

**The Relation of Derrida's Deconstruction to Heidegger's Destruction:  
Some Notes**  
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*I will be examining Derrida's texts on Heidegger in order to establish a relationship between Derrida's deconstruction and Heidegger's destruction. Derrida, while acknowledging the importance of aletheia for radicalizing the notion of truth for Western philosophy, establishes some distance from Heidegger in his readings of Heidegger's post-metaphysics and post-representational thinking. Derrida argues that Heidegger's negation of metaphysics does not manage to overcome or destroy metaphysics as he sets out to do, because his reversals of metaphysics remain bound to the ontological structure and vocabulary of metaphysics. Basically he asserts that non-metaphysics or a reversal of metaphysics remains a form of metaphysics and is no different from metaphysics. Although Heidegger's attempts to overcome representational thinking in Aletheia retain some semblance to representational thinking, since the assumption of the Platonic thing-in-itself is implicit in the concealed entity and its utility and equipmentality becomes its unconcealed entity, Heidegger betrays a dual ontological structure that resembles metaphysics.*

While Derrida appreciated Heidegger's attempts to go beyond the strictures of metaphysics, he argues that a simple negation of metaphysics remains a repetition of it. Derrida's reading is still important today because he applies the aporia of Heidegger's negation of metaphysics to most postmodern thought. By noting that a reversal of metaphysics remains a repetition of it he implies that postmodern refutations of the transcendental do not entirely succeed in escaping metaphysics. The relevance of these deconstructive readings of Heidegger to literature is that postmodern writers who seek to negate the transcendental remain bound to its structure. Eventually, texts which attempt to overcome metaphysics find themselves repeating its ontological vocabulary. Derrida's thought thus addresses the aporia that holds between modern and postmodern writing. In other words, postmodern writing, contrary to popular conception, is a repetition rather than a deviation from modern thought.

Derrida locates the origin of metaphysics in that which structures the very possibility of Husserl's Transcendental or Heidegger's Being as presence, namely differance. Differance enables the thought of both as it grounds the possibility of structurality and structure. Derrida thus traces the roots of Husserl's and Heidegger's philosophy to locate the origin of metaphysics in a non-origin. It is the aporia of the transcendental and empirical that enables metaphysics. Transcendental and empirical idealism embodied by Husserl and Heidegger's thought fails to acknowledge differance as the meta-condition that enables the very structurality of their philosophies. Derrida thus affirms the impossibility of univocal truth and responsibility. To him the necessity of iteration, and the division of the mark from itself undermines the possibility of absolute truth and presence. Rather, truth is constituted by difference, the impasse and aporia between the representational and post-representational and is implicated in both. To clarify: Truth is apprehended by understanding its impossibility—the inability to choose and the undecidability between competing systems as every inscription of speech and writing subverts its authority from the outside by differing

from the original mark. Truth is aporia, or the space between the transcendental and empirical.

I first examine the deconstruction of Being as presence in Derrida's readings of Heidegger through *Of Grammatology* and *Writing and Difference*, demonstrating that non-presence and differance are essential to determining presence. Then I proceed to examine the problematic relation between metaphysics and its destruction in *Spurs, The Truth in Painting* and *Of Spirit* in order to show that non-metaphysics is merely a repetition of it. In between, I will examine Derrida's explicit statement on the relation of his deconstruction to destruction in *Positions* and examine his attempts to distance himself from Heideggerean destruction.

### *Of Grammatology*

Echoing Heidegger in "The End of the Book and the Beginning of Writing," Derrida takes similar steps to pronounce the end of a certain epoch of philosophy but distances himself from Heidegger's *destruktion* by describing Heidegger's onto-theology as a system of presence, logocentrism and phonocentrism which philosophy must now think anew by reconsidering its origins, not in Being and presence as Heidegger did but in the trace or in the space between the transcendental and empirical. Derrida writes that:

From the *Introduction to Metaphysics* onward, Heidegger renounces the project of and the word ontology. The necessary, originary and irreducible dissimulation of the meaning of being, its occultation within the very blossoming forth of presence, that retreat without which there would be no history of being which was completely history and history of being, Heidegger's insistence on noting that being is produced as history only through the logos, and is nothing outside of it, the difference between being and the entity—all this clearly indicated that fundamentally nothing escapes the movement of the signifier and that, in the last instance, the difference between the signified and the signifier is nothing. (1974: 22)

Derrida argues that by designating presence and being as origin, onto-theology favoured a logocentrism that rigidly delineated the difference between signifier and signified. In his view, the movement of the trace erases the difference between signifier and signified because this difference separates nothing and distinguishes nothing. In other words, despite Heidegger's notion of being as presence, the transcendental is nothing outside the empirical and the origin of philosophy is a non-origin. Derrida thus pronounces the beginning of writing, the end of the book, the end of philosophy as presence, the end of speech and the death of phonocentrism or the absolute proximity of the signified to the signifier. He demonstrates that there is no transcendental signified, "nothing outside the text" and shows that "every signified is in the place of signifier." Phrased differently, philosophy does not refer to a transcendental or mythical origin or *topos noetos* but is a chain of supplements that refer infinitely to each other. It is irrevocably *mediated*. The signified is nothing outside the signifier, meaning is nothing outside the text, which brings it into being through iterability, or repetition with a difference. The signified, or the transcendental, is thus nothing outside a system of differences that defer meaning infinitely in its representation and mediation only through signifiers and supplements that refer infinitely to each other. Meaning thus becomes plurivocal and free from a referential origin or the transcendental signified that designates

meaning only as something to be comprehended. This infinite deferral of meaning will always allow a surplus of meaning that escapes the text.

## **Differance**

In Derrida's examination of Heidegger's account of presence, Derrida argues that Heidegger has acknowledged the difference between Being and beings as the trace which belongs neither to presence or absence, but Heidegger elides this difference by collapsing it into unitary Being and presence. Derrida would argue that this collapse of the difference between Being and beings fails to acknowledge the trace or the interval between presence and absence as the very structure and conditionality on which both are premised. The interval between Being and beings, presence and absence, is what conditions metaphysics and ensures its structurality; thus Heidegger, by suppressing differance in favour of the totality and presence of Being, forgets the conditions of possibility upon which his ontology is premised. Derrida would remark that non-being and absence, and the difference between Being and beings or the differance between presence and absence are as essential to determining presence as the simple ontological privileging of presence that Heidegger emphasizes through the ontological certitude of Being. This relegates non-Being and non-presence to something secondary, when it is, in fact, essential to determining Being and presence. Although difference determines the structurality of metaphysics, Heidegger elides this in his simple privileging of Being and presence. Derrida notes that erasure and dislocation belongs to the structure of the trace. In other words, presence is determined by the deferral, spatially and temporally, of the trace which conditions and originates both presence and absence. The origin of presence is thus a non-origin, rather than pure Being or presence.

Derrida thus seeks, through following the movement of the trace that Heidegger has elided in his emphasis on presence, to think the unthought and the other of language, to acknowledge non-presence, non-Being, absence, silence and ellipsis as both a condition of philosophy as of Being and presence. Differance defers and delays; hence language always becomes other to itself, a repetition with a difference, an iteration of an origin that only is retrospectively produced through the movement of the trace. Derrida sustains that Heidegger, while acknowledging the difference between Being and beings, violently collapses this difference into univocal Being and presence which fails to acknowledge the differentiating movement of the trace that produces both presence and absence, Being and non-Being. Derrida, therefore, posits the trace as the meta-condition that perpetuates Heidegger's very notion of Being as presence, discovering in the process the origin of philosophy to be a non-origin.

## **Structure, Sign and Play**

Derrida chooses Nietzsche, Freud and Heidegger to think decentering but concedes that these names have been chosen arbitrarily, for even though they have formulated the structurality of structure in most radical terms, no discourse escapes metaphysics or rupture. As he puts it: "This event I call a rupture, the disruption I alluded to at the beginning of this paper, presumably would have come about when the structurality of structure had begun to be thought, that is to say, repeated, and this is why I said this disruption was repetition in every

sense of the word” (1980: 353). Hence there is no thought that escapes structure, whether it involves building a system around an *arche* or a system that decenters it. As a matter of fact, the rupture of metaphysics involves repetition and redoubling rather than simple decentering. What this means is that the rupture that results from decentering metaphysics involves a redoubling of it, an opening to think its Other. To quote Derrida, “What would this event be then? Its exterior form would be that of a rupture and a redoubling” (1980: 351). Structure is something that has either been affirmed or deviated from, constantly it is being re-inscribed in discourse. Discourse escapes neither structure nor the metaphysical constraints it imposes in the form of the structurality of structure, whether the center is affirmed or negated. As Derrida argues: “There is no sense in doing without the concepts of metaphysics in order to shake metaphysics. We have no language—no syntax or lexicon—which is foreign to this history; we can pronounce not a single destructive proposition which has not already had to slip into the form, the logic, and the implicit postulations of precisely what it seeks to contest” (1980: 354). To clarify: we have no language which is not already informed by metaphysical presuppositions; therefore all destructions of metaphysics that proceed from within the confines of language repeat the metaphysics they seek to destroy.

The center is a function of the structurality of structure rather than an *arche* or *telos*. This is demonstrated by the fact that it can be decentered and substituted infinitely by supplements that extend the play of signification infinitely. As Derrida argues:

Henceforth, it was necessary to begin thinking that there was no center, that the center could not be thought in the form of a present-being, that the center had no natural site, that it was not a fixed locus but a function, a sort of nonlocus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions came into play. This was the moment when language invaded the universal problematic, the moment when, in the absence of a center or origin, everything became discourse—provided we can agree on this word—that is to say, a system in which the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely. (1980: 354)

The absence of the transcendental signified or absolute origin frees signification to an infinite amount of possibilities, an infinite number of supplements referring to each other rather than corresponding to an absolute referent or transcendental signified. Arguments between philosophers might differ in opinion about the absence or presence of a center, but essentially affirm this center and reinscribe the structurality of structure. Derrida writes:

But we cannot do without the concept of the sign, for we cannot give up this metaphysical complicity without also giving up the critique we are directing against this complicity, or without the risk of erasing difference in the self-identity of a signified reducing or deriving the signifier into itself or, amounting to the same thing, simply expelling the signifier outside itself. (1980: 355)

The destruction of the center only repeats metaphysics by affirming its complicity with the structure of metaphysics through its affirmation of the primacy of the sign. Furthermore, there is no difference between signifier and signified or the transcendental and the empirical: they are essentially the same. There is nothing but the distinguishing movement of the trace that produces the illusion that these are separate through an illusory movement of distinction

called difference. As Hegel has affirmed, no difference exists between philosophers because philosophy is an examination of the Absolute and the *arche* in different forms.

While Derrida describes the aporias that haunt metaphysics, his thought does not escape these aporias, that is, it is a meta-reflection on the structurality of structure and the conditions of possibility of metaphysics. As such, not only does it not escape this structure, but also secures it. Derrida does not offer any alternative to metaphysical or logocentric thinking. He does, however, alert us to the meta-conditions that enable the very possibility of metaphysical thinking or philosophy. As he puts it:

For my part, although these two interpretations must acknowledge and accentuate their difference and define their irreducibility, I do not believe that today there is any question of choosing—in the first place because we are in a region (let us say, provisionally, a region or historicity) where the category of choice seems particularly trivial; and in the second, because we must first try to conceive of the common ground, and the difference of this irreducible difference. (1980: 370)

Henceforth, the interval is neither transcendental nor empirical but enables the thought of both. By defining the interval as the quasi-transcendental Derrida locates the condition of possibility for metaphysical thinking within the concept of difference. As a result, the possibility of metaphysics comes about through its repetition, or iterability. The sense of history implied by the structure of repeatability is the history of the determination of being as presence, where there is an origin that is referred to and recalled in its repetition. The nostalgia for a lost origin, a presence and self-presence of innocence, of a prior time untainted by chance and skepticism, is what has determined the structure of repeatability, a history of being as presence. As Derrida says, “The thematic of historicity, although it seems to be a somewhat late arrival in philosophy, has always been required by the determination of Being as presence” (1980: 367). The notion of “proper” (property, properties, appropriateness, appropriation, etc.) undergoes a contamination with the movement of the mark. The “proper” time of a repeatable mark is its rupture, its discontinuation of it, or its effect as rupture and difference, and its contamination of the original as the trace. As Derrida states, “For example, the appearance of a new structure, of an original system, always comes about—and this is the very condition of its structural specificity—by a rupture with its past, its origin, and its cause” (1988: 367). The “original” mark is the historic determination of being as presence where a transcendent origin or ideal concept must be represented through its repetition as the empirical. Derrida argues that this historic determination of being as presence is a myth, that the mark only exists through its mediation and iteration, and that it does not exist separately from its iteration. As Derrida puts it, “The Absolute is passage.” So, ideality is constituted through repetition. Hence, there is no instance of the mark that lies outside the structure of its iteration. All thought is always delay; it is communicated to us through the passage of difference. It follows that the structurality of structure has determined human thought and philosophy from Plato to Nietzsche and that metaphysics has always re-inscribed itself in human thought. Metaphysics has been repeated even in a non-metaphysics like Heidegger’s, but Heidegger’s destruction of metaphysics is in every sense a repetition of it.

## Derrida's Later readings of Heidegger

In this section I will be examining later texts such as *Spurs*, *Positions*, *The Truth in Painting* and *Of Spirit*, which are more concerned with the non-difference between metaphysics and non-metaphysics. *Spurs* examines the relation between metaphysics and non-metaphysics, *The Truth in Painting* examines the relation between representational and post-representational thought, and *Of Spirit* examines the relation between Heidegger's de-spiritualization of his ontology and his paradoxical embracing of the spirit of Nazi philosophy. I will examine Derrida's claim that metaphysics and non-metaphysics remain metaphysical forms and adopt the same ontological structure through close readings of these texts. Derrida demonstrates that metaphysics and non-metaphysics are repetitions and doublings of each other rather than contradictions and negations or reversals. In this sense, Heidegger's non-Christian philosophy shares more with Christian theology and metaphysics than he cares to acknowledge because his reversal of metaphysics remains bound to its ontological structure.

### *Spurs*

In *Spurs*, Derrida charges that Heidegger eludes Nietzsche's allegations about the gendered nature of truth in his quest to confine truth to the asexual questions of Being. The claim that truth is a woman might hold more force than Heidegger cares to concede. As Derrida puts it:

Instead let us attempt to decipher this inscription of the woman. Surely its necessity is not one of a concept-less metaphorical or allegorical illustration. Nor could it be that of a pure concept bare of any fantastic designs.

Instead it is clear from the context that it is the idea that becomes woman. The becoming-female is a process of the idea and the idea of a form of truth's self presentation. Thus the truth has not always been woman nor is the woman always truth. They both have a history, together they both form a history. And perhaps, if history's strict sense has always been so presented in the movement of truth, their history is history itself, a history which philosophy alone, inasmuch as it is included therein, is unable to decode. In the age before this progress in the history of the true-world, the idea was Platonic. (1979: 87)

Derrida thus argues that there is more force to Nietzsche's claim that truth is a woman than Heidegger admits in his attempts to avert this claim as purely a matter of hyperbolic style and to render his philosophy asexual. In Derrida's view, the feminization of truth is no different from the Platonic ideal. Heidegger's attempt to avert difference in suppressing the gender of truth consigns him to a privileged view of truth as asexual or masculine, whereas Derrida argues that there is no difference between a feminine truth and a masculine truth. There is, therefore, less difference between Heidegger and Nietzsche than Heidegger would concede. Indeed, Heidegger shares the same notion of truth as Nietzsche: truth as being a form of non-metaphysics. In Derrida's words:

Still, perhaps things are not so simple. The conceptual significations and values which would seem to decide the stakes or means in Nietzsche's analysis of the sexual difference, of the eternal war between the sexes, and the mortal hatred of the sexes, of

love, eroticism, etc., are all based on what might be called a process of *appropriation* (appropriation, expropriation, taking, taking possession, gift and barter, mastery, servitude etc.) Thus, in numerous analyses (which it is impossible to elaborate here), the woman's appearance takes shape according to an already formalized law. 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, is simulating, and consequently assuring the possessive mastery for her own self. The for which appears in the to give-oneself-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 property (*propre*), 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. The exchange masks *ad infinitum*. Women have known how to secure for themselves by their subordination the greatest advantage, in fact the upper hand. *Human All too Human*. Should the opposition of give and take, of possess and possessed, be nothing more than a transcendental snare which is produced by the hymen's graphic, it would then escape not only dialectics, but also any ontological decidability. (1979: 110-111)

The opposition between the sexes is not determinate and fixed, but a fluid and dialectical dynamic that can be negotiated and exchanged. To clarify: the position is not one of ontological decidability. Thus the definition of truth as woman or feminine is simply an equivalent version of truth rather than an inversion or negation of it, because male and female are interchangeable rather than fixed in logocentric or phallogocentric determination. As Derrida remarks, the relation between the sexes is one of appropriation or expropriation and exchange rather than rigidly delineated and determinate. This further sustains Derrida's argument that Heidegger's version of truth is interchangeable with Nietzsche's, since there is no difference between them as the gender of truth is a site of interchangeability and indeterminacy rather than a fixed, absolute concept.

Heidegger also commits himself to notions of truth as Being and ultimate presence, which to Derrida he does by eliding the movement of difference. He thus critiques Heidegger's post-representational thinking while remaining caught in the trap of representation through his insistence of truth as Being and presence. As Derrida puts it:

In its turn, the opposition between metaphysic and non-metaphysic encounters its limit here, the very limit of that opposition and of that opposition's form. This might give the impression then of a new metaphysic of property, and indeed a new metaphysic. The many instances of such an impression are in fact attested to by the abundance and connotative qualities of statements to that effect. But—if the form of opposition and the oppositional structures are themselves metaphysical, then the relation of metaphysics to its other can no longer be one of opposition. (1979: 115-116)

Each attempt by Heidegger to de-limit metaphysics by limiting it to non-metaphysics opens it up to its other, as if the ghost of metaphysics came to haunt it as its other. So, there is no opposition between metaphysics and non-metaphysics as these structures are both fundamentally metaphysical. Indeed, these are repetitions and doublings of each other, rather than contradictions or negations, as Derrida had argued in *Of Spirit*. Put bluntly, there is no difference between metaphysics and non-metaphysics. They are fundamentally the same.

In terms of form, *Spurs* is rendered alongside a French translation of the text to demonstrate the equivocal and double meaning of truth, to show that truth is both masculine and feminine and that neither is privileged because they are essentially the same. Stylistically *Spurs* is committed to rhetorical flourishes to invalidate the plausibility of Nietzsche's claim that truth is a woman, or feminine rather than masculine.

### ***Positions***

Derrida contests the idea that his grammatology is modelled, in its major lines, on Heideggerean metaphysics. By substituting the anteriority of a trace for the "presence of logos" he creates an onto-theology based on the trace as "ground," "foundation," and "origin." Derrida then asks how one models oneself after what he deconstructs and wonders if one can speak so simply of Heideggerean metaphysics. Derrida reiterates that the trace is neither a ground nor foundation, nor an origin, and is thus not the basis for a disguised onto-theology. He thus argues that he is neither performing destruction in the manner of Heidegger nor replacing Heidegger's onto-theology of Being with an onto-theology of the trace as ground. To put it differently, Derrida seeks to trace the foundations of Heidegger's onto-theology through his notion of differance rather than to inscribe a disguised alternative onto-theology. In other words, he is more interested in the meta-conditions which determine Heidegger's onto-theology than in substituting it with a different onto-theology based on the trace as ground. The meta-conditions which determine Heidegger's onto-theology, as argued in *Margins of Philosophy*, are differance and trace, non-presence and nothingness rather than Being or presence. Death thus lies at the heart of philosophy and constitutes it: death is the impossible possibility that enables life.

### ***The Truth in Painting***

In *The Truth in Painting*, Derrida maintains that Heidegger's attempt to "go beneath or behind the metaphysical determination of truth" (1987:30) remains committed to the anthropological project. While Heidegger sought to break away from representation, he also remained humanist and anthropomorphic. Derrida illustrates this through examining the Heidegger-Shapiro correspondence about Van Gogh's shoes. Derrida contrasts Shapiro, the city dweller, with Heidegger, the champion of peasant ideology, and illustrates the paradox of the controversy by examining the trap of representational thinking. Rather than defend either Heidegger or Shapiro, he exposes the "tacit institution" in their correspondence (1987: 281), which basically concerns a representational mode of epistemology. Derrida thinks Shapiro is trapped in representational thinking when he seeks the identity of the person who dons the shoes. Heidegger is also trapped even though more subtly.

In disputing the identity of the person who wears the shoes, Derrida alleges that both Shapiro and Heidegger have assumed the traditional paradigm of painting: realism. Both assume that the shoes must belong to a real person, a peasant or Van Gogh. While Shapiro takes a strictly realist approach to the picture on insisting it is Van Gogh's depiction of his own city shoes, Heidegger does not escape the trap of representation in assuming that the shoes' status as equipment must be disclosed by the painting. This assumption confirms the Platonic idea of the naked thing stripped of use value, prior to the painting which the painting



must disclose or unconceal as equipment, as having “utility,” as Derrida calls it, or as a being-product. This artistic presencing of the authentic mode of the shoes as equipment and utility is but another form of representational thinking that Heidegger fails to escape, however much he proclaims his work a form of post-metaphysical and post-representational thinking. The ghost of Plato and his concept of the naked thing haunts Heidegger’s conception of *aletheia*. Reading from Derrida on this symptom:

From the moment he is interested here in the work of art, Heidegger insists and makes his question more precise: does this (dominant) form-matter complex have its origin in the being-thing of the thing or else in the being-work of the work and in the being-product (with the participation of man, it is understood, whence the temptation to take this matter-form complex to be the immediate structure of the thing) of the product? In other words, would it not be on the basis of the thing as work or as product that this (general) interpretation (or rather one) is secretly constituted? Now reread the chapter: in the course of this questioning about the product as informed matter, the example of the pair of shoes appears at least three times before and in the absence of the least reference to a work of art. (1987: 296)

Derrida argues that Heidegger has not escaped a metaphysical concept of the thing in conceiving it in terms of a matter-form complex. He further notes that Heidegger is more interested in the thing as a metaphysical object to be unconcealed, than as artwork. He stresses that form and matter are renamed the “concealed” and the “unconcealed” through Heidegger’s treatise on the artwork, but that Heidegger departs from a similar metaphysical and ontological structure, hence repeating metaphysics rather than deviating from it. Further, Derrida elaborates on Heidegger’s dependence on Plato’s concept of the naked thing-in-itself:

Well, if, along with the frame and the column, clothing is for Kant an example of a *parergon*, in its aesthetic representation, and if then what is proper to representation is the ‘nude,’ then where shall we classify certain ‘old shoes with laces’? Do they not have as their ‘principal’ subject this time the *parergon*, all by itself, with all the consequences that follow from that? A *parergon* without *ergon*? A ‘pure’ supplement? An article of clothing as a ‘naked’ supplement to the ‘naked’? A supplement with nothing to supplement, calling, on the contrary, for what it supplements, to be its own supplement? How would the shoes relate to the ‘naked’ thing, to the ‘nude’ and the ‘remainder’ we’ve just been talking about? And yet, in another sense, we just said they were ‘naked,’ we saw them quite naked. Is it by chance that the vestimentary ‘metaphor’ comes so easily to Heidegger, when he wants to speak of the thing ‘pure and simple’? “This ‘naked’ (*blöss*) does however mean the stripping (*Entblossung*) of the character of usefulness (*Dienlichkeit*) and of being made. The naked thing (*blöses Ding*) is a sort of product (*Zeug*) but a product divested (*entkleidete*) of its being-as-product. Being-thing then consists in what still remains. But this remainder (*Rest*) is not properly determined in itself. It remains doubtful (*Es bleibt fraglich*) whether it is along the road (*auf dem Wege*) of a subtraction of all product-like characteristic (*alles Zeughaften*) that the being-thing of the thing comes in general to appear. A subtraction (of the being-product) will not reconstitute the ‘remainder’ to us as a ‘naked’ thing. The remainder is not a naked thing. We have to ‘think’ the remainder otherwise. (1987:302)

Derrida thus contends that Heidegger assumes the Platonic conception of form and matter by conceiving of the thing divested of use value, a naked thing stripped of its equipmentality, and of the artwork as that which unconceals its use value or equipmentality from us. If the

“naked” thing is an import from Plato, the remainder is not a naked thing because the object is nothing outside its mediation. As a matter of fact, the signified is nothing outside the signifier and the transcendental is not outside the empirical. Simply put: Derrida argues that Heidegger’s realm of the “concealed” naked thing stripped of equipmentality and use value is a metaphysical abstraction that bears imprints of Platonic metaphysical thought. Thus Heidegger, for all his post-metaphysical and post-representational rhetoric, repeats metaphysics rather than escaping it with his reconfiguration or truth as *aletheia*. Derrida is not, however, critical of this repetition of metaphysics; he only contends that it does not perform what Heidegger sought to do, which was to destroy and overcome metaphysics. Paradoxically, the aporias of this destruction transform it into repetition.

Both Shapiro’s realism and Heidegger’s *aletheia* are committed to a form of representative epistemology which involves detaching the object from its context and re-attaching it to another function or identity, be it a person in the form of Van Gogh or a function as being-product and utility. Representation in the form of referential signification is thus implicit in both Shapiro’s realism and Heidegger’s *aletheia*. In this regard Derrida notes:

This problematic is a bit simplistic—a case or an effect at the very most—if you take into account the argument-of-the-girdle or of two-shoes. And then these laces, precisely, these loosened bonds do not seem to play in the logic of the cut. Rather in the logic of stricture, in the interlacing of differance (or as) stricture. The loosening of the laces is not absolute, it does not absolve, unbind, cut. It keeps an organized stricture. Not a more or less of stricture but a determined (structured) form of stricture of the outside and the inside, the underneath and the top. 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 differance. 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. But this shifty, limping, more or less paired pair, like the in-between band, ajar, is neither empty nor full. A certain haunting, which will return in a moment, cannot accommodate any of these couples of oppositions, of these oppositional cuts (coupes, also ‘cups’). If I say of the ghost in this leasing-out of shoes, that le, la, les double(s) band. (1987: 340)

Derrida refers to the logic of representation as the logic of the cut or decontextualization. This logic of decontextualization or the logic of the cut leads to opposition when the object is made to refer to that which is entirely other. He points up the *aporia* of such an opposition, showing that it is simultaneously stricturation and destricturation as it removes the object from its context to refer it to a meaning wholly other, be it in terms of the identity of a person or the function of utility in terms of being product. It thus frees while simultaneously binding. As this movement binds the object to a meaning that is wholly other it suppresses difference. The space between object and referent is indeterminable rather than determinate, as Heidegger and Shapiro have it:

It’s in considering the unboundedness, the destricturation, the being-loosened of the laces, the out-of-service of the two shoes that Heidegger declares the picture to be useless for his search. But, and this is the second reason interlaced with the first, he says it is useless in what it thus represents and frames [...]. Useless for what the useless

shoes (the product) but useless too for being a picture disinserted, detached from its milieu by the artifice of its reattachment, the line of the frame. It is not only a useless product showing a useless product, it is useless in that it is a work (werk), a product abstracted from its milieu and showing a product abstracted from its milieu. Its milieu of belonging (the museum wall, for example) is as abstract as is that of the shoes. When Heidegger talks of the 'indeterminate space' around the shoes, he could also have said it of what surrounds the picture.

In this phase of the argumentation. Heidegger puts the emphasis on the un-, the unlaced, the unstructured, detachment, abstraction. Later, the process of reattachment, the always already begun restrictionation will come, after the 'And yet' to put this double uselessness to work, to make use and surplus value of it in a certain way. (1987: 341-342)

Re-attachment involves a certain violence in putting uselessness to utility, thus removing its surplus value and subjecting it entirely to utility. In giving itself fully to utility and remarking it entirely as useful, the difference, surplus and indeterminacy of the object is erased by lending itself fully to representation as something useful, as equipment. Henceforth, post-representational thought or *aletheia* does not escape representational violence as it designates uselessness and utility as a metaphysical and ontological duality that reinscribes *aletheia* in representation and metaphysics. In other words, Heidegger's thought thus does not escape the trap of representational thinking but re-inscribes its metaphysical structure.

In terms of style, *The Truth in Painting*, is written in a highly elliptical form in order to capture the fact that representation never fully renders its meaning, and thus Derrida's deconstruction of both representational realism and post-representational *aletheia* shows that there will always be a surplus of meaning, an excess. Caesuras, silences and gaps between meaning render accurate representation inaccurate. In his writing Derrida uses breaks, ellipsis, and fragmented punctuation to show that no rendering in painting is ever adequate and that pure representation (i.e., a representation that correlates to a transcendental signified, be it referent or utility) cannot happen.

## *Of Spirit*

The distance Heidegger attempts to achieve from metaphysics by purging his philosophy of spirit only conjures spirit as a ghost that returns to haunt the purged body of philosophy, as the ashes that remain after the flames have been extinguished. For instance, Heidegger seeks in *Being and Time* to destroy metaphysics and the Christianity and spirituality of theologians by rooting his notion of man in ontology and Being rather than in metaphysical abstractions. But a destruction of spirit will only mark its absence as a place to be haunted. Spirit returns to haunt the text it was expunged from in the form of German Nationalism. While distancing himself from the spiritual, Heidegger embraces spirituality. Here is Derrida commenting on Heidegger's rectoral address:

The celebration corresponds properly, literally, to an exaltation of the spiritual. It is an elevation. This is not only a question of kerygmatic tone, of proclamation or declaration. But of an exaltation in which is declared and erected the most high. As always, the profound and the haughty are allied in the most high, the highest of what guides the spiritual guides of *die hohe Schule* and the depth of the forces of earth and blood. (1989: 37)

He further states that:

Heidegger thus confers the most reassuring and elevated spiritual legitimacy on everything in which, and on all before whom, he commits himself, on everything, he sanctions and consecrates at such a height. One could say that he spiritualizes National Socialism. (1989: 39)

Derrida argues that Heidegger, while evading spirit in *Being and Time*, spiritualizes National Socialism in his rectoral address as a Nazi. It is not avoidance of spirit, as Heidegger had it in *Being and Time*, but an embracing and valourization of Spirit in terms of the elevation of the Spirit of German Nationalism. Heidegger thus expels spirit from his philosophy in *Being and Time* only to have it haunted by the ghostly spirit of fascism that he invokes in his rectoral address. Derrida readdresses this problem in the following passage:

Right from the opening of the Address, Heidegger himself emphasizes the adjective 'spiritual' (*geistig*). It is thus the first thing he stresses. I shall emphasize it in my turn, reading Gerard Granel's (French) translation: not only because it is the first word to be stressed, but because this adjective, *geistig*, is the word which twenty years later will be opposed to *geistlich*. The latter would no longer have anything Platonic-metaphysical or Christian-metaphysical about it, whereas *geistig*, Heidegger will say then, in his own name and not in a commentary on *Trakl*, remains caught in the metaphysico-Platonic-Christian oppositions of the below and the beyond, of the low and the high, of the sensible and the intelligible. And yet, in the *Rectorship Address*, the *Geistigkeit* to which Heidegger appeals is already opposed to 'the Christo-theological interpretation of the world which followed' (*Die nachkommende christlichtheologische Weltdeutung*). (1989:33)

Heidegger evades theological and Platonic notions of spirit in his philosophy in *Being and Time* only to embrace the metaphysical structure of spirituality in his politics. Derrida's reading thus conflates the ontological with the political, arguing that a philosopher's political outlook betrays his metaphysical presuppositions as much as his ontology, overtly de-spiritualized as it is. So, while he does not exalt the spirit of a metaphysical subjectivity he elevates the spirit of German Nationalism. It is the spiritualization of Nazism that he achieves. The ghost of the fascist spirit haunts the philosophy of Heidegger, however much he claims to have expelled the Christian notion of the spiritual from his philosophy.

In his final attempts to ventriloquize the Christian theologians and Heidegger, Derrida demonstrates that there is no distinction between them and that they are fundamentally the same. Metaphysics and anti-metaphysics are repetitions and doublings of each other rather than contradictions or negations. From a deconstructive point of view, Heidegger's anti-metaphysics and anti-spiritualism bears no difference from the overt spiritualism of Christianity. Derrida imagines the interlocutor's reply to Heidegger:

"Yes, precisely," his interlocutors would then reply, 'that's just what we're saying, at the crossing of paths, and these paths would be equally but otherwise circular: we are appealing to this entirely other in the memory of a promise or a promise of a memory. That's the truth of what we have always said, heard, tried to make heard. The misunderstanding is that you hear us better than you think or pretend to think. In any case, no misunderstanding on our part, from now on, it's enough to keep talking, not to interrupt—between the poet and you, which means just as much between you and

us—this *Zwiesprache*. It's enough not to interrupt the colloquium, even when it is already late. The spirit which keeps watch in returning (*en revenant*, as a ghost) will always do the rest. Through flame or ash, but as the entirely other, inevitably. (1989: 113)

Also Derrida imagines the theologians' response to Heidegger:

The first, then, those I called theologians and all those they might represent, would say to Heidegger: 'But what you call the anti-originary spirit, which you claim is foreign to Christianity, is indeed what is most essential to Christianity. Like you, it's what we would like to revive under the theologemes, philosophemes, or common representations. We give thanks for what you say, you have a right to all our gratitude (reconnaissance) for what you give us to hear and think—and which we do indeed recognize. It's precisely what we have always been seeking. And when you speak of promise, this *Versprechen*, of a more than matutinal dawn beyond a beginning and an end of history, before and beyond East and West, do you realize how close to us you are?' (1989: 110)

Herein Derrida imagines the Christian-theologians affirming there is no difference between Heidegger's anti-metaphysics and the overt spiritualism of Christianity. Heidegger shares the same metaphysical assumptions and mode of representational thought of Christian-theologians. As much as he seems to dismiss Christianity, his reversal of metaphysics borrows from the metaphysical structure of Christian-theological thought and thereby affirms it. This is illustrated also in Derrida's reading of Heidegger's designation of animals as poor in worldhood and thus not of the status of Being. Derrida deconstructs the distinction between Man and Animal and demonstrates that there is no substantive distinction between them:

But as, on the other hand, the animal is not a *Dasein*, nor is it *Vorhandensein* or *Zuhanensein* for us, as the original possibility of a *Miseini* with it is not seriously envisaged, one cannot think it or talk of it in terms of existential or of categorical, to go back to the pair of concepts, which structure the existential analytic of *Sein und Zeit*. Can not one say then, that the whole deconstruction of ontology, as it begun in *Sein und Zeit* and insofar as it unseats, as it were, the Cartesian-Hegelian *spiritus* in the existential analytic, is here threatened in its order, its implementation, its conceptual apparatus, by what is called, so obscurely still, the animal? Compromised, rather, by a thesis on animality which presupposes—this is the irreducible and I believe dogmatic hypothesis of the thesis—that there is one thing, one domain, one homogenous type of entity, which is called animality in general, for which any example would do the job. This is a thesis, which, in its median character, as clearly emphasized by Heidegger (the animal between the stone and man) remains fundamentally teleological and traditional, not to say dialectical. (1989: 57)

Heidegger's attempts to expel spirit and animals from his text only repeat these as ghosts that return to haunt it as ontological doubles. As Derrida argues, Heidegger repeats the traditional teleology of metaphysics and fails to escape either the spirit or the metaphysics that he seeks to overcome and destroy. In other words: This haunting of the text by its ghosts, be it Christian-theology, fascism or animals, repeats the structure of metaphysics entirely and thus Heidegger does not manage to escape metaphysics in his destruction of metaphysics.

## Conclusion

Derrida argues that it is difference, non-presence, nothingness, and iterability rather than transcendent Being that conditions Being and presence. In his view, there are more similarities between metaphysical and non-metaphysical or representational and post-representational thought than Heidegger concedes. Indeed Heidegger's post-representation or *aletheia* remains a repetition of representational thinking, just as his non-metaphysics is a repetition of metaphysics. As it is, Derrida is not critical of Heidegger's negative metaphysics as a repetition of it, but only wishes to point up the *aporia* of destruction as repetition and, hence, affirmation. His notion of truth traces the root conditions of Heidegger's non-metaphysics and post-representational thinking as he locates it in the movement of difference, the interval that divides metaphysics and non-metaphysics and that marks the limit between them. His writing affirms the impossibility of univocal and undivided truth as every act of speech and writing undermines it simultaneously from without by virtue of the contamination of the trace through the movement of iteration and *a priori* difference. As truth is mediated, it cannot hold to an absolute unitary transcendental signified that exists outside the text, but has to be encountered through difference, the relays of differences between signifiers which refer infinitely to each other than to a transcendental signified, be this transcendental signified the *a priori* or Being and presence. Derrida locates the conditionality that structures philosophical systems in difference and *aporia*, showing that the space of *aporia* (a space that is the structural condition of possibility for philosophy) is neither transcendental nor empirical, neither representational nor post-representational. It is this position of undecidability that constitutes the conditionality of thinking both systems. To sum up: (a) representation provides the foundation for post-representation and (b) the space of truth is quasi-transcendental, neither transcendental nor empirical, representational nor post-representational, but implicated in both.

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