forms of *communication* that occurs between two texts in the double session that *Glas* performs. The textual controversy of *Glas* firstly or most literally occurs through the excision and juxtaposition of texts from Hegel and Genet. These two positions, two major columns, two listening posts, are asymmetrically composed and can in no way yield to being read in the form of presence, supposing that something can ever yield to *reading* in this form. (See on this “*Ousia* and *Gramme*: A note on a note on Being and Time” in *Margins of Philosophy*, op. cit.). This ‘*a*’ marking a silence, as we have just alluded to above, is also a kind of sounding, a listening to the unconscious as:

... the *unconscious* of philosophical contradiction, the unconscious which ignores contradiction to the extent that contradiction belongs to the logic of speech, discourse, consciousness, presence, truth, etc. We bring deconstruction and the unconscious into proximity as we begin to address *dissemination* as the operator of a general strategy of deconstruction which means nothing and cannot be reassembled into a definition. (*Positions*, op. cit., p. 44.)

This we read together with the *unconscious* and its relation to a listening to the materiality of language. As Barthes notes from *Empire of Signs*: “the implicit, the indirect, the supplementary, the delayed: listening grants access to all forms of polysemy, of overdetermination, of superimposition.” (Barthes, p. 258, cited in Ulmer, “Sounding the Unconscious,” in *Glossary*, op. cit., p. 47.) Ulmer goes on to suggest: Liberated from the old intentional model of audition, listening now speaks, according to Barthes, in the “grain of the voice,” producing what Derrida calls “dissemination.” He then again quotes Barthes:

... . ‘What is listened to here and there ... is not the advent of a signified, object of a recognition or of a deciphering, but the very dispersion, the *shimmering* of signifiers, ceaselessly restored to a listening which ceaselessly produces new ones from them without ever arresting their meaning: this phenomenon of shimmering is called *signifying* (*significance*), as distinct from signification.’ *Glas* concerns precisely the dimension not of signification but of *signifying* [my italics]. (ibid.)

fixed. It is where we locate Derrida's negativity as the relation between the calculable and incalculable, a dialectics on/of dialectics and non-dialectics, *pas sans pas* (step/not without the step/not) and what we have entitled, from Derrida, the “Not–Yet.” This would have been a system posed in the negative—*anti-Hegelian*—as the work of simulacrum which makes the successful synthesis, the *Aufhebung*, impossible. An impossibility as Hegel suggests:

Dialectics has a *positive* result because it has a *specifically-determined* (*bestimmten*) *content*; that is, because its result is not truly (*wahrhaft*) *empty* [and] *abstract Nothingness* (*Nichts*), but the Negation of *certain specific-determinations* (*gewissen Bestimmungen*), which are contained in the result precisely because this latter is not an *immediate* (*unmittelbares*) *Nothingness*, but a result.<sup>29</sup>

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The “a” in *Glas* forms the material substance of a ring in-between the bell-(knell)-strokes: That is, the “a” performs a silent and invisible (but divisible) scaffold that allows for the textual cuttings (Hegel, Genet, Freud, Lacan, Rousseau, etc.) to hear otherwise. This is Derrida’s fundamental principle of *iterability* with:

... the possibility of disengagement and citational graft which belongs to the structure of every mark. ... ‘There is where one steals, flies [*vole*]. That the sign is detached signifies of course that it is cut away [*coupé*] from its place of emission or its natural belonging; but the separation is never perfect, the difference never consum(mat)ed. The bleeding [*sanglant*] detachment is also — repetition — delegation, mandate, delay, relay. Adherence. The detached remain(s) collared [*collé*] thereby [*par l’â*], by the [*par lâ*] glue of *differance*, by the a [*par l’â*]. The a of gl agglutinates the detached differentiae. The scaffold of the A is gluing.’ (*Glas*, 188b) ... producing a collage of contexts that subverts the metaphor of sight in ‘theory.’ Derrida, in short, goes after the ear, after that hearing productive of self-presence, with the strategy called ‘glas’. (Glossary, op. cit., p. 35.)

Finally, and in reference to the scaffolding of the capitalized “A” in the context of *Glas* just cited, and in relation to the ‘a’ of *differance*, it is noted in *Differance*, op. cit., and “From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism without Reserve,” from *Writing and Difference*: “It is proposed by a mute mark, by a tacit monument, I will even say by a pyramid, thinking not only of the form of the letter when printed as a capital, but of the text in Hegel’s *Encyclopedia* in which the body of the sign is compared to the Egyptian pyramid.” (*Differance*, op. cit., p. 4.) And this monument is further developed whereby the discourse of logos, which draws the all-speaking truth from the bottom of a well, is opposed to the writing older than truth which is marked on the front of the monument. (See *Positions*, op. cit., footnote 4, p. 99.) Here we have monumental letters re-memorialized from “ATVM” as well as the effects of *differance* noted earlier that point out a *relève* as the feign of the *Aufhebung* that radically displaces the Hegelian contradiction of the conscious/unconscious: the (H)aigle’s swoop that “tips off” the pyramid point.

29 Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, cited in Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, op. cit., p. 203. Kojève unpacks Hegel’s *positive* result of the work of negativity: “Dialectical Negation is the negation of an Identity—that is, of something *determined*, *specific*, which corresponds to an eternal ‘idea’ or fixed ‘nature.’ Now, the specific-determination of what is negated (and identical) determines and specifies both the negation itself and its (total) result. The negation of A has a *positive* or specifically determined content because it is a negation of A, and not of M or N, for example, or of some underdetermined X. Thus, the ‘A’ is *preserved* in the ‘non-A,’ or, if you please, the ‘A’ is ‘dialectically overcome’ (*aufgehoben*) in the ‘non-A.’ And that is why the ‘non-A’ is not pure Nothingness, but an entity that is just as ‘positive’ —i.e., determined or specific, or better, identical to itself—as the A which is negated in it: the non-A is all this because it *results* from the negation of a determined or specific A; or, again, the non-A is not nowhere because the A has a fixed and stable place in the heart of a well-ordered Cosmos.” (ibid.)

Double negation is Hegel's dialectically constructed process. It exists in turning already determinate negative terms i.e., that already negated into something new, a turning that is an overturning. The Hegelian “moment” is a fulcrum, a lever, for leverage. It is torque, turning force, a turning moment, turning force into talk, logos, speech, overcoming yet saving external intuition as universal concept and then the concept-shredding, sacrifice of knowing self for self-conscious bondage. The true (which cannot come from an original term such as in classical negation) is the whole (totality), the Absolute, i.e., at the end of the process is its truth as *end (totalisable positive-result)*. Derrida suggests that it is the internal “logic” of this process whereby the negative lacks independence which generates the movement through mediation and reappropriation: “According to a process of mediation and dialectical reappropriation, the inside of speculative philosophy sublates *its own* outside as a moment of its negativity.”<sup>30</sup> Hence a system that is perpetually digesting what has come before it in order for it to move forward. And in order to leave this system one needs to consider Derrida’s less *formalized* or predetermined notion of time — in his *remainder of time*. Initially, though, we emphasize that *dissemination* leaves the *force-field* of sublation for it cannot be subsumed within conceptuality: “If *dissemination*, seminal *differance*, cannot be summarized into an exact conceptual tenor, it is because the force and form of its disruption *explode* the semantic horizon.”<sup>31</sup> Derrida is also leaving the field of hermeneutics in its proximal relation to the horizon of possibility within dialectics as a teleological and totalizing system and its force to reassemble the totality of a text into the truth of its meaning thereby annulling the potentiality of an open and productive displacement of the textual chain:

Dissemination, on the contrary, although producing a nonfinite number of semantic effects, can be led back neither to a present of simple origin ... nor to an eschatological presence. It marks an irreducible and *generative* multiplicity. The supplement and the turbulence of a certain lack fracture the limit of the text, forbidding an exhaustive and closed

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30 *Dissemination*, op. cit., p. 11. Derrida is discussing in his “preface” to *Dissemination*, “Outwork,” Hegel’s preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, a preface that Hegel felt compelled to write in order to denounce the efficacy of the preface in general, in order to refuse the preface. Hence: “The preface that Hegel must write, in order to denounce a preface that is both impossible and inescapable, must be assigned two locations and two sorts of scope. It belongs both to the inside and to the outside of the concept.”

31 *Positions*, op. cit., p. 45.

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formalization of it, or at least a saturating taxonomy of its themes, its signified, its meaning.<sup>32</sup>

In effect we are getting close to an order of an impossible possibility of a temporality that is outside the present of Hegel's “this—now” time.<sup>33</sup> This would also be the impossible possibility of an analysis of time of the coexistence of *different nows* as our reading of “ATVM” has suggested. It is, says Derrida, the “same” moment and yet it is different, for the “same” (*même*) follows the noun, and in fact in French means something more like “very.” The occurrences of the phrase “at this very moment,” in Derrida's essay are altered by their quotation, their “here and now” at *this* very moment (*this now*) — *angling* them toward each other prevents the phrase pointing to a present. Derrida reenacts Levinas's *saying* and *said*, “uttering” and “uttered” that points to the fragility and lability of language as a system that seams and tears. Through quotation Derrida suggests language provides the subjective field whereby the impossible possibility of a time that was, at least in the Levinasian encounter, is opened up as a responsibility toward the Other. We recognize here a responsibility demanded by the Other that is outside of the present temporal succession of an Hegelian “this now” time that begins the process of reflexive consciousness or self-consciousness.

“Violence and Metaphysics” explores how Levinasian ethics guarantees the otherness of the other through the negative whereby the radical alterity of the other is preserved

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32 Ibid., p. 45. This excess or surplus, the irreducible and *generative* multiplicity of seminal *differance* as dissemination, resists formalization; i.e., Derrida refers readers to the inseparable texts “The Double Session” and “Dissemination” in *Dissemination*, as well as “*Differance*” and “White Mythology: Metaphor and the Text of Philosophy,” in *Margins of Philosophy*. These texts *rigorously* determine the impossibility of an exhaustive formalization in the classical sense, a rigour that would not return its determination to the paleconomy of classical sense. With our consideration of Derrida's time, i.e., the *remainder of time* to follow, these notions of *seminal differance*, *dissemination* excess, surplus, remainder, etc., will relate.

33 Hegel's “this now” represents the cross of time. At the beginning of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel points out that when you say “now,” what you were referring to has already gone, and made thus a deictic and token-reflexive expression, the start of reflexive consciousness in time. See *Phenomenology of Spirit*, op. cit., pp. 59-60: “It is, then, sense-certainty itself that must be asked: ‘What is the *This*? If we take the ‘This’ in the twofold shape of its being, as ‘Now’ and as ‘Here’, the dialectic it has in it will receive a form as intelligible as the ‘This’ itself is.’” Hegel goes on emphasize that in the saying of the now (his example, “Now is Night”) the Now that is Night is preserved while the night becomes Day. Hence: “The Now does indeed preserve itself, but as something that is *not* Night ... in other words as a negative in general.” Derrida suggests with “ATVM” that the *saying* can be considered *reflexive* in that it is a mirroring of what *cannot* be incorporated into what is *said*. And further, the *moment* of attachment of language to its act is overlapped and interlocked. It is not a positing by an agent but rather arises from negotiation and interruption in the event of language that is imposed by our relationship (responsibility) to the other.

through the inadmissibility of speaking of it.<sup>34</sup> In this respect, we could see Derrida's Levinas is *contra* Derrida's Hegel. The problem that is clearly demonstrated in "ATVM" and announced in "Violence and Metaphysics" is how a moving-beyond-speech may be spoken of. The whole force of the Hegelian speculative process is to bring together without residue or remainder, what Bataille termed a "restricted economy." This brings together speaking and what is spoken of and, more generally, consciousness and the content created by consciousness: "source and product in the self-particularizing movement of Thought's development."<sup>35</sup> Kojève suggests concerning Hegelian totality and a temporality "without residue":

Now Dialectic shows us that Negativity (= Freedom) differs from Nothingness only to the extent that it is inserted into Totality (= historical synthesis, in which the future is incorporated in the present through the intermediary of the past), and that the real is Totality, instead of pure Identity, only to the extent that it implies its own negation.<sup>36</sup>

*Différance* and *dissemination* as radical alterity or conflictual forces are negativity working against Hegelian *sublation*. *Différance*'s vowel *change* brings *both* differentiation and deferral, logical and temporal distinction, a change or force of an infinite chain of extension: "that which can no more be integrated into the symbolic than it can form the symbolic's *simple* exterior under the heading of its failure or its ... impossibility."<sup>37</sup>

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34 "Violence and Metaphysics," op. cit., p. 151: "By making the origin of language, meaning, and difference the relation to the infinitely other, Levinas is resigned to betraying his own intentions in his philosophical discourse. The latter is understood, and instructs, only by first permitting the same and Being to circulate within it." Levinas will have responded to Derrida's deconstruction in *Otherwise than Being*, by amplifying the radicality of his understanding of the Saying and the Said, notions not explored sufficiently in *Totality and Infinity*. Of course, with the Saying, one is, paradoxically, deconstructively both inside and outside of language in its classical sense. Levinas thereby evades Derrida's accusation of "empiricism" at the close of "Violence and Metaphysics," and complicates with this difference the profitability of Hegelian speculation for understanding their relationality.

35 See Derrida, "From Restricted to General Economy," op. cit. We recognize a debt Derrida has to Georges Bataille for his determination of what he termed the "general text," or *écriture*, writing, in terms of Bataille's reading of Hegelian dialectics as a "restricted economy" in relation to his own libidinal economics of excess: "The general economy, in the first place, makes apparent that excesses of energy are produced, and that by definition, these excesses cannot be utilized. The excessive energy can only be lost without the slightest aim, consequently without any meaning. It is this useless, senseless loss that *is* sovereignty." Bataille, *The Accursed Share*, cited in ibid., p. 270.

36 Kojève, op. cit., p. 234.

37 See *Positions*, op. cit., p. 85 ff.

## Glas (Derridean Negativity and Hegelian Negation)

The text excludes dialectics.<sup>38</sup>

Derrida's *Glas* enacts a textual economy that has no simple exterior limit yet it excludes dialectics through his notion of the "general text." Gasché suggests that the generalized text is not something that is closed upon itself in such a manner that its limits would demarcate an inside from an outside.<sup>39</sup> And Derrida warns that the conceptual generalization of text should not wind up "... under the influence of very precise interests, reactive forces determined to lead work astray into confusion ... as the definition of a new self-interiority, a new 'idealism' if you will, of the text."<sup>40</sup> That is, the "general text," which positions Derrida's deconstructive strategy of writing and reading does not fall into the conventional meanings of *text*.<sup>41</sup> Instead, Derrida's notion of the general text or generalized concept of text exceeds traditional determination of text as totality: "In whatever terms—empirical, idealist, or dialectical— *text* is defined, it always implies a closure upon itself with a clear inside and outside, whether it is the empirical closure of the unity of a corpus, the intelligible unity of a work, or the dialectical totality of its formal or thematic meanings."<sup>42</sup> We have suggested in Chapter 6 that the problem of *closure* for Derrida is precisely the moment where a text exceeds its own unity, intelligibility and totality, at the position of restorative blindness that *exceeds* its transgressive bounds. The problem of closure would exemplify Derrida's

38 *Dissemination*, op. cit., p. 122.

39 See Gasché, *Tain of the Mirror*, op. cit., p. 280.

40 *Positions*, op. cit., p. 66, also cited in ibid., p. 278.

41 Gasché highlights three concepts of a text that Derrida's concept of *text* must be clearly set against. Firstly he demarcates an empirical encounter of text as transcription of orality or materiality transcended by meaning; secondly there would be the Structuralist text of signification, of signifiers and signifieds, of a signifying organization and structure. But as Derrida suggests: "a text is never truly made up of 'signs' or 'signifiers.' (*Dissemination*, op. cit., p. 261.) We would like to quote Gasché's third encounter here for its relevance to *Glas* as a general text which has no outside yet excludes in its inclusion Hegelian dialectics: "3. Another, and perhaps final, concept conceives of *text* as the dialectical sublation, either as "form" or "content," of both its sensible and ideal determinations. Unlike the previous definitions of *text*, which, by virtue of their opposition and isolation, could be termed intellectual (*verstandesmäßige*) concepts, the dialectical determination of text is its reasonable or rational concept. All those analyses that link a text's sensible and intelligible constituents, as well as the etymologies, allusions, implications, and *sous-entendues* of all sorts, within one totality of either form or content, understand *text* within the limits of speculative philosophy (Idealist or Romantic). By exhibiting the text as the totality of a positioning and reciprocal annihilation of oppositions, as the play of a mutual limitation of self and Otherness, the text is determined as the milieu, the element of *Aufhebung*, or which is the same, of the dialectical exposition of that which is implied in its very concept (*was im Begriffe liegt*)."  
(Gasché, *Tain of the Mirror*, op. cit., pp. 278-279.)

42 Ibid., p. 280.

conceptual working of a general text that is reliant on or works deconstructively *with* conventional or traditional *closures* that define *text*.<sup>43</sup> However, as Gasché notes, this generalization of the text is not “an extension or application of the traditional concept of the text to its traditional inside.”<sup>44</sup> He notes:

Yet if the general text delimits the traditional totalizing concepts of what has been called text, it also implies that the entirely different text, because it is no longer a totality, has no inside or outside. The generalized text is not something that is closed upon *itself* [my italics] in such a manner that its limits would demarcate an inside from an outside. As “Living On” argues, the general text is rather that border itself, from which the assignment of insides and outsides takes place, as well as where this distinction ultimately collapses.<sup>45</sup>

43 See footnote 35 this chapter, and also Gasché, op. cit, pp. 278-279.

44 Gasché, op. cit, p. 280. Gasché notes that the rejection of the text as a totality dependent on a unifying last reason or transcendental signified does not simply mean the suppression of the text’s referentiality. However, this does not imply an exhaustion of reference but rather precisely the general text, and perhaps, an indifference to the ideality of Hegelian dialectics. Although the referent is lifted, “reference remains.” “Truth” (as *adequatio*) is set aside from the general text; relations to truth, projected coinciding, *remains*. In short, then, the general text is *about*, yet without a decidable referent that could saturate, in the last instance, its referral to Otherness. “There is no extra-text,” (i.e., there is nothing outside the text) means just this: nothing outside the text can, like a last reason, assume a *fulfilling function* (*Erfüllungsfunktion*) of the textual referrals. (ibid., pp. 280-281.) See also for further reference, Derrida’s “The Double Session,” in *Dissenutation*, op. cit. pp. 173-285. For example, Derrida draws the graphic of the hymen between Hegel and Mallarmé, where Mime, mimicry and mimesis would constitute the as-structure for the general text: “A copy of a copy, a simulacrum that simulates the Platonic simulacrum—the Platonic copy of a copy as well as the Hegelian curtain have lost here the lure of the present referent and thus find themselves lost of dialectics and ontology, lost for absolute knowledge.” (ibid., p. 219.) “The Double Session” suggests that whilst a text refers to itself, this movement never comes to completion. In addition all self-referral is grafted on a structurally endless referral to other determinate texts, thus making all textual self-reflexivity *ultimately* impossible. On the Hegelian curtain, Derrida offers a footnote reference to Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and a long quote on the “so-called curtain [of appearance]” that conceals the inner world from the inner being: “It is manifest that behind the so-called curtain which is supposed to conceal the inner world, there is nothing to be seen unless we go behind it ourselves, as much in order that we may see, as that there may be something behind there which can be seen. But at the same time it is evident that we cannot without more ado go straightway behind appearance.” See *Phenomenology of Spirit*, op. cit., p. 103 cited in “The Double Session,” op. cit., footnote 31, p. 219.

45 Gasché, op. cit, p. 280. Gasché is referring to Derrida’s “Living On • Borderlines,” op. cit. For example: “If we are to approach [*a border*] a text, for example, it must have a *bord*, an edge. Take this text. What is its upper edge? Its title (“Living On”)? But when do you start reading it? What if you started reading it after the first sentence (another upper edge), which functions as its first reading head but which itself in turn folds its outer edges back over onto inner edges whose mobility—multilayered, quotational, displaced from meaning to meaning—prohibits you from making out a shoreline? There is a regular *submerging* of the shore.” (ibid., p. 81.) With respect to the *folds* just mentioned, see also “The Double Session”: “If there is no such thing as a total or proper meaning, it is because the blank folds over. The fold is not an accident that happens to the blank.” (see p. 258.) The border that defines and collapses inside and outside is an activity or *general* movement occurring in *Glas* that we have addressed above as *seminal différence*. Consider also this comment on Heidegger from Joan Stambaugh with respect to his text “The Principle of Identity”: “Heidegger understands the “is” in identity as the relation of belonging together, and it is this new meaning of identity which concerns him in this lecture. What is new about this understanding of identity as a relation is that the relation first determines the manner of being of what is to be related and the how of this relation. It is perhaps

*Glas*'s active border assigning of inside-outside relations and simultaneous collapsing of a traditional border-notion is most easily detected (at first entry so-to-speak) at the level of formal-compositional disruption of the *book*. On entry, the first destabilizing and delimiting of opposition itself, as a critique of Hegel, comes in the *unlikely* composition juxtaposition of Hegel against Genet.<sup>46</sup> Such an unlikely coupling is the initiating of an asymmetrical relation opposed to the opposition so precisely needed for Hegelian dialectics. That is, we read across from one column to its *other* and away from any neat linear reading that columns should impose, from the orthogonal cross-hairs of discrete horizontality and verticality, to the lattice of dissemination. The imposition or imposter here comes in many forms, not just in the disjointed themes of the excised writers (Hegel and Genet) but via the *graphics* of textual dissymmetry as plurality of styles where any notion of a Master style has been abandoned.<sup>47</sup> There is no slave to any master in a reading looking for security or reasonable style, and determined by any general ideal. Rather, we encounter a Bataillian *sovereignty* that so cunningly re-reads Hegel's mastery with a general economy of excess. We encounter interruptions of interruptions with a dissolving shore-line of textual layouts, where columns sit within columns, white spaces intervene with the coherency of sections and the unity of a neat binary, where typefaces and sizing co-mingle and become entangled across *the* Hegel and Genet columns.<sup>48</sup>

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difficult for us to think of a relation as being more original than what is related, but this is what Heidegger requires of us." (Stambaugh, "Introduction," in Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, op. cit., pp. 11-12.) We would recognize that Derrida's border too is a relation preceding and making available that which is related.

46 That is, for instance, Hegel, the State-upholding Professor, placed against Genet, the petty thief and homosexual writer.

47 In graphic design for publishing, page design is typically a set of formalized and standardized iterations of a Master-style whereby headings, subheadings, body-copy, headers and footers, page numbering etc., are all governed by a continuity of chosen typefaces, font sizing, colour specifications, leading and kerning between letters and words, margins and page sizing, etc. In *Glas* there is one overarching grid of two predominant large columns (Hegel and Genet which are commonly nominated for citation purposes as columns A & B respectively) that prescribes their inner and outer margins (dictated by the scale of the page size). Yet any consistent Master-style is abandoned, creating a reading characterized by dissymmetry and unexpected connections through the fragmentation and excesses of its design styles. These graphemes at once shore up and undermine what we have previously encountered as the "grand style," discussed by Heidegger with respect to Nietzsche. Matthew Arnold defined the grand style thus: "Such a style arises when a noble nature, poetically gifted, treats with simplicity or with severity a serious subject." (Cited in J.A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (London: Penguin, 1998) pp. 362-363.) This serious subject of the Absolute, would there be any more serious, engaged more simply or severely, than with *Glas*?

48 There are two predominant faces used in the printing of *Glas*, one serif and one sans-serif, the former could be construed conventionally as the body of *Glas* with the sans-serif performing the role given to footnotes. This is one way of perceiving this two-faced role, or this face-to-face. But, of course,

Two unequal columns, they say distyle [*dissent-ils*], each of which — envelop(e)s or sheath(es), incalculably reverses, turns inside out, replaces, remarks, overlaps [*recoupe*] the other.

The incalculable of *what remained* calculates itself, elaborates all the *coups* [strokes, blows, etc.], twists or scaffolds them in silence, you would wear yourself out even faster by counting them. Each little square is delimited, each column rises with an impassive self-sufficiency, and yet the element of contagion, the infinite circulation of *general* [my italics] equivalences relates each sentence, each stump of writing (for example, “*je m’éc ...*”) to each other, within each column and from one column to the other of *what remained* infinitely calculable.

Almost.<sup>49</sup>

Abandonment of academic conventions such as explanations of particular terms, their translations, *decidable* commentary on individual lines and the location of all cited passages also contribute to an *absolute* otherness, an opposition to the monolith of an Hegelian oppositional rendering. However, what remains in *Glas* (“Almost.”) with respect to a *countering* of academic expectations, is easily recouped in *Glossary*.<sup>50</sup> John P. Leavey Jr., one of the English translators of *Glas*, produced a “complement [or companion] to this [English] translation” that locates all references made in it by page and line number.<sup>51</sup> In a significant re-framing (*parergon*) of the column-structure

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they are not governed by strict conventions of a book and so can be read otherwise (i.e., whereby the sans-serif also occasions the entry of other voices or commentary on other writers, e.g., Freud, Beckett, etc.). Both faces perform random spatial transfers into *each other’s* column, formally creating columns within columns and varying enormously in their scale and font characteristics (i.e., uppercase, italicized, indentations, etc.).

49 *Glas*, op. cit., p. 1b.

50 *Glossary*, ed. by John P. Leavey, Jr., op. cit.

51 Derrida’s foreword to *Glossary* comments, as a response to the English translation of *Glas*, that he never thought that the text would be translated nor was he even sure he wanted it to be translated. He even *objects* to the translation: “the evidence proves nothing, does not demonstrate” (*Glossary*, op. cit., p. 17.) That is, the translation (as a form of *evidence* in the French language, in Derrida’s “mother” tongue, which would not be the same as evidence in English, does not have the authority of a demonstration: “Who will prove, in calling on what criteria, that this book is indeed the translation, a good translation, the best English translation of *Glas*? And that its *Glossary* is at once pertinent and commensurable to the book, is necessary and sufficient?” (ibid.) There are no guarantees and indeed as Derrida continues to suggest referring to *his* (French) *Glas* that one is never enclosed in the column of one single tongue, and that no one will be able to prove that *Glas* belongs, in its so-called original version, to the element of the French tongue. The system of the tongue which Derrida refers to is such that it is never a closed monolithic column: “Even in its so-called French version, translation devours *Glas*, which exhibits in a way a *passion* for the foreign tongue.” (ibid.) Indeed how does one hear in the resonance of the voice (*Klang*) that speaks without speaking, all that is to be understood? Given this double bind of translation which as Derrida suggests here is the subject of the thing (ibid., p. 19.), the recouping enactment of *Glossary* is an impossibility in terms of a violent finality to *Glas* and for this

(hangings, fallings, contagions, undecidables, etc.) monumentality crumbles and among *its* ruins (what remained futures) are different angles which oppose opposition in their activation of interlacing, of incalculability. And yet this de-composition manages in opposing opposition to keep Hegel and Genet a-part although contagion works its spur with differing thematic angles and interlaced discourses. This appears from page one, as seen from the above citation; remains remain without resolution of Hegelian speculative negativity. How does this occur?

We recognize Hegel with Levinas, or *we* perform, with Derrida, yet another face-to-face. We have previously suggested that Derrida emphasizes the *aporia* of language for Levinas, the insurmountable return of ontology the moment Levinas encounters the question of the meaning of the Otherwise than being. That is, Levinas's guarantee of the otherness of the other is made without demonstrating how a moving beyond speech is in turn spoken, especially in the appropriation of metaphysical discourse.<sup>52</sup>

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reason is perhaps a revealing of a violence constitutive of translation *per se*. Between these two quotes we read this doubling and inevitability of violence:

As for the English translation, despite all the diplomacy this invaluable *glossary* can deploy, the translation risks inflicting on your tongue a violence that renders your tongue unrecognizable in places, deprived of the very possibility of being *spoken*, in any case by its legitimate and usual guardians to which all at once it would appear suspect, foreign, without visa, outside the law. ... Speaking here as a reader, and still relying on classic criteria, I shall not be content then to say that, henceforth inseparable from its *glossary*, a translation has taken place, as effective, faithful, and inventive as possible. I shall even go so far as to claim that the set constitutes then a first *edition* of the book. As I announced, I am referring here to the English use of the word. For the first time, in effect, *glossary* has deployed around the text the impressive apparatus of an exemplary *scholarship*. (*ibid.*, p. 17.)

This *recouping*, a double blow or doubling of a chance perhaps, an imperative text (particularly for the introductory essays by Leavey and Gregory Ulmer and the foreword by Derrida), is also the undoing of an important performative register in *Glas*. Of course *Glassary* itself cannot undo this performativity but its gestures go towards the against of the against, *Glas*'s deconstructive demonstration. *Glas*'s referentially cannot be simply suppressed in what I'm suggesting is the undoing or the gesture of a totality in the form of *Glassary*. “Thus I did everything so that each atom of the book defies the translator and so that no *glossary* could ever succeed in exhausting it. I didn't do this by rooting the text in the *given* of the French tongue, rather by appealing to its generative [*donatrices*] resources and by binding again the anomalies of a writing to the grammatical and lexical laws of my tongue.” (*ibid.*, p. 19.) However, this writer is grateful to *Glassary* for affording the opportunity to provide Derrida's own (truncated) response via extensive quoting as furnishings, décor for my own styles. Yet it may simply be that what *Glassary* offers it does so through the *sacrifice* of scholarship. Its sacrifice would have been its gift, thereby returning that text to the book, or at least to the originary notion of sacrifice as a flaming gift that opens language that *Glas* encounters with Hegel and *Of Spirit* with Heidegger, and that Derrida will also find with Levinas. Each would insist on a return. *Glassary* returns (us) to *Glas*. That is its betrayal of the text.

52 This is the crux of “Violence and Metaphysics,” already discussed in Chapter 6. Though this was hardly the last word. Importantly, though Levinas responds in *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence* with a metaphysical (rather than ontological) encounter with language. However, Derrida will in “ATVM” return Levinas to the place of the Same (*Même*) or the locus of being that was his intention at all cost, or beyond all economy, to evade.

We align Derrida's in(ter)vention with Levinas to his encounter with Hegel in the impossibility for resolving the other in speculative dialectics without remainder. How is it possible for otherness to be sublated? It would through this very logic become no longer otherness, whereby the domestication of the foreign is ultimately transformed into what it is not. In the *logic* of Derridean negativity we are still *faced* with something other-to-itself and beyond calculability. Yet, as we have previously discussed, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* provides a responsible demonstration, in a more *exacting* writing on and between Levinas's coupling of the "Saying" and the "Said," to the conundrum elucidated in "Violence and Metaphysics." We experience this difference in the dissymmetrical face-to-face between the Hegel and Genet columns. Literally what is *said* on the printed page is angled toward *different* faces, or the asymmetrical type-(of)-face is productive of these different angles that produce an incalculable *saying otherwise*.

These angles are the substance of arrangements of printed words, signifiers, types-(of)-faces. Materiality performs against or makes less secure the *master* concept of the Hegelian system, "Absolute Knowledge," through Derrida's acronym-istic acts.<sup>53</sup> That is, "Absolute Knowledge," "*savoir absolu*," abbreviated into "SA" recalls one pole of

<sup>53</sup> Thus, the play for Derrida in *Glas* on a gendered nomination for Hegel's Absolute Knowledge, in French, *Savoir Absolut*, that Derrida abbreviates as SA or Sa, which opens on to the feminine possessive article "her." His play carries this acronym forward to *çà*, for example, alerting us to a particular tactic of unraveling the Absolute precisely by a materiality that cannot sufficiently profit from the system's speculative investments. On these seemingly stupid games in the face of the Absolute itself, we take a note from Avital Ronell and her book *Stupidity*: "In her first book, *Dictations*, Ronell tells us that she "has never entertained any illusions concerning the objective nature of scholarship, no matter how tedious or dusty it can appear to be." Each of her works goes after a seemingly recognizable and knowable signifier (Goethe, the telephone, the drug addict, the television, the test, the greeting, stupidity, etc.) but then tracks it so closely that it quickly becomes unrecognizable, exceeding its object-status, overflowing itself as a concept. Explicitly breaking with scholarly tradition, a tradition that values mastery and certitude, Ronell engages her "object" of study at the level of its finitude, of its radical singularity. In *Stupidity*, for example, Ronell begins with the concept of stupidity, tracking it through poets and novelists and philosophers and literary/critical theorists, and pre-schoolers—but the closer she gets to it, each time, the more it exceeds itself as a concept. The closer she brings us to it, the more unknowable it appears. One of stupidity's many guises, Ronell says several times, is the claim to Absolute Knowledge or Intelligence. And it's in that context that one should read Ronell's determination to remain open, exposed to stupidity's inscriptions and operations, to refrain from closing off or closing in on stupidity in order to pretend to "get" it or to represent it accurately. Ronell presents herself as somewhat "stupid" about stupidity throughout the book, and this is not only exceptionally courageous in academe, it's also a significant ethico-political move. "If stupidity were that simple," if it were that comprehensible, that intelligible—"if stupidity were that stupid," as Ronell puts it—"it would not have traded depths for the pits and acted as such a terror for Roland Barthes or Robert Musil or pre-schoolers" (*Stupidity*, p. 10.). So Ronell sticks with stupidity, tracks and traces it, opens to it, re/discovering in each (missed) encounter with it a fundamental inability to know it completely or objectively, and therefore a fundamental inability to represent it." (D. Diane Davis, The European Graduate School: <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/ronell.html> (visited 19/9/07)).

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the structuralist binary opposition SA/SE, *significant/signifié*, signifier/signified, whereby in effect, Hegel's Absolute Knowledge and the signifier overlap and fall onto each other. Two very different systems brought into proximity are made less secure:

Of the remain(s), after all, there are, always, overlapping each other ... Perhaps the case (*Fall*) of the *seing*. If *Fall* marks the case, the fall, decadence, *Falle* equals trap, snare, spring, the machine that grabs you by the neck [*cou*]. ... The remain(s) is indescribable, or almost so: not by virtue of an empiric approximation, but rigorously undecidable.<sup>54</sup>

But absolute knowledge, like (the) “*jalouse*,” is only a piece of the machinery, a running-effect [*un effet de march*].<sup>55</sup>

What is this implication for SA as a running-effect of the machine? The latter quote above is produced through a complex cross-cutting dialogue, in this part of *Glas*, between literature, philosophy and psychoanalysis. The predominant discussion concerns Freud's notions of fetish and phantasm, whereby SA, the signifier in its relay or projection onto *savoir absolut* is productive of the phantasmatic *Sa*, “*her*,” Hegel as son. Derrida is phantasmatic mother of Hegel. Before we make too much of this phantasm, what is reflected and insinuated in the Hegel column, SA (*savoir absolut*) becomes, for structuralism, a fetish. This phantasmic quality has a stalling effect on the process of *differance*.<sup>56</sup> Derrida is quick to point out at the beginning of *Glas* that rather than take part in a work on Hegel, “the *all*” of Hegel's philosophy and slide into the endless Hegelian circle of his system of thought (or thought of Systematicity), he would draw on one thread: “It is the law of the family: of Hegel's family, of the

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54 *Glas*, op. cit., pp. 1b-2b.

55 Ibid., p. 225b.

56 Something needs to be said on the way phantasm has been discussed with respect to the body's drives as the phantasmal bases of phonation. And this with respect to the stalling effect of *differance* via the phantasmal bases of Absolute Knowledge in the context of structuralism and psychoanalysis's fetish and phantasm: “Is the current concept of the “phantasm” able, with some pertinence, to dominate this discourse? In fact, it is determined by and starting from that discourse. For example, phantasmatic would be the effect of mastery produced by the determination of difference as opposition (and up to the value of mastery itself), of sexual difference as sexual opposition in which each term would secure itself the domination and absolute autonomy of the IC (immaculate conception): the effect—the son (rather than the daughter) comes back to me all by myself. The *check* of such a desire of the return to self, on the circle of double virginity, that would be the limit of the phantasm, that would determine the phantasm as such, as the term of the phenomenology of spirit. The phantasm is the phenomenon. The names indicate this.” (*Glas*, op. cit., p. 224a.). We suggest that our discussion of “Fors” needs to be read in conjunction with this comment on psychoanalysis and its mastery, as a foray approaching a deconstruction of the phantasms of the other. We have already noted Derrida's address to the phonocentrism of psychoanalysis in its Freudian and Lacanian versions.

family in Hegel, of the concept of family according to Hegel.”<sup>57</sup> In reference to our previous discussion of the “now” for Hegel and the sublation of immediacy in the preservation of the not-now, a concept of time that does not break from Aristotle, Absolute Knowledge is the master of Hegelian time, endlessly repetitive and forming a circle of completion and return where an end *is* its own beginning. Derrida’s strategy for choosing one of Hegel’s threads, which strings together religion and the family, *double binds* in its tugging the discourse of psychoanalysis as a strategy for destabilizing Hegelianism through what remains. Derrida’s play on the opening to the first page of *Glas* with the Genet column title “*what remained of a Rembrandt torn into small, very regular squares and rammed down the shithole*” is divided in two” suggests a remainder of time not assimilable to dialectical reappropriation; a movement halting, suspenseful, inscribed in the columns and the cross-cutting of their senses that is the strategy of *Glas*.<sup>58</sup>

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57 Ibid., p. 4.

58 Ibid., p. 1. On the strategy of the columns themselves, Derrida plays with Hegel:

And only later (*erst spätter*) are notches, excavations, openings (*Öffnungen und Aushöhlungen*) made in the columns, in the flank, if such can be said. These hollowings, holes, these lateral marks in depth would be like accidents coming over the phallic columns at first unperforated or apparently unperforatable. Images of gods (*Götterbilder*) were set, niched, inserted, embedded, driven in, tattooed on the columns. Just as these small caverns or lateral pockets on the flank of the phallus announced the small portable and hermetic Greek temples, so they broached/breached the model of the pagoda, not yet altogether a habitation and still distinguished by the separation between shell and kernel (*Schale und Kern*). A middle ground hard to determine between the column and the house, sculpture and architecture. (ibid., p. 3a.)

This middle ground is hard to determine, carves out the negative operation of Derrida’s *Glas* as it “situates” a movement of hesitancy inscribed in the already existing structures’ relations of “pairs” (of the two columns, the two Hegelian passages cited on pages 2a & 3a within columns) between structures to each other that are productive of separation-reparation, both additional and fragmented. The above quote comes from one of the “compressed passages” as an example of Derrida’s angle, his forced entry into the structure of Hegel (into the eagle’s {(H)egele’s} nest). It is precisely this angle of entry that marks the stylate’s spur, the angle of the pen’s nib articulated in our chapter on *Spurs* and continues into the entry of the *crypt* in the chapter on “Fors.” The silence perceived in the (H)egele/aigle operation becomes contaminated by the multiple tongues at work in *Glas* (“French, German, Greek, Latin, Hegel, Genet, philosophy, literature, psychoanalysis—the contamination disseminates any mother or foreign tongue” *Glossary*, op. cit., p. 134.) *Here* imperceptible differences in speech that are marked as differences so evident in writing suggest in *Glas* that writing becomes the ear where imperceptible differences are traced, grafted and mobilized between the different “inaudible” audible tongues, themes, concepts, etc., (oral or written). In this respect it is a writing (as (in) the system of *Glas*) that performs an articulation (designed to grate on the ear as a gratitude of the ear) of its displacement. Under a title, “Translation and Terms in *Glas*,” *Glossary* notes that this grating on the ear:

... is a certain displacement of writing, a systematic transformation and generalization of its “concept.” The old opposition between speech and writing no longer has any pertinence as a way of testing a text that deliberately deconstructs that opposition. Such a text is no more “spoken” than it is “written,” no more *against* speech than *for* writing, in the metaphysical sense of these words. Nor is it *for* any third force, particularly any radicalism of the origin or of the centre. The values of *arche* and *telos*,

As Gasché emphasizes in “Strictly Bonded,” Freud and Marx failed to dislodge the speculative bond of the Hegelian system. Yet with his critique of Kant (acronymised in *Glas* as IC<sup>59</sup>), Hegel “formulates a limit of the bonds of thinking that is no longer simply its limit.”<sup>60</sup> As previously suggested, Derrida’s fidelity to the Hegelian text reveals a margin to the bond of thinking that does not correspond to the Hegelian notion of exteriority.<sup>61</sup> And, as we have already alluded to at the beginning of our

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along with the history and transcendentality that are dependent upon them, constitute precisely the principal objects of this deconstructive critique. (*Glossary*, op. cit., p. 133.)

Thus, for example, *Glossary* translates Derrida’s Hegel passage (cited above from *Glas*):

Especially in India this kind of worship of procreative force in the shape of the generative organs gave rise to buildings in this shape and with this meaning: enormous columnar productions in stone, solidly erected like towers, broader at the foot than above. Originally they were ends in themselves, objects of veneration, and only later did people begin to make openings and hollow chambers in them and to place images of the gods in these, a practice still maintained in the Greek *Hermae*, small portable temples. But in India this cult started with solid phallic columns; only later was there a division between an inner kernel and an outer shell, and they became pagodas.

(*Glossary*, op. cit., p. 137-138.)

We recognize an interlacing movement, halting, suspenseful, inscribed in the columns and the cross-cuttings of their senses on the page. We recognize *dissennation* or *seminal différence* as the working of *ends* as the *beginnings* of contamination, hymenation of habitations between inside and outside, religion and ornament.

59 The initials IC create a contagious series of acronyms that make Hegel’s system less secure. IC holds for immaculate conception, Jesus Christus, (Kant’s) Categorical Imperative, Immanuel (C)ant — these different concepts and references commingle and contaminate their Said as in Chapter 6 we found contagion and contamination of Emmanuel Levinas with E.L., with El (Him, Illeity, God) becoming woman (*elle*). As the *Glossary* to *Glas* translates further the possible semantic richness of acronymization: “ici [now, here]: the French recalls the IC, the siglum for the Immaculate Conception, so important for the text. The reference is lost in the English.” And with SA: “It (ça): the French is included in parentheses as a reminder to the reader of the homophonic play of ça (it), Ça (the Freudian Es, Id), Sa (siglum of *savoir absolut* and abbreviation for the Saussurian signifier), and sa (feminine singular possessive).” (*Glossary*, op. cit., p. 135.)

60 Gasché, “Strictly Bonded” in idem, *Inventions of Difference*, op. cit. p. 183. Gasché has guided the following section of this chapter.

61 The Hegelian bond is the focus for Gasché in “Strictly Bonded” and points to the significance of an ethical, i.e., sacred, dimension constitutive of Hegelian bonds. There is a quality of *indissolubleness* whereby these bonds are “paradoxically unintelligible” as “they resist the separating power of the intellect.” Hegel writes as a marginal note in his own copy of *Philosophy of Right*: “What is the sacred? —that which holds men together, and were it only as lightly as does the rush in the wreath—what the most sacred?—what for all eternity makes the minds united and unified (*einig und einiger*)—actual substantial bond—in which that self-isolated subjectivity which I want to preserve for myself, has perished and is absolutely satisfied—so infinitely powerful in itself that I myself am wholly in it.” (Hegel, cited in ibid., p. 177.) This notion of a unified mind and minds in general bespeaks the sacred ethico-bond that cannot be thought thinking: “Such a bond is possible only in the ethical sphere, in which human beings have become individuals who *as* individuals (in contradistinction to their former determinations as personalities and moral subjects) are distinct from one another within a whole that is of their own willed making, and that thus knows itself in and through the individuals.” (ibid., p. 178.) But more interestingly here is the articulation of this bond between individuals as the indissoluble sacred bond that can “achieve inwardness” (unthought thought or, to put it in Hegelian terms, the lightness of the bond) is at the same time dependent on an exteriority, i.e., it “originates in this bond’s dependence on the linguistic sign.” See here, for instance, Gasché’s discussion on the marriage bond

chapter, Derrida's fidelity to the Hegelian bond — for speculative thought — is not Hegelian yet is an admiration that is shown in *Glas*, for this bond is unconditional. Gasché notes: “it is an admiration due to the power to do justice, to abolish everything inside or outside the system. Such celebration and admiration, however, does not preclude a tireless interrogation of certain limits of the bonds of thinking and their intrinsic ethnicity.”<sup>62</sup> The margin to this bond of thinking, that we locate with Hegel, infers a proximity to Derrida’s own relation to the activity of writing recounted in an interview where he describes a difference between the “unconscious” act of writing (a kind of demand for saying) and a “subconscious state of fear” when removed from his writing.<sup>63</sup> This relation, described as an eccentric circle, cultivates the notion excavated in *Glas* through Derrida’s faithful re-inscription of Hegel as a movement that necessitates a thinking that comes into its own; yet a thinking that “reads thinking against a backdrop of certain possibilities from which it comes into its own.”<sup>64</sup> In its recontextualisation *Glas* is not a familiar (philosophical) writing and, to reiterate, what is unfamiliar is precisely the necessary margin of the bond of thinking that is unable to think itself (if it is to remain thinking). *Glas*’s unfamiliarity, its eccentric circle, its necessary possibility goes after the *family* (bond) with the unfamiliar.

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where ethics and the bond of law coalesce as the individual’s transcendence from physical passion in language, signs whereby “the substantial thing in marriage is brought completely into being.” (ibid.) However, and to get to the margin that formulates a limit of the bonds of thinking that is no longer simply its limit, this appears to thought in relation to the specificity of philosophical speculation. Language is the worthy medium in the ethical sphere of the family, civil society and the State: “the medium of universality. Yet the question remains whether for the self-thinking of the Concept in Absolute thought, *actual* linguistic articulation is indeed required, or whether instead it is sufficient for thinking to conceive of the possibility of articulation in order to weave itself into the lightest of all bonds. ... for Hegel ... language must raise itself to the Concept, and deny itself in this manner as a system of natural signs. The telos of language is its own *Concept* of language, universal language.” (ibid., p. 179.) Gasché also binds together the family, what is familiar and philosophical thinking whereby the latter in its habitual occupation is always at home in a sense with the familiar “dullness” of a thinking that questions what is self-evident and banal and in doing so reveals its substantive aims.

62 Ibid., p. 180. As stated earlier *Glas* is not an undoing of the Hegelian bond. The bond of thinking cannot be undone.

63 See *Derrida* (the film), dir. Kirby Dick and Amy Kofman (Zeitgeist Films/Jane Doe Films, 2002). There are two pertinent excerpts: one addressing Derrida’s reference to the eccentric circle, itself a reference to Derrida’s 1986 lecture and publication, *Mémoires for Paul de Man*; the other refers to the fear of writing. When Derrida broke from writing in a half-sleep, half-waken state, certain fear and doubt overcame him about what he had written. This is a state he describes as “sub-conscious” rather than “unconscious.” With the unconsciousness, something compelled the writing to happen. Perhaps this exemplifies a coming into its own of thinking which must remain unable to think itself if it is to remain thinking.

64 Gasché, op. cit., p. 180.

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## Bastard Paths — The Family Band (Banned)<sup>65</sup>

### Margin of the Bond

We are not going to ask ourselves here *what is* this operation [of *Aufhebung*]? Since the ontological question (what is it? what is? What does being mean (to say) and so on) unfolds itself here only according to the process [*processus*] and structure of *Aufhebung*, confounds itself with the absolute of the *Aufhebung*, one can no longer ask: what is the *Aufhebung*?<sup>66</sup>

Derrida's path of "questioning" *is not is-ness*? Rather than an ontological — dialectical — "destining" through calling into questioning the *is-ness* of Hegel's texts, Derrida's path is a "a bastard course."<sup>67</sup> This illegitimacy occupies an intercourse that sits in the margins in its relations to a course of onto-theology, onto-logy, dia-lectics: "to be held on the margin or a leash when entering a true family or the family of truth."<sup>68</sup> This bastard questions with a strategy that describes an exteriority not corresponding with Hegel's exteriority. It rather dia-grams the (con)striction of the *Glas* (Klang). This is a diagram *familiar* from the scene of the "Fors" crypt which partitions, in its differentiation and spacings, the foreign and familiar in order to point toward the question's centre. But here the "centre" occupies the dehiscence opened with the between of columns or columns within columns, productive of *dissemination* marking and re-marking the blanks, the virginal spaces between the distinct columns.

This play of the *Glas* (Klang) has *wormed* its way into the very centre of the *stricture* of the Hegelian system. That is, it is precisely its restrictive economy that Derrida locates

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65 As *Glossary* notes: "Band erect: *bander*: the French means to band, to bandage, to blindfold, to tauten, and to get a hard on. Band erect attempts to recall the erection and the banding or bandaging." (see *Glossary*, op. cit., p. 135.) And, as *Gasché* notes, in German and in French as well, *bande*, *Band* means not only to shackle, chain, fetter, more generally string, band, tie, but also barrier, edge, margin, border, frame.

66 *Glas*, op. cit., p. 34a.

67 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

68 *Ibid.*

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as a double bind in the Hegelian threads and allows for a bastard future, where other inter(dis)courses can be heard, inventions of the others, *psychic* affairs.<sup>69</sup>

A bastard path, then, that will have to feign to follow naturally the circle of the family, in order to enter it, or parcel it out [*partager*], or partake of [*partager*] it as one takes part in a community, holy communion, the last supper scene, or part [*partager*] it as one does by dissociating.<sup>70</sup>

### Dwelling Between Speculative Thought and the Suspended Remainder

We do not yet seem to be there, and that can no more be done at one go (*d'un coup*) than by a continuous approach. The event cannot be as noisy as a bomb, as garish or blazing as some metal held in fire. Even were it still an event, here it would be ... inapparent and marginal.<sup>71</sup>

We attempt to develop here a *priorty* of thought in *Glas*, in Derrida's thinking or a thought on the *priorty* that comes as the spatio-temporal undecidable of the *before* of speculative logic, pre-ontological and yet structured by ontological Hegelian thought. This analysis will come to describe the kind of double movement *belonging* to *Glas*'s illegitimate belonging to speculative thought. It is a weave that takes up Hegel's most radical singular heterogeneous readings of the irruptive event of the gift, readings that exist as pre-ontological thinking and within ontological thinking. Their positioning of thinking, demonstrated in Derrida's own logic of the *gift*, culminates in *Glas*'s analysis of Hegelian constriction as *re-(con)-striction*, a function of common *ground* for forces and counter-force per se, whether dialectical or not. The movement of the *pure gift* "cancelled" by taking up an offer of entry into the economy of exchange describes the

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69 Derrida explores this centre or central focus of the family in Hegelian thinking, and the bond to thinking of thinking it implies, via a whole range of critical approaches from "traditional philological criticism to what resembles contemporary "deconstructive" approaches to Hegel's text. Gasché notes that while Derrida argues for all of these varieties of "methodological temptations," (see *Glas*, op. cit., p. 20.), none critically disband the Hegelian bond "measured by the power of the greater logic." (ibid., p. 224.) "All these attempts fail. Among them, psychoanalysis, especially in its Lacanian form, and Left Hegelian criticism of Hegel (Feuerbach and Marx) as well figure prominently in *Glas*. Neither one nor the other, Derrida shows, can hope to dislodge the speculative bond." (Gasché, op. cit., p. 183.) See, for example, on the unconscious, *Glas*, p. 177a ff.; and with respect to Marxist criticism, *Glas*, p. 201a.

70 *Glas*, op. cit., p. 6a. Is this parceling-out like the analogy or metaphor of the very regular square, the mathematical precision of the circle and square, if not of the squared circle, rammed, fully digested without chewing, down the shithole—divided in two, feigning its path by dissociating?

71 Ibid., p. 107a.

most significant “destabilizing” or otherwise-thought of thinking to dialectics. We read here a movement of the *before* that in its moment of non-moment is pre-anticipatory entry. The Derridean temporal logic of “not yet” is “not-yet the teleological anticipation, which results in it never becoming dialectical contradiction.”<sup>72</sup>

This movement of the *pure gift*, before it becomes *gift for-itself* (as the representation and figure of self-presence, self-consciousness), *remains*, according to the “logic” of *Glas*; “(non-dialectical) law of the (dialectical) strict-ure, the *restriction* of the *first* initials of *Glas* as the silent strangulation of the guttural and glutinous force of *Gl-* (*as*). A holding back, a hesitancy that is the “non-dialectical” law or the “lock (*serrure*) of the dialectical.”<sup>73</sup> This *force of law* which articulates the movement of the before of the *gift* as *pure gift* founded on a *lock* anticipates a paradoxical position that comes with security. Derrida constitutes a spatio-temporal locale that describes an otherwise-beyond in the *before* of thought and yet an entry into the strict bonds of thought for its otherwise to turn into what it is not. This would be the spatio-temporality of Derrida’s *negativity* of the not-yet, of the dialectics of dialectics *and* non-dialectics, where the non-philosophical and philosophical turn into each other (as in the analogy of the *faux-Möbius* strip that enters our discussion on “*Strict-ure Against Strict-ure (The Double Bind)*” in the “final” moment of this chapter.<sup>74</sup>

72 Ibid., p. 244a. We would necessarily need to read this “not-yet,” the doubling of “*pas*” as step and not, as a signatory of the before in relation to Heidegger’s reading of Hegelian thought and the limits of thought thinking. It is in his reading of Hegel, that Heidegger suggests that what supersedes the *Aufhebung* as elevation and at the same time undoes the force of the *Aufhebung* is the “step back”: “For us, the character of the conversation with the history of thinking is no longer *Aufhebung* (elevation), but the step back. Elevation leads to the heightening and gathering area of truth posited as absolute, truth in the sense of the completely developed certainty of self-knowing knowledge. The step back points to the realm which until now has been skipped over, and from which the essence of truth becomes first of all worthy of thought.” See Heidegger, “The Onto-Theological Constitution of Metaphysics,” in *Identity and Difference*, op. cit., pp. 42-76; p. 49. Derrida and Heidegger would differ on nothing more than this step and the question of the gift that the step leads to. We have broached this legacy of fidelity to and betrayal of Heidegger by Derrida on this in our reading of *Spurs*, Chapter 4 of this thesis, under a theme of the *coup de don*.

73 Ibid.

74 In the interview “*Ja, or the faux-bond II*” in *Points ... Interviews*, op. cit., Derrida suggests that there have been some interpretations of *Glas* that have read the end phrases of the text as a return to the beginning insofar as they seem to pick up on the “first” phrases of *Glas*. Derrida insists that this formation of a Möbius strip is false and that a “caesura or hiatus prevents ... such a band or strip from turning back on itself.” And in fact breakages {bris} occur, repeat and disseminate throughout the workings of *Glas*, not just at its *beginning’s end* or *end’s beginning*.

The Möbius strip is a powerful figuration of the economy, of the law of reappropriation, or of successful mourning-work that can no longer, in the writing of *Glas*, toll a knell {sonner un glas} which is its own (its *glas*) without breakage {bris} and debris. The *debris* of this band is not even the last or the first; it repeats and scatters the debris of a *bris de verre* {glass breakage} or of a mirror {glace}, and it has a

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### —The Double Bond—Conceptuality Doubled (Reading Both Ways)

We have suggested above that Derrida traverses Hegel's most radical singular heterogeneous readings (of the irruptive event) that exist both pre-ontologically and within ontological thinking. It is a singularity in its "quasi-trancendentalism" for the *remainder* it produces through a trans-categorical limit to thinking. What may at first appear as the absolutely indigestible that the Hegelian system cannot swallow, this remainder, which fascinates both Hegel and Derrida, is ultimately "thinking's being-

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multiple occurrence in the book (impossible to count them: it is always, at least, once again a piece of the name of Jean Genet's mother: *Gabrielle*, of my name, of all the numerous brilliant objects and words, or of that which bridles and unbridles the horse and the "cavalier phantasm" of the *genet*, the Spanish horse that plays a very important role in all of this {ça}—the last words are "debris de," of all the *dé*, *dés* {die, dice, or sewing thimbles}, *dais* {dais, or canopy} [for example "dais de l'oeil révulsé" {canopy of the upturned eye}—" A lapidary text of many possibilities for reading the caesura's in *Glas* as the work of mourning whereby both teleological economy can be thought and within it a break into the unknown as the moment of death opens onto {as in the canopy of the upturned eye}. (*Points*, op. cit., p. 51.)

Derrida suggests breakage (*bris*) occurs in a piece of the name such as *Ga—bri(s)—elle* (of my [Derrida's] name) ... recalling the possibility of a crypt in the name of the mother tongue ... the foreign of his own name incorporated within the (origin, first) mother tongue that recalls his beautiful thoughts on *Glas* in *Glossary*'s "Proverb: "He that would pun ..." that it is book on *theft* {vol}, of a certain thief (of the mother tongue): "But I would adore the thief who is my mother." (*Glas*, op. cit., p. 18b.) Here we have the betrayal or theft of language as it interrupts itself precisely on the moment whereby the economy of the break (for instance, on or into the crypt of the mother tongue; i.e., the French language exceeds itself in *Glas*: "This 'first' translation, apparently within the book and the French tongue, certain French-speaking readers can judge to be excessive, as if it transported them toward a foreign idiom, verily unknown." (*Glossary*, op. cit., p. 18.) The operation of the *bris* (breakage) disseminates the trace of sexual difference from his [Derrida's] name in the adopted or appropriated (*theft*, vol) in the form of the thief's [Genet] mother's "name [*Ga—bri(s)—elle*]. Derrida becomes woman— "... [but there are many others], the funerary dais or the bridal canopy with the bride or the fiancée the day of her wedding which is, *for me*, Genet's or Hegel's mother, as if these two were my bastards, that is those of an unknown woman who would have called herself in secret Marie-Gabrielle Derrida, and so forth); in short, before closing the book on a prefabricated Möbius strip, one has perhaps to let oneself be taken in a little longer by the words, the morsels of words or of dead bits {mors} in decomposition that let the writing go a bit more unbridled. A first is a detachable part in this treatise on detachment, an effect of partial simulacrum, a dead bit there where there is always more than one." (*Points*, op. cit., pp. 51-52.) In the series of moves that we have discussed under the notion of decomposition in our earlier chapter, here *Glas* affects the possibility that his future anterior performs on the dead names of Hegel and Genet. Hegel's (Mother) System is appropriated through the theft which *Glas* performs and reveals the economy of a bastard within it through such appropriation where its end is simply not its beginning but rather its notion of end gives rise to the possibility of an other end, a future-to-come where the mourning-work is one of affirmation "a beyond the mourning principle": "It is the unimaginable, even unthinkable logic of this step/not {pas} beyond which interests me. Even if it is unthinkable, it/id lends at least a contour to the able-to-be-thought." (ibid., p. 52.) And it is precisely this *contour* that we have attempted to mark as the margin to the bond, the banding of the bond, (in difference to Hegelian exteriority) as Derrida's movement of negativity (step/not {pas} beyond). And what further can be read as the feminine operation where Derrida immaculately conceives (IC) to the Hegelian *Aufhebung*, i.e., in making it *relieved* (*relevée*), off-guard, in the making it feminine (IC).

with-itself.”<sup>75</sup> It is a traversal that takes detours (without *telos*) in order to follow (retrospectively) the singular heterogeneous train of Hegel’s statements that contain non-oppositional logical relations between decidable and undecidable statements.<sup>76</sup> Hegel’s reading of Antigone (as sister) becomes a paradigmatic *figure* of such undecidability, the inconceivable reserve, whereby she escapes his logic of *femininity*. His becomes a logic that situates her as an absolute uniqueness, what the Great System cannot assimilate as she is dead before ever becoming a citizen, wife or mother:

Unique example in the system: a recognition that is not natural and yet that passes through no conflict, no injury, no rape; absolute uniqueness, yet universal and without natural singularity, without immediacy; symmetrical relation that needs no reconciliation to appease itself, that does not know the horizon of war, the finite wound, contradiction, negativity. Is that the inconceivable? What the great logic cannot assimilate?<sup>77</sup>

### —Banding of the Bond (Marginal Exteriorty)

The ultimate question being posed here concerns the manner whereby these absolute unique examples, as marginal exteriority, are foundational to the System. *Glas* suggests that the logic of the *absolute* exteriority, a marginal exteriority with respect to the bonds of thinking, exists in order for speculative logic to form its bond. This *absolute* still-marginal remains is not the system’s margin but is able to become its margin. Gasché refers to “the banding [or bond] of the bond.”<sup>78</sup> Derrida traces the Hegelian argument of instability in the form of singular and absolute uniqueness, revealed particularly in *Glas*’s *Das Lichtwesen* (God as Light), the thematic of this marginal exterior (banding of the bond) with respect to the purity of the gift, *absolute gift*.<sup>79</sup> It is

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75 Gasché, op. cit., p. 189.

76 It is important to note here that although “nothing is ever homogeneous in the different ruptures, stances, or saltations of speculative dialectics,” the heterogeneity in question perhaps no longer simply lets itself be interred into “the [therefore] *general* (thus homogeneous) heterogeneity of the whole set of the ontological system”; “... The singularity of these statements derives from the fact that they can (and will) *always* go both ways [ontological and otherwise order], that they are divided into two, and lend themselves to two readings.” (*Glas*, p. 198-199, cited in ibid., p. 191.)

77 *Glas*, op. cit., p. 150.

78 Gasché, op. cit., p. 191.

79 *Glas*, op. cit., p. 240a ff. The pure gift, the absolute gift is the self-immolation of spirit, the sacrifice of spirit in itself for itself. The originary light is the flaming light of this immolation. It is the burning of burning, the annulling of the burning in the opening of the annular: “anniversary of the solar revolution

an exceptional example that sets the course for the way in which Derrida's circuit of argument “alters” (from) Hegelianism, in relation to the spatio-temporal deconstructive economy of the negative that we have come to analyse in our previous chapters as the workings of the future anterior.<sup>80</sup> As Gasché notes, this moment of focus is from Hegel's *Lectures on Philosophy of Religion* on the first moment of religion, a *natural* religion of the sun, luminous essence, to be sublated by that of the plant or animal.<sup>81</sup> Derrida's focus here is exemplary for Gasché among the other of Hegel-moments that Derrida operates with *Glas* because it is in contradistinction from all other moments. That is, the cult of light as the first moment of natural religion “is characterized by an absence of figure and representation [*Vorstellung*], and thus already anticipates absolute knowing, which is said to be absolutely free of all *Vorstellung* [the before or another first moment].”<sup>82</sup> It is a *non-figure* figure insofar as it is a “figure of an absence of figure” which Hegel names “*Gestalt der Gestaltlosigkeit*” that distinguishes the cult of light as a light that not only burns everything, but burns itself as well.”<sup>83</sup> It is a (first) moment that has no before and in this case in its act of *self*-destruction (*self*-consummation that is the *all-burning* as it burns everything including itself), its non-ontological status “is” suggestive in the act of *not* being for-itself, which in turn is suggestive of a Hegelian negative in the not-being of its self-less self<sup>84</sup>:

With the all-burning of the cult of light, neither sense, nor time, nor circle, nor bond has yet begun. But, if such is the case, how, then can

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in sacrificing itself as the all-burning, therefore in guarding itself. ... The difference and the play of the pure light, the panic and pyromaniac dissemination, the all-burning offers itself as a holocaust to the for-(it)-self, *gibt sich dem Fürsichsein zum Opfer*. It sacrifices itself, but only to remain, to insure its guarding, to bind itself to itself, strictly, to become itself, for-(it)-self, (close)-by-(it)self. In order to sacrifice itself, it burns itself. The burning then burns itself and goes out; the fire appeases itself; the sun begins to go down ... .” (ibid., pp. 240-241.) See also Marian Hobson, *Jacques Derrida: Opening Lines* (London & New York: Routledge, 1998) pp. 160-161; and Gasché, op. cit., pp. 192-193.

80 Derrida notes in “ATVM” that he has had recourse to use the future anterior frequently, as it annuls the temporal framework that returns us to presence. (See “ATVM,” op. cit., p. 36.)

81 *Glas*, op. cit., p. 245a: “At the limit or the mediation between the first and the second moment of natural religion, between the religion of the pure luminous essence and than of the plant or the animal. This is also the passage to the for-(it)-self. And, in the history of religion, the passage from sense-certainty to perception.”

82 Gasché, op. cit., p. 192.

83 Ibid.

84 Gasché puts it slightly differently, to suggest that “having no self to which to relate itself, it never accedes to a for-self.” (ibid.) The distinction here between a self-less self (apart from intonations of martyrdom as self-sacrifice) and a non-relational self is a distinction that differs on the point of negativity —something has opposed and preserved the *non* in order for a loss of self to be traced. How can reduction occur in this process thereby? We will amplify this point in what follows and although the difference is slight, it is crucial though Gasché will also come to point to Derrida's analysis of the Hegelian (“hard-working”) negative at work in this hypothesis.

this first moment of natural religion become a moment in the first place, a moment that would prime the dialectical process?<sup>85</sup>

### —Hegel’s Hard-Working Negative (An Implacable Force)

“If the all-burning destroys up to its letter and its body, how can it guard the trace of itself and breach/broach a history where it preserves itself in losing itself?”<sup>86</sup> The resolution to this process of reduction and preservation is heightened by Derrida in his question to the “outside” of the bonds of thinking that reside in “the implacable force of sense, of mediation, of the hard-working negative.”<sup>87</sup> How can there be the guard *outside* to the bonds of thinking that yet remains in the sphere of ontological prefiguring or predetermined destinying whereby as itself it is to be re-appropriated by spirit? As “Hegel argues, the pure fire *must* pass into its opposite. ... it *can be what it is*, [absolutely irreducible] *only if it turns into its contrary*:

In order to be what it is, purity of play, of difference, of consuming destruction, the all-burning must pass into its contrary: guard itself, guard its own movement of loss, appear as what it is in its very disappearance.<sup>88</sup>

### —“suspended remain(s)” (Speculative Thought “out of order”)<sup>89</sup>

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85 Ibid., pp. 192-193.

86 *Glas*, op. cit., p. 240a. *Glas*, through the account of the flame, is about to erect the pyramid, the guard and preserve of the dead. We note the etymological play pointed to in *Glas*. *Pyr*: flame but also *pyros*, wheat for a *pyranis*, a sweet honey-cake.

87 Ibid.

88 Ibid. Turning into what it is not, darkness, with the sun going down, we have the originary mediation of difference, the originary annulation of return, the “passage to occidental subjectivity” as the opening of history. (ibid.) As Gasché suggests: “Yet with this (self-)conserving consummation, by which the all-burning annuls itself in order to be what it is, the annulus is opened, the annulations of history and of the bonds of thinking have been broached. That which disorders the system has turned into the system’s first moment.” Gasché, op. cit., p. 193.

89 So many “obscene” (ob-scene) an(nul)us references contaminate the System, blocking it up, putting it out of order, “rammed down the shithole” and from *her (Sa)* very opening (*Glas*, p. 1b.). She relieves herself by stuffing it up. Too much to eat and drink, for it is with this jamming up of the infinite concept that Derrida engages the “Bacchanalian intoxication” of her (*Sa*) delirium: “For one could be tempted to reduce *Sa*’s binge to a typical, certainly essential, but very determinate phase of phenomenology.

Derrida notes that there is a remainder that remains in the place of the guard (as guard), which amounts to the very “presence” of disappearance. And this remaining guard enacts the *after-all* of the all-burning as the “(self-)conserving consummation.”<sup>90</sup> The remain(s) (*reste*) paradoxically exists “intimately bound up with the system’s bondings, [and] cannot fully be assimilated by it,” what Derrida calls “suspended remain(s)”<sup>91</sup> Suspended remains puts speculative thought *out of order*, without destroying or paralyzing it absolutely.<sup>92</sup>

### —Inner Necessity

The guarding logic that Hegel insists on from the movement of an all-burning that contradicts itself in order to be first is an act of (self-)immaculate-combustion (S)IC). It is an inner necessity of, let us suggest, the “starter motor” for the Hegelian engine to *purely* (re)turn over (itself). *Inner* necessity existing on “both sides of the revolution” is “under the power of (*en puissance d*) ontology.”<sup>93</sup> The bits and pieces of this “motor,” its morsels, all powered by ontology, the bits that interlace, engage, mesh and play together in the holocaust of ignition, these pieces put in play would be what?:

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Does not this binge punctuate the whole phenomenology of religion? Into its three times, natural religion, esthetic religion, revealed or absolute religion?” (ibid., p. 233a.) She saucers up to the “not-yet but already the bread and wine.” (ibid.) She does not slip up in her step, even when it comes to flesh and blood. She becomes woman, becomes Christian and never stops relieving herself, periodically, with anal regularity.

90 Gasché, op. cit., p. 193 and *Glas*, op. cit., p. 226a. Derrida poses for himself the question of the crypt, its anguish and angle of entry, he grills himself with respect to his impossible holding on to the word “remains” when there is not-yet, when there is nothing that remains but the disappearance: “Then why this word, why keep [*garder*] a “remain(s)” that no longer corresponds to the remains of traditional semantics? Will it be said that this word keeps with this semantics a metaphorical relation? That would again be to reappropriate it to the metaphysical circulation. What remains of the “remain(s)” when it is pulled to pieces, torn into morsels [the *mors* and *mort* of “Fors”]? Where does the rule of its being torn into morsels come from? Must one still try to determine a regularity [even squares] when tearing to pieces what remains of the remain(s)? A strictly angular question. The remain(s) here suspends itself.” (ibid., p. 226a.)

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid., p. 233a. See Gasché, op. cit., p. 193-194: “Since this remainder can be what it is only if it loses itself as remainder by becoming the first moment of the system, by thus tying itself up with the system, what “jams it [the system] inconceivably” is also what confirms the implacable force of the hard-working negative.”

93 Ibid., pp. 242a-243a.

This perhaps: the gift, the sacrifice, the putting in play or to fire of all, the holocaust, are under the power of [*en puissance d'*] ontology. They carry and de-border it, but they cannot not give birth to it. Without the holocaust the dialectical movement and the history of Being could not open themselves, engage themselves in the annulus of their anniversary, could not annul themselves in producing the solar course from Orient to Occident. Before, if one could count here with time, before everything, before every determinable being [*étant*], there is, there was, there will have been the irruptive event of the gift [*don*].<sup>94</sup>

### —The Pre-Ontological Status of the Gift : Contra-Band

We have previously broached a question of the *be-fore* with our readings of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Levinas and psychoanalysis as the *be-fore* breeches Derrida's texts particularly with respect to the *coup de don*, the *es gibt* and the future anterior of the ancient-still-to-come that circulate the impossible as gift in the disseminating of *reserve*, *remainder*, *excess*, *sendings*, *propriation*, *la cendre*. Yet again we recognize the before of the *be-fore* in the double scene of the Hegelian revolution that moves like a (*faux*) Möbius strip and we encounter the logic of the gift that is under the power of ontology.<sup>95</sup> What comes before the “be-fore”? That is what gives the before of the “be-fore” its entry into the economy of exchange destined by ontological–dialectical–thinking, whereby the gift that gives to the “be-fore” is then converted by it into a counter-gift as it faces itself in the act of preserving itself in losing itself. Immediately an economy based on the guard, the preserving guard of the (hard-working) negative. Immediacy thus preserved in its mediated guarding. Now and then.<sup>96</sup> Yet, what *Glas* offers without sacrifice on the thinking of the gift in relation to the before of the “be-

94 Ibid., pp. 241a-242a.

95 “*Be-fore*” is a spatio-temporal paradoxical “economy” that aligns with Derrida’s notion of negativity (step/not [*pas*] beyond). That is to say, the hyphen marks the space-time between the *pure gift* [*cadeau*] and its entry into the economy of exchange where it becomes for-itself. The ‘be’ marks a priority that is the paradoxical pre-ontological status which at the same moment is ontologically structured in its becoming for-itself. The before of this *be-fore*, however, is a moment that ultimately is unthinkable. Its negativity and infinity as the un-thinkable will be addressed as the radical alterity that marks the giving (the pure *cadeau*) of the gift. We have referred earlier to this as the necessary breakage (*bris*) that *Glas* demonstrates as thinking’s “unimaginable, even unthinkable logic of this step/not [*pas*]beyond ... Even if it is unthinkable, it/id lends at least a contour to the able-to-be-thought.” (See “*Ja*, or the *faux-bond II*,” op. cit., p. 52.) This *break* is the *not-yet* or the contra-band that never becomes dialectical contradiction: “To be sure, the contra-band necessarily becomes that [dialectical contradiction], but its not-yet is not-yet the teleological anticipation, which results in it never becoming dialectical contradiction. The contra-band *remains* something other than what, necessarily, it is to become.” (See *Glas*, op. cit., p. 244a.)

96 Our post-script will come to parallel this notion of the hard-working and preserving guard of Hegelian negativity in the figure of Kafka’s guard in his parable “Before the Law.”

*fore*” belongs to *another* temporality (as conditions of possibility). The pre-ontological as “the thought of something that is not yet, but that cannot not be(come)” is precisely the excessiveness and limitlessness of the unthought before it has become thought.<sup>97</sup>

Or, as Gasché suggests:

What becomes thinkable perhaps is the irruptive event of the gift (itself), the limitless expenditure, the lavish giving *before* it has become the gift *itself* that opens the circularity of the bonding exchange.<sup>98</sup>

“The gift *is not*, the holocaust *is not*,” Derrida writes, “if at least *there is some such*. But as soon as it burns (the blaze is not a being), it must, burning itself, burn its action [*opération*] of burning and begin to be.”<sup>99</sup> This *gift* is a process that marks an “absolute” inconceivability of the before of the “be-fore” as in a thought being for-itself, that is not yet, not yet thinkable and yet is somehow governed by an Hegelian notion of thinking. Or, rather, what is governed is constitutive of what is inconceivable.

We opened with the margin of the bond and with Derrida’s fidelity to Hegel that yet re-contextualized, without betrayal or sacrifice to the System, that which bands or bonds the bond of thinking. It (*ça*), as a margin or exteriority, a non-dialectical margin of displacement formulates a limit to the bonds of thinking that is no longer simply *its* limit. We now recognize this margin of exteriority as this inconceivability that re-marks the notion of the gift as the “pure *cadeau*” before conditions of possibility, the be-fore (as for-(it)self) of exchangeability:

The *Taumehn*, the vertigo, the delirium *must* determine itself as for-(it)self and take on a stable subsistence. From the moment this constraint, this constriction of the “must” comes to press the mad energy of a gift, what this constriction provokes is perforce a countergift, an exchange, in the space of the debt. I give you—a pure gift, without exchange, without return—but whether I want this or not, the gift guards itself, keeps itself, and from then on you must-owe, *tu dois*. In order that the gift guard itself, you must-owe. ... the gift, the giving of the gift,

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97 Gasché, op. cit., p. 194.

98 Ibid.

99 *Glas*, op. cit., p. 242a. As with a mirror, the holocaust, the flaming first light is; it reflects on itself and thereby crosses over to its not. It speculates, is specular, a spector: “The speculative is the reflection (speculum) of the holocaust’s holocaust, the blaze reflected and cooled by the glass, the ice, of the mirror.” (ibid.) Gasché suggests: “With fatal necessity, the gift must give rise to speculative thought.” Gasché, op. cit., p. 195.

the pure *cadeau*, does not let itself be thought by the dialectics to which it, however, gives rise.”<sup>100</sup>

Determination (of) itself (for-(it)—self) gives rise to speculative thought in all of its cunning trans-categorical transcendentalism. *Glas* speculates on speculation in the thought of the *be-before* as a spatio-temporal difference that describes exteriority as the partitioning (cryptic) effect of another’s (singular) exteriority—restrictive—interiority. *Glas* inhabits a thought between dialectics and non-dialectics in what Derrida has thought before under notions of the *gift*, *suspended remainder (remain(s), excess, propriation)*, etc. The double bind or bond—between speculative thought and the suspended remainder—or the reading both-ways of Hegelian speculative dialectics via the singular moment (the first moment) is articulated in *Glas*’s examples of Antigone and *Lichtwesen* as “cult of light.” The bond inhabits or finds re-articulation through Derrida’s *pure cadeau* amongst the Hegelian column. Through a repetition of these Hegelian moments (and there are many others in *Glas*), between the pre-ontological and the ontological readings, Derrida will have avoided, according to Gasché, “the methodological temptations of Hegelianism.”

On this “temptation,” Derrida suggests that all of the others recounted in *Glas* have fallen prey to it in their desire to unseat the Great System. He would have avoided “the naïveté of establishing in all security a domain that positively would remain unassimilated by the system of speculative thought.”<sup>101</sup> Derrida’s reading of Hegel *touches* the limits of speculative thinking at the (“prior” “first”) moment thinking comes into its own (Derrida’s, Hegel’s, etc.), but which touches also remain(s) unable to think if it is to remain thinking.

### Strict-ure Against Strict-ure (The Double Bind of the (k)Not—Yet)

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100 Ibid., pp. 242a-243a. Hence, the moment of thinking the gift as gift inaugurates the speculative logic of the guard, of the debt and the counter-gift. The moment the question of meaning arises, the moment of the “what is” of the gift, the motor of ontology, then the sacrifice, economy as striction and return, happen: “As soon as thinking thinks the gift—that is, as soon as it asks what the donation of the gift is, the energy of the gift has already yielded to the constraint of determining itself as for-itself, and has thus fallen prey to the first and elemental ruse of dialectical reason.” Gasché, op. cit., p. 195.

101 Gasché, op. cit., p. 195.

This dwelling between the *speculative thought* and the *suspended remainder* is only possible through speculative logic, as we have suggested, on a thinking of the contraband that organizes the margins of thinking. Gasché has named this the *infrastructure* of re-strict-ure (*re-stricture*).<sup>102</sup> It will be precisely this notion of re-strict-ure that articulates the *prior* (before of the be-before for-(it)self) dwelling of *Glas* in the Hegelian column. As we have suggested, the notion of what is strict in Hegelianism is the moment something (a concept) has been forced to think itself, bound to itself as itself. It (constriction) is a moment of (self)-liberation (as in Hegelian notions of freedom, the good (ethical), spirit, etc.): “This liberating constriction proceeds through closing up, squeezing, containing, suppressing, subjecting, compressing, repressing, subduing, reducing, forcing, subjugating, enslaving, hemming in.”<sup>103</sup> In *Glas* the reader is faced with a plethora of terms that Derrida uses when dealing with the Hegelian *Aufhebung*, the essential negative movement to attain the *absolute*.<sup>104</sup> But what is most explicit and

102 Ibid.

103 *Glas*, op. cit., p. 99a. How would this constriction be yet a liberation? This is decisive for Hegel in the constitution of rights and law and Derrida emphasizes the decisiveness of Hegel in separating out a restriction as an empiric condition and a restriction as self-conscious imposition that “erects the empiric individual into a free subject.” (ibid, p. 100.) Death for Hegel will be the crowning moment of negation whereby the subject frees itself in subjecting itself to universal law. The universality of law relieves the subject from the constrictions of natural, empiric law, overcomes the constraints of nature only to subject the subject to the stronger counter-constriction of freedom, a strangulation that it gives to itself. Also see Gasché, op. cit., p. 196.

104 This we find strict, constriction, striction, stricture, restriction, re-striction and so on with their manifold themes of enclosing in bands, compressed passages, ligaturing, strangulation, contraction. “Striction” in *Glas* is a word that has disappeared from use in the dictionary and has been more commonly replaced by the word “stricture.” The word stricture does not exist in French and Derrida will use this as a pun toward “structure.” In English, of course, it has the strong connotation of being a restriction that is extremely harsh or unfair, a severe criticism or strong critical remark (as though some one is to blame for something) and associated with bodily discipline or contortion as with, for example, an abnormal constriction or narrowing of a body passage. In *Glas* the notion of “striction” as “stricture” is doubled (positively and negatively) into “stricture” and “destricture” as a process of “striction” that under-powers or undermines the Hegelian negative. Derrida writes about his own logic of the double bind of stricture, for example in *The Truth in Painting*: “The logic of detachment as cut leads to opposition, it is a logic or even a dialectic of opposition. I have shown elsewhere that it has the effect of sublating difference. And thus of suturing. The logic of detachment as stricture is *entirely other*. Deferring: it never sutures. Here it permits us to take account of this fact: that these shoes are neither attached nor detached, neither full nor empty. A double bind is here as though suspended and imposed simultaneously, a double bind which I shall not here attempt to attach strictly to another discourse on the double bind. ... Any stricture is *simultaneously* stricture and destricture.” (“Restitutions,” in *The Truth in Painting*, op. cit., pp. 255-382, p. 340. Also cited in Hobson, op. cit., p. 162. We have already made reference to all of the strings being pulled by Derrida here, between the laces of some odd pairs and the double bands and binds of many of his texts. See as a further thread, “Resistances,” in *Resistances of Psychoanalysis*, op. cit., on the pulling on this and that of the double bind of analysis such that when one loosens something here it is only at the expense of a strangulation there. One never unknots, dissolves, un-does the bind. Rather, one plays along with the “thousands and thousands of knots of passion,” alerting us to the innumerable, the *tous les deux* and the impossible numbers of sexual differences. This *simultaneous* double is what will come at our conclusion as the separation-reparation of sexual difference(s).

has been fore-grounded in the logic of the all-burning itself is a movement of restriction and counter-re-striction. Derrida's notion of *re-strict-ure* thinks the *strict(ness)* of the Hegelian constricting movement necessary for the achievement of the *absolute* (to be itself through restricting itself to itself as in the case of the *all-burning logic*).

This movement of constriction depends on the hard-working negative as the “unbandaging,” the unbinding, and it is for this reason Derrida argues that Hegelian constriction is a movement of counter-constriction, from the empiric to reason, from nature to law, from necessity to freedom and from the difference of sensation and perception to the difference of their difference in the self-sacrifice of spirit to the universal concept. Further it is a movement that necessitates the shift from natural empirical singular determinations toward universality:

What strictly is the spirit is a raised corpse, a corpse strapped in bandages, strangulated, from which all singular, natural life has been torn, and subsequently *unbandaged* [my italics] and elevated to universality. However gruesome and violent such idealizing constriction may sound, it is a counter-constricting to a first natural constriction.<sup>105</sup>

And further: “This constriction could only be displaced, Derrida suggests, by ‘displacement that itself escapes the dialectic law and its strict rhythm’.”<sup>106</sup> *Glas* suggests that the “methodological attempts” made to unravel Hegelianism fail precisely for the dialectical strictures they bring in order to move outside, according to the law of dialectics “as species of general negativity, forms of *Aufhebung*, conditions of relief.”<sup>107</sup> If “strict-ure against strict-ure” is to succeed, it would not be of the order of Hegelian negativity.<sup>108</sup> The thinking of “strict-ure against strict-ure” appears in *Glas* as a force of the irruptive event of the gift:

There is no choosing here: each time a discourse *contra* the transcendental it held, a matrix—the (con)striction itself—constrains the discourse to place the non-transcendental, the outside of the transcendental field, the excluded, in the structuring position. The matrix in question constitutes the excluded as transcendental of the

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105 Gasché, op. cit., p. 196.

106 Ibid.

107 Ibid. See *Glas*, op. cit., p. 191a.

108 *Glas*, op. cit., p. 107a. This is the context of “*de-stricturation*” and “*seriature*” in “ATVM,” which will be discussed in what follows in this chapter.

transcendental, as imitation transcendental, transcendental contra-band (*contre-bande*). The contra-band is *not yet* dialectical contradiction. To be sure, the contraband necessary becomes that, but its not-yet is not-yet the teleological anticipation, which results in it never becoming dialectical contradiction. The contra-band *remains* something other than what, necessarily, it is to become.

Such would be the (nondialectical) law of the (dialectical) strict-ure, of the bond, of the ligature, of the garrote, of the *demos* in general when it comes to clench tightly (*serer*) in order to make be. Lock (*serrure*) of the dialectical.<sup>109</sup>

The movement of this double bind gives allusion to a (*faux*) Möbius-strip as a diagrammatology of Derrida's negativity that escapes Hegelian negativity through the movement of the *gift* where the dialectic jumps between the poles of the circuit. This movement of the "gift" is *more than* that, as there is suspension and countermovement *within* the poles as the double bind of "striction" and "stricture."<sup>110</sup> It is a version more intense than the noose in "ATVM": "The lace of obligation ... Its incomparable stricture."<sup>111</sup> It is a movement of interruption of the Said in the Saying that is brought to bear in the *style* of Levinas's chiasmic writing to avoid schematization, and which Derrida feigns. What is repressed in the Said is continuously worked on in a criss-crossing of the tensions it seems to bear.

In the parceling out of Hegel's family from the totality of his system, we may see a further criss-crossing tension brought to bear in what we have previously discussed as the remainder of time or what Derrida also refers to in *Glas* as the "after all," the *remain(s)* [*reste*] that is also "of the remain(s)."<sup>112</sup> This manifests in the working on or feigning the path of Hegel's constriction (as strict-ure against strict-ure or (con)striction)

109 Ibid., p. 244a.

110 Ibid., p. 244a ff.

111 "ATVM," op. cit., p. 30. This noose would bind Levinas to the superannuation scheme of Hegelian ethicity that forged itself in all of the collars and bracelets of familial exchange or the substitutions even up to death that would mark an infinite responsibility to the Other. Derrida emphasizes the etymological links between *cadeau* and the chain: "*Cadeau* means chain. The word designates, according to Littré, the 'Pen strokes [*Traits*] with which the masters of writing embellish their examples,' or also, 'Large letters placed at the head of acts or chapters in cursively written manuscripts.' Or too, 'Formerly, feast that one principally gave to women, a pleasure party.' The etymology, still according to Littré, would refer to '*Catellus*, small chain, from *catena*, chain' ... because of the chained form of the pen strokes. Household management teaches us that making *cadeaux* is said for making things that appear attractive but are useless, metaphorically compared to those strokes of the hand of the writing masters. From these one passes without trouble to *cadeau* in the sense of diversion, feast, and finally present." *Glas*, op. cit., pp. 243a-244a.

112 See, for example, *Glas*, op. cit., p. 262a: "Surplus value of the contradiction that contracts (itself) with itself, makes itself, after all, the gift of the remain(s) [*se fait du reste cadeau*]."

for which Derrida produces the noose of his *double bind*. *Stricture* would be the position of possibility and impossibility as we have discussed, for instance, with the event of signature and the gift. This is the necessity for what is more than a *structure* (*stricture*) of exchange to become one, to become dialectical, named by Derrida “striction.”<sup>113</sup> It is as if the pre-dialectical “striction” which produces the dialectic also forms a structure which, as already suggested, is pre-ontological. In the name of repetition: “The (con)striction no longer lets itself be circumscribed as an ontological category, or even, very simply, as a category, even were it a trans-category, a transcendental. The (con)striction — what is useful for thinking the ontological or the transcendental — is then *also* in the position of transcendental trans-category, the transcendental transcendental.”<sup>114</sup> “Striction” therefore becomes part of the structural context of the ontological or transcendental as a condition of force or dynamism: what is excluded from conditions structures them.

It is, however, as Derrida quickly suggests, a “false transcendental,” (“simili-transcendental”), *contre-bande* transcendental, transcendental smuggled goods, and also an “erection against.” Derrida’s negative, structuring by what is not there—because excluded—differs from Hegelian work of the negative through *temporal* differentiation. *Contre-bande* is “not-yet” dialectical contradiction: “[it] remains something other than what, necessarily, it is to become. Such would be the (nondialectical) law of the (dialectical) stricture, of the bond, of the ligature, of the garrote, of the *desmos* in general when it comes to clench tightly in order to make be.”<sup>115</sup> Note the chain or relay of terms, the *cadeau* of a flourish or cadence of a *marche*, mark, step, the fall of ash. The member *stricture* has its future in Derrida’s work like that of *differance*, a variant by one letter on a philosophical term (structure). It forces a short circuit (or crossed-wires) between paths that the dialectic would like to organize into remainder-less synthesis. It is as if this *stricture*—double bind in the sense of being forces pulling in opposite directions by chiasmic tensions, by strangulation, as the constricting of the

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 242a.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 244a. Derrida’s “negative” is here an ultimate *coup de don*, a gift’s blow, stroke, time, etc. This *coup* drifts across *Spurs* and *Glas*, as a painter or mooring rope, both at once, interlaced, woven or kept apart, separated, tightening our bind between one and the other as she moves from offshore and into the backwash. See ibid., pp. 242-246.

throat produces the first phoneme of *Gl (as)*—is a parodic double of *sublation*, but subverts it, and is itself doubled by other terms.

This would be the *same* tension, constriction, as the separation—reparation of sexual difference described *by/as* the word *fourmis* [for me, perhaps, an annulling of the for-(it)self in the sacrifice of spirit to and for itself, a privative “a” attached to the separating nullity of Hegelian negation], *ant*:

In the end the ant merits the title of insect: it is an annulated animal. Its body is marked, phrased, strictured by an annular multiplicity of rings, which cut it without cutting it, divide it without slicing, differentiate it without dissociating it — even though the word *insecta*, from *inseco*, means ‘cut’. Thus a word meaning ‘cut’ comes to signify ‘strangulated’, but not ‘cut’, both (but) cut and (but) non-cut, separated but (and) non-separated, no sooner cut than repaired. Here is what we would like to speak of: of the separation/non-separation, of the cut/non-cut — and of the word ‘sex’, of sexual difference in its relation to the cut (and) (but) non-cut, to the cut that no longer opposes itself to the non-cut, between the ‘separating’ and the ‘repairing’.<sup>116</sup>

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116 Derrida, *Rootprints*, op. cit., pp. 121-122.

## Post—Script (*reste*)<sup>1</sup>

It is generally believed that one can oppose law to affirmation, and particularly to unlimited affirmation, to the immensity of *yes, yes*. Law—we often figure is as an instance of the interdictory limit, of the binding obligation, as the negativity of a boundary not to be crossed. ... The excessiveness of *yes, yes* is no stranger to the genesis of law ... The double affirmation is not foreign to the genre, genius or spirit of the law. No affirmation, and certainly no *double* affirmation without the law sighting the light of day and the daylight becoming law. Such is the madness of the day, such is a *récit* in its “remarkable” truth, in its truthless truth.<sup>2</sup>

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1 In a seemingly *gratuitous* display, we have positioned (glued), in the form of a postscript, another “after all, of the remains” (*reste*) style (column) of analysis on *deconstruction’s law as law* constructed out of the literary motif of Kafka’s “Before the Law” in Jacques Derrida’s “Before the Law” in *Acts of Literature*, op. cit., pp. 181-220. What is this effect of such an extended—*reste*—column for our modes of reading sexual difference(s)?

2 Derrida, “The Law of Genre,” in *Acts of Literature*, op. cit., p. 247.

## 80s Sendings: A Seminar's Demand

“Women in the Beehive” is a modified transcript of a seminar given by Derrida at the Pembroke Center for Teaching and Research on Women in 1984.<sup>3</sup> The transcript refers to the speaker, Jacques Derrida, as “Response,” as it is rather a written account of his responses, not the writer Jacques Derrida, but an account of his responses to questions posed by members of the Pembroke Seminar and visitors. With Derrida’s authorization of this collaborative text, he suggests it is also authorless.<sup>4</sup> Those who have *signed* this seminar, and indeed, those who initially inaugurated its event, oblige the reader-to-come to a questioning of rupture, split and re-mark between the columns of sexual difference(s)’s “illusory coherence.”<sup>5</sup>

In this *post-script* we take up the textual demands of this text’s discourse which correspond on the coinciding forces of deconstruction and sexual difference in relation to institutionalisms.<sup>6</sup> We take up the call of those sendings (signers of cinders) from the 80s. These are textual demands as they gather around the forces of reading and writing, preoccupations with the analyses of discourses and the power inherent in language and its relation to texts and its *generals*. Important for *this* reader is the contemporaneous call in “Derrida’s” deconstructive relation to the law and its affirmative power (both deconstruction as law and as be-fore the law) in relation to the

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3 Derrida, et al. “Women in the Beehive: A Seminar with Jacques Derrida” op. cit.. The seminar was audio-taped and transcribed. Derrida requested that the printed text be “authorized but authorless.”

4 Derrida has placed only two sets of quotation marks in this edited text. Members of the Pembroke Seminar present were: Joan Scott, Elizabeth Weed, Naomi Schor, Françoise Basch, Jasmine Ergas, Janice Doane, Louise Lamphere, Harriet Whitehead, Mary Renda, Barbara Anton, Irene Brown, Gloria-Jean Masciarotte, Lynne Joyrich, Mary Moran, Kate Garrett, Melissa Robbins, Tracey Aronson, Susan Fendrick. Visitors present were: Wendell Dietrich, David Sorkin, Jean-Joseph Goux, Claudette Goux, Mary Ann Doane, Albert Cook, Mary Wilson Carpenter, Rosalina de la Carrera, Christina Crosby, Kaja Silverman, Marlena Corcoran, Gunther Zoeller, Paol Keineg, Robert Robertson, Bennett Schaber, Sharon Marcus, Cindy Osman, Anthony Scott, Matthew Lee, Glenn Hendler, Kate Doyle, James Adner. (Cited in “Women in the Beehive,” 1985 reprint, p. 141.)

5 Ibid., p. 140.

6 The Institution in question and the context for this Seminar was, of course, the University and the necessity for contestation by both Deconstruction and “Women’s Studies” departments around the organizing principles of an Institution’s governing order. This governing order became an issue, investigation, question, etc., (for instance) when “something sexual is at stake.” (ibid, p. 148.)

question of sexual difference(s), described and demanded in this 1984 Pembroke Seminar.<sup>7</sup>

7 With this seminar Derrida emphasizes *differences* rather than “difference” and the radical theoretical possibilities offered by the notion of the “gift” of alternative routes of inquiry, as we have seen elsewhere in his work. Derrida begins his seminar with an introductory statement concerning the status of “women’s studies” as an institution making reference to a previous lecture he gave on Kafka’s text “Before the Law.” The lecture referred to was given at Brown University in March 1984, and published the following year as “*Préjugés: devant la loi*,” *La Faculté de juger* (Paris: Minuit, 1985) pp. 87-139. This Kafka parable will figure as the leitmotif in the seminar as well and subsequently will be carried through as a major figure for our post—script analysis. Our reading will centre on the version, published in *Acts of Literature*, with the same title as the Kafka’s text, “Before the Law.” Its focus is on institutional, ethical and juridical implications of law-making with literature and we coincide this with our questioning of sexual difference. Here *genre* and *gender* find their correspondence to these institutional, ethical and juridical parameters and particularly the affirmative power of the law as deconstruction would have it. Today many universities have assimilated the “Women’s Studies” departments of the 1980s into pre-existing other departments, for example, English, Anthropology, History, Film Studies, Visual Arts, Politics, etc., as predicted in this Seminar. Yet the question of sexual difference as something that no longer suggests “natural” couplings and *their* conventional categories of opposition, always already deconstructed (split, ruptured, decomposed, etc.) within the very discourses that govern each department, these kinds of questions on sexuality *still* have as much force as they did then although the forces or, rather, their representative grounds as questions are continuously shifting. However, at the time of the seminar “Women’s Studies,” particularly in the context of the U.S., had become “relatively solid institutions” in their *own* right. Derrida questions the potential failure at stake for “women studies” if they are not to question the very notion of (classical university) institutionalisms which they have appropriated and become part of: “Thus with women’s studies, is it a question of simply filling a lack in a structure already in place, filling a gap? Fascinating things would be done, new things discovered, knowledge advanced, and this is necessary—but one would not alter the model of the university, and in consequence, one would insidiously reproduce in the modern university, whether one knew it or not, the old model, which is fundamentally phallocentric or “phallogocentric.” (*ibid.*, p. 142.) Now, “women’s studies” departments are absorbed into older established department, or newer departments, particularly those engaging communications, where in the past there was “no place foreseen in the structure of the classical model [of Berlin] for feminist studies.” (*ibid.*) How do we perceive the implications of such an assimilation process? We will keep this question suspended for the main part, but hint at the suggestion that such contamination of the *classical* by the other of “women’s studies” could be perceived deconstructively as an affirmative and necessary movement for the forces of destabilizing solid (column) structures. That is, the question of sexual difference(s), sexuality, etc., is not an isolated question constitutive of being woman or studies on (and of) or for women. Rather, as phallogocentrism implies in its force of resistance, something sexual is always already at stake in the question of institutional power (identity and difference). However, from the point of view of the Pembroke Seminar and visitors at this time, a strategy for subverting other disciplines from within, in their words “feminizing disciplines,” had a trivializing and pejorative effect on feminist studies. (See *ibid.*, p. 145.) Derrida’s response was to have “joint appointments,” to be both inside and outside at the same time: “The best choice would be to have the two gestures at the same time: to have a Women Studies department with a solid, autonomous structure, without giving up the idea of penetrating all the other fields, to remain [only] within a department would be a failure. On the other hand, if you give up the idea of the feminine studies program, then you will weaken the feminine cause. So the only response to this question would be—joint appointments!” (*ibid.*, p. 145.) The logic of the trivial seems to be hugely problematic as it conditions both separatist thinking and at the same time continues (regardless of its potential subversion) the hierarchical thinking of a phallogocentrism. As with Ronell on the stupid, we would want to deconstruct the trivial. In terms of the joint appointments, Derrida reiterates his position later in the seminar, suggesting that we have to negotiate across both terrains: To maintain, for instance, women’s studies as a classical program, a now classical program, and at the same time to ask radical questions which may endanger the program itself. And what is the measure? You must check everyday what is the measure. ... There is no general device. In some situations you have to behave in a very conservative way, in tough conservative ways, to maintain, and at the same time or the day after to do exactly the contrary.” (*ibid.*, p. 155.) We may recognize some familiar ring here of a Derridean annulment of the returns to the familiar, or a doubling of strategic bets on the remains of

The question as it was posed, obliged the *reader* of the seminar to *know* “her place” well in the institutional order, in its ethical and juridical manifolds, in his words: “As much as women’s studies has not put back into question the very principles of the structure of the former model of the university, it risks being just another cell in the university beehive.”<sup>8</sup> Thus the risk of the failure of feminist studies, on the one hand, where the institutional principles of the university go unquestioned, is the risk, on the other hand, of its very success. As “Women’s Studies” grows into a positive *self-sufficient* discipline, regardless of its assimilation into other departments and its many names, while it is unquestioning of its inherent phallogocentrism, it is simply proving its worth and workability to its “masculine directors of the university—masculine whether women or not—the more that it legitimizes itself by this power, the more then, it risks covering up, forgetting, or repressing the fundamental questions which we must pose.”<sup>9</sup>

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disciplinary housing. To remain within “classical” departments and renovate their cedar paneling, or to forge new institutional frames, new *frat-houses*, only to find the law of the Faculties applies to all; or to weave the two in joint appointments that deconstruct the matrix binary of interior and exterior. We are here re-member Derrida’s “The Ends of Man,” op. cit.

8 Ibid., p. 142. Derrida is in no way denying all the positive forces that these new studies bring and indeed have brought to the classical institutional model and its discourses: “From out of the realm of the forbidden all sorts of feminine signatures, feminine discourses which were obscured, one brings not only literary but anthropological, political, and sociological dimensions.” [We could add significantly now to this list] (ibid, p. 143.) But he is talking about the import of putting back into question as a question the structural principles that construct university law, the academic law, the social law.

9 Ibid., p. 143. Derrida continues at this moment in his text with a vital point on the double-bind inherent in the risk-and-failure conundrum within Institutional law that is still very relevant today for all academics and not only those seeming most directly to be investing in the question of sexual difference. It is precisely this current climate of instrumental testing mechanisms by governments of *their* universities and academics, through the quantification of research outputs, that places excessive pressure on an individual and her communities to contest these fundamental structural principles: “Thus, the risk is not only the unequal development between positive and progressive research, both political and scientific, which are necessary to pursue, but it is a more dangerous and adventurous question. It is that whoever asks questions by definition not coded on these principles of progress risk appearing—in the eyes of women who are activists for women’s studies—reactionary, dangerous, only limiting the progress of their positive research.” (ibid, p. 143.) I suggest that such risk-taking is the ultimate call of deconstruction and it is a risk *of* or *as* responsibility, as we are all part of the law. In this sense the law is an affirmative force — as members of the university we are all guardians of the Law. As Derrida continues to state, in Kafka’s parable both “the guard” and “the man from the country,” although in opposing positions, are also symmetrical in terms of the Law: “People who assure a tradition, who maintain a heritage, who are critics and evaluators, and at the same time who are [wo]men from the country, naïve before the text, before the Law are the law’s guardians.” (ibid, p. 143.)

## New and Old Relations to the Law—The Double Affirmative

In our relations to the Law, a double gesture, both positive and “pessimistic,” is demanded by deconstruction, as deconstruction as law-making.<sup>10</sup> That is, what is on offer in this seminar is the potentiality for embracing two guardian posts. One is described by Derrida as a positive deconstructive response that consists of refusing the Law in its pushing to the extreme the question of university law. It would be a stance that was not content only with positive research outcomes or with simply a department of Women’s Studies. But this radical or positive deconstruction of the institution would not be able to reproduce the Law in the face of the Law: “It is not a question of transgressing the Law ... if one were to radically deconstruct the old model of the university in the name of women’s studies, it would not be to open a territory without Law—the theme of liberation if you like. But it would be for a new relation to the Law.”<sup>11</sup> The former move leads to the latter “pessimistic” deconstruction operation which finds itself before the Law but in a new relation to it, ultimately having shifted the situation with the establishment for instance of “women’s studies” and the new feminine signatures and discourses this brings to the Law.

In Derrida’s “Before the Law” we encounter Kafka’s deconstructive move *as law* in the form of this relation between the joint appointments of both an outside and a being-with (or inside) the Law with the former post taken up by the “man from the country” who patiently waits or rather decides to wait for “permission” to enter the Law and the “non-rapport” of the Law’s guardians, signifying an inaccessibility to or lack of presencing of the Law’s “face.” That is, one can only have a rapport with the

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10 Derrida will come to describe the Law(s) we are before as a more powerful law, and its guarantee, allusive and inaccessible in *form* (gauged only through its representatives), shifts through making law, making, for instance, deconstructive gestures. Kafka’s (deconstructive) “Before the Law” challenges the conventions and conceptions of literature’s more powerful Law and beyond, i.e., those laws that ascribe particularly literary value but only through the power that these laws force (here prohibition and interruption co-exist): “the text [has] the power to *make the law*, beginning with its own. However, this is on condition that the text itself can appear *before the law* of another, more powerful text protected by more powerful guardians. Indeed, the text (for example the so-called “literary” text and particularly this story by Kafka) before which we the readers appear as before the law, this text protected by its guardians (authors, publishers, critics, academics, archivists, librarians, lawyers, and so on) cannot establish law unless a more powerful system of laws (“a more powerful guardian”) guarantees it, in particular the set of laws and social conventions that legitimates all things.” (“Before the Law,” op. cit., p. 214.) For an extended engagement with how Kafka’s literary work demonstrates, and is housed within, these even more powerful laws (i.e., that are not only *interior* to literature) see *ibid.*, esp. pp. 214-220.

11 “Women in the Beehive,” op. cit., p. 144.

Law's representatives, but not with the Law *itself*: "We must remain ignorant of who or what or where the law is, we must not know who it is or what it is, where and how it presents itself, whence it comes and whence it speaks."<sup>12</sup> It is not that permission by the guard has not been granted; it has merely been delayed, adjourned, deferred. This "putting off" (not-yet) marks the space of indecision in the face of non-presence, or rather the countryman's decision to not decide and "rather wait" marks Kafka's performative act of suspension in the face of nothing. Nothing happens except everything holding potentiality. That is to say, the Law, never accessible or visible, save for its representatives, constitutes an *aporia* or hiatus in acting *before* the law. And at the same moment it marks the pre-originary, not-yet *before* entering into the Law as an otherwise relation to the law.<sup>13</sup> We must remember the *parable's* end tells us the gate was only made for him (the countryman) and so no-one else could have been admitted. The singularity of admittance, of potential new relations to the Law, is the performative deconstructive move of Kafka's story torn from *The Trial*. That is, the *singular* borders of "Before the Law" deconstruct the borders of literary genre/gender-making, in its having shifted the established laws *of* literature. This affirmative relation to the Law marks deconstruction *as* law before a more powerful law of canonicity or the proper of Literature which is both effacing and effaceable.

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12 "Before the Law," op. cit., p. 204.

13 The relation between the singular and universal, between the singularity of a "women's studies" department and the universality of the law of the institution as university, is amplified in Derrida's "Before the Law" in the deferral-temporality of *differance*. That is, the paradoxical position of the "not-yet" described may be recognized with *differance* as the *time* of the story, time of adjournment. In the man from the country's decision to defer deciding, in preference to waiting, two laws are in operation at the same moment. The discourse of the guard is an indirect law whereby it does not use force directly to prohibit. Rather, his language provisionally forbids and interrupts and defers the passage of the man, and of the text. The man from the country is physically free to cross over the threshold entry point into the space of the Law, that is, he is governed by natural law regardless of how he proceeds whether forcefully crossing or forcefully not crossing over. Derrida suggests that it is in his very act of indecision where he decides "to not gain access" that the man uses a force, i.e., gives himself an order to defer his entry to the Law. This force, as Derrida describes, is produced between the singular "I" and the universality of "we" — both an I's singular event that is law and a universal "me" that events the I-accession to this demand without gaining access to the (me) Law. This is not a force constitutive of an imperative constraint but rather it is a *differance* activated by the law of delay or the advance of the law that prohibits itself as a place; "it is a prohibited place." However, it is not that this man is naturally or physically free to prohibit himself. Rather, it is the inaccessibility of the law as its law of self-prohibition: "that allows man the freedom of self-determination, even though this freedom cancels itself through the self-prohibition of entering the law" he is subjected-to (before). (*ibid.*, pp. 203-204.) The *differance* of simultaneous permission granted —signified by the open door which the man is able to stoop and look through that marks a limit with itself posing an obstacle—and yet deferred is *interminable* as it lasts for days and "years," up until, as Derrida puts it, "the end of (the) man ... without end because ended. As the doorkeeper represents it, the discourse of the law does not say "no," but rather "not yet" indefinitely." (*ibid.*, p. 204.) We would have recognized this already from *Glas*, in the stricture and re- or counter-stricture, the band and counter-band of the supercession of nature in self-determination within Hegelian dialectics.

The double affirmative position described here, on the one hand, affirms the conventional values of resistance encoded in phallogocentrism (“optimism, liberation, revolutionary”) and at the same moment traces shifts that open new and more subtle relations within the “pessimistic” stance: “a modest [position] ... one will have brought a better situation, again in front of the Law, which would give one time to grow old, to die like the man from the country.”<sup>14</sup> However, what at this very moment would be our next step? Is it a question of strategy [only or at all]? Is not strategy itself the real risk?<sup>15</sup> This call to us by Derrida re—marks on the same space of the *undecidable* that we already discussed in relation to the problem of closure in Chapter 6.<sup>16</sup> The undecidability of closure has traversed all of our readings with respect to the critical registers Derrida has summoned in the names of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Abraham & Torok, Levinas and Hegel. Each reading appropriates *their* thinking as a gift of

14 “Women in the Beehive,” op. cit., p. 144.

15 Ibid. The *risk* with “strategy” is its potentiality for a predetermined outcome that somehow falls into the binary of an either/or logic if it is not continually worked on, moved forward, in a deconstructive operation. Derrida makes this point in response to a question Gayatri Spivak posed concerning Derrida’s mention of “woman” in his work as the only instance of originary undecidability and translates this to mean that “she can occupy both positions in the subject/object oscillation.” Derrida responds that this is a strategic phase:

... whereby woman is the side you start with to dismantle the phallogocentric structure and so you can put undecidability and all the other concepts that go with it (*différance*, writing, the *parergon*, the supplement, etc.) on the side of femininity, writing and so on. But as soon as you have reached the stage of deconstruction, then the opposition between women and men stops being pertinent. Then you cannot say that woman is another name, or a good trope, for writing, undecidability, and so on ... the motif of undecidability—has to do with a given situation in which you have an opposition or a dialectic logic. (ibid., pp. 146-147.)

Derrida continues to suggest that “undecidability” like “woman” has more than one inference depending on a given situation:

There is one meaning for the word ‘woman’ which is caught in the opposition, in the couple, and to this extent you can use the force of the woman to reverse, to undermine, this first stage of opposition. Once you have succeeded, the word ‘woman’ does not have the same meaning. Perhaps we could not even speak of ‘woman’ anymore. Of course, these two stages are not chronologically altered. Sometimes you can make the two gestures at the same time, and sometimes you cannot go from one to the other. (ibid., p. 147.)

This *risk* describes the commitment needed when embarking on a deconstructive strategy as a double-session.

16 This *call* that we are obliged to take is in fact the *recall* that traces the arguments and movements made in this thesis in relation to the potentiality of critical re-sourcing in a movement of (non)-*return* to the works of Heidegger, Hegel, Levinas, etc., at their most transgressive (and restorative) phases with respect to a metaphysics of presence. In this moment we survey the text “Women in the Beehive” that captures, if not captivates, a certain ethos of feminism from the 1980s and its positive and negative relations to deconstruction. *Equally* and in a retrospective gesture we are able to locate a metaphysics of presence in the discourse of liberation that perhaps necessitates “Women’s Studies” as a singular entity, secular yet enframed by university law. This movement of transgression and restoration is by now a familiar deconstructive operation and it is necessarily a slow and rigorous procedure for locating points of closure, labile and fragile keystones that in their trembling become new openings.

deconstructive agency. Their most transgressive moments constitute a new relation to the Law (of metaphysics). Yet they still face the Law with Law, and in this sense have not opened onto a terrain that is somehow law-less (not-yet or *be-before*). Heidegger's notion of *end* (of metaphysics of presence) was aware of this opening in terms of the problem of closure amplified in Chapter 6 and hence had already deconstructed the very notion of an epochal stasis (inherent in such thinking).<sup>17</sup> Heidegger's end was an *end* which continues indefinitely, (in)de-finite(ly). Derrida would somehow demand that "joint appointments" perform the necessary weave on the limit of belonging and not-belonging that is itself a force of law, as opposed to subscribing to the notion of circularity that has governed our thinking or/of reason (phal)logo-centrism) in the desire to bring to presence (all) difference(s).<sup>18</sup> The limit of the joint (appointments) would necessitate, for example, the deconstructive work by feminist philosophers on the philosophical axiomatics that imply *women* as subjects.<sup>19</sup> As we have indicated with our reading of *Spurs*, woman as subject *exists* within ontology's economy of the self-Same.<sup>20</sup> The same resistances exist when there's something sexual at stake, and

17 On closure, ends and the *clôture* that we discussed in Chapter 6, see in particular footnote 19 from that chapter. We emphasize from that discussion the following: for Derrida, *closure* signifies a finite totality which is continuously breached by a movement of infinitisation (this is philosophy's condition). The infinity of this task arises through mathematical idealization and Derrida deconstructs this in disrupting the Husserlian transcendental innovation with respect to the overcoming of finite knowledge based on the objective ideality of the sciences. At this limit point, or what Critchley emphasized as the *de-finite*, a structural break or excess from within closed systems of knowledge occurs, Derrida's *undecidable*. This is the problem of closure: "a moving limit that restores each transgression and transgresses each restoration," (Critchley, op. cit., p. 80.) where an undecidable moment occurs that detects the break (the flaw) in the totalizing circularity of logos. In Derrida's renovation of Husserlian phenomenology with respect to the problem of closure, he displaces the undecidable moment of "closed" (blinded) theoretical assertion where phenomenology itself is a rigorous science that depends on the discourse of mathematization, and yet inherits from Husserl this very notion of *closure*, displacing as a key conceptual apparatus for his deconstruction of metaphysics of presence. *Closure* for Derrida then becomes the moment of a double-bind of belonging and break-through, between the relations of (phal)logocentrism and its others. According to Heidegger, metaphysics dissolves into the empirical and technological sciences which perform a scientific and methodological study of human beings and all that pertains to them. Forgetful, the sciences continue the metaphysical foundations and project — carrying it forward to its ultimate and total global domination. The *end* of metaphysics shows how much it has accomplished and how much it will accomplish in the future, the end of the end of metaphysics as the continuation of the metaphysical project. The term *closure* by Derrida was intended to remedy the misreadings of Heidegger's end as apocalyptic, eschatological rather than an end that he and Heidegger allude to as that *end* which continues indefinitely.

18 See Derrida, "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority,'" in *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, ed. by Drucilla Cornell, Michael Rosenfeld, and David Gray Carlson (New York & London: Routledge, 1992) pp. 3-67.

19 We would be thinking here, in the context of our thesis of both the movement of French feminism (*Écriture Féminine*) and, of course, Jacques Derrida.

20 Derrida suggests:

If someone tries to deconstruct the notion of subjectivity within women's studies, say, 'Well, woman is not a subject, we no longer consider woman as a subject'—this would have two consequences: one radically revolutionary or deconstructive, and the other

“something sexual” is always already for the for-itself of stakes as such. These are resistances which both deconstruction and studies of the feminine share:

—Now why is it the same?

Because deconstruction has developed itself as deconstruction of a structure which is called phallogocentrism, which is a whole structure, which is a system, so to speak. And it's not only a matter of concepts, of philosophical battle, but it's also a problem of how to write, how to behave in front of texts, in the institution, and of the relationship to literature and philosophy and so on. That's why it seems that there is a strong link between deconstruction—deconstructions and feminine studies, women's studies; but these strategic difficulties are also the same, with the same aporias, the same traps.<sup>21</sup>

### The Trial Before the Law (*Contre-Abyme*)<sup>22</sup>

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one dangerously reactive. This is the risk. The effect of the Law is to build the structure of the subject, and as soon as you say, ‘Well, the woman is a subject, and this subject deserves equal rights,’ and so on—then you are caught in the logic of phallogocentrism and you have rebuilt the empire of the Law. So it seems that women's studies can't go very far if it does not deconstruct the philosophical framework of this situation, starting with the notion of the subject, of ego, of consciousness, soul and body, and so on. The problem with this strategy is that it's difficult to make so many gestures at the same time. (“Women in the Beehive,” op. cit., p. 145.)

Has enough time passed? Has enough of this deconstructive strategy been embraced in the discourses on sexual difference to allow those more traditional, yet essential, discourses on subjectivity (race, class and gender) to “continue indefinitely”? That is to say, their “self-same” essentiality is also radically questioned with respect to a metaphysics of presence, within the continuation of metaphysics as a dissolution into the empirical and technological sciences which perform a scientific and methodological study of human beings and all that pertains to them. We would suggest that the 20th century inception of political science, of politics, is not divorced from Heidegger's concern for the indefinite path of metaphysics with the empirical and technological sciences. We refer here to the works of Giorgio Agamben, Jean Luc Nancy and Maurice Blanchot with particular reference to each of their notions on “community” as the “coming community,” as an “inoperative community,” and as an “unavowable community.” See Agamben, *The Coming Community*, trans. by Michael Hardt (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993); Nancy, “The Inoperative Community,” in *The Inoperative Community*, op. cit., pp. 1-42; and Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community*, op. cit. We address directly Blanchot's unavowable community and the in a concluding moment to this thesis.

21 Ibid., p. 149.

22 *Contre-abyme* will not be properly named in this text but rather performed with Derrida's “Before the Law.” (See “Before the Law.” op. cit., p. 217.) *Contre-abyme* refers to the structural possibility of a spatio-temporal movement of turning back (turning our backs but also “re-turn” impossibly translated as *ressac*, backwash, translating the firebrand of a Nietzschean spur, the *Brandt of Spurs*) and at the same time being before the law (the double post of the guard and man from the country). Derrida's essay suggests that the fragmentary *Before the Law* both inside and torn from Kafka's *The Trial* has produced a more powerful *mise-en-abyme* as *contre-abyme*. That is to say, the abyssal and interminable deferral in *The Trial* is even more powerfully conceived in *Before the Law* “engulfing” *The Trial* “and us along with it. Chronology is of little relevance here.” (ibid.)

You see, deconstruction cannot be transgression of the Law. Deconstruction *is* the Law. It's an affirmation, and affirmation is on the side of the Law. ... Law has the structure of affirmation. It's not something which limits the desire or forbids the transgression. As soon as you affirm a desire, you perform something which is the Law. The Law says "yes."<sup>23</sup>

Kafka's "Before the Law" *is*, as suggested by Derrida, the Law, just as the mode of deconstructive writing *is* the Law. Both Kafka's and Derrida's writings deconstruct all the systems of Law with the former's parable illustrating just how impossible it is to see or enter the Law. Both writings place the reader before their texts, before *their Law*:

Let us be patient too. But don't go thinking that I am stressing this story [i.e., Kafka's, enmeshed with Freud's letters on "repression" and concerned with the origin of morality] to mislead you, or to make you wait [like the countryman] in the anteroom of literature or fiction for a *properly* [my italics, M.O.] philosophic treatment of the question of law and the respect before it, or of the categorical imperative.<sup>24</sup> Is it not what holds us in check before the law, like the man from the country, also what paralyzes and detains us when confronted with a story: is it not its possibility and its impossibility, its readability and unreadability, its necessity and prohibition, and the questions of relation, or repetition and of history?<sup>25</sup>

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23 "Women in the Beehive," op. cit., p. 149.

24 Derrida's initial encounter with "Before the Law" constituted a seminar in which Kafka's story "laid siege" to his attempts at a reading across Kant, Heidegger and Freud on moral law and respect for law "in view of moral law and respect in the Kantian sense of the term." See "Before the Law," op. cit., p. 190. Derrida notes that the seminar turned to Heidegger's reading of "respect," developed in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*.

25 Ibid., p. 196. In facing the law, Derrida emphasizes that in *first* looking at it, accessibility to it is always refused. The country man has to wait or rather *chooses* himself to wait; he judges it is better to wait even though his original expectation was that the Law should be accessible to everyone. He decides not to enter: "he decides that it is better to wait until he gets permission to enter." (ibid., p. 183., citing Kafka) He is never granted permission and his decision to decide is a decision of non-decision: "he decides to put off deciding, he decides not to decide, he delays and adjourns whiles he waits." (ibid., p. 195-196.) Kafka's story is ultimately about this inaccessibility to the Law but this is an *effect* of the law. That is, the man from the country is trying to find a *way in*, realizing that entry is not as he had anticipated, accessible "at all times and to everyone," i.e., it should be universal. The effect is one of exclusivity or, as Derrida suggests, Kant emphasizes that it is a problem of exemplarity particularly in Kant's notion of "respect." (ibid., p. 196.) Without respect of the Law, people are exempt from it or rather they are *before the law*. But what is it to "respect" the law? What is it to *know* the law? Does this *knowing* make the Law visible, accessible, etc.: "in order to stand before it, face to face and with respect, or to introduce oneself to it and into it, the story becomes the impossible story of the impossible. The story of prohibition is a prohibited story." (ibid, pp. 199-200.) We will tie this back to the way Derrida discusses Freud's essay *Totem and Taboo* in relation to the murder of the father as a story about prohibition. Yet what it prohibits is the impossibility of its origins of analysis (of morality and law) as structured on fantasy, fiction or, as Derrida names it, "fictive narrativity (fiction *of* narration as well as fiction as narration: fictive narration as the simulacrum of narration and not only as the narration of an imaginary history)." (ibid, p. 199.) This is the origin of literature [the origin of origin and its end] and at the same time the origin of law—"like the dead father, a story told, a spreading rumour, without

Their texts question the grounds whereby any text can be classified legitimately literary, non-literary, philosophical, non-philosophical, etc. That is, whose or which legal authority has the governance to make such decisions? Whose measures? Who measures?<sup>26</sup> In this respect the reader, the text's other, like the guard as well as the man from the country, becomes guardian of the textual institution and its Law(s): “the signature of the text, makes the Law”<sup>27</sup> If we think of this signature that makes the Law, we suggest that this condition of the Law is also a signatory to Derrida's “gift” and “destination” that, as “gift,” determines sexual difference. That is to say, in the “performativity” of text, a receiver (reader, the other, signature) is produced, “but in no way does it [the receiver] pre-exist it. It is the receiver who is the determining factor of the gift.”<sup>28</sup> Unlike predetermined givers and receivers or calculative giving, in that we

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author or end, but an ineluctable and unforgettable story. ... It tells *its law.*” (ibid.) We have also recognized in “Fors” the re-membered narrative of what has never taken place.

26 Derrick Attridge, editor of *Acts of Literature* (that includes “Before the Law”) suggests that with this collection of essays Derrida responds to “works conventionally and institutionally categorized as ‘literary’ (with one borderline case in Rousseau's *Confessions*), but also works which in some way ‘perform’ literature, put it into play, establish and question its laws, operate at some internal distance from the institutional and the category which they at the same time confirm.” (*Acts of Literature*, op. cit., p. ix.)

27 “Women in the Beehive,” op. cit., p. 150.

28 Ibid., p. 152. Derrida engages deconstructively with performatives in the sense that on the one hand he emphasizes from speech act theory the necessity for performatives to follow conventions, i.e., there cannot be performatives if there is no law. However, he equally emphasizes the capacity for performatives to engage subversively with those conventions and in this sense break with the law: “In that sense, every event is subversive, because it doesn't rely on any given program.” (See ibid., p. 154. Also *Limited Inc*, op. cit., for the essays on Austin (“Signature, Event, Context”) and Searle (“Limited Inc.”) that are Derrida's most sustained engagement with speech act theory and performatives.) The example Derrida gives here is the Declaration of Independence suggesting that the “scriptor” (Jefferson and his representatives of the “good people”) does not exist before the signature of the “good people” of the United States who signed the text in the name of God. It is God who guarantees their good faith. American people did not exist as American people before having signed the Declaration of Independence. And it is in the signing that they conferred on themselves the right to call themselves the American people and the right to sign. The signature itself, which imposes the law, is in itself a performative act which in a certain way produces its own subject, which gives the person the right to do what he is doing.

Here is an enunciation—the Declaration of Independence—which arises with a burst of force before there is even a receiver. Thus there is a gesture which, at the limit, produces the receiver, and at the same time produces the sender. Where there is such a gesture, an enunciation, it speaks of indetermination but produces determination. It is by the gift that the Law is produced. It is this signature which engenders the sender, the receiver, the signer. It is a performative act—not to put great trust in this concept, but to use it only for convenience—of the gift which produces the giver and the receiver, who at that time become determined, determine themselves as such. It happens all the time, when one says “yes” in marriage for instance. (ibid., p. 153.)

This “yes” conditions the affirmation of the Law, in the moment of determination *as such* when the other answers with “it is me who answers,” “it is mine.” (ibid., p. 152.) Within this “economy” of the performative, of the gift, of the signature, where the gesture does not rely on a ready determination, you cannot rely on the sexual opposition. We are able to further engage with Derrida's understanding of the

know what we give, existing within an economy of exchange, this gift (economy) is not based on a “message” structure, as there is no message: “It is only the other, at the moment of receiving it, who decides the destination, and who says “it is me who answers” or “it is mine.”<sup>29</sup> Like the other who receives, their answer cannot be a determined answer to something, but rather it is absolutely heterogeneous. We must remember that the gift as the *before* of the *be-before* (for-itself) has no *a priori* value—no value before it has taken place. At each singular moment the gift’s irruptive force produces a sexual difference for each gift for each situation of reception and answer “it is me who answers,” “it is mine.”<sup>30</sup> This answer is suggestive of a Law-making act such as in the case of Kafka’s indeterminate *genre* (gender) that at the same time faces and is guaranteed by a more powerful Law.<sup>31</sup>

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signature in a reading of his text *Signéponge/Signsponge*, trans. by Richard Rand (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984). Ulmer, in *Glossary*, emphasizes this text in his reading of the signature in *Glas*. Ulmer cites Derrida in relation to the three possible modalities of the signature with respect to the name “Francis Ponge”:

The one that we call the signature in the proper sense represents the proper name, articulated in a language and readable as such: the act of someone not content to write his proper name (as if he were filling out an identity card), but engaged in authenticating (if possible) the fact that it is indeed he who writes. ... The second modality, a banal and confused metaphor for the first, is the set of idiomatic marks that a signer might leave by accident or intention in his product. These marks would have no essential link with the form of the proper name articulated or read ‘in’ a language. ... We sometimes call this the style, the inimitable idiom of a writer, sculptor, painter, or orator. ... Thirdly, and it is more complicated here, we may designate as general signature, or signature of the signature, the fold of the placement in abyss where, after the manner of the signature in the current sense, the work of writing designates, describes, and inscribes itself as act (action and archive), signs itself before the end by affording us the opportunity to read: I refer to myself, this is writing, I am a writing, this is writing—which excludes nothing since, when the placement in abyss succeeds, and is thereby decomposed and produces an event, it is the other, the thing as other, that signs. (Ulmer, “Sounding the Unconscious” op. cit., p. 67 & p. 69 cited from *Signéponge/Signsponge*, p. 52 & p. 54.)

Ulmer discusses *Glas*’s signature-effect as a placement into the abyss relating this effect to the centrality of heraldry where smaller escutcheons appear in the center of larger ones. The terminology of heraldry and its relation to the name, to the signature, relates conceptually to the “all-burning” as the terms become extended in turn as emblems: “Blazon, for example, underlies all Derrida’s discussions of the ‘all-burning’ in *Glas*, *La Carte Postale*, and most explicitly in *feu la cendre*, in which it is suggested that cinders may be finally the best ‘paradigm of the trace,’ with the *feu* of ‘fire’ or ‘combustion’ recalling the *fus* of ‘I was,’ the past tense that informs every ‘here and now’ of the written ‘I am’ (*suis*), not to mention the *feu* in the idiom *la feue reine*, the late queen (*feu*—deceased). And whose cinders are these, the deceased? The sender’s? (Blaze—flame, but also a trail, marks left on trees, trace).” (*Glossary*, op. cit., p. 54.) Again, we recognize the *ressac*, the firebrand or trial-by-fire of a return without end, or return.

29 “Women in the Beehive,” op. cit., p. 152.

30 One may only assess after its event whether the receiving of the gift has a negative or positive effect on its receiver. One cannot say ahead of time: “Well, this will endanger you.” (ibid., p. 155.)

31 This “more powerful Law” suggests thinking governed by metaphysics, ontology, etc., addressed in our discussion of *Glas* and the notion of *be-before* as the spatio-temporal undecidability of the *before* of speculative logic, pre-ontological and yet structured by ontological-dialectic Hegelian thought.

The law making of these works is before another Law, whereby *their* law is guaranteed by one more powerful. Derrida suggests that this deconstructive position of being *before* the (more powerful) Law is ongoing, “a process [that] has no end.”<sup>32</sup> He gathers together the paradoxical economy of being before a law that is self-prohibiting and yet allows man the freedom of self-determination that is paradoxically cancelled by the self-prohibition of entering the law. The discourse of the Law (said via its representatives) does not say “no” but rather “not-yet” indefinitely described as an interminable *differance*.<sup>33</sup> This “interminable *differance*” starts to closely resemble the temporality of the *before-be-before-for-(it)self*, the *before* of entering into the gift-exchange economy of be-before-for-itself. Not—Yet’s indefinite movement demonstrates both a process that has no end and interruption by the Law’s representatives. Not—Yet as *differance (pas)* is the Law as threshold between *pure cadeau* and be-before for-itself: “The law prohibits by interfering with and deferring the ‘ference’ [*férance*], the reference, the rapport, the relation. What *must not* and cannot be approached is the origin of *differance*: it must not be presented or represented and above all not penetrated. That is the law of the law, the process of a law of whose subject we can never say, ‘There it is,’ ‘it is here or there.’”<sup>34</sup>

“Before the Law” tells of a law about which we know neither *who* nor *what* it is. Kafka’s text is not a text of philosophy, science or history: “Here one does not know the law, one has no cognitive rapport with it; it is neither a subject nor an object *before* which one could take a position.”<sup>35</sup> Knowing neither *who* nor *what* the law is: “this, perhaps, is where literature begins.”<sup>36</sup> Kafka challenges the conventions of literature’s *law* with its law as inaccessibility in “entitlement.” That is, the very title “Before the Law” is not en-titled. It is a parable enclosed within *The Trial*. Torn from its origin, it takes place otherwise as a titled work in its *own* right. Derrida notes the double eventing that occurs between the title and the *incipit* (before the law) and simulates its

32 “Women in the Beehive,” op. cit., p. 150.

33 “Before the Law.” op. cit., p. 204.

34 Ibid., p. 205. This non-relational infinite delay, we suggest, like the man from the country who is an outlaw (outside the law) *affirmatively* positions the outlaw condition of woman who is not-yet, indefinitely, outside the judgement before subjectification: “The judgement, however, does not arrive. In this other sense, the man of nature is not only a subject of the law outside the law, he is also, in both an infinite and a finite way, the prejudged; not so much as a prejudged subject but as a subject before a judgement which is always in preparation and always being deferred. Prejudged as having to be judged, arriving in advance of the law which only signifies ‘later.’” (ibid., p. 206.)

35 Ibid., p. 207.

36 Ibid.

simulation in his own essay's title, a Kafkaesque movement of "entitlement," as law folds into the double yet contrary role of guardianship that occurs between the two protagonist. The law's representative as doorkeeper turns his back before the law. His position as a turning-back is an event of both turning to the law ("doing guard-duty, forbidding contact") and at the same time ignoring (transgressing, neglecting) the Law.<sup>37</sup> The man from the country faces the Law waiting to enter it and in this respect the two are in contrary positions. The contrary positioning marks the double event of the title and its *incipit* which poses the impossibility of longing and belonging between figurehead and the textual body *and* their ultimately undecidable relation as to *who* or *what* they are *before*. Derrida suggests that this eventing of "entitlement" as the double act of transgressing and upholding the law "is in order to prohibit all presentation."<sup>38</sup> We are never in the presence of the Law, never facing *it*, only engaged in the double event of its same mark (title and *incipit*) as the (before) of all heterogeneity.<sup>39</sup>

The question at stake in Derrida's "Before the Law" is whether literature and philosophy share the same conditions (or thought of the law) of possibility? The question of coincidence of conditions would coincide with a thought of the affirmative power of the Law in the face of it not being recognizable, neither the *who* nor the *what*, nor the where of a destination that is neither visible nor possible to enter. This co-inciding would cohere with Derrida's notion of the gift, the *pure cadeau* we spoke

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37 Ibid., p. 200.

38 Ibid., p. 201. We have seen this movement of transgression and restoration in our previous chapters as the necessary moment of closure or *end* (to the Law) that allows for an otherwise opening or angle of entry (as Law of the Law or law-making). It is in this movement of transgression and restoration, noted for instance in the (revolutionary) works of Heidegger and Levinas that open up new spaces in the critical resources of the old (metaphysical) ground, that we can think via deconstruction. This opens the possibility for otherwise engagements in, and discourses on, sexual difference.

39 Double eventing is a continuous thread throughout Derrida's reading of "Before the Law" in "Before the Law" as the first territorial divide between title and *incipit* doubles also with the first guard to the city and its Law. As the divider between country and city, this first guard is also the furthest and most removed from the Law. In this respect the first guard is the least powerful as the story goes and therefore the last: "The first in order of the narration is the last in the order of the law." (ibid., p. 202.) The lowest guard in the hierarchical chain of guards appears to hold the most powerful post and this double deconstructs the notion of the "more powerful" Law. This structural territorial divide between country and city, natural and juridical law marks the threshold of a trace where the logic of its path performs the undecidable and inaccessible "face" of the Law. This path of the trace between the appearance (guardians, representatives) of the law and the face-less-ness of the Law becomes a significant marking (of madness) between the avowable and unavowable communities of sexual difference. We later come to explore this fiery trace, ignited by Derrida in Kafka's text, through its ashen edges in the works of Maurice Blanchot, by way of this post-script's conclusion.

of earlier, whose “purity” deconstructs the Hegelian *absolute*.<sup>40</sup> This would be the incalculability of difference(s) that has an indefinite number of sexes, what we will come later to suggest as “the gift” of sexual difference which is not a gift: “but [not sexual in-difference] in a sexuality completely out of the frame, totally aleatory to what we are familiar with in the term “sexuality. ... the gift is beyond sexual duality.”<sup>41</sup>

### Madness of the “Truth” (Genre, Gender—An Odd Couple)<sup>42</sup>

“Like truth, the law would be the guarding itself (*Wahrheit*), only the guarding. And this singular look between the guardian and the man.”<sup>43</sup>

40 Our analysis of Derrida’s *pure cadeau* is suggestive of the kind of double movement *belonging* to *Glas*, and belonging to speculative thought. It is a weave that takes up Hegel’s most radical singular heterogeneous readings of the irruptive event of the gift that exist both pre-ontologically and within ontological thinking. This weave of the double movement positions thinking according to Derrida’s own logic of the *gift* culminating in *Glas*’s analysis of Hegelian constriction as *re-(con)-striction*, a function of common *ground* for forces and counter-force per se, whether dialectical or not. The movement of the *pure gift* “cancelled” by taking up an offer of entry into the economy of exchange describes, perhaps, the most significant “destabilizing” or otherwise thought of thinking to dialectics. The “not-yet” is a movement of the *before* that in its moment (of non-moment) as pre-anticipatory entry. It is “not yet the teleological anticipation which results in it never becoming dialectical contradiction.” (*Glas*, p. 244a.) This movement of the *pure gift* before it becomes *gift for-itself* (as the representation and figure of self-presence, self-consciousness) *remains* according to the “logic” of *Glas* a “(non-dialectical) law of the (dialectical) strict-ure, the *restriction* of the *first* initials of *Glas* as the silent strangulation of the guttural and glutinous force of *Gl-(as)*, a holding back, a hesitancy that is the “non-dialectical” law or the “lock (*serrure*) of the dialectical.” (ibid.) This *force of law* which articulates the movement of the before of the *gift* as *pure gift* founded on a *lock* anticipates a paradoxical position that comes with security. This constitutes the security of a spatio-temporal locale that describes an otherwise beyond in the before of thought and yet an entry into the strict bonds of thought for its otherwise to turn into what it is not.

41 “Women in the Beehive,” op. cit., p. 151.

42 Cited in ibid.

43 “Before the Law.” op. cit., p. 206. Derrida establishes that the law has no essence, eluding thus presence, the essence of being. It is inaccessible and its *true* manifestation is guarding only. This truth as appearance is Heidegger’s truth of truth as “truth” is non-truth. Truth without truth as appearance of the law only in the guarding, as representation or the guard, as the representative to the law — it is in this light that we must understand the above quote in relation to the Law as guarding itself (*Wahrheit*). Only the guarding can be glimpsed in the singular event of the look between the guard and man. We have spoken earlier about this guarding in relation to the Hegelian primordial event of the “all-burning” that for Hegel is an originary sacrifice that inaugurates the cult of religion through the dialectical guardian of the hard-working negative. We can start to see a resemblance in the hard-working negative of Hegelian dialectics that acts as the representative of a guarding force of Law that guards its own movement of loss. The look between the guardian and man marks this appearance of disappearance, what can be seen in the look-between is suggestive of the “doorkeeper who guards nothing, the door remaining open—and open on nothing.” (ibid.) With Hegelian appearance of disappearance we enter into the moment of ontological dialectics of return as *Aufhebung*, or truth as *end* (totalisable positive-result) whereas in the beyond of the look (appearance, presence), Derrida suggests a beyond beings (a law that is nothing present), the law calls in silence. There is perhaps still hidden or guarded the abyss of a difference. This abyssal difference (in hiding) as discussed in the context of the interminable *differance* is a temporality of the not-yet that in difference to Hegel and Heidegger (in respect to the gift of being, what gives, etc.), Derrida’s step-back (*pas*) does not lead to original sacrifice that sacrifices beings-as-a-whole to the question of being, that would prioritize the question of being absolutely. However, Derrida does say that

—This is an *abyssal* [my italics, MOC] question, for there is a certain determination of truth which permits one to answer that woman as truth is that which stops the [random] drift, that which interrupts and assures truth. But there is a way of thinking about truth which is much more adventurous, risky, and at that point truth, which is without end, abyssal, is the very movement of the drift. There is a way of thinking about truth which is not reassuring, which is not in general what we think of truth. That would bring us into a discourse about the truth of truth, and Heidegger who says that truth is non-truth; the field is open. As is the case ... with any discipline, at a certain moment, one can no longer improvise or hurry. You have to go slowly, look at things in detail. At a certain point it is necessary to stop; one cannot improvise on a question of truth. It would not be surprising ... that one day, in a program ... there will be the question of truth, and that someone will spend three or four years researching “truth.”<sup>44</sup>

—Would this be madness?

—Such would be the “remarkable truth” that clears an opening for the madness of the day—and that appeals, like law, like madness, to the one who says “I” or “I/we.” Let us be attentive to this syntax of truth. She, the law, says: “The truth is that we can no longer be separated. I shall follow you everywhere, I shall live under your roof ...” He: “The truth is that she appealed to me ...,” she, law, but also—and this is always the principal theme of these sentences—she, truth [*La vérité, c'est qu'elle me plaît*]. One cannot conceive truth without the madness of the law.<sup>45</sup>

What for Derrida is hidden, we have suggested already, is the temporal gift of the not-yet, the Law’s hiddenness as abyssal difference in the story “of what never happens.” We have alluded to the impossible narration that is the whole story of the non-story of Blanchot’s *récit*, his “The Madness of the Day.”<sup>46</sup> The law in Blanchot’s story appears as a *feminine* “silhouette” that is neither a man nor a woman and is a companion to the quasi-narrator who is before the law. What is impossible to narrate is the story of

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a minute displacement of the guardian of law would then begin to resemble Heidegger’s shepherd of being (*Hirt*). Rather, for Derrida, the temporal gift of the “Not-Yet” (the Law’s hiddenness as abyssal difference in the story “of what never happens,” or the impossible narration that is the whole story of the non-story of Blanchot’s *récit* or “The Madness of the Day”) is an affirmative excess and not a sacrifice. (ibid.) This hiddenness as abyssal difference (interminable *différance*) as the affirmative quality of the Law, we will come to name as the madness of the law. And it will be her who comes.

44 “Women in the Beehive,” op. cit., pp. 156-157.

45 Derrida, “The Law of Genre,” op. cit., p. 250.

46 Blanchot, “Madness of the Day,” op. cit., pp. 189-200. This short *récit* has been discussed by Derrida extensively in “The Law of Genre,” and also in “Living On • Borderlines,” in relation to Blanchot’s *Death Sentence*.

the law, an impossible story recounted and demanded by the law's representatives (policemen, judges, doctors). The story recounted, that is "put forward," as appearance, to the representatives is on the impossibility of recounting as correctness, as presence, and hence its impossibility. Derrida suggests this union of an *impossible story* or story as the *impossibility of possibility* is where literature begins. It is made impossible before the representatives of the Law ("language is the elementary medium of the Law").<sup>47</sup> This is the union bringing together an "I/We" of the "remarkable truth" of truth as more adventurous and risky. At that point it would be a truth without end, abyssal, as random drift. Yet, more significantly, it is the "I/We" not of its representatives, but of the law *herself* who, throughout a *récit*, forms a couple with me, with the "I" of the narrative voice.<sup>48</sup> Further, as we know not *what* or *who* the law *is*, as in the neutrality of its non-gendering, the law opens up the impossible "atopology" that annuls oppositions:

The law is silent, and of it nothing is said to us. Nothing, only its name, its common name and nothing else. In German it is capitalized, like a proper name. We do not know what it is, who it is, where it is. Is it a thing, a person, a discourse, a voice, a document, or simply a nothing that incessantly defers access to itself, thus forbidding *itself* in order thereby to become something or someone?<sup>49</sup>

◆ That madness is present in every language is not enough to establish that it is not omitted in them. The name could elude it in that the name as name gives to the language that uses it for a peaceful communication the right to forget that with this word outside of words language's rupture with itself is introduced: rupture that only *another* language would allow to speak (without, however, communicating it).

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47 "Before the Law," op. cit., p. 206. However, "the fictitious nature of this ultimate story which robs us of every event, of this pure story, or story without story, has as much to do with philosophy, science, or psychoanalysis as with literature." (*ibid.*)

48 "The Law of Genre," op. cit., p. 249. The law is being made by both the "I" and "We" coming to light in the madness of the day where the one who brings forth law to the light of day is given by the "I" of the writer as also "author of the law." (*ibid.*, p. 250.) This union's singular act is eventing before institutional, academic law engenders the law: "There is no general device. In some situations you have to behave in a very conservative way, in tough conservative ways, to maintain, and at the same time or the day after to do exactly the contrary." ("Women in the Beehive," op. cit., p. 155.) But also: "He who engenders her, he, her mother who no longer knows how to say "I" or to keep memory intact. I am the mother of law, behold my daughter's madness. It is also the madness of the day, for day, the word *day* in its disseminial abyss, is law, the law of the law. My daughter's madness is to want to be born—like anybody and nobody [*comme personne*]. Whereas she remains a "silhouette," a shadow, a profile, her face never in view." ("The Law of Genre," op. cit., p. 250.)

49 "Before the Law," op. cit., p. 208.

But the madness that shatters language in leaving it apparently intact, leaves it intact only to accomplish in it its invisible destruction.<sup>50</sup>

The affirmative interminability of *différance* in both *stories*, Kafka's and Derrida's, is activated by madness that defers the law. This deferral annuls opposition in the spatio-temporal *before* according to the positions of the guarding that guards back and faces man: "before as before and before as behind."<sup>51</sup> The affirmation of the law is singled out as singularity as and at the story's conclusion. We have learnt that the first guard insisted in the end on the singularity of this door for the country man: "There is a place for you here [*il y a lieu pour toi, ici*]." But we do not know what this place is for, "for what we do not know" except for uniqueness of the event *itself*.<sup>52</sup> Like Kafka's text, the law is unreadable and this is its singular law, a law of the text as distinct from a self-referential transparency of assured specular reflection: As Derrida concludes:

We are *before* this text that, saying nothing definite and presenting no identifiable content beyond the story itself, except for an endless *différance*, till death, nonetheless remains strictly intangible. Intangible: by this I understand inaccessible to contact, impregnable, and ultimately ungraspable, incomprehensible—but also that which we have not the *right* to touch. This is an "original" text, as we say; it is forbidden or illicit to change or disfigure it, or to touch its form. Despite the non-identity in itself of its sense or destination, despite its essential unreadability, its "form" presents and performs itself as a kind of personal identity entitled to absolute respect. If someone were to change one word or alter a single sentence, a judge could always declare him or her to have infringed upon, violated, or disfigured the text.<sup>53</sup>

50 Blanchot, *The Step Not Beyond*, op. cit., p. 46. We have previously addressed Derrida on the question of madness with respect to his encounter with Foucault. See Chapter 4, footnote 4. See also Ulmer's discussion of Derrida with respect to Lacan and Foucault. Thus, Derrida locates in Foucault's project another one, to discover a moment *before* the division of reason and madness, linking and separating them: "... a self-dividing action, a cleavage and torment interior to *meaning in general*, interior to *logos in general* ... by virtue of the historical enunciation through which philosophy tranquilizes itself and excludes madness, philosophy also betrays itself." "Cogito and the History of Madness," cited in Ulmer, op. cit., pp. 38-39. The law of the Proper would constitute this betrayal in that language is the elementary medium of the Law. We do not know the law, only its Proper Name and nothing else, as the law of the Proper, of propriation, capital, etc.

51 "Before the Law," op. cit., p. 209.

52 Ibid., p. 210.

53 Ibid., p. 211. Note here in this quote the hyphen or hymen's graphic as the bridging mark of the "I" of singularity and the "We" of its law. The text of "self-referential" Kafka or Kafka's signature lays down his law and makes the law as in the forming of a new relation to the Law which ultimately *forms* a new relation to itself: "... introduces a kind of perturbation in the "normal" system of reference, while simultaneously *revealing* an essential structure of referentiality. It is an obscure revelation of referentiality which does not make reference, which does not refer, any more than the eventness of the event is itself an event." (ibid., p. 213.) Kafka's text forms a new relation to the law of literature in the context of referentiality in its deconstruction of an essentialised form, thereby *forming* in its new relation

◆ No I myself, who “am neither learned nor ignorant,” “I feel a boundless pleasure in living and shall be boundlessly content to die.” In this random claim that links affirmation usually to women, beautiful ones, it is then more than probable that, as long as I say *yes, yes*, I am a woman and beautiful. I am a woman, and beautiful. Grammatical sex (or anatomical as well, in any case, sex submitted to the law of objectivity): the masculine gender [*genre*] is thus affected by the affirmation through a *random drift* [my italics, MOC] that could always render it other. A sort of secret coupling would take place here, forming an odd marriage (“hymen”), an odd couple, for none of this can be regulated by objective, natural, or civil law. The “usually” is a mark of this secret and odd hymen, of this coupling that is also perhaps a mixing of genders/genres. The genders/genres pass into each other. And we will not be barred from thinking that this mixing of genders, viewed in light of the madness of sexual difference, may bear some relation to the mixing of literary genres.<sup>54</sup>

### Trace of Madness (Ash(lad)en Edges: *Arrêt de Mort*)

The sole law of abandonment, like the law of love, is to be without return and without recourse.<sup>55</sup>

### Absolute Malady<sup>56</sup>

However, it is not that he does not bring something to her also. He tells her the world, he tells her the sea, he tells her the time that passes and the dawn that paces her sleep. It is also he who asks the question. She is the oracle, but the oracle is an answer only through the impossibility of questioning. “*She says: Ask questions then, I can’t do it on my own.*”

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to the laws of genre and literature the Law of literature as a shifting boundary between the singular event and its universal “truth.” The man from the country “had difficulty with literature” as he did not ever enter into this relation between self-referentialism and its universal law of literature as the gesture that marks all possible deconstruction. This would again signify for us Derrida’s statement that deconstruction (like literature) is law. This does not mean that deconstruction is literature but rather its gestures, its referentiality and framing are, at times literary. And, more importantly, the singular act of deconstruction brings the Law of *essentialism* per se (of whatever text and its set of laws, customs, social conventions, etc.) before its (deconstructive) law.

54 “The Law of Genre,” op. cit., p. 245.

55 Jean Luc Nancy, cited in Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community*, op. cit., p. 29.

56 Malady: (1) a physical or psychological disorder or disease; (2) a condition or situation that is problematic and requires a remedy; (3) *My Lady (Middle English): formal address to a titled woman*; (4) Melody: an arrangement of single notes or words (harmonized); (5) *The Malady of Death (La Maladie de la Mort)*: A book by Marguerite Duras (fp. 1982).

There is, in truth, but one question, and it is the only possible question, asked in the name of all by the one who, in all his solitude, does not know that he is asking in the name of all: “*You ask if she thinks anyone could love you. She says no, not possibly.*” [pas] An answer so categorical that it cannot come from an ordinary mouth, but only from very high and from very far, a superior jurisdiction that also expresses itself in him in a modicum of partial truths. ... It is said in three solemn yet simple lines. “*She says: Take me, so it may have been done. You do so, you take her. It is done. She goes back to sleep.*” After which, everything having been consummated, she is no longer there. Gone during the night, she left with the night. “*She'd never come back.*”<sup>57</sup>

With Blanchot's *Unavowable Community* we experience impossibilities of community's existence, its dissolution and what cannot be pronounced in the excessive essential solitude between the “I” of a writer and the “We” that governs the *relation* of the work (*oeuvre*) to its own unworking (*désœuvrement*).<sup>58</sup> This *community* bears a silence through the disappearance and separation of the *I* and *We* in order that they come together again. In the conclusion to *The Unavowable Community*, Blanchot asks, in the name of the *community*, whether it is better to remain silent on what has been almost impossible to speak of without default, that is, its contemporaneous purpose. In responding, Blanchot gives and in giving obliges his reader to *not* answer and *at that very moment* to *not* remain silent. But, rather, to choose words exactly that discover a politico-ethical poetics: “That [it] does not permit us to lose interest in the present time which, by opening unknown spaces of freedom, make us responsible for new relationships, always threatened, always hoped for, between what we call work, *oeuvre*, and what we call unworking, *désœuvrement*.<sup>59</sup>

57 *The Unavowable Community*, op. cit., pp. 54-55.

58 We have spoken earlier of the I/We community, although it is important to emphasise for Blanchot the I/We relation which has the movement of nullifying subjectivity and identity, in terms of what he calls the *neuter* (*le "il,"* the “he/it” or “I/we”—) a movement of relation between the “I” of the subject (the writer) who abandons his place for the non-place of the *le il* (he/it). From this non-place the *le "il"* cannot speak, as with the speaking subject of a self as presence and self-presence. It is a *community* that does not become another subject or identity or puts itself into dialectical opposition to the One. Blanchot suggests how this is possible: “... he/it, specified as the indeterminate term in order that the self in turn might determine itself as the major determinant, the never-subjected subject, is the very *relation* of the self to the other, in this sense: infinite or discontinuous, in this sense: relation always in displacement and in displacement in regard to itself, displacement also of that which would be without place.” (*The Step Not Beyond*, op. cit., p. ix.) This dissolution that the *community* of the neuter suggests elaborates Blanchot's unworking (*désœuvrement*). *Désœuvrement's* association to *oeuvre* (the work of art, or literature) conditions a lack—or the *work* as the work's lack—the work as unmindful of being or not being, as neither present nor absent: neutral. It also means idleness, inertia suggesting a kind of re-treatment of the work that has not come to presence, i.e., the *relation* between the work and its denial, between writing and passivity, between being and not being a writer, being and not being the subject of the verb “to write.”

59 *Ibid.*, p. 56.

I know you are “very close” but the unavowed end of this final letter (semi-fictive, semelfactive) is—

you should be able to guess, to say it in my place, for we have said everything to each other.

I would have liked, yes, to give you everything that I did not give you, and this does not amount to the same. At least this is what you think, and doubtless you are right, there is in this Necessity.

I will ask myself what *to turn around* has signified from my birth on or thereabouts. I will speak to you again, and of you, you will not leave me but I will become very young and the distance incalculable.

Tomorrow I write you again, in our foreign language. I won’t retain a word of it and in September, without my ever having seen you again, you will burn

you will burn it, you, it has to be you.<sup>60</sup>

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60 Derrida, “*Envois*,” in *The Post Card*, op. cit., pp. 255-256.

## ASHES (AN AFTERWORD)

of you, does this remind you of a kind of return? And, if so, what kind of return? And, if so, what circle of centrality on a decaying circumference? The complicated series of questions and questionings of a genre's many lives. Yet, I am also aware that this implication has made quite clear what I would quietly suggest.

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