Metaphors of Travel and Writing: The Deconstruction of the "At-Home" and the Promise of the Other

by

Elina Theodorou Staikou

Centre for British and Comparative Cultural Studies
University of Warwick

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For the one who will always accompany me,

my father, Theodoros Staikos

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Abstract of Thesis

The purpose of the thesis is to consider travel relations with regard to their *onto-phenomenological* and *semantic* conditions of possibility and to raise the question of a possible *ethics of travel*. In turning the notion of travel back upon its signifying conditions, a connection is established with the notion of *metaphor*. The metaphysical polarity between proper and metaphorical meaning is furthered onto a problematic of the couple *Oikos* (house, home in Greek and generally everything that constitutes a sense of *the-at-home*) and travel with the purpose of complicating their mutual determination and to *deconstructively* challenge the derivational and recuperative logic that permeates their intra-metaphysical designation. The reconsideration of the conceptual presuppositions of "travel" is carried out through the critique of what is called its *hermeneutic premise*, formulated here largely drawing on Paul Ricoeur. It is maintained that "travel" in its *Western European* conceptualisation participates in the traditions of the *metaphysics of presence* and *logocentrism* and it is on this level that deconstructive thinking takes effect. Questions related to the theme of travel, such as space, time, boundary, itinerary, event, encounter, as well as to travel writing, such as generic delimitation, representation, constative reference and performative engagement, testimonial value, and the antinomy of fact and fiction, are addressed and relocated through the preoccupation with their *phenomenological* and *tropological* motifs and in particular with their generalised *metaphorical* and *allegorical* conditions, as these are designated by Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man, respectively. The association of the notion of travel with metaphor, and, by extension, that between *Oikos* and properness, will show that senses of home and away, rather than being pregiven, emerge from a *scriptural* condition –a structure of difference and deferral- that interrupts their reductive, totalising, monistic formulations as well as dialectical conceptualisations. Travel *as* metaphor and *as* writing are not treated as metaphors in the conventional sense but name and attest to a structural and historical *a priori* or *aporetic law*, that is, to the phenomenological and signifying conditions that allow for the emergence of both a sense and a history of travel. It is through the movement of signification that effects of *sameness* and *difference* are produced showing that *identity* neither precedes nor opposes *alterity* but rather already bears its *trace*. The lack of an originary identity or first sense, which is tantamount to the loss of *Oikos*, reinscribes tropology in the radical sense of indeterminacy and of *a priori* self-disruption as/at the "origin" of meaning and language. These signifying conditions, however, manifest both language's totalizing and appropriative forces, of which a high point and rigorous historical implication has been *colonialism*, as well as its self-disruptive mode of emergence, an originary openness which bears the possibility of *hospitality* towards and *welcoming* of the *other*. Phenomenological questioning of the structures of meaning reaches back to the constitutive opening of consciousness to the world, to what is other and beyond, to a first exteriority in general. But since meaning emerges through this void or space *in-between* that constitutes the world as a world *for* consciousness, through this *relation* that creates the *relata* in creating itself, there is no solid ground, enunciative position or subjectivity that would operate as the origin of meaning. Since consciousness, the moving *habitat of meaning* becomes such in receiving the world, since it is *for* and destined *to* the *other than itself*, it is already marked by a *condition voyageuse*. It dwells upon the condition of travelling and of the *encounter*. It is in this sense that *travel*, *writing* and *metaphor*, the three focal themes here, testify to the fundamental phenomenological and tropological conditions of language and experience in general and are already marked by the possibility or *promise* of ethics.

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Declaration: This thesis is all my own work and contains original material and has not been submitted for degree at any other university.

Introduction

This thesis is about loss. An irreparable loss. It is about the catastrophe of a place of origin, of what gives one's language, one's identity and culture, one's history and destiny. It is about the loss of roots, of derivation and destination, the loss of property, of one's proper name, the loss of one's father. It is a thesis about travel. Are we certain we know what "travel" is? Travel, to be sure, signifies some kind of movement or displacement. It cannot fail to involve a sort of distancing from a place of origin in view of a place of destination, even when these are largely unspecified. One leaves what one calls home, one takes the road, takes a turn (*strophe*), one puts oneself on a track or course (*trope*), exposes oneself to an exterior, to something distant and alien. Travel is the experience of a passage, the crossing of a boundary that allows for an encounter with otherness to take place. But, as we shall see, to take place is also to give place; to give chance to an event of travel, to the arrival and the welcoming of the other. By moving between places the traveller lays down a path, forms a trajectory or route on the map that brings everything this involves together and lets them signify anew. To expose an *interior*, a closed space of familiarity, what we propose here to call *Oikos* (house, home in Greek), to an *exterior* is to operate within a primarily oppositional distinction, one that is fundamental for metaphysical thinking. The exposure of interiority, which can take on the sense of subjectivity or the inner world of consciousness, to exteriority is also constitutive of the process of *metaphor*, which is traditionally defined as an abstract sense or image of the thing itself in its absence or unavailability. A metaphorical sense or image stands for an absent or lost proper meaning; it is the outcome of a process of substitution of a proper or "natural" sense that becomes exteriorised, distanced and other than itself. The undertaking here will be to draw the notions of "travel" and "metaphor" together in order to consider their semantic and structural affinity and to ponder their conditions of emergence and signification. In so doing we hope to draw implications for and from what shall be called the at once structural and historical *a priori* of travel, to raise questions regarding travel relations and their significant historical and ethical consequences and possibilities.

The title of the thesis, *Metaphors of Travel and Writing: The Deconstruction of "the-at-home" and the Promise of the Other*, aims at bringing out the structural affinity between metaphor and travel and to reinscribe it onto a scriptural condition, what is called *writing* in a broad and generalised sense. In this way, everything that is involved and implicated with metaphor and travel –for instance, the notion of *origin*, which always

implies familiarity, be it with literal and already established senses or with what one calls home and from which metaphor and travel respectively depart- is called into question and is radically disrupted once these are relocated or displaced in a graphematic drift that knows no origin or *telos*, that disclaims the possibility of closure and return to a lost but recoverable properness. It will be claimed, after Jacques Derrida, that everything begins with *writing*, which is generalised to the condition of meaning, to the signifying movement that rather than mediating between or representing already constituted entities (object and subject, world and consciousness) opens up a space for the inscription of meaning in general, for what makes the world and the subject thinkable and possible. This is the space of *différance*, what constitutes the world as a world *for* consciousness, what emerges as the opening of consciousness to a first exteriority, what is also called by Derrida *trace*. The world and consciousness do not pre-exist as such before their coming together in the movement of *différance*, before they enter in this "nonrelational" relation that constitutes the *relata* in constituting itself. This is not to say, of course, that the world does not exist apart from the signifying structures of consciousness, but that the world as *we* know it and find ourselves in it is a world *for* consciousness. Being *in* the world and *with* the world (as an exterior opposed to consciousness) does not signify that consciousness acts upon it by giving it a sense or that it passively receives it as it is. Beyond and before "activity" and "passivity" in the usual sense, we are here making reference to a radical *passivity*, the world's inscription on consciousness *as trace*, as something which is nothing in itself, which has no essence or substance, which does not happen as such, but which must have always already constituted consciousness and the world *for* each other. Every sense emerges in/from this void, which shall be later called *khora* (place, space, division in Greek), from the indeterminacy of the in-between, which makes every (re-)presentation of the world inadequate, for the latter is never given to consciousness as such. Since sense is no longer, or better, has never been based on solid ground or an enunciative position that would secure its self-identity, it is always "other" than itself. It is possible to claim that both world and consciousness enter in or rather emerge from a "tropological" relation, through a figuration or metaphorisation in a radical sense, which exceeds derivation or mediation between polarities. Being other than itself, from the inscription of the trace as first exteriority, is what gives sense its paradoxical condition of emergence and what promises *more* meaning, since there is no such thing as primary or final meaning, and so, more reference. It is what promises the coming of the other, and thus gives, as shall be

claimed, the possibility of travel, that is, the possibility of encounter with otherness from immemorial depths.

What is claimed here is not that everything is to be reduced to the signifying structures of language. This would amount to a linguisticism, which would not be far from *logocentrism*, the metaphysical tradition that poses *logos* at the heart and origin of truth.[1] To claim that everything begins with the *trace* is to disrupt all monisms and reductive attitudes and bring forward the condition which makes all meaning possible, a condition that exceeds language in the narrow sense and reinscribes it as a species of *writing*.[2] Language in the narrow sense is made possible through what Derrida calls the "movement of the reduction of the trace", a movement of *appropriation* and *totalisation* that promises a transparent and adequate idiom and, thus, communication, but which by the same token does not take place without a disruptive remainder. This disruptive remainder, supplement or residue of sense not accounted for in the movement of appropriation, could be called language's drive to *expropriation* or *metaphoricity*, the impossible condition of anything signifying fully. Language is on both conditions: it is on the condition of *ex-appropriation*, of an impossible or aporetic promise that both gathers and disseminates meaning, that lets it emerge in a *self-subversive mode* and be repeated as same and other at once. To say that meaning originates neither in the world nor in consciousness but begins as trace, as the world *for* consciousness, is not to posit the trace, which does not exist, as origin. All that endures is the nonoriginary movement of the trace, the process of its becoming-unmotivated.[3]

The thought of the trace, which is structurally prior to entity as its signifying condition, comes to disrupt a theme that will be central in this thesis, that of *the metaphysics of presence*. Presence considered either as interiority (consciousness) or exteriority (things in the world) is a theme that runs through the long tradition of Western metaphysics and structures its whole vocabulary and thinking according to oppositional and hierarchical pairings. "Presence" is the mode or form of the manifestation of an idea or thing, that is, the way it appears, "presents" itself in its full radiance and plenitude. A thing or an idea, thus, makes itself manifest always in the modality of the "present" as something available in the world or in consciousness. Hence, presence becomes thinkable as a closed,

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[1] Derrida, Jacques, *Of Grammatology*, translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997, p. 3.
[2] Ibid., p. 52.
[3] Ibid., p. 47.

self-evident and circumscribed totality, as something which is *at one with itself*, upon which everything is thought and from which everything derives as its modification, whence the metaphysical priority of presence over absence, proximity over distance, signified over signifier, speech over writing and so forth. It will be argued that "travel" in its, let us say with the purpose of economy, "European" tradition(s), both as concept and practice, if one can separate the two, is inextricably implicated with the metaphysics of presence, which has posited *Oikos* (proximity, familiarity, nearness) as a place of derivation and destination, as the origin and *telos* of travel.

In order to challenge the authority and priority of *Oikos* over travel, which by being restricted to the periphery of the house is denied its eventful character, one has to dwell within metaphysics, to borrow from it concepts and work one's way from within. Rather than attempting to leave metaphysical notions behind in favour of a totally different mode of thinking, an unthinkable enterprise, one must push these notions to their limits by folding them in and on themselves in order to bring out their internal antinomies and inconsistencies. This deconstructive attitude, however, does not signal the end and demolition of what it radically puts into question but opens up infinite possibilities for thought, for subversion of authoritative standings and for keeping the promise of the other alive. Accordingly, it would be impossible to attempt a reconsideration and reinscription of the premises and possibilities of travel, if one did not repeat and dwell on its metaphysical conditions. This is why in order to think "travel" and travel relations "otherwise," one would have to start from their metaphysical designation, which will be treated here with regard to the way it is formulated by what shall be called *the hermeneutic premise of travel*. It will be posited, at least as a working hypothesis, that travel is primarily designated as an interpretive enterprise. Even in discourses of/about travel that relegate the subject/traveller to a marginal position (for instance, the self-effacing pilgrim or the overdetermined colonial and discursive subject) there is an underlying notion of an *intentionality* that is distorted and inhibited by the workings of power, received knowledge and prejudice that condition and alter direct and authentic experience, as if this was self-evident. So travel could be defined as the encounter of an interpretive subject at a given moment in a given place, which is distant from and alien to what one calls home, with a subject or object that become available to it by virtue of this encounter. It thus involves a collectivity of presences: a subject which is present to another present and available subject or object at a present moment in a certain place and given context. In hermeneutic terms, travel is the meeting and interaction of two formerly distant semantic horizons, those of the

traveller and of the visited culture, out of which new configurations of meaning emerge. The assumption of the availability and presence of an object to the intentionality or intuition of the travelling subject can also be called the essential *phenomenological motif* of travel. The undertaking here will be to consider such presuppositions, the structures that enable and also limit them, the way these are implicated with hermeneutic or historical understanding, and, most importantly, the way these are inherently and radically disrupted and reinscribed in an *aporetic* mode in the Derridean sense.

This thesis will attempt to unfold the argument in two apparently opposite directions. One is the consideration of the structural possibilities and signifying conditions of the notion of travel and of those inextricably related to it such as *Oikos*, derivation, destination, boundary and itinerary. The second one involves the historical, textual and contextual manifestations, articulations and delimitations of these notions. The *structural* and *historical* considerations of "travel" do not constitute adverse approaches. They are inseparable and inconceivable on their own terms. It will be claimed that the aporetic condition for the emergence of senses of travel, however varied and diversified, constitutes its at once structural and historical *a priori*. It is what enables and limits senses of home and away through the differing and deferring movement of *différance*, through a force of signification that is already described in travel terms allowing thus for a generalisation of "travel" before and beyond the metaphysical polarity between *Oikos* and travel *stricto sensu*. The movement of *différance* or *trace* by virtue of what is called its *iterability* and *alterability* engenders noncausal effects (since movement is its own becoming an origin without precedence) of sameness and otherness, or otherwise, of properness and metaphor and thus of homeliness and expatriation.

This thesis will primarily focus on the semantic and *onto-phenomenological* conditions and limits of travel, which are often left in abeyance in anthropological and cultural histories of this notion and practice.[4] Without disclaiming the validity of and

[4] Studies of travel relations and travel writing that focus on tropological conditions and figurations and not simply with regard to their occurrence and manifestation in texts but with the way these permeate the very experience of travel, such as Caren Kaplan's *Questions of Travel, Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, London, Duke University Press, 1996, David Spurr's *The Rhetoric of Empire, Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, London, Duke University Press, 1994, Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America, The Question of the Other*, translated by Richard Howard, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1999, to mention some, do not investigate the semantic and onto-phenomenological conditions that, as will be argued, allow for these figurations. The consequence of this lack is often the construction and reduction to rhetorical typologies that fail to address and efficiently ground the way the latter arise, primarily due to not attending to the value and distinction between proper meaning and metaphor.

necessity for such studies, it will be maintained that the enduring structures that allow the practice and notion of "travel" to signify are not simply reducible either to their context of emergence (which is never saturated) or to a genealogy and history of travel relations. There are senses and histories of travel to begin with –"travel" here is used as a general term and comes to name a structure that traverses all sorts of displacements- but these are never simply given as such without some sort of reduction and totalisation. To probe into the semantics of travel is not to posit a structural centre or semantic kernel with transformational capacity and also sensitive to context which would engender and account for all senses of travel. It is to suggest that insofar as different senses and histories of travel are possible, this necessarily implies that there is at least a minimal semantic identity of "travel", to the extent that a sort of "ideality" is ascribed to it by virtue of its repeatability, its structure of overflowing particular contexts that enables it to signify in unlimited number of contexts.[5] Moreover, this ideality or generality is not a pre-existent meaning or transcendental signified. If it is posited as such this can only happen *post-factum*. A general sense of travel rather emerges out of particular inscriptions and realisations again by way of iterability but also alterability, for nothing is repeated as exactly the same. This condition is what gives travel a meaning and a history. By folding "travel" upon its phenomenological condition, which presupposes the intuition of a present object by a present subject as such, and by challenging the priority of the "present" as the modality and form of meaning, in other words, by bringing out the *self-disruption* of the phenomenological motif of travel, one is able to unsettle everything related to and thought on the basis of rigorous demarcations and "self-righteous" identities. The phenomenological crisis amounts to the erasure of the boundary, to the suspension of closure and the interception of unified, homogenised and regulatory spaces. Because meaning arises out of its repetitive inscriptions and is never simply given or present as such, everything thought on the basis of the present (subject, object, time, space, context) is divided in and of itself.

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[5] It has to be clear from the start that the notion of "structure" here exceeds a strict, "structuralist" sense. To speak of the onto-semantic and phenomenological structures or conditions of the experience of travel is not to reduce it to a core, regulative and transformational association or interplay of signs. Derridean notions such as *différance*, *dissemination*, *trace*, *writing* do not preclude the use of this term since, as will be shown, they refer to a semantic movement or iteration that is not without a certain rhythm and organisation of space. The old term is reinscribed in a Derridean fashion that points to a broken, impure and disjunctive "structure" or tracing as the possibility of meaning. Of course, the term "structure" will be unavoidably used here both in the Derridean and a traditional, metaphysical way, however, always in view of the latter's reinscription and surpassing.

The experience of travel (experience is essentially related to the theme of presence but also signifies the crossing of a boundary –*ex-peras*, limit, end in Greek) is thereby enabled and traversed by repetitive or scriptural structures that essentially imply and engender a certain sense of ideality, which is nothing outside factuality or empiricity, and have an at once systematic and *aleatory* character. Travel is a necessary accident, however, one that does not befall an essence or *Oikos* given beforehand; it is as much contingent as structural. Insofar as meaning is understood as an inscriptive force, it confers upon the empirical or experiential field in its entirety a textual quality. *Textuality* in the general sense thereby exceeds the opposition between text *stricto sensu* and context. The textual experience of travel enables, engulfs and traverses the genre, if it is one, of *travel writing*. It will be argued that the phenomenological motif of travel and by consequence its disruption can be extended onto the travel text that purports to be the re-presentation of an experience of travel. Accordingly, the question of *proper meaning* and *metaphor*, which in the travel text takes effect as the antinomy of fact and fiction, the *interpretive subject*, who becomes a signatory, the problem of the *boundary*, which is rearticulated in generic delimitation repeat and actualise what are essentially onto-phenomenological conditions and questions. I will try to explore how all these are interconnected and also subvert one another and to draw some implications about their historical significance and potentialities. To challenge boundaries, hierarchies and divisions is to acknowledge the impossibility of firm and grounded positions. To put indeterminacy and mediacy before determinacy and immediacy is to unsettle final decisions and judgements, to make *decision making an infinite task*. In the event of encounter that travel is, as much as in the re-presentative discourse that travel writing claims to be, the impossibility of decision and judgement about the other –something that phenomenological disruption forbids since the other (a place, a culture, a language, a person) is neither available, nor knowable or apocalyptic in its essence- gives the chance for an *ethics of travel*, for a hospitable reception and welcoming, for a response to the other's summons that shows respect to the other *as other*.

This thesis is divided into three parts. The first part consists of two chapters, *Metaphors* and *Metaphors of Travel*, which aim at elaborating the concept of "metaphor" and the semantic structures that allow for its emergence and extending these to problematise "travel". It will be argued that the fundamental metaphysical opposition between literal or proper meaning and metaphor with all the questions it raises can be rearticulated with regard to what shall be postured as the metaphysical division between

and hierarchy of *Oikos* over travel, which on the whole traverses the latter's European tradition. The point of departure will be Paul Ricoeur's theory of metaphor and its place in the hermeneutical project. The hermeneutics of Ricoeur will provide us here with a rigorous and comprehensive formulation for what will be defined (and, to be sure, challenged) as the hermeneutic premise of travel. It will be argued that his theory of metaphor can offer the conceptual gear for exploring the metaphysical presuppositions of travel. Ricoeur designates metaphor as the linguistic process for the creation of new meaning that proceeds from the interaction of previously established literal meanings that are, however, being brought together in a incongruent mode. Ricoeur explains this process according to dialectical pairings that fall under the primary dialectics of *belonging* and *distanciation* and he, finally, reinstates the priority of properness over metaphor, hence in keeping this distinction, which he ultimately cannot avoid to take for granted by incorporating it in what he calls "the struggle for univocity". It is on the level of the philosophical concepts of proper and metaphor that such distinctions are established and can be challenged. Jacques Derrida's critique of the concept of metaphor, which he reinscribes as the general and aporetic condition of meaning beyond the intrametaphysical polarity between proper and metaphor *stricto sensu*, takes effect on this level by proposing to think metaphor in a nondialectical mode. Henceforth, the values of proper and metaphorical meaning are radically disrupted, erased and reinscribed in the movement of *différance* that creates irreducible effects of sameness and difference, resisting synthesis and dialectisation and thus suspending closure in a teleological horizon of meaning.

In the second chapter it will be argued that the dialectical and teleological thinking of metaphor is coterminous with a dialectical notion of travel, which can be formulated on the basis of what is called here the "hermeneutic premise of travel". It will be argued that in the tradition of Western metaphysics "travel" has been designated as secondary to and derivative from *Oikos*, which has always taken the value of immanence, interiority and permanence. In the same way that metaphor is submitted to a logic of derivation and recuperation, travel is commanded by *the-law-of-the-house* (*Oiko-nomy*) that imposes on it the exigency of *return*, that posits *Oikos* as final destination, thereby, as that which acts at once as the *prime mover* and *telos* of travel. It will be maintained that *return structurally belongs to travel*. Travel, at least in its Western European tradition, is submitted to a circular, that is, restricted economy; it cannot distance itself from Ulysses path. The notions of *Oikos* and travel are indissociable even in discourses that attempt to challenge and disengage them. In order to disclaim the authority of the house and its colonising

implications, one rather than doing away with such totalising notions, must endeavour to think them and think them through otherwise. One must turn them upon their semantic and onto-phenomenological conditions in order to bring out their aporetic and self-subversive character. The deconstruction of *Oikos* or of *the-at-home* and travel as its dialectic counterpart takes effect on this level through the reconsideration of the primary categories of space and time and their metaphysical motifs, and of the signifying structures that give rise to senses of place, of boundaries and of the itinerary. *Oikos* and travel as an oppositional and dialectical pair re-emerge as the totalised effects of a movement that is structurally prior to such oppositions. It will be argued that senses of *Oikos* and travel are made possible through the appropriative and ex-propriative forces of signification. They are always already inscribed in a graphematic drift that enables them without ever letting them signify as such. Hence, *Oikos* and travel, like properness and metaphor, arise as effects of *writing* in the generalised sense. This is what allows for the proposition that *there is no travel without writing*.

The second part of the thesis proposes to extend the problematic of travel to a consideration of the historical category of *narrative* in order to draw further implications with regard to concrete instances and actualisations of the phenomenological *a priori* of travel. The third chapter, *Metaphors of Writing* endeavours to review the notion of narrative, both in the broad (*narrativity*) and narrow senses, with regard to *travel writing*, with the aim of bringing forward an understanding of travel as *inter-textual* experience, within which travel writing is inscribed. The chapter will start with the hermeneutic definition of narrative, largely drawing on Ricoeur, as a configuration which *mediates* between the experience of the world and the projection of a possible and inhabitable world before the text. Mediation, according to Ricoeur, works as a synthetic and *mimetic* operation that progresses towards univocity and necessitates the totalising action of narrative. However, the fundamental function of narrative, that is, its ultimate reference to a possible world that turns upon the ontological condition of *belonging* and actualises *being*'s ownmost possibilities, can only advance through the exchange between and interweaving of fact and imagination that Ricoeur mainly discusses with regard to historiography and fiction. This poses the question of generic boundaries, which will be discussed with regard to "factual" and "fictional" travel writing. In order to remove travel and travel writing from a dialectical and mimetic arch, that is, from its hermeneutic designation, we shall attempt to reinscribe the hermeneutic circle of *mimetic mediation* onto the aberrant and disjunctive structures of *allegory*, as formulated by Paul de Man.

Allegory, generalised into the aporetic structure of meaning, resists dialectical synthesis and reinstates *literariness* as the defective condition of language before and beyond the distinction between fact and fiction. With regard to the travel narrative the critique of totalising configurations takes effect on the level of its constantive and performative function. It will be argued, after de Man, that these operations do not simply undo one another and thus the text's pronouncements, but are themselves radically disjunctive acts. But these are, however, what enables and "promises" the text's emergence and repetition in infinite number of contexts, what allows the text to keep signifying and to engender more meanings and more references. In terms of the travel narrative this is what allows for and at once undoes authoritative judgements upon the other and dismantles any claim to adequate representation. Finally, the question of the testimonial value of travel writing will be addressed largely drawing on Jacques Derrida, with the purpose of disrupting the travel text's claim to truthful representation. It will be argued that the necessarily singular and irreplaceable character of testimony is divided in itself by the general structures of meaning that make it possible and communicable and thus potentially universalisable. Every testimony in order to signify must be able to overflow any particular instance of attestation, thus it must be structurally capable of becoming other than itself, of becoming a lie, a fiction or perjury.

The third part of the thesis proposes to bring everything previously elaborated together and to draw implications with regard to the way this enables and traverses historical and mainly colonial situations in view of showing the latter's inherent grains of resistance that also give the chance of a different mode of thinking them through, beyond and not simply through contextual reductions, explications or justifications. The chapter *Colonialism, Ethics and Travel* aims at the reconsideration of prominent approaches to the phenomenon of colonialism with particular reference to Edward Said's *Orientalism* as well as to the criticism it has received from post-colonial theorists. It will be argued that the phenomenon of colonialism can be best understood as a high peak of the appropriative and totalising forces of language (in a broad sense) and that, consequently, it can be radically intercepted through the awareness of the aporetic and disjunctive character of its premises. Even discourses that deplore and go against colonial projects, such as Claude Lévis-Strauss' *Tristes Tropiques*, may form, as will be shown, instances of *ethnocentrism*. Of course, to challenge these is by no means to reduce determined historical situations to a linguistic structure and to outline a project or programme for overcoming them in the future but rather to raise the issue of the possibility of *an ethics of travel* and travel writing,

an issue that must be taken up again and again and always with regard to particular instances. The question that is urgently and permanently posed is that of the possibility of a hospitable opening to the other, of the welcoming of the other as other beyond pragmatically determined rules of *hospitality* with specific demands and reductive attitudes that show no respect for otherness but rather attempt to assimilate and subjugate it. To be sure, it is impossible to brush pragmatic conditions aside in favour of an "unconditional hospitality". Unconditional hospitality becomes thinkable and desirable through its particular inscriptions within determined situations. If it becomes possible as a regulatory idea and aspiration, it exists by its own *pervertibility*, something which posits, however, the demand or rather promise of perfectibility. As Derrida claims, a promise is not nothing; it is not a non event. Everything happens on its condition. Even if a promise can never be fulfilled, for it would cease to be what it is, a promise, even if promise must always be inadequate and anachronistic to what it commits itself to, everything is waited upon and happens on its impossible condition. Nowadays, in the epoch of the so-called globalisation, international organisations and the advent of democratisation, when international law seeks to interfere with and limit State sovereignty, notwithstanding that this in its application usually implies the domination of particular nation-States, there is a lot of discussion and controversy around discourses on human rights, crimes against humanity, the questions of asylum, of refugees, immigration control but also of forgiveness that one tends to look upon with reservation and suspicion.[6] However, to disclaim and criticise the justifications and premises of such discourses does not erase the fact or event of promise, even if this lastingly fails to be adequate to what it pledges. Maybe, in a certain sense, it should fail, that is, fail to deliver calculated and predetermined goals so that it can be posed anew in every single instance.

In order to better understand what is happening today in a age of rapid techno-scientific and, more importantly, ethical-political-juridical mutation, which sustain such institutions as that of *international law* and impose cultural and linguistic hegemonies on a *global forum* and on the (*cyber*) space of communication and exchange, it is more pressing than ever to turn upon the signifying conditions, the enduring structures or genealogies that let new configurations of power and distribution emerge. One can only proceed in the examination of what are matters of urgency by detecting old structures in new concepts and the way these enable and limit them: "without yielding to empiricist relativism, it is a

matter of accounting for what in this genealogy, let us say *European* to go quickly, gets carried away, exceeds itself by exporting itself".[7] If one wants to take the measure of the significance of travel today with respect to the increasingly accelerated developments in transportation and telecommunication, which give rise to new configurations of space, of boundaries and cultural identities, it is very important not simply to consider its historical-semantic genealogy but also its onto-phenomenological conditions. The infinite possibilities and, to be sure, the new forms of hegemonies and restrictions of intercultural encounter and exchange problematise and unsettle the traditional notions and practices of travel and its related themes. Cultural encounter seems to become more of a *virtual* experience in an electronic age but so does travel to the extent that such indissociable notions or regulative principles like *Oikos*, itinerary, boundary and so forth are constantly under challenge and increasingly become more unspecified, while at the same moment giving rise to new divisions and new responsibilities. This *virtualisation* or *spectrality* or metaphorisation (since they all bear the structure of an "as if"), however, is not something novel for the signifying structures of travel. It is their very condition. If the experience of travel is, as shall be claimed, essentially a figurative one, if it is necessarily disrupted from the start, that is, if it belongs to the structure of the *trace*, then what we are witnessing today not only has had its possibility but was already at work since travel begun to make sense.[8]

This thesis proposes to explore travel relations with regard to their *phenomenological*, *rhetorical* and *ethical* premises. These, however, neither constitute separate categories or concerns, nor do they enter in relations of causal or temporal succession. This is to say that despite the formalisation and the successive treatment of these themes here, it is not implied that the self-disruption of the phenomenological motif of travel comes first and is then re-presented in the figurative structures of travel writing, which *a posteriori* give rise to questions of ethics. The thought of the *trace* as the constitutive opening of consciousness to exteriority or *otherness*, in a way establishes

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[6] Derrida, Jacques, *Spectres of Marx, The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*, translated by Peggy Kamuf, London, Routledge, 1994, pp. 83-84.

[7] Derrida, Jacques, "Globalization, Peace, and Cosmopolitanism" in *Negotiations, Inteventions and Interviews, 1971-2001*, edited, translated and with an Introduction by Elizabeth Rottenberg, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2002, p. 376.

[8] "For as soon as there is trace, there is also some virtualization; these are the abc's of deconstruction." Derrida, Jacques, "The University Without Condition" in *Without Alibi*, edited, translated and with an introduction by Peggy Kamuf, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2002, p. 210.

ethics as first philosophy, but it is also its phenomenological and tropological condition. Consciousness and the world emerge as destined to each other from this void that gives place to the *with* and the *simul* of a relation without precedence, from this movement without assignable origin or *telos*, a voyage of meaning that makes dwelling possible on the condition of travel.

Part I

Chapter I

Metaphors

Travel has to begin from some place, a *topos*. Whenever the word "travel" comes up we believe we know what it means: a displacement, a departure from what is taken provisionally or not for a place of origin, a change of location, a movement towards what is further, other, beyond. Travel begins when there is movement away from the familiar. It is filled with expectation and promise and riven by surprise and chance. When one turns away from home, one performs a *strophē* (twist and turn in Greek) –and with *strophē* cata-strophe is always a possibility- that opens up a path, a way or *tropos* in Greek, that takes on a course or *tropē* with incalculable consequences. Let us begin with this *tropē*/*trope*, embark on a journey hoping to arrive at that beginning where "travel" begins. Let us retrace this mysterious path, the secret narrative of travel, always in view of travels to come. But before we are carried away by "travel", we shall make a detour. We will set off with metaphor (and when we speak of metaphor travel is already on its way) and, in so doing, try to think of the "double turn" or semantic structure that opens "metaphor" and "travel" at once.

The title of this chapter, "Metaphors" in the plural, does not solely imply a preoccupation with two treatments of the concept of metaphor, namely those of Paul Ricoeur and Jacques Derrida, but rather stresses the problematics of metaphor. It will be argued that metaphor extends far beyond its use and function as a single "tropic" force that befalls literal meaning making it signify in spite of itself. If we spoke of metaphor in the singular, we would assume that this twist in meaning was reversible and controllable, that we would be able to isolate the semantic kernel that acted as point of departure and thus calculate loss or gain in meaning. "Metaphors" in the plural suggests that "metaphor" –and meaning *in general*- is not reducible to what is posited as a single, original, proper meaning. Before "proper" or "literal" and "metaphor" in the singular become thinkable, there are always already metaphors. Our journey with metaphor will take off from Ricoeur's expansive and comprehensive hermeneutical project that will also familiarise us with this "defamiliarising" figure and with the major theoretical approaches it has received. At the end of this trajectory, which will take us to the limit or delimitation of metaphor, another path will be opened, one that will reinscribe and retrace this limit, in view of

showing that, rather than circumscribing, it traverses and cuts across the discourse that it is supposed to contain. This path is opened up by Jacques Derrida.

In 1971 Jacques Derrida published an article in *Poètique* (5) under the title "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy"[1] ("La Mythologie Blanche"), in which he proposed a deconstructive rethinking of the classical concepts of the proper and metaphor. In 1975 Paul Ricoeur in *The Rule of Metaphor*[2] elaborated his *interaction theory* of metaphor, which he defined as the linguistic process of the creation of new meaning. This volume also comprised a critique of Derrida's "unbounded deconstruction",[3] which was centred on Derrida's assumed prioritisation of "dead" metaphor and denomination over "live" metaphor and contextual action, which form the premises of Ricoeur's theory. Derrida replied to Ricoeur's criticism in his lecture entitled "The Retrait of Metaphor"[4] given at the Colloquium "Philosophy and Metaphor", which was held in 1978 at the University of Geneva. These three texts constitute a debate, which also reflects and should be understood within the framework of a more general discussion between hermeneutics and deconstruction and their impact on human sciences. Even though the debate focuses on the place and function of metaphor in the text of philosophy, its implications can be extended to every discourse on metaphor, for it is articulated on the level of its philosophical presuppositions. Most discourses on metaphor fail to recognise the philosophical grounds that condition its every single occurrence. This is not to say that metaphor *in general* operates in a specific and determined way independently of discourse or discipline. It is to suggest that, despite of its diverse and multiple uses and functions, metaphor always refers back to the constitutive distinction between literal and figurative meaning, to a metaphysical division that is impossible to do away with. The issue, as will be argued, is not choosing between a *systematic* or a *historical* (and contextual) approach to metaphor but to acknowledge

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[1] This article is included in the volume *Margins of Philosophy*, translated by Alan Bass, London, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982.

[2] The French title is *La Métaphore Vive*, which translates as 'the living metaphor'.

[3] Ricoeur, Paul, *The Rule of Metaphor, Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, London, Routledge, 1978, p. 284.

[4] The title of the French original is "Le retrait de la métaphore". As the translators of this text, Frieda Gardner, Biodun Iginla, Richard Madden, and William West explain, the word *retrait* brings into play a variety of meanings in French some of which are: withdrawal, retracement, recess, and retraction and it also metonymically touches on *retraite*: retreat, retirement, place of retirement, shelter or refuge; *trait*: line, mark, stroke, or feature; *traite*: road, place of passage, bank draft or bill of exchange; *retirer*: to retire, to retreat.

instead the historical constitution of a structure that receives the imprints of a long sequence of occurrences, a structure as formal and systematic as it is historical and contingent.

Paul Ricoeur: Living Metaphor

In *The Rule of Metaphor* Ricoeur designates metaphor as the linguistic process of *creation of new meaning.* Metaphor is not to be understood merely as the rhetorical figure, as a deviation of meaning by means of the substitution of a word by another more striking word. Metaphor is not just a stylistic or pedagogical device, although it carries the burden of a long tradition from Aristotle to the present that designates it as such. Metaphor is the dynamic aspect of language: it is the force that enables semantic innovation and new insights into reality. Indeed, for Ricoeur, metaphor has the power to *redescribe* reality by giving rise to novel ways of looking at and experiencing the world. For Ricoeur, the semantic innovation brought about through metaphor is *an ontological event* for it discloses new aspects of reality and new modes of being in the world, increasing our awareness of it and at the same time projecting new possibilities of action. In this sense, metaphor is *creation-as-discovery*. It is a heuristic function of language that permits new insights into a reality that is already there, a reality to which we belong but have no full grasp of, and at the same moment a reality which is being transfigured and transformed.

Ricoeur's theory of metaphor amounts to a theory of meaning and interpretation that exceeds the description of particular aspects and functions of language (like semantic innovation) and assumes its full scope in the hermeneutic project. Ricoeur's aptitude to synthesise and put to work prominent philosophical traditions as well as linguistic and literary theories is clearly exposed in the unfolding of his argument in *The Rule of Metaphor*. Departing from Aristotle and classical rhetoric, he passes from structuralism and semiotics to semantics and the theory of discourse to finally reach the hermeneutics of disclosure and to readdress the question of the ontological import of metaphor. In this theoretical trajectory prevalent theories of metaphor are discussed, criticised, taken up and synthesised in a *dialectical* mode. At each phase a new question is posed leading to the final argument in the seventh and eighth studies of the work that introduce the concept of "metaphorical truth," address the problematic of "the intersection of discourses" and argue for the "autonomy" of philosophical or speculative discourse. So the work moves from

classical tropology (taxonomy and classification of the figures of speech) to the structural explanation of semiotics (metaphor as an operation of the systematic layer of language) and the question of *sense*, to the semantics of the sentence and discourse, where the question of *reference* is introduced, and, finally, to the hermeneutics of the text where all previously elaborated theories attain their "righteous" place in the broader scope of hermeneutics.

We will attempt to reconstruct this movement in a moment. For now it is important to ask what is at stake in the theory of metaphor, what is its place in Ricoeurian hermeneutics, and why does this long theoretical journey end up with the question of ontology and an argument for the autonomy of philosophy? To do this we have to go back to the basic premises and central notions of the hermeneutics of Ricoeur. Ricoeur's ambitious and comprehensive project is to formulate a hermeneutical model that would bring together Husserl's phenomenology, Heidegger's and Gadamer's hermeneutics, French structuralism, Anglo-American philosophy of "ordinary language" and the critique of ideology. His objective is to balance two adversarial movements in the history of hermeneutics: 1. the exigency for an epistemological hermeneutics that would raise *exegesis* and *philology*, the traditional branches of regional hermeneutics, to a "technology" and a general method for interpreting texts according to established and objective criteria (Schleiermarcher, Dilthey) and 2. the consideration primarily and fundamentally of the ontological condition of understanding that precedes and grounds epistemological preoccupation (Heidegger, Gadamer). This dichotomy within hermeneutics can be summed up under the opposed notions of *understanding* (*Verstehen*) and *explanation* (*Erklären*), which Ricoeur brings together in a dialectical pairing and in a single encompassing process, which he calls *interpretation*.

Understanding here refers to the immediate grasp of, and familiarity with, the world that human beings acquire simply through the irreducible and primordial fact of *being-thrown* into the world. The structure of *being-in-the-world*, that is, the structure of *Dasein*, constitutes the ontological condition of all understanding and, hence, precedes the theory of knowledge and its mutually constitutive categories of subject and object. The ontology of understanding, as articulated by Heidegger and taken up by Gadamer, seeks to go before and beneath the methodological attitude of the human sciences to the fundamental conditions of human existence, of that being

which *finds* and *orients* itself within the world. The structure of understanding has the paradoxical character of *a priori throwness* or *belonging* and of *projection* or *anticipation* of different possibilities of being. *Explanation*, on the other hand, is an epistemological attitude that presupposes a methodological and objectifying distancing or "alienating distanciation", to use Gadamer's term, which, in his view, disrupts the immediate and primordial relation of belonging. Ricoeur, however, wants to overcome the alternative between understanding and explanation, ontological truth and method, and, consequently, to keep open the dialogue between hermeneutics and the human sciences:

> "*How is it possible to introduce a critical instance into a consciousness of belonging which is expressly defined by the rejection of distanciation?* It is possible, in my view, only insofar as historical consciousness seeks not simply to repudiate distanciation but to assume it."[5]

Ricoeur incorporates the critical moment of *distanciation* to the ontological condition of belonging as its dialectical counterpart. *Belonging* is the positive expression of the unsurpassable ontological condition of finitude that precedes reflection, encompasses and grounds cognitive categories and constitutes the structure of understanding or rather *pre-understanding*. However, (pre-)understanding cannot become meaningful, cannot become itself, if it is not mediated by interpretation. Because we already find ourselves *in medias res*, in a historical situation, transmission and conversation which has long begun, understanding always involves the overcoming of distance and estrangement:

> "The concept of distanciation is the dialectical counterpart of the notion of belonging, in the sense that we belong to a historical tradition through a relation of distance which oscillates between remoteness and proximity. To interpret is to render near what is far (temporally, geographically, culturally, spiritually)."[6]

Now, for Ricoeur, distanciation is a positive condition understood either as ontological or epistemological category. Because there can be neither a total or unique nor closed horizon of meaning, one constantly finds oneself exposed to situations in which one's singular vantage point enters in a relation of tension with distant and alien semantic fields. Understanding thus becomes a project enabled by the structures of belonging and developed or extended by the positive condition of

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[5]Ricoeur, Paul, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences, Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation*, edited, translated and introduced by John B. Thompson, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 61.
[6] Ibid., pp. 110-111.

distanciation. Interpretation as the interplay of nearness and remoteness, of identity and difference, acquires an ontological value as general as that of understanding.

Now, any philosophy of interpretation is necessarily centred on the question of meaning. The ontological question of *being* is primarily a *phenomenological* one since what is principally asked is "what is the meaning of *being*?" To the extent that the meaning of *being* is not evident or easily accessible but requires investigation and meditation, the phenomenological question, according to Ricoeur, is essentially a hermeneutical one. Hermeneutics by definition addresses the problem of concealed meaning. But since the question of meaning is at the heart of the hermeneutic preoccupation, hermeneutics maintains an unsurpassable phenomenological presupposition.[7] The act of perception or intuition of a present object that lies outside consciousness and which consciousness intends, could not be elevated to meaning if it were not completed by an act of suspension or phenomenological reduction. "Phenomenology begins when, not content to 'live' or 'relive', we interrupt experience in order to signify it."[8] On the other hand, phenomenology cannot advance without incorporating a hermeneutic critique, an instance of explication and interpretation. Since consciousness is always already exposed to the effects of history, which already contain the element of distance, the movement of signification must involve an act of interpretation. Because interpretation presupposes both proximity and distance, it includes a moment of suspension, which disrupts our immediate relation to the historical situation we unreflectively find ourselves in. Hermeneutics "begins when, not content to belong to transmitted tradition, we interrupt the relation of belonging in order to signify it."[9]

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[7] Ricoeur rearticulates Husserl's principal notions in terms of hermeneutical categories and concerns. In other words, he extends Husserl's philosophical gesture onto the plane of history. For Ricoeur there can be no ultimate or presuppositionless ground for the constitution of meaning and, accordingly, no scientific description of it, since it would always have to come to terms with the ontological condition of understanding, that is, the irreducible and primordial fact of belonging. Accordingly, phenomenological experience can be realised only as hermeneutical experience. In hermeneutical terms, the phenomenological notion of *intentionality* is actualised as *interpretation*, *epoché* becomes *distanciation*, and *lived experience* the historically lived experience and situation of belonging. Thus, according to Ricoeur, the discourse of phenomenology attains its full scope when it is incorporated in the hermeneutical project, that is, in historical understanding. Inversely, hermeneutical notions take on epistemological rigour and value drawing on phenomenology's method of "questioning back" to the ideal and objective aspects of meaning.

[8] Ibid., p. 116.

[9] Ibid., p. 117.

The notion of phenomenological *epoché* signals a preoccupation with *sense*, with the objective and ideal side of meaning. This is what has enabled hermeneutics to move away from the psychologising and historicist model (Romanticist hermeneutics, which prioritised a notion of understanding defined as the recognition of the author's intention from the point of view of his/her original audience). Counter-movements to this approach focused on the immanent structures and formal properties of the text, which was defined as an autonomous, self-contained and atemporal entity, employing explanatory strategies and structural analysis. Ricoeur's model aims at bringing these two attitudes, the historical and the structural, together in a theory of interpretation that would make this dichotomy positive and productive.

For Ricoeur, the division between objectified and historical meaning falls under the dialectical pair of *sense* and *reference* (a distinction taken up by Frege's *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*). Sense is the immanent and repeatable structure of meaning, what enables a proposition to be identified and reidentified as such, to be rephrased and translated. It is a structure of sameness. Reference pertains to the eventful character of meaning. It is meaning actualised in specific contexts and historical situations. While meaning cannot exist outside its particular instantiations, it would be impossible if it were not supported by an ideal and objective structure. In other words, meaning must always have a reference but it must also exceed every single reference. While the dialectic of sense and reference is something inchoate in the oral speech situation, it is best manifested on the level of the text, the proper field of hermeneutics. With regard to the text, sense corresponds to its synthetic structure and immanent properties revealed by explanation, while reference pertains to its actualisation in a specific context and in the present of *discourse as event*. The text is the most exemplary instance of what Ricoeur calls distanciation, which apart from a positive ontological condition also becomes a positive methodological attitude, since it enables the description of structural and objectifiable aspects.

Each time a text is read, it is interpreted in a particular context and actualised in a new event of discourse. Interpretation always involves the *application* of the text in a specific historical situation, from which it also receives a new referent. It intercepts the suspension or *epoché* of reference by redirecting the text to the world:

> "If reading is possible, it is indeed because the text is not closed in on itself but opens out onto other things. To read is, on any hypothesis, to conjoin a new discourse to the discourse of the text. This conjunction of discourses reveals, in the very constitution of the

text, an original capacity for renewal which is its open character. Interpretation is the concrete outcome of conjunction and renewal."[10]

However, the new reference of the text is not of a situational or ostensive character. It is a projection of a new mode of being that is unfolded by the text and appropriated by the reader. At this juncture Ricoeur introduces the notion of *appropriation* as a dialectic counterpart of *distanciation*. Appropriation and distanciation is another form of the dialectic of understanding and explanation. The act of interpretation is only completed through the movement of appropriation, which constitutes its final stage. The interpreting subject finally renders the distant semantic horizon into something familiar:

> "One of the aims of all hermeneutics is to struggle against cultural distance. This struggle can be understood in purely temporal terms as a struggle against secular estrangement, or in more genuinely hermeneutical terms as a struggle against the estrangement from meaning itself, that is, from the system of values upon which the text is based. In this sense, interpretation 'brings together', 'equalises', renders 'contemporary and similar', thus genuinely making one's *own* what was initially *alien*."[11]

But what exactly of the text is appropriated by the reader? Appropriation here does not strictly signify taking possession of or merely reading into the text one's prejudices and expectations. Nor does it mean recognising the authorial intention or the historical conditions of the text's production. Appropriation, in Ricoeurian hermeneutics, is primarily a force of disclosure and manifestation. What it discloses is a world, the *world of the work* which, far from a situational reference to the intentional horizon of its author, is a projection and a proposal of a new mode or possibility of *being-in-the-world* displayed *in front of the text*: "Ultimately, what I appropriate is a proposed world. The latter is not *behind* the text, as a hidden intention would be, but *in front of* it, as that which the work unfolds, discovers, reveals."[12] The world of the work, or in Gadamer's terms the *matter of the text*, is a dynamic structure that unfolds and orients towards new possibilities of being, a process which more than an act *on* the text, is the act *of* the text. How can we speak of the matter or world of the work if this is comprehended as something which exceeds and thus suspends ostensive reference without, moreover, bestowing it a static, atemporal or "unworldly" character? It is at this point that the dialectic of understanding and explanation reaches its full potential. As Ricoeur shows in his reading of Lévi-Strauss' analysis of myths, structural explanation does not merely reveal a logic of

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[10] Ibid., p. 158.
[11] Ibid., p. 159.

distribution, combination or formal arrangement of textual units but brings out what he calls *depth semantics*, that is, the internal structure of the text that is not understood in analytical terms but rather as the synthesis of meaningful propositions.[13]

The explicatory phase of interpretation recovers the depth semantics of the text and orients the reader to a potential meaning. In other words, it opens up the horizon of the text, in front of which the reader activates his/her own finite conditions of understanding, thus bringing them forth but also expanding them since the reader now receives an enlarged horizon of meaning through what is called the *fusion of horizons*, his/hers and the text's. The fusion of horizons, again a notion Ricoeur borrows from Gadamer, is the interaction and convergence of two semantic fields in a way that reveals their essential structures and culminates in the eruption of a new meaning and reference. "What is to be interpreted in the text is a proposed world which I could inhabit and in which I could project my ownmost possibilities."[14] Appropriation is completed as *self-understanding in front of the text*, which far more than an action controlled by a dominant subject, by "a narcissistic ego", involves the *effacement* of the ego before a distant and larger horizon of meaning and, finally, its reemergence an enlarged self.[15] The reader loses and regains him/herself in front of the text, which by displaying a possible world unfolds his/her *power-to-be*.[16]

Let us recapitulate. We said that the hermeneutics of Ricoeur is centred around the primary dialectics of *belonging* and *distanciation*. Belonging is the unsurpassable ontological condition of understanding, *Dasein*'s structure of pre-understanding conferred upon it by the simple and irreducible fact of *being-in-the-world*. *Dasein* is designated as a "thrown project", a set of possibilities, which it

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[12] Ibid., p. 143.
[13] Ibid., pp. 154-162.
[14] Ibid., p. 112.
[15] "To understand is not to project oneself into the text but to expose oneself to it; it is to receive a self enlarged by the appropriation of the proposed worlds which interpretation unfolds. In sum, it is the matter of the text which gives the reader his dimension of subjectivity; understanding is thus no longer a constitution of which the subject possesses the key." Ibid., p. 94.
[16] A new meaning points to a new reference and a new modality of being. Thus, by revealing an unthought possibility, the text introduces to the reader "imaginative variations of the *ego*". Into this stage of the interpretive process Ricoeur incorporates the "critique of the illusions of the subject" especially in the form of the Marxist and psychoanalytical traditions that could be put in the service of hermeneutics as an integral part of a general theory of prejudices. Ibid., p. 191.

receives and hands down to itself, which it unfolds and realises. Belonging already bears the element of distance, since *Dasein* finds itself at a particular moment of the historical connection and transmission, at the receiving end of historical efficacy. And exactly because its horizon is finite and limited, it is constantly engaged in the overcoming of distance and estrangement, that is, in *interpretation*. It is through interpretation that *Dasein*'s ownmost possibilities, its finite project of life, are realised. Understanding becomes itself, that is, self-understanding as the *appropriation* of the estranged meaning of being. Of course, this is an infinite task, since the structure of belonging precedes and encompasses all reflection, so it can never be fully comprehended.

The primordial dialectics of belonging and distanciation becomes explicit in the interpretation of texts, the paradigm of distanciation and domain of hermeneutics, and particularly through the derivative dialectic of understanding and explanation. Interpretation consists of three phases: pre-understanding (the structure of belonging), explanation (the existential and epistemological moment of distanciation) and understanding as self-understanding (the phase of appropriation). Interpretation brings the text to discourse and realises it as an event of language. The eventfulness of discourse is of primary importance since, for Ricoeur, an event of language (and an event is always something new) signals an *ontological event*. A possible new meaning has an ontological import for it points to a new possibility of being, to a possible world. In other words, new meaning brings about a redescription of the world. By suspending reference to the actual and familiar, the text releases the potential of another type of reference, what Ricoeur calls *second order reference*. Second order reference may disrupt direct reference to everyday reality but still has a claim to truth, since it unfolds the essential structures and possibilities of being, since it turns back to and also projects the ontological conditions of belonging.

This takes us back to where we started from. For is not metaphor defined by Ricoeur as the process of creation of new meaning, as the creative force of language that unfolds new possibilities of being, that enables new insights into reality, and unleashes a new reference that has a claim to truth, to what Ricoeur calls *metaphorical truth*? The metaphorical process is another manifestation of the dialectic of belonging and distanciation, which takes the form of that of literal and metaphorical meaning. Literal meaning is designated as that which pertains and

belongs to one's semantic horizon, as that which is familiar, one's own, appropriated. Metaphorical meaning is the outcome of the exposure of one's semantic horizon to another that is distant and alien. It is a new event of language.

If metaphor is language's power to cast a new light on, redescribe and transform reality, then where does it stand in relation to literature that is usually ascribed a similar function? For Ricoeur, *metaphor is the paradigm for all creativity through language*. Literary works, by disrupting direct reference to everyday reality and by pointing to an imaginary or fictional world, bring the metaphorical potential of language to its full blossom. Because literature and poetry engender "imaginative variations of reality" more than any other form of discourse, they offer the best example of metaphorical action. This is why the theory of metaphor can provide a medium for the analysis of literature. For Ricoeur, metaphor is an "abridged version" of the literary work or, as Monroe Beardsley sustains, "a poem in miniature".[17] Literature receives here a semantic definition, since it is foregrounded as the exemplary case of the production of new meaning. Insofar as literature radically suspends first order reference, it is also a limiting case of distanciation, thus it raises the fundamental problem of hermeneutics. And as long as hermeneutics' principal aim is to make explicit the implicit ontology of discourse, it must seek its completion in philosophy, in the discourse that is centred and structured around the *question of being*. If literature is under the rule of metaphor, philosophy is the reign of the proper. The dialectical couple "literal" or "proper" and "metaphorical" is at the heart of a problematic that has preoccupied literary theory as well as philosophy among other disciplines concerning the separation and/or intersection of cognitive discourses and literature, the function of rhetoric in philosophy, the dichotomy or interweaving of fact and fiction. This problematic is posed in the last study of *The Rule of Metaphor* and is explored on the fundamental level of its conceptual premises and in terms of the question of the boundary between philosophy and literature.

Ricoeur's theory of metaphor integrates and deploys all the hermeneutical notions and themes elaborated above. It is important before we go into the details of his formulation to establish one more distinction, that between metaphor and *polysemy*. Polysemy is for Ricoeur an essential characteristic of language, which

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[17] Ricoeur, Paul, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*, Fort Worth, Texas Christian University Press, 1976, p. 46.

manifests the ambiguous and open character of words and their sensitivity to context. Polysemy refers to the already established and lexicalised multiple semantic potential and possible contextual uses of words and pertains to the order of the literal. For Ricoeur, every single word is polysemic, yet no polysemic word is a metaphor. While polysemy brings to discourse a semantic dynamic, which is activated within context and is then reduced through the labour of interpretation to a relatively univocal meaning, metaphor explodes this dynamic since, in its case, polysemy comes short of pertinent semantic values and a new one has to be created. Polysemy and metaphor constitute another form of the dialectic of belonging and distanciation. Let us now proceed to a more extensive elaboration of Ricoeur's theory of metaphor.

Ricoeur criticises numerous theories of metaphor, of which the main trait is that they, in a more or less direct way, address metaphor as a phenomenon of substitution at the level of the word or sign and on the basis of resemblance. This trait is repeated in a consistent way in the discourses of classical rhetoric, semiotics and the semantics of the word, which are word-focused theories. For Ricoeur metaphor is a far more complex and productive element of language. To show this, he advocates a passage from semiotics and the semantics of the word to the semantics of the sentence, that is, the unit of discourse. This shift from the level of the word/sign to the level of the sentence, permits Ricoeur to further his theory to the level of the text, the province of hermeneutics. In order to do this, Ricoeur develops a theory of discourse and a theory of the text.[18]

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[18] Ricoeur draws on Émile Benveniste's theory of discourse and elaborates it in the context of the debate between semiotics and semantics. Semiotics' domain is that of *langue*, that is, language as a homogeneous, self-regulated and closed system of hierarchically structured and differentially defined linguistic units, whereas semantics' object of study is *parole*, the realisation of *langue* in a meaningful event of language. *Langue* is a linguistic code composed of finite sets of discrete linguistic entities with combinatory capacities, which, precisely because of its systematic character furnishes linguistics with an accessible and manageable object of study. It is *parole*, however, that actualises the communicative and referential functions of language, that carries the message and relates language to reality. While *langue* has only a virtual existence, *parole* is the actual event of language with individual and contingent character. Now, Ricoeur's aim is not to substitute semantics for semiotics but to show the mutual and necessary exchange between the two disciplines, and accordingly between *langue* and *parole*. Metaphor, as will be shown, is exemplary of this relation. In Ricoeur's view, semiotics provides a unidimensional approach to language and needs to be supplemented by a theory of discourse. Following Benveniste, he uses the term *discourse* instead of *parole* in order to underscore the shift of focus from sign to sentence. The sentence disposes a synthetic structure, which is different from the analytic structure of the combination of signs. With it one enters a different domain, the province of the semantics of discourse.

Discourse is described by Ricoeur according to dialectical traits.[19] The first and "nuclear" one is the dialectic of event and meaning. For Ricoeur "discourse always occurs as an *event*, but it is to be understood as *meaning*."[20] The event of discourse is fleeting and repeatable at the same time. It is "fleeting" because it always takes place in a here and a now, in a passing instant, and "repeatable" because it bears a structure that allows it to be identified and reidentified as the same. This structure constitutes the propositional content of the utterance, which transcends the transitory and singular event and can be repeated at another instance. Ricoeur says: "There is meaning because there is sameness of meaning."[21] The act of discourse may vanish but its propositional content or locutionary mode, to use a speech act theory term, outlives the intention that activates it each time. It can be repeated, rephrased, translated and still be identified as such. What is finally retained and understood in the event of language is its meaning.[22]

Sense and *reference* form another dialectical pairing that falls in the inner dialectic of meaning. Sense corresponds to meaning's synthetic structure, to the correlation of the identifying and predicative functions of the proposition. It is the objective or ideal aspect of language in the sense that it is repeatable and identifiable. Reference marks the movement of language towards the world. Sense manifests "what" is being said, whereas reference shows the "about what" of the saying. Language "in use and in action" rests upon the dialectic of sense and reference, which

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[19] The Ricoeurian notion of discourse, which is a decisive part of his theory of metaphor, is not presented here in comparison and disjunction to other theories of discourse, which are arguably more prominent, for instance, that of Michel Foucault, which also happens to be the departure of a prevalent, albeit often disfiguring, as will be argued in the last chapter, trend of discourse analysis with regard to travel writing. We are here interested in the hermeneutic experience of travel, that is, in the core experience of the interpretive subject and the onto-semantic structures that make it possible even before and beyond contextual and historical determinations and discursive constraints and delimitations.

[20]Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 70.

[21]Ibid., p.70.

[22] This, whatsoever, does not reintroduce the distinction between code and discourse and all the more in favour of the former. Ricoeur stresses that what we have is "the repeatability of an event, not an element of a system." This repeatability is immanent to the event and it is supported by a synthetic structure which is particular to discourse and consists in the connection of a subject to a predicate or, differently said, in the intertwining of the *identifying* and the *predicative* functions. The subject of the proposition refers discourse to a particular entity or situation and is designated by a predicate, which attributes to it qualities or actions, or places it in classes and sets of relations. The concrete subject of a proposition is what gives the predicate a transitory character because it links a potentially universal attribute to a particular here and now. The instance of discourse may have a fleeting quality but it is not

also indicates its ontological dimension. As Ricoeur argues, "it is because there is first something to say, because we have an experience to bring to language, that conversely, language is not only directed towards ideal meanings but also refers to what is."[23] According to Ricoeur, experience is prior to language. It is the ontological condition of language.

The theory of discourse provides by extension a theory of the text, which is understood as an entity homogeneous to the sentence, which, after all, is the unit of discourse and the foundational entity of semantics. The text is defined as any discourse fixed by writing. Fixation by writing is for Ricoeur constitutive of the text itself, yet without limiting it to a transcription of oral discourse. The notion of *discourse as work* is important here. Discourse as work is a closed sequence characterised by a certain structure and internal organisation. It is a structured totality composed of sets of sentences that is, however, irreducible to them. The structured work either oral or written falls into a primary type of distanciation, the dialectic of event and meaning. In the case of the text, distanciation becomes more obvious because as soon as the text is completed, it is freed from the writer's intentions and its conditions of production. If dialogue is the paradigm of communication, since it takes place as a play of question and answer in a shared context, the text is the paradigm of *communication in and through distance* and, hence, the domain of hermeneutics, the art of rendering alien meaning familiar. It is the structure of the work that makes its mediation and its repetition in different contexts possible. It is what allows for the detachment of meaning from the event of language, something that is nascent in living speech but made explicit by writing.[24] So, the seemingly negative notion of distanciation becomes a positive and productive condition for interpretation.

The theory of discourse provides Ricoeur with the basis for his theory of metaphor. For Ricoeur metaphor is a phenomenon of discourse that takes effect on the level of the sentence through the interaction of words. Metaphor, then, is always a statement and not a word. The difference between metaphorical and literal statements is that the synthetic structure of the former produces a semantic impertinence, which can only be resolved by adding to the term that causes the disruption in the coherence

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merely a vanishing event, for its synthetic structure preserves and secures for it an identity of its own. Event and meaning traverse one another.

[23]Ibid., p.21.

[24]Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, p. 25.

of the context a new meaning that would restore semantic congruence. In this sense metaphorical meaning is always something new. It does not belong to the so-called secondary meanings of a word nor is it an instantiation of *polysemy*, of the outline of accepted and literal uses. Living metaphor is not yet part of the lexicon. Ricoeur maintains that there are no metaphors in the dictionary. The dictionary contains only dead metaphors, i.e., literal senses, which were first engendered through the metaphorical process and were then lexicalised as their use became expanded.[25] Metaphorical meaning eventually becomes literal.

Ricoeur's discussion of the most prevalent theories of metaphor is essential to the formulation of his own model. He begins with the classical definition of metaphor in Aristotle's *Poetics*:

> "Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on the grounds of analogy."[26]

According to Aristotle, metaphor is a change of meaning that affects the word. It is an *epiphora*, a displacement or transposition of a name, which is borrowed from an original domain to substitute for a literal word, and in doing so deviates from its original use. Metaphor, according to Aristotle, is a transposition between "logical poles", a transference between already constituted categories. This, for Ricoeur and in spite of Aristotle, introduces a discursive moment in the definition of metaphor. Metaphor by being essentially the designation of one term by another involves an act of predication, which is a lot more than a change of meaning affecting the word. It is rather the alteration of semantic distance that results in a disturbance of the whole network of meanings.

According to Aristotle, the transference of meaning presupposes the perception of resemblance between two at first sight different things. He writes in *Poetics*:

> "It is a great thing, indeed, to make a proper use of the poetical forms as also of compounds and strange words. But the greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others; and it is also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars."[27]

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[25]Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 99.
[26]Ibid., p. 13.
[27]Ibid., p. 23.

"To metaphorise well", for Aristotle, is to "see resemblance". Resemblance adds a dynamic aspect to metaphor, which, more than a deviation at the level of the lexical code, is the perception or establishment of a relationship between the things and ideas it brings together. However, for Aristotle, resemblance must be a pre-existing though unrecognised relation. Ricoeur maintains this feature of metaphor in his own theoretical model but ascribes it a different function, since resemblance now becomes a creation and not a condition of metaphor.

In late rhetoric, metaphor is relegated to one of the figures of speech along with metonymy and synecdoche and it is not designated as the paradigm of all figures as in Aristotle.[28] Metaphor becomes the single word trope that consists of the substitution of an absent proper word for a borrowed figurative one on the basis of resemblance. Resemblance is the *reason* or *rationale* of the trope of metaphor, the exploration of which could lead to the restoration of the absent term through an "*exhaustive paraphrase*". Therefore, since the trope can always be restored in a proper available and already established meaning, metaphor provides "no new information" and is restricted to a merely pedagogical function.[29]

Substitution theories tend to deprive metaphor of any cognitive value that would emerge from the creation of a new meaning, since they confine metaphor to the already established and static aspects of language. Semiotics, it could be argued, continues the tradition of substitution theory, by trying to account for the change of meaning by referring solely to intra-linguistic rules and operations.[30] Ricoeur

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[28] In the second study of the *Rule of Metaphor*, "The decline of rhetoric: tropology," Ricoeur considers the passage or decline of rhetoric as designated, for instance, by Aristotle, to a restrictive theory of tables of tropes and figures as in Pierre Fontanier's *Les Figures du discours* (1830).

[29] Substitution theories of metaphor by necessity imply the condition of *translatability* of the metaphorical into the literal. Since metaphor is defined as a deviation from literal meaning, it is implied that a rhetorical analysis that would explore and expose metaphorical action could restore the meaning which acted as point of departure. In other words, insofar as metaphor is engendered from and, consequently, reducible to an original proper meaning, it by necessity implies *translatability* between the former and the latter. This would secure that there is no loss of meaning and that metaphor is submitted to the economy of the same. However, restricting metaphor to a series of controllable substitutions also implies that there is no gain in meaning either. For Ricoeur, metaphor brings about a change of meaning that cannot be exhausted in a paraphrase or in the retrieval of an absent literal word. In this sense, metaphor defies translation in its classical notion because it always conveys something more than already established meanings. To Ricoeur's mind, semantic innovation is untranslatable.

[30] The structural linguistics of Roman Jakobson designates metaphor as a substitution of a sign for another sign on the basis of resemblance. Jakobson`s bipolar schema associates metaphor and metonymy with two general processes of language, that of *selection* and *combination*. In

advocates a passage from semiotics and the semantics of the word to the semantics of the sentence and to an interaction and contextual theory of metaphor. This transition does not abolish its point of departure. The change of focus rather means concentrating on the metaphorical process than just describing its effects on the level of the word. Ricoeur sustains that semiotics and substitution theory are not only compatible with his own model but also an integral part of it.

Metaphor illustrates the necessary exchange between the systematic traits of language, which constitute the domain of semiotics, and discourse through its relation to *polysemy*. Polysemy is a feature of the linguistic code describing potential and not actual meanings. Metaphor, on the other hand, is an event of language that is always realised in the present of discourse and brings about a change of meaning, which has the power to alter the lexical code. Polysemy would not exist without the metaphorical process, which creates additional meanings for words, and metaphor would never take place if words had not the capacity of acquiring new meanings and at the same time preserve their old ones. Each time a word is used in a sentence it brings with it all its potential meanings, which are screened by its context and reduced to the one that makes sense. In the case of metaphor none of the word's

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the case of selection, signs are related on the basis of resemblance on the paradigmatic plane of language that pertains to the linguistic code only, whereas, in the case of combination, signs are related on the basis of contiguity on the syntagmatic plane, which takes effect on both code and message. Metaphor, thus, pertains to the paradigmatic pole of language. These operations control all levels of language from phoneme to text in exactly the same way not admitting any difference between the sign and discourse. See Roman Jakobson's "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disorder" in *Selected Writings. II: Word and Language*, The Hague, Mouton, 1971. Ricoeur objects to such a restricted rhetoric of two figures and to the exclusion of the function of discourse from the explanation of the metaphorical process. His main criticism of the structural method is that, although it provides a highly technical theory of metaphor, it fails to account for semantic innovation, since it explains metaphor solely on the grounds of intra-linguistic operations and not as a discursive phenomenon. Theorists of what has been called "new rhetoric" like Gérard Genette, Jean Cohen and A.-J. Greimas also employ a structural model of language and attempt to formalise a common structure of figures, one that would be governed by the same two operations at all levels of language (phoneme, seme, sign, sentence), namely, those of *deviation* and *reduction of deviation*. New rhetoric introduces a new unit of meaning, the *seme*, by breaking down the signified to minimal semantic entities. The sense of words, accordingly, is an accumulation of semes. The decomposition of the signified aims at the isolation of a semantic unit that carries an essential and identical meaning that has not been affected yet by rhetorical deviation. This unit constitutes the *rhetorical degree zero* and has only a virtual existence since it cannot occur as such in discourse. Deviation is explicated as a relation of semes and it is something that can be measured. The concatenation of semes distances them from their "natural" meaning. But as Genette admits, "it is impossible to decide at what degree of accumulation of inessential semes a deviation begins to be perceived". So the structural explanation of

established meanings is suitable for its context, so the word has to retain all its semantic acceptations *plus one*, a new one that would render the statement meaningful and would achieve *semantic pertinence*. As is shown, metaphor involves the action of the whole statement though its effect focalises on a single word. It is a discursive phenomenon that relates a word and a predicate and can be sufficiently described by a theory of interaction.

To formulate his interaction or tension theory of metaphor, Ricoeur borrows from the works of I.A. Richards, Max Black and Monroe Beardsley.[31] These theorists move from the semantics of the word to that of the sentence and argue for a contextual theory of meaning. Accordingly, meaning proceeds through the interanimation of the words of a sentence and not merely through their summing up. By extension, metaphorical meaning is the result of the action of the whole sentence, although it is made manifest in a single word.[32] In contrast to substitution theory, these thinkers do not think resemblance is a pre-existing similarity that grounds metaphor but rather a likely outcome of a semantic approximation initiated in the metaphorical statement between the two things or ideas that are brought together. Hence, resemblance is not included in the explication of the metaphorical process. This is precisely the point from which Ricoeur takes his separate way from all previous theory by reformulating the function of resemblance in the metaphorical process. Richards, Black and Beardsley saw resemblance as the outcome of the metaphorical action and not as functional feature. Ricoeur reinstates the notion of resemblance in his theory of metaphor by shifting attention to its semantic character.

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metaphor reaches an impasse when it comes to demarcating literal from metaphorical meaning.

[31] Richards, Ivor Armstrong, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1971, Black, Max, *Models and Metaphors,* Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1962, Beardsley, Monroe C., *Aestetics*. New York, Harcourt, Brace and World, 1958.

[32] For I.A. Richards metaphorical action is made manifest as the incongruence between the *tenor*, that is, an underlying idea, and its *vehicle*, the word under the sign of which this idea is apprehended. Richards, p. 116. Black also designates metaphor as a phenomenon generated by the whole sentence but centred on a single word, which is now called the *focus*, while the rest of the sentence functions as its *frame*. Black, p. 47. According to Beardsley, metaphor emerges from an attribution of a *modifier* to a *subject* that causes an incompatibility of meaning. Beardsley, pp. 139-140. The tension that is inflicted through semantic incongruence is resolved by reference to pre-established classes of potential connotations, what Beardsley and Black respectively call "inventory of secondary meanings" and "system of associated commonplaces". As Ricoeur points out, however, these theorists fail to account for semantic innovation since they reduce its dynamism to an index of available meanings and, therefore, do not acknowledge the productive character of metaphor. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 85.

To perceive resemblance is to have the capacity to *imagine* something as or through something else, to be able to *see as*. For Ricoeur the operation of "seeing as" is at the same time *iconic* and *verbal*. The apprehension of similarity between logically distant things is a "seeing" or "iconic" instant which is not reduced to a sensible image. It is "thinking" and "seeing" at the same time.[33] The reformulation of the iconic character of resemblance allows for the inclusion of the function of *imagination* and *feeling* as components of metaphorical cognition and not simply as accompanying psychological features. Metaphor holds together a sense and an image, a verbal and a non-verbal element, precisely because it arises at the borderline between the semantic and the psychological. This limit is the locus from which the creative force of language, or *linguistic imagination*, springs forth.[34] For Ricoeur, the image aroused by metaphor is not a perceptual residue or a replica of an absent thing. It is first an emerging meaning, an outline of possible meanings that has not yet reached the level of "conceptual peace" and, therefore, has still a *quasi-verbal* character. The *quasi-verbal* is the condition of the *quasi-optic* aspect of imagination. In order to better explicate the at once verbal and iconic aspect of metaphor, Ricoeur resorts to the Kantian notion of *productive imagination*. Productive imagination, in disjunction to "reproductive imagination" or quasi-sensual imagery, is the *schematisation of the synthetic operation* initiated by metaphor. It is a "logical structure of likeness" that holds two meanings together preserving similarity in and in spite of difference. Ricoeur describes the workings of linguistic imagination in three phases. His aim is to provide an explication of the passage from semantic incongruence to metaphorical congruence, what, in his view, all theories previously mentioned leave in abeyance.

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[33] The "iconic" element of metaphor is acknowledged in most theories of metaphor and has received various treatments. For theorists like Michel LeGuern and Paul Henle metaphor emerges as a disruption of the semantic coherence that triggers a verbal image. Nonetheless, this image is ascribed a psychological and affective function reverting thus to an emotionalist theory of metaphor. The image in the end becomes external to the linguistic process and metaphor is driven out of the jurisdiction of semantics to that of psychology. Ibid., pp 182-191.

[34] "In *The Rule of Metaphor* I try to show how language could extend itself to its very limits forever discovering new resonances within itself. The term *vive* in the French title *La Métaphore Vive* is all important, for it was my purpose to demonstrate that there is not just an epistemological and political imagination, but also, and perhaps more fundamentally, a *linguistic imagination* which generates and regenerates meaning through the living powers of metaphoricity." Quotation from Richard Kearney's "Paul Ricoeur and the Hermeneutic Imagination" in *The Narrative Path, The Later Works of Paul Ricoeur*, edited by T. Peter Kemp and David Rasmussen, London, The MIT Press, 1989, p. 14.

Primarily, imagination is understood as a "seeing", an *insight* into likeness that is *homogeneous to discourse*. Two things or two different registers of meaning are brought together through a predicative act that describes the one in terms of the other, altering their logical distance and giving rise to new combinatory possibilities. Ricoeur calls this productive and linguistic insight *predicative assimilation*. It is a discursive event by means of which two separate semantic fields approximate and clash. It is important to note that the semantic conflict is not simply between a subject and a predicate but rather between semantic incongruence and congruence. It is at this phase that the pictorial aspect of metaphor is introduced. A new connection begins to *appear*; a *schema* or pattern for the creation of new meaning is formed: an outline that holds similarity and difference in tension and for a moment keeps the possibility of many different meanings alive. This is the moment metaphor unfolds its *figurative* power by creating a *milieu* or space within language where new connections and images can be perceived. These images are called by Ricoeur "tied," a term borrowed from Richards[35], since they are aroused and controlled by the verbal element. Language –and poetic language *par excellence*- has the power to evoke verbal images, which are seen, felt, as well as understood. According to Ricoeur, linguistic imagination has both iconic and emotive aspects, though these are bounded by its essentially verbal character, out of which they also emerge. Ricoeur sustains that there is a "*structural analogy* between the cognitive, the imaginative, and the emotional components of the complete metaphorical act."[36] This phase correlates with the explanatory moment of interpretation since it involves the manifestation of the essential structures of two clashing semantic horizons in an encounter initiated by an original insight into similarity. At this stage of the metaphorical process, meaning is still suspended (and so is reference) since no fusion is yet accomplished. This necessitates an *intuitive passage* that would establish a new connection and pertinence out of the density and intensity of the semantic potential of the metaphorical schematism. Interpretation is completed when a relative univocal meaning is reached out of the confrontation of identity and difference outlined by metaphor. At this point, semantics and the psychology of imagination and feeling reach their common border. However, Ricoeur keeps the theory of metaphor within

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[35] Richards, Ivor Armstrong, *Principles of Literary Criticism*, New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1925, pp. 118-119.

[36]Ricoeur, Paul, "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling" in *On Metaphor*, edited by Sheldon Sacks, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1978, p. 157.

the limits of semantics by "prudently" framing innovation within Kantian "productive imagination" and by underscoring the cognitive import of feelings.[37] The metaphorical process is initiated by an incompatibility of meaning and terminates in a new pertinence, though it also necessitates the participation of nonverbal components.

Another essential function of linguistic imagination, which was previously touched upon, is the suspension of ordinary descriptive reference. At the phase of metaphorical schematism reference to reality is provisionally disrupted:

> "Imagination does not merely *schematise* the predicative assimilation between terms by its synthetic insight into similarities nor does it merely *picture* the sense thanks to the display of images aroused and controlled by the cognitive process. Rather, it contributes concretely to the *epoché* of ordinary reference and to the projection of new possibilities of redescribing the world."[38]

Ambiguity in sense always implies ambiguity in reference. The moment of schematism is one of undecidability (however, not between concrete choices but one involving the dismantling of certitude before a new possibility), which concerns them both and is, finally, resolved through the advent of the new pertinence. For Ricoeur every gain in meaning regards both sense and reference. Throughout the metaphorical process reference is merely suspended and not completely abolished and this is where its creative force lies. As the literal interpretation of the statement becomes impossible, literal meaning self-destructs giving way to a metaphorical meaning. In the same way, metaphorical reference is constructed on the ruins of literal reference. Again, literary reference is exemplary of this function. Ricoeur here resorts to Jakobson's notion of *split reference*. Jakobson thinks that "the supremacy of poetic function over referential function does not obliterate the reference but makes it ambiguous."[39] For Ricoeur, "the poet is a genius who creates split references by creating fictions."[40] The suspension of direct reference to reality is the paradoxical condition for the disclosure of its deeper structures, which are blurred in everyday

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[37] Ricoeur defines feelings as "interiorised thoughts". Feelings do not obstruct the process of cognition but, on the contrary, they accompany and complete it for it is through them that thoughts are made ours. In the same way imagination suspends reality and points to a second order reference, feelings imply an *epoché* of bodily emotions. Aristotle's theory of *catharsis* is exemplary here. The feelings of *phobos* and *eleos* entailed in the tragic tale are not real, everyday life feelings. They involve the suspension of emotions and the schematisation of a structure of feeling. The negative moment of suspension does not imply the complete abolition of emotions, but rather their *metamorphosis*, their elevation to poetic feelings. Ibid., pp 153-157.

[38] Ibid., p. 152.

[39] Jakobson, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disorder", p. 371.

[40] Ricoeur, "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling", p. 153.

life. This is possible since metaphorical reference is not radically discontinuous from ordinary reference. Literature, by representing reality in a creative way, imposes on it an order and composition that everyday life lacks. So, according to Ricoeur, the literary text, precisely because it has a structure which makes it objectifiable and at the same time distant, at once accessible and subversive, has the power to alter and reorganise our perception of reality pointing to its most fundamental layers.[41] This is what Ricoeur calls "metaphorical truth", that is, the projection of another inhabitable world, one corresponding to possibilities that would be most deeply our own.[42] Split reference is ultimately displayed as a conflict between the metaphorical "is" (possibility of new congruence) and the literal "is not" (impossible congruence) condensed in the metaphorical format "being as". The ontological force of metaphor is finally made manifest in the copula, which carries the tension between same and other as well as between actuality and potentiality. The paradox of the metaphorical

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[41]Aristotle's theory of *mimêsis* is exemplary here. *Mimêsis* in *Poetics* is not the faithful copy of nature but a representation of essential traits of that which is human in a way that elevates and ennobles it. *Muthos* (plot) is a constituent element of the tragic tale and has a similar function with what Ricoeur calls the sense of the text. *Muthos* is not just a "rearrangement of human action into a more coherent form, but a structuring that elevates this action." Thus *muthos* structures reality in a comprehensible and knowable form that also points to new possibilities of action. *Muthos* preserves reference to reality but also refigures it through creation, *poiesis*: it is both mimetic and metaphorical. *Mimêsis* was already related to metaphor by Aristotle, who attributed to both the same structure of "setting before the eyes" and of creative representation. The notion of *mimêsis* as creative or metaphorical imitation can manifest the power of literature to redescribe reality and to raise metaphorical reference to the enterprise of "saying what is". For Ricoeur this is the *ontological* function of metaphorical discourse. The notions of *mimêsis* and *muthos* will be extensively discussed in relation to narrative in the third chapter.

[42]Literature then becomes a heuristic discourse with cognitive import. It is a medium of describing reality and moreover describing it anew. In this sense, the function of literature is not that different from that of epistemological models. According to Max Black, theoretical models constitute a new language or idiom that provides a better known and controllable field, on which new hypotheses and new relations can be tried out. In the same way with productive imagination, scientific imagination holds the power to make new connections by verbal means. The perception of new connections on the linguistic plane extends scientific language and thus enables new descriptions of reality. Fictional and scientific discourses are both engendered by *linguistic imagination*. They both endeavour to master meaning by relating it to different referents and to investigate new referents by describing them in inventive ways. Scientific discourse claims a place in the enterprise of stating "*what is*", while fiction maintains the paradoxical character of referring to what "somehow" is and at the same time is not, thus keeping potentiality and actuality together. However, if scientific discourse depends, as Black and Ricoeur argue, on heuristic devices in order to designate reality more precisely, then well established distinctions like discovery and creation, and fact and fiction are shaken. Ricoeur, however, is far from identifying poetic with scientific discourse. What he wants to demonstrate is, on the one hand, the ontological function of the former and, on the other, a lack of thematisation and clarification of the presuppositions and operative concepts of the latter.

copula, which is both relational and existential, points to a tensional truth: what *being* could reveal itself to be.

If metaphor is the paradigm of creativity in language, best displayed in literary discourse, with cognitive and referential functions and, most importantly, with ontological import, then is the distinction between the so-called cognitive or factual and emotive or fictional discourses still valid? And if the metaphorical process, such as described by Ricoeur, is the general "formula" for the creation of new meaning and for concept formation, then are discourses metaphorically engendered? Indeed, are they all under the rule of metaphor?

In the eighth study of *The Rule of Metaphor*, which bears the title "Metaphor and Philosophical Discourse", Ricoeur's argument reaches its utmost formulation and is elucidated with regard to two "extreme" discourses, poetry and philosophy.[43] If poetry carries the semantic dynamism of metaphor to its extreme, it is philosophy that ultimately comes to reflect upon it, to have the "final" word. As was elaborated above, metaphor is a general process for the production of new meaning that operates in, expands and indeed (re)generates all discourses, including philosophy. However, Ricoeur is far from considering that all discourses, and philosophy in particular, are metaphorical or secondary to metaphor. Metaphor springs forth at the moment when two separate semantic and referential fields collide and interact, a procedure called predicative assimilation. Yet, this implies the prior constitution of the semantic fields in question. For Ricoeur, discourses have a relative autonomy without being radically heterogeneous, since they interrelate and interact. He pleads for a "relative pluralism of forms and levels of discourse" that would be regulated and sustained by a "principle of *discontinuity*".[44] Ricoeur is particularly interested in securing the *autonomy* of philosophical or speculative discourse,[45] since it is through the

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[43] We will not get into Ricoeur's discussion of Aristotle's doctrine of the analogical unity of the multiple meanings of being and its later reformulation by onto-theological discourse. Ricoeur, in order to show the discontinuity of philosophy and poetry, refers back to Aristotle's exemplary project to establishing an order for the multiple ways being is said in the philosophical logos, without reducing it to chance equivocity (poetry) or to absolute univocity (generic unity), by means of a concept of analogy that is disengaged from that of metaphor and is understood instead as an order of polysemy referred to a first term (*pros hen*).

[44] Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, pp. 257-8.

[45] Ricoeur defines speculative discourse as "the discourse that establishes the primary notions, the principles, that articulate primordially the space of the concept." It is what founds the discontinuity of all modes and levels of discourse by structuring the conceptual space in which

philosophical act that the conceptual premises and the principles of identification and differentiation, as well as that of interaction, can be established. Consequently, the discourse on metaphor would not be possible if it were not inscribed in the conceptual space set up by speculation.

According to Ricoeur, even though philosophy draws on metaphorical potential, the philosophical act precedes the metaphorical one. Philosophical discourse, for Ricoeur, aims at making the implicit ontology that underlies all discourses explicit. Thus, it is considered first in the order of grounding. Philosophy is structured and thematised around the question of being. Through an *epoché* it elevates the primordial experience of *belonging* that all discourses articulate to the enterprise of saying "*what is*". When a word is transposed into the philosophical field, it enters into a relation of tension and interaction with an already established rigorous conceptual order. By the end of the metaphorical process a new concept is formed and set up in a network of philosophemes given in advance. According to Ricoeur, the discursive production of new pertinence has a particular function in philosophy. The establishing of a new semantic value does not coincide with concept formation. The "spark" of imagination that renovates discourse and adds new perceptions of reality cannot reach the clarity of the concept but in speculative discourse. We said earlier that the semantics of discourse primarily considers the referential function of language. Yet this function is only thought as such or reflected upon by speculative discourse, in which "language becomes aware of itself in the self-articulation of the being which it is about."[46] *Here metaphorical dynamism encounters its limit.* The schematic potential of double meaning and split reference must here subdue to the horizon of speculative *logos* constituted in advance and conform to the requirements of the concept.

Ricoeur seems to want to at all costs purify philosophy from metaphorical ambiguity. Metaphor finds its limit when it is taken up by interpretation, a composite discourse that mediates between the dynamism of meaning and the clarity of the concept:

"Interpretation is the work of concepts. It cannot help but be the work of elucidation, in the Husserlian sense of the word, and consequently a struggle for univocity. Whereas the

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metaphorically engendered meaning comes to be inscribed. Therefore, the speculative is the condition of the conceptual and "first" discourse in the order of grounding. Ibid., p. 300.

[46] Ibid., p. 304.

metaphorical utterance leaves the second sense in suspension, while its reference continues to have no direct presentation, interpretation is necessarily a rationalisation that at its limit eliminates the experience that comes to language through the metaphorical process."[47]

Metaphor, by bringing a new experience to language, poses the demand of "thinking more". However, at the conceptual level where this demand attains its ultimate articulation, it must also comply with the rules of speculation, which works by its own necessity. This mediation or exchange between metaphor and philosophy is regulated by the idea of univocity, which draws a limit between the two. As we said in the beginning, Ricoeur's hermeneutics does not prefigure an ultimate or totalised horizon of meaning. It is not a dialectics of absolute knowledge. However, it operates along the lines of synthetic dialectics and the demand for univocity, even if this cannot be finally attained. The hermeneutics of Ricoeur seeks to explore our primordial experience of belonging and bring it to the level of conceptual understanding, a task never to be completed, since it is itself rooted in and structured by the irreducible fact of belonging. The critical moment of conceptual thinking is an instant of distanciation that is initiated by metaphor, which displays most forcefully its dynamism in the articulation of the limit experience of poetry. Poetry may be the paradigm of the dialectic of belonging and distanciation but it is speculative thought that takes it up and "carries it to the highest point of reflection." Finally,

"What is given to thought in this way by the 'tensional' truth of poetry is the most primordial, most hidden dialectic –the dialectic that reigns between the experience of belonging as a whole and the power of distanciation that opens up the space of speculative thought."[48]

Metaphor, as Ricoeur describes it, is a short-lived event of discourse that enables and registers a dialectical movement from a literal meaning to another that is newly established. In the end, semantic dynamism is subordinated to *the rule of the proper*, to an economy of the same. Living metaphor eventually dies by being incorporated into what originally gave rise to it, by ceasing to be a novelty. The death or catastrophe of metaphor is not without gain, since it is what brings about the extension and deepening of our understanding of the world and of ourselves in it. The return of metaphor to the literal and its effacement in it all along presupposed a firm distinction between the two, if only to the extent they are inscribed as regulative concepts in the internal dialectic of meaning. However, Ricoeur's theory of metaphor for all its breadth, detail and vigour falls short of addressing the heart of the matter:

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[47] Ibid., p. 302.
[48] Ibid., p. 313.

what allows for the delineation of literal and metaphorical meaning in the first place and whether there is room for a nondialectical approach to metaphor.

As will be argued in the next chapter, the dialectical conceptualisation of metaphor rests upon the same premises that formulate the oppositional and hierarchical pairing of *Oikos* and travel. The hermeneutics of metaphor and travel subdue to a logic of derivation and recuperation that necessarily presupposes an original, familiar and undivided point of departure, literalness or the house, which already limits and structures the conceptual space within which metaphor and travel move and operate. It is this logic that will be put to the test by the deconstructive challenge of the premises of metaphor.

Jacques Derrida: Leaving Metaphor

"Metaphor" is a term that often appears in Derrida's works. How does then such an enduring and persistent notion justify the title of this section, "Leaving Metaphor"? In "White Mythology" and elsewhere, Derrida criticises a classical concept of metaphor defined as the oppositional counterpart to that of literal or proper meaning.[49] His aim is to radically reinscribe these notions and explode their primary metaphysical partition. For Derrida, metaphor is neither just a deviation from a proper meaning, nor the creative force of language that opens up hidden yet already present potentialities. Such definitions necessarily imply the assumption of a rigorous demarcation between literal and metaphorical meaning. Derrida wants to explore the conditions of possibility of such a distinction, which is too problematic to be taken for granted. Proper meaning and metaphor are not understood as pregiven or separate values, but rather emerge as effects of the movement of meaning, which resists totalisation and division into clear-cut typologies. Accordingly, all oppositional pairs which correspond to the kernel distinction of proper and metaphor, like *logos* and *muthos*, philosophy and literature, fact and fiction begin to blur. Paul Ricoeur also puts into question such delimitations but only in order to reinstate in the end the authority and priority of proper meaning. Metaphor is, to him, a necessary detour submitted to the dialectical movement of the proper. This hierarchisation is precisely

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[49] Derrida, Jacques, "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy" in *Margins of Philosophy*, translated by Alan Bass, London, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982, "The Retrait of

what Derrida puts in question not simply by reversing but disrupting both concepts of proper and metaphor. Metaphor as such *withdraws* and in withdrawing its effects become all the more pervasive. Metaphor or rather *metaphoricity* is generalised to the extent that it traverses all meaning as its irreducible condition. No proper meaning precedes it and no teleology governs it. This, however, does not amount to a reversal of the hierarchy of properness over metaphor. What is called metaphoricity or *quasi-metaphor* is an essential semantic structure that gives the condition of both proper and metaphorical meaning in the traditional sense. But it also gives the possibility of reinscribing them as irreducible effects or traces of a structure that, as we shall see, is broken and disseminated from the start.

Before attempting to reconstruct the argument of "White Mythology", it is useful to consider some of Derrida's major notions related to the theme of metaphor. With respect to the aim of this chapter, it would be more helpful to consider these in relation to Ricoeur's theoretical premises, also with the purpose of establishing a context for the debate that took place between them. A good starting point would be the consideration of two notions inextricably related to that of metaphor: *polysemy* and *dissemination*. We saw that in Ricoeur, polysemy is a dialectical counterpart of metaphor, a structure which supports and enables the metaphorical process and which is, in turn, altered and reformulated by metaphor. Polysemy is an order that gathers together the multiplicity of meanings around a semantic kernel, resisting, in this way, absolute dissemination. Polysemy's function is that of establishing an economy of meaning regulated by the ideal of univocity and re-appropriation. This is why, despite being a description of semantic multiplicity and ambiguity, it necessarily implies a pregiven distinction between proper and metaphorical meaning. To this notion Derrida opposes that of dissemination. Dissemination points to the irreducible ambiguity of language, to the radical and essential undecidability of meaning that resists assimilation by and reduction to a fixed semantic order. Dissemination, however, does not purport the loss of meaning to absolute indeterminacy and confusion. Undecidability always implies the drive towards a decision, however, a decision which, in being constantly deferred and delayed, promises more meaning. What is at stake with dissemination is not the unbounded free play of meaning but a

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Metaphor" translated by Frieda Gardner, Biodun Iginla, Richard Madden, and William West, in *Enclitic*, vol. 2, no. 2, Fall 1978, University of Minnesota.

relative indeterminacy, which is nothing but *determinability*,[50] a certain non-identity of meaning, which does not preclude sameness altogether but rather challenges the idea of the primacy of a semantic core. Now, dissemination does not completely denounce polysemy but reinscribes it in a way that radically solicits its conceptual premises, that is, the values of the proper and metaphor. Dissemination is an *irreducible polysemy*, since it does not refer everything to a first term or an order of meaning, though, as will be shown, it is not without a certain structure.

To be sure, the difference between Ricoeur and Derrida is not a matter of choice between absolute univocity and equivocity. Ricoeur evokes the regulative notion of polysemy in order to explain the diversity and multiplicity of the ways *Being* is said and at the same time to dispense with the danger of absolute dispersal. What he finally maintains is the idea of relative univocity. The dialectic of polysemy and metaphor becomes part of the mediation between a lost or estranged immediacy (the unreflective experience of belonging) and the projected unity of the horizon of meaning. Metaphor is a necessary detour from proper meaning always in view of re-appropriation, a journey that makes a profit out of its investment by reserving and interiorising everything, that creates a continuous and homogeneous space expanding towards the ever receding horizon. Derrida, far from taking the side of absolute equivocity (for meaning would not exist –and it certainly does– if it were not supported by a structure of sameness, that is, of idealising repetition), refers to semantic movement not as mediation between an origin and an end but as an unprecedented and irreducible structure, as a sheaf of forces and differences, that precisely resists dialecticising and appropriation. There might as well be a chance that the expenditure of meaning delivers unforeseeable effects that are beyond accountability and calculability, that identity cannot assimilate difference without a remainder, that the surplus of meaning produced by metaphor is all the more pervasive precisely where it is not intelligible. And these, according to Derrida, are not accidents befalling the course of language but rather pertain to its very condition of possibility.

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[50] To sustain that meaning manifests a certain indeterminacy is not to uphold that it is not determined in the specific and singular instances it occurs. It is rather overdetermined and reduced to contextual explications, which, however, can always be subverted by its multiple interpretative potential. This is to say that meaning is always and necessarily *determinable* and this precisely constitutes its force of self-disruption and its structure of *overflowing* every particular instance and context.

For Ricoeur, language comes to reflect an experience prior to it, although experience already disposes a "lingual condition" (*Sprachlichkeit*) or else "expressibility".[51] This "lingual dimension" is, however, subordinated to the structure of experience that gives the ontological condition of language. There is language because there is something to be said in the first place. It is true that before one thinks or speaks one is already in the world. The primordial fact of belonging is not contested here. What is however questioned is a certain priority given by Ricoeur to experience with regard to what he calls the "lingual condition". One could relate the latter with what Derrida calls "writing" in order to refer to the signifying structures that precisely make experience possible. For Derrida, language and thought do not come to supplement or represent an immediate and unreflective experience of the world. Experience is not the *a priori* condition and origin of language and neither is language a mediation or modification of a lived-present and its unfolding and fulfilment in self-reflection. Experience, for Derrida, is always the experience of meaning. It has thus a *phenomenological presupposition*. Something must make itself manifest to someone for an experience to take place. The notion of experience has always implied the unity of a present: a self-present consciousness intending a present object or situation at a given moment. But experience is nothing outside meaning (outside signification) and, since the latter emerges from the interplay of differences, it constantly divides and defers everything it is associated with, the signifying intention, the intended object, the context, in short, everything that is supposed to confer on experience unity. In other words, experience is always the experience of difference or *différance*. However, différance from what?

Before oppositions and hierarchies such as empirical/transcendental, sensible/intelligible, object/subject and all couples that organise metaphysical thought were formed, an "older" difference must have opened a space of structural possibilities that gave the condition for metaphysical reduction to oppositional thought, however, without being itself reduced to it: the space of *différance.* This space is the opening up of consciousness to the world, an unprecedented opening that constitutes them both, what structures the world as a world *for* consciousness. This pouring or movement of an "interior" (consciousness) towards an "exterior" (world) is not an event that once took place bringing together previously constituted entities.

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[51] Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, p. 115.

Consciousness and the world are not posited one against the other engaging in a relation of passivity or activity. Before such a distinction becomes thinkable there must have been something like a more originary *passivity* that marks the advent of the other, "the opening of the first exteriority in general". And this again does not refer to an event but rather points to a structural law, to an unrepresentable and irretrievable "absolute past" that never was present as such. One cannot recall the first time one thought or said "I" or the first time something made sense. The impossibility of a first time, of the inauguration of identity, is what gives the very condition of signification as relation to the other, that is, as the *trace* of an "originary difference" before identity. For Derrida, everything begins with the trace, which is neither a thing nor a substance, which is nothing present in itself but still gives the paradoxical condition of meaning.

Différance points to the essentially *aporetic* structure of language, which gives at once the possibility and impossibility of meaning, its *double bind*: the impossibility of an ever same, adequate, identical and fully present meaning and at the same time the possibility of meaning as a "weave of differences", a chain of *traces* with no unified origin or *telos*. What is referred to here is the movement of signification which, rather than the teleological unfolding of meaning, is a play of marks or traces, that is, of nonpresent elements that forbid meaning ever to gather and reserve itself in the immediacy and self-containment of a present instant. What comes to language, what lends itself to signification, never comes to it as such, as a whole. Signification emerges as a process of *temporalisation* (and *spacing*, as we shall see in the next chapter) which, rather than being a linear succession of present moments, a sequence of signs, is a movement that divides everything it involves in and of itself, since each of its elements is related to and marked by something other than itself, that is, the past and future elements within the infinite chain of traces. The trace is the form and structural necessity of meaning that lets everything signify (a thing, an idea, a subject) on the condition that it does not assemble itself in a present and available meaning. What comes together in the structure of the trace is not already constituted elements and, hence, differences. The trace, where the relationship with the other is marked, is rather the movement of production of difference, of differences that are not preceded by identity but perpetually defer it from coming together as such. The movement of meaning is reinscribed as the movement of *différance*, a structure of difference, deferral, and delay.

If meaning emerges out of a movement, in other words, from instability, mediacy, mediation, from the middle and the in-between, then movement must be its nonsimple, divided and multiple origin. That is to say, meaning has no origin, no pure and simple *archē* or absolute beginning. It has always already begun and begun as trace. What allows us then to have the idea of origin and of *telos*, if these never were? The movement of the trace where everything is at stake is not without a certain rhythm or structure. A linguistic sign, oral or written, must have a certain self-identity in order to be recognisable and repeatable. But this relative identity is not guaranteed by the unity of a signified, a semantic intention, a referent or the context of communication that the sign comes to represent or is attached to. A sign or mark must be always able to disengage itself from all these in order to be meaningful in other events of language. This capacity of having a signifying function that overflows any given context, that is, of signifying in an infinite number of contexts, divides the sign in and of itself and reinscribes it in a structure of self-effacement that is precisely the effect of its repeatability and iterability. Iterability always implies *alterability*.[52] The mark or trace is repeated always as other, never itself as such. And this self-effacing in repetition is what makes it possible; it is its very condition of possibility. The structure of iterability is more manifest in the case of the written sign or mark, which by definition is instituted by its capacity of disengagement from its context of inscription. Derrida shows that this trait of the written sign is equally pertinent to all forms of signs. "Writing" is generalised as the condition for all signification beyond the narrow sense of inscription. The phonic sign thus becomes a *grapheme*, at once the condition of possibility and impossibility of identity:

> "Why is this identity paradoxically the division or dissociation of itself, which will make of this phonic sign a grapheme? Because this unity of the signifying form only constitutes itself by virtue of its iterability, by the possibility of its being repeated in the absence not only of its 'referent,' which is self-evident, but in the absence of a determinate signified or of the intention of actual signification, as well as of all intention of present communication. This structural possibility of being weaned from the referent or from the signified (hence from communication and from its context) seems to me to make every mark, included those which are oral, a grapheme in general; which is to say, as we have seen, the nonpresent *remainder* [*restance*] of a differential mark cut off from its putative 'production' or origin. And I shall even extend this law to all 'experience' in general if it is conceded that there is no experience consisting of *pure* presence but only of chains of differential marks."[53]

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[52] As Derrida points out *iter* probably comes from *itara*, which means *other* in Sanskrit. "Signature Event Context", translated by Alan Bass, in *Limited Inc*. Evanston, IL, Northwestern University Press, 1988, p. 7.

[53] Ibid., p. 10.

The structural law of iterability is what gives meaning its ideal dimension. Linguistic elements must have at least some degree of ideality in order to be repeatable and recognisable. However, this ideality is not at the origin of meaning as a transcendental idea or principle, as a presence of any kind (in the form of consciousness or not). It is rather the effect of idealisation, a certain residue of sameness *in*, *through*, and *in view* of repetition and alteration. Moreover this effect of sameness is what gives the condition for every form of ideality: presence, essence, truth, origin, telos, the transcendental, the proper and so forth and everything that is thought in relation and opposition to them. Thus the idea of origin is something added to meaning *post factum*, a *prosthesis*. No retrospection or genealogy can ever reach and reconstitute what was always already a trace. The thought of the trace, however, does not amount to a relativism, scepticism or nihilism. Derrida does not set out to undo the concept of truth or ideality, to leave them behind for better or worse. What he challenges is the idea of purity and unity.[54] Iterability is the very condition of idealisation, without which there would be no meaning. But iterability is at once "identificatory" and "altering".[55] If it were not so there would be no history. It is what creates identity and difference; it broaches and breaches. The concepts of iterability and idealisation emerge as "conceptualisations" of a structural law, which cannot assemble or present itself as such but lies as the general condition of every singular event of meaning. And this is a positive condition, "the promise at the origin of history". It enables one to think generality and singularity, concept and event at once.

Now Ricoeur clearly misses the mark when he remarks that Derrida holds that "writing has a root distinct from speech and that this foundation has been misunderstood due to our having paid excessive attention to speech, its voice, its *logos*", thus overlooking "the groundings of both modes of the actualisation of

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[54] "The concept of iterability itself, like all concepts that form or deform themselves in its wake, is an ideal concept, to be sure, but also the concept that marks the essential and ideal limit of all pure idealisation, the ideal concept of the limit of all idealisation, and not the concept of nonideality." Derrida, *Limited Inc*, p. 119.

[55] "The concept of iterability is this singular concept that renders possible the silhouette of ideality, and hence of the concept, and hence of all distinction, of all conceptual opposition. But it is also the concept that, *at the same time*, with the same stroke marks the limit of idealisation and of conceptualisation: 'concept' or quasi-concept of concept in its conceptualisable relation to the nonconcept." Ibid. Iterability is the concept of concept formation and also of the impurity of the concept. Thus, itself only to an extent conceptualisable, is a quasi-concept signifying the impossibility of complete and adequate conceptualisation.

discourse in the dialectical constitution of discourse."[56] "Writing", which Derrida uses not in the conventional but in a generalised sense, is neither a foundation nor is it opposed to speech. It precisely challenges the notion of foundation and oppositional thinking. Although Ricoeur refers to writing as the paradigm of distanciation and as the condition for the projection of a "world" of new possibilities,[57] he stays close to the tradition that privileges speech over writing, what Derrida calls *logocentrism*, and renounces the latter as the dangerous and immobilising inscription of oral discourse. To be sure, Ricoeur does not simplify the relation of discourse to writing as a mere material fixation. To his mind, "writing" as the figuration of speech, a technique that forms, shapes, and deforms, has its own particular traits. But they are conditioned by and derived from the primary dialectic of event and meaning already at work in the *speech* situation. What is fixed in writing, for Ricoeur, is the meaning of a *speech event*, or else the "intentional exteriorisation", which can be described according to the dialectical traits of discourse. Meaning is what survives the event of discourse but still bears grammatical markers that point to the communicational situation. What is communicable here is the synthetic structure of discourse. Now, communicative discourse, according to Jakobson's model, to which Ricoeur subscribes, presupposes a signifying intention on the part of the addresser, the recognition of the latter by the addressee, a shared code, a given context, a message, and a medium of communication. The collaboration of all these "factors" with the end of communication, that is, an intersubjective exchange, is what is called by Austin "total speech act". Thus discourse is realised as a *dialogic event*. Hermeneutics begins when dialogue ends, when the animating intention of communication is no longer present and understanding assumes the task of overcoming distance and estrangement. This task, which is imposed by writing, is necessarily pursued within a horizon of communication and aims at the reactivation of the text in a *quasi-dialogical event*, which is not the reanimation of a writer's intention by means of empathy, but the realisation of the text as a discursive event. The "intentional exteriorisation" (the intention to mean is always an exteriorisation), which could also be the interpretive labour of the reader, is the *organising centre of discourse*. It is also what reduces the

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[56] Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, p. 26.
[57] "Thanks to writing, man and only man has a world and not a situation." Ibid., p. 36.

danger of ambiguity by initiating the screening function of the context. "The contextual is the dialogical".[58]

Although Ricoeur at various instances refers to the generalisable traits of writing –which is after all the paradigm of distanciation and what makes explicit the essential characteristics of oral discourse– foreshadowing, in a way, the possibility of a further complication of its relation to speech,[59] he maintains *the speech event as the ideal and regulatory model of all communication*. Now, Derrida does not disclaim the theories of discourse and communication but is more attentive to the conceptual premises that these are constructed upon. What he objects to by evoking the generalisable traits of writing, is the organisation of the discursive event around the themes of *presence* and *telos* (presence of intention, of sense and referent, of unified and unifying context and horizon) that seems to disregard the very condition for the constitution of meaning and for the emergence of the event itself.[60] Iterability, by virtue of its differential structure, always and necessarily implies from the inception of meaning and even before the occurrence of the event (as its structural possibility, what is called *eventuality*[61]) that the signifying intention (*vouloir-dire*) is not at the centre of discourse but is already divided and displaced. Intentionality, however, is

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[58] Ibid., p. 17.

[59] "This affinity [between writing and the specific codes which generate the works of discourse] is so close that we might be tempted to say that even oral expressions of poetic or narrative compositions rely on processes equivalent to writing. The memorisation of epic poems, lyrical songs, parables and proverbs, and their ritual recitation tend to fix and even to freeze the form of the work in such a way that memory appears as the support of an inscription similar to that provided by external marks. In this *extended sense of inscription*, writing and the production of works of discourse according to the rules of literary composition tend to coincide without being identical processes." (my italics) Ibid., pp. 33-34.

[60] Derrida sums up the "nuclear" traits of writing: "1) the break with the horizon of communication as communication of consciousnesses or of presences and as linguistical or semantic transport of the desire to mean what one says [*vouloir-dire*]; 2) the disengagement of all writing from the semantic or hermeneutic horizons which, inasmuch as they are horizons of meaning, are riven [*crever*] by writing; 3) the necessity of disengaging from the concept of polysemics, what I have elsewhere called *dissemination*, which is also the concept of writing; 4) the disqualification or the limiting of the concept of context, whether 'real' or 'linguistic,' inasmuch as its rigorous theoretical determination as well as its empirical saturation is rendered impossible or insufficient by writing –I would like to demonstrate that the traits that can be recognised in the classical, narrowly defined concept of writing, are generalisable. They are valid not only for all orders of 'signs' and for all languages in general but moreover, beyond semio-linguistic communication, for the entire field of what philosophy would call experience, even the experience of being: the above-mentioned 'presence.' " *Limited Inc*, pp. 8-9.

[61] "What makes the (eventual) possibility possible is what makes it happen even before it happens as an actual event (in the standard sense) or what prevents such an event from ever entirely, fully taking place (in the standard sense)." Ibid., p. 57.

not an absent category from Derrida's notion of writing, something he has been charged with.[62] Iterability is not the annulment of intention but, on the contrary, its (paradoxical) condition of possibility:

> "intention or attention, directed towards something iterable which in turn determines it as being iterable, will strive or tend in vain to actualise or fulfil itself, for it cannot, by virtue of its very structure, ever achieve this goal. In no case will it be fulfilled, actualised, totally present to its object and to itself. It is divided and deported in advance, by its iterability, towards others, removed [*écartée*] in advance from itself. This re-move makes its movement possible. Which is another way of saying that if this remove is its condition of possibility, it is not an eventuality, something that befalls it here and there, by accident. Intention is a priori (at once) *différante*: differing and deferring, in its inception."[63]

Ricoeur himself speaks of the impossibility of "complete mediation" but reduces it to the dialecticisable and intelligible surplus of meaning. His theory of interaction is a dialectic of identity and difference premised on the reducibility of the latter to the former. Distanciation might be a positive condition for understanding but it is, however, a condition that in every case, if only provisionally, one has to overcome. It has to be clear that Derrida does not privilege difference over identity but speaks of the nondialectical "symploke" of the two. The chain of differences from which meaning arises would not signify if it did not imply a certain economy that by definition involves sameness. Moreover, différance does not signify merely a play of differences of the semiological order, as Ricoeur seems to think.[64] The "originary" difference or trace, or différance that makes all differences (semiological, semantic and so on) possible is that between consciousness and the world, the opening of the space within which everything comes to be inscribed as meaning, before and outside which nothing is. "The trace must be thought before the entity."[65] Hence, the ontological presupposition which Ricoeur assumes with regard to language (i.e., the priority of experience) is a derivative effect of différance ("derivative" here, however, has neither a causal nor a temporal sense; différance is *structurally* "older" than the entity as its condition of signification). That everything begins with the trace by no means suggests that there are actually no entities or beings outside the differential marks of writing. Différance refers to the structural presuppositions as well as to the predicament of our relation with the world (a sort of nonrelation too, for it constitutes

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[62] See John R. Searle's "Reiterating the Differences: A Reply to Derrida", *Glyph 2*, 1977, which is a response to Derrida's criticism of Austin in "Signature Event Context".

[63] Derrida, *Limited Inc*, p. 56.

[64] The deconstruction of the concept of the sign is at the centre of Derrida's critique of *logocentrism*. The first part of *Of Grammatology* contains an extensive critique of the concept of the "sign", which is at the heart of metaphysics.

the *relata* in constituting itself), to what makes the world *as we understand it* possible. The thought that we cannot have a direct and transparent relation with things is very old. Things, entities cannot be fully present as such in consciousness. What we can have are "representations" (let us use this word here provisionally and in quotation marks) of them and not the thing itself. Now, différance does not suggest that consciousness passively and inadequately receives imprints of the world. That would be an *empiricism* that would reduce meaning to factuality. Neither does it suggest that consciousness invests the world with meaning, being its transcendental origin. The distinction between factual and ideal, or empirical and transcendental, emerges as an effect of the historical movement of différance, which involves both ideality and factuality. A thing cannot appear as such to consciousness in the mode of disclosure. Before a certain identity is formed (idealisation) there have to be repetitive inscriptions (element of factuality), which in turn would not be possible without the identificatory (and altering) operation of iterability. Through this movement of signification *sense* (that is, both the signifying intention and the sensory) is being divided in and of itself in constituting itself.

Let us now see what the foregoing implies for the concept of metaphor. We can begin by saying that the differing and deferring (and also idealising) movement of différance is synonymous with the movement of metaphor. However, such a proposition necessitates and, of course, signals a deconstructive thinking of metaphor and of the inextricably related concept of proper meaning. To avoid confusion we first have to make "confusion" our theme and speak of the myth of the "proper name", the myth of *Babel*.[66] Babel is a name (of God, of a city, a tower and a story) and a narration. In a single stroke, God proclaiming His name "YHWH" or "Bavel", which in Hebrew sounds "confusedly" like the word "confusion," it makes the proper name possible and impossible at once. The "proper name" is the reference of a pure signifier to a single being; it must, therefore, be unique and irreplaceable. It must name a thing and name it properly letting it fully signify in all its plenitude and radiance. But as soon as there is more than one proper name and thus distinction, as

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[65] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 47.

[66] Babel, "telling at least of the inadequation of one tongue to another, of one place in the encyclopedia to another, of language to itself and to meaning, and so forth, it also tells of the need for figuration, for myth, for tropes, for twists and turns, for translation inadequate to compensate for that which multiplicity denies us." Derrida, Jacques, "Des Tours de Babel",

soon as the proper name receives determinations and attributes, it is drawn into the differential drift of language. Hence, it becomes impure and improper, impossible as such. However, Derrida asks, what would be a language without proper names, without the possibility of nomination and appellation?

> Language presupposes and at the same time renders "proper names" impossible. They belong without actually belonging to it. Let us try to be clearer. As we speak I want to make myself understood (the "I" is no less problematic than the "we", insofar as it implies an intentionality present to itself and outside the differential marks of language) and also to understand. In other words, to create a common idiom with my interlocutor. Although I acknowledge that my language is singular and idiomatic (as it must also be general and communicable), that there can be no transparent communication and that misunderstanding is always and essentially possible, I necessarily presuppose that a thing like a common idiom should exist. Otherwise, I would not open my mouth. Even though, there is no pure idiom that would enable immediacy and transparency in communication, the possibility of an ideal communicative situation is presupposed. Language is in/on the condition of the promise of immediacy and purity, even if such a thing is impossible.[67]

Likewise, the pure signifier of a unique signified and referent, that is, the proper name, is still promised (notwithstanding that this promise at times delivers the most dangerous and colonising effects). It has to be promised for there to be a language, though it can never belong to language as such. It belongs to it on the condition that it is always *almost* translated into language by becoming a common noun, by being *interpreted* by its semantic equivalent and by assuming conceptual generality.[68] One should remember that the proper name of God in the myth of Babel already signifies "confusion". It is already a common noun.[69] That is to say, there is

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translated by Joseph F. Graham, in *Difference in Translation*, edited by Joseph F. Graham, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1985, p. 165.

[67] "It is not possible to speak outside this promise that gives *a* language, the uniqueness of the idiom, but only by promising to give it." Derrida, Jacques, *Monolinguism of the Other or The Prosthesis of Origin*, translated by Patrick Mensah, Stanford, California, Stanford University Press, 1998, pp. 66-68.

[68] Derrida, "Des Tours de Babel", p. 172.

[69] That the proper name of God becomes a common noun is not an argument for the non-existence of God. It rather means that there can be no ideality outside language that the latter in turn would come to represent and that the name of God –and accordingly all proof of His existence, for "God, Himself, should certainly exist"- is already drawn "into a graphematic drift [*dérive*] that excludes (for instance) any decision as to whether God is more than the

no (original or translatable) proper name and no noun (translation) but rather the process of the *becoming-noun-of-the-proper-name*. Insofar as the noun is considered a generalisation or abstraction of the proper name (the presumed unity of a singular and unique signifier-signified that does not even necessitate language in order to signify, that is *on* the condition of its *self-erasure* before the thing itself), it has no traceable or recoverable origin, since, what is posited as its origin, that is, the proper name, is *a priori* impossible due to its enmeshing in the graphematic drift of language. What endures is the function or promise of the proper name as the *archē* and *telos* of language. The possibility of the common noun rests upon the condition of translatability from a singular and self-transparent idiom to a general one. But again what endures is the condition or imperative of translatability and not the event of a translation that once took place, for its posited source idiom never was; it never existed before generality. But generality also points to the possibility of a universal idiom, of the reduction by means of translation to a universal singularity. Translation in its metaphysical designation presupposes the existence of a *transcendental signified*, that is, an independent sense that can detach itself from its phonetic element and conditions of inscription and that can thus *transcend* the limits of a single idiom. Translation, to be sure, can never achieve adequacy and full correspondence of meanings but it is still on the condition of this (im)possibility.[70] Since universal singularity is impossible, even though it is still pointed to, what finally endures is the movement of the *becoming-noun-of-the-proper-name* (a movement without origin or

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name of God, whether the 'name of God' refers to God or to the name of God, whether it signifies 'normally' or 'cites,' etc., God being here, *qua* writing." It speaks of the relation of the name and of reference to writing, which is not opposed to God or to existence in general; it is "outside the alternative of existence and non-existence." Derrida, *Limited Inc*, pp. 82-83.

[70] We are here referring to the double bind of translation, which gives at once its paradoxical condition of possibility and impossibility. The classical philosopheme of translation posits the imperative and possibility of translatability, that is, the possibility of adequacy between linguistic idioms. If it were not so, translation would be unthinkable. However, its general aporetic structure, which exceeds the restricted concept of translation, also posits the prohibition of a complete and adequate translation, and thus gives the imperative of infinite translation, because if adequate translation were possible this would put an end to the signifying movement and differential structure of language that would then achieve transparency. The end of translation, both in the sense of teleology and prohibition, would presuppose an originary or source idiom, that is, an absolute and recoverable source of meaning, to which translation would point back. But since such an idiom never existed, since there are only languages and not *a* language (this is to say that the concept of *a* language emerges out of the plurality of languages and, more importantly, out of their translatability). what comes structurally first is not the source idiom but paradoxically *translatability*, the impossible promise of *a* language out of the multiplicity of target idioms. Insofar as there is no

telos), that is, translation as an infinite task. To return to the myth of Babel, when God "imposes and opposes" his name to the people of *Shem*, he inflicts *dispersal* and the *imperative* for perpetual translation. And in a stroke he makes translation both a necessary and impossible task, a "necessity *as* impossibility".[71] There can be no end to translation as there is no original translation of something like a first and originary language, a proper idiom to be adequately rendered. The story of Babel, to which Derrida comes back again and again, does not recount an inaugural event. It is a myth about the origin of language as dispersal (there are always already languages before *a* language becomes thinkable) that lets the silhouette of an aporetic law flicker: the untranslatable translatability of the proper name.

So if the proper name can be part of language only through its enmeshing in the differential chain, one can say that there is no proper name but only metaphors. Accordingly, metaphor is to be inscribed anew as it is no longer understood as a single tropic force overtaking the proper. This gesture can take effect through a reconsideration of the philosophical concept of metaphor and the place it holds in philosophical discourse. The problematic thus must be dealt with on the level of its essential and conceptual premises. Derrida in "White Mythology" proposes a deconstructive critique of the classical concept of metaphor and of the prominent philosophical tradition that reduces philosophical concepts to a genealogy of metaphors. His departs from all theories, Ricoeur's is no exception, which construct *metaphorics* on ready-made metaphysical oppositions. Derrida exposes the frailness and the fundamental impossibility of such a project, i.e., the construction of a metaphorics which would exhaustively define metaphor. Derrida poses straight away

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absolute source or target idiom but only idioms, which are both translatable and untranslatable (in an absolute sense), translation becomes an impossibility *qua* necessity.

[71] "In seeking to 'make a name for themselves,' to found at the same time a universal tongue and a unique genealogy, the Semites want to bring the world to reason, and this reason can signify simultaneously a colonial violence (since they would thus universalise their idiom) and a peaceful transparency of the human community. Inversely, when God imposes and opposes his name, he ruptures the rational transparency but interrupts also the colonial violence or the linguistic imperialism. He destines them to translation, he subjects them to the law of translation both necessary and impossible; in a stroke with his translatable-untranslatable name he delivers a universal reason (it will no longer be subject to the rule of a particular nation), but he simultaneously limits its very universality: forbidden transparency, impossible univocity. Translation becomes law, duty and debt, but the debt one can no longer discharge. Such insolvency is found marked in the very name of Babel: which at once translates and does not translate itself, belongs without belonging to a language and indebts itself to itself for an insolvent debt, to itself as if other. Such would be the Babelian performance." Derrida, "Des Tours de Babel", pp. 174-175.

the problematic and asks to what extent and in what form is metaphor implicated in the text of philosophy. He will establish that metaphor involves the "usage of philosophical language in its entirety, nothing less than the usage of so-called natural language in philosophical discourse, that is, the usage of natural language as philosophical language"[72]. The term *usage* here has a double delineation which, Derrida in order to better demonstrate, substitutes with the term *usure*, which bears both the meanings of wearing out, using up, loss, and of usury, reserving, profit. Metaphor is always caught in this juncture. *Usure* constitutes the very history and structure of the philosophical metaphor. Metaphor traditionally balances itself between the idea of profit and loss of meaning. It signals the loss of properness but at the same time an interest in re-appropriation. However, Derrida's notion of *usure* does not signify gradual wearing out or accumulation but the loss of proper meaning as origin and *telos* of language. Everything thereby signifies in "relation to this loss of meaning", a relation that engenders traces of meaning or, if one is allowed to say, effects of nonmeaning.

Derrida's critique of the classical concept of metaphor illustrates the limits of that philosophical tradition that designates philosophical discourse as a trajectory of "tropic energy." This tradition, which is called *artistic*, attempts to reveal the rhetoric of philosophical discourse in view of recovering a "natural" language unaffected by tropological deviation. For instance, Nietzsche asks:

> "What then is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonymics, anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which became poetically and rhetorically intensified, metamorphosed, adorned, and after long usage, seem to a nation fixed, canonic and binding; *truths are illusions of which one has forgotten that they are illusions*; *worn out metaphors* which have become powerless to affect the *senses*, coins which have their obverse effaced and now are no longer of account as coins but merely as metal."[73]

This quotation recapitulates the basic premises of metaphorology. Accordingly, philosophy not only consists of metaphors that have become worn out and distant from their sensory origin, but has forgotten its own tropological formation. The classical example of the coin of which the *exergue*[74] is effaced and, hence, the value inestimable, corresponds to the gradual erosion of the primary, "natural" meaning and its metaphorical elevation to an abstract, spiritual level.

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[72] Derrida, "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy", p. 209.
[73] Nietzsche, Friedrich, quoted in "White Mythology", p. 217.

According to the philosophical tradition under consideration, the primary, "true", literal meaning of a philosophical concept can be retrieved through the practice of *etymologism*. This project articulates the *longing* of metaphysics for an *archē*, the origin of meaning,[75] which is understood as a natural language attached to physical, sensible objects. So metaphor here maintains a "continuist presupposition," since it involves a gradual wearing away, and a "symbolist stand," since its genealogy leads back to the symbol, which still maintains a relation of resemblance and natural affinity to the physical object.[76]

So behind and under philosophical logos lies the secret narrative of metaphor, the myth of its own creation. Derrida sums up:

> "Metaphysics –the white mythology which reassembles and reflects the culture of the West: the white man takes his own mythology, Indo-European mythology, his own *logos*, that is the *mythos* of his idiom, for the universal form of that he must still wish to call Reason,"

and further on,

> "White mythology–metaphysics has erased within itself the fabulous scene that has produced it, the scene that nevertheless remains active and stirring, inscribed in white ink, an invisible design covered over in the palimpsest."[77]

Derrida proceeds to a critique of the metaphorology of philosophy, that is, the general taxonomy of philosophical metaphors, and shows its structural impossibility. He contends that the tropological figuration of philosophical logos is not something that befalls a pure and originary language that ought to be reinstated but it is rather already inscribed in the very possibility of philosophy. Metaphor belongs to the structuration of philosophical discourse, in fact of any discourse. Any attempt to

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[74] *Exergue*, from the Greek *ex-ergon*, means literally "outside the work" and is used in the sense of the inscription on the surface of coins as well as of epigraph. *Exergue* is also the title of the first part of "White Mythology".

[75] It must be said that Nietzsche on whom we drew for illustrative purposes differentiates himself on this point. Nietzsche discloses the tropological construction of philosophy but leaves no room for metaphysical nostalgia.

[76] It is useful to recall here the distinction between the concept of the "sign" and that of the "symbol". Whereas the symbol functions as a tripartite and natural unity of the thing-image-idea, the sign is the unity of a signified and a signifier that has broken free from the referent; it is instituted, unmotivated and arbitrary. Saussure excludes the symbol from the domain of semiology. The sign can thus be defined as a symbol which has become unmotivated. Derrida's notion of the trace disrupts the unity of signifier/signified. There is not prior symbol or sign that then became unmotivated but only a process of becoming that allowed these to signify as effects of the trace: "Without referring back to a 'nature', the immotivation of the trace has always *become*. In fact, there is no unmotivated trace: the trace is indefinitely its own becoming-unmotivated. In Saussurian language, what Saussure does not say would have to be said: there is neither symbol nor sign but a becoming-sign of the symbol." Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 47.

define the philosophical field by means of the concept of metaphor would be doomed to failure as it would extract the definition from that which it aims at defining. As Derrida maintains, metaphor remains a classical philosopheme, a metaphysical concept:

> "Metaphor has been issued from a network of philosophemes which themselves correspond to tropes or to figures, and these philosophemes are contemporaneous to or in systematic solidarity with these tropes or figures."[78]

So the philosophical concept of metaphor cannot define or master that from which it is engendered. Each time metaphor is taken up to define the totality of the philosophical field, it cannot help but carry with it a circuit of philosophemes, with which it is essentially associated. Furthermore, being extracted from the very field it aims at defining, the concept of metaphor would deprive it of at least one of its concepts, that of metaphor. The field would contain a *metaphor less*. On the other hand, the definition of the philosophical field would also include a *metaphor more*, which would not be accounted for: the metaphor that produced the very concept of metaphor, since like all philosophemes metaphor should be metaphorically constituted. *Plus de metaphore*: "more metaphor" and "no more metaphor". The "extra turn of speech" becomes the "missing turn of speech" and the philosophical field is never saturated.[79]

According to Derrida, a project of metaphorics would involve a "philosophical rhetoric in the service of an autonomous theory constituted before and outside its own language, manipulating its tropes like tools."[80] So metaphorics would be a derivative discourse borrowing its conceptual categories from philosophy (thus being too philosophical and too rhetorical to start with) and constituted on the assumption that the latter can be separated from and discharged of its tropic figuration. This separation and hierarchy is precisely what Derrida puts into question. As he points out, philosophical concepts like *theoria*, *eidos*, *logos*, *archē*, which are considered primary and foundational philosophemes, are themselves " 'archaic' tropes," metaphors,[81] which thereby disclaim any possibility of a metaphor-free philosophical discourse or rhetorics. What has been imagined and longed for by

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[77] Derrida, 'White Mythology", p. 213.
[78] Ibid., p. 219.
[79] Ibid., p. 220.
[80] Ibid., p. 224.
[81] For example, *theoria* and *eidos* derive from the Greek verb *oran* which means *to see*, and are, therefore, optic metaphors.

metaphysics as a "natural" language is already charged with metaphor. The assumed "sensuous kernel" of metaphor, that is, its original attachment to the natural object, appears to be determined by the very philosophical concepts or metaphors that it is supposed to have engendered.[82]

Hegelian dialectics, in Derrida's view, best describes *metaphor as the process of elevation from the sensuous to the spiritual*, as the *Aufhebung* (or *relève*, to use Derrida's translation of the Hegelian notion) from a "proper sensory meaning" to a "proper spiritual meaning."[83] Metaphor in dialectical terms is the movement of idealisation through which fundamental metaphysical oppositions such as nature/spirit, nature/history, nature/culture, in short, nature and its others come to be formed and thought of. It is the formal structure of the transposition from the *sensory* to the *nonsensory*.[84] Nonetheless, before such transposition puts "smoothly" things on track, one has to consider that both *sense as meaning* and the *senses* have a common root (*sensus*, *Sinn*) and structural possibility that resists what dialectical thinking presupposes: a separation into the domains of the physical and the non-physical. As Derrida puts it, "before utilising a dialectical concept of metaphor, one must examine the double turn which opened metaphor and dialectics, permitting to be called *sense* that which should be foreign to the senses."[85]

Derrida's critique of the concept of metaphor breaks away from the tradition of metaphorology, which tries to track down the history of philosophical logos as a trajectory of "'tropic' movements" aiming at the recovery of a first proper sense and

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[82]As Derrida points out, a regression to the "sensory origin" of metaphor and, consequently, of the philosophical concept, would demand a classification of metaphor according to the "mythology of the four elements" and also to the "regions of sensibility." Moreover, it would require a rigorous definition of the "a priori forms of space and time" and an exhaustive delineation of the empirical field. And still such metaphorics would tend to take for granted the metaphysical opposition between the transcendental and the empirical. In other words, such a project could not advance without having resolved fundamental philosophical questions, which constitute philosophy itself. Ibid., pp. 226-228.

[83] Derrida, "White Mythology", p. 226.

[84] The concept of metaphor thus defined is drawn into the structure of the *Aufhebung*, which is essentially a representational one. Metaphor as the movement of idealisation within the economy of the proper pertains to a representational logic formalised in the structure of the "already-not-yet", which marks a limit to be transcended. The notion of representation carries the metaphysical burden of rendering (present) and repeating (perhaps in effigy) by sign or symbol what is no longer present. It is a detour in view of re-appropriation, that is, in view of a return to presence. Metaphor in these terms would be the *image* of an absent thing interiorised as meaning. It is the image *before* the thing itself, "before" here used in both spatial and temporal terms. See Jacques Derrida's "Sending: On Representation", translated by Peter and Mary Ann Caws, in *Social Research*, 49, no2, Summer 1982.

presupposing "that the sense aimed at through these figures is an essence rigorously independent of that which transports it." And by the same gesture he disturbs the totality of the philosophical field as he challenges what "is an already philosophical *thesis*, one might even say philosophy's *unique thesis*, the thesis which constitutes the concept of metaphor, the opposition of the proper and the nonproper, of essence and accident, of intuition and discourse, of thought and language, of the intelligible and the sensible."[86] Philosophy cannot support a project of metaphorics with nonmetaphorical conceptual tools. Every undertaking to define philosophical logos from the standpoint of metaphor would be charged with too much metaphor. The structural impossibility to account for the metaphorical constitution of the philosophical field has vast implications for the concept of the proper, in fact, for the concept of the philosophical concept itself. If the concept of metaphor is metaphorically generated, in other words, if the concept of metaphor is itself a metaphor, then it cannot possess a proper meaning in the rigorous, classical sense that would qualify it as a concept. Thus, as the properness of metaphor is lost so is the properness of its metaphysical counterpart.

So the thesis of "White Mythology" has been established: Metaphor (i.e., the concept) can have no control over the text of philosophy, even though, it (i.e., metaphoricity) thoroughly traverses it. There can be neither independent theory that would define philosophy on the grounds of metaphor nor a metaphilosophy not bound to the resources of philosophy, which in turn cannot give a full account of the totality of its field using one of its philosophemes. Now, if philosophy (as well as all discourse) is metaphorical in an irreducible way, then what does this leave us with? With too little and too much at once, since any concept from now on will signify less (as properness is lost) and more (through metaphor's endless multiplication).

In "White Mythology" Derrida reads Aristotle, Fontanier, Du Marsais, Descartes, Hegel, Nietzsche, Bachelard and others but warns against the assimilation of philosophical texts to "a homogeneous continuum", while underlining at the same time the importance of "attending to such of the most durable constrains which have been exercised on the basis of a very long systematic chain."[87] Overlooking these

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[85] Derrida, "White Mythology", p. 228.
[86] Ibid., p. 229.
[87] It has to be clear here that deconstruction is neither a self-proclaimed theory nor a polemical attitude setting out to undo the great texts of metaphysics, for it would be nothing outside

sequences, their limits and functions, would risk "taking the most derivative effects for the original characteristics of a historical subset."[88] Metaphor is referred back to its first theoretical designation by Aristotle, which laid out its basic premises and put later theories on a systematic and historical track: "Metaphor consists in giving a thing a name that belongs to something else." The name or noun is recognised by Aristotle as the linguistic entity that governs and best defines the operation of metaphor. This is so because the noun more than the other parts of *lexis* is an independent semantic unity. "What is proper to nouns is to signify something."[89]

Metaphor occupies an important place in "the great immobile chain of Aristotelian ontology" ranked with the values of *truth*, *logos*, *mimesis*, *name*. Metaphor in Aristotle must be comprehended as part of a wider program: the *analogy of Being*. The significance of metaphor in this project becomes obvious when one recalls Aristotle's definition. The fourth and most important type in his typology is the one made on the grounds of analogy *(e kata to analogon*). Analogy is the *par excellence* metaphor. Metaphor makes manifest the analogies and similarities that hold together the chain of beings. Thus metaphor assumes the function of inquiring into the nature of things, of telling the truth. However, it does so in an intermediate way by participating in *mimesis*. Mimesis says nature otherwise; it is its double since nature reveals itself in mimesis and in repetition. For Aristotle it is *speech*, a property of human nature, that is more prone to imitate.[90] Human beings repeat nature in

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them. Deconstruction involves the close reading of texts, the exposition of their internal arrangement and also their relocation in the long sequence of metaphysics. Without disclaiming historical concerns and configurations, it ventures to bring out the enduring structures (both systematic and historical) that hold these texts together under the aegis of metaphysics and that precisely make its history (with all its mutations and disruptions) possible. This is why deconstructive reading attends to both structure and context without reducing the one to the other. Geoffrey Bennington in his book *Jacques Derrida* referring to the argumentative structure of "White Mythology," which in his view has "not been read philosophically enough," remarks: "This structure, whereby a law deduced a priori, and which has every appearance of being a thesis (there is nothing outside the text, the proper name is not proper, at the beginning is repetition, the thing itself always escapes, etc.), is surrounded by long 'historical' readings, is not peculiar to this essay, but constitutes the movement of deconstruction itself: the relation between 'thesis' and 'reading' does not answer to a model of illustration or exemplification [...]-but our own reading, which began with a representation of apparent theses, will itself have to escape this movement and incline increasingly toward the historical." Bennington, Geoffrey and Derrida, Jacques, *Jacques Derrida*, The University of Chicago Press, London, 1993, p. 125.

[88] Derrida, "White Mythology", p. 230.

[89] Ibid., p. 237.

[90] "In this sense, *mimēsis* is therefore a 'natural' movement. This naturality is reduced and restricted to man's speech by Aristotle. But rather than a reduction, this constitutive gesture of

imitation and by perceiving resemblance, that is, by mastering metaphor, achieve insights into the nature of beings. Nevertheless, metaphor is relegated to an ancillary status as it only provides an indirect route to truth. It is there where things can always go wrong.

Metaphor marks a departure to an uncertain destination. As Derrida points out, metaphor "opens the wandering of the semantic",[91] of which the end is never secured. The proper name by definition submits to a teleology of manifesting the thing itself in its truth. It fulfils its destiny by erasing itself before the presence of the thing, of a plenitude which defies representation. However, the noun is always in language and always already in metaphor since it exists "only at the stage when meaning has appeared, but when truth still might be missed, when the thing does not yet manifest itself in act in the truth. This is the moment of possible meaning as the possibility of non-truth."[92] This point is crucial for all theories that designate metaphor as a deviation from the proper taking for granted the priority of the latter over the former and considering the proper name as "the nonmetaphorical prime mover of metaphor."[93]

Derrida discusses two examples of metaphor by analogy from *Poetics*. The first one concerns the poetic analogy between the sun's engendering power and the act of "sowing" seeds. The metaphor is: "sowing around a god-created flame" (*speiron theoktistan phloga*). In the analogy between the "casting forth of the sun's flame" and "sowing" there is a missing term. The proper name for the sun's generative act is lacking and, therefore, is supplemented by that of "sowing." In the case of *elliptical* analogy the comparison is not made between present words with fixed meanings and referents but is created within language. Derrida asks:

> "Where has it ever been *seen* that there is the same relation between the sun and its rays as between sowing and seeds? If this analogy imposes itself -and it does- then it is that within language the analogy itself is due to a long and hardly visible chain whose first link is quite difficult to exhibit, and not only for Aristotle." [94]

Metaphor in this case is not a substitution of one proper name for another. It is a creation of resemblance within language, which may inaugurate a series of new

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metaphysics and of humanism is a teleological determination: naturality in general says itself, reassembles itself, knows itself, appears to itself, reflects itself, and 'mimics' itself par excellence and *in truth* in human nature." Ibid., p. 237.

[91] Ibid., p. 241.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid., p. 243.

metaphors that cannot be referred back to an originary proper name, since the latter is missing; it is an *ellipsis*. The second example helps to illustrate this point. An analogy is established between the expressions the "shield of Ares" and the "cup of Dionysus." If the shield is to Ares what the cup is to Dionysus then, it follows, that on the basis of analogy the metaphor "the cup of Ares" may be created and even furthered by another metaphor: "the wineless cup." As Derrida points out, this is the case of a metaphor that bears no relation to a proper meaning since what is proper to the "cup" is denied by the "negative addition" of the adjective "wineless":

> "No reference properly being named in such a metaphor, the figure is carried off into the adventure of a long, implicit sentence, a secret narrative which nothing assures us will lead us back to the proper name. The metaphorisation of metaphor, its bottomless overdeterminability, seems to be inscribed in the structure of metaphor, but as its negativity."[95]

Let us go back to the example of the sun, to the heliotropic metaphor. What would be the ultimate sensory object, the unique, natural referent, that which could be named properly and unequivocally but the sun? It seems at first sight that the sun is the paradigm of the proper name, what promises and secures the *telos* of language, that is, univocity. However, even the sensory sun becomes an elusive object. How do we know what is proper to the sun? Aristotle admits that every sensory object can become obscure as it can always not present itself, hide itself, evade our senses. So the sensory object, the kernel of metaphor, does not provide reliable knowledge precisely because the *aisthêton* (sensory) can always disappear; "it does not yield itself upon command, and its presence is not to be mastered."[96] This is why the sun is the *sensory object par excellence*, the paradigm of the sensory and of metaphor; "it regularly turns (itself) and hides (itself)." The sun as the paradigm of the sensory represents what is natural in language, stages the very opposition of *appearing* and *disappearing* and everything associated with it (presence/absence, natural/artificial and so forth). In short, it structures the entire lexicon of metaphysics.[97] Insofar as the

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[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.
[96] "Heliotropic metaphors are always imperfect metaphors. They provide us with too little knowledge, because one of the terms directly or indirectly implied in the substitution (the sensory sun) cannot be known in what is proper to it. Which also means that the sensory sun is always improperly named." Ibid., p. 250.
[97] "The sun does not provide an example, even if the most remarkable one, of the sensory Being such that it can always disappear, keep out of sight, not be present. The very opposition of appearing and disappearing, the entire lexicon of the *phainesthai*, of *alētheia*, etc., of day and night, of the visible and the invisible, of the present and the absent –all that is possible only under the sun. Insofar as it structures the metaphorical space of philosophy, the sun

sun, the "sensory model of the sensory" is im-properly known, it is also im-properly named. It therefore emerges as "solely metaphorical" and less "natural" than ever, since it is never properly present in discourse. In this way, the sun, the par excellence prime mover and sensory kernel of metaphor, is inversely already engendered by metaphor[98]:

"Each time that there is a metaphor, there is doubtless a sun somewhere; but each time that there is sun, metaphor has begun."[99]

So, in the "light" of what has just been elaborated, no genealogy or etymological practice would end up with more than metaphors. The presumed "tropic" trajectory of each concept will have to be inscribed within a generalised notion of metaphor or what Derrida calls after Bataille a *general economy* of meaning.[100] The generalisation of metaphor forbids the recourse to a direct,

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represents what is natural in philosophical language. In every philosophical language, it is that which permits itself to be retained by natural language. In the metaphysical alternative which opposes formal or artificial language to natural language, 'natural' should always lead us back to *physis* as a solar system, or, more precisely, to a certain history of the relationship earth/sun in the system of perception." Ibid., p. 251.

[98] Derrida also considers the metaphor of the *house*, which along with the metaphor of the *sun* are posited as the two dominant metaphors of metaphysics. The metaphor of the house will be extensively discussed in the next chapter in relation to travel.

[99] Derrida, "White Mythology", p. 251.

[100] General economy becomes thinkable through an extension and disruption of dialectical reasoning. The dialectical notion of metaphor, that is, deviation in view of re-appropriation, is inscribed in what Derrida calls the *restricted economy* of the Hegelian *Aufhebung*, of the speculative concept *par excellence*. *Aufhebung* is a formal notion that describes the passage from one level of knowledge and consciousness to a higher one through a series of negations, interiorisations and sublations. It is an operation "carried out *in the name and insight of* meaning." Derrida, Jacques, "From Restricted to General Economy, A Hegelianism without Reserve" in *Writing and Difference*, translated by Alan Bass, London, Routledge, 1997, p. 268.

The "restricted economy" of the *Aufhebung* is subordinated to the *work* and labour of meaning. It is regulated by the ideal of absolute knowledge that seeks to convert everything into *positivity* and to secure the continuous linking-up of meaning. Hence, whatever lies beyond meaning as otherness and *negativity* is still reducible and reservable. This, according to Derrida (and Battaille), is the blind spot in Hegel's philosophy. The dream of the *mastery* of meaning that promises truth, absolute knowledge, self-consciousness and freedom is bound to an economy of the same, to the phenomenological *epochē*; it is subordinated to the *slave* (the master is the truth of the slave, who is interiorised and elevated in the process of the *Aufhebung*), to the *thing* and to *work*. "Since it relates the successive figures of phenomenality to a knowledge of meaning that always already has been anticipated, the phenomenology of the mind (and phenomenology in general) corresponds to a restricted economy [...]" Ibid., p. 271.

The economy of the *Aufhebung* restricts itself to the conservation, circulation, and reproduction of meaning, "thereby simultaneously blinding itself to the baselessness of the nonmeaning from which the basis of meaning is drawn, and in which this basis of meaning is exhausted." Ibid., p. 257.

continuous line of metaphors that would lead back to a primary metaphor and so to a primary proper meaning. We can only speak of metaphors in the plural:

> "If there were only one possible metaphor, the dream at the heart of philosophy, if one could reduce their play to the circle of a family or group of metaphors, that is, to one 'central,' 'fundamental,' 'principial' [sic] metaphor, there would be no more true metaphor, but only, through the one true metaphor, the assured legibility of the proper."[101]

So metaphor is not to be reduced to the history of its meaning, to the history of a thesis or concept. It is because metaphor is multiple, because *metaphor always already and only belongs to syntax* and to a "more general syntax" called metaphysics, that it is divided, multiplied, and organised within the systematic structures it appears in. And then again metaphor cannot reduce, cannot account for this syntax; it is what disallows for reduction in the first place. In this sense, since reducibility to a first term or being is in principle impossible, metaphor is put into *abyme* (Derrida uses Nietzsche's expression[102]); it is plunged into the bottomless

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Derrida speaks of a negativity beyond the opposition positivity/negativity, a radical negativity which forms no part of the process or system of dialectics. This negativity opens onto the possibility of nonmeaning, to an *expenditure without reserve*, that is, to a irreducible, nondialecticisable or interiorisable residue of meaning that comes to disrupt meaning from within. The question of meaning is reopened and *restricted economy* is reinscribed into a *general economy*, an economy which does not reserve everything as potential meaning. "Instead of being simply overturned, it [restricted economy] is comprehended: not comprehended by knowledge-gathering comprehension, but inscribed within the opening of the general economy along with its horizons of knowledge and its figures of meaning. General economy folds these horizons and figures so that they will be related not to a basis, but to the nonbasis of expenditure, not to the *telos* of meaning, but to the *indefinite* destruction of value." Ibid.

[101] Derrida, "White Mythology", p. 268. This, however, does not mean that philosophy is to be considered in its synchronic stages or that its concepts do not bear the imprints of their own history. The point is not choosing between genealogical or synchronic readings. Derrida takes pains in examining the systematic structure and internal construction of the texts he considers and the way these are traversed and worked by metaphor. Yet he also acknowledges the enduring structures and continuities that support and allow for these and for metaphor.

[102] For a detailed discussion about Nietzsche on metaphor see Sarah Kofman's *Nietzsche and Metaphor*, translated by Duncan Large, London, Athlone Press, 1993. An abridged version of the book was first published in *Poétique* (5, 1971) along with parts of Derrida's "White Mythology". The first version was also presented to Jacques Derrida's seminar on metaphor at the École Normale Supérieure (1969-1970).
In this book Kofman reconstructs the place and the trajectory of the notion of metaphor in Nietzsche, which appears by name in his early works and is later substituted by the term "representation". The gesture of the generalisation of metaphor that is essential to Derrida's deconstruction is first carried out by Nietzsche. For Nietzsche, as Kofman explains, man is "a metaphorical animal", an "artist from the beginning", trying to make sense of and to master the world by means of what can only be metaphorical transpositions. The "originary metaphorical activity" (something already effaced and forgotten in the anthropomorphic representation of the world, which expresses a *will to power*) is displaced in the figure of the concept that fails to capture the "innermost essence of things", which can only be felt by attuning oneself to the music and rhythm of nature, to the plenitude of life. Instead, man

depths of indeterminacy. This is, however, its paradoxical condition of possibility. Derrida, in delimiting the project of metaphorology is not interested in discarding it altogether along with the concept of metaphor. He wants to bring out a barely visible and yet very powerful structure: the very possibility of meaning that rather than a teleological progression or regression is an expenditure without reserve, the movement of a *différance* that misses its profit and endlessly unfolds in dissemination. What Derrida brings out is something that trembles, something that "is" on the condition of its own erasure.

Metaphor can only be in erasing itself, "indefinitely constructing its destruction." It signifies on the condition of its *self-destruction*, its own *death*, whether the latter is understood either as its teleological elevation to a concept or as its multiplication or generalisation. For Derrida the self-destruction of metaphor always takes two different yet inseparable courses. The first one is brought about by the place it is assigned by and within metaphysics. Metaphor is submitted to the teleology of the proper; it assumes its value and function under the law of the same. Insofar as metaphor, at once an endangering and necessary detour, is controlled by the economy of the proper, as long as it is annulled (and conserved) in the dialectical process of the *Aufhebung*, it allows for no irreparable loss of meaning. This is the first death of metaphor. The triumph of the proper. The second death metaphor suffers is through its multiplication and generalisation within syntax. Metaphor is reinscribed beyond the traditional opposition proper/metaphorical and now receives a more extended sense than that assigned to its metaphysical concept. Endlessly multiplied within syntax (out of which it would be nothing), unable to reduce it to a centrality of a theme or sense (secretly lurking behind and beneath substitutions and deviations), metaphor is its own multiplication. "This time it is no longer a question of extending and confirming a philosopheme, but rather, of unfolding it without limit, and wresting its borders of propriety from it."[103] It is through the deconstruction of the opposition between proper and metaphorical that metaphor is for the second time destroyed. And with it, as Derrida claims, so is philosophy, which sees or fails to see its most

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produces "substitutive images", human, all-too-human metaphors. Musical language, for Nietzsche, is the best metaphor for the "proper" understood as the "essence of the world". However, the "proper" is already an interpretation, a metaphor for the superabundancy of life. "At this level metaphor is founded on the ontological unity of life represented by Dionysus. But if there is metaphor it is because this unity is always already in pieces and can only be symbolically transposed into art." Kofman, p. 14.

fundamental concepts tremble. The name of metaphor becomes a *catachresis* and also a *homonymy* incorporating its two deaths.

The Debate

In the eighth study of *The Rule of Metaphor* Ricoeur engages in a combative critique of "White Mythology." His criticism embarks from a footnote (29) where Derrida mentions a passage from Heidegger's *Der Satz vom Grund* (*The Principle of Reason*), which expresses a "distrust" towards the *concept* of metaphor. Heidegger maintains that there is a collusion of the metaphysical *transposition* of the sensory into the non-sensory and of the linguistic *transfer* from proper to metaphorical.[104] For Heidegger the collapsing of the movement of the *Aufhebung* with the movement of metaphor restricts language to a representation of this transposition. His argument is that the sensory can never be a "simple reception of the senses," since it already involves interpretation. Hence, the distinction between sensible and nonsensible and its representation in language by the couple proper/metaphorical, which is fundamental for metaphysics, cannot be maintained.[105] The passage ends with the much quoted proposition: *"The metaphorical exists only within metaphysics."*[106] Ricoeur assumes that Derrida subscribes to Heidegger's treatment of metaphor even though Derrida clearly states that the opposition sensory/nonsensory is "an important, but neither the only, nor the first, nor the most determining characteristic of the value of metaphor."[107] Ricoeur fails to perceive that Derrida's critique aims at the metaphysical concept of metaphor by not taking into account the purpose and context

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[103] Derrida, "White Mythology", p. 270.

[104] "Because our hearing and seeing is never a mere sensible registering, it is therefore also off the mark to insist that thinking as listening and bringing-into-view are only meant as a transposition of meaning, namely as transposing the supposedly sensible into the nonsensible. The idea of 'transposing' and of metaphor is based upon the distinguishing if not complete separation, of the sensible and the nonsensible as two realms that subsist on their own. The setting up of this partition between the sensible and the nonsensible, between the physical and the non-physical is a basic trait of what is called metaphysics and which normatively determines metaphysical thinking when one gains the insight that the above-mentioned partitioning of the sensible and nonsensible is insufficient." Heidegger, Martin, *The Principle of Reason*, translated by Reginald Lilly, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1991, p. 48.

[105] Ricoeur objects to such a designation of metaphysics: "I am afraid that only a reading forced beyond any justification can make Western philosophy lie on this Procrustian bed." Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 282.

[106] Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, p. 48.

[107] Derrida, "White Mythology", footnote 29, p. 226.

of this footnote. Assuming a coincidence between Heidegger and Derrida,[108] Ricoeur forces a reading on "White Mythology" which is organised according to two themes: "the efficacy of worn-out metaphor in philosophical discourse" and the supposed "deep-seated unity of metaphorical and analogical transfer of visible being to intelligible being."[109] More specifically, Ricoeur attributes to Derrida the following postulates: 1. Derrida uses the notion of *usure* as simply fraying and wearing-out 2. Derrida is interested solely in dead, worn-out metaphor as he believes that philosophical concepts are dead metaphors needing to be revived 3. Derrida considers metaphor at the level of the word, thus, favours substitution and denomination theory discarding the function and importance of discourse 4. Derrida privileges the metaphors of *sun* and *home*, which manifest the movement of idealisation, a Platonism, collapsing, in this way, metaphysics into one, great, homogeneous discourse.

Ricoeur misconstrues Derrida's notion of *usure* in depriving it of its double sense of loss and profit. *Usure* is misunderstood as the using-up, wearing-out, which only deflowers without adding anything to metaphor. The second sense of *usure*, which implies a surplus of meaning is deemed as what is hidden and already dead in metaphor.[110] This is why Ricoeur thinks that Derrida is mostly interested in the practice of etymologism in an effort to retrieve the continuous line of metaphors behind philosophical concepts, whence also the assumption that Derrida's designation of metaphor is premised on denomination and substitution theories. However, this approach towards metaphor is what Derrida specifically puts into question.[111] As Derrida points out in his reply to Ricoeur, *usure* is "the production of surplus value (*plus-value*) according to laws other than those of a continuous and linearly

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[108] "We can now consider the theoretical core common to Heidegger and Derrida, namely, the supposed collusion between the metaphorical pair of the proper and figurative and the metaphysical pair of the visible and invisible. I myself do not hold this connection to be necessary." Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 294.

[109] Ibid., p. 285.

[110] "Now the non-stated in metaphor is used, worn-out metaphor. Metaphor functions here in spite of us, behind our backs so to speak. The claim to keep semantic analysis within a metaphysically neutral area only expresses ignorance of the simultaneous play of unacknowledged metaphysics and worn-out metaphor." Ibid., p. 284.

[111] Derrida in his reply to Ricoeur's criticism expresses his discontent for the misreading and twisting of his argument: "Its logic is sometimes disconcerting: it is because I sometimes subscribe to some of Ricoeur's propositions that I am tempted to protest when I see him turn them back against me as if they were not already evident in what I have written." Derrida, "The Retrait of Metaphor", p.12.

accumulative capitalisation."[112] *Usure* implies both *usage* and *expenditure*; it does not restrict metaphor to a linear, interiorising, reserving enterprise but, on the contrary, it extends and unfolds it infinitely. So the surplus of meaning does not refer to what looms behind metaphor (to what is worn out and hidden) or merely to an addition to the linear linking up of meaning but to its constant dissemination and division along a movement that a continuist notion of metaphor cannot assimilate. Moreover, the infinite play of metaphor does not attest to Derrida's "unbounded 'deconstruction'" but it conforms to the laws of iteration and repetition; it submits to enduring sequences and structures, which Derrida does not overlook.

Ricoeur acknowledges "a stroke of genius" on Derrida's part in entering the domain of metaphor by way of its *death*. He maintains that Derrida is fascinated by dead metaphor and that he equates wearing-out to concept formation. Now, as we saw, Ricoeur considers metaphor as only the *first* phase of concept formation. This is a crucial point, since he is mainly interested in establishing and securing the autonomy of philosophical discourse. Philosophical concepts may be metaphorically engendered but philosophy, to his mind, is not metaphorical. This is so, because the network of philosophemes that constitute the philosophical field precedes metaphor.[113] Metaphor only provides a schema, which holds resemblance and difference, identity and otherness in tension and interaction. It is through the work of interpretation that a new meaning finally emerges and a new concept is formulated. For Ricoeur, interpretation always draws on a pre-established web of literal meanings and involves a conscious effort. This is why live metaphor resides in the awareness of it and is an event that always happens in the present of discourse. For Derrida, however, metaphorical effects can neither be fixed nor mastered because they operate and extend far beyond our awareness of them and this is not due to the impossibility of etymological regression to a first term but because of essentially structural conditions. Metaphor is not simply an occasion for interpretation, or merely that which evades us in contrast to what is already our own. It is the predicament of meaning, what both enables and disrupts everything involved with it. Moreover, generalised metaphor is not dead metaphor. The distinction between live and dead

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[112] Ibid., p. 13.

[113] "So it is not metaphor that carries the structure of Platonic metaphysics; metaphysics instead seizes the metaphorical process in order to make it work to the benefit of metaphysics. The metaphors of the sun and the home reign only to the extent that they are selected by philosophical discourse." Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, pp. 294-295.

metaphor has no pertinence for Derrida. And, to be sure, he does not endeavour to revive dead metaphor and trace it back to its original proper meaning. On the contrary, he tries to show the impossibility of such an undertaking by deconstructing the couple proper/metaphor, by depriving metaphorics of its conceptual tools and by questioning its very presuppositions.[114]

Ricoeur reprimands Derrida for not taking into account the semantics of metaphor and for adhering to denomination and substitution theories.[115] Derrida grants a lot of room in "White Mythology" to the critique of metaphorics, which concentrates on worn-out metaphor, but he does so in order to contest the "privilege of the name and the word" and not to affirm it. As Derrida himself points out, the emphasis on the syntactic motif dominant in "White Mythology" opposes the "primacy of denomination."[116] Derrida does not deliver a discursive theory of metaphor of Ricoeur's detail as he prefers to treat discourse on the level of its presuppositions. His designation of meaning as an effect of the infinite chain of traces should be enough to rebut the accusation of prioritising the word. Ricoeur is probably misled by Derrida's extensive analyses of the metaphors of *sun* and *home*, although Derrida, far from merely giving a historical and genealogical account, painstakingly examines them within the syntax in which they occur. Derrida's persistence with these metaphors instigates another objection from Ricoeur. He maintains that Derrida, by privileging the metaphors of *light* and *sojourn*, which are metaphors for the

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[114] S.H. Clark also misreads "White Mythology" by assuming that Derrida favours etymologism over usage and discourse analysis. Clark fails to locate Derrida's critique of metaphorics within the scope of the latter's deconstructive project. He goes as far as to say: "In so far as Derrida seeks to retain the status of 'a philosophical rhetoric in the service of an autonomous theory constituted before and outside its own language. In this I wholly concur." Clark, S.H, *Paul Ricoeur*, London, Routledge, 1990, p. 143. A more attentive reading of the paragraph Clark refers to would show that it is exactly this "separation" and "hierarchy" that is contested. According to Derrida, rhetoric and philosophy are too philosophical and too rhetorical, respectively, to be rigorously separated. Derrida does not nurture the thought of an "autonomous theory constituted before and outside its own language, manipulating its tropes like tools." That would imply that thought and meaning were prior to language, which, if this were the case, would reduce language to a vehicle of an independent sense. This, of course, would be unacceptable for the thinker of *différance*, who precisely challenges the positing of an independent signified or sense before the signifier or language. Such divisions and hierarchies are at the centre of metaphysical thinking.

[115] "The effectiveness of dead metaphor can be inflated, it seems to me, only in semiotic conceptions that impose the primacy of denomination, and hence of substitution of meaning. These conceptions thereby condemn the analysis to overlook the real problems of metaphoricity, which, as we know, are related to the play of semantic pertinence and impertinence." Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 290.

[116] Derrida, "The Retrait of Metaphor," p. 15.

metaphorical process itself (that is, the double movement of idealisation and appropriation), tries to show the "primordial metaphoricity" of metaphysics and to ground the "auto-implication" and continuity of metaphor.[117] In doing so, Derrida, according to Ricoeur, ascribes to metaphysics a homogenous unity[118]: "And so, by reason of their stability, their perdurance, the dominant metaphors ensure the epochal unity of metaphysics."[119] Though Ricoeur agrees with Derrida that each concept carries a "traditional metaphorical burden", he maintains that each time an "ancient metaphor" (like light, ground, home, path and so on) is used in a new context, it is a form of innovation.[120] This is why no metaphor should be either privileged or forbidden. The revitalisation of dead metaphors is for Ricoeur a perfectly legitimate task as long as one bears in mind that this would involve not the restoration of a "primordial meaning" but rather the reactivation of metaphor in a new context and, hence, the occurrence of live metaphor. Here, while Ricoeur is forced to admit to a certain continuity in the history of metaphor, which his notion of polysemy already implies, he once more falls short from acknowledging the syntactic motif of "White Mythology."[121] As was suggested, Derrida supersedes the dilemma between history

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[117] Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 289.

[118] Ricoeur's accusation is also levelled at Heidegger: "It seems to me to deny oneself the convenience, which has become a laziness in thinking, of lumping the whole of Western thought together under a single word, metaphysics." Ibid., p. 311. Derrida in his reply to Ricoeur points out that his use of the term "metaphysics" or of expressions such as "the closure of metaphysics" does not refer to a homogeneous field contained within a circular limit: "I have never believed in the existence or in the consistency of something like metaphysics *itself* (la métaphysique). [...] Representation of a linear and circular closure surrounding a homogeneous space is, precisely, the theme of my greatest emphasis, an auto-representation of philosophy in its onto-encyclopedic logic." Derrida, "The Retrait of Metaphor," p. 15. If such a thing as the unity of metaphysics existed or was affirmed by Derrida, then deconstruction would be inconceivable. It is because linear and homogeneous representations do not go uncontested, because "metaphysics" is always already disrupted from within, that no unity is ascribed to it, not even in view of its surpassing. However, this does not mean that there are not durable constraints and systematic traits that have allowed for something like "metaphysics" to come together, nonetheless, never *as such*.

[119] Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 289.

[120] Ibid., p. 311.

[121] "But noting this continuation is not the same as determining the sense of Idea in each philosopher. No philosophical discourse would be possible, not even a discourse of deconstruction, if we ceased to assume what Derrida *justly* holds to be 'the sole thesis of philosophy,' namely, 'that the meaning aimed at through these figures is an essence rigorously independent of that which carries it over.'" Ibid., p. 293 (my italics). Here again the context of Derrida's quotation is not taken into account. Derrida criticises rather than affirms the "sole thesis of philosophy". If meaning were thought as an "essence rigorously independent of that which carries over" then all binary couples, like signifier/signified, form/content, material/spiritual, to name a few, that Derrida scrupulously deconstructs would automatically

and systematicity. He urges that attention is paid to the "durable constraints" and the "very long systematic chain" that delimit and support concepts, yet he also denounces the philosophical practice of abstracting concepts from their context and use value as if a concept could signify by itself, independently of context.

Finally, Ricoeur believes that the definition of metaphor is not circular, as Derrida would have it. One can speak of metaphor nonmetaphorically. This is so because its definition contains already established, literal meanings. It is the conceptual network of philosophy that decides upon and formulates the concept of metaphor. For Ricoeur, the act of positing the concept dialectically precedes metaphor.[122] Ricoeur wants to maintain at all costs the independence of philosophical discourse. To him "thinking is not poeticising"[123] and it is the rigorous order of the philosophical field that confirms this. However, he accepts that the formation of a new concept transforms the totality of the field, which, he quotes Derrida, " 'is worked by metaphor'."[124] It is clear that Ricoeur prioritises the proper, the literal in the service of which metaphor is put. This is seminal to a hermeneutics that is essentially a "struggle for univocity". Ricoeur has been criticised for bringing philosophy to an "instant arrestedness" and "virtual petrification". S.H. Clark scorns Ricoeur for not investigating "the relation of active concept to active metaphor."[125] He is amazed that "a book so committed to demonstrating the fundamental importance of metaphor in human creativity should devote so much of its final chapter to trying to fend off the success of its preceding argument."[126] The weakness, nonetheless, of *The Rule of Metaphor*, which is a very consistent and tightly woven text, does not rest on an antinomy introduced in the eighth study. Ricoeur's theory is grounded in the priority of the proper, from which metaphor dialectically ensues and returns to. This is a central theme that develops throughout the book and becomes

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creep back in. It is Ricoeur, rather than Derrida, who accepts this proposition and, in this way, relegates metaphor to a secondary place with respect to the proper.

[122] This is the basic premise of Ricoeur with regard to metaphor and concept formation. Though, Ricoeur uses the verb *proceed* instead of *precede*, ("la position du concept procéde dialectiquement de la métaphore elle-même," *La Métaphore Vive*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1975, p. 372) here we accept the correction by Leonard Lawlor in his *Imagination and Chance, The Difference Between The Thought* of *Ricoeur and Derrida*, New York, State University of New York Press, p. 40, since in Ricoeur's thinking it is the concept that is prior to metaphor.

[123] Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 311.

[124] Ibid., p. 293.

[125] Clark, p. 147.

[126] Ibid., p. 137.

more dominant and inclusive when Ricoeur reaches the final stages of his analysis. The drawback of *The Rule of Metaphor*, in my opinion, is that it does not put into radical rethinking the traditional couple of proper and metaphor, which seems to be taken for granted, although the wealth of argument and the extensive discussion of the major theories of metaphor make this study indispensable.

Ricoeur does not deem necessary any preoccupation with the metaphysical concepts of the proper and metaphor. In his view, "a better semantic analysis of the metaphorical process suffices to dispel the mystique of the 'proper'."[127] It is discourse and the conflict of interpretations that each time decide which meanings are to be taken literally or metaphorically. Ricoeur explains that his use of the term "literal" refers to what is "simply current, 'usual' " in discourse and not to the "proper" in the sense of "originary", "primitive" and "natural". However, he also states that "the criterion of delimitation is clear: the metaphorical sense of a word presupposes contrast with a literal sense."[128] So discourse can decide on the value of words under the condition of a contrast between literal and metaphorical interpretations. Nevertheless, this would need the support of a previous delineation of what is literal and what metaphorical. This is essential to a theory that prioritises the philosophical concept over metaphorical action and refers the interpretation of utterances to already established conceptual networks. Not defining the "literal" as originary or primitive does not disengage it from the concept of the proper, which lurks behind each of its delimitations. It is precisely this concept of the proper, its history, function and construction that Derrida attempts to expose and explode and not to assert its originality and primitiveness.

As Leonard Lawlor observes, neither Ricoeur nor Derrida ever address each other's key notions, that is, *distanciation* and *différance*, in the texts presented above.[129] The fundamental difference that makes all the difference between these notions is that *distanciation* is essentially dialectical, while *différance* demonstrates a deeply aporetic structure. Why is metaphor so important for Ricoeur's hermeneutics and Derrida's deconstruction? The answer comes from metaphor itself, straight out of its classical definition. Metaphor is the movement, deviation, *mediation* of meaning.

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[127] Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 291.

[128] "We did admit of course that the metaphorical use of a word could always be opposed to its literal use; but literal does not mean proper in the sense of originary, but simply current, 'usual'. The literal sense is the one lexicalised." Ibid., p. 290.

And here Ricoeur and Derrida would add: a necessary mediation, not an accident that befalls language in its pure state. The questions then become: What sort of movement? Deviation from what? Mediation between what? Here the answers split. Either way, dialectics or aporetics, proper and metaphor are always thought together. In Ricoeur's dialectics metaphor struggles to compensate for the loss of the proper by seeking re-appropriation. In Derrida's aporetics metaphor disappropriates meaning, bringing about an irreparable *loss*.

Ricoeur's live metaphor, eventually, becomes a part of polysemy, that is, of the regulated and already established system of the multiple ways *Being* is said. Metaphorical deviation is, finally, reduced and submitted to the order of the same, which takes its most rigorous form in the discourse of philosophy. So metaphor, for Ricoeur, is a mediation between two proper meanings both belonging to the same order of polysemy. The originary proper meaning is at the same time cancelled and preserved in the second one in an endless but teleological process of elevation (*Aufhebung* or *epochē*). For Ricoeur, the horizon of meaning constantly recedes toward the univocal. For Derrida, metaphor always already disrupts the proper. Metaphor as the mediation of meaning proceeds in a nonhorizonal and nonteleological fashion. Meaning is an effect of a structure of iteration and it is divided and unfolded at every instant of discourse. The concept of metaphor as the mediation between two poles of meaning, as the eruption of a new insight, the calculated trajectory toward a more inclusive proper meaning, *withdraws*, retreats, as it always has, *leaving* behind a conceptual field in unrest, in doubt of its own definition. And by withdrawing, metaphor, that is, the classical philosopheme, infinitely exceeds and expands itself allowing no room but for metaphor, that is now a *catachresis*, a *quasi-metaphor* because it is no more opposed to properness.[130] After

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[129] Lawlor, p. 43.

[130] The withdrawal of metaphor is, for Derrida, concomitant to the withdrawal of *Being*. For Heidegger, the *epoché* of metaphysics opens up with this withdrawal, which makes the thought and history of *Being* possible. *Being* constitutes the transcendental horizon within which beings, entities, everything that exists comes to be thought. It is neither a *primum signatum*, nor a transcendental signified, "it has never been thought or said as such except by dissimulating itself in beings". Derrida, "Différance", p. 22. Without manifesting itself as such in each and every individual being, it underlies and raises the question of "being" in its entirety. And it is, precisely, the question of *Being*, the question of *ontico-ontological difference*, that is, the difference between *Being* and beings, which, according to Heidegger, is forgotten by metaphysics as far back as the Greeks. *Being*, or truth, or presence does not manifest itself in discourse for, if it did so in its fullness and plenitude, there would be no need for discourse and no need for the thought of *Being*. *Being*, then, in the evidence of is radiant

the *withdrawal of metaphor*[131] the metaphysical field appears "*more metaphorico*" than ever. Derrida asks: "What, then, would happen with metaphor?" and replies, "Everything: the totality of what is (l'étant). And it would happen that we should get along without it, without being able to dispense with it (il se passerait ceci qu'on devrait se passer d'elle sans pouvoir s'en passer)."[132] It would happen that we should get along without the rigorous metaphysical concept of metaphor, however, without being able to dispense with metaphor *in general*, with generalised metaphor, which also engulfs, repeats, and deconstructs the "intra-metaphysical metaphor in displacing it."

After the elaboration of the semantic values of the proper and metaphor and the challenge to their oppositional and hierarchical thinking, which best takes shape in its dialectical formulation and its historical application along the hermeneutic project, proper meaning and metaphor re-emerge rather as functions and effects of the signifying movement of *différance* and not as a kernel distinction structuring semantic resources and potentiality. Metaphor as the movement of meaning, or else as "the travel of meaning," is no longer to be understood as a semantic deviation or derivation from an established and literal sense. Metaphor henceforth signifies as an effect of a detour that is now posited as an irreducible and originary movement, a movement without origin or *telos*. That is to say, in the beginning there is detour, movement and travel.

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presence would not necessitate the detour of language. And yet *Being* does not exist outside discourse. It is an effect of discourse even though it is necessarily posited as its origin. *Being*, that is, the thought of *Being*, is at the same time constituted by and constitutive of discourse. It comes to be thought and cared for in language, however, never as such. It only signifies and becomes thinkable in *withdrawing*, making in this way thought and meaning possible and desirable. In this way, the withdrawal of Being, that is, the concealment of Truth, is a sort of originary movement that opens thought and *logos*. Likewise, the withdrawal of the proper concept of metaphor, which is tantamount to the withdrawal of the proper, creates a space in which they are both inscribed as effects of "tropic capacity". We shall develop this more in the next chapter.

[131] Derrida warns against an understanding of the expression "the withdrawal of metaphor" as a metaphor in the traditional sense. That would be, for him, an almost "catastrophic" or "catastropical" metaphor because it would disorient the whole endeavour of deconstruction to a hermeneutic enterprise of establishing a new meaning for the vehicle of this "metaphorical" expression. Based on the already known and established meaning of "withdrawal," hermeneutics would claim "to procure access to the unknown and to the indeterminate by the detour of something recognisably familiar." According to such schema, "withdrawal" would maintain its familiar sense without giving any chance to the thought of ontico-ontological difference. For Derrida, one should "allow withdrawal in general to manifest itself, only from the withdrawal of *Being* as a withdrawal of metaphor in all the polysemous and disseminal potential of withdrawal." Derrida, "The Retrait of Metaphor," p. 23.

We began with metaphor, with what has always already begun, with the purpose of using this notion along with its related themes and concepts, primarily its indissociable concept of the proper, for a discussion of travel relations within the context and tradition of Western metaphysics. It will be argued in the next chapter that the binary thinking of the literal and the metaphorical and, to be sure, its deconstructive challenge, can be raised to a problematic of travel focusing mainly on the binary couple of *Oikos* (which receives here the broad sense of familiarity, of what structures and circumscribes one's semantic universe) and travel. The theory of metaphor will enable the exploration of the signifying and systematic structures that make sense out of *Oikos* and travel, but which also radically disrupt their traditional and largely accepted formulations. Metaphor and travel or rather *travel as metaphor* will be examined with regard to what is posited as its hermeneutic premise and in turn with regard to its aporetic condition, which comprehends and interrupts the former. We set off with metaphor but, as will be shown, we are already on the course of travel, at once moving along and leaving behind what seems more and more unfamiliar: *Oikos*.

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[132] Ibid., p. 21.

Chapter II

Metaphors of Travel

This chapter will attempt to establish a connection between the philosophical concept of metaphor and, what shall be called for the purpose of economy, a largely *Eurocentric* notion of travel that underlies and permeates travel writing, the theory of travel, as well as other types of discourse, and, indeed, the very practice of travel. It will be argued that travel as practised and conceptualised in a long European tradition traced back in time and extending up to the present has largely participated in what is called the *metaphysics of presence*. The aim of this chapter is not to produce a history or genealogy of travel but rather to trace and present in a systematic way enduring structures that have supported and sustained a metaphysical notion of travel lying behind and beneath the long and diverse tradition(s) of European travel. To claim that travel manifests continuity throughout its long history, or indeed histories, is neither to homogenise nor to overlook or cast aside cultural and historical particularities. It by no means discredits approaches which draw attention to the multiple designations that travel has assumed in different historical periods. However, as soon as we speak of the history of travel, we necessarily presuppose a certain and relatively unified sense of travel, which gathers around it different meanings and practices, admitting semantic deviation or unfolding semantic potential. If there is to be a history of travel, it will have to constitute, delineate and circumscribe an object or theme for itself, a sense it will try to trace as it emerges and is differentiated throughout the period of time under consideration. If one is to write a history of travel, one must presuppose that there is a sense of what travel is that allows for such a history to be written. Even if this sense alters, even if it acquires different functions and participates in distinct discourses, it cannot change beyond recognition, if we are to understand anything by the word "travel".

Accordingly, the aim of this chapter will be to investigate the systematic structures that have enabled the emergence and re-emergence of a relatively unified notion of travel in various discourses of Western metaphysics. In other words, it will attempt to address the essential presuppositions for the constitution and reproduction of the metaphysical notion of travel and its far reaching effects. It will be argued that the traditional notion of travel is necessarily conceived of in relation to that of *Oikos* or home, which is here used in a broad sense extending to what is familiar –*oikeio* in Greek- to what is one's own, to one's identity, to what pertains to the literalised

meanings of one's semiotic universe, to the "proper" place from which travel begins. *Oikos* and *travel*, *home* and *away*, have been traditionally conceived as an oppositional couple, of which the former constituent is prioritised over the latter. This powerful structure privileges *Oikos* over what lies beyond it, over its *other*, which is subordinated and appropriated by the order of the *same*, by the *law of the house*. This hierarchy, either openly or secretly at work throughout the history of colonialism, and its pervasive, multi-levelled and manifest or latent effects has been called into question by post-colonial theory[1]. However, as was recognised from its early stages, the critique of Eurocentrism, of which travel constitutes an integral and decisive part, would be self-defeating if it were to simply reverse the binary couples and hierarchies of Western metaphysics and continue to operate along divisions of the type West/Orient or West and its Other.[2] Through the critique of Eurocentrism, totalised historical narratives, largely defined by operations of subordination, conquest and exclusion, receive responses which call for alternative histories and give a hearing to silenced voices. Yet making room for alternative histories, paying heed to cultural diversity and particularity and celebrating cultural difference by "deconstructing" binary thinking does not amount to overthrowing metaphysics. Metaphysics is not something that one can simply do away with. It is something that must be thought through *from within*, otherwise one runs the risk of reproducing the very discourse one calls into to question. Disclaiming, for instance, the hierarchy of *Oikos* over travel and discrediting the traditional value of these notions in favour of a diverse, multiple and hybrid history that overlooks the enduring structures that traverse any discourse of travel –if we are to agree that something like the subject of travel exists- would fail to interrupt the notions under challenge. There are as many experiences of travelling as there are travellers. What home and what being away from home mean may infinitely vary. However, as will be argued, the structural and necessary relation between home or *Oikos* and travel lies beneath every discourse of travel, including those of the nomad or the cosmopolitan, as their *essential possibility*. It is the very

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[1] See, for example, Edward Said's *Orientalism, Western Conceptions of the Orient*, with a new Afterword, London, Penguin Books, 1995 and *Culture and Imperialism*, London, Chatto, 1993, Homi K. Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*, London, Routledge, 1994, Robert Young's *White Mythologies*, London, Routledge, 1990.

[2]See, for instance, Dennis Porter's "*Orientalism* and Its Problems", Aijaz Ahmad's "*Orientalism* and After" in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory, A Reader*, edited and introduced by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, London, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993, also Fred Dallmayr's *Beyond Orientalism, Essays on Cross-Cultural Encounter*, New York, State University of New York Press, 1996 and *Travel Writing & Empire, Post-Colonial Theory in Transit*, edited by Steve Clark, London, Zed Books, 1999.

structure that has enabled the violent eruption and expansion of *Oikos* against and over what was posited as its other. If we were to disclaim the authority of *Oikos* over travel and to make room for what is called hybrid identity, multi-culturalism, the figure of the nomad and of the homeless, rather than disengaging the two, we should pursue a rethinking of these notions in a way that would bring forth their internal discontinuities and antinomies, that would put them forever into unrest, not solely on the grounds of cultural difference, but in terms of their very condition of signification. In doing this, we must not overlook the pervasive effects that the binary thinking of *Oikos* and travel has had in the history of European travel but we should ask, instead, what made this thinking possible and at the same time what makes the rigid separation of these notions impossible. Our attempt to reinscribe *Oikos* and travel in their essential possibility of meaning will take effect drawing on the figure of metaphor.

We will try to show that there is an essential correspondence between the binary thinking of *Oikos* and travel and that of proper meaning and metaphor and to extend the latter in view of a possible reconsideration of the former. Accordingly, this chapter will take up the theme of "travel as metaphor" and will examine the implications of such a "figuration". Yet, one may ask, what do we mean by the "figure of travel", by the phrase "travel as metaphor"? Is the occurrence of this figure simply a metaphorisation of "travel" in the proper sense?

Travel has its place as a recurrent motif in a wide range of discourses incorporating the themes of change, maturation, quest, etc. But even beyond the diverse and multi-levelled use of the motif of travel found in all sorts of texts, "travel as metaphor" here comes to name the very movement of meaning and language. Travel is as much constituted as a literary or philosophical motif or theme as, in this broad sense, constitutive of discourse, of every investment and venture of meaning. Moreover, travel, in a generalised sense, not only constitutes meaning but also suspends and disseminates it. The moment "travel" launches a quest for meaning, for the mastery and *appropriation* of meaning, it also condemns it, as will be shown, to an ever-lasting *ad-venture*, to a perpetual dislocation and *disappropriation*. *Oikos,* the proper home of meaning, thus becomes an impossible destination.

Travel in the broad sense does not seem to be clearly distinguished from the concept of metaphor. If metaphor is the movement of meaning and travel just another metaphor for it, then what sort of movement would define travel in the proper sense?

To speak of metaphor as the "travel of meaning" is to metaphorise metaphor, to metaphorically speak of metaphor.[3] However, metaphor has no privilege over travel. To think "travel" merely as a metaphor for metaphor would be to disregard their essential association, a relation so close that hardly allows the one to occur without implying the other. "Travel as metaphor" brings forth the essential affinity, the common *structure of semantic movement* and *economy of meaning* of these terms, which is both constitutive of and constituted by them. The classical definition of metaphor by Aristotle bears the imprints of travel.[4] If it were assumed, accordingly, that "metaphor" signifies the movement of meaning (*epiphora noematos*) towards an alien (*allotrio*) semantic field and "travel" physical displacement to a foreign place, then the phrase under discussion would take on the function of bringing together two proper meanings in a way that would permit the establishment of analogy, and thus a mutual illumination of the terms. What relates these terms in an evident way is their common designation as kinds of "movement" and, moreover, as this sort of movement that instigates an "encounter" with otherness. However, to speak of "travel as metaphor" is neither simply to detect correspondences between these terms nor to use the one as a vehicle for the better understanding of the other. This phrase is not metaphorical in the conventional sense. If we deployed the concept of metaphor in order to explain it, we would be resorting to a "proper meaning" in view of exploring a "metaphorical" sense of metaphor. This would upset the explicatory process from the start, since it would charge it with too much metaphor and, inversely, imply a metaphor less, the proper concept of metaphor that turns out to be inadequate. Moreover, if one were to define travel as physical movement (the displacement of a body) and if one were to accept this as the *proper*, *literal* and *real* travel, with regard to which any other sense would be an addition, derivation or metaphorical displacement, then would one not be drawing a distinction between nonsemantic (real, physical) and semantic travel? But even if it were possible, such a distinction would not make things any easier since suggesting that physical movement makes semantic movement thinkable by means of a metaphorical displacement, in other words, that proper meaning engenders metaphor on the condition that it is affected by metaphor, would not amount to more than an endless tautology that would

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[3] This point is also sustained by George Van Den Abbeele in his *Travel as Metaphor, From Montaigne to Rousseau*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1992, which will be discussed later in the chapter.

presuppose established meanings of the proper and metaphor without ever questioning effectively how these came about. We can neither speak of movement in the proper nor in a metaphorical sense without drawing upon an already semantic distinction. This is to say that the "metaphor of travel" is not simply just another medium for probing into the semantics of travel. Metaphor is the travel of "travel" as much as travel is the metaphor of "metaphor". Rhetoric in its entirety, as Catherine Malabou points out, presents itself as a theory of travel.[5]

To recognise the semantic and structural affinity between travel and metaphor is not to collapse every practice, form, or sense of travel, physical or not, "literal" or not, with every occurrence of the term as theme and motif or as "metaphor" in the conventional sense. It is to say that *there can be no such thing as pure experience of travel*. The experience of travel is an experience of meaning, which therefore admits to the problematics and aporetics of the "proper" and "metaphor". Travel then in all its possible forms and designations remains an "adventure" or "expenditure" of meaning, a movement from something familiar to something distant and alien.[6] Arguing that travel is unthinkable outside semantic structures or semantic movement (and thus metaphor) is not saying anything novel. Travel is the displacement of a subject and *signifies* only in relation to a place of derivation, home, and to a place of arrival.[7] Travel cannot be dissociated from *Oikos*, which is not posited here simply as a geographical and circumscribed location but rather as the totality of meanings that make up the traveller's semantic universe. In order to consider in what sort of relation *Oikos* and travel enter, one would have to think the way through which senses of home and away emerge in the first place.

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[4] "Metaphora", still much in use in modern Greek, is a term equally applied to all sorts of transfer and movement, including transportation, representation, expression, translation, as well as to metaphor, the figure of speech.

[5] "*Un trope (de* tropos, *tour, direction, et* trepein, *tourner) est une figure du discours par laquelle un mot ou une expression sont détournés, dérivés de leur sens prope. La rhétorique tout entière se présente à sa manière comme une théorie du voyage.*" Malabou, Catherine et Derrida, Jacques, *Jacques Derrida, La Contre-Allée*, Collection Voyager Avec..., LaQuinzaine Littéraire, Louis Vuitton, 1999, p. 203.

[6] As Catherine Malabou explains in her book on the notion of travel in Derrida's work, "*Il n'est pas, pour Derrida, de voyage "vécu", d' "expérience" du voyage, qui n'engagent une équipée du sens. C'est très précisement cette conjointure de l'expérience et du sens qui détermine le voyage comme économie, ou, ce qui vient au même, comme métaphysique.*" Ibid., p.16.

[7] One, however, could also ask whether animals travel or do they simply move about in quest for food and shelter, or whether the movement, for instance, of celestial bodies is not movement in a literal and objective sense. When we argue that travel is a semantic movement, we do not imply, for sure, that there is no movement outside signification. Nonetheless, it takes a signifying consciousness to perceive and assign a sense to movement that frames it according to places of derivation and destination, that makes it, in a word, meaningful.

This chapter consists of three parts. The first part will venture a reinscription of the notion of travel by means of its relation to metaphor drawing on Paul Ricoeur and Jacques Derrida. Its objective will be the extension of these two theorists' well-known debate on metaphor to a problematic of travel. Both thinkers' designation of metaphor amounts to a theory of meaning since metaphor is traced back to its very constitution. Metaphorical and literal meaning can only exist through their mutual definition. Yet, as we tried to demonstrate in the first chapter, what for Ricoeur is a *dialectical* relation always progressing towards the re-appropriation of the literal, for Derrida is an *aporia*, which forbids a clear-cut distinction between literal and metaphorical and their subordination to a teleology of the "proper". Ricoeur takes the couple literal/metaphorical to a certain extent for granted, while Derrida infinitely complicates it. Consequently, the mutually constitutive couple of *dwelling* and *travelling*, of *Oikos* and *voyage*, can be rearticulated according to the problematic posed by these thinkers with regard to metaphor. It will be argued that "*Oikos*" and "travel" have been traditionally conceptualised as a dialectical pair, which in a way calls upon Ricoeur's hermeneutic approach, but also invites Derrida's far more radical and challenging critical thinking.

The second part of the chapter will attempt to explore two primary existential categories related to travel, namely those of *space* and *time*, along with the inextricably related notions of the *boundary* and the *itinerary*. Drawing mainly on Derrida's reading of Heidegger, it will be argued that travel is not a mediation between fixed and present loci circumscribed by solid boundaries. It will be maintained that travel rather than a crossing of boundaries and passage from one definite place to another, rather than a linear progression of successive and present places and moments, is a movement that structures and generates senses of place and time. The *itinerary* then becomes the origin of *Oikos* and travel; an origin, however, which, as we shall see, does not precede the notions it inscribes and makes possible but is constituted and constantly divided along the movement of *spacing* and *temporalisation*, along the movement of *différance*.

The third part of the chapter will try to explore and reinscribe the metaphor of "travel as writing". It will be argued that travel *and* writing have a structural affinity since they both imply a certain organisation and distribution of space and time and a linear and teleological progression. The prescribed *telos* of writing and of travel, that is, the totalities of the book and of *Oikos* respectively, enabled the interlacing of these

notions and their articulation in powerful metaphors such as "*the Great Book of the World*," which the traveller traversed, read, or inscribed. However, beyond and within their historico-metaphysical configurations and interconnections, travel *and* writing, as will be suggested, manifest an inscriptive force that disrupts oppositional and dialectical designations announcing at once the closure and the re-opening of the book and *Oikos*, that is, the beginning of writing and travel.

Travel Beyond Oikos

As was shown in the previous chapter, Derrida in *White Mythology* centres his elaboration on metaphor around the two major metaphors of *light* and *home*, instigating an objection from Ricoeur to such a "privileging." However, these metaphors, according to Derrida, have a significant function in the history of metaphysics as they are constitutive of the primary philosophemes of *eidos* and *idea* (from the Greek *orān*, which means *to see*) and of the *proper*, which is linked to the notions of *property* and *proximity*. *Light* and *home* are not random metaphors and deserve special treatment because they can be said to define the very movement of metaphor. Metaphorisation in metaphysics always involves a moment of *ideal*isation and a moment of *re-appropriation*.[8] This is why Derrida objects to Du Marsais' foregrounding of the metaphor of the house over that of light. For Du Marsais the metaphor of *home* or *house* is structurally important for the concept of metaphor, which he conceives as "*a borrowed dwelling*". He understands this figure –the metaphor of the house- as signifying metaphor itself. Derrida:

> "it is a metaphor of metaphor; an expropriation, a being-outside-one's-own-residence, but still in a dwelling, outside its own residence but still in a residence in which one comes back to oneself, recognises oneself, reassembles oneself or resembles oneself, outside oneself in oneself."[9]

The trajectory of metaphor, thus described, is framed within a dialectical back and forth movement within the space of properness/residence. The metaphor of light is also an integral part in this movement. Metaphor is an "*expropriation*," a moving away from what is *proper*, "one's own", but always in *view* and in *sight* of a *re-appropriation*, of "the self-presence of the idea in its own light". One outside one's residence *returns* to oneself, to an *enlarged*, en*light*ened, "*reassembled*"" self, gaining *self-consciousness* and *recognition*. The self is reassembled rejoicing in the *profit* of its *expenditure*, in the *capitalisation* and *interiorisation* of new meaning. Through this

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[8]Derrida, "White Mythology", p. 253.
[9]Ibid.

journey the self aspires to the *mastery* of meaning and, eventually, to *self-mastery*. This is the vocabulary of the dialectics of metaphor at its most Hegelian moment, which Ricoeur largely shares. This is also the hermeneutic premise of travel.

In the beginning of this chapter it was argued that travel and metaphor are essentially linked through a common structure of movement. In effect, everything that has been so far elaborated with regard to the metaphysical couple of proper and metaphor can be extended to a problematic of the couple of *Oikos* and *travel*. *Oikos* incorporates here the senses of property, proximity, of the familiar, the known, and domestic. *Oikos is properness itself.* And travel, the being away from *Oikos*, is what induces disappropriation, distance, the unfamiliar, unknown and foreign. *Oikos* is presence, nearness, interiority. Travel is *loss* of presence, remoteness, exteriority. Finally, *Oikos* is the *same*. Travel is the *other*. Like all metaphysical couples *Oikos* and travel are bound together in a hierarchical relation that in this case prioritises the former. *Oikos* is posited before travel and the latter is conceived as a derivation or an accident befalling its essence. Travel, thus, is secondary to *Oikos*. Should we say that *Oikos* and travel *move* together in a dialectical course that aims at the re-appropriation of the former? What, then, would this *movement* say about the concept of *Oikos*? What would the essence of *Oikos* be if it has to be *supplemented* by travel in order to attain self-presence?

Travel is submitted to *Oikos*, to an economy of the same, to an *"oikonomia,"* which literally means *the law of the house*. If it were not so, travel would involve the absolute *loss of the house*, it would expose it to an absolute risk. Travel is, indeed, a risky business. But it can also be a profitable business. In both cases, what is at risk or what is gained is *Oikos*, both the prime mover and prohibition of travel. If *Oikos* is provisionally lost, it has to be regained and reaffirmed. *Oikos* then is the point of departure and final destination. Eventually travel has to stop. This is the condition of travel as formulated by *the-law-of-the-house*. Travel in its metaphysical designation consists of a departure from home always in view of a *return*. Whether this is actually accomplished is circumstantial. *Return essentially belongs to the structure of travel.*[10]

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[10] As Derrida maintains, "O*ikonomia* would always follow the path of Ulysses." Derrida, Jacques, *Given Time: 1.Counterfeit* Money, translated by Peggy Kamuf, Chigago, University of Chigago Press, 1992, p. 7. Even if return is not physically achieved, in the eco-nomics, that is, in the metaphysics of travel, it is always posited as a desirable and commanding destination. Travel can take the form of nostalgia; it is the dream of a return home that can be the longing for a place where one would feel at home and not necessarily one's actual original place of

Oikos, origin, identity, sameness or properness regulate and, finally, incorporate travel, derivation, difference, otherness and metaphor in the eco-nomy of the same. This is the dialectics of travel, which is not just one designation among others. It undercuts travel and travel literature throughout its history from the journey of Ulysses back home, to the narratives of exploration and conquest, to *picaresque* literature and the *Bildungsroman*, to the *Grand Tour* up to tourist brochures, which promise self-fulfilment and capitalisation of experience. This, however, does not collapse every sense of travel and every form of travel writing to a single, homogeneous discourse but points to the premises with which travel has always had to negotiate. *Oikos* may appear as an axiom, but it is, nevertheless, an axiom that the theory of travel cannot dispense with. It will always be repeated, reinscribed, rearticulated in the text of travel safeguarding, in this way, its continuity, its endurance, its unity as an object of study, even at the moment of its dissemination and erasure. Even at the moment the relation of *Oikos* and travel becomes a *trace* forbidding their clear-cut distinction, these traditional notions are indispensable.

Let us go back to the key notions that have been up to now our guidelines, namely, *distanciation* and *différance*. *Distanciation* is posited by Ricoeur as the positive condition for interpretation and is essentially designated as a dialectical notion. As was elaborated in the previous chapter, Ricoeur analyses *distanciation* in terms of dialectical pairs, for instance, *event* and *meaning*, which all fall within the primary pair of *belonging* and *distanciation*. This dialectical couple and its concurrent pairs of *same* and *other*, *identity* and *difference*, *proximity* and *distance*, also take effect in the opposition between *Oikos* and travel which concerns us here. It has to be clear that *Oikos* is used here in a broad sense that includes all the signifying structures that constitute and traverse the interpreting subject. *Oikos* represents all literalised meanings, institutions, cultural conventions, historical vantage points and hermeneutic presuppositions that the traveller inhabits. *Oikos*, hence, is presence and proximity also in the form of consciousness, the habitat of meaning.

In a similar way with metaphor, which consists of a deviation from a proper meaning by means of a transposition to an unfamiliar semantic field and of the reduction of this deviation through contextual interaction, travel marks a detour from *Oikos* and exposes the subject to a foreign cultural horizon inducing a process of

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residence. In this sense, the law of the house also commands the exile, the fugitive, the nomad, the cosmopolitan, the visionary of utopias.

interpretation, eventually, resolved in a *fusion of horizons*. Distanciation in both cases is a necessary and positive condition. One must bear in mind that hermeneutics assumes the task of overcoming "cultural distance" and "historical alienation," which can take various forms that are gathered under the notion of the *horizon of the text* in its broader sense, that is, as a system of interrelated signs (linguistic or cultural). Hermeneutics undertakes to abstract similarity from difference, to create sameness out of otherness, to establish an order of regulated polysemy. *Hermeneutics is a struggle for univocity*. However, this can only advance by means of a mediation, distanciation, or metaphor. One must acquire distance from home and be exposed to an alien semantic or cultural horizon in order to attain a new and fuller *insight* into *home*. *Understanding* comes as a result of a tension and conflict between interpretations. And in the hermeneutics of Ricoeur, understanding always implies *self-understanding*. Similarly to the metaphorical process, at the moment two cultural horizons, that of the traveller and that of the visited culture, meet and clash, a tension is produced which makes their deeper structures of meaning appear. At this juncture, understanding is still held in suspension. It takes the labour of interpretation, which draws on already established meanings, which submits to *the-law-of-the-house*, for this tension to be resolved in a semantic fusion. The traveller in the end returns to *Oikos*, or should we say that *Oikos* returns to the traveller? The traveller is provisionally dispossessed of his/herself only to re-emerge an enlarged self. This process forms the dialectic of distanciation and *appropriation,* which amounts to a *self-understanding before the text*. The text, in this case a distanced cultural horizon, opens up a new world for the traveller which offers an invitation and an opportunity for the actualisation of his/her *ownmost* (*oikeies* as one's own) possibilities. This is the profit of travel, the hermeneutic experience of travel.

Accordingly, travel is the interpretative experience of a subject who is transposed to a foreign cultural horizon. This is, of course, the hermeneutic premise of travel and not necessarily "what actually happens". The above formulation would describe the ideal traveller in an ideal situation, a subject who painstakingly and consciously struggles to achieve understanding as self-understanding. Ricoeur admits that such a situation would be practically impossible and this is why he incorporates the *critique of ideology* and of *false consciousness* into his hermeneutic project. The critique of ideology attempts to lay bare the structures of power and knowledge and to dispel "illusions" of the subject that distort and inhibit communication. In the case of the traveller, this would demand a copious analysis of the discursive structures and

relations of power which determine and interfere with the experience of travel as much as with its representation and articulation in the travel text. Such studies, which are today in abundance, tackle travel writing particularly from post-colonial and gender point of views concentrating mainly on questions of cultural identity, representation, race and genre.[11] Nonetheless, does not the critique of ideology and discourse analysis in attempting to expose and dismantle the layers and constructions of power assume and presuppose the possibility of an unprohibited communicative situation, a hermeneutic ideal? And does not the positing of such a possibility, even though untenable, evade the question of its own essential presuppositions? Are we sure of what we mean by experience, presence, meaning, home and travel?

The notion of *différance* proposes a radical rethinking of these concepts, which are often taken as self-evident.[12] "Experience" and "presence" have been inextricably related in the history of metaphysics, whether they were understood and treated as *exteriority* or *interiority*, in the form of consciousness or not.[13] This is to say that meaning, either reduced to an "empirical consciousness", that is, to a psychic reality, or to a "transcendental consciousness" (*ideality*), or to the exterior world

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[11] For instance, Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes, Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London, Routledge, 1992, Sarah Mill's *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel-Writing and Colonialism*, London, Routledge, 1991, David Spurr's *The Rhetoric of Empire, Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, Durham & London, Duke University Press, 1993, Derek Gregory's and James Duncan's (eds), *Writes of Passage: Travel Writing, Place, Ambiguity*, London, Routledge, 1999, Inderpal Grewal, *Home and Harem: Imperialism, Nationalism and the Culture of Travel*, Durham, Duke University Press, 1996.

[12] Even approaches that acknowledge the *complexity* and *hybridity* of such notions as the subject, culture, identity and so forth mainly foregrounding and "celebrating" difference, cannot always avoid the "trap" of *relativism*. Questioning firm positions and "closed" identities, in many cases, entails prioritising "difference" over "sameness." It is thus the reversal of the same logic. To champion relativism, in a way, is also to endorse a "relational" logic that necessarily implies the pre-existence of certain identities, at least of a minimal *identificatory* operation, which allows for the *relata* to come together and signify interactively. *Deconstruction, it must be clear, is not the practice of relativism.* It already disrupts the *relata* as such and relational logic on the whole. *Relata* and *relation* emerge together without the precondition of a minimal and simple identity. The emergence of meaning, however, is not without a certain rhythm and structure; it is not the unbounded play of signs and differences. Another crucial difference between *deconstruction* and *relativism* is that the former engages in bringing out and intercepting rigorous structures, that is, the enduring structures that traverse the discourse of metaphysics, in a rigorous way. This does not amount to a levelling off of the particularity of any given context. It is what multiplies differences within contexts without implying that anything is possible or that anything goes. Relativistic attitudes by not attending to these rigorous structures foster a "naïve" conception of the "values" of identity and difference, which, ultimately, go uncontested.

[13] According to Derrida, "experience" has "always designated the relationship with a presence whether that relationship had the form of consciousness or not." Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 60.

(*factuality*) that then grafts itself onto consciousness, has always presupposed the definiteness of something *unified* and *present*. "Interior" and "exterior" constitute a fundamental metaphysical opposition, one that grounds *transcendental* (i.e., the assumption of the existence of *a priori* categories) and *empirical* thinking (the reduction of experience and knowledge to the sensible, factual world), one which allows for the oppositions between *spirit* and *matter*, *subject* and *object*, *signified* and *signifier*, *speech* and *writing*, what allows for *logocentrism in toto*. These divisions are put into question by Derrida, who maintains that interiority and exteriority divide and traverse each other.[14] Because experience cannot be simply reduced to the *intuition* of a *fully present object* since the latter involves a process of *temporalisation*, which constitutes and divides its intended object out of and in its past and future "presentations" (retentions and protentions), because interiority and exteriority cannot be in a relation of direct and transparent correspondence, *there can be no pure experience* lived as such. Meaning neither originates from the "real" world, nor from consciousness but rather emerges from the relation of the world to consciousness, as the world *for* consciousness. It emerges out of a *space* opened between consciousness and the world, a space, however, which also opens and destines them to each other. Sense or meaning then becomes the "nonreal component" of lived experience.[15]

Meaning emerges from a difference between "the world" and "lived experience", a difference and a relation, which is not preceded by constituted realities, which is already a *trace*, and which bears the imprints of what could be reduced to such "realities."[16] This is to say that, concrete contents can be constituted solely on the condition of the "reduction of the trace". According to Derrida, meaning is not something disclosed or intuited in the fullness of a present as such, but rather arises out of the constant repetition, that is, the *iteration* and *alteration* of differential relations that form chains of traces. The trace, no more interior (consciousness) than exterior (world), no more intelligible than sensible, opens up a space for the inscription and the production of meaning. It is the nonsimple origin, the originary difference or *différance* that gives the condition for all difference and for all chains of differences. The trace then does not have a representational structure since it does not stand for something absent. It is neither an empirical mark, nor an ideal content: it is

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[14] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 35.
[15] Ibid., p. 64.
[16] Ibid., p. 65.

nothing present in itself, hence, nothing presentable or re-presentable. This is why Derrida's thought of the trace has vast implications for the metaphysical notion of the sign, which is essentially premised upon a representational function, that is, the function of standing for an absent thing, a past or future present.[17] Removing or dislocating meaning from this representational logic is what *makes a trace of the sign*, intercepting, thereby, a fundamental metaphysical notion.[18] This is not to say, however, that the sign is prior to the trace. The sign does not turn into a trace, but rather becomes thinkable through what is called "the movement of the reduction of the trace." However, since the trace does not exist, there is neither sign nor trace: all that endures is the process of *the-becoming-sign-of-the-trace*.

The critique of presence has vast implications for Ricoeurian hermeneutics, according to which meaning is always produced and understood in the event of discourse, in a present that overdetermines it. For Ricoeur, meaning is actualised as a "dialogical event", which is traversed by the subject's intention to communicate in a particular situation. The intention of the subject, the "soul" of discourse, is part of the contextual determination of meaning, of what furnishes singularity, particularity and definiteness to the otherwise fleeting event of language. Now, Derrida neither disclaims the eventfulness of meaning nor discards the necessity of a theory of discourse but rather objects to their organisation around "a collectivity of *presences*" (for instance, a present signifying intentionality and a present and available object). Of course, Ricoeur also speaks of the openness of words or signs to new meanings (and thus of a certain ambiguity that upsets the "presence" of meaning), which is effected through the workings of metaphor, the force behind semantic innovation. The crucial difference is that while Ricoeur accommodates innovation as the

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[17] Saussure designated the signifying function as the outcome of the play and the differential chains of signs, that is, of arbitrary and unmotivated linguistic entities without positive terms. He thus broke away from a tripartite concept of meaning as the unity of signifier-signified-thing. However, he still largely maintained the theme of presence, since the unity of the signifier-signified (and thus the presence of sense in each of its empirical occurrences), as we shall later see, goes uncontested.

[18] *Différance* forbids the reduction of meaning to an interior or exterior experience or presence. Meaning emerges out of imprints, of traces which, as traces, are neither totally present nor totally absent but infinitely relate and refer themselves to other traces, to traces of traces, always differing and deferring themselves. The thought of *différance* is not a structural explanation of language celebrating and affirming playfulness in detriment of vigorousness and seriousness, a rejoicing in depriving it of any possibility of definite meaning. The formal play of signs as traces is a rigorous structure that manifests, on the one hand, the essential impossibility of the appearance and reappearance of an ever same and present meaning but, on the other hand, constitutes the essential possibility of all meaning.

dialectical counterpart of a rigorous and regulative order of meanings, *polysemy*, Derrida questions this very order by opposing to it the notion of *dissemination*, which does not accept comfortable settlements of literalised senses precisely because it challenges what Ricoeur tends to presuppose: the possibility of demarcating between literal and metaphorical meaning.

So, according to this thinking, what would the meaning of *Oikos* be –up to now understood as presence, interiority, and self-proximity- if its unity or self-consistency is no more secure and self-evident? What would "*Oikos*" as the *home-of-meaning* "mean" if the very notion of meaning becomes infinitely complicated?

Up to now *Oikos* and travel have been used in a holistic mode without paying attention to the discursiveness, contextuality, and historicity of the notions, articulations and "experiences" gathered under these headings. Do house, dwelling, home, at home, or voyage, displacement, the exile, the nomad, fall into the same totalised categories of *Oikos* and travel? An anthropological or cultural study of travel relations would probably answer negatively and would examine the contextual and historical specificity of these terms. It is absolutely necessary that attention is paid to cultural particularities and formations and to the way these delimit travel. Caren Kaplan in her *Questions of Travel, Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* calls for the historisation and contextualisation of the notions of "home" and "away" and of the mystified and universalised figure of the "traveller," as these occur in the so-called modernist and postmodernist critical and literary discourses.[19] In her view, these discourses abundantly and uncritically use prevalent metaphors of "travel" and "displacement" rarely admitting to the material conditions, the specific historical, geographical, political and primarily colonial circumstances surrounding and giving rise to particular experiences. Her argument is that "although modern imperialism does not structure every aspect of culture in every site around the globe [...] the emergence of terms of *travel* and *displacement* (as well as their *oppositional counterparts*, *home* and *location*) in contemporary criticism must be linked to the histories of the production of colonial discourses." (my italics)[20] The validity of this argument is not objected to here. "Travel" and "displacement," which Kaplan designates as modernist and postmodernist metaphors respectively, do receive diverse historical determinations and critical delineations, whose conditions of emergence

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[19] Kaplan, Caren, *Questions of Travel, Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, London, Duke University Press, 1996.

need to be considered so as to reduce the danger of homogenising experiences of "travel" under generalised figures such as the "exile", the "tourist" and the "nomad". Kaplan disapproves of James Clifford's use of the term "travel" which, in her opinion, unwarrantedly functions as "a kind of *ur*metaphor"[21] for all experiences of displacement. "Travel" cannot shake off the legacy of its European and bourgeois histories and traditions and, therefore, cannot incorporate "the histories of mass immigrations and more collective displacement." Kaplan opts for the term "displacement" for the description of more recent, "post-modern" collective movements and dislocations, from which she wants to address the "modernist" experiences and articulations of "travel". Although Clifford admits that "the marking of 'travel' by gender, class, race, and culture is all too clear" and that he struggles, "never quite successfully, to free the related term 'travel' from a history of European, literary, male, bourgeois, scientific, heroic, recreational meanings and practices"[22], he hangs on to

> " 'travel' as a term of cultural comparison precisely because of its historical taintedness, its associations with gendered, racial bodies, class privilege, specific means of conveyance, beaten paths, agents, frontiers, documents, and the like."[23]

"Travel" then is used by Clifford as a "translation term", that is, "a word of apparently general application used for comparison in a strategic and contingent way."[24] In this way, Clifford is able to address a continuous, "global", "broad" and relatively unified sense of travel, since his aim is "to make some sense, or senses, of people going places"[25] and at the same time to take account of and to account for the historical, contingent and heterogeneous experiences of travel. What Clifford calls "translation term" or "comparative concept" is not a singular site for comparison but is built up of "imperfect equivalences" without being able to fully account for any of them:

> "My expansive use of 'travel' goes a certain distance and falls apart into nonequivalents, overlapping experiences marked by different translation terms: 'diaspora,' 'borderland,' 'immigration,' 'migrancy,' 'tourism,' 'pilgrimage,' 'exile'".[26]

"Travel" here does not refer to an original sense that has been translated, metaphorised, or interpreted according to specific historical contexts. One might say,

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[20] Ibid., p. 2.
[21] Ibid., p. 131.
[22] Clifford, James, "Traveling Cultures" in *Routes, Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, London, Harvard University Press, 1997, pp. 31-33.
[23] Ibid., p. 39.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Clifford, *Routes*, p.2.
[26] Ibid., p. 11.

stretching Clifford's argument, that the multiple senses gathered under the term "travel" are translations without an original. It is through its historically specific experiences and inscriptions that a general notion of travel emerges, giving also rise to a sense of translation from the particular to the general, and not inversely. Thus, there is no single, unified or original sense of "travel" that would define every experience of travel as such. If a sense of travel is possible it is because these "experiences" have a certain structural continuity, a minimal identity, which is not pre-given but rather emerges from their historical instantiations. Any preoccupation with the "notion of travel" should begin with the question *what is travel*, that is, with the question of the *meaning* and *history of travel*. In seeking to write a history of travel, one is not doing anything else but following the trajectory of the meaning of "travel". However, this pre-posits an original sense, a unified and simple *etymon*. Then the question becomes: *what is the origin of travel*? (a question, however, which already presupposes that of *what is the sense of origin* in general.) Since a certain sense of travel is already comprehended and anticipated in this question, it is the particular instantiations and events of travel that *will always have been* the guiding thread for a preoccupation of the sort. It is through and across history that a sense, with all its polysemic configurations, arises in a way that makes room for thinking *ideality* and *history* together. Meaning emerges across history without, however, being merely historical, since for there to be meaning, there has to be a certain ideality, a structure of repetition that creates effects of *samenes*.[27] A repetition, however, across contexts always implies *alteration* and difference. This structure of sameness and difference, which is inconceivable outside history, but even more, which produces a "history" of travel, is what concerns us here.

Without dismissing Kaplan's project, this thesis proposes a re-examination of the notion of travel. Even in a study such as Kaplan's, which argues for the historisation and contextualisation of cultural formations and practices as well as of critical categories and bears the title *Questions of Travel*, the notions of *Oikos* and

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[27] In treating any subject one should begin with the question of its origin of meaning, even if this proves to be something impure and always already disrupted. For instance, Derrida comes about the question of "what is art" in the same way. He writes with regard to the at once structural and historical values of meaning: "the crossing [of history] can in this case just as well denote historicism, the determining character of the historicity of meaning, as it can denote ahistoricity, history crossed, transfixed in the direction of meaning, in the sense of a meaning [*le sens d'un sens*] in itself ahistorical." Derrida, Jacques, *The Truth in Painting*, translated by Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod, London, The University of Chicago Press, 1987, p. 20. So it is not a question of choosing between a structural or a historical approach but to ponder over the signifying conditions that make them both possible.

travel or "home and away", which is the opening phrase of the book, retain an organising and regulative function. We are still tackling questions of travel, of an at least minimally unified subject, which is oppositionally conceived to the notion of *home*. Kaplan is interested in both the continuities and discontinuities between and within the multiple discourses of modernism and postmodernism. She argues that despite the former's foregrounding of "elitist", "aesthetised" and "individualised" figures of the "traveller" and the "exile" and the latter's preoccupation with the collective but also fragmented and scattered experiences of tourism, diaspora, nomadism and immigration, they both taint and traverse each other. These continuities and discontinuities within the very notion of travel already contextualised in the discourses of modernism and postmodernism should be addressed, according to Kaplan, from a historical point of view. However, as will be argued here, these transformations also participate and emerge from a structure that may be itself historically produced but which also forms the "quasi-transcendental" condition for the signification of *Oikos* and travel, a historical rather than transcendental *a priori*. This is the structural and necessary relation between *Oikos* and travel, which lets them signify through effects of properness and metaphor, and which when dialecticised and gathered under definite meanings (of home and away) may and indeed has inflicted violence, of which a high point has been *colonialism*.

If colonialism has been able to so thoroughly and indeed diversely redefine and change the face of the world drawing maps, giving rise to historical and political entities, redistributing power, this was so also due to reasons that cannot be accounted for solely on empirico-historical grounds. It is also of primary importance to acknowledge and examine the place that the notions of *Oikos* and travel at work behind the practice of colonialism hold in the history of metaphysics and in the systematic and enduring structures that "ensure (us of) the transmission and uninterrupted continuity –however highly differentiated- of all the moments of Metaphysics."[28]

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[28] Derrida continues: "If one does not acknowledge this powerful, systematic truth, one no longer knows what one is talking about in allegedly interrupting, transgressing, exceeding, etc., 'metaphysics,' 'philosophy,' etc. And, without a rigorous critical and deconstructive acknowledgement of the system, the very necessary attention to differences, disruptions, mutations, leaps, restructurations, etc., becomes ensnarled [sic] in slogans, in dogmatic stupidity, in empiricist precipitation –or all of these at once; and in any event lets the very discourse it believes it is putting into question be dictated to itself *a tergo*." Derrida, Jacques, "*Ousia* and *Grammē*: Note on a Note from *Being and Time*," *Margins of Philosophy*, translated by Alan Bass, London, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1982, p. 39.

The systematic preoccupation with the signifying conditions of *Oikos* and travel and the enduring structures that allow for their perpetuation and continuity does not simply pertain to a rhetorical codification or formal taxonomy. The aim here is not to replace historical explications by ahistorical and ever same categories, by virtual constructions and structural rules which do not admit to historical, political and ethical questions. On the contrary, these structures bring forth the general conditions of signification and historicity of senses of being at home and away, which also give rise to particular notions and representations of *Oikos* and travel. It is in language where there already lies the possibility of *Oikos* and travel. It is in its signifying movement, which is torn apart between a drive towards mastery, adequacy and *appropriation* of meaning and a counter drive towards metaphor, dissemination and *ex-appropriation* that *Oikos* and travel become thinkable. Language as the "house of meaning" is what gives the possibility and "deconstructability" of "the-at-home" by exposing it to an internal, so to speak, exteriority, forbidding thus the serene closure in the familiarity of the house but also promising the "other", the beyond, the still unthinkable.

Travel is always already implicated in the *appropriating* and *ex-appropriating* force of meaning and far from being a neutral term is ridden with historical meaning. The association of the term "travel" with Eurocentric, male, humanistic, in short, with authoritative discourses, is not superseded here since it brings into play and makes more evident the semantic structures that essentially implicate it with imperialistic enterprises. This is also why this term is useful for a study of the metaphysics of "travel", the critique of presence and logocentrism. "Travel" is not chosen here for the specific historical determinations it has received as a term, but it refers to a structure that has made these determinations possible, the structure of semantic movement that defines and engenders senses of home and away. It has to be stressed that to recognize this structure is not to produce a holistic or reductive definition but rather to point to the condition of possibility for both a general meaning of "travel" (for a concept must have *generality*) and its differential and singular instantiations (for generality is nothing outside and before "its" singular inscriptions). This is what gives the chance of thinking generality and singularity, concept and event together. We shall take up this point in the next chapter.

What concerns us is the binary thinking of *Oikos* and travel as this takes shape within the tradition of Western metaphysics. The preoccupation with the

metaphysics of travel and its deconstructive challenge is not simply a matter of choice here. When we think of "travel" we necessarily do so in terms of a place of departure and arrival, even if these are not always easily determinable. In other words, "travel" is indissociable from a certain sense of derivation and destination or *telos*. Now, is it possible to break free from the centripetal force of home? Travel is never disengaged from some sense of homeliness. It is not implied here that *Oikos* is the negative condition of travel that has to be overcome. An evaluation of the sort would amount to no more than a reversal of hierarchy that would reaffirm its logic and would fail to think through the essential relation of these notions. What is proposed is a rethinking of the house and of travel that would disrupt their totalising effects and that would make room for an event of encounter with otherness that would not subordinate difference to sameness. If one tried to formalise how a deconstructive reading works, one could point to two supplementary gestures that pertain to the double or "doubling" movement of "deconstruction", which is, however, already at work within the notions themselves and not something imposed from the outside. It is through *reversing* the priority *Oikos* over travel and through the *displacement* and *generalisation* of the latter that oppositional coupling can be exceeded. Once again, we revert to the figure of metaphor in order to extend its Derridean generalisation to the notion of travel.

From now on, the metaphor of travel, "travel as metaphor", can no longer appear as a metaphor in the usual sense. Its abyssal generalisation forbids this. Nor can home, what is known and familiar, be "at home" in the infinite detour and deferral of meaning. Derrida in "The Retrait of Metaphor" reflects on the Heideggerian *quasi-metaphor* of the "house of Being." The subject of this quasi-metaphor is language, what allows Being to be thought, what Being inhabits and where Being is sheltered and cared for.[29] "It is language that tells us about the essence of a thing, provided that we respect language's own essence."[30] And it is by virtue of language's *appropriative* force that the house, property, propriety and properness become thinkable.[31] If this expression were taken as a metaphor in the traditional

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[29] "Die Sprache is rather the house of Being, in which living there, man ek-sists, in that he belongs to the truth of Being by assuming its guardianship." Martin Heidegger, *Letter on Humanism*, quotation from "The Retrait of Metaphor", p. 25.

[30] Heidegger, Martin, "Building Dwelling Thinking" in *Basic Writings from Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*, edited by David Farrell Krell, London, Routledge, 1993. English translation 1977 by Harper Collins, p. 348.

[31] To suggest this is not to reduce everything involved with *Oikos* and thus travel to linguistic structures strictly regulated by linguistic norms. That would be a form of linguisticism or

sense, it would function as a way to approach something distant and unknown, "Being," by means of something familiar, the "house." However, this would tell us nothing about the subject of the expression, "language":

> "Discourse about the house of Being is not a metaphor transporting the image of the 'house' toward Being, but it is by way of *appropriating* thinking the essence of Being that we will one day be able to think what 'house' and 'to inhabit' are."[32](my italics)

The house becomes possible by way of thinking our mode of *being-in-the-world*, by coming closer, approximating, appropriating, making proper meaning out of *Being*, out of the ways we find ourselves in the world. According to Heidegger, thinking *Being* is already a *dwelling*.

In "Building Dwelling Thinking" Heidegger designates *dwelling* not as something we do but rather as what we are, as what defines *Dasein*, the *being* that we are. It is because we are capable of dwelling, because dwelling is proper to the essence of our being, that we construct buildings to dwell in. "Dwelling is the manner in which mortals are on the earth." Dwelling means to *remain*, to stay in a place and to stay with the things that surround us. And to *remain* for Heidegger signifies to set free, to make room for, to spare:

> "Real sparing is something *positive* and takes place when we leave something beforehand in its own essence, when we return it specifically to its essential being, when we 'free' it in the proper sense of the word into a preserve of peace. To dwell, to be set at peace, means to remain at peace within the free, the preserve, the free sphere that safeguards each thing in its essence. *The fundamental character of dwelling is this sparing.* It pervades dwelling in its whole range."[33]

And it is in language that the essence of *dwelling*, the mode of *Dasein's being-in-the-world* and its *being-with* things and other *Daseins*, can be thought of and cared for.

> "Dwelling, however, is *the basic character of Being*, in keeping with which mortals exist. Perhaps this attempt to think about dwelling and building will bring out somewhat more clearly that building belongs to dwelling and how it receives its essence from dwelling. Enough will have been gained if dwelling and building have become *worthy of questioning* and thus have remained *worthy of thought*."[34]

In this sense the question of *Oikos* arises anew and primarily as the question of dwelling, that is, a more radical condition than the circumscribed locality of the house taken for the origin of travel. Before calling upon the properties of the house,

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logocentrism that would, moreover, imply a language in a pure and diaphanous state in full correspondence with the world. Proper meaning and metaphor, *Oikos* and travel, with all their related notions and their syntactic or spacio-temporal motifs, arise from what Derrida calls *writing* in the generalised sense, that is, the condition of possibility for the inscription of meaning, something that exceeds language in the narrow sense.

[32] Heidegger, Martin, quotation from "The Retrait of Metaphor", p. 24.

[33] Heidegger, Martin, "Building Dwelling Thinking", p. 351.

[34] Ibid., p. 362.

one would have to address the question of how the house comes into being, how appropriation becomes possible. In order for the house to become thinkable in its essence, that is, in order for the *Being* of the house to appear, or inversely in order to think *Being* by way of the house, it would take more than a mutually illuminating drawing together of these notions. It is by virtue of language and its appropriative (and to be sure, ex-appropriative) forces that both the house and *Being* become thinkable. But this would also signify that neither the house nor *Being* are re-presented or fully manifested in language. They both become possible and desirable by way of their *withdrawal* from language. We are referring here to an originary ex-appropriation or exile of truth, essence and meaning from language; an exile, however, that opens the path to an impossible yet necessary re-appropriation, by way of which everything becomes thinkable.

To return to the metaphor of language, "the house of Being" should not be treated as a metaphor in the Ricoeurian sense. Derrida disagrees with Ricoeur's reading of Heidegger's *The Principle of Reason*, which is also cited in "White Mythology," in a passage which is at the centre of Ricoeur's critique. Ricoeur maintains that Heidegger's distrust of metaphor is undermined by his abundant use of metaphors, which defeat the thematic exposition of the notion. In contrast, Derrida's view is that a metaphorology of the sort would be "almost *catastrophic*" for Heidegger's text and its main theme, which is the *withdrawal-of-Being-or-of-metaphor*. The phrase "the withdrawal of Being or of metaphor" is not to be taken as a metaphor in the strict, intra-metaphysical sense. "Withdrawal" and "Being" or "metaphor" are not mutually illuminated by being drawn together in this phrase. "Being", metaphor and proper meaning do not pre-exist their withdrawal, nor does "withdrawal" have any meaning before its inscription as the withdrawal of *Being*.[35] Since *Being* is not a determinate being, since it "presents" itself only in concealment and dissimulation, it is neither fully present nor totally absent, but manifests itself in retreating. The *ontological* question of *Being*, the thought of the essence and meaning of the *ontic*, that is, of empirical *beings* or entities, becomes possible and desirable by way of this "a priori withdrawal" that makes room for thinking in general. If the truth and meaning of beings were manifest in their full presence and radiance, thinking and language would be made redundant. It is out of the opening of the space of ontological difference or *différance* (though these notions are not identical), of the

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[35] Derrida, "The Retrait of Metaphor", pp. 22-23.

discursive space where meaning comes to be inscribed, that the proper meaning of beings is sought for and effected. It is also through thinking this difference that language and the established concepts of the proper and metaphor are disrupted and unable to literally, properly signify. So the "withdrawal of Being or metaphor" is more than a metaphor (*stricto sensu*) and yet nothing but metaphor or metaphoricity. *Plus de métaphore*. Likewise, "the house of Being" does not open a path from the 'house' to 'Being' nor does 'Being' through a tropic inversion say or promise "more about the house than the house about Being" but it "speaks above all *of* language and therefore in it of metaphoricity",[36] metaphor in the generalised sense. The "house of Being" is no more proper than it is metaphorical.

The Heideggerian *Destruktion* of the proper and metaphor in the metaphysical sense gives way to an originary thinking of the trajectory or *path* (*Weg*) of language as *the way to Being*. The way to language and the way to *Being* opened up by the withdrawal of proper meaning and metaphor (in the intra-metaphysical sense), that is, by the originary ex-appropriation of meaning, already bears the imprints of an originary thought of travel revealing its existential condition as the "*voyage of Being.*" The withdrawal of meaning signals the "*mise en chemin*" [*Geschick*] of *Being*, another *quasi-metaphorical* phrase, since *Being* never appears as such but is always already imparted and dissimulated in beings. It is always on its way, never at home. This is also what gives the possibility of all paths, journeys and destinations.[37] Language then is not the house of *Being*, at least not in an unproblematic way, for it cannot gather *Being* in itself but only promise it. This is, however, language's very condition of existence: promising itself as the *sheltering* place of *Being*. It is through this promise that language *and* Being, language *as* the house of Being, begin to signify. Since nothing signifies as such in a self-revealing way, since *language only names improperly* by at once totalising and dividing everything involved in the signifying process, the possibility of both language and (the) thought (of Being) must have opened up by what is called originary trace or *incision*, that is, the totality of traits or traces, which open, split aside, hold together

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[36] Ibid. pp. 24-25.

[37] "En ce sens, Heidegger serait le premier penseur du voyage originaire de l'origine." Malabou, p. 125. According to Catherine Malabou, Heidegger engages in an unprecedented thinking about travel which opens out to all paths, destinations and destinies: "Heidegger dégage donc un sens tout à fait inouï du voyage: ni propre, ni littéral, comme ouverture originaire de tous les chemins, de tous les destinations et de tous les destins. Cet excès de la mise en chemin sur la métaphoricité et la littéralité du chemin ne provient d'aucune surabondance, d'aucune plénitude d'origine, mais du tracé d'un trait [...]" Ibid., p. 128.

the possibility of language.[38] Both "house" and "Being" then signify on the condition of this incision, for *Being*, what qualifies being as being, can only be thought in and *after the fact* of language, which through its re-appropriative drive becomes the "shelter" or the "house" of *Being* and thus also makes the meaning of "house" in general possible. The trace that opens language is not originary in the proper sense of origin. It is not the foundation from which everything emanates. Nor is it, as usually understood, a remainder, derivation (the trace is not a metaphor) or modification. Nothing precedes the trace and yet everything has always already begun with the trace. One would have to renounce any security with regard to the notion of the house as a place of origin, even if this entails giving up what is familiar and proximate, and start thinking of the house as "a place of withdrawal": "It is necessary to come back to where we are without properly being there."[39] If this withdrawal with no precedent is everything there is, if we live by it, think by it, and reside in it, in "the non-near of proximity" of *Oikos*, in the *neighbourhood* of home, without properly being "at home", then everything erupts out of a difference or incision which is more originary, that is, structurally older than what is called by Heidegger "ontico-ontological difference". Ontological difference, that is, the difference between the *Being* of being as such and present beings, is already incised by the concealed trait that makes it thinkable:

> "Being nothing, [the trait of the incision] does not appear itself, it has no proper and independent phenomenality, and in not disclosing itself it withdraws, it is structurally in withdrawal, as a divergence, opening, differentiality, trace, border, traction, effraction, etc. From the moment that it withdraws in drawing itself out, the trait is *a priori* withdrawal, unappearance, and effacement of its mark in its incision."[40]

The opening trait of language where *Being* and thus ontological difference come to be thought does not consist of a separation between or the drawing together of two previously constituted presences (*Being* and beings) re-presented in language. Just as *thought* without being identical with *language* is not being said or thought elsewhere (thus language is not reduced to a representational function), the "*mise en chemin*" cannot be simply a passage from something familiar (the house) to something distant, but it is the movement in and through which both come to signify.[41] All that is drawn to the proximity of the house, regulated by the economy of

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[38] Derrida, "The Retrait of Metaphor", p. 31.
[39] Ibid., p. 26.
[40] Ibid., p. 29.
[41] However, as Malabou points out, even though Heidegger puts forward the essential condition for the signification of *Oikos* and travel and pushes these notions to the limit of metaphysics, he remains within the logic of derivation and of the predestined path, on the way to the re-appropriation of the truth of *Being* or the voyage of *Dasein* towards its anticipated and projected

Oikos, by the desire for presence, cannot just simply be there, present in itself. "We reside and move in *neighbourliness*."[42] *Neighbourliness*, again a Heideggerian term, is living in proximity with one another. It is a relation that draws together but in doing so also constitutes and splits the relata in themselves for it does not let them be in their proper selves. *Oikos* and travel, each in the neighbourhood of the other, are (with-)drawn together in a continuous movement to and from one another, along a path which infinitely postpones arrival, an itinerary with no premeditated *telos*. *Oikos* and travel *a priori* withdraw in order to be thought in the *space* opened up by this withdrawal.

But what do we mean by "space" here? One cannot challenge the "naturalness" of the division, circumscription, or mastering of *space* that gives rise to fixed geographical entities and rigid boundaries, before and without asking what allows for such an inscription to "take place," what is that in which it does "take place" and, indeed, what is *place*?

Travel, Space and Time

We previously touched upon Heidegger's notion of *dwelling* as the *par excellence* existential condition of *Dasein*. *Dwelling* essentially presupposes the primordial fact of being thrown into the world, of *Dasein's belonging* to the world with which it attains an immediate and "inconspicuous" familiarity. As Heidegger maintains in the pages dedicated to the question of space in *Being and Time*, *Being-in-the-world* and in *space* is an existential condition for *Dasein*. Thus before *world* and *space*, within which *Dasein* finds and constitutes itself, become the objective field of epistemological cognition and inquiry, they should be addressed from an ontological perspective and moreover from a *fundamental ontology* that goes beyond and deeper than the preoccupation with the *ontic field* (ontic sciences). So space or rather *spatiality* is an *existential* for any entity found within the world.[43] What is determined next is the kind of spatiality pertaining to entities other than *Dasein*, which Heidegger calls *equipment*, and to *Dasein* itself.

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unity or destination. The originary trace, in the end, is not effaced in Heidegger. Malabou, pp. 130-132.

[42] Derrida, "The Retrait of Metaphor", p. 26.

[43] "[I]nasmuch as any entity within-the-*world* is likewise in space, its spatiality will have an ontological connection with the world." Heidegger, Martin, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, Oxford, Blackwell, 1997, p. 134.

Heidegger coins the expression "*ready-to-hand*" in order to characterise the entities we come by and are close to in our everyday dealings. "Readiness-to-hand" expresses the *Being* of equipment and is what allows *Dasein* to have access to and make use of it, to essentially fit it up, set up, and put to rights.[44] The *ready-to-hand* as "what is close in this way gets established by the circumspection of concern" and is made room for, given place, through *Dasein*'s involvement. *Ready-to-hand* is carefully distinguished from *present-at-hand*, which belongs to the definite and objective determination of things by the ontic sciences. Things *present-at-hand* are being calculated, computed, and have their distance measured according to "objective" and pre-established criteria. What allows for this is the essential *readiness-to-hand* of equipment that offers itself to our circumscription. However, whenever the latter is not kept in mind things lose their fundamentally worldly character. For Heidegger, things are not simply discovered randomly in the world but are allotted places in accordance with our involvement. A place presents itself, makes itself appear, as the place of such and such equipment. Out of a multiplicity of possible places a thing is given *directionality*, what Heidegger calls the "whither", and is eventually allocated a place in "the context of equipment that is environmentally ready-to-hand" and to which it belongs at the time.[45] So space is not something pre-given in its pure state. It is fragmentarily discovered through circumspection and is nothing outside the entities that take up and make up space.[46] However, the fragmentary, multiple and provisional character of space has its own unity on the level of its underlying existential condition of spatiality, "through that totality-of-involvements in-accordance-with-the-world [weltmässige] which belongs to the spatially ready-to-hand."[47] It is because of the *readiness-to-hand* of equipment and its essentially spatial dimension that things can be allotted places according to some context of involvement and within the range of a regional orientation

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[44] Ibid., pp. 135-136.

[45] "[I]n general the 'whither' to which the totality of places for a context of equipment gets allotted, is the underlying condition which makes possible the belonging-somewhere of an equipmental totality as something that can be placed." This "whither" Heidegger calls "region". A "region" then is that towards and within the range of which a thing is directed and oriented by our circumspective concern and "where" it provisionally takes up place within a context of possible places that "make-up the aroundness –the 'round-about-us' [das Um-uns-herum]- of those entities which we encounter as closest environmentally." Ibid., pp. 135 and 136.

[46] "[A]ll 'wheres' are discovered and circumspectively interpreted as we go our ways in everyday dealings; they are not ascertained and catalogued by the observational measurement of space." Ibid., p. 137.

[47] Ibid., p. 138.

encountered in advance. This, of course, presupposes the circumspective involvement of *Dasein*.

Dasein also has an irreducible spatial dimensionality, however, essentially different from that of equipment. *Dasein*'s spatiality is neither *readiness-to-hand* nor *presentness-at-hand*. *Dasein* is " 'in' the world in the sense that it deals with entities encountered within-the-world, and does so concernfully and with familiarity. So if spatiality belongs to it in any way, that is possible only of this Being-in."[48] *Dasein*'s spatiality has a two-fold character: that of *de-severance* and *directionality*. *De-severance* is the *existentiale* of *Dasein* that constitutes its aptitude to bring-close, to cross over the remoteness of the things alongside and within the range of its environmental *ready-to-hand:* "*In Dasein there lies an essential tendency towards closeness.*"[49] However, *closeness* and *remoteness* are not to be understood, as Heidegger emphasises, in terms of objective and measurable *distance*. A thing may be physically proximate and still remote if it does not fall under *Dasein*'s circumspective care and, of course, the reverse is also the case. Nor is de-severing something which can ever conclusively cross over remoteness:

> "So little has Dasein crossed over its de-severance that it has rather taken it along with it and keeps doing so constantly; for *Dasein is essentially de-severance –that is, it is spatial.* It cannot wander about within the current range of its de-severances; it can never do more than change them."[50]

Dasein finds itself and moves alongside and in between things within the ever extending boundaries of its environment. *Dasein* is always in-between places. Its constant de-severing involvement has also the character of *directionality* since through de-severing *Dasein* allocates places according to its *a priori* familiarity with its environmental regions. Because *Dasein* is constituted through *being-in-the-world*, because *Being-in-the-world* is its *a priori* and absolutely fundamental condition, the world must have been already presented to it giving it beforehand a sense of *directedness*.

Through its circumspective concern *Dasein* discovers space and also gives space, makes room for, and sets free, in the sense of letting something be part of a context for a "totality of involvements." As was said before, space is not something pre-existent or pre-given. It is an *a priori* for *Dasein* only in the sense that *Dasein* is itself spatial. "*Space is not in the subject, nor is the world in space*. Space is rather

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[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid., p. 140.
[50] Ibid., pp. 142-143.

'in' the world in so far as space has been disclosed by that Being-in-the-world which is constitutive for Dasein."[51] This does not mean that space cannot be discovered non-circumspectively or that it cannot be objectively measured. Yet, according to Heidegger, when this happens "the environmental regions get neutralised to pure dimensions", "spatiality loses its involvement-character", "the world loses its specific aroundness; the environment becomes the world of Nature."[52] *Space* is neither merely objective nor merely subjective. The circumspective discovery of space as de-severance is not an arbitrary interpretation of a subject but rather the ontological condition *for* the appearance of space for any subject and what "perhaps uncovers the 'Reality' of the world at its most Real."

Why is an ontology of space so important for a rethinking of travel? To travel is to move through space relating locations and crossing boundaries. In order to be a traveller one has to cross a boundary, and boundaries, the division and also joining of spaces, take on different meanings and functions. A boundary is usually understood as the circumscription and enclosure of space, the safeguarding of a fixed, closed and homogeneous territory or field, the guarantor of the legitimacy and self-evidence of a geographical, political or cultural entity that also grounds its right to a particular historical past and destiny and regulates its relation with what lies beyond it. We now recognise that boundaries, which are as much constitutive of as constituted by what they enclose, are nothing more than inscriptions of power productive of and produced by forceful discourses, which tend to naturalise them concealing their artificial character. However, even in discourses that target precisely this artificial and most often brutal "naturalness", the inscription of the boundary as cultural construction reinstates itself anew. Syed Manzurul Islam in his *The Ethics of Travel, From Marco Polo to Kafka* urges caution in relation to the question of the boundary: "Perhaps we are moving a bit too fast, for hasn't the apparent innocence of the adjective 'cross-cultural' belied its origin? Doesn't it presuppose the naturalness of cultural boundaries, as if the cut that divides and establishes polarities is somehow given? These questions must be addressed before the possible effects of various boundaries can be understood."[53]

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[51] Ibid., p. 146.
[52] Ibid., p. 147.
[53] Islam, Syed Manzurul, *The Ethics of Travel, From Marco Polo to Kafka*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1996, p. 4.

Islam reverts to an ontology of space mainly drawing on Heidegger. He maintains that such thinking can offer an insightful critique of the techniques of power and their accomplice discourses of knowledge and also open up the possibility of an "ethics of travel". Fixed and rigid boundaries are drawn by means of a collusion of power and knowledge, which also demarcates and defines the movement of the traveller. However, as long as the traveller dwells on, originates from and returns to fixed locations, travel as the encounter with the other cannot be effected. Travel always involves an encounter with something beyond the closed boundaries of *Oikos*. Closed boundaries condition, enable but at the same time resist travel. One has to cross a boundary to travel, nevertheless, one still dwells inside the boundary if one never challenges its authority. For Islam, this sort of traveller, whom he calls *sedentary* in disjunction to *nomadic*, is not a traveller at all. A sedentary traveller would fail to cross over the boundary of his/her enclosure as s/he would continue to push it forward, to carry it with him/her never really calling it into question.

In order to be consistent with the terminology applied and with the notions that have guided us so far and also with the aim of drawing further implications, we will call such a figure of the traveller *phereoikos* or literally *home-carrier* (*phero* [$\phi\varepsilon\rho\omega$]: to bring and to carry in Greek as in *meta-phero* [$\mu\varepsilon\tau\alpha$–$\phi\varepsilon\rho\omega$], and *oikos*: home or house). A *phereoikos* traveller burdened by the weight of home would be only capable of sluggish movement not going very far indeed, staying within and being drawn into the periphery of the house, commanded by its law, lingering on the *inside*, *interiorising*, thus appropriating, new meaning and succumbing to the order of the *same*. On the other hand, *phereoikos* already implies the instability and mobility of the house forbidding a distinct demarcation between sedentary and nomadic travel.[54] The moving house, which is still a house, pushes forward its borders, moving and dwelling all the same, revealing the *double bind* of travel. To travel is to move away from home yet it is also to carry, reinstate and refer back to home, a home that is already in motion. One cannot totally dismiss the dialectical and binary thinking of travel since home, in one way or another, is always implicated in any conception of

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[54] "La nomadisation elle-même, qu'elle fût discours ou expérience, opérait partir d'un centre ou d'une capitale, ou au moins de leur mirage, d'un lieu qui ne fût pas n'importe où (*anywhere*). Or peut-on encore aujourd'hui parler de nomadisation? L'opposition entre nomade et sédentaire a-t-elle cours? Y a-t-il lieu de se référer un lieu, une unité de lieu, fût-ce la terre, depuis laquelle mesure une détermination ou une indétermination?" Derrida, Jacques, *Faxitexture*, quoted in Catherine Malabou's and Jacques Derrida's *Jacques Derrida, La Contre-Allée*, p. 28. Derrida will be quoted in French in cases where English translations have not yet been published or were unavailable.

travel. What is called then into question is the location or localisation of home and the rigidity of its boundaries. Surely, boundaries do not ever stay the same. But what allows for this, besides the reinscription and redistribution of power and the establishing of new "knowledge"? What allows for boundaries to be drawn in the first place? And are there really any closed boundaries?

We said before that *Dasein*'s essential mode of dwelling is de-severing, that is, bringing closer the things that it comes across in its immediate regional environment and assigning them places by means of its circumspective involvement. *Dasein*, by definition in perpetual movement, extends the boundaries of its world and in so doing also extends itself. However, when things encountered fall under epistemological scrutiny, when they are objectified and assigned fixed positions, they lose their *ready-to-hand* character and their primordial spatiality is levelled off into homogenised spaces outlined by congealed boundaries. Objectified space is conceived as a passively given expanse onto which geography comes to draw its mark or, paradoxically through an inverse process, where it comes to ascertain and legitimate what is taken as a naturelike and given boundary. This conception of space forgets the question of the *Being* of space, of *spatiality* and *Dasein*'s primordial relation to it. *Dasein* is dwelling but a dwelling in movement, (a *dwelling-in-travelling*), in the in-between, without resting on or assigning fixed locations. The spaces *Dasein* discovers are multiple, fragmentary, contingent and ever changing. As Islam argues, "one can only learn to dwell as a traveller by forgetting to ask the habitual cognitive question: what is 'it'? Otherwise, one would remain immobilised in an epistemological trap."[55] An ontology of space reveals on the most primary and existential level the insubstantiality and groundlessness of rigid boundaries. For Islam it is the "fissuring of epistemology" that shows the way for an *ethics of travel*[56] and for "true", non-sedentary travelling.[57] To the figure of the sedentary traveller Islam opposes that of the *nomadic* traveller.

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[55] Islam, p. 10.

[56] The question of the *ethics of travel* will be taken up in the last chapter where it will be reconnected with the theme of metaphor, that is, the tropological structure of meaning, and with its phenomenological condition. The question of ethics is not something optionally added to the consideration of travel but will be posed as the most rigorous implication of what has been elaborated so far. It is also what gives direction and purpose in this thesis. Travel is by definition the event of an encounter with otherness. When it comes to "the other" the preoccupation with ethics is inescapable.

[57] "The possibilities of dwelling within non-rigid boundaries and becoming-traveller are immanent in the fundamental ontological condition of being: they loom like so many uncanny presences concealed in the placid uniformity of epistemological space." Islam, p. 23.

The nomadic traveller moves along and through *supple* lines, from the middle and the in-between and not merely through fixed points. Released from the burden of the house, the nomadic traveller develops *speed* and travels "by intensity", breaking boundaries, *deterritorialising* fixed territories, thus suspending arrival to a definite and final place, to a prescribed destination.[58] However, nomadic travel does not bring down boundaries altogether. There are boundaries if only to be broken and if this is possible then it should reveal their loose and open character. The fact is that, even if we challenge their substantiality and before such a thinking takes place, we already reside within or come across boundaries at once artificial and very real. We define and identify ourselves along and against all sorts of boundaries, linguistic, cultural, national and so on. This is not necessarily a negative condition. We may hide, seek protection and immunity behind borders but we also break, transgress, trespass and push them forward. Whenever a boundary presents itself it becomes *problematic* in the sense Derrida outlines: It exposes itself to the danger of transgression, of the passage, and it calls for a decision on its status. A *problema* in Greek means at once projection and protection, a project, a task, a barrier to be overcome or used as a shield. "Every border is problematic in these two senses."[59]

A boundary then is a site of exposition and exposure. It both demarcates and exposes an inside to an outside. A boundary does not only separate, it also joins. This is why it must assume an indivisibility and the possibility of passage at the same time. It is essential for the boundary to be able to be crossed over. Its double character divides it in itself forbidding the clear-cut demarcation of an inside (*Oikos*) from an outside (away from *Oikos*). We could say that the very *poro-sity* of the boundary points to its *a-pore-tic* nature and to a certain experience of the "*non-passage*". Since the crossing of boundaries is no longer a passage from one clearly demarcated and

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[58] Islam drawing on the terminology of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari describes two possible experiences of space and travelling: "Two kinds of space: striated (*extensio*, *strata*) and smooth (*spatium*, *metastrata*). Two lines of travel: rigid (inside) and supple (outside). Two fundamental attributes of travellers: movement (departure and arrival) and speed (intensity, plane of consistency, body without organ). Two secondary attributes: dimension (points, gravity, immobility) and direction (trajectory, flight). Two kinds of individuation: molar (subjectivity, black hole, faciality) and molecular (haecceities, unformed matter). Two orientations: representation (centred perspective, white wall, reterritorialisation, coding, root tree, *mots d'ordre*) and encounter (multiplicity, deterritorialisation, performance, chance, event, decoding, abstract machine, diagram, rhizome, becoming). Islam, p. 57. We cannot go into every category and delineation deployed above. What is important here is the emergence of a possibility of travel that breaks away from the fixed polarities of home and away, same and other, inside and outside.

identifiable place to another, it could be said that coming across a boundary exposes one to an experience of *aporia*, which literally means in Greek *impasse* or *non-passage*. "*Il y va d' un certain pas.*" This untranslatable phrase from and within the French language ["It involves a certain step/not; he goes along at a certain pace"] signifies the experience of an at once "impossible" and "necessary" passage. Derrida:

> "The crossing of borders always announces itself according to a movement of a certain step [*pas*]-and of the step that crosses a line. An indivisible line. And one always assumes the institution of such an indivisibility. Customs, police, visa or passport, passenger identification- all that is established upon this institution of the indivisible, the institution therefore of the step that is related to it, whether the step crosses it or not. Consequently, where the figure of the step is refused to intuition, where the identity or indivisibility of a line (finis ou peras) is compromised, the identity to oneself and therefore the possible identification of an intangible edge –the crossing of the line- becomes itself a problem. There is a problem as soon as the edge-line is threatened. And it is threatened from its first tracing. This tracing can only institute the line by dividing it intrinsically into two sides. There is a *problem* as soon as this intrinsic division divides the relation to itself of the border and therefore divides the being-one-self of anything."[60]

A boundary in order to divide and to join must be indivisible and open; in order to "present itself", it must first of all intrinsically divide and efface itself and, in this way, what it includes and circumscribes. The boundary does not give itself over to intuition as such. It is not a *limit* that separates and juxtaposes two identifiable territories, cultures, domains of discourses, or two concepts according to an oppositional or relational logic of *same* and *other*. To define a boundary merely on the basis of geopolitical, historical, or ethnographical articulations would amount to reducing its *onto-existential* condition. The issue here is not to invalidate such discourses but to bring attention to what they presuppose and often take as self-evident without rigorously posing the question: what is a boundary? The boundary, border or edge, that allegedly separates an entity from another, is its *phenomenological* condition; it is what lets an entity be itself and appear as such. It is what also grounds the *phenomenological motif* of travel, since in order to be a traveller one has to cross a certain and presentable boundary. No boundary, however, is presentable as such for this would assign it a closed and self-determined character. The necessity (as impossibility) of the passage that presupposes the porosity and openness of the boundary gives the internal limit and double bind of the *phenomenology of travel*. It signals the self-interruption of intuition that can only perceive discontinuous objects. A boundary thus becomes a *tracing* that exceeds oppositional logic and "dialecticisable contradiction". It interrupts all "*presentable* determination" maintaining a "presentable" relation to the interruption and the

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[59] Derrida, Jacques, *Aporias*, translated by Thomas Dutoit, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1993, p. 12.
[60] Ibid., p. 11.

interrupted[61]: A boundary *as tracing* never presents itself as such; yet it makes possible and at the same time impossible (as such) all types of limits for it gives both their conditions of existence and irreducible indeterminacy. Thereby, the experience of the passage is on the aporetic condition of an interminable and impossible encounter with a border one can neither stop at nor cross over but must endure and perpetually call into question.[62] The aporetic character of the boundary is not a negative condition. It does not necessarily bring about paralysis but, quite the contrary, it is what enables and calls for thinking.

Let us once more turn to Heidegger:

> "a space is something that has been made room for, something that has been freed, namely, within a boundary, Greek *peras*. A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognised, the boundary is that from which something *begins its essential unfolding*. That is why the concept is that of *horismos*, that is, the horizon, the boundary. Space is in essence that for which room has been made, that which is let into its bounds."[63]

A boundary thus conceived sets free, gives space, unfolds. It presupposes continuous movement and involvement. For sure, as one may argue, an involvement is never innocent and disinterested. However, an involvement of the sort is not conducted from a firm and solid position. It constantly ungrounds itself as it comes from "the essential position of the existence [Dasein] that questions"[64], from the entity who asks the question of *Being* and for whom this very asking is the mode of existence. *Dasein* by definition always starts and departs from "the side of its here", from its finitude. Its being is existentially "decided" as a *being-here*. As Derrida points out, "it is on this side, on the side of *Dasein* and of its here, which is our here, that the oppositions between here and over there, this side and beyond, can be distinguished. In the same direction, one could say that it is by always *starting from*

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[61] Ibid., p. 17.

[62] "It should be a matter [il devrait y aller de] what, in sum, appears to block our way or to separate us in the very place where *it would no longer be possible to constitute a problem*, a project, or a protection, that is, at the point where the very project or the problematic task becomes impossible and where we are exposed, absolutely without protection, without problem, and without prosthesis, without possible substitution, singularly exposed in our absolute and absolutely naked uniqueness, that is to say, disarmed, delivered to the other, incapable even of sheltering ourselves behind what could still protect the interiority of a secret. There, in sum, in this place of aporia, *there is no longer any problem*." Ibid., p. 12. In the aporetic "experience" of the boundary the latter ceases to constitute a "problem" in the original sense of the word. Having no shield, no presentable boundary enclosing determined identities, we are no longer dealing with an opposition, an antinomy, or an either/or relation but rather with the absolute exposure to an other, an absolute and irreducible other, "un tout autre non opposable". We are referring to a relation beyond calculation, moral prescription and duty. We shall take these issues up in the last chapter.

[63] Heidegger, Martin, "Building Dwelling Thinking", p. 356.

[64] Heidegger, Martin, "What is Metaphysics?" in *Basic Writings*, p. 94.

the idiomatic hereness of my language, my culture, and my belongings that I relate myself to the difference of the over there."[65] Starting from a *here Dasein* is able to think the *beyond* and the *over there*. However, this does not simply amount to a privileging of the here and near over the far and away. Even if finitude and mortality decisively define *Dasein*, the "here" for Heidegger *must* remain undecided:

> "The theoretical question concerning the here, the 'this side' as point of departure *must* remain *here*, *on this side*, undecided, that is to say, decided without any theoretical question, before any theoretical question: without proof."[66]

It is a "here" rooted in *Dasein*'s irreducible mortality and finitude, its essential character of *being-towards-death*, the ultimate limit and aporia, of which the meaning cannot but remain undecided. The "hereness" of *Dasein* marks an impossible (undecided and unlived as such) relation to death, which, nonetheless and paradoxically, is *Dasein*'s proper and essential possibility (being-towards-death, or else the possibility of a being-able-no-longer-to-be-there). We cannot go into this here although "death" is essentially related to the theme of travel not least for being at the heart of the existential condition of the boundary and its radical *undecidability*. *Undecidability* is essentially implicated with the *question of ethics* when it comes to all "problematic" boundaries. If we were to address the issue of an *ethics of travel*, of opening up, responding and saying "yes" to the other, of an encounter which brings closer and still lets be, of losing and gathering oneself before the other, then this should not involve the deployment of a given and decided position, of a prescription or programme. The question of ethics (of travel) is not a simple one. We shall come back to this in the last chapter.

The "hereness" and "nearness" of the house from which travel begins does not necessarily and simply privilege home over travel. Islam's notion of nomadic travel cannot simply preclude the notion of the house, even if this loses its authority as an absolute point of departure and arrival. There can be no travel totally freed from at least some notion of home, however loose and indeterminate. *Oikos* and travel move together infinitely dividing and reconstituting each other. However, one may ask, what is the nature and rhythm of this movement? What is an *itinerary?* Travel has been traditionally conceptualised as a transition between a point of departure and a point of arrival, which according to the economy of the house coincide. Thereby, travel emerges as the relating of sites in view of a return to the initial point, to the completion of the hermeneutic circle. Travel thus conceived is a linear movement, a

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[65] Derrida, Jacques, *Aporias*, p. 52.

succession of *loci* that defines a route on the map. How is the construction of the route and its reduction to a line possible? What are the prerequisites for this drawing, this *writing* on space? We will now pursue an inquiry into the "itinerary" of travel along the lines of Derrida's analysis of the *line* in "*Ousia* and *Grammē*: Note on a Note from *Being and Time*." This will introduce the dimension of *time* in the movement of travel, something already immanent in our discussion on space.

Oikos understood as presence, self-proximity, immanence and self-containment, as interiority itself, is exposed to the exteriority of the detour. In the dialectics of *Oikos* and travel, *Oikos* is exceeded by the outward movement of travel, a movement that always implies *space* and *time*, the fundamental categories of exteriority.[67] One could say that *Oikos* before travel is pre-geographical and timeless. Being outside *Oikos*, being outside oneself, beyond the security of home, beyond the blissfulness and serenity of presence, of immediacy and self-sameness, travel introduces difference, a relation to the *other*, which is always already inscribed in space and time. Hence, it is the *other* that introduces space and time into the ever present, unchanging and immovable essence of the same. "*Ousia* and *Grammē*" is an elaboration on a note that appears at the end of Heidegger's *Being and Time* and prepares the ground for a critique of the "vulgar" concept of time as it is found in Aristotle and taken up by Hegel.

The question of time is essentially and indissociably related to the question of the meaning of *Being*, as time, according to Heidegger, is what opens up the horizon for the analytic of *Dasein*, of "a Being-there which comprehends Being". In the metaphysical tradition "time" and "Being" have been conceived on the basis of the "present" both in the sense of "what is now" and of an object "related to a representing subject" and present-at-hand. The "present" is what comes to "present" itself and "linger within the expanse of unconcealment". The question then is what is the relation of time to the thing that presents itself. Is time determined by the present "thing" or "being," of which the essence must be then interrogated, or is it "being" that which is determined by time? In the metaphysical tradition the "present" is privileged as that "which endures and persists, near and available, exposed to vision or given by hand" and that which also gives rise to the idea of *presence* as *permanence* and *persistence*, according to which everything comes to being and to

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[66] Ibid., pp. 53-54.
[67] Derrida, "*Ousia* and *Grammē*," p. 41.

thinking.[68] Heidegger's criticism is driven against the "vulgar concept" of time based on the "now" (*nun*) and its representation as the succession of the points of a line. Time thus conceived is for Heidegger a homogenising and levelling off of "primordial time" (that is, *temporality* as the essential structure of *Dasein*), by means of which what he calls the "ordinary concept of time" is produced. The conception of the time of the world as something fallen manifests an affinity with Hegel's understanding of time and history as the fallen state in which "spirit" finds itself. However, Heidegger wants to shatter the privilege or "extraordinary right" of the present, which runs through metaphysics and also conditions Hegel's thinking. Yet while this philosophical gesture would certainly not produce a completely different notion of time, it would call into question the up to then unproblematic "tie between truth and presence". If, as Derrida writes, "the experience of thought and the thought of experience have never dealt with anything but presence"[69] and if "truth" is not to be reduced either to what is manifest and available (empiricism) or permanent and transcendental (idealism), then a different yet not totally other thinking that would bring about a decentring of the "present" and, indeed, a questioning of the value of truth is in order.[70]

In "Ousia and Gramme" Derrida reads Heidegger reading Aristotle and Hegel. The question of time, the "vulgar time of metaphysics", is posed primarily with regard to what it *evades*: the privileging of the "present" as the basis for the conceptualisation of time, as essential modality and form of time. The question of time as formulated by Aristotle consists of an aporia based on two inverse hypotheses: 1) that time belongs to beings/ time belongs to nonbeings and 2) that time is divisible into parts (nows)/ the "now" is not a part. According to the first formulation of each hypothesis, time is thought of by Aristotle as a succession of "nows," of present moments, which divide and constitute the flow of time. However, Aristotle continues, if time *is*, if its *form* is that of the "now", of a being that now is then, in a certain sense, *time is not*. The present tense on the basis of which beings are determined (*what is?*) is also the basis for the conception of past and future. Past and future are understood as past-presents and future-presents, as what is no more

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[68] Ibid., p. 32.

[69] Ibid., p. 38.

[70] Such thinking becomes all the more pertinent with regard to the experience of the traveller and its articulation in the travel text since they necessarily presuppose and are centred around a lived present, a particular here and now, a present and given context re-present-ed presumably

(present) and what is not yet (present). So the present is also "what is past and what is to come". The present as "now," as a fleeting, evasive moment in time. marks a passage from what is no longer to what is not yet, or rather *it is* this passage, this becoming. The present as "now" is the synthesis of a past-now and a future-now, the synthesis of two *absences*. Hence, the *now is nothing*. It is the negation of time, which is no-thing in itself; it is neither a being nor an essence but a relating of absences intuited only through movement. This formulates the *aporia* of time as delineated by Aristotle in *Physics IV*. Time is divided into "nows" but since "nows" are non-beings, nothing in themselves, time cannot consist of "nows". The "now", the element of time is "temporal only in becoming temporal, that is, in ceasing to be, in passing over to no-thingness in the form of being-past or being-future."[71] However, even if time cannot be a being, an essence or substance as it is composed of nonbeings, it is still thought on the basis of the present. What is not or what "is barely or scarcely" cannot not be thought but according to *what is*. Time itself cannot be present since it appears out of a succession of presents that are not longer or not yet. Conceived in this way, however, time is already determined as no-thing, as *non-being*. "Without *disclosing* it, one already has operated within the horizon of the meaning of time in order to think nonbeing as nonpresent, and being as present. Being has been determined temporally as being-present in order to determine time as nonpresent and nonbeing".[72]

Heidegger perceives a direct line from Aristotle's *Physics* to Hegel's *Encyclopedia*, which for him consists of a dialectical repetition or paraphrase of the Aristotelian aporia. In the dialectical conception of time, as designated by Hegel, time becomes meaningful only as a necessary detour leading back to the *Idea*, to pure presence. As mentioned before, *space* and *time* are conceived as the fundamental categories of exteriority, which for Hegel is the *Idea* being-outside-itself, that is, in nature and history. But what is the relation of space and time in Hegelian dialectics? *Space*, as the idea outside itself, in its absolute and abstract initial state, which is *spatiality* itself, receives its first determination from the point. The point, thus,

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as it happened. The question of time with regard to the travel narrative will be taken up in the next chapter.

[71] Derrida continues: "Even if it is envisaged as (past or future) nonbeing, the now is determined as the intemporal kernel of time, the nonmodifiable nucleus of temporal modification, the inalterable form of temporalisation. Time is what overtakes this nucleus, in affecting it with no-thing. But in order to be, in order to be a being, it must not be affected by time, it must not become (past or future). To participate in beingness, in *ousia*, therefore is to participate in being-present, in the presence of the present, or, if you will, in presentness." Ibid., p. 40.

introduces difference to the pureness of space. It "spatially negates space."[73] But the point is also negated in its relation to another point, "it negates itself by itself in its relation to itself." The succession of points is, therefore, a succession of negations in which every point suppresses, retains and uplifts the previous one in the movement of the *Aufhebung*, the form of Hegel's negative dialectics. The point negates itself into the line and the line becomes "the truth of the point." In the same way, the line negates and uplifts itself in the *plane*, which becomes "the truth of the line". Hence, the dialectical movement from absolute space to concrete and determined space, to space that has acquired awareness of itself, that is for-itself, completes the circle. The beginning coincides with the end. In this process of the *Aufhenbung* "time was requisite." Each negation of space, each relation of a spatial determination to its previous one, was already in time:

> "To the extent that it *is*, that is, to the extent that it becomes and is produced, that it manifests itself in its essence, that it *spaces* itself, in itself relating to itself, that is, in negating itself, space is time. It temporalises itself, it relates itself to itself and mediates itself as time. Time is spacing."[74]

So moving in space and time becomes closed in on itself in the infinite unfolding of the circle that is the becoming of presence for itself, of self-presence. The closure of this circular movement is what allows presence to manifest itself. So time and space in Hegel are still thought on the basis of the "point-like now," which gives the very form of presence.[75] The dialectical conception of time on the basis of

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[72] Ibid., pp. 50-51.
[73] Ibid., p. 41.
[74] Ibid., pp. 42-43.
[75] However, as Derrida points out, there is already in Hegel a difference between "the presence of the present" and "the present as now". The concept of presence points to something permanent, eternal and infinite, while the present as now is finite, singular and in Nature, although it is still abstract since it is also a becoming from nothing into nothing. To Derrida's mind, the distinction between "now" and "present" found in Hegel but also prepared for in Aristotle's *Physics* challenges Heidegger's critique and complicates things even further as it already makes room for a conception of time which exceeds the limitation that "now" as the element of time poses; it already calls upon the difference between the finite and the infinite. Ibid., p. 46. According to Derrida, Heidegger's decisive step was to make explicit what Aristotle's inquiry into the nature of time has evaded and left undecided: whether time belongs to beings or nonbeings, whether time *is* or *is not*. The question of time posed in these terms would be thought on "the basis of a being already secretly predetermined in its relation to time" and to a particular modality of time, that of the present. Heidegger's philosophical gesture in *Sein und Zeit* repeats the question of Being and time "in the transcendental horizon of time": "time, then, will be that on the basis of which the Being of beings is indicated, and not that whose possibility will be derived on the basis of a being already constituted (and in secret temporally predetermined), as a present being (of the indicative, as *Vorhandenheit*), that is, as substance or object." Ibid., p. 47. The ordinary concept of time, that which thinks time as a linear succession of undifferentiated "nows", is for Heidegger a derivation or fall from the primordial and authentic time of *Dasein*'s temporality. However, as Derrida maintains, the

the "now", of punctuality, makes possible the representation of time as a line (*grammē*). Like the points of a mathematical line, successive point-like "nows" create a linear idea of time extending *ad infinitum*. Though only the points of a line co-exist, whereas "nows" cannot be simultaneous for this would annul time, there can be a certain simultaneity in the "now," which presents itself in the continuity and synthesis of past "nows" and future "nows". However, unlike spatial points, the "now" cannot be a limit, end and beginning at the same time. The "now" cannot arrest time for time appears only through and with movement. Time is sensed, intuited as passage. What of time is given to consciousness is not the concrete "nows" of a succession but rather the *form of succession*. This break between the sensory present thing and its intuited form, that is, the thing as it appears to consciousness, which Heidegger attributes to Kant and his notion of "the non-sensuous sensuous" (that is, intuited sense freed from all sensuous matter), is already prescribed in Aristotle's *Physics IV*, in which time and movement is united in *aesthesis*, the form of inner sense.[76] Thus time is not conceived as *ousia* or *predicate* of beings but as the *form of their intuition*, which is not itself something graspable or determinable for time then would receive an intemporal essence. Time is thought on the condition of its own *erasure*. Time as nonbeing or as what is scarcely is, nonetheless, thinkable only in the horizon of essence or presence, that is, of what is permanent, unchanging and timeless, to which time befalls as something foreign, as an exterior accident, and this thought runs through metaphysics from Aristotle to Hegel. This is why the analogy of the *grammē* can be still preserved: "on the condition that one does not take it as a series of potential limits, but as a line in act, as a line thought on the basis of its extremities (*ta eskhata*) and not of its parts."[77]

The fragmentation of time to point-like "nows" receives its meaning from the linear conception of time. So time is not to be thought of on the basis of the now-present but as the unfolding of the line. And in order for the line to be indefinitely unfolded, in order for the now not to be a limit, its extremities must touch in the plenitude, unlimited potentiality and mobility of the circle. In dialectics, time is thought through movement but on the basis of its *telos*, completeness and closure.

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notions of "derivation", of "the primordial and authentic", that is, the "proper" and "near" carry a metaphysical weight, which cannot be dispensed but only displaced through the shattering of the privilege of the "present". That time is not purely and simply a sequence of present "nows" is already in place in the analogy of the line to temporal succession either in its aporetic designation or its "dialectical manipulation".

[76] Ibid., pp. 44 and 49.

Then the "prime mover" is pure presence or self-presence, which animates all movement by the desire it inspires and which, moreover, is not something available but something anticipated as the *anticipation of meaning*.[78] Within this thinking fall the concepts of "act and potentiality", "essence and accident", "infinite and finite" and all the derivative oppositions including *Oikos* and travel. Thus the question concerning the essence or *physis* of time and space, notwithstanding their naïve separation, should be turned against itself and toward what it evades: "whether essence, here, can be the formal horizon of this question, and whether the essence of essence has not been predetermined secretly –as presence, precisely- on the basis of a 'decision' concerning time *and* space."[79] One would have to go back to the texts of metaphysics and retrace within them the "hidden passageway" that reopens the theme of presence as the problem of the written trace.

What are then the implications of a thinking of space and time that pushes metaphysics to its limit but is necessarily intrametaphysical, for the notions of *Oikos* and travel? In the dialectics of travel, *Oikos* is understood as immanence, interiority and presence which, by being exposed to an exteriority (travel) through the movement of the *Aufhebung*, tends to its full meaning and self-presence. It takes relating *with* the other, with what is exterior, that can only happen in the itinerary of travel, for the categories of space and time to emerge, however, without being clearly separated since "relating *with*" essentially implies both time and space.[80] Moreover, if in the metaphysics of presence, the house is thought of on the basis of what is present and permanent, then the full meaning of the house, the house that *is* for itself, rises out of a continuity and homogeneity of place and time which is only possible and thinkable in the closure of a circular movement. *Oikos* is thus the totality of the circle, of an itinerary of which the point of departure reserves and elevates itself in the point of arrival. Travel, in its dialectical thinking –which is not just one among others but

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[77] Ibid., p. 60.
[78] Ibid., p. 52.
[79] Ibid., p. 56.
[80] In the linear reduction of *space* and *time* the analogy of the spatial point to the temporal element (now) does not presuppose their clear distinction and separate conceptualisation and thematisation. The simultaneity of spatial points could not take place without temporalisation. "The *with* of spatial coexistence arises only out of the *with* of temporalisation. As Hegel shows: there is a *with* of time that makes possible the *with* of space, but which could not be produced as *with* without the possibility of space." It is through *relating*, through the *with* that time and space arise without existing *a priori* in their essence or in their parts or elements (points, nows). "The duplicity of the *simul* [...] does not yet reassemble, within itself, either points or nows, places or phases. It says the complicity, the common origin of time and space, appearing

one which secretly predetermines every designation of travel- becomes meaningful only as movement away and back to *Oikos*, a detour that is commanded by the *desire for presence*. Travel is the truth of *Oikos*, at once its negation, preservation and rehabilitation. It is thought of on the basis of a linear course defined by its extremities, which touch at the completion of the circular journey revealing the truth of the house as self-knowledge. Yet within and despite its teleological determination, travel is still conceived on the basis of the present. Everything happens in a given place, or succession of places, where the traveller is present at a present moment. This is also the *phenomenological condition* of travel.

Now, since the house reveals itself for what it truly is through the negation and reservation of what is exterior to it, by consequence, it can only be thought of *after the fact* of travel. *Oikos and travel can only be thought together*. But if travel is primarily thought as a deviation or distancing from the house then, can we still know what these notions signify in relation to each other? One would have to disengage them from a derivational logic, which is not a simple thing to do, since this would upset the concept of origin in general. Neither *Oikos* nor travel would be posed as the origin of meaning and this would entail the destruction of the house and thus the impossibility of return, the end of eco-nomy and the end of travel in the "proper" sense. In order to think these notions otherwise, that is, in order to push them to the limits of this circular and restricted economy, one would have to perform a similar gesture to that of the generalisation of metaphor. In this mode of thinking, *Oikos* would not be posited as the regulatory principle of travel, as its beginning and destination, as its prime-mover and *telos*, as that which inflicts the desire of the voyage as a desire for the return back home. Both "*Oikos*" and "travel" begin to signify along a movement or *itinerary* without pre-given origin or end. All there is are signifying effects of home and travel. The shattering of the house, however, does not bring about complete demolition and disorientation. It explores the possibility of a thinking that does not restrict itself to the teleology of *Oikos*, that does not revolve around a pre-established locus.

In this sense, the itinerary becomes the origin of *Oikos* and travel, an origin, however, in the sense of the "originary trace", as an incision which is not preceded by a unity. In the same way as generalised metaphor, the itinerary marks the *withdrawal*

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together as the condition of all appearing of Being. In a certain way it says the dyad as the minimum." Ibid., pp. 55-56.

of travel. Generalised travel engulfs its metaphysical concept, which necessarily draws with it that of *Oikos*, yet infinitely exceeding and expanding it. Of course, the deconstruction of *Oikos* does not mean that travel as actuality does not have to start from somewhere, from a place, home. The conceptualisation of travel does not disregard the physicality of travel but is what makes manifest the structures that make sense of it. If all experience is the experience of meaning and if meaning is produced through its repetition and iteration, then the senses of *Oikos* and travel, never cease to be restructured along the itinerary. The itinerary is represented as a line on a map, as a relation of points, of loci, a relation that is only possible in space but which also *creates space*. If space emerges through the relating of one locus to another, this relation is already in time. The relation to the other, to what differs and is deferred, entails the *becoming-space of time* and the *becoming-time of space*. It is the form of the "originary difference" or *différance* that constitutes and also divides the "present" and along with it everything thought on its basis.[81] We touched upon this previously and we come back to it now for the movement of *différance* as simultaneous *spacing* and *temporisation* is what displaces the house and also lets it signify by deferring, delaying, reserving, without, however, making a profit out of it, without re-appropriating or allowing it to come to itself, to come to being as such. Time and space are constituted together as *intervals*, as the possibility of *iteration* and *alteration*, as an infinite chain of mediations and supplements "that produce the sense of the very thing they defer." If *Oikos* is presence thought of on the basis of the present, of what is near and available, then "an interval must separate the present from what it is not in order for the present to be itself, but this interval that constitutes it as present must, by the same token, divide the present in and for itself,"[82] since it lets it be marked by something other than itself. *Oikos* and travel emerge from intervals, differences, distances along an itinerary, which rather than marking relations between fixed terms, stable referents or clearly defined identities, constantly divides and disseminates everything these involve. *Oikos*, "immediacy is derived."[83] This is to say that *Oikos* and travel re-emerge in a nonsynthetic way out of the ruins of their *phenomenological motif*. Phenomenological "catastrophe" entails the blurring of the boundaries one has to cross in order to become a traveller.

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[81] Derrida, "Différance", p. 13.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 157.

If *Oikos* and travel emerge out of the iteration of meaning as *effects* with no prior cause, origin, or essence, they only become possible (and at the same time impossible as such) by means of an *a priori withdrawal* of *Oikos as presence* and *travel as derivation*. This originary withdrawal is not tantamount to the *loss* and *promise* of recovery of an initial proper meaning in a teleological manner. *Oikos* and travel do not pre-exist their withdrawal but are rather produced through and with it, in the "structure of delay" that suspends and defers return nondialectically, without synthesising and sublating differences according to an economy of *telos*. No departure and no return to *Oikos* can ever be possible as *Oikos*, once placed within the general economy of *différance*, becomes a "past" that is not an origin, that "has never been present, and will never be, whose future to come will never be a *production* or a reproduction in the form of presence."[84]

This is not to say that the multiple senses of "*Oikos*" and "travel", which form the semantics and polysemics of these terms, do not pertain to an economy of meaning. Their sense is not boundless, but neither is it confined to a closed *oiko*-nomy, to the roundness and closure of presence, though it is still only thinkable in relation to its metaphysical presuppositions. Moreover, the deconstruction of the metaphysics of travel does not preclude the notion of *return*, which, as was argued before, essentially belongs to the structure of travel. "Return" without been necessarily subordinated to a teleological destination is still at work in the structure of repetition and re-iteration that produces effects of *Oikos* and travel. If we insisted on metaphysical thinking, we did so because we still dwell within and on it, because in order to think beyond it "we must stay within the difficulty of this passage, and repeat it in the rigorous reading of metaphysics, wherever metaphysics normalises Western discourse, and not only in the texts of the 'history of philosophy'."[85]

If we are to challenge the metaphysical delineation of *Oikos* and travel, we have to venture a thinking that goes beyond metaphysical polarities but which also gives place for their appearance and (re-)emergence. We have to venture thinking of a space that allows for the inscription of such polarities and that gives their condition of signification. This space is that of *différance* or *khôra* (which in Greek also means "place," "region," "location," "country"), which opens onto the possibility for the inscription of the meaning of *beings* (entities) as well as the meaning of *Being* (the

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[84] Derrida, Jacques, "Différance", p. 21.
[85] Ibid., p. 22.

existential condition of beings) and of all metaphysical couples such as sensible/intelligible, visible/invisible, empirical/transcendental and so on. "*Khôra*" is a text by Derrida elaborating on the notion and place of *khôra* in Plato's *Timaeus*. *Khôra* in Plato is the name of the space that *receives* the order of the "mimeme" (copy), sensible, or becoming, that is, the *mobile image* of the order of the eternal "paradigm", of the idea, *eidos* or the intelligible. In the cosmogony of *Timaeus*, *khôra* is a tale about the origin of the world, a *probable myth* for the origin of *logos*, a myth, however, which exceeds and precedes the distinction between mythological and philosophical discourse. If a discourse can be uttered only from a certain and assigned site or place grounding its reasoning, then *khôra* names this unlocatable place or nonplace that grounds nothing *per se* for it exceeds the polarity of proper and metaphorical meaning and that analogous to it, *logos* and *muthos*. The thought of *khôra* is not that of a substance but of a structure that lets us glimpse "the silhouette of a 'logic'", the "being-logical of logic", whether it be true, probable, or mythic, put *en abyme*.[86]

In the first chapter we insisted on the uncertain boundary between philosophical and metaphorical discourse, which comes down to the primary distinction between proper meaning and metaphor. In this chapter, aiming at bringing out the "existential" conditions of travel, we attempted to challenge the notion of the "boundary" and hence that of "place" as a circumscribed enclosure regulating (linguistic, cultural, national and so forth) identities. If proper meaning can only be uttered from a proper place or firm position (from and of which metaphor would be a derivation or expropriation), the radical shuddering of such oppositional and hierarchical thinking, would signal a different conception of space. This has immense implications for philosophical discourse, in fact, for discourse in general. It was necessary (that is, constitutive) for philosophy to disengage itself from or, rather, to sublate myth[87] and tropology in general and to relegate them to a pedagogical or didactic function. But since the distinction between myth and logos constitutes philosophy as such and is what inscribes it in a teleological horizon, there must have been an "older place" or structural potency, older than *muthos* as opposed to *logos*,

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[86] Derrida, Jacques, "*Khôra*" in *On the Name*, edited by Thomas Dutoit, translated by David Wood, John P. Leavy, JR., and Ian McLeod, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1995, p. 106.

[87] "Philosophical logic comes to its senses when the concept wakes up from its mythological slumber. Sleep and waking, for the event, consist in a simple unveiling: the making explicit and taking cognisance of a philosopheme enveloped in its virtual potency. The mytheme *will have been* only a prephilosopheme offered and promised to a dialectical *Aufhebung*." Ibid., p. 100.

that allowed for such polarities without been reduced to them. This (non)place is called *khôra*. *Khôra* names the possibility of the inscription of meaning, of everything there is *for* human consciousness.[88] It is a space in-between the subject and the world as object but in itself it is neither subject nor object. It marks a relation *with* (and the "*with*" always already signifies both space and time) but a relation that at once constitutes the subject and the object as destined to one another.

Let us go back to *Timaeus*. Before *khôra* receives the imprint of the idea, *khôra* is nothing in itself. It is not a determined place; it receives all determination from what it gives place to. It is neither of the order of the *paradigm* nor of the *mimeme*, neither intelligible nor sensible, however, it participates in both without belonging to neither. It is a mythical place. But at the same time it is a probable myth about the origin of *logos*. The tale of *khôra* gives way to the tale of *logos*. And in this way it exceeds both myth and logos; it becomes a receptacle of a succession of tales and substitutions with no determinable origin. *Khôra*, as Derrida reads it, names the "gap", the "abyssal chasm", the "cleavage", the *milieu* and difference that separates the order of the intelligible (meaning) from the order of the sensible (factuality), that is, it is what gives room to and allows for all metaphysical oppositions. At the same time the space of or the discourse on *khôra* is where all such oppositions come to be inscribed; it is "where" metaphysics is situated. It is the opening of "a place 'in' which everything would, at the same time, come to take place and be reflected".[89] But it is also a *mise en abyme* of everything "it" situates since it is not a proper place, a base or firm ground providing the solid foundation and authorisation of *logos*. *Khôra* is what gives place without taking place; "it is more situating than situated".[90] *Khôra* is the space where everything comes to be. However, it is not an origin; it disrupts origin as such. It is neither essence nor substance, neither sensible nor intelligible, neither subject nor object, neither *eidos* nor *mimeme* (copy), though it makes all these possible. It is a "third genus" beyond oppositions, one that shakes up all polarities and

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[88] So, in a fashion, what Derrida does in *Khôra* is to reinscribe Plato's probable myth of cosmogony onto a phenomenological space. For a rigorous and inspired discussion of Plato's *Timaeus* see also Serge Margel's *Le Tombeau du Dieu Artisan*, précedé de *Avances* par Jacques Derrida, Paris, Les Editions de Minuit, 1995.

[89] Ibid., p. 104.

[90] "To give place" does not mean here to offer a concrete and definite space for things to be installed and accommodated. "To give place here does not come to the same thing as to make a present of a place. The expression *to give place* does not refer to the gesture of a donor-subject, the support or origin of something which would come to be given to someone." "*Khôra*", p. 100. *Khôra* is neither the ground, nor base, nor the support of what she/it receives. It is not a

the very notion of genus or genre. *Khôra* bears the imprints of everything thought of; it receives all enunciations, interpretations, categorisations without possessing them as properties. "She does not possess anything as her own. She 'is' nothing other than the sum or the process of what has just been inscribed 'on' her". [91]

Khôra is not a proper place but makes room for all senses of place. It receives them without determining them. Being nothing in itself it gives the existential condition of *place*, *reception* and *arrival*. It thus gives the possibility of all senses of *Oikos* and travel. But at once it upsets all determined senses of place and arrival since nothing can derive from or arrive at a nonplace. But if *khôra* gives the possibility of nonarrival, this is at the same time the possibility of the reception and arrival *par excellence*, that is, the reception and arrival of an unforeseen and unexpected event. It is what promises the event.[92]

Khôra is the hospitable opening and welcome to the event not in the sense of a benevolent intention but in that it receives everything, and the event is always a (new) arrival. But for an arrival to be (new) it must not be awaited; it must not receive a definite content. Someone, in order to properly arrive at a proper place, must properly derive from a proper place. But since definite, proper places emerge out of an indeterminate space, since determination emanates from indeterminacy, there can be neither derivation nor arrival in the proper sense as the relating of fixed locales but only effects of them. "Arrival" makes possible all the traits of belonging (cultural, social, national) without being reduced to them for *l' arrivant par excellence* is always indeterminate, unpredictable and never happens as such. *Il n' arrive qu' à s'effacer*. It succeeds only in being effaced. However, even if it is not expected, it is still promised. It is the promise and expectation of an unexpected event; a promise without content and "an expectation without horizon of expectation". What is to come (*à venir*) in the figure of a foreigner, a traveller, a text, a language, for better or for worse, is always other. And the other never comes as a revelation; s/he does not give her/himself up to intuition, *s/he is not totally phenomenalisable*. *Khôra*, as the general structure of experience, as a spacing where everything comes to be inscribed, may

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substance but rather a structure or "structural law" that opens up a space for the inscription of forms and *schemata*, thus receiving and at the same time making them possible.

[91] Ibid., p. 99.

[92] "*Le non arrivé est bien, si l'on veut, un point de départ: départ et resource de tout événement. Mais cette chance n'est précisément pas une origine dont dérive ce qui arrive. Le non arrivé désigne un non-lieu en lieu et place de l'origine. En un sens, ce non-lieu est principe.*" Malabou, p. 140.

seem as a desert place. But as Derrida points out, it is not a given empty space for an onto-theological revelation:

> "*Chora, the 'ordeal of chora' would be, at least according to the interpretation I believed justified in attempting, the name for place, a place name, and a rather singular one at that, for that spacing which, not allowing itself to be dominated by any theological, ontological or anthropological instance, without age, without history and more 'ancient' than all oppositions (for example, that of sensible/intelligible), does not even announce itself as 'beyond being' in accordance with a path of negation, a via negativa.*"[93]

In the discourse of travel one could name three powerful metaphors of place that traverse and invest with meaning the expenditure of the traveller: the *island*, the *Promised Land* and the *desert*. The island or isle comes to signify a singular or insular place, to where everything comes from an unlocatable elsewhere.[94] For instance, the "island" has functioned as a trope in the sixteenth century travel literature and cosmographies (for example, André Thevet's *Singularitez de la France antarctique* and *Cosmographie universelle*, Paris, 1557 and 1575 respectively) that encapsulated the fantasies of a "new" land, self-mastery, of utopia and even of Paradise.[95] The "Promised Land" runs through all sort of pilgrimages and utopias from pilgrims' journeys to the Holy Lands to André Gide's *Back from the USSR*. The trope of the "desert" can occur again as utopia, receptacle, or simulacrum (sometimes of meaninglessness), that is, both as a place of opportunity and revelation and as a metaphor of *deterritorialization* or emptiness, as we come across it, for instance, in Jean Baudrillard's *America*.[96] But before entering the question of how tropes function in travel narratives:

> "*Let us step up the pace in order to finish: in view of a* third place *that could well have been* more than *archi-originary, the most anarchic and anarchivable place possible, not the island nor the Promised Land, but a certain desert –and not the desert of the revelation, but a desert* in *the desert, that which makes possible, opens, hollows or infinitizes the other.*"[97]

A difference is marked here between the "*order of the 'revealed'*" and the "*order of the 'revealable'* ", that is, between "*event*" and "*possibility or virtuality of the event*".[98] A "determinable" event of arrival, if such a thing exists, is preceded and overflowed by the *promise of the event* through the structures (of iteration and

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[93] Derrida, Jacques, "Faith and Knowledge, The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone", translated by Samuel Weber in *Acts of Religion*, edited and with an introduction by Gil Anidjar, London, Routledge, 2002, p. 58. *Khôra* in this translation is transcribed as "Chora".

[94] "*Une île est un lieu où l'on ne peut qu'attendre sans attendre ce qui vient, l'événement arrivant nécessairement d'ailleurs, de l'autre bord, de nulle part.*" Malabou, p. 238.

[95] See Mary Baine Campbell's "Renaissance Voyage Literature and Ethnographic Pleasure: The Case of André Thevet" in *Studies in Travel Writing*, number 1 (Spring 1997), pp. 9-42.

[96] Baudrillard, Jean, *America*, translated by Chris Turner, London, Verso, 1988, p. 63.

[97] Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge", p. 55. Translation modified.

[98] Ibid., p. 59.

alteration) that make any event possible as such. In other words, this certain *spacing*, *khôra*, or "desert in the desert", which receives the imprints of meaning and structures the possibility of everything there is *for* consciousness, is "l'avant-premier" of space.

Since the thought and name of *khôra* comes after the inscription and emergence of the meaning of "being", it is also necessarily "anachronistic" and "retrospective" with respect to "being" for it precedes and exceeds "it" and all the polarities which delineate "it". *Khôra* comes as the *trace*, as the *possibility* of the inscription of meaning in the entire field of the entity, what allows metaphysical oppositions to signify, and hence what must be thought before them. *Khôra* is the space opened up through an *originary withdrawal* (for instance, of the Platonic *Idea* that precedes beings or of the Heideggerian *Being* as the thought of the totality of beings; in other words, the withdrawal of presence) of something which never was present but was only effected through "its" withdrawal. *Khôra* comes as an "irreplaceable", "unplaceable", "anachronistic", "achronic", mobile place, a "sort of nonplace" without history or destiny, that, however, makes place for the inscription of the "tale", the myth (*muthos*) and *logos* of a proper place, of all places. It is the *quasi-metaphorical* condition of every sense of place, of the tale(s) and narrative(s) of *Oikos* and thus of travel.

Why is such attempt of thinking *khôra* important here? "Is it insignificant that this *mise en abîme* affects the forms of a discourse on *places* [*places*], notable political places, a politics of place entirely commanded by the consideration of sites [*lieux*] (jobs in the society, region, territory, country), as sites assigned to types or forms of discourse?"[99] If *khôra* offers the groundless condition of all senses of place, it necessarily and infinitely complicates all forms of discourse on place, *Oikos* and travel. *Khôra* is a nonoriginary localising process, "the structure of an overprinting without a base", the nonbase of meaning and the unlocalisable expanse (because it neither belongs to a transcendental being, nor simply to consciousness or to the world) in which everything comes to take place.[100] *Khôra* hence "is" an improper "place" that embeds, that places "place" and "displacement", *Oikos* and travel, as their condition of inscription, as the condition of a *writing* and iteration that does not

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[99] Derrida, "*Khôra*", p. 104.

[100] "*En tant qu'elle désigne, donc, dans la langue grecque, le lieu habité, le poste, la position – départ et destination de tout voyage-* khôra *pourrait dire l'origine, la source de ce qui est; elle pourrait désigner le fond même de l'être, la cause, le principe, l'avoir ou l'être de tout lieu.*" Malabou, p. 141.

unfold teleologically but rather lets them appear and signify in the *self-erasing structure of the trace*.

Travel as Writing

In *Of Grammatology* Derrida speaks of writing as the *possibility of the road*:

> "One should meditate upon all the following together: writing as the possibility of the road and of difference, the history of writing and the history of the road, of the rupture, of the *via rupta*, of the path that is broken, beaten, *fracta*, of the space of reversibility and of repetition traced by the opening, the divergence from, and the violent spacing, of nature, of the natural, savage, salvage, forest. The *silva* is savage, the *via rupta* is written, discerned, and inscribed violently as difference, as form imposed on the *hylè*, in the forest, in wood as matter; it is difficult to imagine that access to the possibility of a road-map is not at the same time access to writing."[101]

We said before that the senses of "*Oikos*" and "travel" along with those of properness and metaphor, or identity and difference, rather than being predetermined and already given, are engendered through the movement of iteration and belong to the structure of the trace. The trace, this irreducible structure that always already announces the other in the same, emerges as the "nonoriginary" origin of meaning, an *arche* without plenitude and purity, an "originary synthesis not preceded by an absolute simplicity". Then the trace as the opening of the same to the other, of a present to a nonpresent, an inside to an outside, of "the first exteriority in general" is already a *spacing* that by now should be understood as the *becoming-space of time* and the *becoming-time of space*. Again, if the opening of sameness to otherness is not preceded by predetermined categories, if the present is already marked by and retains the nonpresence of the other (and thus cannot present itself as such), then the trace also institutes what it is supposed to relate: it becomes the very opening of a space for the *inscription* of meaning (however, a space that appears through and simultaneously with its inscription). Derrida calls the possibility of all inscription *writing*.

Writing is the possibility of the road and of the itinerary, of a movement that relates places and lets them signify in relation to one another. "Travel" and "writing" in the conventional sense share the character of linearity, of the succession of signifiers or loci related through movement, either semantic or physical, if this distinction can be upheld. Both movements are reduced to a linear representation and progression that receives teleological orientation aiming at the recuperation of what was posited as their prioritised counterpart, that is *speech* in terms of writing and *Oikos* in terms of travel. However, in our analysis of the line we saw that the *telos* or *closure*, on the basis of which the line is thought, are "effects" rather than

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[101] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, pp. 107-108.

transcendental principles and are produced through the movement of iteration. Out of this approach to linearity a radically different thinking of writing and travel emerges, one that disrupts and inscribes them anew, one that generalises them in a way that exceeds foreseeable or calculated closure. *Writing* in Derrida's generalised sense precedes the opposition between "writing" (in the colloquial sense) and "speech", in the same way that generalised travel precedes "*Oikos*" and "travel" in their metaphysical determination. The structural affinity of the generalised notions of travel and writing allows us to speak of *travel as writing*, which far from being just another metaphor of travel, brings out its essential inscriptive force. The possibility of inscription on space cannot be simply reduced to the demarcation of something given. It is rather a *spacing* in the sense previously elaborated. Reading or drawing a map has never been a simple operation.

In fact "travel" and "writing" have been traditionally closely associated and not simply with regard to the narrative genre of "travel writing", which will be our focus in the next chapter. "Travel as writing" as well as "writing as travel" are prevalent metaphors occurring in all sort of discourses, literary, philosophical, theological and so on, that address the *textuality* of travel as a process of configuration of cultural and natural signs and draw from its inexhaustible conceptual resources and all its attached themes (*Oikos*, itinerary, boundary, arrival, return, etc.) for the elaboration of their respected projects. "Travel as writing" is far more than a rhetorical figure, a metaphor in the conventional sense, with didactic or explanatory purposes. The "metaphor" or theme of travel can prove a disrupting element in the texts that "innocently" deploy it. "Travel" always exceeds its thematic exposition. One may say that as soon as there is writing there is travel, and inversely, as soon as there is travel there is writing.

Recent theory on travel extends the association of travel to writing beyond the preoccupation with the poetics and the history of the genre. Michel Butor, Normand Doiron and Georges Van Den Abbeele explore the relation of travel to writing not solely with regard to its historical designations and symbolic functions but also drawing further implications from the structural affinity or, one may say, mutual structuration of these notions.[102] For Michel Butor travel is a kind of writing, as

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[102] Butor, Michel, "Le Voyage et l'Écriture" in Romantisme 4, 1972, Revue de la Société des Etudes Romantiques, Doiron, Normand, "De l'Épreuve de l' Espace au Lieux du Texte, Le Récit du Voyage Comme Genre" Biblio 17, Voyages, Récits at Imaginaire, Actes de Montréal, édités par Bernard Beugnot, 1984, and "L` Art de Voyager, Pour Une Définition du Récit de

writing (and reading) is also travelling: "Pour moi voyager, au moins voyager d'une certaine façon, c'est écrire (et d'abord parce que c'est lire), et qu'écrire c'est voyager."[103] For this, there are obvious reasons. Even if the text is not a travel narrative, the process of reading (which is always also a writing and a rewriting) registers a movement, a trajectory the eye follows from sign to sign that is often "grossly" simplified as the progression along a line linking a point of departure to a point of arrival. In another "obvious" way, the text becomes a journey by taking the reader to another place, "be it the writer's room". Through reading "one finds him/herself elsewhere". Moreover, following the trajectory of signs or the story line even in the most conventional and linear plots always involves the traversing of a blank space, a gap, the *milieu*, the in-between that separates and joins one sign from and with another, a scene or a place from another. The blank space surrounding the sign upsets the linear movement of the signifier and its reduction to a progressive succession of interrelated signs, not only because each sign is referred and deferred to another sign but because it is exposed to an irreducible and nonpresentable exteriority. In the same way that travel cannot be reduced to a succession of loci, reading and writing cannot be simply reduced to a succession of signs. There is always a certain residue of meaning not accounted for. One may go so far as to say, there is an essential travel motif operating in any reading or writing. The opposite is also true. There is an operation of reading and writing in any expenditure of travel. The travel text may manifest this better. On the one hand, by juxtaposing and joining different places in the same phrase or itinerary, making them signify together and in relation to one another, it reinscribes them by creating a new sense of place. On the other hand, as Butor points out, it "enforces" the grammar of the book on the restitution of that of the trajectory.[104] So the traveller may read a map, repeat and retrace a path or an itinerary, read travel texts, follow the footsteps of other travellers, make his/her own mark, add new places, avoid, reinscribe and efface visited ones, associate and dissociate them, make them signify anew. The possibility is always there. Travel is a mode of inscription which is not simply restricted to the writing of a travel book. In turn, the experience of travel is also largely shaped by the

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Voyage à l'Époque Classique" in *Poétique 19*, 1988, Abbeele, Van Den, *Travel as Metaphor, from Montaigne to Rousseau*, Oxford, University of Minnesota Press, 1992.

[103] Butor, Michel, "Le Voyage et l'Écriture", p. 4

[104] "Les termes Rome, Athènes, Jérusalem, disposés dans un certain ordre par la phrase de mon voyage, comme je puis les faire varier, instruit par celui-ci, dans le récit que j'en propose, que de souterrains, que d'obliques, il m'est alors possible de découvrir." Ibid., pp. 18-19.

commonplaces of travel narrative. Travel must be always able to be written about. In this sense, *there is no travel without writing*.

For Normand Doiron a traveller is someone who *re-marks*:

> "L'opération propre au voyageur consiste à remarquer. La marka, c'est la marque de la frontière, le signe de la limite, les empreintes laissées sur le sol, la marche. Entre les deux mots (marque/marche), la contamination s'effectue rapidement dans l'histoire de la langue. Re-marquer, à nouveau imprimer les marques du voyage, non plus sur le sol, non pas sur la toile, mais sur la page, re-faire le chemin, re-passer un à un les lieux visités, au fur et à mesure les 'faire voir' à celui qui maintenant nous accompagne, qui suit pas à pas les méandres qu'on décrit."[105]

Re-marking or reinscribing then reveals the essential affinity of travel and writing. The traveller comes to add his/her mark, to retrace, to repeat, to rewrite and not to represent a given reality.[106] Since the traveller traces and retraces, s/he moves beyond the limits of representation. The traveller does not pass from one place to another, from one present locus to the next, without retaining the trace of the previous one and, indeed, the traces of previous travels. No itinerary would be possible without this tracing, which cannot be represented or reduced to the simplicity of a present. However, what Doiron calls the mutual "contamination" between the "mark" and the "march" in the "history of language" is an essential possibility of meaning that is at the origin of history *and* language. It is the structure of the trace, or better, it is the *movement* of the *becoming-trace-of-the-mark*, whether by it we understand a vestige or not, that has always already made the "mark" and the "march" thinkable. And this is what has allowed for the marking and naming of places, a process intrinsically related to colonial travel and also to the travel of discovery.

If one is to explore the notion of *travel as writing* one has to go back to the notion of the *travel book*, which best manifests the metaphysical conception of travel. The book signifies a totality and a closure, the metaphysical exigency for a return to properness according to the economy of the house. It is through rethinking the linearity and closure of the book of travel that travel as writing, in the Derridean sense, becomes thinkable. We will leave the consideration of travel as narrative for the next chapter. What concerns us here is the affinity of the notion of travel to the concept of the book precisely in the sense of a closed totality that corresponds to the completion of travel upon return, to the *telos* of the circular journey. Actually, the collusion of "the book" with "travel" is a very old one.

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[105] Doiron, Normand, "De l'Épreuve de l' Espace au Lieux du Texte, Le Récit du Voyage Comme Genre", p. 23.

[106] "Il ne s'agit pas de représenter. Le voyageur se déplace aux limites de la représentation." Ibid.

In seventeenth century France the genre "l'art de voyager" makes its appearance with the aim of instructing the traveller. The publishing of these volumes coincides with the emergence of the genre of travel writing.[107] The method or art of travel, as prescribed in the Classical age, links the rules of physical displacement to the poetics of the travel genre.[108] The traveller of the Classical age had to follow a route that was well-ordered and regulated. He had to take pains not to "wander instead of travelling". The prescribed journey then had to comply with the exigency of the return home, if it were to be an instructive and profitable one. The danger of *errance* or error had to be eliminated.[109] This exigency conforms to and also reproduces the classical *episteme* of ordering and representation. Travel in the Classical age is part of the search for the right route and the right method aiming at the ordering of a chaotic and fragmentary world, at its unification and representation in a comprehensive map, in a totalising discourse. Classical discourse produces a new type of knowledge, one that has to succumb to the test of proof, one based on experience.

During the Renaissance knowledge was intrinsically related to divinity, the signature of God on every natural thing that humans had to decipher and interpret. This was possible because all signs were considered in relations of resemblance and analogy with the secret content or signified they were the mark of. "Visible" and "invisible" were linked by similitude. The world was envisioned as a book, the *liber mundi*, that one opens and reads in order to access the "sovereignty of an original Text."[110] Words and things, language and nature, are intertwined with one another "to infinity, forming, for those who can read it, one vast single text",[111] amenable to infinite interpretation. So in the sixteenth century "the fundamental configuration of knowledge consisted of the reciprocal cross-reference of signs and similitudes," whether these were natural signs inscribed on things or words.[112] So what is the

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[107] Doiron, Normand, "L' Art de Voyager, Pour Une Définition du Récit de Voyage à l'Époque Classique", pp. 85-86.
[108] "Cela paraît d'autant plus suprenant que les arts de voyager prescrivent aux voyageurs les règles spécifiques d'une forme non seulement de mouvement mais de récit." Ibid., p. 86.
[109] "Le voyageur lui-même ne peut se déplacer qu'à condition de revenir régulièrement au point fixe du départ, au *foyer*." Ibid.
[110] Foucault, Michel, *The Order of Things, An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, London, Routledge, 1970, p. 41.
[111] Ibid., p. 34.
[112] "There is no difference between the visible marks that God had stamped upon the surface of the earth, so that we may know its inner secrets, and the legible words that the Scriptures, or the sages of Antiquity, have set down in the books preserved for us by tradition. The relation to

function of the Renaissance traveller as an agent of knowledge? It is to collect, write down, account and recount what must then fall under the workings of interpretation. "Scriptural commentary, commentaries on Ancient authors, commentaries on the accounts of travellers, commentaries on the legends and fables: none of these forms of discourse is required to justify its claim to be expressing a truth before it is interpreted; all that is required of it is the possibility of talking about it."[113]

The figure of the traveller in the Classical age, by contrast, is not that of an interpreter of signs. He is in search of an exemplary language and method that would properly name and order the fragmented reality that falls under his scrutiny.[114] He no longer tries to discover relations of kinship and resemblance between things but rather to compare, analyse and classify in terms of identity, difference, measurement and order. However, he still does so in view of reconstituting the book of the world. The epistemological revolution against bookish knowledge in favour of a model based on observation and experience keeps with the notion of the *liber naturae* or *liber mundi*, "the great metaphor of the book", that now receives a new meaning which reconciles practical knowledge with the authority of the written word. The world is now a book that the traveller has to inscribe.[115] So the classical traveller returns to the book.[116] The age of "rationalism," however, with its belief in the possibility of the formation of a universal method of *mathesis* and *analysis* that would reveal the fundamental order of things also expresses a belief in unlimited progress and in the power of human reason to create and reinscribe new relations between signs. Signs are no longer simply there as the manifestation of the divine but are reorganised and redistributed.

For the classical traveller then the "Great Book of the World" still exists. But now it is no longer a question of reading it. The traveller has to write within its space. He has to describe it, hence write it, in a way that would also submit it to the test of

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these texts is of the same nature as the relation to things: in both cases there are signs that must be discovered." Ibid., p. 33.

[113] Ibid., p. 40.

[114] "Le voyageur renaissant collectionne, énumère, recense des cas, des curiosités que le voyageur classique ensuite ordonnera", Doiron, "L' Art de Voyager", p. 98.

[115] "Le monde continue d'être un livre où s'inscrira l'itinéraire du voyageur." Ibid., p. 102.

[116] "Ainsi voit-on l'expérience du voyageur qui s'opposait à l'autorité des livres devenir elle-même une autorité, un livre. Ce *nouveau livre* du voyageur ou du philosophe ne fait plus obstacle au monde mais l'embrasse ainsi que la carte l'englobe. Il ouvre un espace médiateur où se réconcilient l'autorité et l'expérience, où sont également compris le livre et le monde." Ibid., p. 102.

proof.[117] A descriptive act is also an inscriptive act. The Classical traveller searches for the right (and virtuous) path to truth but in order to reach it, that is, in order to accurately and precisely describe the world, he must have at his disposal an equally accurate language. However, the language of truth, *proper language*, must always efface itself before the plenitude of the thing it denotes. Its ultimate end is to become redundant. "L' écriture, comme la nature, devient transparente." The aim of travel is to return to its original place, to the point of departure. A finality is prescribed to it. After having put to the test the realm of doubt, the empirical field, the traveller must regain certainty and stability, in a word, properness. The exigency of return that had to be regulated by specific rules (l'art de voyager) can only be thinkable through the prepositing of a fixed and transcendental point of reference, that of *Oikos*. A traveller is not supposed to endlessly wander; s/he must be contained within "the limits of truth".

This directly takes us to René Descartes' *Meditations* and *Discourse on Method*, which with their abundant use of metaphors of travel show how deeply intertwined is this notion with the philosophical thinking and writing of the period, although writing and travel are implicated in ways that cannot be simply reduced to their historical articulations and associations. Descartes, as Georges Van Den Abbeele demonstrates in his *Travel as Metaphor, from Montaigne to Rousseau*, resorts to the metaphor of travel in order to formulate the right method (*methodos* in Greek means also pathway) that would restore the certitude of the *cogito* that has been shaken by *hyberbolic doubt*. However, the wanderings of the doubting subject must be restrained within "an economy of error" and what is put into doubt and under test is watched over and bounded by the truth of the *cogito* that is thus preposited as the beginning and end of the intellectual journey, again prescribed as a circular one.[118] As we shall see later, the metaphor of travel and the "topography" of the *cogito* in Descartes can be read against the text's own pronouncements and destabilise "the truth of the *cogito*."

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[117] As Normand Doiron points out, by travelling one performs an act, which is also a discursive one. By enunciating the proposition "I travel" the traveller accomplishes what s/he says, what this act describes. " 'Je voyage' est une expression performative; le voyageur l'énonçant, accomplit cette action qu'elle décrit. Non seulement il dit voyager, mais ce faisant il voyage." Doiron, "De l'Épreuve de l' Espace au Lieux du Texte, Le Récit du Voyage Comme Genre", p. 19.

[118] "The positing of the *cogito* provides the Cartesian coordinates for the discursive meanderings of the doubting subject, that is, it provides a transcendental referent point (*oikos*) in relation to which he can always locate himself." Abbeele, *Travel as Metaphor, from Montaigne to Rousseau*, p. 44.

The systematic presentation of classical travel would not be efficient if it was not placed within the more general syntax of metaphysics. The exigency of return and the teleological notion of travel and writing, which are not relevant only to the classical period,[119] manifest an instance of their inherently metaphysical structures and if one is not attentive to this fact one runs the risk of reducing a powerful and enduring structure to a historical configuration that fails to account for the continuities that make them possible. Doiron and Butor are aware of this fact when they acknowledge the complicity of travel with metaphysics and the pervasive and compelling structures that inscribe travel in a dialectics of return and recuperation, in an economy of metaphor that gives rise to the "myth" of properness, of *Oikos*.[120] Hence, travel and writing must (and can only) be reconsidered within the powerful system of thought that has commanded the "styles" of their historical movements and within which they received their condition of signification and thus became meaningful: the historico-metaphysical epoch of what Derrida calls *logocentrism*. *Logocentrism* is neither the transcendental origin of history, science, and language nor something prior or exterior to them, though it has produced their concepts as we understand them. It is a historical epoch (but one that "has controlled [its field of vision] for a few millennia, especially in the West"[121]) that has "assigned the origin of truth in general to the logos,"[122] at the heart of which lies a determination of a concept of the sign that presupposes the existence of a signified, of an ideal meaning, giving rise to hierarchical oppositions such as transcendental and empirical, nature and culture, speech and writing, inside(-*Oikos*) and outside(-*Oikos*) and so on.

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[119] "Toutes les grands voyages romantiques sont des aller et retour [...] À ces voyages dans notre histoire que sont les pèlerinages romantiques, nous permettant de relire autrement ce qui nous avait été transmis, il faut en opposer d'autres, également aller et retour dans leur principe: les voyages d'exploration. [...] Le voyage de découverte manifeste de la façon la plus saisissante les phénomènes de marquage et d'écriture." Butor, pp. 12-13.

[120] "Aussi est-il très difficile, sinon impossible, quand on veut degager les règles du discours de voyageur, et qu'on utilise pour ce faire un discours forcement métadiscursive, d'éviter le double sense, c'est-à-dire la métaphore qui continuellement traverse la méthode classique d'analyse des discours. Ce vertige tient au cercle que trace toute métaphysique. C'est la marque du voyageur." Doiron, "L' Art de Voyager", p. 91. "Nous avons l'impression qu'il n'est qu'un seul type de voyages, à savoir l'aller et retour. Etant donnée la fonction métaphorique fontamentale du voyage dans tout ce qui est lecture et corrélativement écriture, par consequent dans notre connaissance du réel et notre action sur lui, il est certain qu'une telle reduction va developer des puissances mythologiques d'autant plus trompeuses que nous y accordons moins d'attention." Butor, p. 7. However, with regard to Butor's position, we may add here that it is not simply a question of overthrowing a prevalent (and false) view of travel but of probing into the structures that made it possible and to recognise that the notion of *Oikos* is not something one must discard of (for it would return even more persistently) but what one must rather explore in a way that would show its integral and essential discontinuities, its own self-erasure.

[121] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 4.

In the first chapter of *Of Grammatology*, which is entitled "The End of the Book and the Beginning of Writing", Derrida contends that the epoch of logocentrism is inaugurated with a certain privilege accorded to the voice (*phonè*) and thus to speech over writing. Living speech enunciated in the present of discourse was considered (from Plato to Saussure) closer to truth than writing, which by definition implies the absence of the thinking subject and submits to the danger of "usurpation". Hence, logocentrism, which is a *phonocentrism*, structures itself around a notion of the sign that is determined as the "absolute proximity" of the voice or spoken signifier to the signified or ideality of meaning. Writing or rather phonetic writing (for instance, the alphabet), according to this designation of the sign, is the graphic representation or figuration of the phonetic element, the *signifier of a signifier*, and is thus secondary and derivative. This logic assumes the pre-existence of a *transcendental signified* that is represented in the element of the voice, the signifier, that is, what is closest to consciousness since it always appears in the "self-presence of the breath", in *hearing(understanding)-oneself-speak* [*s'entendre-parler*]," in the subject's *auto-affection* and relation to itself in the element of ideality. The phonic signifier is privileged over the written because it is detached from materiality and can be elevated to the immanence of consciousness. It reduces the sensible, spatial and exterior to a form of time that is consciousness itself, to an interiority that "does not borrow from outside of itself." The phonic element in proximity to the ideality of the signified erases itself before the full-presence and plenitude of the latter. The exterior no longer inflicts or contaminates meaning, the purity of logos. And it could not be otherwise in the metaphysics of presence that is motivated by the desire for return to the origin of a "primum signatum":

> "The privilege of the *phonè* does not depend upon a choice that could have been avoided. It responds to a moment of *economy* (let us say of the 'life' of 'history' or of 'being as self-relationship'). The system of 'hearing (understanding)-oneself-speak through the phonic substance –which *presents itself* as the nonexterior, nonmundane, therefore nonempirical or noncontingent signifier –has necessarily dominated the history of the world during an entire epoch, and has even produced the idea of the world-origin, that arises from the difference between the worldly and the non-worldly, the outside and the inside, ideality and nonideality, universal and nonuniversal, transcendental and empirical, etc."[123]

Now, for Derrida the issue is not overthrowing metaphysical notions. They are necessary to the extent that "nothing is conceivable for us without them." What he wants to demonstrate, taking into account the *systematic* and *historical* grounds of these notions, are the conditions and the limits of this powerful and encompassing

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[122] Ibid., p. 3.
[123] Ibid., pp. 7-8.

discourse. He argues that the privileging of speech over writing would not be possible if it were not guaranteed by the assumption of the prior existence of a transcendental signified, a sense preceding and independent of language. This is why the signifier must have as its end its own erasure before the signified. This is the condition for the very idea of truth.[124] The truth of the infinite logos does not depend on its representation or figuration. Its image is excessive and accessory. Moreover, the graphic signifier is more remote from truth; it is born out of "a primary *expatriation*" and condemned to wandering;[125] it has no life; it is a dead letter. It must be submitted to the teleology of the spoken word. Derrida reconstructs major gestures of the movement of *logocentrism* from Plato to Rousseau, Lévi-Strauss[126] and Saussure. He demonstrates how these discourses that exclude writing from their internal constitution (for instance, Saussure's *langue* as the internal system of language) are in fact inaugurated by means of this exclusion and presuppose a certain concept of writing (for example, the divine writing on the soul or writing as natural law). The debasement of writing in the colloquial sense and its subordination to the teleology of the living speech that traverses and constitutes logocentrism is not simply exposed and challenged on the premise of what is called "performative contradiction", as all these thinkers do write if only to deplore and warn against the dangerous effects of writing. As Geoffrey Bennington points out, "it would be necessary to show that philosophy is *essentially* written if we wished to make this a serious argument."[127]

Derrida makes manifest the common structural root of speech and writing by showing that what has been specified as the essential properties of writing equally predicates speech. Writing has been traditionally identified with the absences of the intending subject, addressee and primary context. According to its metaphysical designation, writing has no claim to properness for it is always exposed to the danger of confusion and misunderstanding. Its function is to inscribe, reproduce and iterate, that is, to supplement for the absence of speech but as its weak and dangerous substitute. However, insofar as repeatability and iterability are the main properties of writing, one has to acknowledge that the same goes for speech since no meaning would be possible in general if it were not supported by a structural consistency that

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[124] Ibid., p. 20.
[125] Ibid., p. 39.
[126] In the final chapter we will have the chance of considering Derrida's critique on Claude Lévi-Strauss, who performs an instance of *ethnocentrism*, the way this is implicated with *colonialism* and also with the question of an *ethics of travel*.

would allow for its repetition and identification as such. The singularity of the present of living speech would not be possible if it were not assigned repeatability, a certain ideality and transcendentality (and thus translatability). Moreover, with respect to modern linguistics and specifically Saussure, who inscribes another instance of *phonocentrism*, one can perceive a metaphysical background that unsettles his very theory of the sign. Saussure privileges the phonetic signifier and warns against "the tyranny of writing".[128] However, if according to Saussure writing is the signifier of a signifier, then it inevitably receives the same definition as all signs, which, as we know, are not positive terms but always refer to other signs and take on their value from their differences rather than a substance. Accordingly, the hierarchy of the phonic over the graphic signifier is unwarranted. Derrida shows the inconsistencies of the "theoretician of arbitrariness," who, nonetheless, assumes a "natural bond" between sense and sound.[129] How could the determination of the sign as "instituted" and "unmotivated" come to terms with the presumption of a "natural bond" between sense and the phonic signifier? For Derrida, it is not simply a question of resolving this contradiction but of dislocating the very distinction between the "natural" and the "instituted".[130] We will not persist here on this point. We are simply sketching out a gesture that reinscribes the prominent and metaphysical notions of speech and writing. According to this gesture, *writing* becomes the possibility of all inscription, of all meaning *spoken* or *written*. Writing in this sense constitutes the essential scriptability and iterability of meaning, what confers meaning an ideality that makes it repeatable and identifiable; what permits the emergence of effects of properness but also of metaphor, since repetition always implies displacement and difference. This newly inscribed term that keeps with the metaphysical terminology, for one has to remember that deconstruction necessarily operates from the inside, "borrowing all the strategic and economic resources of subversion from the old structure",[131] precedes and also displaces the metaphysical coupling of speech and writing and is, therefore, called *arche-writing*.[132]

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[127] Bennington, Geoffrey, *Jacques Derrida*, London, University of Chicago Press, 1993, translated from the French by Geoffrey Bennington, p. 48.
[128] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 38.
[129] Ibid., p. 35.
[130] Ibid., p. 42.
[131] Ibid., p. 24.
[132] The notion of *arche-writing* also involves the eruption of an *originary violence*. The indictment of writing in the usual sense as a usurpation that befalls speech has its root in "a primary usurpation" that involves both speech and writing. It is the originary violence of language in the function of naming and assigning "fixed" and "proper" meanings to words and

To recapitulate: there is a structural affinity between travel and writing with regard to their designation as the essential possibility of inscription that is extended beyond the notion of the travel book. The notion of the book, which has acquired different functions with respect to travel and travel writing and to which travel offered its inexhaustible metaphorical resources, was traditionally conceived on the premise of a totality, infinite or finite, on the assumption of the origin and *telos* of a unified meaning. The signalling of the end of the book and the beginning of writing, which is nothing else but a rereading and rewriting of the text of metaphysics according to an organization of space that refuses to be reduced to linearity, the weaving of a "thread" in the text of metaphysics that sends "down roots among roots"[133] in a way that uproots them, cannot but signal the end of the teleological thinking of travel and the beginning (a beginning, however, which has always already begun) of a thinking that disrupts its metaphysical premises. Once again, such a gesture would not do away with the traditional notions of *Oikos* and travel but would rather reinscribe them working from within and paying metaphysics its dues. This is why "the enterprise of deconstruction always in a certain way falls prey to its own work,"[134] for better or for worse and, one may argue, for better, since this "defect" is its very force of subversion.

Van Den Abbeele offers an example of deconstructive reading of travel narratives and philosophical texts that employ the "travel motif". He refers to the generalised notion of travel as *prototravel* showing in this way its essential affinity to Derrida's notion of *arche-writing*. He designates *travel as text*, as a structure of iteration and relating of loci.[135] His aim is not to offer solely a historical and contextual reading of texts but to explore "the travel motif as such at the more

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things. We have touched upon this before and we will come back to it in the last chapter where we will examine travel writing with regard to colonialism and post-colonial discourse.

[133] "And if a text always gives itself a certain representation of its own roots, those roots live only by that representation, by never touching the soil, so to speak. Which undoubtedly destroys their *radical essence*, but not the necessity of their *racinating function*. To say that one always interweaves roots endlessly, bending them to send down roots among the roots, to pass through the same points again, to redouble old adherences, to circulate among their differences, to coil around themselves or to be enveloped one in the other, to say that a text is never anything but a *system of roots*, is undoubtedly to contradict at once the concept of system and the pattern of the root." Ibid., pp. 101-102.

[134] Ibid., p. 24.

[135] "Not only, however, do both text and voyage raise the same set of problems, but one finds with surprising frequency that the problems associated with one are posited and described in terms of the other" and further on "the voyage is somehow already a kind of text, that is, if there is already in place a differential structure of relationships that allows the 'voyage' to be cognised or recognised as such." Van Den Abbeele, pp. xx-xxi.

abstract level of its general epistemological presuppositions".[136] He focuses on four classical French philosophers: Montaigne, Descartes, Montesquieu and Rousseau and explores the *motif of travel* underpinning travel journals, philosophical as well as literary texts. The pivot of his analysis is the dialectical relation of *Oikos* and travel that runs through these texts taking various forms which include questions of authorship, ethnocentrism, gender, the proper name and signature, in short, categories that fall under the general notion of *Oikos*. Van Den Abbeele shows how these discourses are extensively determined by the travel motif whether this receives thematic treatment or not. "Travel" is examined within the tight fabric of each text and within the philosophical system of each author as well as within the general syntax of metaphysics. In this way, the writer of *Travel as Metaphor* keeps with the deconstructive exigency of not choosing between a systematic and historical approach by attentively and closely studying the internal organisation and argumentative structure of the texts, locating them within the enduring structure of metaphysics and within their contextual determinations.[137]

Van Den Abbeele defines *Oikos* as "a transcendental point of reference that organises and domesticates a given area by defining all other points in relation to itself."[138] This does not have to be the point of departure but it can be any point of the itinerary as long as it posited as the organising and teleological principle of the journey, as long as it safeguards the economy of travel. However, as he argues, the positing of *Oikos* "can only occur retroactively" as an effect of the itinerary. "The voyage has always already begun."[139] The restructuring of *Oikos* via the detour of iteration forbids the coincidence of the point of origin with that of return, "for the point of return as repetition of the point of departure cannot take place without a

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[136] Ibid., p. xiii.

[137] Van Den Abbeele formulates his reading strategy by combining systematicity and historicism: "It might well be argued, at this point, that such an analysis would be in no way historical. The figure of travel is so generally implicated in Western metaphysics that it becomes difficult to grant any kind of historical specificity to the texts or analyses that appropriate that figure. The deconstructive potential of the voyage would be lodged in that figure itself and not in any particular or historical uses of it", however, "it does seem pertinent to reintroduce a certain historicism into my reading of the problem of travel. There is a particular force to such an analysis when it is carried out in the context of French Classical thought. A deconstructive opportunity is provided by that era's strong and insistent representation of the thinker as traveller, concretised in such literary stereotypes as the *picaro*, the knight errant, and the prudent navigator, or more abstractly in the Baroque theme of the *homo viator*." Ibid pp. xxv-xxvii.

[138] Ibid., p. xviii.

[139] "The concept of home is needed (and in fact it can only be thought) only *after* the home has already been left behind. In a strict sense, then, one has always already left home, since home

difference in that repetition." Hence travel becomes an "infinite detour" at risk of losing, erasing its very origin and destination. "The voyage, it would seem, can only be thought at its own risk."[140] But then again this enables travel to exceed the circumscription of *Oikos*, the boundaries of the house, which prescribe an end to it. For Van Den Abbeele the priority traditionally given to *Oikos* over travel is concomitant to "the decision of Western metaphysics to privilege presence over absence, voice over writing, and hence the near over the far",[141] a decision with devastating implications.

Van Den Abbeele reads René Descartes' *Second Meditation*, *Discourse on Method* and *Meditations* by using the figure of travel both as weaving thread and incisive trait. Descartes tormented by doubt embarks on a discursive voyage with the aim of finding the right path (*methodus*) to truth that would dispel "false opinions" and anxiety. However, for this goal to be achieved one must not let oneself aimlessly wander but has to limit and direct oneself, instead, along guidelines that would secure one's destination, in this case, the certitude of an unshakable position. The journey embarks from the doubting in view of the self-asserting *cogito*.[142] Wandering is thus inscribed in an "economy of error" in a way that, finally, "neutralises" and impedes a radical questioning of the *cogito*'s truth. The "topographical" metaphor of the *cogito* functions as a strategy of circumscription of error as deviation. It reduces the meditative journey to a *methodos*, to a "straight and narrow" path. But such reduction comes in turn and despite Descartes to disrupt itself since it is articulated in terms of a *recuperative logic* (of travel). Insofar as travel is inscribed in a general economy of meaning that forbids return and recuperation, the *cogito* is doomed to endless erring without assured *origin* or *telos*. "The labyrinthine topography of error in its threat of an infinite wandering figures Descartes' predicament as one that is inextricably textual."[143]

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can only exist as such at the price of its being lost. The *oikos* is posited *aprés-coup*. Thus, the voyage has always already begun." Ibid., pp. xviii-xix.

[140] Ibid., p. xviii.

[141] Ibid., p. xx.

[142] However, Van Den Abbeele points out, "the very act of positing certainty as a destination already puts the philosopher on firm ground and keeps him from slipping into the drift of aimless nomadism." Ibid., p. 43. Then the speculative journey has from the start a prescribed *telos* which coincides with its point of departure. And if the mind "enjoys wandering off [s'égarer; aberrare], and it cannot yet contain itself within the limits of truth" the philosopher chooses to allow such meandering or erring as long as it is eventually and inevitably disciplined by good reasoning. The purpose of erring thus ascribed warrants Van Den Abbeele's reformulation of Descartes' famous proposition: *J'erre donc je suis*.

[143] Ibid., p. 53.

The "travel motif" is not just a literary commonplace or metaphor found in all sorts of discourses. It permeates discourse to the extent it can prove to be a disruptive and complicating element in the literary, theoretical, and philosophical texts that deploy it.[144] Travel has always signified a transgression, the crossing of a boundary, the passage to a beyond that institutes a relation with the other. This movement, whether one refers to travel in the "literal" or "metaphorical" sense, is a *spacing* that already bears the trace of the other, an other that in a way has not yet arrived, an other before and with(in) the same and yet an other to come. In every discourse that attempts to establish itself by drawing a boundary between an inside (itself) and an outside (other discourses), a boundary that has to be transgressed and acknowledged, the *spatial metaphor of travel* is at work. However, as was argued, travel is not simply a deviation in view of recuperation, that is, peaceful reintegration. We have noted how the apparently "innocent" use of the travel motif can prove a disruptive force in philosophical texts, how the theme of travel employed as an explanatory device can be turned against those texts or rather against their dominant and instituted interpretations. As Van Den Abbeele maintains, "discourse on travel is thus inexorably contaminated by its object."[145] The metaphor of travel unsettles claims to any definite and proper meaning. It reveals its essential ambiguity and undecidability, or *literariness*. And when it appears in philosophical texts it raises the question of their "problematic" boundary with literature. The question of the genre as well as the indissiociable issue of the open boundary between fact and fiction will concern us in the next chapter.

What we have been pointing to is a glimpse at this closure which is an opening at the same time: closing *the book of travel* and opening onto *travel as writing*:

> "The question of writing could be opened only if the book was closed. The joyous wandering of the *graphein* then became wandering without return. The opening into the text was adventure, expenditure without reserve. And yet did we not know that the closure of the book was not simply a limit among others? And that only in the book, coming back to it unceasingly, drawing all our resources from it, could we indefinitely designate the writing beyond the book?"[146]

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[144] Van Den Abbeele goes as far as to say that the theme of voyage "in some way or other raises the question of the status of literary discourse itself." "If literature returns with such frequency to this *topos* (if it can still be considered to be one), the theme of the voyage must not be simply one literary theme among others but one that in some way or other raises the question of the status of literary discourse itself." Ibid., p. xiv.

[145] Ibid., p. xxx.

[146] Derrida, Jacques, "Ellipsis" in *Writing and Difference*, translated by Alain Bass, London, Routledge, 1978, p. 294.

This chapter has attempted to reinscribe what was held as the hermeneutic exigency of travel, that is, its enclosure in the restricted economy of the house, into a general economy of travel. In the generalised notion of travel the chance of no return is no longer an accident befalling the course of the journey, but its essential and structural possibility. Return now takes the form of infinite regression or repetition of the same, of the same in the other. For in the itinerary of travel *Oikos* is also moving along the way nourishing the myth and the dream of origin; an origin, however, that is unceasingly divided and doubled. Travel always carries with it a certain sense of home (*phereoikos*), a sense of a proper place from which travel must have begun. As we saw, however, this sense of place never appears as such but instead emerges as the effect of the very movement of travel. Because there is no place like home, travel must infinitely return to this nonplace called home as writing must after a certain fashion return to the book in order to repeat, traverse and exceed it.

Let us close with a flight. The flight of Icarus. Icarus flies away towards freedom, towards the *sun* (the sun returns here to reclaim its privilege) after having escaped his prison-mansion, the *labyrinth*, and pays no heed to the prudent warnings of his father, Dedalus, not to carry himself too far. Icarus disobeys paternal advice, the law of the house, the proper name of the father in his self-destructive desire for the sun. But the sun, like the house, is an impossible destination. Icarus is trapped between two powerful metaphysical metaphors, the house and the sun, and is finally brought down. The illusion of an escape from the labyrinth, from the textual labyrinth of the book, and the impossibility of return to what was thought to be escaped plunge him even deeper into the abyss of textuality. Self-presence, properness, the sun, the house were untenable from the start. Always already. And the myth of Icarus' impossible journey was always already silently inscribed in white ink. A white mythology.

Part II

Chapter III

Metaphors of Writing:

Travel as Narrative

There is no story without narration, no experience without recounting, and no travel without writing. There is no travel without some sort of marking, inscribing, traversing the dense text of culture. What is claimed by this is not a privileging of the text, at least in the restricted sense of a closed and self-contained totality, over the experience of the world and the actual experience of travel. It is to say that the experience of travel becomes recognised as such as it is formed and articulated through the signifying structures of thought and language. What will be here called *narrative* and *writing* does not coincide with, even though it engulfs, the very act of narrating and writing and their final product in the form of a story. Narrative and writing receive here a broader sense that moves beyond and also precedes narrating and refers to the essential *readability* and *scriptability* of experience, to the received universe of cultural signs and the linguistic patterns of thought that turn lived experience into something meaningful, recountable and memorable.

This chapter will examine the notion of travel as narrative and writing both in their broad and narrow senses and will attempt to explore the way these interconnect and are reinscribed onto each other. It will attempt to draw implications of the previous discussion about the semantic, spatio-temporal, and scriptural conditions of travel onto the space of the travel text. Our discussion of metaphor has already laid down a path (but is that not what metaphor essentially does?) for entering into an issue that has occupied central stage in the consideration of travel texts as far back as the emergence of the genre, although we should be careful here not to bestow retrospectively any generic unity, especially as we have yet to define travel writing. This issue concerns the essentially problematic distinction between factual and fictional or literary travel writing and will be the focus of this chapter. This division within travel writing has taken many forms and has been addressed under different headings and according to various concerns (moral, epistemological, etc) throughout the history of the genre that had also to circumscribe the cases of imaginary voyages, pseudo-travel texts and plagiarism. In the present, when these issues are taken up in the ongoing discussion on the antinomy of *fact* and *fiction* and the inextricably related problematic of the (open) boundaries of *genres*. the case of travel writing acquires *de nouveau* a particular

significance. Travel writing could prove an interesting case in point and contribute considerably to the aforementioned discussion not only because the problematic of factual and fictional representation is inherent to it (as it has to be to discourse in general if the related debates are to have any currency at all), not only because it is an issue that has been thematised, parodied, attacked and defended within travel texts themselves but mainly because travel literature more than other "literary" genres (with the obvious exception of autobiography) has a claim to experience; it recounts something that really happened and was witnessed by the traveller/writer and, what is more, something that usually implies a crossing over to the unfamiliar. What is at stake in the travel text is the claim to the authority of a truthful experience, if not as its *raison d'être* at least as its excuse.[1] However, even in texts that aspire to give "straight" reports of facts, the very *matter* of travel writing, which presupposes a process of *figuring out* something that appears distant and alien (sometimes in the form of the marvellous, supernatural, or exotic depending on the discourse it occurs in), necessarily conflates the "factual" and the "figurative".

One could object that the antinomy of fact and fiction is more pervasive and exemplary with regard to texts that do not challenge or make an issue of it, as it has been traditionally the case with historiography, philosophy and ethnology, which have a claim to reality, to truth and to objective representation. Recent studies that centre on the exposition of the tropological construction of texts regarding these disciplines, draw attention to poetics and rhetoric to show that writing is far from a controlled and self-transparent activity[2]. In fact, as will be suggested later, historiography and ethnology, which bear close links to travel writing, constitute themselves on the basis of the disjunction between factual and fictional representation. The case of travel writing retains its exemplary force and is all the more pertinent in an age when intercultural relations are being addressed on an unprecedented scale, for it belongs to a tradition long in the making that has built upon instances of encounters of European subjects –it is European travel (writing) that concerns us here- with worlds exceeding their "reality". But it is not solely for historical or even for inherently structural reasons

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[1] As we shall later see, however, generic conventions do not presuppose the truthfulness of any such claim, actually, the opposite is structurally requisite. What is "generically" requisite is the *claim* itself and this implies that lie and perjury must be always possible.

[2] See Hayden White`s *Metahistory, The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973, James Clifford's and George E. Marcus's (eds) *Writing Culture, The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, London, University of California Press, 1986 and Paul de Man's *Allegories of Reading, Figural Language in*

imposed by its very matter that travel writing is an important case in point. It is a unique case for the exemplification of how historical and rhetorical categories, how factual circumstance and textual convention, interlace or rather emerge together.[3] What is principally at stake in travel writing is the *representation* or *figuring out* of the "cultural" other. This (tropological) force or function, however, does not solely regard textual configurations and rhetorical typologies, but is already at work in the *experience* of travel, allowing us thus to speak of a *general rhetoric of travel* and not merely of travel writing. Rhetoric should be viewed as a shaping force of cultural encounter (if such a thing ever takes place), which is both structurally and historically determined.[4]

The previous chapter explored the "existential" conditions of travel in order to readdress its metaphysical notion by raising the questions of space, time, the itinerary and the boundary. This questioning leads us back to the phenomenological conditions and motif of travel, which are premised upon the metaphysical concept of the present, and through their deconstruction to a reinscription of travel essentially as an experience of *aporia* or of the non-passage. The disruption or fracture in (the) experience (of travel) is tantamount to its tropological constitution. In this sense, travel writing becomes the textual figuration of what is already a figurative experience for a consciousness exposed to otherness. It becomes the figure of a figure. In Mary B. Campbell's words, "in the travel book we have developed a literary instrument of consciousness, a genre of cultural translation".[5] If a sort of correspondence or analogy between the rhetoric of the travel text and the essentially figurative character of

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Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust, London, Yale University Press, 1979, which we will be discussing later in this chapter.

[3] This is not to say that fact and fiction are two distinct categories even though they conflate and are hard to separate. If something of the sort has been implied so far by the juxtaposition of these terms, it was so for the sake of introducing the problematic. It will be argued that this problematic either with regard to discursive representations or, indeed, with understanding in general does not simply involve the synthetic merging of factual and imaginary elements that one would then assume the task of delimiting. The semantic values of literalness and metaphor and, by extension, fact and fiction, do not exist separately and prior to their interlacement.

[4] Mary B. Campbell in *The Witness and the Other World, Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600*, London, Cornell University Press, 1988, discusses the force of figuration manifested in travel writing not simply as a device of describing the "other", something that calls for a "new" language, but as a shaping process of perception. For Campbell, the "literary situation" of the travel book is "an inherently interesting one –a limit case for such intertwined literary issues as truth, fact, figure, fiction, even genre." Ibid., p. 2. A similar vein of thinking is that of Hayden White, who has argued with regard to historiography that tropes are not simply constitutive of discourse but are "transformational patterns in conceptual thought". White, Hayden, *Tropics of Discourse, Essays in Cultural Criticism*, London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, p. 14.

[5] Campbell, p. 11.

experience is suggested here, as one has to bear in mind, this is a far more complicated relation than any typology of tropes could delineate. Travel and travel writing are always in excess of such schematisations and, what is more, they are always in excess of each other for it is impossible to delimit what pertains to the text and what to experience, as it is also impossible to reduce either way the one to the other.

It would be interesting to view the history of European travel writing with regard to the shifts of tropes in use at different instances. Changes, for instance, in the symbolical or allegorical functions or shifts in the focal themes that organise these texts (for example, emphasis may shift from the destination on the journey itself, or the traveller) can be registered from the spiritual journeys of pilgrims, to the medieval accounts of marvels, the narratives of exploration and conquest, the romantic flight and modernist nostalgia, which become manifestations of a world becoming larger and smaller again from the European perspective. One could argue that the history of this genre dramatises and testifies to the opening of "European" consciousness to the world and to a process of self-awareness and self-formation at once painful and celebratory. And again this would presume that a largely *Eurocentric* attitude has been at work throughout the history of European travel (the term "European travel" already implies this). Although such homogenising claims are inherently problematic and should be cautiously handled, it is safe to argue that across the particularity of events of travel one can trace a relatively unified "European" perspective, which we propose to explore on the level of its conceptual premises. The latter can be formalised in the polar couple *Oikos* and travel that constitutes the at once *structural* and *historical a priori* of "European travel" and is manifested in its most devastating effects in various forms and instances of *colonialism* (as diverse, multi-level and antagonistic as these may be). The encounter of Europe with what was dreamt, imagined and constituted as its other induced and enhanced notions of *home* and *away*, fostered ideas of humanity and of the teleology of Western civilization, of which the dreadful implications are largely known. Cultural encounter, in fact, the theme of encounter in general, that is, the moment that instigates a relation with the other, immediately and necessarily introduces the question of *ethics*. In a fashion, what we have been elaborating so far and shall extend now to travel narrative and the genre of travel writing, has paved a way for addressing the question of an ethics of travel. In this way a passage will be made from the consideration of the *phenomenology*, to the *rhetoric* and, finally, *the ethics of travel*, three themes that are inextricable related and emerge from the common root of a disjointed present or *trace*. But we shall leave this for the moment.

Travel writing, even more explicitly than other genres, presents immense difficulty in defining. This, besides the inherently problematic character of any attempt at generic definition in general, is also due to the fact that it is necessarily connected to the immensely varied practice of travelling that forbids travel writing to be considered on its own terms as a particular mode or field of human creativity and expression. When it comes to such an archaic and primitive practice as travel that has so largely affected the history of humanity as much through the immediate and long-term effects of displacement, exploration and conquest, as through its various symbolic forms that permeate and orient singular and collective destinies and, furthermore, when it comes to writing about the experience of travelling and, subsequently, codifying it into a literary genre, any definition is bound to be either too schematic or too exclusive. However, it is safe to argue that, although it is hard to agree upon a definition, one can still have a fairly accurate idea of what travel writing by and large is, without even addressing the specificities and particularities of the questions and problems it raises. Although travel writing as a literary genre cannot be defined on the basis of traditional criteria pertaining to formal, modal or thematic unity at least in a strict sense, it cannot but dispose a minimal or loose thematic identity by the simple fact that *it is a writing about travel*. And then again, this is saying too much and too little at once. For travel as a theme can appear in all sorts of texts; it can be or rather has been the subject of essays (Montaigne's, for instance, *On Travel*), it has provided the *mise-en-scène* of novels (Lawrence Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* is one of the countless examples), the constitutive trope of genres like the *picaresque* and the *Bildungsroman*, the matter of *romances*, the object of *satire* (Lucian's *True History*). At the same time "travel" may not be thematically exposed or at least foregrounded in texts that "legitimately" belong to travel writing, such as early accounts of pilgrimages like Egeria's *Peregrinatio*, where the focus is neither on the journey itself nor the place visited but on its Scriptural significance instead.[6] And, of course, there is always the surrounding literature on the "art of travel" and travel writing, that is, treatises and manuals with the necessary exhortations and warnings, moral directions and practical advice for travellers (for instance, what was called *apodemic* literature in the sixteenth century), as well as, guidebooks, for many the successors of the medieval *itinereria*. So writing about travel

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[6] Or as Paul Fussell suggests, travel books of the interwar period when "the genre is a device for getting published essays, which without the travel 'menstruum' (as Coleridge would say), would appear too old fashioned for generic credit, too reminiscent of Lamb and Stevenson and Chesterton." Fussell, Paul, *Abroad, British Literary Travelling Between the Wars*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1980, p. 204.

can hardly provide the criterion for a thematic unity of travel writing. Neither is form a self-evident category for a genre that can appear both in prose and verse[7] (for instance, Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*[8]), that participates in and draws from other genres or modes of writing such as letters, journals, memoirs, chronicles, hagiographies, etc. It is not suggested here that genres can be defined on solely formal or thematic grounds. Travel writing is, of course, an admittedly "impure" and hybrid genre, but it is also a "clear" example of the "impurity" and impossible demarcation of genres on solid and constant criteria.

In *The Architext*, Gérard Genette retraces the history of the theory of genres and tries to show the impasses and confusion that inevitably arise from the formulation of reductive and inclusive taxonomies.[9] The consideration of the theory of genres, with its charts and tables, constantly "refined", altered, and challenged is proof enough that genres do not display a self-evident or self-sufficient character that would establish them as such. Genres do not possess properties peculiar to them; there is not such a thing as *essentially* generic qualities that would allow for the demarcation and systematic representation of genres. Of course, generic charts retain a heuristic and

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[7] Percy G. Adams enumerates four forms of travel literature: 1) the letter 2) the diary or journal 3) the simple narrative and 4) the "atypical" forms such as dialogue (wholly or partly), autobiography or biography, and poems. Adams, Percy G., *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel*, Lexington, The University Press of Kentucky, 1983, pp. 43-44.

[8] There has been a considerable amount of travel poetry. See, for instance, *The Faber Book of Poetry and Place*, edited by Geoffrey Grigson, London, Faber & Faber, 1980 or *The Oxford Book of Travel Verse*, chosen and edited by Kevin Crossley-Holland, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1986. It is very interesting to consider the criteria by which editors select their material since these underline the inherent difficulties of this project imposed by travel writing itself. Kevin Crossley-Holland in his introduction specifies that he has taken travel verse to mean both verse about the nature of travel and verse occasioned by it. Another preoccupation and matter of choice was form for, even if his is an anthology of verse, the boundaries between forms are still undecidable: "I have to the last remained in two minds about whether it is also proper to include dramatic monologues. In what sense, for instance, is Robert Browning's 'Up at a Villa –Down in the City' a travel poem? The result is that a few monologues are included, and do perhaps vary the anthology's texture, but only a few." Crossley-Holland, *The Oxford Book of Travel Verse*, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv.

[9] Genette spells out the fallacious attribution of the tripartition of literature into the three major genres, or archigenres of the epic, drama, and lyric to Plato and Aristotle that, in his view, lead to the erroneous establishment of genres as "natural", "ideal" and overarching categories that form highly hierarchical systems. Genette insists that Plato's and Aristotle's poetics, which have served as a basis for everything that came later, do not consist of a theory of genres but are instead grounded primarily on the basic division among *modes* or *situations of enunciation*, namely the *narrative* and *dramatic* modes, that is, essentially *linguistic* and *pragmatic* categories, and are therefore "somewhat" structurally superior to romantic and modern poetics, which reinterpret the system of modes into a system genres, that is, at large thematically defined categories. Genette, Gérard, *The Architext, An Introduction*, translated by Jane E. Lewin, Oxford, University of California Press, 1992, originally published as *Introduction à l'Architexte*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1979.

guiding function since they can account for the relative continuity in the unstable field of literature with all its "occasional surprises", "sudden mutations", and "capricious decisions".[10] But no such thing as "final generic position" outside all historicity exists.[11]

Genette proposes a theory of genres that challenges the romantic and modern poetics' systematic and hierarchical charts that are built around and under the three "archigenres".[12] Genres are "empirical classes" that are irreducible to tabular models. On the other hand, genres can neither be simply reduced to historical determinations. Genette is indeed a formalist but one who tries to overcome the impasses of hierarchical and exhaustive charts by exposing form to the effects of history and adhering at once to a set of "*relatively constant and transhistorical*" thematic, formal and modal elements that assure the continuity and transformative capacity of literature. Gennete introduces the notion of the *architext*, which he designates as "that relationship of inclusion that links each text to the various types of discourses it belongs to", for instance, to genres that with all their "thematic, modal, formal, and other (?)" determinations form part of an unstable network of inter-, trans-textuality "everywhere –above, beneath, around the text".[13] This notion is extremely important for a reconsideration of generic theory because it shows that texts may simultaneously or successively participate in and cut across multiple genres or types of discourses and it is this principle of inclusion (which is, however, never a simple one) rather than an immanent generic property that allows for such and such text to be allocated (if only provisionally) to such and such genre. Of course, there are genres and they receive

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[10] Ibid., p. 78.

[11] "In surreptitiously (and unconsciously) backing both the modal definition and generic definition, the attribution sets up these archigenres as ideal or natural types, which they are not and cannot be: no archigenre could totally escape historicity *while at the same time retaining a generic definition*. There are modes (for example, the narrative); there are genres (for example, the novel); the relationship between genres and modes is complex and doubtless not, as Aristotle suggests, one of simple inclusion." Ibid., pp. 70-71. Genette later clarifies the intentionally "ambiguous construction" of the last sentence of the passage cited above with regard to Aristotle's position. The relationship between modes and genres is not one of simple *inclusion* but one of *intersection*. Genette realises "after the fact" that "the category of genre (for instance, tragedy) is included in both the category of mode (dramatic) and the category of object (superior), where it belongs for a different reason but to the same degree." Ibid., p. 73. This realisation of the complexity of relationships of inclusion brings him closer to the notion of the architext.

[12] "The whole history of the theory of genres is imprinted with these fascinating patterns that inform and deform the often irregular reality of the literary field –patterns whose designers claim to have discovered a natural 'system' precisely where they are constructing a factitious symmetry with the help of a copious supply of false windows." Ibid., p. 45.

[13] Ibid., pp. 82-83.

thematic, formal, modal and other (?) determinations but none of these essentially belongs to them, none of these is generic.[14]

This conclusion, nonetheless, Genette reaches somehow paradoxically by insisting on keeping the distinction between modal and thematic criteria in the definition of genres though he admits to the complexity of their relation.[15] Modal and generic criteria must remain heterogeneous in defiance of romantic poetics, which brought about their confusion. He maintains that modes or enunciative situations are properly linguistic categories and have the status of "natural forms", while genres are "properly literary categories" or, "to be more precise, we should say 'properly aesthetic,' for as we know, the fact of genre is common to all the arts. Here, therefore, 'properly literary' means proper to the aesthetic level of literature, the level literature shares with other arts, as opposed to the linguistic level, which literature shares with the other types of discourse."[16] Modes are natural forms in a "wholly relative sense and only to the extent that language and its use appear as facts of nature vis-à-vis the conscious and deliberate elaboration of aesthetic forms."[17]

Two points at least arise from this: the first is that according to Genette genres as "properly literary categories" do not manifest a properly literary form, that is, a form particular to literature, since modal or "natural" forms are essentially linguistic. Genres inevitably include in their definition thematic elements and so they cannot be designated on purely formal grounds. However, neither does thematics have a purely literary function since it bears on and intersects with extraliterary elements. The second point concerns the distinction between the linguistic and the literary, which are played against each other through what is a typically formalistic gesture largely suggesting (as all formalisms by definition do) that there is a level of language that is natural or literal onto which aesthetic elaboration comes to graft its mark. Genette assumes or presupposes here the fundamental distinctions between nature/art (*techne*, artifice) and

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[14] We will come back to this notion of nongeneric determination of genres when we will discuss Jacques Derrida's "The Law of the Genre" a bit later in the chapter.

[15] Although, as Genette himself shows, there are thematic elements also in Aristotle's generic definitions that suggest that form is "contaminated" by extraformal categories, he contends that Aristotle's poetics is structurally superior, since it does not subordinate the one to the other and does not lead to hierarchical and univocal inclusions. Ibid., pp. 20-21. In Genette's view, what happens later in romantic and postromantic poetics, is the elevation of the epical, dramatic and lyrical to "natural", "ideal", all-encompassing genres, which form highly hierarchical systems and are no longer thought on the basis of modal (and formalistic categories) but inevitably admit to their definitions "thematic elements, however vague." Ibid., p. 62.

[16] Ibid., p. 64.

[17] Ibid.

literal/figurative and the prioritisation of the former, something that largely compromises the notion of the *architext*.[18] *The Architext* is not free from contradiction, although it is undoubtedly a very important addition to the theory of genres.[19]

Let us come back to travel writing. We touched upon the essential impossibility of the definition of genres and, in our case, of travel writing. We said that, although it can be neither formally nor thematically defined, we do have a sense of what travel writing is, as indeed we must if we are about to define anything, even if the definition is bound to fall short. What allows for this gathering of texts under the same heading is a fact that is extraneous to the literary genre "properly" speaking. It is the experience of travelling. And then the question is, whose experience? Does a travel book worthy of its name necessarily communicate the travelling experience of the writer? What if it is about someone else's experience? What if it recounts something that never actually took place? In fact, most scholars seem to be in agreement that an enabling definition, one that, however, mostly adheres to the modern conception of the genre, is that travel writing is a first-person narrative that recounts what is claimed to

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[18] Jacques Derrida in "The Law of the Genre" critically addresses two "motifs" in Genette's text. The first one relates to Genette's critique of romantic poetics for formulating a tripartite of "natural" and "ideal" archigenres. Derrida maintains that romanticism should not be understood simply as an epoch, a moment or stage located in the trajectory of a "history", of which the concept would be assured. For Derrida, romanticism, if such a thing can be identified, bears within it simultaneously both a "naturalising" and a "historicizing" logic, which is the repetition of all the broaches and breaches that cut across, bring together, divide, assemble and disseminate the notions of physis/nature or genos (in the Greek sense of generation) that traverse in their turn all genres assembling them and dividing them. In this sense, and if the romantic "naturalisation" of genres needs to be addressed, we carry still a romantic load. The second motif has to do with the distinction between the mode and genre, which amounts to a distinction between "natural" form and content, for Derrida, something of questionable legitimacy and, moreover, uncertain efficacy in the reading of texts, especially of those that challenge modal and generic limits. This critique is comprised in the French original and has been omitted from the English translation, which we are going to use later when we discuss Derrida's text more extensively. Derrida, Jacques, "La Loi du Genre" in *Parages*, Paris, Éditions Galilée, 1986, pp. 256-262.

[19] Suzanne Gearhart in *The Open Boundary of History and Fiction* extensively discusses this text and brings out inconsistencies and weaknesses, which are, however, evaluated within the more general context of the formalist standpoint. Just as literature cannot be defined on its own terms, form cannot be determined on solely formal grounds. And just as genres possess formal and modal properties, form also and necessarily bears on the thematic, rhetorical, historical and so on. As Gearhart sustains, "there is no purely formal definition of form [...] form is always in some sense extraformal; it is always defined by rhetoric, by linguistics, and by philosophy, and implicated in politics and history. The distinction between form and its 'others' is, like all distinctions within formalism, never neutral. It is inextricably linked to the historical, philosophical, and political hierarchies which are themselves repeated 'within' the formal system as hierarchies among genres, tropes, and so on." Gearhart, Suzanne, *The Open Boundary of History and Fiction, A Critical Approach to the French Enlightenment*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984, p. 72.

be the true and actual experience of a journey made by the author him/herself.[20] So in more technical terms, travel writing is that genre that consists of narratives written in a direct autodiegetic mode (author, narrator, hero blend in one person), mostly in the form of prose, and is thematically organised around the claim to a true experience of travel. This definition is admittedly restrictive, one that Percy G. Adams would probably not be too happy about,[21] for it pertains to the modern sense of travel writing as the self-conscious activity of a fully-present narrator, which as Campbell reminds us was "still barely thinkable in the sixteenth century".[22] Studies on travel writing include chapters on, for example, Herodotus or the Alexander Romances that, even though they are texts grounded on "real" experiences of travel, they do not fit the modern idea of the genre as representation of the journey itself as lived by the travel writer. It is claimed, in fact, that travel writing, as we now understand it, is a relative recent literary phenomenon that came to be established as such in the sixteenth century,[23] although it emerged from a tradition long in the making that reaches back to antiquity, to the first reports of foreign cultures that already bore the traces of what later became the "pilgrimage" (Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius* written in the AD 220s or 230s), the

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[20] "Travel writing" is often interchangeably used with the terms "travel narrative" and "travelogue", which are in fact the most prominent forms of the modern genre. In the foreword of the journal *Studies in Travel Writing*, number 1, Tim Youngs takes on a broad definition of travel writing –"travel writing will be interpreted broadly to encompass not only travel narratives, letters, diaries, and so on, but also texts such as tourist brochures and guidebooks: whatever is written, is about travel, and is interesting", *Studies in Travel Writing*, number 1, spring 1997, p. v). In the introduction of the same journal, however, Peter Hulme states that "like autobiography, with which travel writing shares some features, travel narrative is always controlled by the first-person singular" and refers to other forms such as letters, notebooks and, diaries as "pre-existing the 'official' travel narrative itself." Hulme, pp. 3-5. Mary B. Campbell defines travel literature "as a kind of first-person narrative, or at least a second-person narrative (as in the travel guide: "thence you come to a pillar near the chamber of the holy sepulchre")." Campbell, p. 5. Barbara Korte defines the genre of travelogue as consisting of "accounts of travel [that] depict a journey in its course of events and thus constitute narrative texts (usually composed in prose). They claim –and their readers believe- that the journey recorded actually took place, and that it is presented by the traveller him or herself." Korte, Barbara, *English Travel Writing from Pillgrimages to Postcolonial Explorations*, translated from German by Catherine Matthias, MacMillan Press LTD, 2000, p. 1.

[21] Adams' idea of travel writing is more inclusive: "in fact the majority of literature about real travels has been written in the third person, and without doubt much of that portion has always been thought of as 'travel literature' ", although he acknowledges that "while there is no typical travel account any more than there is a typical novel, for many readers the first-person journal or letter, that pristine document, is still the archetypal form of the récit de voyage." Adams, pp. 162-164.

[22] Campbell, Mary Baine, "Renaissance Voyage Literature and Ethnographic Pleasure: The Case of André Thevet" in *Studies in Travel Writing*, number 1, p. 10.

[23] In the sixteenth century we have also the appearance of the first great collections of *récits de voyage* by Peter Martyr, Theodore de Bry, Richard Hakluyt, Samuel Purchas and André Thevet, which signalled the codification of the genre and which along with the new atlases and cosmographies contributed to its reorientation and re-evaluation.

"ethnographic" (the pre-socratic philosopher Xenophanes, Herodotus in the fifth century BC, Ctesias in the fourth century BC, Strabo and Pausanias in first century AD) and "satiric" (Lucian in the second century AD) models.[24] The fact that there was a parody of "travel writing" as early as the second century AD shows that there was at least some level of awareness of a kind of writing that pertained to a body of texts on travel, although in no way did that consist then of a distinct genre. Furthermore, one cannot leave out from the consideration of the (pre)history of this genre the archetypal travel text of Homer's *Odyssey*, the epical narration of the *par excellence* journey that epitomises the powerful and all pervasive allegorical function of the theme of travel.

It is, however, both legitimate and enabling, and to a great extent unavoidable, to address travel writing from the standpoint of the modern sense of the genre as a first-person narrative. And if we do have this sense to begin with, this has emerged out of the singular instances and repetitive occurrences of what we now call travel writing with all their shifts, breaks, and surprises that make both a sense of continuity and a sense of change possible. In other words, if we can speak today of the genre of travel writing, it is because of the singular and iterable inscriptions that have given to it both a relative identity and a history. It has to be clear here that we are using the term "history" not in the sense of a linear progression, evolution or transformation of something given and shaped in advance. We rather refer to a sort of movement that is both assembling and disassembling, that both brings together and tears apart texts, genres, contexts in and between themselves, however, not in the sense of succession of different stages in the "history" of travel writing, for example, from the medieval travel texts, which aspired to be comprehensive and to live up to the idea of the *liber mundi*, to the Renaissance demarcation of scientific travel writing and the modern division of the genre into literary and factual. Of course, we necessarily speak of shifts and paradigms in the "history" of travel writing and one cannot deny that there have been relatively unifying forces and trends at different phases in what is assumed as its historical trajectory. But one, nonetheless, must be attentive to the problems that such periodisations and generalisations by definition pose. Linear representations cannot help being reductive even when they make room for discontinuities and disruptions. Travel texts cut across and intersect with, as they also participate in the formation of other genres, some of the most evident examples are the novel and ethnography, which had to define itself in disjunction to travel writing and was forced to consider most

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[24] See the introduction in *Voyages & Visions, Towards a Cultural History of Travel*, edited by

recently *de nouveau* their close affinity.[25] And within the genre itself it would be too reductive and simplistic to retrospectively map out a passage from pilgrimage to the chronicle, to narratives of discovery, conquest, scientific observation and so on. These formulations represent and assemble forces and possibilities that at some level and to some extent are constantly at work within what we now call travel writing. And, of course, some of these possibilities are also realised somewhat separately (yet not wholly independently) from what is considered "mainstream" travel writing – pilgrimages are still being written today. There are traces and recurrences of many different elements and functions that make a history of the genre conceivable and it is true that at different historical instances some of these have been in the foreground as most representative. But to simply reduce this fact to contextual determination would be to overlook the enduring structures (the iterations and alterations) that make this genre possible. To put a text back into context necessarily means that one has first taken it out of context.

Contextualisation presupposes a previous distinction between text and context. In truth, we always read in and out of context(s). A text by definition can be detached from the context of its initial inscription and be read in infinite number of contexts. What is questioned here is by no means the legitimacy of the demand for contextualisation. We cannot help but contextualise and recontextualise texts and this is indeed what we must do –limitlessly. However, this precisely amounts to saying that there is no closed, final or total context. There is no context that can exhaust or establish a meaning for the text in a definite mode. What is called into question here is rather a notion of the context as something cohesive and stabilised and a certain limit that is often uncritically drawn between text and context. Text and context traverse one another and, as Geoffrey Bennington remarks, to be able to have a certain understanding of a text implies that one is, however minimally, part of its context.[26] A simple distinction cannot be upheld for texts are always contexts bearing the imprints of other texts/contexts and contexts are also texts and more broadly cultural formations bearing the imprints of texts. Texts and contexts emerge out of sheaves and grids of forces and differences that cannot be reduced to closed and circumscribed entities. To say that "there is nothing outside the text [*il n'y a pas de hors-texte*]", the much quoted

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Jas Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés, London, Reaktion Books, 1999.

[25] Lévi-Strauss' *Tristes Tropiques*, for instance, is considered a classical ethnographic study and one of the masterpieces of twentieth century travel writing.

[26] Bennington, Geoffrey and Derrida, Jacques, *Jacques Derrida*, London, University of Chicago Press, 1993, p. 91.

and largely misunderstood phrase of Derrida, amounts to saying that "there is nothing outside context."[27] Text here is obviously used in the broader sense of "writing". However, it should be clear that this is not another use or another meaning imposed on the term. It is not a matter of terminological choice. Any text in the conventional sense is already interrupted by its generalised notion.

This chapter began with the phrase: *there is no travel without writing*. "Travel" and "writing" are both inscriptions in a generalised sense and, as Barbara Korte also points out, fundamentally *intertextual*[28]. Here we make use of the term *intertextuality* coined by Julia Kristeva in a way that goes beyond the narrow concept of the text and points to the Derridean generalised notion of *textuality*, although precisely because of its generality it renders the prefix "inter-" redundant.[29] Travel writers read, quote, or plagiarise other travel writers or texts about travel such as guidebooks. But beyond this, what is implied here is that there can be no rigid separation between the experience of travel, as the surrounding context and situation of inscription, and the travel text. Experience itself occurs as a structure of writing within which "travel writing" is

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[27] "The phrase which for some has become a sort of slogan, in general so badly understood, of deconstruction ("there is nothing outside the text" [*il n'y a pas de hors-texte*]), means nothing else: there is nothing outside context. In this form, which says exactly the same thing, the formula would doubtless have been less shocking. I am not certain that it would have provided more to think about." Derrida, Jacques, *Limited Inc*, Evaston, IL, Northwestern University Press, 1988,p. 136.

[28] "Texts read during the journey contribute in large measure to the travelling experience, as they mediate the travelled world for the traveller; the experience of travel is thus fundamentally intertextual." Korte, p. 146.

[29] The notion of "intertextuality" has been widely applied with regard both to the formation of travel texts and to the experience of travel on the whole. For instance, Philippe Antoine attempts to read travel texts by Chateaubriand according to the "horizontal" and "vertical" axes of intertextuality as designated by Kristeva. Antoine, Philippe, *Les Récits de Voyage de Chateaubriand, Contribution à l'étude d'un genre*, Paris, Honoré Champion Éditeur, 1997. Christine Montalbetti, again with regard to travel writing, uses "intertextuality" in a broader sense that brings together and mediates between the world and the text. Montalbetti, Christine, "Entre Écriture du Monde et Récriture de la Bibliothèque, Conflicts de la reference et de l'intertextualité dans le récit de voyage au XIXe siècle" in *Miroir de Textes, Récits de Voyage et Intertextualité*, Études réunies et présentées par Sophie Linon-Chipon, Véronique Magri-Mourgues et Sarga Moussa, Nice, Publications de la Faculté des Lettres, Arts at Sciences Humaines de Nice, 1998. Montalbetti undertakes to produce a tropology and typology of intertextual relations and operations such as "mediation", "comparison", "inclusion", "coincidence", "contiguity" that mediate and structure the relation between the experience of the world and the text, the text and the library, the text and the world as text. The problem with such typologies and formalism in general is that they tend to produce reductive explications of texts that compromise the complexity of the notion of textuality and largely presuppose, often in spite of themselves, a prior demarcation between a fundamental level of literalness and the tropological figuration of texts. In other words, they ultimately presuppose the core distinction between proper meaning and metaphor.

implicated. In this sense, experience, what is posed as the outward and unifying condition of travel writing, comes in turn to divide and disseminate it.[30]

So one cannot simply delimit historical contexts, such as the time of pilgrimages and the age of discovery, in order to write a history of travel. For sure, travel texts are read in contexts, and some contexts are more pertinent than others, but this cannot alter the fact that in doing so one, even unknowingly, *divides* and *multiplies* differences within them, even when one reduces them to definite meanings. If one is to write a history of travel writing one must, of course, assume a certain sense and a certain beginning. But no such effort would amount to the assembling of a total history. There are many histories to be told and one can, as indeed one must, start from and justify a somewhat arbitrary or "imaginary" point of origin, as Mary B. Campbell does.[31] One may even, like Campbell, guided (legitimately and unavoidably) by the modern notion of the genre consider everything written before the seventeenth century as the "prehistory" of travel writing. There can be multiple origins, that is to say there is no origin, of travel writing and these are always posed after the fact. So rather than advancing in a linear progression, travel writing assembles (and disassembles) itself in a *zigzag* movement (*mouvement en vrille*) that in moving forward turns back to repeat and divide, thus, to multiply its origin. Starting with the modern sense of travel writing as a first-person narrative we can look back to the forces that made it possible, to the genealogies of the (European) subject that inscribe instances of the opening of consciousness to the "other world", of the antinomy of fact and fiction, and colonialism, themes that are inextricably woven and constitute the main concerns of theorists today. However, in so doing, and this is the undertaking here, and in order to avoid both historicist reduction and textual or structural substantiation, one must take into account the at once historical and structural movement (or *différance*) that makes travel writing possible, a movement that gives rise to singular and repeatable instances, outside which it would be nothing in itself.

This chapter will consider travel writing as an *inter-textual* experience both in a strict and a broader sense. It will attempt to explore both the way diverse genres and textual elements are interconnected and woven in the formation of this genre and how

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[30] As we shall see later, it is not the actual experience of travel that gives the travel text its authority but the "claim" to an experience that might as well not have occurred. Here, the intertextual experience of travel acquires an even more obvious and conventional sense.

[31] "Our point of origin, though, needs justifying: it is, like any point, imaginary. [...] The simple answer [...] is that travel literature is defined here as a kind of first-person narrative". Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World*, p. 5.

these are implicated in the radical *textuality* of experience itself. We are going to look at how the structures and existential conditions of experience both formulate and are illustrated in the primarily historical category of the narrative. This is not to say that existential conditions precede the experience of travel and the act of writing about it and that the latter is simply their actualisation and articulation. Existential categories mean nothing outside the historical instances they make possible. If today travel writing increasingly receives attention, it is mostly because it consists of a historical "sequence" that uniquely dramatises the formation of Europe's relation to its cultural other(s) and the emergence of the theme of *representation*, a largely modernist theme.[32]

Starting with *travel narrative* as a working and enabling notion (and bearing in mind what was previously argued about such delimitations) we will endeavour to explore what we assume to be the essential *figurality of experience* both in relation to its textual inscription or "figuration" and to its "figured out" cultural object. Extending what has been elaborated so far on metaphor and the existential conditions of travel to the historical category of travel narrative, we hope to bring another insight into the problematic of fact and fiction and genre formation. Keeping in track with our previous discussion of what was held as the "hermeneutic premise" and the aporetics of travel, we will proceed to the consideration of the travel narrative with regard to three central themes and functions: *mimesis*, *allegory* and *testimony*. These themes are unfailingly implicated in any discussion of travel writing, which is defined as a sort of *witnessing* that both *represents* or *imitates* and *allegorises*. *Mimesis* is usually understood as representation and description and is considered as the constitutive operation of the travel text at large. *Allegory* usually pertains to the *diegetic* function or the "purely" narrative parts of the travel text, since the latter is necessarily placed and occasioned within symbolic and semiotic networks that imbue it with a meaning that exceeds in large, let us say, the "thin description" of a cultural experience or configuration. To these "conventional" preoccupations we hope to bring three powerful and radicalising insights. We will begin with Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative*, which ascribes to narrative a primarily *mimetic* function with regard to the "reality" it points to and also refigures, in view of exploring the "representational" function of travel writing. Then we will proceed to Paul de Man's exploration of the aberrant and essentially *allegorical* structure of narrative, which we shall discuss with regard to the "allegorical" motif of

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[32]As Campbell sustains, "it is a genre that confronts, at their extreme limit, representational tasks proper to a number of literary kinds: the translation of experience into narrative and

travel. Finally, we will consider Jacques Derrida's elaboration on the theme of testimony and its fundamentally "impure" or literary character in connection to the "authenticising" claim to a true experience at the centre of the travel text. Any discussion of the notion of narrative necessarily involves the question of *time*, which will also be a major concern throughout the rest of this chapter.

Paul Ricoeur: Travel as Mimetic Narrative

We mentioned above that travel writing is bestowed with a fundamentally mimetic function, that takes on the sense of *imitation*, *description* and *representation*.[33] This term is also used in disjunction to the narrative function of travel writing, which brings attention to the journey itself, to the sequence of events from the point of departure to the point of return. But on the whole, travel narrative, as the articulation of the experience of "the other" as lived and brought to writing and thus to reading by a representing subject, is understood as a discourse of representation. *Representation* essentially means making or rendering present; it is something that by definition involves repetition and hence alteration. Now, it would be unfair to suggest that the notion of representation is used uncritically at a time when so much is written on the discourses of power and knowledge and the way these (de)form and nuance the gaze of the traveller, even more so if s/he is looking with "imperial eyes". And there is probably not a single theorist who would uphold the idea that a lucid and diaphanous representation is possible, especially at a time when the distinction between fact and fiction has never been more uncertain. However, such deliberations that challenge, and rightly so, the value of representation and attempt to reveal the politically and ethically submerged rhetorical constructions of texts more often than not tend to largely presuppose what they call into question, that is, the distinction between literal and metaphorical meaning, and continue to assume that behind the forces of power and figuration there lies a core of meaning to be brought forth, a truth to be restored. The endeavour to dispel the mystique of figurative formations by constructing tables and taxonomies of prevalent rhetorical operations always implies that there is something like a literal meaning lurking behind the former (Genette, White, and Ricoeur, as we have seen or as we shall see, are no exceptions). Mary B. Campbell, in her otherwise formidably lucid and well-argued book, presupposes to some extent the distinction

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description, of the strange into visible, of observation into the verbal construct of fact". Ibid., p. 6.

between factual and fictional representation, when she warns us not to confuse the modern antinomy with the function of figuration in the middle ages' semantically denser and symbolic universe. In the last chapter of *The Witness and the Other World* we are introduced to the figure of a sympathetic traveller, Sir Walter Ralegh, of a *fully-present* narrator who is aware of the rhetoric of his own text and is able for the first time to distinguish fact from fiction.[34] This is the turning point, the beginning of the end of what Campbell calls the *longue durée* of the prehistory of travel writing. Travel writing in the modern sense could then begin. Yet, does this not insinuate a slow and gradual process of rationalisation that leads up to the epoch of representation, to the modern idea of the representing subject, a subject that places him/herself on central stage, as the very scene of representation, the world now being there before and for him/her? For sure, the operation of what we now call representation did not start with the self-assured subject,[35] as also the antinomy of fact and fiction was not effectuated with the exigency for their separation. They have been always at work as essential

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[33] Although *mimesis*, as we have seen, is not identical to imitation and representation, it is often used in this sense. See, for instance, James Duncan's and David Ley's (eds) P*lace/Culture/Representation*, London, Routledge, 1993, pp. 1-5.

[34] "Ralegh's account of his quest for Guiana is among the very best of the sixteenth-century English travel relations: it is the most intricately constructed and entertaining, and also the fullest, the most knowledgeable and accurate. Although it explicitly rejects the informational imperative, it is in fact better at conveying information without distortion than most other English accounts of the period." Campbell, p. 253.

[35] It has to be clear here that the critique of the notion of "representation" does not imply that representation is something distorting and malign that should be over and done with. We cannot but reside in representation in the broad sense, which also takes on the senses of metaphor and translation in general. The issue is to critically address an essential premise involved, which presupposes that something as a presence or essence precedes and destines itself to re-presentation. The notion of destination or "sending" of a thing gathered in its essence to re-presentation, that is, of its rendering present by virtue of repetition, is what "allowed" Heidegger to envision a "history of metaphysics in its presumed unity as the indivisible unity of a sending". This history is divided into epochs according to the rhythm and unity of this "sending" that presupposes presence or a notion of Being gathered in itself. This is what has allowed for the modern, post-Cartesian epoch of representation, that of the representing and representative subject, which was already prescribed, announced and prepared for in the "great Greek epoch", when representation was yet inconceivable and the world was understood as presence (*Anwesen*). In the modern epoch of representation the subject takes central stage and becomes itself the process and scene of representation but also a calculating and calculable subject. As Derrida remarks, according to Heidegger, "it is toward the *incalculable* that the limits of representation can be transcended." Derrida, Jacques, "Sending: On Representation", translated by Peter and Mary Ann Caws, in Social Research, 49, no2, Summer 1982, p. 315. Derrida challenges Heidegger's notion of the unity and destiny of Being that structures the history of metaphysics on the whole as something consistent and divisible into epochs. For Derrida, the notion of "sending" (*envoi* or rather *envois* in the plural) is already a sending back; it is a movement that cannot gather itself together in/as the destiny of Being but rather proceeds through its multiplications in traces or *renvois* without preposited origin. The sense of origin comes after the fact as a *prosthesis* and, moreover, it is infinitely divisible; it is a past that has never been present as such.

forces in the figurative structure of experience,[36] though these have taken on and manifested different functions (and Campbell is right to point this out) at different historical instances. But a genealogy of fact and fiction (which, however, Campbell does not claim she is doing) leaves these notions untouched because it precisely presupposes them without investigating the structures that make them possible (or impossible).

In our effort to do exactly that we will begin with Paul Ricoeur's theory of narrative, which also constitutes a major contribution to the problematic of fact and fiction and which he discusses with regard to the historical and fictional types of narrative. In order to explore the consequences of such a thinking with regard to travel writing, we will have to persist on the distinction between historiography and fiction. If in the first two chapters we persisted on the relation of philosophy and literature, this was so for the purpose of exploring the binary couple of proper and metaphor, and by extension the signifying structures of *Oikos* and travel, on the fundamental level of their conceptual premises as these operate and are formulated in two paradigmatic discourses. In a similar way, historiography and literature are held here as *exemplary discourses* for the consideration of the problematic of fact and fiction. If we are to look at how fact and fiction operate within travel writing, we would first have to think them through according to discourses that pose these questions in a more acute and pressing way, for these belong to their own mode of coming to being. Historiography and fiction, although in a way that proves to be increasingly problematic, rest on the distinction between the factual and the fictional. So a disjunction which is inherent to travel writing acquires its most acute formulation and elucidation through the comparative discussion of two discourses that constitute themselves on the grounds of a largely unwarranted and mutually exclusive division between an inside and an outside. This, however, is what brings out the aporia of factual and fictional representation. One must first think in and then challenge oppositional terms.

Drawing on Ricoeur's thinking on narrative has also a considerable advantage for the exploration of travel as an "inter-textual" experience that exceeds travel writing *stricto sensu*. For, as we shall see in a moment, narrative for Ricoeur is a broad notion that runs through and structures the whole range of hermeneutic experience. Ricoeur

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[36] As Derrida maintains "as soon as there are words –and this can be said of the trace in general, and of the chance that it is- direct intuition no longer has any chance". Derrida, Jacques, "Passions", translated by David Wood, in *On the Name*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1995, p. 30.

ultimately presupposes the distinction between literal and metaphorical meaning. His hermeneutics rests on the notion of re-appropriation or return to the proper. Yet his extremely rich and extensive elaboration will bring us to the end of that road and to the point of no return and, hence, of no re-appropriation, that is, to the premises that Paul de Man and Jacques Derrida bring forward. In view of this, Paul Ricoeur's theory of narrative is an excellent point of departure.

Paul Ricoeur formulates his theory of narrative in his three-volume work *Time and Narrative*.[37] This work constitutes an extension and completion of his other major work *The Rule of Metaphor*, which was extensively discussed in the first chapter.[38] Indeed, Ricoeur's theory of metaphor, which reaches its impetus and full potential on the level of discourse as work and the hermeneutics of the text, attains its complete formulation and effectiveness in his theory of narrative. It is through narrative that the dynamic of the metaphorical process manifests its most significant realisations.

Ricoeur's passage from metaphor to narrative is made by way of the notion of *mimesis*. *Mimesis* is used in its Aristotelian designation as creative imitation or innovative redescription. Even though Aristotle subordinates metaphor to mimesis that is a broad category comprising both *lexis* (diction) and *muthos* (plot), he restricts it to the level of the "noun" in his famous definition. Ricoeur unfolds the dynamics of metaphor by elevating it to the level of the text. The schematisation of productive imagination that played a principal role in the metaphorical process, as we saw in the first chapter, reaches now its full potential in the synthetic structure of the text called *emplotment*.[39] So narrative for Ricoeur is the *configuration* of human action (*praxis*) in

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[37] Ricoeur, Paul, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, translated by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, London, The University of Chicago Press, 1984, originally published as *Temps et Récit*, Editions du Seuil, 1983, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 2, translated by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, London, The University of Chicago Press, 1985, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, translated by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, London, The University of Chicago Press, 1988.

[38] Ricoeur states in the preface to the first volume of *Time and Narrative*: "*The Rule of Metaphor* and *Time and Narrative* form a pair: published one after the other, these works were conceived together. Although metaphor has traditionally belonged to the theory of 'tropes' (or figures of discourse) and narrative to the theory of literary 'genres,' the meaning-effects produced by each of them belong to the same basic phenomenon of semantic innovation." Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, p. ix.

[39] One should remember that in Aristotle's *Poetics* the definition of tragedy, which for him constitutes the literary genre par excellence, involves the mimesis of human action in a work that has coherence and magnitude, in other words, that constitutes a structured and complete act. Aristotle ascribes six elementary features or parts to tragedy: plot (*muthos*), language (*lexis*), thought (*dianoia*), characters (*ethos*), melody (*melos*) and spectacle (*opsis*). While Aristotle examines metaphor only on the level of *lexis*, Ricoeur establishes its pertinence primarily on the level of *muthos:* "There is no doubt that the prevalent sense of mimesis is the one instituted by

the structured totality of the text. Narrative organises the chaotic and disordered flow of the events of the life world into a coherent whole giving it in this way a concrete form and meaning. *Emplotment*, the prime category of narrative, is an art of composition that enables the representation of human action in an ordered fashion. It is a principle of *concordance* that interrelates the disconnected *episodes* of action into an event of meaning that is characterised by "completeness, wholeness, and an appropriate magnitude"[40]. However, narrative is not granted a purely unifying and totalising function beyond the threat of fragmentation and disruption. It also includes and sustains a principle of *discordance*. Narrative then has to balance between a drive to coherence and a drive to disintegration, which is represented by the reversals (*peripeteia*), the surprises, twists and turns that a plot may contain. While Aristotle restricts the principle of discordance to what he calls "complex plots" in disjunction to "simple plots", Ricoeur elevates it to an essential component of narrative, which he consequently designates as a model of *discordant concordance*[41].

So for Ricoeur narrative is a synthesis of the heterogeneous, the bestowal of order to what is scattered and incongruent. Narrative always involves conflict and tension between meanings because it brings together semantic fields previously loosely connected. This attests to its close ties with metaphor. As we have already seen, metaphor, for Ricoeur, is the linguistic process of creation of new meaning that erupts out of the tension produced by the clashing between two formerly distant and alien semantic fields, finally resolved through the workings of productive imagination and interpretation. In a similar way, narrative by bringing sameness and difference together produces a *schema*, a plot that unfolds its dynamic by projecting the *world of the text* enlarging thus our experience of belonging to the actual world. At this point it is necessary to bring attention to a crucial distinction between the broad and narrow senses of narrative. Ricoeur distinguishes between narrative as a *mimetic action* and *diegesis* as the particular mode of organisation and presentation of events in a singular text. Mimetic action involves the "what" of the text and it is much broader than the specific composition that identifies a text as such. "What happened" or "what could

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its being joined to muthos". This is how metaphor becomes a constitutive category of narrative. Ibid., p. 45.

[40] Ibid., p. 38.

[41] "Emplotment is never the simple triumph of 'order'." Ibid., p. 73. *Discordant concordance* is a theme that runs through *Time and Narrative* and is explored, as we shall see, in relation to Ricoeur's major concern and pivot theme for the consideration of narrative, that of *time*. Plot for Aristotle is a logical and causal structure. For Ricoeur it manifests an essentially temporal character.

happen" is the object and reference of narrative, which precedes and also exceeds the complete product of writing. Narrative exists only because there is something to be narrated in the first place, because the field of action, where human agents act and suffer, calls for it. As unregulated and loose as it may be, the world of action offers narrative *stricto sensu* its vast semantic resources and conceptual networks that can be recapitulated in the phrase *semantics of action*. Human action, for Ricoeur, is an inchoate narrative for it already disposes a *pre-narrative* structure. Therefore, the notion of narrative or better *narrativity* "can be taken in a broader sense than the discursive genre that codifies it"[42].

Ricoeur discerns three levels of narrativity: *prefiguration*, *configuration* and *refiguration*. These levels correspond to each phase of his notion of *threefold mimesis*. We said before that mimesis is defined as the creative imitation of an action. Accordingly, the field of human action may be grasped as an interaction between three strata of experience shaped by three mimetic mediations: *mimesis1*, the pre-understanding or prefiguration of praxis granted on the semantics of action, *mimesis2*, the organisation or configuration of this praxis in the form of a discursive work, and *mimesis3*, the unfolding of the potentialities of praxis or its refiguration through the act of reading. Mimesis2 is located at the centre of Ricoeur's analysis. One must bear in mind that Ricoeurian hermeneutics is a hermeneutics of the text. However, hermeneutics is also "concerned with reconstructing the entire arc of operations by which practical experience provides itself with works, authors, readers."[43] Textual configuration carries out the central task of mediating between the prefiguration of the practical field and its refiguration through the reception of the work.

However, according to Ricoeur a preoccupation with configuration or emplotment would amount to no more than a formalistic theory of poetics, an abstraction of rules of composition, lacking the force and scope of the hermeneutics of action, if it failed to take into account the temporal character of human experience and its mediation and refiguration through narrative. According to Ricoeur, there is an essential interconnection between time and narrative, the investigation of which could offer valuable insights into both the immense philosophical question of time and the poetics of discourse. Ricoeur emphasises: "*time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it*

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[42] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, p. 260.
[43] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, p. 55.

becomes a condition of temporal existence."[44] In the same way that emplotment mediates between the prefiguration and refiguration of action, it also functions as the mediation of a configured time between a prefigured and a refigured time. To Ricoeur's mind, the temporal dimension is not an optional consideration but a constitutive feature of narrative, which is realised as a meaningful event of language in the *present of discourse*. To lose sight of this and to centre solely on formal and semantic concerns would undermine the scope of Ricoeur's project.

Hence, the inquiry on the mediation between the three mimeses cannot be complete without taking into account their temporal character. *Mimesis1* is designated by three seminal features: a structural, a symbolic and a temporal one. Human beings find themselves within the world and within time, to which they primordially belong and of which they have an immediate grasp. *Being-in-the-world* and in time confers upon humans a preliminary familiarity with the field of action and the competence for understanding, i.e., for *practical understanding*. This is so because the practical field is already constituted through *conceptual networks* that allow human agents to understand events, motives, circumstances, etc., in a "relation of intersignification". The practical field offers its *symbolic resources*, i.e., systems of signs, sets of norms and rules, and cultural processes that enable the articulation of experience. These sets of cultural norms and processes, which Ricoeur opts to call *symbolic mediations*, is what makes meaningful action possible. Anthropologists like Clifford Geertz have maintained that culture is a totality of *symbolic systems*,[45] i.e., sets of patterns, rituals, conventions, beliefs and institutions that ascribe to it, in Ricoeur's words, an "initial readability". In this way culture is granted a prenarrative form, an immanent texture presupposed by narrative. Finally, the field of human action is characterised by a prenarrative structure of temporal experience, what allows for the immediate and primitive experience of time conferred upon humans simply by the irreducible fact of being *thrown* into the world among the objects of their circumspection and care. It is preoccupation with the things of this world, the time of "our everyday acting and suffering" that calls for their measuring and dating. Mimesis1 corresponds to the structure of *pre-understanding* of

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[44] Ibid., p. 52.

[45] "Undirected by culture patterns –organised systems of significant symbols- man's behaviour would be virtually ungovernable, a mere chaos of pointless acts and exploding emotions, his experience virtually shapeless. Culture, the accumulated totality of such patterns, is not just an ornament of human existence but –the principal basis of its specificity- an essential condition for it." Geertz, Clifford, *The Interpretation of Cultures, Selected Essays*, London, Fontana Press, 1993, p. 46.

our experience of the world, which is consequently made explicit in narrative configuration.

Mimesis2 is the plane onto which our experience of the world is grafted in an explicit mode. Time and action are figured out, made manifest, by means of their inscription and structuration in narrative form. So it is through *emplotment* that the heterogeneous factors of the practical field are mediated and synthesised in a complete and coherent story. This synthesis also involves the elevation of the temporal features of reality to "one temporal whole." The temporal aspect of narrative is not reduced to a sequence of episodes but always presupposes, even in the most "humble" of narratives, an act of configuration.[46] Configuration is what transforms a sequence of events into a story, into a temporal unity. It is also what makes the story *followable* and *repeatable*. It imposes on it "a sense of ending" which governs the act of reading by connecting parts to an anticipated whole.[47]

Mimesis2 is the central stage and focal point of the hermeneutics of discourse. Ricoeur builds on it a poetics that carries and delivers the effects and driving forces of history, *tradition* and *innovation*. As mentioned above, configuration corresponds to a schematisation and concretisation of our rough and "naked" experience of the world. This action resonates the work of *productive imagination* at the kernel of the metaphorical process. As Ricoeur points out, with *mimesis2* we enter "the kingdom of the *as if*."[48] So configuration constitutes a dynamic schema with the power to imaginatively (re)produce reality. However, this schema is not detached from reality but rather belongs to and draws from it. Emplotment has its own history and tradition, which Ricoeur describes as a dialectic of *innovation* and *sedimentation*. A narrative establishes itself as such by means of its formal features, the most radical of which, according to Ricoeur, is that of *discordant concordance*. Formal paradigms are nothing but sedimentated innovations. For Ricoeur, this accounts for the evolution of *genres*

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[46] Ricoeur criticises semiotics and in particular the literary school of *narratology* represented mainly by Vladimir Propp, A.J. Greimas and Gérard Genette for *de-chronologising* narrative and reducing it to a logical structure and to its underlying formal properties. Structuralist literary criticism relegates time to the surface structure of narrative and pays attention exclusively to the "achronic" features in the deep structure. However, a synchronic analysis of narrative fails to account for its irreducibly diachronic element, which more than a structural "residue," as Greimas would have it, is what brings narrative together in a meaningful totality. Ricoeur, Paul, "The Narrative Function" in *Hermeneutics & the Human Sciences*, edited & translated by John B. Thompson, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981, pp. 282-5.

[47] Reading forwards and backwards is an essential operation of interpretation, which is a process of mediation between the *pre-understanding* of the text and its final comprehension by relating its parts to the whole.

and for the particularity of individual works. Innovation preserves the formal principle of narrative even if it reforms or deforms it. This is so because "innovation remains a form of behaviour governed by rules"[49] and is realised as deviation from an already established order. In this way, it retains narrative under the sway of *the rule of metaphor*.[50]

The third level of mimesis, *refiguration*, refers to the actualisation of narrative in the act of reading and interpretation. This corresponds to what Ricoeur calls, following H.-G. Gadamer, *application*. *Mimesis3* fulfils and also unfolds the dynamic of narrative by projecting a new and inhabitable world before the reader, who is offered the occasion for new insights into reality and alternative modes of *being-in-the-world*. *Mimesis3* stages the *intersection* of the *world of the text* with the *world of the reader*. Thus, with refiguration the circle of mimesis, the hermeneutic circle is completed. In the end, mimesis consists of a mediation between what precedes and what follows the text. For Ricoeur, what has been so far outlined is by no means a vicious circle. The hermeneutic circle "is not a lifeless tautology" but rather a "healthy circle",[51] which enlarges and deepens our experience of the world and provides the conceptual means for tackling the complex issues that it involves in all its phases.

Ricoeur's meditation on mimesis is subordinated throughout his voluminous work to the notion of mediation between time and narrative. He maintains that the all-important philosophical question of time, which is recapitulated in the central aporia of *cosmological* confronted with *phenomenological* time, receives a response from poetics and can be better formulated through the investigation of the refiguration of time by narrative.[52] In this way, not only is the aporetics of time brought to light but the hermeneutic quest into the effectiveness of narrative also attains its fuller scope. The phenomenological reflection on time, especially that of Augustine, Husserl and Heidegger, provides Ricoeur with the conceptual tools for probing into the ontological

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[48] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, p. 64.
[49] Ibid., p. 69.
[50] It is clear, therefore, that Ricoeur accounts for the formation of genres and also for disruption and difference within them in terms of deviation from already established generic orders. However, what he calls the dialectic between sedimentation or tradition and innovation cannot but totalise and reduce to a linear progression what precisely resists such reductions and totalisations: the assembling and disassembling forces that only give rise to confounded and inherently disjunctive generic formations.
[51] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, p. 76.
[52] "Temporality cannot be spoken of in the direct discourse of phenomenology, but rather requires the mediation of the indirect discourse of narration." Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, p. 241.

presuppositions and imports of narrative and, reversibly, the poetics of narrative offers its resources for the articulation of the experience of time. Ricoeur's aim is "to discover what resources a poetics of narrative possesses for, if not resolving, at least making this aporia [of time] work for us."[53] To do that, Ricoeur focuses on two types of narrative: *historiography* and *fiction*.

We will not follow closely the "long and difficult threeway conversation between history, literary criticism, and phenomenological philosophy" that unfolds *Time and Narrative*. The purpose here is to explore the question of the intertwining of historical and literary narrative, which, to the extent that it reaches the core of the problematic of fact and fiction, is extremely pertinent for the consideration of travel writing. There are similar operations in the travel text and in its decisive separation from the discourse of ethnography. For sure, travel writers are neither historians nor ethnographers (though historians and ethnographers can be travel writers) but they necessarily share with the latter premises, claims and operations of representation. In such "representations" the theme of time is all-important since it is essentially implicated with the constitutive questions of "how things were" in the historical past, "how things could be" in the untimely and possible world suggested by literature, and "how things are" in the descriptive discourse of the "ethnographic present." The *phenomenological motif* of travel writing by definition roots it in the experience of a *present*, nevertheless, a present that bears the imprints of a past (the traveller's cultural past, the historical past of the culture visited, the span or division of time between and throughout perception and inscription) and of a future (the impending return and reintegration to the home culture, which is at once a past and a future). These can never consist of successive episodes in a journey; they are far more complex and implicated with one another.

Narrative as the articulation of human action is primarily a historical category. It is the configuration of time above all as human time. Any thinking on narrative or historical time would lack in depth and grounding if it did not put forward the philosophical questions: "what is time?" and "what is history?" Ricoeur addresses the concept of time through its primary aporia concerning the confrontation of *cosmological* (or else objective, or physical) time with *phenomenological* (or subjective, or psychological) time. Cosmological time is designated as the time of the universe within which we find ourselves, the time of the regular movement of heavenly

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[53] Ibid., p. 4.

bodies, and phenomenological time as that of the soul, lived time as constituted by consciousness. Cosmological time can be measured and represented as a line of undifferentiated instants, while phenomenological time is constituted as a synthesis of multiple and diverse intentionalities, as *discordant concordance*. These, however, are not two separate modalities of time. Physical time would not be measurable or intelligible if it were not for a constitutive and measuring consciousness. Ricoeur maintains that these two approaches "mutually occlude each other to the very extent they imply each other."[54]

Ricoeur follows this aporia from the legacy of Aristotle's and Augustine's meditations on time up to Kant, the phenomenology of Husserl and the hermeneutics of Heidegger. Aristotle and Augustine represent respectively the cosmological and psychological traditions.[55] The comparative consideration of their work could be outlined in the major aporia of time concerning the duality of the "now" as instant and present. An "instant" differs from the "present" in that it functions like a point in a line, homogeneous to other points with which it is related in terms of the points "before" and the points "after," while the "present" is always the present of discourse, the living present of an intentional act gathering in its periphery past-presents and future-presents. The instant, therefore, is the unit of a time objectively conceived, while the present is the source of subjective time. For Ricoeur, the impasse that these two approaches towards time run up against could be escaped or at least made productive by means of a poetic solution. Before proceeding to this he considers the immense input of Husserl and Heidegger into the aporetics of time.

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[54] Ibid., p. 14.

[55] Aristotle defines time as "the number of motion in respect of 'before' and 'after' " (*Physics IV*, 219b2), as the measurement of the intervals in between the succession of 'nows'. Time, however, for Aristotle, does not coincide with movement even if it depends on it. Time acquires unity and continuity because it is conceived as a line, at rest by definition. Time as continuum is grounded on the paradoxical function of the point-like instant to both divide and connect, by the line's endless divisibility. Aristotle, who is interested in designating the principles of *physis*, leaves out of his analysis the psychological aspect of time even though he admits that the measurement of movement presupposes the noetic act of a consciousness. For him time before and above humans is in *physis*. This is why Aristotle thinks of time as an objective succession without any differentiation or determination of the instants it is composed of. "Past" and "future", in Aristotle, coincide with "before" and "after".
For Augustine time is primary constituted as the time of the soul; it exists as far as it is constituted by a consciousness. This is why he is able to discern between the "instant" and the "present", which is conceived as the living present of a meaning intending consciousness. For Augustine, time is measured by the *intentio* and *distentio animi*, that is, the shortening of expectation for what approaches and the extension of the memory of what recedes. Yet, Ricoeur points out, confining time to the mind does not allow for a fixed unit for measurement neither can it explain its objectification into a common, singular time.

Husserl's phenomenological project is to make *time appear as such*, to achieve a direct description of *internal time-consciousness*. To do this he excludes objective time, the time of the world, from the scope of his study. Husserl pursues his quest with a set of reductions from perceived time to sensed time, in which objects are being constituted as temporal unities, and then to time as *duration* in the sphere of *pure immanence* that corresponds to the flow or *flux* of consciousness as such, to the purely formal substratum of time.[56] Time is described according to a principle of *continuity* and a principle of *multiplication*. Thus, on the one hand, the phenomenological present is designated by Husserl as the *source-point* of series of *retentions*, *protentions* and *modifications* of past-presents, as an enlarged present. On the other hand, retention and *recollection* allow Husserl to represent phenomenological time as a serial order which relates its composing units by means of a principle of *coincidence* between retained and repeated presents.

For Ricoeur the most significant contribution to the phenomenological question of time is formulated in Heidegger's *Being and Time*. Here we witness a shifting of ground since Heidegger's meditation on time is centred on the analytic of *Dasein*, which rather than an entity opposed to the world (allowing thus for a distinction between the psychological and the physical) is primarily a *being-there*, the world belonging to its very constitution. According to Ricoeur, Husserl's antinomy between *internal time-consciousness* and *objective time* receives a response from what is called hermeneutic phenomenology, for which time cannot be separated from the worldliness of the only entity that makes an issue of it. The time of *Dasein* is outlined above all as a structure of *Care*, that is, a structure of *coming-towards-Being-a-whole*, towards an *authentic* mode of existence that resists dissimulation into our ordinary

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[56] According to Ricoeur, "the two great discoveries" of Husserlian phenomenology are "the phenomenon of retention and its symmetrical counterpart, protention, and the distinction between retention (or primary remembrance) and recollection (or secondary remembrance)." *Retention* is the fundamental capacity of the present "now" to retain or hold on to recent "nows," which form its "comet-tail" running-off into the depths of the past. The repetition of a present-now in the successive present, and therefore its retention in it, ensures the continuity of time and of temporal objects. Temporal objects or *tempo-objects* (*zeitobjekt*) are defined by Husserl as *immanent unities* which are constituted by the repetitive perceptions of an object, of which the sense is retained in a way that enables its identification each time as such. Tempo-objects are *durations* that ascribe to the perceived objects of the world (*transcendent objects*) a temporal rather than logical identity. They pertain to an intermediate level of time between *objective time* (level one) and *absolute time* (level three), that is, the immanent and grounding time of absolute flux. *Protention* refers to the anticipation of the future-present in the present-now, to the openness of the present towards the future, and *recollection* denotes the repetition of a past-present that no longer belongs to the recent past, that is not *still* retained, but appears *once*

concern with the things of the world, with what is *present-at-hand*.[57] The time of *Care*, according to Heidegger, is a primordial time, from which all temporal levels and modalities derive. The emphasis, thus, is shifted from the *present*, which was considered up to now the source-point of time, to the *future* in the form of *anticipatory resoluteness*, *Dasein's* coming towards being a whole according to its ownmost possibilities. According to Ricoeur, the originality of Heidegger's project lies in his effort to "seek in Care itself the principle of the pluralising of time into future, past, and present."[58] Accordingly, *being* is perceived as a "projected unity", which is brought together through the *transmission* and *repetition* of received potentialities. *Repetition*, here, is the principle of continuity which gathers together what is received, actualised and projected. And it is *Dasein's* preoccupation with the things of the world, with what is *present-at-hand*, what is measurable and datable that makes objective time (which is, however, an inauthentic and derivative time) or, as Heidegger calls it, the *ordinary concept of time* possible and desirable.[59]

Ricoeur maintains that the aporia of time brought forth by phenomenology can receive a reply from a poetics of narrativity. According to him, phenomenology need not fall into silence for lack of words for describing time as pure immanence, but should instead resort to the metaphorical mediations and innovations of language:

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more as a *quasi-present* (since it does not belong to the present of a perception). Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, pp. 24-26.

[57] "Here already, what seems closest in the eyes of direct phenomenology turns out to be the most inauthentic phenomenon, while the authentic is what is most concealed." Ibid., p. 64.

[58] With Heidegger, *Being-in-the-world* receives a history of its own. It is the history of *coming-towards*, which, nevertheless, always turns back upon "the condition of finding itself already thrown into the world." The being that we are is a lot of potentialities, which we receive as heritage and hand down to ourselves, to which we go back, which we reopen and actualise.

[59] The main criticism Ricoeur levels at Husserl concerns the exclusion of objective time, which, in any case, is the starting point of his phenomenological project: "Without some prior familiarity with the objective world, the reduction of this world would lose its very basis." Ibid., p. 25. According to Ricoeur, Husserl could not but borrow "from the determinations of objective time that are known before its exclusions" in order to describe time as such. We are already in time before we think and phenomenologically articulate it. The main arguments Ricoeur addresses against Heidegger, though he admits that his debt to him is immeasurable, concern first the encapsulation of history as exclusively the history of *Dasein* marked by its incommunicability and untransmissability. What *Dasein* hands down, it hands down to itself. And what it moves forward to is its own death, *Being-towards-death* being its essential, absolutely incommunicable structure and internal limitation. Secondly, Ricoeur emphasises that Heidegger's analytic of *Dasein* is a labour of language and interpretation that is necessarily rooted in worldly time and ordinary experience. He asks: "How could the public character of the historising fail to precede in its own manner the most radical temporality, inasmuch as its interpretation itself comes out of language, which has always preceded the forms of Being-towards-death reputed to be untransferrable?" Ibid., p. 94. At this stage of his analysis Ricoeur reintroduces the notion of narrative.

"Words are not always lacking."[60] The two perspectives of time, the cosmological and the phenomenological, do not form an alternative choice but rather a relation of mutual dependence. Time makes itself manifest neither solely through the movement of stellar objects nor in the deep substratum of consciousness but through a *third time* that Ricoeur calls human, historical, or *narrated time*. Time is configured and objectified in the structure of narratives and consequently refigured through the process of reading, which completes the production of historical time as *a reinscription of lived time onto cosmic time*.

Mimesis3, which constitutes the last phase of the hermeneutic process, places narrative under the aegis of a general theory of effects. What is ultimately at stake, what finally comes out of narrative function, is the refiguration of time and praxis in a way that raises it to the level of *historical consciousness*.[61] The hermeneutics of historical consciousness describes how the immediate experience of belonging, which exposes us to the effects of history and tradition, is mediated, concretised and totalised through the text and, finally, transformed into meaningful action. In Ricoeur's view, this process would not be possible without the connivance of the resources of both history and fiction. The intersection of the world of the text and the world of the reader on the level of refiguration is the outcome of the interweaving of the references of history and fiction, which points to a possible and inhabitable world wherein our ownmost possibilities could be reopened and unfolded.

Ricoeur perceives a *common structure* between historiography and fiction on the level of their formal properties. Historiography and fiction, prior to their identification as such, are principally narrated stories. They both conform to the rules and paradigms of narrative composition. They both dispose a plot that configures the scattered and fleeting events of the field of action into coherent and structured totalities. They are both examples of *discordant concordance* in the sense that they elevate a mass of heterogeneous elements into a complete and followable story.[62] In other words, historiography and fiction have a deep affinity on the level of explanation or *mimesis2*. However, this is not the level at which their interrelation reveals its true significance and potential. Historical and fictional narratives correlate also with regard

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[60] Ibid., p. 27.
[61] Ibid., p. 102.
[62] Historical and fictional narratives both demonstrate a sense of continuity, direction and ending, and structural features like order, characters (real or fictional), point of view, and narrative voice (implied or manifest), which organises the work in a way that makes it communicable.

to their reference to reality on the level of refiguration. Though they are driven by *different intentionalities*, the former intending the reconstruction of an actual past and the latter the "imaginative" representation of reality (thus they ultimately refer to a shared condition of *historicity*), they both borrow from each other's resources for the concretisation of their respective objects in a way that allows Ricoeur to speak of the *interweaving* of their references. Indeed, Ricoeur maintains that the extensive exchange between them legitimates such expressions as "the historisation of fictional narrative" and "the fictionalisation of historical narrative".

According to Ricoeur, narrative or historical time is produced as a *hybrid* time through the intimate exchanges between history and fiction. Historical time arises as the reinscription of phenomenological time onto cosmological time integrating the time of human action with the time of the universe in a way that allows for the *objectification* of time as *collective singular*, for the datability of events, and for the construction of meaningful historical totalities. Historical time then functions as a bridge over a numerical and anonymous time, the mortal time of individual fates, and the public or social time of communities. It is the temporal situation that envelops us, within which we find and understand ourselves as historical agents without necessarily examining its conditions of signification.[63] Ricoeur maintains that the ontological ground common to historiography and fiction, which is the primordial experience of belonging to the world, can only be accessed and articulated on the condition of the interpenetration of the fixed terms of history and the *imaginative variations* of fiction. The extent to which historiography is a reconstruction of and fiction a rupture with reality is what remains to be seen.

Historiography, according to Ricoeur, exhibits its creative force initially through the invention of "certain reflective instruments" that also function as "connectors" between lived time and universal time: the *calendar*, the *succession of generations*,[64] and the *trace*. The notion of the *trace* for Ricoeur, which is significantly

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[63] Our participation in a collective time and in a common historical situation creates the notion of a shared reality, which historians intend as their object, often failing to acknowledge the import of imagination to the outcome of their labour. Inversely, literary theorists, formalists in particular, often disregard the resources of historisation at work in the production of the "unreal" object of fiction.

[64] The *calendar* represents time as a linear continuum computed, on the one hand, on the basis of the periodicity and regularity of astral movement while, on the other, imbued with meaning according to the interconnections and intersignifications that historical agents as intending subjects bring to the otherwise undifferentiated axial moments. The second connector between cosmological and psychological time, that is, the *succession of generations*, far more than stating a biological fact, that is, the replacement of the dead by the living, assumes a powerful

different from Derrida's *trace*, has immense epistemological and ontological value because not only does it allow for but also makes the way we stand in relation to things of the past thinkable.[65]

The trace in general signifies the vestige of the past, what of the past is still preserved in the present. The idea of the vestige involves both a static aspect, the mark or thing that *still remains* and is visible to us, and a dynamic aspect which signifies a passage and a "pastness", in other words, something that happened in the past, an activity or a situation that *no longer is* but can be traced back through the marks it has left.[66] The essential function of the trace, in Lévinas' expression quoted by Ricoeur, is to "signify something without making it appear."[67] The trace *stands for* something that once was but no longer is; it becomes a *sign-effect* for something absent. The structure of standing *for*, that is, of substituting for, reveals the essential connection of the trace with the notion of metaphor and everything this brings along. The trace enters into a *tropological* relation with the past and, according to Ricoeur, should be thought under the sign of the *analogous*, which, as we know, is the *par excellence* type of metaphor and involves a *synthesis* of identity and difference. Accordingly, the *analogical structure of the trace* is what enables access to the historical past, with which historians, in order to make sense of and lay claim on, engage by way of prefiguration and configuration, that is, *tropological understanding*.

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symbolic function through the elevation of the phenomenological notions of present, past and future from the private and mortal time of *Dasein* to the public and limitless time of contemporaries, predecessors, and successors. The passage from private to public time also corresponds to the passage from concrete intersubjective relations to the construction of the anonymous "we" of the realm of contemporaries, whose *interconnectedness* with the realms of predecessors and successors in the form of memory (retention and recollection), hope and expectation (protention) gives rise to such concepts as heritage, destiny, and progress, but also to the construction of a "they" or Other which evokes the immemorial, infinity, eternity, immortality, that is, the "wholly Other than mortals." Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, p. 115.

[65] The trace, according to Ricoeur, is an overarching historical category that both includes and exceeds *documents*, i.e., collections of data according to a theme or question posed by historians, *archives*, i.e., the organised and institutionalised body of documents, and *monuments*, what is handed down intentionally for the purpose of commemoration.

[66] Ricoeur's definition of the trace as *sign-effect* is grounded on its double-sidedness, that is, on the one hand, its "thing-like" character pointing to a relation of *cause to effect* between the mark and the conditions of its production and, on the other, its semantic dynamic as something past but still lingering. Ibid., p. 120. The trace is designated by Ricoeur as an "overlapping" of the *empirical*, i.e., the materiality of the mark and the causal relations it involves, and the *existential*, i.e., the signification it receives as part of the time of *Care* of a *Dasein* that already *has-been-there*. The trace signifies through its existential characteristics of *datability* and of *stretching-along* in time but also by means of its necessary grafting onto the time of the calendar. *Datability* is the concern of the philosopher. *Dates* concern the historian. For Ricoeur the trace conflates the two.

Ricoeur's thinking is very close to Hayden White's, who argues in his *Metahistory* that historians in order to represent or rather produce an *icon* of the past in a coherent and comprehensible mode necessarily advance by first *prefiguring* sets of events in terms of linguistic protocols, which he identifies as the four primary tropes of metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony, then by *configuring* or "encoding" these sets into what he calls *archetypal* or *pregeneric plot structures* that are, finally, exemplified or sublimated into narratives as stories of a particular kind: Romance, Comedy, Tragedy, and Satire.[68] It is configuration or emplotment into distinct and limited types of narrative that enables the work of the historian to have a meaning, moreover, a meaning to which his/her audience can relate to, and an explanatory value.[69] Of course, the process outlined above is not by necessity a conscious one, neither does it consist of distinct and successive stages. It is however always at work in the writing of history whether historians acknowledge it or not. Historians then, according to White, by configuring events (which are neutral in themselves and have no intrinsic meaning) into recognisable plot types adhere to "specific processes of sense-making" that enable their audience not only to follow the story but also to understand it, that is, to understand it in a specific manner.[70] In other words, the past is rendered familiar and comprehensible by means of the mediative function of a particular kind of emplotment available to the historian, and more importantly, immanent in language itself, "that permits us to speak of a historical narrative as an

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[67] Ibid., p. 125.

[68] White, Hayden, *Metahistory, The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.

[69] "I will consider the historical work as what it most manifestly is –that is to say, a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse that purports to be a model, or icon, of past structures and processes in the interest of *explaining what they were by representing them*." Ibid., p. 2.

[70] "The reader, in the process of following the historian's accounts of those events, gradually comes to realize that the story he is reading is of one kind rather than another: romance, tragedy, comedy, satire, epic, or what have you. And when he has perceived the class or type to which the story that he is reading belongs, he experiences the effect of having the events in the story explained to him. He has at this point not only successfully *followed* the story; he has grasped the point of it, *understood* it, as well. The original strangeness, mystery, or exoticism of the events is dispelled, and they take on a familiar aspect, not in their details, but in their familiar functions as elements of a familiar kind of configuration. They are rendered comprehensible by being subsumed under the categories of the plot structure in which they are encoded as a story of a particular kind. They are familiarized, not only because the reader now has more *information* about the events, but also because he has been shown how the data conform to an *icon* of a comprehensible finished process, a plot structure with which he is familiar as a part of his cultural endowment." White, Hayden, "Historical Text as Literary Artifact" in *Tropics of Discourse, Essays in Cultural Criticism*, London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, p. 86.

extended metaphor".[71] This for White is by no means a negative condition.[72] It empowers and enriches rather than compromises the explanatory and representative task of the historian:

> "History-writing thrives on the discovery of all the possible plot structures that might be invoked to endow sets of events with different meanings. And our understanding of the past increases precisely in the degree to which we succeed in determining how far that past conforms to the strategies of sense-making that are contained in the purest forms in literary art."[73]

Historiography and fiction seem very close at this point. However, this affinity, according to Ricoeur, does not collapse these discourses altogether. He points out that one must not forget "the kind of constraint that the past event exercises on historical discourse by way of the known documents"[74]. It is recourse to documents and their subjection to the rules of verification that marks a dividing line between historiography and fiction, which, for Ricoeur, are still separated by their referential intentions. Fiction has the power to detach itself from and challenge the authority that the calendar and the document exercise on historiography and to explore *limit-experiences* that dissolve linear and fixed formalisations of time.[75] But having argued this, Ricoeur recalls that it is still a thin line that separates historiography from fiction, since the latter is bounded by and has a hold on reality.[76] Both historiography and fiction have a claim to truth, and they are both being worked on by the creative powers of imagination. As White claims, "all written discourse is cognitive in its aims and mimetic in its means."[77] Or in Ricoeur's words: "the 'really' is signified only through the 'as'."[78]

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[71] Ibid., p. 91.

[72] However, the problem with White, as with formalism in general, is that although he goes against conventional conceptions of historiography and in this way he breaks new ground as a historian, his project is fundamentally premised upon hierarchical oppositions that by necessity presuppose a level of literalness beneath tropological formations that could be demystified through analytical explications and classifications. As Suzanne Gearhart remarks, "underlying White's formalism –indeed, I would claim, underlying all formalisms- is a theory of literal language whose dream is to dominate 'metaphorical' language by reducing it to a system of categories in which metaphor can be literally presented." Gearhart, p. 63.

[73] White, "Historical Text as Literary Artifact", p. 92.

[74] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, p. 154.

[75] According to Ricoeur, fiction pushes phenomenological questions to the limit by giving them, on the one hand, a distinct content and linking them, on the other, to the unreal, to myth, to the inscrutable. And it is because of the inexhaustibility of its metaphorical resources that fiction is able to articulate the experience of time when the discourse of phenomenology retreats into silence.

[76] Ricoeur has advanced considerably in illustrating this point, particularly in the last stages of *The Rule of Metaphor* in which he argued, as we saw in the first chapter, for the ontological import of metaphorical discourse.

[77] White, Hayden, "The Fictions of Factual Representation" in *Tropics of Discourse*, p. 122.

[78] Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, p. 155.

So although historiography and fiction are separated by distinct *intentionalities* (the real and the likely or possible), according to Ricoeur, they both fall under the broad category of narrative and into the realm of the "*quasi*"[79] or the "*as if*", that is, of metaphor. They both point to things "as they might have been" either in the past or as a probability. They both ultimately share and refer to the condition of historicity grounded on the primordial facticity of *belonging*. Furthermore, they share the same resources and mode in coming about their intended object, namely, their mimetic or hermeneutic action upon it. It is on the plane of reference much more than on the level of configuration that exchanges between history and fiction display their dynamic character. Ricoeur's lengthy conversation between historical and fictive discourses can only be completed in a theory of reading. It is through the hermeneutics of discourse ultimately concerned with *application* and refiguration that the function of narrative and, more importantly, its ethico-political dimension is effectuated. What we finally arrive at is a notion of history necessarily as "*a history of the potentialities of the present*."[80] This kind of history can only be *quasi-fictive* for it involves the imaginative reproduction of the past and the reactivation of its unrealised possibilities worked on by the retentions and protentions of the present, within which they are repeated. In a similar way, fiction is *quasi-historical* since it explores potentialities inherent to reality, to a historical situation, which acts as a point of departure. If fiction's domain is the probable, this can only have meaning on the condition of *verisimilitude*, at least to some extent. What "might have been" cannot be completely unrelated to "what is" or to "what has been".

Now, if, to Ricoeur's mind, historiographers and fiction writers ultimately share a point of departure, that is, reality –and at a more radical level the ontological condition of belonging- and a mediating process, that is, the mimetic fashion of coming about it, finally resulting in the interweaving of their references, then the sole principle of their differentiation necessarily becomes a distinct, unified intentionality. The relative pluralism of forms and levels of discourse for which Ricoeur pleads in the eighth study of *The Rule of Metaphor* can only be illustrated by a "phenomenology of

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[79] The "quasi" character of both discourses resonates the phenomenological notion of *quasi-present*, that is, the recollection of a past that has been distanced from the thickness of present and, therefore, needs the labour of imagination in order to be repeated, for it is simply not there. The notion of "quasi-present," of a present that is real and unreal at the same time recalls what Ricoeur has designated as the *split reference* of metaphor, that is the creation of new meanings out of the interaction of those already established.

[80] Ricoeur, Paul, "The Narrative Function", p. 295.

semantic aims".[81] So would one not be justified in assuming that, according to Ricoeur, what finally makes a narrative historical or fictional is that its author or reader intended it as such? Then again the question that immediately comes up is "who and on what grounds decides what counts as history and what as fiction?" A lot has already been said, and particularly by Ricoeur himself, that shakes those grounds and a unifying semantic intention, however honest and competent, cannot suffice as the ultimate criterion for their separation. But having argued that, one cannot conflate historiography and fiction and wholly renounce the investigation into the epistemological requirements, social conventions and ethico-political determinations that institute them. There are conceptual apparatuses, empirical and contextual delimitations (though these are hardly distinguishable and unified forces) at work and at play in generic articulations but none of these confers upon them unity or rigorous demarcation, nor do they possess an inherent principle that could ground their self-justification. Amongst and traversed by all these, nor can a semantic intention function as a unifying and organising centre, for it is already divided by its uncertain and unstable referent. The notion of reality is too loose and problematic to be invoked as something self-evident. That is to say, that the notion of the trace as the underlying analogical structure that, according to Ricoeur, allows us to enter in a relation with the historical past and make sense out of it, is a far more general condition; it is what makes meaning *in general* possible. What we come across at any given moment is already a *trace* for it resists reduction to a fully signifying present and this is why it also resists analogical and synthetic representation and, in turn, by necessity disrupts everything involved with it and thus any claim to a unified signifying intention. There is always a residue of meaning that cannot be assimilated in analogical synthesis but comes instead to intercept such configurations from within. We are here once again evoking the *self-disruption* of the *phenomenology of the present*, the essential incapacity of anything signifying fully, which is also a principal motif of the experience of travel.[82]

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[81] Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 295.

[82] Christine Montalbetti makes use of the notions of the trace and of the ruin with regard to the traveller's encounter with elusive cultural and historical objects in a similar way to Ricoeur. Thus the trace receives a tropological and analogical structure that submits to the operations of metonymy and synecdoche. Montalbetti, p. 13. It is here maintained, however, that the trace is not a signifying condition of the dialecticisable or apocalyptic type but rather signifies on the condition of its self-erasure, that is, as Catherine Malabou points out, on the ruins of its phenomenological motif. This condition by extension disrupts the totalising drive of the travel narrative: "*La ruine du* 'motif phénomenologique' *provoque du même coup celle du* 'récit de voyage'." Malabou, p. 34.

Accordingly, there is simply no way of rigorously demarcating between the factual and fictional elements in the travel text. One must rather show its inherent limitations and discrepancies and this amounts to saying that once claims to purity are put in abeyance infinite possibilities are opened up. Why is this discussion so important today? If we go back to travel writing this is for the purpose of illustrating the way these narratives, which played such an active part in the formation and regulation of Europe's encounter –if such a thing ever took place- with its cultural others, constantly undermine their own claims to objectivity, the very claims that fostered ahistorical, static, and hence colonial perceptions of the other. To take measure of this historical-linguistic fact, one must look into the structural conditions that both subvert and make these claims possible, or else, that let them emerge in a *self-subversive* mode. According to Ricoeur, narrative involves a process of prefiguration, configuration and refiguration that unfolds the centripetal movement of the hermeneutic circle. Its mimetic or metaphorical function is driven along a course that constructs analogies, brings identity out of difference and builds upon it totalities, albeit open ended ones. Analogy or similitude is, as Campbell remarks, a "crucial trope of travel literature and its epistemological weak spot".[83] Campbell painstakingly analyses the way this trope was implemented and implicated in the experience of and writing about travel in texts that cover a long period of the history or rather prehistory (400-1600 AD) of travel writing.[84] We follow Egeria, the nun, in her pilgrimage to the Holy Lands, to a place more allegorical than real, a place where the Scriptures and the phenomenal world merge, where present time becomes *illo tempore*. We see how in the Middle Ages' *mappae mundi* and Christian cosmographies the boundaries of the known world become margins of real and imaginary geographies, beyond which and the more one distanced oneself from the divine centre, Jerusalem, one were to encounter the monstrous and marvellous.[85] Later on, Christopher Columbus reaches the earthly Paradise and with a rhetoric reminiscent of romance heroes embarks on an interpretive

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[83] Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World*, p. 249.

[84] For an analysis of the fact and fiction antinomy and the intertextuality of travel writing also see Zweder Von Martels' (ed) *Travel Fact and Travel Fiction, Studies on Fiction, Literary Tradition, Scholarly Discovery and Observation in Travel Writing*, New York, E.J. Brill, 1994.

[85] The recounting of monsters and marvels in medieval travel texts, according to Campbell, fulfilled a conceptual need. Wonders were envisioned as proofs of God's existence, as data with a truth value, the truth of belief in a world, however, that perceived all things as figurative and as divinely significant. Tropological constructions were then part of a rhetoric deployed to describe the actual. When it comes to the unknown: "the effect of hybridisation is technically inescapable: in the context of describing the unknown, similitudes based on features of the known inevitably result in such perverse collages, destroying the coherence of the alien subject in order to transmit a visualisable image." Campbell, p. 70.

description carried out by a drive "to translate the Other into a distortion of oneself –in a word to domesticate" and hence to metaphorise.[86] We, finally, arrive at Ralegh's use of similitude as a link between different realities rather than "a dangerously deluded perception of identity between actually diverse natures".[87] All these inscriptions are historically differentiated instances of an essential structure that enables and conditions every encounter with the unfamiliar. The tropological relation of "the same" with "the other", and as long as these are necessarily thought together, reveals the tropological condition of both.

There is always a question of identity and difference when we speak of cultural encounters. According to Ricoeur, identity and difference are made visible through metaphorical interaction that, finally, results to a fusion of meaning and to a reintegration with the order of the same, albeit an enriched same. It is mimetic convergence that also produces senses of the factual (that is, meaningful events) and the fictional. Facts are constructed as a way of coming to terms with things; fictions always involve evasive and disruptive elements. To interweave factual and fictional references is to reintroduce disruption and continuity in both, although, as we have seen, Ricoeur subordinates this operation to a synthesising and sublating economy, that is, a restricted economy. Studies of cross-cultural relations alternatively deploy the rhetoric of identity or difference as a way out of the predicament of the encounter that always unsettles and challenges "well-formed" identities. To champion a "politically correct" cultural relativism and syncretism that privileges difference over sameness (but is not difference the formation of an "other identity"?) is to disregard the conditions that give rise to the notion of difference. As Clifford points out, "difference is an effect of inventive syncretism."[88] Senses of identity and difference are both produced and tested in cultural encounters and in ways that cannot be reduced to a demarcation of culturally distinct entities.[89] In order to move away from an

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[86] Ibid., pp. 177-178.
[87] Ibid., p. 252.
[88] Clifford, "On Ethnographic Authority", p. 23.
[89] Neil L. Whitehead in "Monstrosity and Marvel: Symbolic Convergence and Mimetic Elaboration in Trans-Cultural Representation: An Anthropological Reading of Ralegh's *Discoverie...*" in *Studies in Travel Writing*, number 1, pp. 72-95, proposes the notion of *symbiotic identity* that is effected through a mimetic convergence occasioned by cultural encounter. He shows, for instance, that the rhetoric of the monstrous and marvellous in the sixteenth century discovery narratives of America, rather than a convenient projection of European imagination was the outcome of a "convergence of symbolic usages" largely fed on native lore and mythology that Amerindians in turn used as "potent indigenous symbol of political autonomy" and Spaniards drew on in a process of self-fashioning. Identity and difference are inter-textually produced and thus infinitely complicated.

oppositional, relational and reductive logic, one must venture the thought of the essentially aporetic character of experience (and experience is always the experience of the other). One must think the *trace* otherwise, that is, removed from the arch of analogy.

Travel and travel writing are caught up in an essentially temporal predicament. And this involves much more than the temporal distance that might separate the experience of travel and the act of writing about it and the distortions of memory that travel writers commonly try to minimise by evoking a writing on the spot, in the immediacy and authenticity of a present. The aporetic thinking of time precisely denies to the experience of travel any immediacy or transparency. It takes time to travel, it takes time to write a book and it takes time to read it. It is true that one engages in processes of prefiguration and configuration and that the travel book can only acquire a certain unity as a narrated time. But these processes involve the totalisation and reduction of what precisely resists them. *Travel as writing* manifests that both travel and writing are effected through a movement or iteration that produces senses of identity and difference without letting them appear as such or synthesise without a disruptive residue. There can be no intuition of a present thing (not to mention a foreign culture) disclosed in its radiance and plenitude. Each moment of the cultural encounter is worked on by memory and expectation, by the retentions and protentions that allow for this fleeting instance, but which also already divide it in itself. And this, to be sure, is not a deplorable sign of modern times. It is an essential condition of travel and its *self-interrupted phenomenological motif* (that is, the impossibility of a unified, fully signifying present) that, as long as it was reduced and unacknowledged, has indeed occasioned many things to be deplored both in past and modern times. Lévi-Strauss' longing for the time of "real journeys" is characteristic of such reductions: "I wished I had lived in the days of *real* journeys, when it was still possible to see the full splendour of a spectacle that had not yet been blighted, polluted and spoilt" (his emphasis).[90]

Travel and travel narrative can be ascribed a unity only on the condition of what Derrida designates as the "movement of the reduction of the trace". As long as they are understood in this way they remain deeply implicated with metaphysics. It has to be clear that was is proposed here is not a way out of this inescapable condition but a

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[90] Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Tristes Tropiques*, translated by John and Doreen Weightman, New York, Penguin Books, 1992, first published in French in 1955, p. 43.

rethinking of the metaphorical totalisation that narrative is in a way that brings out its internal discrepancies and thus radically disrupts authoritative claims to representation. From this *metaphor of writing* we are now going to pass onto an *allegory of reading*, to a thinking that endures rather than tries to overcome the aporia of travel and travel writing.

Paul de Man: Travel as Allegorical Narrative

We previously mentioned that travel writing apart from a mimetic also displays an allegorical function. This function may be deployed in an explicit or implicit fashion but it is, either way, necessarily implied as a structural component of the travel narrative. We said that the allegorical mode pertains to the "properly" narrative parts of the travel text, while mimesis is usually considered in relation to its descriptive parts. In Ricoeur's thinking, however, mimesis becomes the constitutive trope and mediative function of narrativity *in toto*. The implication, we argued, is a conceptualisation of narrative according to an analogical, dialectical and totalising logic. This, however, inscribes narrative in a restrictive economy, which in view of displacing and exceeding, we are now going to consider in terms of a mode of figuration that precisely resists dialectical synthesis. Allegory is traditionally defined in disjunction to metaphor, which is designated as a single word trope established on the grounds of natural resemblance. Allegory, on the other hand, pertains to a longer sequence and, rather than inducing and resolving semantic incongruence in favour of a new meaning, maintains two meanings, a literal and a figurative one without conflict. Allegory does not depend on a resemblance or exchange of properties between two things but is rather produced as a contingent effect of interlinguistic interpretation. So in the theory of tropes, allegory (as well as irony) acquires the value of a *metatrope*, since it is produced by verbal means and disrupts metaphorical mystification. The mimetic notions of metaphor and narrative, which have been our pivot themes so far, now run up against the dense yet breached tissue of their own textuality. They now run the risk of being read against themselves, of becoming an *allegory* of themselves, the figure of a figure.

Now, in an inter-textual conception of travel allegory proves to be an at once mediating and disruptive figure. What is proposed here is the reinscription of the three phases of the *mimetic circle* (prefiguration, configuration, refiguration) in an allegorical

mode, in accordance to Paul de Man's designation. It will be maintained here that allegory is that figurative force that lays out the passage, detour, or *mouvement en vrille* from sign to sign, trope to trope, reading to reading, and in our case from the *textual experience* of travel to its grafting onto a narrative form capable of endlessly engendering meaning. Allegory's essentially narrative, that is, performative mode will reintroduce here a problematic that was already implied in our discussion of Ricoeur's mimetic model and which is intrinsically related to that of fact and fiction: the operation of *constantives* and *performatives* in the travel text. When one travels and writes about it, one performs an act. When travel writers make a claim to the description or representation of a foreign culture they *perform* constative speech acts, by means of which they constitute or configure their referent and themselves as representing subjects. This operation, of course, is neither simple nor obvious especially in travel texts that purport to constitute themselves through the *self-effacement of the subject* such as, for instance, the Grand Tour narratives in the eighteenth century which made a point of not being too "egotistical". We will argue that *de-facement* is an essential function and not simply a historical or conventional requisite in travel texts, which always bear an autobiographical element. Travel narratives may be essentially performative yet, as de Man demonstrates, performatives not only constitute fictional referents and subjects but are radically disrupted acts. Before proceeding to this analysis we will take up some of de Man's deliberations on allegory, rhetoric, time and narrative.

Allegory is for de Man the paradigm of all figures and not simply the privileged trope in a rhetorical typology. Allegory points to the general tropological condition of language beyond traditional classifications, to the immanent aberrations and tensions within linguistic structures themselves, which are far more than a deviation from a structural norm. As we have seen, both Ricoeur and Derrida, though in essentially different ways, employ the notion of metaphor in order to explore the figurative forces of language. De Man designates allegory instead as the figure of figures, as the "most general version of metaphor."[91] *Metaphor* in its classical designation consists of a semantic deviation occasioned through an exchange or substitution of attributes or properties between polarities on the basis of resemblance and in view of a recuperation of proper meaning. *Allegory* is the figure that radically disrupts metaphorical totalisation for it transposes substitutive, that is, paradigmatic

relations onto the syntagmatic plane. Allegory does not rest on relations of resemblance between things or meanings; it is an intra-linguistic operation in which signs come together in relations of contingency and contiguity and not by necessity. The allegorical sign *does not imitate* a meaning or a referent but signifies only in relation to another sign on the basis of mere association, which suspends synthesis, whereas, the analogical universe of metaphor is driven by a dialectical and totalising force, which aims at reinstating a lost but retrievable proper meaning. Time is the constitutive category of allegory since "it remains necessary, if there is to be allegory, that the allegorical sign refer to another sign that precedes it" and repeat it in a *noncoincidental* mode.[92] The allegorical sign is caught in "a truly temporal predicament" for it cannot recapture the "unreachable anteriority" of the sign it originates from and also points to. Allegory

> "designates primarily a distance in relation to its own origin and, renouncing the nostalgia and the desire to coincide, it establishes its language in the void of this temporal difference."[93]

The successive mode of allegory creates a sense of time merely by verbal means, a time that bears no essential resemblance with what is thought as the time of the natural world and, hence, cannot exchange properties or synthesise with it. Allegory demystifies the "organic world postulated in a symbolic mode of analogical correspondences or in a mimetic mode of representation in which fiction and reality could coincide."[94] Allegory, which can only exist in a narrative mode, also reflects language's "tendency towards narrative." "From the recognition of language as trope, one is led to the telling of a tale, to a narrative sequence."[95] Thus, narrative becomes the allegory of narrative and allegory the narrative of allegory infinitely narrating or allegorising their own impossibility of totalisation. As Derrida says in his *Mémoires for Paul de Man*, "here totalisation is exactly what an account, a story, and a narrative are denied."[96]

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[91] De Man, Paul, *Allegories of Reading, Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust*, London, Yale University Press, 1979, p. 73.
[92] De Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality" in *Blindness and Insight, Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, second and revised edition, introduced by Wlad Godzich, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1983, p. 207.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid., p. 222.
[95] De Man, Paul, "The Epistemology of Metaphor" in *Aesthetic Ideology*, edited and with an introduction by Andrzej Warminski, London, University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p. 44.
[96] Derrida, Jacques, *Mémoires for Paul de Man*, revised edition, translated by Cecile Lindsay, Jonathan Culler, Eduardo Cadava, and Peggy Kamuf, New York, Columbia University Press, 1989, p.13.

For de Man allegory is not just another trope, even a privileged one, but language's proper way of coming to being. De Man generalises allegory –in a gesture reminiscent of Derrida's generalisation of metaphor- to the irrefutably tropological condition of language. Rhetoric, as de Man understands it, puts into unrest established patterns of grammatical readings and hermeneutic enterprises. To recognise this at once productive and disruptive allegorical condition is to distance oneself from conceptions of language grounded on intuitive or referential models that establish correspondences between linguistic patterns and the world. According to such approaches, literature assumes a primarily aesthetic function that nourishes the division between literary and non-literary uses of language. For de Man, the advent of *literary theory*, which by drawing on linguistic and semiotic models inaugurated the consideration of literature in its own terms, that is, according to specifically linguistic and not historical or aesthetic aspects, established a common trait between linguistics and literature, a trait, however, which came to disrupt the former's established grammar: *literariness*.[97]

Literariness does not circumscribe a self-contained and autonomous discourse, that of literature. It designates an immanent condition of language from which literature emerges as a prominent instantiation. We came across before a prevalent view that considers the *suspension* or *epochē* of the referential function of language as literature's instituting moment. For de Man, the suspension of reference is a constitutive condition for *literariness* in general, for language's coming-to-being that could be explored by means of rhetorical readings. Language, to be sure, is not denied reference altogether. De Man does not disclaim language's drive towards reference but rather puts into question "its authority as a model for natural or phenomenal cognition."[98] He objects to the assimilation of a merely verbal effect to a substantial correspondence between the natural world and linguistic structures. Language and the world are not bound by an essential resemblance. Their relation is neither phenomenal nor mimetic. Though de Man admits that "the notion of a language entirely freed of referential constraints is properly inconceivable" and that "any utterance can always be read as semantically motivated",[99] he postulates that "by allowing for the necessity of a non-phenomenal linguistics, one frees the discourse on literature from naïve oppositions between fiction and reality, which are themselves an offspring of an

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[97] De Man, Paul, *The Resistance to Theory*, foreword by Wlad Godzich, London, University of Minnesota Press, 1997, p. 9.
[98] Ibid., p. 11.
[99] De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, p. 49.

uncritically mimetic conception of art."[100] *Literariness*, one has to remember, is the predicament and also the essential condition of language *in toto* and not a distinctive quality of literature.[101] Literary theory does not advance in its task without "some" resistance.

For de Man, "resistance to theory" does not ensue only from adversary approaches to rhetorical reading or from overlooking the rhetorical structures of language. It might as well be a "built-in constituent of its discourse". To his mind, "the resistance to theory is a resistance to the use of language about language. It is therefore a resistance to language itself or to the possibility that language contains factors or functions that cannot be reduced to intuition."[102] De Man foregrounds rhetoric in a way that proves unsettling to the equilibrium of the classical *trivium* of the sciences of language, *logic*, *grammar* and *rhetoric*,[103] by bringing attention to the linguistic fact that "there are elements in all texts that are by no means ungrammatical, but whose semantic function is not grammatically definable, neither in themselves nor in context."[104] There is always a residue of indeterminateness that grammatical elaborations cannot help leaving untouched. The foregrounding of rhetoric reverses what was called "grammatisation [i.e., codification] of rhetoric" to a "rhetorisation of grammar." To understand this better we have to examine how a rhetorical reading

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[100] In de Man's view, language creates the effect or illusion of reference, which can be enhanced by the likely confusion of "the materiality of the signifier with the materiality of what it signifies." This confusion grounds the false belief in a continuity between language and nature and, hence, establishes the possibility of a literal or proper language in relation to which literature would stand as a deviation or imitation. De Man, *The Resistance to Theory*, p. 11.

[101] De Man does not treat the suspension of reference in favour of a formalistic model or of a celebration of the aesthetic function of literature. Formalistic approaches and codifications do not succeed in reading through the aberrant rhetorical structures of language more than, for instance, a hermeneutic model, which postulates "a single originary, pre-figural and absolute text." Neither do aesthetic concerns constitute the primary categories of literature for they cannot account for its integral structural discrepancy. Moreover, if one is to pay heed to the affinity of aesthetics with phenomenalism (*aesthesis* in Greek also means perception or intuition) then one might say with de Man that "literature involves the voiding, rather than the affirmation, of aesthetic categories." Ibid., p. 10.

[102] Ibid., pp. 12-13.

[103] In the history of the classical *trivium,* rhetoric, traditionally defined as the art of persuasion and eloquence, was relegated to the affective plane and to perlocution, a less grammatical or essential property of language. Grammar and logic have formed, instead, a relatively unproblematic couple essentially connected by relations of natural affinity and correspondence. Logic and grammar established a smooth passage from the cognition of the phenomenal world to its articulation in language. Rhetoric was subordinated to grammatical and logical patterns, for which it was both a servant and a threat that could be, nonetheless, warded off or diminished through the meticulous codification and taxonomy of figurative functions. The conception of classical rhetoric lies in a certain continuity with the "new rhetoric" of Greimas, Genette, and Todorov, who attempt to formulate a general grammar of rhetoric that would reduce or neutralise the element of indeterminateness in language and reach the degree zero of figurality.

works. It is shown that a perfectly grammatical and readable proposition might be subverted by its rhetorical mode in a way that upsets its logical structure and suspends decision on its meaning. The example used by de Man in the beginning of the *Allegories of Reading* is that of the *rhetorical question*. It demonstrates that the same grammatical sequence may engender at least two incompatible meanings, one asserting and one denying the sentence's illocutionary mode. According to de Man, "the grammatical model of the question becomes rhetorical not when we have, on the one hand, a literal meaning and on the other hand a figural meaning, but when it is impossible to decide by grammatical or other linguistic devices which of the two meanings (that can be entirely incompatible) prevails."[105]

In his close readings of Proust, Rilke, Nietzsche, and Rousseau, de Man examines how the texts' own pronouncements are continuously subverted by their rhetorical mode, how grammatical structures are undone in a way that produces more text and, hence, imposes the endless task of reading. For a truly rhetorical reading never achieves the closure of the text but undoes its own totalising explications (for instance, metaphorical readings are subverted by metonymic ones and vice versa). It disrupts the text's figurative movement; it rhetorically reads the trope. Rhetorical reading also presupposes a "rhetorical model of the trope". What has to be clear here is that a rhetorically aware reading is not one that privileges figures over thematic exposition. Even if figurality continuously undermines claims to univocal and referential meaning, the latter returns to haunt figurative meaning and thus allegorise it in its turn. One should remember that rhetoric for de Man is about undecidability. Furthermore, since undecidability emerges from the text's own resources, since it is already contained in the text, one could argue that it is what the text is ultimately about.[106] The text refers to its allegorical mode in an endless self-reflection. This *reflexivity* is also its condition of *referentiality*. However, since the text's referential and semantic potential is continuously played out by its rhetorical undoing, the text becomes the narrative of its own impossibility of reading. It becomes an allegory of its own reading, for de Man "the irreducible component of any text." It is in this sense that

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[104] Ibid., pp. 15-16.
[105] De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, p. 10.
[106] "Since any narrative is primarily the allegory of its own reading, it is caught in a difficult double bind. As long as it treats a theme (the discourse of a subject, the vocation of a writer, the constitution of a consciousness), it will always lead to the confrontation of incompatible meanings between which it is necessary but impossible to decide in terms of truth and error. If one of the readings is declared true, it will always be possible to undo it by means of the other;

the text engenders more text. "Rhetoric is a *text*..."; it is a narrative about the movement of meaning.

So the allegory of reading is a story of success in "failing" to achieve a complete and final reading which would annul the text's radically rhetorical mode. A rhetorically aware reading succeeds in not achieving. The allegory of reading is the *self-deconstruction* already "at work *in* works, especially in *literary* works. [...] Texts deconstruct *themselves* by themselves, it is enough to recall it or to recall them to oneself."[107] And furthermore, deconstruction ceaselessly undoes or "deconstructs" itself since it resists producing a totalising explication of the text.[108] *Self-* or *auto-deconstruction* gathers the text's totalising forces (whether logical, figural, thematic, etc.) in order to detotalise them but also, and more importantly, to detotalise in turn the very movement of their detotalisation, which for de Man is a new rhetorical mystification. As Rodolphe Gasché describes it, deconstruction for de Man is a process of continuous and unsymmetrical (because it suspends ultimate synthesis) relapse from "retotalisation" into "detotalisation" and vice versa.[109] "The reversal from denial to assertion implicit in deconstructive discourse never reaches the symmetrical counterpart of what it denies."[110]

The *disjunctive* or *aporetic* structure of the text, however, does not bring about its self-destruction. Far from it, it is what grounds the text's "coherence" and "stability" and, at the same time, what ensures its generative powers by holding together aberrant meanings without allowing them to synthesise. This disjunction or aporia is the irreducible structure, "fact", or "defective model" of language, which still bears the

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if it is decreed false, it will always be possible to demonstrate that it states the truth of its own aberration." Ibid., p. 76.

[107] Derrida, *Mémoires*, p. 123.

[108] The de Man and Derrida reader has to be also attentive apart from their close affinities to the subtly distinct ways these thinkers use the term "deconstruction". Even though Derrida seems to be in complete agreement with de Man in his *Mémoires for Paul de Man* and de Man himself in the preface of *Allegories of Reading* acknowledges an association with Derrida's use of the term, of which "the power of inventive rigor" he "certainly" does not wish to erase, there is a considerable difference between the two, which Gasché discusses with reference to their preference respectively for the terms *writing* and *reading*. This is not the place for such an elaboration. For further discussion see Rodolphe Gasché's *The Wild Card of Reading, On Paul de Man*, London, Harvard University Press, 1998, especially the chapter on Derrida entitled "Giving to Read".

[109] "In other words, the process of self-deconstruction constitutive of the literary text is an endless process in which all deconstructions turn into retotalisations which consequently need to be deconstructed again. Such deconstructions to the second degree, deconstructions of the unifying effects of the prior deconstructions, take place through precisely these retotalisations." Gasché, *The Wild Card of Reading*, p. 25.

[110] De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, p. 125.

name of "allegory", or one should say *quasi-allegory* (or *quasi-metaphor* in Derrida's sense), exactly because it is not something more original than language.[111] The aporetic structure of the text is principally an *aporia of time*. The text, in de Man's sense, finds itself in a temporal predicament or *double bind*, which nevertheless is what grants it a temporal continuity. The text emerges as a temporal process from reading to reading, as the deferral of closure. For at the *moment* the text gathers or totalises its semantic potential in a present meaning, this metaphorical effect is suspended and laid out in an allegorical mode. The text becomes an allegory of metaphor, an allegorising narrative of metaphor. Narrative is the unrolling, "the diachronic version of a single moment",[112] a moment also re-emerging (or promised) by its deferral. Thus, the aporia of narrated or allegorical time is the paradoxical condition of meaning. Language is *on/in* this condition.[113] If we fail to acknowledge this, even if this means resigning ourselves from the possibility of a final and complete meaning, we are in risk of not reading at all.[114]

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[111] This "strategy" of keeping the "old" name of a concept in order to reinscribe it anew is called by Derrida *paleonomy* and it consists of the double gesture of "deconstruction" that *reverses* and *displaces* metaphysical polarities generalising what was up to then held as secondary and derivative (for instance, writing, metaphor, translation) beyond the rigorous metaphysical order and hierarchy. See *Positions* and *Dissemination*. Having outlined this movement, we must be cautious of such formalisations. "Deconstruction" is neither a specific approach to texts, nor a reading strategy, or an explicatory device. Even if we cannot avoid some sort of abstraction and generalisation for the purposes of introduction, we must keep in mind that what is called "deconstruction" is an intrinsic effect of texts and certainly not an exterior force or a well-regulated enterprise. De Man's and Derrida's "deconstructive" readings take effect on the text's own terms, which then become the bearers of their self-deconstruction.

[112] De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, p. 68.

[113] As Derrida maintains, *aporia*, which literally means "an absence of the path, a paralysis before roadblocks, the immobilisation of thinking, the impossibility of advancing, a barrier blocking the future" in de Man's work becomes exactly what "gives or promises the thinking of the path, provokes the thinking of the very possibility of what still remains unthinkable or unthought, indeed, impossible." Derrida, *Mémoires*, p. 132.

[114] In a way this gesture, that is, the radical allegorisation of narrative, reverses the project of Ricoeur's *The Rule of Metaphor*, which constitutes a passage from rhetoric as the discourse of persuasion via semiology and then semantics to the hermeneutics of the text. In the end the text becomes, for Ricoeur, an answer to a question addressed by the reader, a question which is also pertinent to his/her historical vantage point. This is the hermeneutic function of *application* or *refiguration*, which, it has to be clear, is not annulled or invalidated by de Man's or Derrida's critiques but is rather put into question in terms of its dialectical and totalising orientation and its postulation of referential meaning as the *telos* of language. Of course, Ricoeur understands rhetoric in a completely different way than de Man. Ricoeur does not put into radical scrutiny the polar couple of the proper and the metaphorical, which he takes to an extent for granted. This opposition lies as an unexamined presupposition throughout his otherwise diligent and expansive analysis and becomes more explicit at the last stage of his work in his argument for the autonomy of philosophical discourse. While Ricoeur draws a line between philosophy and literature which is safeguarded by the rigorous conceptual order of the former, de Man speaks of their common tropological condition, of their *literariness* as was described above. Both philosophy and literature are caught up in the matrix of undecidability and indeterminateness, a breached linguistic structure being their "nonoriginary" origin. Their difference lies in the degree of explicitness and mode of thematisation of this linguistic predicament. "Finally",

Let us now proceed to the consideration of allegory with regard to travel narrative. We said that travel texts are structurally allegorical in ways that exceed the explicit or implicit treatment of an allegorical theme. The allegorical register of travel texts has been conventionally recognised as the transfiguration of the secular journey into an overt or covert narrative of self-growth, spiritual ordeal, humanistic utopia and so on. These are familiar stories that constitute the allegorical motif of travel. To reinscribe allegory in a "radical" way as a *constitutive* trope rather than a generalising interpretation is by no means to disengage it from its spiritual or moralising function. Deconstructing the generally accepted or conventional designations of allegory or metaphor does not amount to their relegation in favour of a novel meaning. Far from it, "generalised" notions bear all the traces and functions of their classical definitions. If we were to admit that allegory permeates travel writing to the extent that there could be no history of the genre that would not recount a second, allegorical story, then we would have to look into the structures and forces that make the consideration of allegory not simply a matter of choice. Allegory has always been at work in travel texts or, generally speaking, in writing about travel. Odysseus's journey back home is a deeply rooted, powerful allegory of longing for an origin and desire for salvation. The allegorical (and moralising) function of the theme of travel that more often than not implies a certain irony has been to the foreground of such texts as Lucian's *True Story*, Thomas More's *Utopia*, Bacon's *New Atlantis*, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. One might argue that travel or writing about travel become allegories of their specific goals and purposes. Even in cases where travel is done for its own sake and celebration, *travel becomes an allegory of itself.* One could write indeed a

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writes de Man, "our argument suggests that the relationship between literature and philosophy cannot be made in terms of a distinction between aesthetic and epistemological categories. All philosophy is condemned, to the extent that it is dependent on figuration, to be literary and, as the depository of this very problem, all literature is to some extent philosophical. The apparent symmetry of these statements is not as reassuring as it sounds since what seems to bring literature and philosophy together is [...] a shared lack of identity and specificity." De Man, "The Epistemology of Metaphor", p. 50.

According to what has been argued so far, the possibility of establishing rigorous epistemological criteria, on the basis of which a rigid demarcation between different types of discourses would be achieved, seems more dubious than ever. The all-important distinction between philosophy and literature best illustrates this problematic, which extends to any separation between the cognitive or factual and the figurative. Philosophy and literature rather than being separated by a mutually constitutive limit that would regulate the relation between what is contained in (interior) and what is excluded from (exterior) their discursive fields are instead traversed by this limit that they fold back upon themselves. The blurring of the boundary between philosophy and literature (and the same goes for history and ethnography as cognitive discourses and literature) upsets the fundamental premises of these discourses, which come down to the opposition between the literal and the figurative.

"supplementary" history of allegorical travel, a history of quest and desire that would recount the pilgrims' journey to "celestial" Jerusalem, the chivalric quest for the Holy Grail, the moralisation of marvels and monsters as proofs of God's creative powers in medieval "wonder books" that also contributed to forging the fable of Europe's historical destiny of carrying out and fulfilling Divine Providence. One could go onto Marco Polo's discovery of the Orient as a screen for the projection of European dreams of splendour, fertility and plenty, Columbus' newly discovered Edenic surroundings and Renaissance's humanistic utopias, another of Europe's self-imposed task that was, however, nourished by descriptions of distant "exotic" lands. One could address the allegorical theme of the quest for primitiveness and prelapsarian innocence reflected in Bougainville's accounts of Tahiti, which he found appropriate to call "New Cythera," or the romantic nostalgia for lost authenticity and wholeness underlying Lévi-Strauss' tropic sadness. And again this would be a reductive history guided by specific interests and purposes for it would fail to acknowledge the complexity of the allegorising function of those texts. It would be an allegorical history indeed, of which the only hope of succeeding would be to fail, that is, to fail to produce a totalising narrative. These stories register and engender stories of their own, stories under stories, upon stories, across stories, and one more would be their configuration in a historical narrative. Most of these relate a story of colonialism and this can never be the whole story as some post-colonial theorists would assume. This is not to say, of course, that colonialism is an allegory. But it is certainly caught in and to a great extent fashioned by allegorical registers.

The allegorical mode of narrative is what suspends synthesis and resists totalisation. There are always more stories to be told and these come to subvert and disrupt but not to erase or brush aside those that have engendered them. For instance, the description of the particularities of a place may be subverted by generalising assumptions about humanity that in turn may register and justify colonial intervention. Sympathy for the cultural other most of the time rests on humanistic ideals that, while celebrating primitiveness and an authentic past, at the same time, establish the moral grounds for intrusion and appropriation. These multi-level stories are neither linked by temporal or causal succession, nor do they coincide but rather refer to and repeat one another in a *noncoicidental* mode. They cannot be synthesised in a certain present and if they refer to an anterior moment this is a past that has never been present as such; it is an absolute, unrecoverable anteriority. This is allegory's temporal and inter-textual predicament or aporia, what negates the chance of a final and total story, what allows

for more stories to be told, for the condition of undecidability. Travel narrative then becomes a narrative of its own aberration, an *allegory of travel* or should we say *the travel of allegory*, since the latter is infinitely carried away in/through texts. If allegory retains its traditional moralising function, then this is perhaps what it may ultimately relate to us. Something without specific content: the impossibility of a final decision or choice.[115] Travel narrative thus becomes an impossible relation.

James Clifford considers the function of allegory in ethnographic texts and in particular with regard to the structure of the "ethnographic pastoral" and "salvage".[116] Clifford maintains that ethnographic theory, interpretation or explanation should be viewed as "privileged allegorical" registers that have the function of subordinating and accounting for other levels and voices in the ethnographic text. Hence, the abstract and generalising theoretical level rests in an allegorical relation to the descriptive parts of the ethnographic text. This relation does not ensue from the addition of abstraction and interpretation to the original "simple account" but is rather the condition of its "meaningfulness": "Ethnographic texts are inescapably allegorical, and a serious acceptance of this fact changes the ways they can be written and read."[117] The prominent "pastoral" function of ethnography acutely illustrates the temporal predicament of allegory. The theme of vanishing primitive, pure and simple societies, to the "textual" rescue of which the ethnographer comes, testifies to a cultural "present-becoming-past", to allegory's unreachable anteriority. The ethnographer's quest for the authentic attains only an elusive and instantaneous gratification because it immediately becomes a thing of the past in need of rescue. Thus the allegory of primitiveness, of the European cultural past, becomes a story of redemption for the ethnographer's guilty conscience and intrusive presence. Of course, the search for authenticity and innocence and the feelings of disappointment, resignation and guilt are pervasive motifs in travel narratives as well and they also fall within the temporal and allegorical predicament. The function of "textual salvage" at work in ethnography and travel writing can be designated at its most fundamental level as the very act of textualisation: "Whatever

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[115] This is also the most significant *ethical* implication of the allegorical structure of narrative, that no decision or pronouncement upon the other is ever adequate or final. Thematic closure is suspended from reading to reading in a way that shows that otherness, what the travel text is by definition about, can never be totally manifest or present in the text but is instead promised by virtue of the repetitive and noncoincidental structures of allegory.

[116] Clifford, James. "On Ethnographic Allegory" in *Writing Culture, The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*.

[117] Ibid., p. 99. It is plausible then to argue that ethnographic descriptions enter into an allegorical relation with anthropological abstraction and totalisation. Anthropology as the "science of man" is an ethnographic allegory.

else an ethnography [or travel writing] does, it translates experience into text."[118] This, however, does not confer upon the ethnographer and the travel writer the privilege of being *the ones who write*.[119] Writing always involves a process of reading, in this case, the reading of cultural inscriptions. This, for Clifford, constitutes ethnography's "intertextual predicament".[120] For cultural inscriptions are themselves texts on texts under texts coming together and pulling apart without ever constituting a total text or context. Allegorical textualisation bears on this discrepancy and disjunctive function, which is the text's mode of coming to being. This is also what effectuates the process of configuration that works by metaphorical synthesis and reduction and gives rise to a sense (or illusion) of textual and referential unity. But as soon as this takes effect allegory already comes to haunt and lay out metaphorical totalisations by bringing into play metaphor's semantic residue (what dialectical synthesis fails to incorporate and what lies there as another possibility), thus disrupting and suspending synthesis. From now on the destiny of the text is uncertain.[121] And this is not simply due, as Clifford maintains,[122] to history's open-ended character that provides texts with more contexts and occasions for new interpretations. If reading is not simply something imposed on the text but something that arises from and traverses it -at least in the sense that it pertains to the text's resources- this implies the inherent possibility of many different readings that simultaneously cut across, refer to and subvert one another in an allegorical mode. These may arise at particular historical instances but are already ingrained on the text's structural possibilities, however, not as possible contents but as the text's essentially aberrant structure. Internal aberrance, by leaving the text forever

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[118] Ibid., p. 115.

[119] We will have the chance of further analysing this in the next chapter with regard to Jacques Derrida's critique of ethnography and ethnocentrism.

[120] Clifford, "On Ethnographic Allegory", p. 117.

[121] This is not, however, what Clifford maintains. While drawing on de Man's notion of allegory he also levels a critique: "Whereas the free play of readings may in theory be infinite, there are, at any historical moment, a limited range of canonical and emergent allegories available to the competent reader (the reader whose interpretation will be deemed plausible by a specific community). These structures of meaning are historically bounded and coercive." Ibid., p. 110. De Man, at any rate, does not deny that historical determinations are at work in any process of reading but rather challenges a certain tendency towards totalising explications. To say that there are always more stories to be told and that this is an immanent and structural possibility of the text is not to nourish the idea of free play. It does not imply that anything goes. Readings are always historically pertinent but this in turn confers upon them only a minimal unity; it does not pin them down to a cohesive meaning and context. To acknowledge the internal aberrance of texts is to have a glimpse at the structure that allows for their repetition and iteration, that makes historical readings possible; that is indeed a historical force.

[122] "Meaning is indeterminate only to the extent that history itself is open-ended." Ibid., p. 120.

(in)determinate, is also its positive condition of historicity, for it is what promises more text and more meaning, even if this meaning is ultimely unreadable.

Is this to say that travel texts can receive, or better, engender infinite number of readings? Essentially, yes. Though this neither precludes the pertinence of particular contexts (no text produces its own context since it is already in context(s), yet it also disposes resources that may call for specific types of reading, though these are never simply available there), nor does it suggest that all texts have equal semantic potential that should be infinitely unfolded. It suggests, however, that texts, hence travel texts also, have the structural potential of being infinitely read, even if this does not actually happen. What interests us here is the immanent disjunctive structure of the text, what both enables its repetition (hence its relative continuity) and tears it asunder, what allows for the constant self-denial and undoing of the travel text's own assertions. This discrepancy and aporetic condition already in operation *regardless of context* we will consider with regard to the *constantive* and *performative* functions of travel texts. But first we have to see what constantives and performatives are and how de Man proposes to read them.

J.L. Austin in *How to Do Things With Words* envisions a philosophy of *language as action* that would restore the primacy of ordinary or "real" life language over theoretical abstractions and structural explanations.[123] The domain of *Speech Act Theory* is that of utterances, of signifying events of language organised and made meaningful according to sets of conventions (of which Austin tries to produce a typology) that cannot be accounted for solely on the grounds of grammatical edifices, which only have a virtual existence. Austin's major contribution consists of the reversal of the presumed priority of *constative* statements, that is, statements of primarily cognitive, referential, and descriptive function, over *performatives*, that is, statements that perform and are committed to what they state and are now granted a privileged place. However, this overturning acquires the status of a decisive philosophical gesture only within the restricted context of analytical philosophy, of which Austin is one of the most prominent exponents. Austin launches his "revolution" by proclaiming that "it was for too long the assumption of philosophers that the business of a 'statement' can only be to 'describe' some state of affairs, or to 'state some fact', which it must do either truly or falsely."[124] Austin argues instead that constative statements are only a

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[123] Austin, J.L., *How to Do Things With Words*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1976.

[124] Ibid., p. 1. Analytical philosophy proposes a theoretical model of language that foregrounds and considers exclusively constative statements of the type *S is P* that pertain to a

species of a more general class, that of performatives, which engulfs and enables the possibility of reference without limiting itself to the criterion of truth or adequacy and which brings into play the *forces* and *conventions* that constitute the *total speech act* situation, that account for the full meaning of the event of language. Thus Austin reinscribes the constative, which pertains to the *locutionary* mode of the statement, onto the performative, that is, its *illocutionary* force. In a theory of language as action no statement is conceivable without the presence of an utterer, without the pronoun "I". Even in cases where the subject is not obvious, it is necessarily implied. *Every constative is an implicit performative*. The true force of the performance of a speech act is located in its *illocutionary* mode, in what the statement actually does. So illocution, onto which a set of conventions (the specificity of a context, social norms, established patterns of behaviour, circumstances, etc.) is grafted and which is animated by the present intention of the utterer, is for Austin the *par excellence* speech act.[125]

However, despite his initial intention not to privilege *intentionality* as the organising principle of the total speech act, which he tries to explain through the delineation of possible criteria for it to be successful or "happy," Austin is forced to reintroduce this notion at a late stage of his analysis. Even if an exhaustive typology of the contextual conventions of a speech act were possible, Austin's project was bound to falter if a solid criterion for the commitment and engagement of the utterer were not established. Thereby, Austin posits as the model of a "serious" speech act an explicit performative uttered in the "first person singular present indicative active form".[126] A total speech act is above all a signifying verbal act of a subject fully present to him/herself and to the act s/he performs. Speech acts –and Austin admits this is most often the case- that do not meet the criterion of a fully present intentionality due to a "mistake" or by "accident" or because they were made "under duress" are considered "infelicitous" and are *a priori* excluded from the domain of Speech Act Theory.[127] Austin constitutes his field of objects by dividing speech acts into "normal" or "serious" and "nonserious" or "parasitic" and by excluding the latter from it. Literature,

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representational and referential logical grammar and are evaluated according to the principles of truth or falsehood.

[125] Austin bans *perlocution* from his study of speech acts, thereby, stressing their exclusively verbal character, which he seeks to "detach from its consequences".

[126] Austin, p. 61.

[127] "Now I suppose some very general high-level doctrine might embrace both what we have called infelicities *and* these other 'unhappy' features of the doing of actions –in our case actions containing a performative utterance- in a single doctrine: but we are not including this kind of unhappiness –we must just remember, though, that features of this sort can and do constantly obtrude into any particular case we are discussing." Ibid., p. 21.

according to him, falls under the category of nonserious speech acts, "under the doctrine of the *etiolations* of language". And it is naturally not pertinent to Speech Act Theory.

Austin's philosophy of language is premised on a series of exclusions that allow him to demarcate his discursive field. However, these exclusions can be said to be unwarranted as they lack justification from a theoretical or methodological point of view. Indeed, how could a "comprehensive" theory of language lay claim on its object if it reduces it to a specific part by performing an act of purification (which can only be an ethico-political gesture), which, in turn, attempts to use as model for the description of the totality of the field? What Austin postulates as the domain of Speech Act Theory, that is, "normal, ordinary" language turns out to be an ideal and fictive object, a pure theoretical construct.[128]

How does then a theory that by definition rules out literature have a place in literary theory? Rodolphe Gasché addresses this question especially with regard to de Man's extensive use of the notions of constatives and performatives in *Allegories of Reading*. We saw that Austin's difficulties in establishing rigid criteria for the description of the "total speech act" forced him to retreat to the notion of a fully present intentionality of a signifying consciousness as the organising principle of a successful utterance. This gesture reinstates the subject as the source of meaning in the event of language. The primary function of a performative is to refer to its very agent, to act out an instance of self-referentiality and self-reflexivity, something also effected by grammatical markers or indicators (adverbs, pronouns, tenses) that point to the actual conditions of the act. "What the act communicates is, first of all, itself as act. It is a fully present act of a self-asserting subject that is fully present to itself."[129] If the primary function of constatives is that of reference (description, denomination, cognition), the primary function of performatives is that of self-reference and self-

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[128] One could also perceive an affinity between Austin's Speech Act theory and the hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur. Ricoeur also defines language primarily as action and meaning as an event which takes place in the present of discourse according to a dialectic of the *locutionary function* and the *illocutionary force*, as the meaning intending act of a present subject. In a way, Ricoeur in *The Rule of Metaphor* repeats Austin's philosophical gesture in his elaboration of the passage from semiotics to semantics and finally to hermeneutics, which reinstates the interpreting subject as the source of meaning and reference. However, Ricoeur in contrast to Austin, who is often accused of a lack of familiarity with Continental Philosophy, avoids the pitfalls of unwarranted or at least blatant separations and purifications. For the relation of Ricoeur to Speech Act Theory see Ricoeur's *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*, pp. 1-23.

[129] Gasché, *The Wild Card of Reading*, p. 15.

reflection and since constatives are implicit performatives then the implication is that in order for a statement to refer to anything it first has to refer to itself. Referentiality always presupposes self-referentiality, an act of self-constitution. The relegation of reference to a secondary effect of the speech act is the major attraction of literary theory to Speech Act Theory, since, as was said before, the former comes to being through a suspension of the referential moment.

So performatives are grounded on subjectivity, on a subject that posits itself before positing anything else; on a subject that is fully present to itself and to the act it performs as act, that is conscious first of all of the *factum* of the act. This is why Austin's philosophy is "tributary to the metaphysics of subjectivity",[130] to a philosophy of the *self-present* subject as the regulative principle and origin of meaning and this is also why, according to Gasché, the applications of Speech Act Theory to literary texts remain "within the psychological horizon of romantic hermeneutics."[131] So what is the place of Speech Act Theory for a thinker like de Man who puts into question and into unrest monistic explanations and reductions? The notions of constatives and performatives occupy central stage in the last chapters of *Allegories of Reading*. However, as one might suspect, de Man does not take these notions at face value. On the contrary, he submits them to a radical reinscription with far-reaching implications for the notions of subject, reference and text.[132]

We are now going to see how constatives and perfomatives undo and reproduce one another through de Man's readings of Nietzsche and Rousseau also in view of extending this problematic to travel writing. It is important to go into these analyses here because they expose principal functions of the travel text, that is, a claim to cognition and to authentic experience, at their most fundamental level.

De Man's reading of Nietzsche shows how his claims are caught in the unreconcilable discrepancy of constantive and performative functions.[133] Nietzsche's

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[130] Ibid., p. 40.
[131] Ibid., p. 41.
[132] Gasché outlines de Man's critique as threefold: 1. de Man discredits the *totalising explicative power of the concept of the act* claimed by Speech Act Theory. 2. He interrupts the notion of *literal reference*, of the possibility of reference and reintroduces it as the possibility of the *referential illusion* of language. 3. He "deconstructs" the totalising figure of *self-reflexivity* and *self-referentiality*. Ibid., pp. 36-38.
[133] De Man focuses here particularly on *The Birth of Tragedy*, *The Gay Science*, *A Genealogy of Morals*, *Human all too Human*, *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense*, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, *Unzeitgeässe Betrachtungen*, *The Will to Power*.

predication, or else a positional act that obeys the human, all too human imperatives of logic and noncontradiction and can have no claim on things themselves- necessarily have both a referential and positional function that disrupts them in its turn.[134] Logic, according to Nietzsche, consists of *positional* and *hypothetical* speech acts, of which "truth" is an effect. However, as de Man points out, denying the possibility of affirmative knowledge does not amount to replacing it by performance. Nietzsche's text discredits the principles of noncontradiction and identity and proves them to be positional acts by means of another positional act, that of his own, which, however, cannot but relapse to the "fallacy" of affirmation and reference. It cannot show itself as act as it cannot erase its own referential mode. "The text", writes de Man, "deconstructs the authority of the principle of contradiction by showing that this principle is an act, but when it acts out this act, it fails to perform the deed to which the text owed its status as act."[135] Performative and constative acts continuously undo one another; they are both irreconcilable and indissociable.[136] By consequence, the performative function of language, which was formerly pronounced as the condition of reference, appears to be no less ambivalent or fictitious than the constative one. Nietzsche proclaims that performatives, which are self-reflective acts, not only constitute a fictive "doer" but that the "deed" they perform is itself also a fiction.[137] The verbal act of thinking "as epistemologists conceive of it, simply does not occur" for it consists of metonymic displacements and metaphorical totalisations that devoid it of any authority. One cannot longer claim to know for sure what one does or whether one is doing or not doing something in the "act" of thinking.[138] And an epistemology of tropes, however

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[134] According to Nietzsche knowledge is an imperative of logic and not a pronouncement adequate to and comprehensive of entities. Nor are the axioms of logic adequate to reality as they assume *a priori* the existence of such and such entity and proceed to predicating it according to a "principle of noncontradiction" (an entity cannot receive opposite attributes). Thus for Nietzsche "*logic* (like geometry and arithmetic) applies only to *fictitious truths that we have created*. Logic is the attempt to *understand the actual world by means of a scheme of being posited by ourselves, more correctly: to make it easier to formalise and to compute*[...]" (Nietzsche's italics). Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Will to Power*, translated by Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale, quoted in *Allegories of Reading*, p. 121. So knowledge is a process of predication, that is, a constative act. Furthermore, since it depends on an *a priori* knowledge of the being of entities, it cannot contain a "*criterion of truth*, but an *imperative* that should count as true".

[135] De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, p. 125.

[136] Nonetheless, this by no means invalidates Nietzsche's critique of constatives: "it does not follow that, if it cannot be said of language that it is an act, that it has to be a knowledge. The negative thrust of the deconstruction remains unimpaired; after Nietzsche (and, indeed, after any 'text'), we can no longer hope ever 'to know' in peace." Ibid., pp. 125-126.

[137] Ibid., p. 127.

[138] Ibid., p. 131.

rigorous, could not succeed in erasing the radical ambiguity of verbal acts. More precisely, it cannot do away with rhetoric as de Man understands it:

> "If the critique of metaphysics is structured as an aporia between performative and constative language, this is the same as saying that it is structured as rhetoric."[139]

To de Man's mind, the asymmetrical relation between the constative and performative functions attests to the text's structure as "a dynamic system of excess and lack."[140] If we opt to use one of them as a totalising explicative device it will always be too much, excessively charged with the other thus lacking too much of itself. After having thrown them off balance de Man has now to reinscribe them onto a "supplementary" structure that would reinstate their unbalanced relation as the essential condition for the production of text and meaning. It is with respect to Jean-Jacques Rousseau that de Man reaches the most radical level of his critique. The legal and contractual text of the *Social Contract* serves him here as model.

The *Social Contract*, like any legal text, is torn apart by an exigency for *generality* and impersonality, which is effected by the text's grammar, its "machinelike systematicity", and an exigency for *application*, for *particular* reference. These two exigencies are both mutually constituted and destructed. "There can be no text without grammar: the logic of grammar generates texts only in the absence of referential meaning, but every text generates a referent that subverts the grammatical principle to which it owed its constitution."[141] De Man calls this discrepancy between grammar and referential meaning "the figural dimension of language." It is the rhetorical structure that engenders incompatible meanings within the same text *regardless of context*.[142] A text may be impossible as closed and ever same entity but it is possible as the iteration of its disjunctive constitution, as the series of readings from which it re-emerges.[143] In terms of constatives and performatives, the legal text, which is here evoked as a

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[139] Ibid., p. 131.
[140] Ibid., p. 180.
[141] And de Man continues: "What remains hidden in the everyday use of language, the fundamental incompatibility between grammar and meaning, becomes explicit when the linguistic structures are stated, as is the case here, in political terms." Ibid., p. 269.
[142] Hereby, "we call text any entity that can be considered from such a double perspective: as a generative, open-ended, non-referential grammatical system and as a figural system closed off by a transcendental signification [i.e., by something pointing beyond it] that subverts the grammatical code to which the texts owes its existence. The "definition" of the text also states the impossibility of its existence and prefigures the allegorical narratives of this impossibility." Ibid., p. 270.
[143] However, as Gasché points out, this does not mean that a text in the colloquial sense actually narrates its own impossibility of closure, that it is a narrative *about* that. What we have here is the allegorised notion of the text and narrative is to be understood primarily in a structural fashion. Gasché, *The Wild Card of Reading*, p. 44.

paradigmatic instance of the law of the text in general, claims to be a theoretical description of the State. But as soon as it is set in motion, as soon as it is applied to concrete situations, it becomes a narrative of praxis, thus passing from "constative theory to performative history". One has to remember that according to Speech Act Theory constative statements have a cognitive and referential structure, which, moreover, in order to signify has to be inscribed onto a performative act. "If a text does not act, it cannot state what it knows."[144] The "text of the law", which explicitly manifests the nondialectisable relation of constatives and performatives, coincides with the "law of the text", *the law of the law*, which in this case forces the theory of politics to turn into history, into "the allegory of its inability to achieve the status of a science."[145] This is the general law of the text, which is constituted as a machine for the production of meaning. The text is always capable of engendering more meaning in any given situation, to be read and be meaningful in different contexts.[146]

The discrepancy between constatives and performatives is explicated by de Man in *temporal* terms. It reflects the noncoincidence of "the theoretical statement with its phenomenal manifestation." The performative speech act of the legal text may be necessarily pronounced in a concrete present but it always points towards a hypothetical future. "All laws are future-oriented and prospective; their illocutionary mode is that of the promise",[147] of the *par excellence* performative. Furthermore, a present promise cannot be but the past of its realisation. When I promise to do something I commit myself to the necessity of a future action, which when I actually perform, exactly *because* I am committed to it, points back to a past promise. A promise is an expression of a present will, which necessarily fails to coincide with what it pledges and depends on "a metaleptic reversal of cause and effect"; the moment at which a promise is given is already *anachronistic* and self-disruptive. In this sense the "lawgiver", in this case Rousseau, becomes an "impostor" in spite of himself, a rhetorical figure caught in and produced by the text's own figural status.[148] For sure,

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[144] De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, p. 270.
[145] Ibid., p. 271.
[146] However, any attempt to determine meaning solely from the perspective of *context* faces the risk of becoming an overdetermination as it would fail to acknowledge what enabled the text to signify in the first place, the same structure that enables it to exceed any context and that allows for *recontextualisation*.
[147] De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, p. 273.
[148] According to de Man, the *Social Contract* here reaches an impasse and is forced to take refuge in a transcendental principle of signification. It has to "invent" a principle exterior to it (a "subterfuge", which "can only be God") that would place it within "a teleological system oriented toward the convergence of figure and meaning." Ibid., p. 274.

the *Social Contract* will continue to legislate: "what the *Social Contract* keeps doing however is to promise, that is, to perform the very illocutionary speech act which it has discredited and to perform it in all its textual ambiguity, as a statement of which the constative and performative functions cannot be distinguished or reconciled."[149]

Before reaching the final and most crucial phase of de Man's critique, we will endeavour to show the relevance of what has been elaborated so far with regard to speech acts to travel narrative. We previously said that travel writing draws its authority from a *claim* to a true experience as lived by the travel author. In other words, it establishes itself on the grounds of a commitment or promise to tell the truth about something that really happened, a journey made, an act of travelling performed by the author, whose signature confers upon it unity and validity. But before and beyond this, the travel text is fundamentally a narrative and should be treated as such. We must never forget that it is texts that we are considering, laborious configurations, and not events and experiences, to which we can have no access. So primarily what a travel narrative does is to "promise" a story, a *récit de voyage*, of which the truth value remains open to verification. The travel text is trapped in the fundamental discrepancy of its constative and performative functions. It constantly registers a forward and backward movement between constative and performative, reference and self-reflection, the general and the particular, a movement that also constitutes its temporal double bind. Even though in travel texts descriptive and narrative parts seem to be more balanced, their relation remains highly complex since they both presuppose and undo one another. One cannot separate a purely denotative, referential and informative discourse from the positional, self-reflective and autobiographical elements of travel texts. One cannot simply distinguish between place and event, actuality and experience, between the observed object and the act of observation. In other words, one cannot draw a line between what of the object and what of the subject is found in the travel text. The relation between the cultural or natural object and the representing subject not only gives rise to the travel text but more importantly it is what constitutes both referential object and reflective subject. This is to say that textual objects are not something pregiven and simply available at the traveller's discretion. As Barbara Korte remarks, "not until the journey is textualised does it become an experience; only as text does the journey gain significance for the traveller."[150] Thus it is through this very textualisation, here used in its broad sense, that the figure of the traveller also emerges.

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[149] Ibid., pp. 275-276.

Every representation presupposes a representing subject which, however, must constitute and define itself as the agent of this representational act. This is why acknowledging the implicit performative in every descriptive or constative act does not simply collapse the latter into the former. Performance does not totally displace or replace reference.

To be sure, description and narration have taken on different functions and values throughout the history of travel writing. But their aberrant and unstable character is not merely due to historical circumstance. We previously said that it is accepted at large that what is now called the modern genre of travel writing came to be through a re-evaluation and foregrounding of private experience, which became more and more significant.[151] Is it without any significance that the travel narrative which, according to Mary B. Campbell, signals the emergence of the modern genre, namely Sir Walter Ralegh's *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Bewtiful Empire of Guiana, with a Relation of the Great and Golden City of Manoa (which the Spaniards call El Dorado), etc. Performed in the yeare 1595*... includes the word "performed" in its title? Yes and no. Yes, if it even marginally implies the figure of a traveller who is aware of his personal involvement in relating an account. No, in the sense that structurally performance is already at work even in the most "impersonal" descriptions.

It was argued before that a genealogy of the function of the subject in travel writing would "perform" a reduction of the multiplying forces that both give rise and disseminate all the features that are now said to pertain to the modern genre. For sure, one could reconstitute a linear progression on the condition that one selected and isolated what one assumed or set up as prominent features. Undertakings such as these are not without merit as long as one recognises their inherent limitations. Moreover, one cannot speak of a linear development with regard to the inscriptive subject of the discourse of travel, of an increasing self-awareness and confidence, since there have been periods also in modern travel writing in which the subject was relegated to a secondary function. For instance, the humble journey of pilgrims to the Holy Lands is supposed to involve a process of *self-effacement* before the glory of God's manifestations, as does the crusaders' participation in divine and eschatological history. However, the overt pronouncements of such texts are being subverted by

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[150] Korte, p. 146.

[151] "In Europe, more specifically in England, our contemporary understanding of the travelogue as the account of authentic, autobiographical travelling experience does not emerge until the

autobiographical and anecdotal elements as this is clearly seen also in the chronicles of crusades that introduce secular experience. The medieval secular, profane and iconoclastic *curiositas* and Renaissance's emphasis on empiricism that reinstates the experience of the world as source of knowledge, of course, do not constitute a clear break with what precedes. On the other hand, neither do they foreshadow or secure the self-establishment of a powerful representing subject that could later fulfil the modernist dream of mastery and autonomy as we can now retrospectively judge from a time that has recently evidenced the prominence of Foucauldian discursive models, widely held with regard to travel writing,[152] and declarations of "the death of the author".

The eighteenth century travel literature, according to Charles L. Batten Jr, is structured around a "clearly defined" convention: "a travel writer must not talk about himself."[153] Batten is concerned with "the nonfiction travel account," which is still held as a literary genre in the eighteenth century by the fact that travel literature then widely conforms to the Horatian doctrine of *utile dulce*, that is, to a mixture and balance of pleasure and instruction, to an artful representation of information that elevates the genre "to the rank of poesy".[154] Although eighteenth century generic demands, as described by Batten, who focuses mainly on English travel writing, cannot be as "clearly defined" as he suggests –and one could detect a certain uneasiness with regard to the designation and separation of the fictional and nonfictional account[155]- they are a

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Early Modern period, and many earlier texts are not compatible with the modern conception of the genre." Ibid., p. 21.

[152] We will discuss the Foucauldian framework of recent theory on travel writing in works such as, for instance, Sara Mills' *Discourses of Difference, an Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism*, London, 1991 in the next chapter.

[153] Batten, Charles L., *Pleasurable Instruction, Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature*, London, University of California Press, 1978, p. 13.

[154] Ibid., p. 25.

[155] It is form and convention rather than content that in the eighteenth century, according to Batten, qualifies a travel account as a nonfictional one. Readers expected to recognise well-established conventions that pertained to what was then demanded from "an authentic account". In an age that travel writing enjoyed immense popularity but was all the same constantly suspected and attacked for not being enough factual and truthful, travel writers established their credibility and defended their reputation by resorting to artistry, to the literary conventions that their audience was familiar with. Although this was also an age anxious for novelty and knowledge it was not without a certain uneasiness that the unprecedented amount of incoming information on foreign lands was received. One could not possibly disagree with Batten that the student of travel literature must have a comprehension of generic conventions and of the tradition in which travellers write. However, his adherence to a formal definition of "nonfictional" travel literature does not escape the pitfalls that those whom he criticises for attempting at distinguishing factual and fictional representations on the basis of content run up against. For Batten, such "attempts to discern fact from fiction [...] reduce critics to petty detectives" and are "difficult if not impossible" since they presuppose "omniscience", whereas

good case in point for the consideration of the constative and performative functions. For here we have narratives that purport to deny or at least to diminish their own narrative mode and thus to achieve a balance between their constative and performative functions in favour of the former: "the eighteenth-century travel writer tried to achieve a 'golden mean': he had to include a sufficiently detailed record of his experiences to prove that he actually visited the countries he described, but he could not tell too much about himself and his adventures. If this narrative appeared too circumstantial, he would usually be attacked as an egoist; if it seemed too contrived, he would frequently be criticized as a writer of fiction, primarily interested in entertaining readers at the expense of their instruction. A properly handled narrative, therefore, not only provides entertainment but also certifies the truthfulness of the book."[156]

By then the modern antinomy of fact and fiction was clearly formed and evaluated on moral grounds. In medieval times the conflation of fact and fiction did not pose a moral threat since every sign or thing manifested by analogy a divine truth. In the scientifically sophisticated eighteenth century the exigency for accuracy put in the foreground referential and descriptive discourses that pertained to truthful representation, while personal engagement presented the danger of compromising cognitive aims. So the performative mode of narrative, on the one hand, served as a condition of validity and, on the other, if used out of proportion, undermined the validity of the travel text (designated as pleasurable instruction) on the whole. While accurate and objective observation produced general and educational information, autobiographical and anecdotal parts pinned down the travel account to useless particularities and had to be minimised. This much sought balance which rested upon a relation of excess and lack could not be and was not sustained for there were enough exceptions to this rule of ideal standards to form a counter-law, whence the need for rigorous conventions.

"classifications based on form [...] usually avoid practically insurmountable problems." Ibid., pp 21-24. Form can hardly be disengaged from thematic elements, although it may offer an insight to the accepted patterns for the production and reception of knowledge at a particular time. But it fails to constitute a criterion for the distinction between fictional and nonfictional travel writing since it precisely bears the possibility of both. The distinction between fact and fiction (as well as between form and content) remains highly problematic. Batten seems to presuppose what he explicitly rejects: a division of fact and fiction according to content that an awareness of rhetorical conventions would help to overcome. Any attempt at considering separately the vehicle or medium of a discourse from its content essentially presupposes the independent existence of the latter. If the truth value of eighteenth century travel accounts was largely premised upon but not wholly secured by literary conventions then such distinctions rather than avoiding come up against "insurmountable problems".

[156] Ibid., p. 63.

The unbalanced relation between constatives and performatives is not a matter of proportion within the text but rather an inherent instability of these functions, a question of excess and lack within themselves. For the cognitive or referential act points back to the thinking subject and so, being too self-referential, lacks in objectivity and the self-reflective subject constitutes itself through its pronouncements and affirmations, which it fails to think as positional acts. This instability within the travel text is not, of course, put to rights with the advent of romantic, sentimental and modernist travel from the nineteenth century onwards that shifted attention to private experience, emotion and reflective mood. These texts may manifest an increased awareness of self-engagement and a liberty on the travel writer's part, which amounts to the celebratory aestheticisation of travel, but they are also caught in the disjunctive and tropological structure of speech acts since they continue to describe, to affirm and to produce reference and knowledge about the other, as Edward Said elaborates with regard to Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Nerval and Flaubert in *Orientalism*.[157] By this time, it is often assumed that factual and literary travel writing are clearly divided. To challenge this separation is not to collapse every travel text into the category of literature, especially not if this is defined in disjunction with the so-called factual and cognitive discourses. If it has been suggested that the experience of travel and travel writing are essentially "figurative," it was done so according to the radical sense of *literariness*, that is, with reference to the internal condition of undecidability that already (re)marks the inherent possibility of any text to become literature. We will have more to say on this in the following section of the chapter. But still travel texts that display a literary self-awareness bring to the fore in a more acute way the structures underlying travel writing in general. It is not without a certain irony that Gustave Flaubert, a figure of the traveller as *voyageur maudit* according to Dennis Porter,[158] recounts his experience of the Orient. Ironic overtones are effected by the traveller's incapability to produce a just and "adequate" image of the other, which he will continue to describe and lay claim on all the same, and by the self-doubt and self-reflection inflicted by the encounter.[159] Flaubert on Egypt:

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[157] Said, Edward, *Orientalism, Western Conceptions of the Orient*, London, Penguin Books, 1995. The theme of "orientalism" will be taken up in the next chapter where it will be considered with regard to colonialism and post-colonial theory and the question of the ethics of travel.

[158] Porter, Dennis, *Haunted Journeys, Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1991, p. 168.

[159] The figure of irony has similar function and structure with allegory. They are both considered metatropes because they manifest an awareness of their figurative mode and imply a

"What can I say about it all? What can I write you? As yet I am scarcely over the initial bedazzlement. It is like being hurled while still asleep into the midst of a Beethoven symphony, with the brasses at their most ear-splitting, the basses rumbling, and the flutes sighing away; each detail reaches out to grip you; it pinches you; and the more you concentrate on it the less you grasp the whole. Then gradually all this becomes harmonious and the pieces fall into place themselves, in accordance with the laws of perspective. [...] Anyone who is a little attentive *re*discovers here much more than he discovers. The seeds of a thousand notions that one carried within oneself grow and become more definite, like so many refreshed memories. [...] The dances that we have had performed for us are of too hieratic a character not to have come from the dances of the old Orient, which is always young because nothing changes. Here the Bible is a picture of life today. [...] You can see that there is much to enjoy in all this, and plenty of opportunity to utter stupidities about it –something which we abstain from as much as possible. If we were to publish anything it would be on our return. But between now and then, let nothing transpire."[160]

The passage begins with what is called the "inexpressibility topos" in travel writing that tries to convey the traveller's amazement and "bedazzlement" in the face of the other. This is articulated here through the resort to a familiar scene for the Western traveller that would help to orchestrate and harmonise the fleeting and forceful impressions into a coherent whole, a sort of symphony. The traveller moves forwards and backwards between the particular and general, detail and wholeness, past and present, which is, however, an eternal and static present "because nothing changes".

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rupture from the meaning to which they refer and which they repeat and, more importantly, have as function the thematisation of this rupture. Allegory and irony then emerge from the same temporal void, of a "temporality that is definitely not organic, in that it relates to its source only in terms of distance and difference and allows for no end, for no totality." De Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality", p. 222. Like allegory, irony is a figure that can be said to pertain to the very semantic structures of travel and travel writing. To be certain, irony is not solely a feature of the modern, "self-conscious" genre of travel writing. Mandeville, the untravelled travel writer of the Middle Ages, as Campbell points out, used multiple ironies in his plagiarisms. According to Donald Howard this is an effect of the essential link between travel and irony: "If this book is ironic, it is because travel itself is ironic: things are other than what we expect at home, and the contrast turns us back upon ourselves." Quoted by Campbell, pp. 149-150. Campbell does not want to generalise the workings of irony in travel writing and asks to what extent pilgrimage and missionary accounts betray expectations. She ventures the thought that over the millennium between Egeria and Mandeville it was as if the mentality of the West sought to protect an archetypal *imago mundi* designed in a way that rejected the possibility of real surprise in the experience of travel. Ibid., p. 150. Is not denying the possibility of surprise in the experience of travel to deny travel altogether, for what is travel if not the eventuality of an encounter with the other? Perhaps this is the deep ironic structure underlying these texts, which in a way subvert their own purposes. Of course, one could object and, indeed, Andrew Palmer has with regard to the suggestion that Egeria was an exotic traveller implied by the title of Campbell's book that this is a retrojection since pilgrims were not visiting foreign lands but were travelling to the centre of their scriptural universe, to a spiritual home. Palmer, "Egeria the Voyageur, Or The Technology of Remote Sensing in Late Antiquity" in *Travel Fact and Travel Fiction*, p. 52. Palmer also remarks that "Egeria is willingly deceived; but she only 'deceives' in the sense that she idealizes, and then she deceives herself as much as her correspondents." Ibid., p. 45. Seeing only what the law of the house commands and allows to be seen, which essentially is never the house itself for it does not show itself for what it is, that is, a law, is one of the greatest ironies of travel.

Memory is a past expectation becoming present reality, a reality that is "young" and vibrant and at once "old", ritual, and mythical. What Flaubert's "attentive" gaze ultimately leads to is a *re*discovery of himself. He is awaken, brought to conscience by the "loud" images of the Orient, which is there as a stage for his own growth and, of course, pleasure. But at the same time the Orient is the testing ground for his own "refreshed memories" and assumptions. His own mystified and blurred past only attains a short-lived moment of resolution for there cannot truly be a reconciliation or synthesis with the present. He is bound to relapse to inauthenticity. Flaubert constantly moves between assertion and doubt (the dances "are of too hieratic a character not to have"…?) ending up with self-sarcasm (there is "plenty of opportunity to utter stupidities") that disrupts all that was affirmed before. He will, however, give himself more time to better orchestrate, "if" he does so. The passage ends with the promise of a travel account. The Orient then becomes at once at this transient and deafening moment a past, a present, and a future. But between then and now, nothing should transpire and everything should be reserved for the book on the Orient that would bear his proper name.

Travel texts, like all texts in a certain sense, can be said to be more or less autobiographical. They manifest a specular structure that allows for the emergence of the figure of the author which becomes the text's referent, and which, in its own turn, acquires a degree of referential productivity. Paul de Man in "Autobiography as De-facement" explores the tropological condition of the genre of autobiography, which is, however, extended to all types of writing, and addresses the problematic of the distinction between actuality and fiction in those texts.[161] If we replaced in the quotation that follows the term "autobiography" by "travel writing" the relevance of this thinking becomes obvious:

> "Autobiography seems to depend on actual and potentially verifiable events in a less ambivalent way than fiction does. It seems to belong to a simpler mode of referentiality, of representation, and of diegesis. It may contain lots of phantasms and dreams, but these deviations from reality remain rooted in a single subject whose identity is defined by the uncontested readability of his proper name".[162]

But the very act of self-restoration and salvage in the travel text that purportedly secures the author's proper name, which in turn functions as a warranty for

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[160] This is an extract from a letter Flaubert wrote to Dr Jules Cloquet in Cairo, 15 January 1850. Flaubert, Gustave, *Flaubert in Egypt, A Sensibility on Tour*, translated and edited with an introduction by Francis Steegmuller, London, Penguin Books, 1996, pp. 79-81.

[161] De Man, Paul, "Autobiography as De-Facement" in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1984.

the place's proper name, inflicts a split on the writing subject between its empirical self (author *of* the text) and a figurative self (author *in* the text). The historical self is immersed in textuality, in a figurative structure that both lets him/her emerge by means of tropological substitutions, exchanges, totalisations and by the same token disclaims the possibility of a unified and consistent signifying subject. What is referred to here is not, of course, a historical existence, but the specular structure of self-understanding:

> "The specular moment that is part of all understanding reveals the tropological structure that underlies all cognitions, including knowledge of self. The interest of autobiography, then, is not that it reveals reliable self-knowledge –it does not- but that it demonstrates in a striking way the impossibility of closure and of totalisation (that is the impossibility of coming to being) of all textual systems made up of tropological substitutions."[163]

This redoubling and multiplying force constitutes the tropological condition of autobiography and, by extension, travel writing that is split along a movement towards *prosopopeia* (the emergence of a face, *prosopo* in Greek) and a counter and simultaneous movement towards *de-facement*. Performative function cannot act as a unifying and authenticising factor because as soon as it takes effect, "it is at once reinscribed within cognitive constraints."[164] This is to say that as soon as the performing subject institutes itself as the agent and signatory of the text it is folded back upon itself, however, not "in mirror like self-understanding" but in a way that displaces (without overcoming) the specular pair according to which the author is both the performer and the cognitive referent of the text. "The study of autobiography is caught in this double motion, the necessity to escape from the tropology of the subject and the equally inevitable reinscription of this necessity within a specular model of cognition."[165] There is always too much performance in cognition and too much reference in performance for either of these to constitute a pure or total speech act and it is in this sense that the latter is essentially disjunctive and figurative. There can be neither coincidence nor reconciliation between what the text claims it does and what it actually does. Moreover, this is the condition for the productivity of the text, for what the text does is to promise more meaning and more reference.

We have now reached the most crucial phase of de Man's critique, which consists of the reintroduction of *promise* as the irreducible fact and rhetorical model of language. If Austin reverses the priority of constatives over performatives, de Man in

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[162] Ibid., p. 68.
[163] Ibid., p. 71.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid., p. 72.

his turn reverses the primacy of performatives, however, not by opposing them to constatives but precisely in order to displace this metaphysical opposition. The performative function is generalised as language's own mode of coming to being as a *promise for truth and meaning*. Here, of course, *promise* is not to be confused with an actual speech act. The promise of language is an open structure generative of more meaning and more reference, which is unable to gather itself as such, to be adequate to what it promises. This is because the text's semantic potential is never fully present to any of its instantiations. Every reading necessarily has too much referential meaning, an excess of cognition, which extenuates the text's promise for more meaning. But the promise for meaning, like any promise, is also excessive. It always promises "too much," more than it can deliver, constantly deferring its fulfilment and closure.[166] The promise of language is an aporetic, an impossible yet inevitable promise. The grammar of the text as a promise of meaning cannot coincide with any of its actual meanings for it is a promise with no *telos*. And if the text performs an impossible promise which no reading is able to control, "the error", de Man writes, "is not within the reader; language itself dissociates the cognition from the act. *Die Sprache verspricht (sich)*; to the extent that it is necessarily misleading, language just as necessarily conveys the promise of its own truth."[167]

Die Sprache verspricht (sich). Language promises (itself). Language misleads. De Man deforms Heidegger's phrase *Die Sprache spricht* (speech speaks, language speaks) revealing promise as the essential but also defective condition of language. If for Heidegger it is only language that can speak of language and it is only by language that language can be spoken of ("language speaks *of* and *by* itself"[168]) without being exhaustively controlled by speaking subjects, for de Man, as Derrida explicates, language already promises as soon as it speaks. Promise reveals "a structure or destination of the *Sprache* which compels us to say *Die Sprache verspricht (sich)* and no longer simply *Die Sprache spricht*."[169] What language essentially promises is itself. When I speak I promise to say what I mean and to mean what I say and that what I say will mean the same thing when I repeat it again and again. What enables me to

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[166] As Derrida explains, "without this essential excess, it would return to a description or knowledge of the future. Its act would have a constative structure and not a performative one. But this 'too much' of the promise does not belong to a (promised) content of a promise which I would be incapable of keeping. It is within the very structure of the act of promising that this excess comes to inscribe a kind of irremediable disturbance or perversion." Derrida, *Mémoires*. p. 93.

[167] De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, p. 277.

[168] Derrida, *Mémoires*, p. 97.

promise, or rather what promises in my stead (since we are not referring to a voluntary promise with concrete content), through me and in spite of me, is the repeatable and iterable structures of language, which allow for an utterance to be identified as such and be meaningful in more than one contexts, indeed, in infinite number of contexts. The promise of language is thus necessarily excessive. It is an impossible promise, a promise it cannot keep since any utterance will mean *more* or *less* in different contexts. And this is not by accident; it does not befall language from the outside but it is always already inscribed in its differential structure, in the essential possibility of meaning to be repeated as same and other at the same time. Nor is this difference or excess simply reducible to context, which is always open and nonsaturable. It is the iterable and differential structure of language that which engenders effects of *truth* (sameness, ideality) and *history* (as the history of meaning –from which ensues the sense of history in general). "To the extent that it is necessarily misleading, language just as necessarily conveys the promise of its own truth. This is also why textual allegories on this level of rhetorical complexity generate history."[170] The rhetorical structure of language that affects its readability and unreadability at the same time is already found in the *versprechen*, in "the promise at the origin of history."[171]

So what does the travel text essentially do? It promises. It promises a self, a place, home. It pledges to the other and must *excuse* itself for doing so for the other can never be (re)present(ed) in the text; the other can never be the object of cognition. This promise inherent to the travel text is what enables the generation of more meaning and cognition (referential meaning), which it has in turn to repress and suspend (in order for the text to keep on signifying):

> "there can never be enough guilt around to match the text-machine's infinite power to excuse. Since guilt, in this description, is a cognitive and excuse a performative function of language, we are restating the disjunction of the performative from the cognitive: any speech act produces an excess of cognition, but it can never hope to know the process of its own production (the only thing worth knowing.)"[172]

This is why the travel text has to excuse itself for being excessive in giving and promising too much and, inversely, for knowing and performing too little. If we are now able to readdress these texts, to read them anew this is possible due to their inherent promise to interminably speak of the other, of an encounter which is constantly postponed. In the most authoritative, affirmative and *guilty* of travel texts

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[169] Ibid., p. 97-98.
[170] De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, p. 277.
[171] Derrida, *Mémoires*, p. 99.
[172] De Man, *Allegories of Reading*, pp. 299-300.

there are always destabilising elements, the texts' own power to *excuse*, that radically disrupt and reduce any claim on the other to impotence. And this is not an interruption that comes from outside, from a scholarly or political will that assumes the task of doing justice. If allegory teaches us something this is that no one ever says only and simply one thing. The travel text will continue to narrate the story of its own aberration and in this sense it will always be true to itself. It will continue to promise the house and that other place, that is to say, it will continue to allegorise them. And "we know this to be the case from empirical experience as well: it is always possible to face up to any experience (to excuse any guilt), because the experience always exists simultaneously as fictional discourse and as empirical event and it is never possible to decide which one of the two possibilities is the right one."[173] Travel then is an allegory of the house and this amounts to saying that *the house is an allegory of travel* since they constantly refer to, repeat, and disrupt each other. This is the only chance for an *ethics of travel*, an ethics that promises without delivering the other, the other being thus an absolute *arrivant*, the one to come. Derrida asks: "What are we, who are we, to what and to whom *are we*, and to what and to whom are we *destined* in the experience of this impossible promise? Henceforth: what is experience?"[174] And what is it if not the experience of the other, of someone awaited but not prepared for, the experience of an expectation "without horizon of expectation", without prior decision. It is the other that must decide when and if to come in the travel text, in us. The travel text must remain open to this promise, to undecidabilty. In this sense, what it essentially does is to pledge to secrecy.

Jacques Derrida: Travel as Testimony

So far we have tried to explore the themes of metaphor and allegory and to argue that, beyond their recurrent and varied use in travel narratives, they pertain to the essential functions and constitutive forces of such texts –and of the experience of travel on the whole- in a way that exceeds their thematic exposition and reinscribes them as generalised conditions of travel and travel writing. The metaphorical and allegorical functions of travel texts therefore re-emerge as essential and essentially aporetic

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[173] Ibid., p. 293. This is not to say that the text's inherent mechanism to self-excuse by way of its radically figurative mode is an act of self-absolution. In excusing itself the text repeats its guilt as it must without resolution or reconciliation. To give oneself up to the jurisdiction of an other and to ask for forgiveness is something that perhaps one must do but it is all the same a guilty act for it denies itself the responsibility for what one does. One must endure, dwell in guilt and excuse oneself for doing so. One must stay in this impossible and terrible situation.

[174] Derrida, *Mémoires*, p. 149.

conditions, the preoccupation with which is not simply a matter of choice. We are going to be concerned now with another constitutive function of the travel text, which is essentially implicated with its metaphorical and allegorical functions, with the antinomy of fact and fiction and that of performative engagement and constative reference: *travel writing as testimony*. In *The Witness and the Other World* Mary B. Campbell designates the travel book as "a kind of witness: it is generically aimed at the truth."[175] The traveller is commonly perceived as a sort of witness drawing on and evoking his/her own experience of a distant culture as the legitimate and legitimising ground of his/her discourse. A traveller testifies to the truthfulness of an experience of travel or rather makes a *claim to truthfulness*. This claim –explicit or implicit, truthful or not- is a constitutive condition of the travel text. However, as will be argued, the evaluation or verification of such claims are generically requisite neither for the composition nor the reception of the travel text as such. Quite on the contrary and like all attestations the travel text is structured on the aporetic and paradoxical condition that it can always not say the "truth", that it can always lie, become a perjury and a fiction.

Indeed, what happens when the attestation to a "truthful" event of travel takes the form of a narrative, of a structured work that furthermore pertains to a "literary genre" and conforms to conventions and rules of composition? And still this is saying the least for, as has been suggested so far, writing about an experience of travel does not simply amount to representing or shaping in narrative and communicable form the contents or the raw and hard facts of experience as lived by the traveller. Although representation, which we previously discussed under the aegis of *mimesis*, is presumed to be a constitutive function of the travel text, to the extent that it is organised around the theme of presence (a fully present subject intending a present thing or situation that is re-presented in turn in the travel text), it cannot help reducing or totalising in order to make available what precisely is not: *otherness*. Experience is not something previously constituted and meaningful in itself that is later simply brought to writing; it is already a kind of writing. It bears a structure of scriptability and repeatability or else a structure of overflowing that disseminates from the start the basis on which experience is generally thought: a fully present moment in which an event occurs and to which the traveller comes to attest. If the present of the experience of travel is always already divided by its essential repeatability, which necessarily disrupts its

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[175] Campbell, pp. 2-3.

unity and uniqueness, then to what does the traveller "truthfully" testify? What is the value of travel as testimony?

Undoubtedly, the question of veracity and adequacy of travel writing to the place or culture under description has been a major axiological criterion throughout the trajectory of this genre, one that also concerned the very status of the travel text as such. Travel writing has been a major source of information on foreign lands and an important agent for intercultural relations for millennia. Of course, as we have already seen, travel texts assumed different functions and purposes at different times, which also had a bearing on the question of adequacy and were largely determined by the expectations, conceptual and material needs of the home culture. For instance, the accounts of pilgrims established their validity on the grounds of their adequacy to the Scriptures rather than on the basis of private experience. The medieval books of wonders responded to the spiritual need for the circumscription of the boundaries of the Christian world as the geographical containment of God's providence. The epistemological requirements established from the Renaissance onwards and the demand for accurate information, especially in view of commercial exploitation and conquest, created a new ethos for travellers, put more pressure for exactness and at the same time raised more suspicion against travel books. The travel book was offered as a sort of evidence that only the traveller could provide from his/her unique experience and point of view but at the same time had to be put to the test according to established criteria and already received and accepted knowledge. As private experience and scientific sophistication were increasingly recognised as the source of truth and knowledge, so were the principles of truth and error as the ultimate axiological criteria of travel books. As Charles L. Batten explains, the more popular did travel writing become, the more did its reputation suffer.

We previously touched upon the generic exigencies and particularities of travel writing in the eighteenth century, a period that has been extensively studied and indeed provides a good case in point for the discussion of the factual and fictional elements in travel writing. Percy G. Adams in his *Travellers and Travel Liars 1660-1800* attempts to establish the grounds for the distinction between real, imaginary and pseudo-travel writing.[176] The eighteenth century, Adams observes especially with regard to Britain, was "the age of gold for travellers, both real and imaginary. And as a result, it was the

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[176] Adams, Percy G., *Travelers and Travel Liars 1660-1800*, New York, Dover Publications, Inc, 1980, first publ. 1962.

age of opportunity for travel lies."[177] Now, it would be difficult if not impossible to draw a line between what would count as erroneous information due to ignorance and lack of insightful observation and intentional lies. For Adams then, one would have to detect a suspicious motive behind inaccuracy and, actually, he produces a threefold typology of lies according to their dubious motivation: 1) vanity, 2) cupidity, 3) prejudice. By setting one traveller against another one could enable oneself to detect lies and also cases of plagiarism performed by the so-called "fireside travellers". Adams relates stories and legends nourished by travel books, for instance, about the giants of Patagonia or the Northwest passage, and attempts to measure their effect on the reading public and their reception by scientific communities and administrative authorities. Fantasy and, indeed, private ambition that triggered the sometimes immensely popular as well as deceptive "tall tales" of travellers fostered long lasting images and ideas of exotic lands, affected foreign policy, occasioned expeditions, found their way into cosmographies, atlases and even school books. The enormous input of information called for more control and rigid demarcation between what was regarded truthful and fictitious. The eighteenth century, according to Adams, was unique in the wholesale production of a variety of "fictitious travel literature," which could be distinguished between the kind that "was designed to be believed" and "that other prolific variety of the period, the imaginary travel accounts, such as the fantastic, the utopian, the lunar literature, which were not intended to fool the general reader."[178] Of course, the so-called pseudo-travel writing, the utopias, and imaginary voyages did not first occur in the eighteenth century. For Philip Babcock Gove the imaginary voyage, which he defines as a deviation from "truth", is inextricably woven with travel writing from its incipience: "Always there have been travellers who have lied, and always man has been interested in the far places where others have been. The combination sufficiently explains the simple elements constituting the basis of all imaginary voyages."[179] Neither scholar, however, is able to provide a criterion for the demarcation between imaginary and "real" travel writing. The question of the truthfulness of travel books no matter how competently it is scrutinised, no matter if this results in the exposure of hoaxes and lies, and, accordingly, to the reallocation of texts within generic subdivisions, it cannot provide the measure for the separation

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[177] Ibid., p. 9.
[178] Ibid., pp. 80-81.
[179] Gove, Philip Babcock, *The Imaginary Voyage in Prose Fiction, A History of Its Criticism and a Guide for Its Study, with an Annotated Check List of 215 Imaginary Voyages from 1700 to 1800*, London, The Holland Press, 1961, p. 13.

between the actual and the fictional at least in generic and structural terms. Circumstantial evidence or scholarly work may discard a travel text's claims to truthfulness or detect plagiarism but there is no such thing as a textual quality or property that could establish a generic boundary between what is held as actual and what as imaginary. As much as it is essential for the travel text to make a claim to truth, it is also essential and structurally requisite for it to be able to lie. Both possibilities must be there if travel writing is to attest to anything.

It is essential that there is no structural difference between "imaginary" and "real" travel writing. The concern here for the study of this genre is its function as testimony and not an interest in the restoration of truth, which is at any rate a dubious and wilful task. One may ask to what precisely must the travel book be truthful and whether do not such claims imply that there is something like a measurable and calculable reality available to the traveller's gaze. When erroneous observation is attributed to prejudice does not this suggest that travel writing is fundamentally and inescapably false? The evaluation of travel writing along the principles of truth and error in the name and in the service of objective truth is a doubtful task and one that fails to effectively challenge the authority of the house. Hermeneutics teaches us that "prejudice" can also be a positive and enabling condition and one that in any case is impossible to do away with since it is constitutive of understanding. This however is neither to invalidate travel writing as necessarily prejudiced nor to level off every single claim that travel texts make. Even more subtle approaches than that of Adams, who tries somewhat crudely to separate truth from lie, which undertake a critique of the ideological fashioning of travel texts (a tradition that, as we have seen, is incorporated in the hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur), to a large extent presuppose that something like truthful representation should be possible. These also imply that one should be able to designate such entities as the "house" and other cultures and circumscribe them in terms of identity and difference. Thinking in a deconstructive mode radically disrupts the assumptions that still underlie such notions like *Oikos*, difference, representation, mediation even in discourses that attempt to challenge them. Before one undertakes to test out the truth claims of travel texts and their value as testimonies one should first think through the notions and conceptual tools one is bound to put into effect. In other words, one should look into the essential conditions that allow for such a thing as a testimony to take place. And these do not depend on any rules of verification. A travel text retains its function of testifying as well as that of reference even if it pertains to the

imaginary or fictional travel literature in the conventional sense. In fact, as we shall see, every travel text bears the possibility of becoming literature or false testimony.[180]

Now, travel writing is admittedly inter-textual even more explicitly than other genres. One of its *topoi* is that a traveller directly refers to, quotes from, credits or discredits other travel texts. The travel text as testimony must occasion from a unique and irreplaceable position but at the same time it must not differ substantially from other travel narratives on the same place, if it is to be believable. This condition of verisimilitude became a generic convention that allowed for the enormous production of *pseudo-travel books* and was in many cases parodied. *Mandeville's Travels*, a fourteenth century text that was considered a genuine travel book for centuries and was even a source book for Columbus, is exemplary for that matter. A travel text that is now known as fictional at the time of its production and for much longer still testified and was an acclaimed authority. Since Mandeville's credibility, as Campbell points out, "was founded neither in personal experience nor for the most part in the transmission of accurate facts, it must be a literary credibility, a sort of intertextual verisimilitude."[181] Imaginary travel writing, utopias and parodies such as Lucian's *True History*, Bacon's *New Atlantis*, Thomas More's *Utopia*, and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* not only share the same structure and form with "real" travel texts but, precisely because of this, they challenge and ridicule the latter's premises offering themselves as the best examples for the study of the genre. Lucian attacks the credulity of readers by admitting that his *True History* is more truthful in overly and overtly lying, Thomas More calls his hero "Raphael Hythlodaeus," literally meaning "bringer of salvation through nonsense," and Mandeville omits the conventional prefatory truth claim and by artfully mixing fact and fantasy and at the same time casting himself doubt to some of his descriptions creates "an imaginative freedom" for his readers and stimulates contemplation and sympathy.[182] In Jenny Mezciems' words, this sort of text challenges authoritative claims on the other and has a moral function in "showing that deception, at the level of art beyond that of the plain-speaking liar, may nevertheless be

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[180] As Derrida points out, "a testimony can be false, that is, mistaken, without being false testimony –that is, without implicating perjury, lie, a deliberate intention to deceive." Derrida, Jacques, *Demeure: Fiction and Testimony*, translated by Elisabeth Rottenberg, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2000, first published as *Demeure: Maurice Blanchot*, Editions Galilée, 1998, p. 36.

[181] Campbell, p. 126.

[182] Ibid., p. 146.

used to undeceive."[183] Whether the writer's aim is to attack deception and naivety, like Lucian, to promote humanistic ideals, like More,[184] and to induce faith and tolerance into a morally and spiritually impoverished and fallen world, like Mandeville, the foregrounded allegorical and ironical register of these narratives, which undo their constative mode and make this undoing their theme, bring out the general aporetic condition and inner discrepancy of travel writing.

It is not, however, through their openly satiric and ironic mode that these texts, which hold an influential part in the tradition of travel writing, cast doubt on the latter's assumptions and claims. At a more fundamental level, travel emerges as an effect of the sedentary practice of writing, as the dream of *Oikos*, at the same time that *Oikos* is destroyed and reconstructed through travel as this ideal *nonplace*. Then the discourse of *Oikos* and thus of travel loses its ground and basis and re-emerges as an effect of the trajectory of (travel) writing, which hence cannot any longer be a sedentary practice but rather assumes the function of attesting to the *condition voyageuse* of every notion it involves and of language itself. Since the testimony of these texts has no definite or "real" content, since their central function is to disrupt their referential mode, what they essentially attest to is a secret promise: a secret longing, the dream of utopia, of the ideal "nonplace", to which there can be no path and no passage (*a-poros*) but still haunts travel texts and gives their impossible condition of possibility. "Utopia" may designate a place, a theme, become a title and a book, the object of desire, hope (as in André Gide's *Back from the USSR*) or nostalgia (as in *Tristes Tropiques*); it may receive everything, every enunciation, determination, function for it is not a proper place. It is neither a place of derivation nor of destination; it grounds nothing for it has no essence, no properties of its own, while bearing and suffering everything. Like

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[183] Mezciems, Jenny, " ' 'Tis not to divert the Reader': Moral and Literary Determinants in some Early Travel Narratives" in *The Art of Travel, Essays on Travel Writing*,edited by Philip Dodd, London, Frank Cass, 1982, p. 3.

[184] Thomas More makes use of familiar devices of travel writing in his *Utopia* (1516) such as prefatory claims to truthfulness, the modesty topos, detailed descriptions and information on the land of Utopia. *Utopia* takes the form of a testimony, that of Ralphael Hythlodaeus, an imaginary traveller who is, however, surrounded by real persons, More, Peter Giles and claims to have travelled with Vespucci. For the knowledgeable reader of the time, one who would be able to detect the ample use of puns in the Greek language, More's satiric attitude immediately comes to the fore. More, in view of criticising and deprecating what is to him the lamentable state of Western European civilisation, parodies travel narratives and their aptitude for the grotesque and marvellous: "But as for monsters, because they be no news, of them we were nothing inquisitive. For nothing is more easy to be found than be barking Scyllas, ravening Celaenos, and Laestrygons, devourers of people, and suchlike great and incredible monsters. But to find citizens ruled by good and wholesome laws, that is an exceedingly rare and hard

khôra. Or literature. Yet it is still what promises more meaning, what opens up the space of inscription, what awaits for the unpronounced arrival of the other. Utopia is the condition of travel, its nonplace of origin and impossible destination. Utopia as an ideal place either of the past or of the future, which is none other than the past or future of *Oikos*, a past which never was present, a future that will have always already happened, is a theme that more or less runs through travel writing. The promise of travel, what puts it in motion, however, need not have a concrete content. U-topia or A-topia as the condition of travel and the *promise of the other* does not receive here an eschatological content announcing the coming of the other as fulfilment, that is, as modification of *Oikos*. Utopia or atopia here refers to the nonplace that *Oikos* always already "is" in order to receive the other –another whose identity no one can foretell or foreclose, the borderless non proper place that exceeds *the law of the house* and its *rules of hospitality*. If utopia is a promise without content yet, as Derrida reminds us, the event of a promise is significant in itself. A promise is not nothing. But let us leave it at that for the moment.

We previously discussed the essentially allegorical function of travel writing that exceeds the implicit or explicit allegorical themes occurring in or generated by the travel text. We said that travel texts are caught within the fundamental discrepancy of their rhetorical mode and the irresolvable conflict between their constative and performative functions. It was maintained that this aberrant structure, or else radical *literariness*, destabilises not only the texts' pronouncements but also disrupts the representing and cognitive authority of the travel writer. Thus, in a more essential way than any challenge to a purported deviation from truth, deliberate or not, literary in the conventional sense or not, the allegorical function of travel writing brings forward its condition of fictionality, one that exceeds the division of fact and fiction *stricto sensu*. Fictionality here does not refer to a deviation from truth but it rather points to *the impossibility of something such as "truth" to be ever told*. This is a *secret*, and one often well guarded, behind the authoritative pronouncements of travel texts. Nevertheless, it is not a secret in the sense of a concealed, elusive or undecipherable content but the secret of there being no secret, no hidden source of meaning either profane or mystical, but that which is non phenomenal and non noumenal. The secret in this sense that Derrida delineates is heterogeneous to truth and to the vocabulary of veiling and unveiling. It is the trace, the remainder, what cannot be accounted for, what

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thing." More, Thomas, *Utopia*, translated from the Latin by Ralph Robinson, with an

can be neither reduced to language nor be separated from it. A travel writer assumes the task of giving an account of a place, a culture, in other words, of making it available to his/her readers.

> "But who", Derrida asks, " would ever determine the proper extent of a thematization so as to judge it finally adequate? And is there any worse violence than that which consists in calling for the response, demanding that one *give an account of* everything, and preferably *thematically*?"[185]

Travel writing, by definition a discourse on the other, on the phenomenal and infinitely secret other, would find its exemplarity in fiction, there where there is respect for the secret: "There is in literature, in the *exemplary* secret of literature, a chance of saying everything without touching upon the secret."[186] There is a chance in literature of saying everything without pretending to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, of testifying without producing knowledge, without reducing the other to forms and norms of cognition. And this chance that literature is is already remarked in every text as the possibility of its becoming literature. In this way, there is a chance in every travel text of its becoming a fiction or, by common standards, a lie and a perjury.

We will now have the chance to turn once more to the question of the generic definition of travel writing this time in view of readdressing the constitutive division between fact and fiction with regard to its testimonial condition and function. Travel writing is largely designated as an autobiographical discourse to the extent that it is occasioned by and based upon a private experience.[187] It is in this sense that it is qualified and authorised to function as a testimony, to have a claim on the reality that is called upon to give an account of. One testifies from the singular, unique and irreplaceable position of one's experience, which one is summoned up to render public. Furthermore, in order to testify, one must have a certain competence, one must conform to the norms of attestation. One must appear before and appeal to a law, to a system of reference and validation; one must enter into a relation with what demands that a story is told and, moreover, that it is told in compliance to a certain type of law, let us say, a textual and generic law. A travel text, as singular, unique and idiomatic as

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Introduction by Jenny Mezciens, London, Everyman's Library, 1992, p. 20.

[185] Derrida, Jacques, "Passions: "An Oblique Offering" " translated by Davis Wood in *On the Name*, edited by Thomas Dutoit, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1995, p. 25.

[186] Ibid., p. 29.

[187] This condition does not preclude the event of massive displacement. Undoubtedly, one has to be attentive to historical circumstance and to the particularities of each experience of travel and be careful not to collapse, for instance, the bourgeois traveller with the refugee and the immigrant. One cannot deny, however, the singular and private character of each experience as well as its phenomenological and biographical motif. In the next chapter we will have the chance of reflecting upon what "travelling" and "*travelling with*" might signify.

it must be, in order to be recognised as such it must also be an *example* of travel writing. But what is an example an example of? And if, as was argued so far, there is no generic essence or definition of travel writing, what is a travel text an example of?

It was suggested in the beginning of the chapter that our current sense of travel writing has emerged out of the multiple instantiations/examples and functions of texts concerned with the theme or the experience of travel. Even if one were able to subtract the properties that would bring forward the essence of this genre, one would hardly come across a text that would totally realise and fulfil all the possibilities of what travel writing should purportedly be. In other words, no such thing as *the* example of travel writing exists, while there are only examples of travel writing. As Derrida maintains, "the exemplarity of the example is clearly never the exemplarity of the example."[188] This is to say that, while travel texts as performative acts that bear an irreplaceable signature, are dated, and refer to particular places and events (whence their function of attestation), are *singular* and *unique*, as an example must be, their *exemplarity* essentially consists of their structural ability to overflow their particular reference and be infinitely repeated and iterated in other contexts. An example, as Derrida points out, is at once *singular* and *universalizable*.[189] It does not exhaust its exemplarity in itself but maintains it on the paradoxical condition that its irreplaceability is replaceable, repeatable at another instant, by another text and testimony. A travel narrative attests to the singularity of an event or experience of travel. However, a travel narrative is also a writing, by definition repeatable or else always already a repeatability. This is its condition of readability, what confers upon it its ideal character and what gives rise to the notion of "travel writing". This condition that at once enables and disrupts testimonial function does not solely pertain to writing in the conventional sense. It structures –"but with a fracture"- experience itself, that is to say, it divides the instant of the occurrence of the event in and of itself already inflicting it with the possibility of fiction. This is what we called the radical inter-textuality of travel and not simply the inter-textual constitution of travel writing.

The essential possibility of any (travel) text to be repeated and assume different functions and statuses in different contexts is already marked within it as its iterability. The actual or fictional status it may assume then does not belong to it as generic or stable property but is rather fixed each time by a categorical authority, i.e., a

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[188] Derrida, "Passions", pp. 17-18.
[189] Derrida, *Demeure*, p. 41.

literary institution, before which it is summoned up according to a movement of "framing" and "referentiality"[190]. In order for genres to exist there must be a certain principle or trait that grants them a certain identity and that circumscribes them as such. There must be a certain generic law that establishes and regulates generic boundaries. Yet, Derrida asks,

> "What if there were, lodged within the heart of the law itself, a law of impurity or a principle of contamination? And suppose the condition for the possibility of the law were the *a priori* of a counter-law, an axiom of impossibility that would confound its sense, order and reason?" [191]

Every text participates in one or more genres –there is no genreless text- and this necessarily means that there should be a distinctive and identifiable trait that would precisely allow for such and such text to participate in such and such genre. One must note that what is referred to here is the possibility of *participation* and not strictly of belonging. This is to say, that if a text can be placed under different generic headings then it must bear a trait that need not be a thematic or explicit element of the text, that need not essentially belong to a particular genre, but that would nonetheless allow for this "overflowing". This is the open structure and law of textuality, or else the *re-marking* trait that does not present itself in the text, that does not essentially belong to it or to any of the genres the text participates in as a specific and distinctive property, though it is not simply heterogeneous to them. In the same way that a definition must not belong to the defined object yet without being of a totally different order, "*genre designations cannot be simply part of the corpus*." The designation of the novel is not novelistic neither is that of poetry poetical and so on. That generic designations are not part of the texts they nominate signifies that no taxonomy can ever be closed, for texts have no stable identities. However, this is also what allows for taxonomies in the first place. The trait of participation is the condition that enables at once inclusion and exclusion, the gathering of a corpus and its overflowing. Derrida calls it the *genre-clause* signifying both the institutional act and the condition of forming a genre and at the same time a "closing that excludes itself from what it includes", from the class of texts it brings together since it does not essentially belong to it. This is the *law of*

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[190] Texts are assigned a certain *frame*, i.e., generic and contextual determinations, and a certain *reference* in any of their instantiations that also ascribe them a particular function and status. This takes effect according to what is called by Derrida the movement of *framing* and *referentiality*, i.e., a possibility already inscribed in the text as its trait of re-markability, which constitutes the general law of textuality.

[191] Derrida, Jacques, "The Law of Genre", translated by Avital Ronell in *Acts of Literature*, edited by Derek Attridge, London, Routledge, 1992, first published as "La loi du genre" in 1980, p. 225.

impurity, the *counter-law* within the heart of the law of genre that from the moment of its incipience signals the beginning of *degenerescence*.[192] So what is called *generic law* is nothing present in the texts it, nonetheless, brings together nor is it anything outside them but becomes thinkable on the paradoxical condition of the *counter-law* of the general and limitless field of textuality. *The law is a universality that is nothing out of singularity*. In effect, if a text is commanded by or appeals to a generic law, this is possible on the condition that it can always disobey it and be read otherwise. A text, literature in general, is on the condition that it can always be read as other than itself for it has no self-identity, no eternal essence. In this sense, "literature is not." It is not itself. Therefore, in its instituted sense literature is already a fiction.

Generic norms, even the most enduring ones, do not foreclose the immanent possibility of any text to be read eventually as literature:

> "The possibility is always there. This does not constitute a text *ipso facto* as 'literature', even though such a possibility, always left open and therefore eternally remarkable, situates perhaps in every text the possibility of its becoming literature."[193]

It must be clear that what was just said does not address simply a probability but the necessary condition for the constitution of "what we call art, poetry or literature." If it is possible, however, to eventually read any text as literature, who and what decides when this possibility takes effect? *Who* decides and according to *what* criteria whether a text is literary or not? [194]

A text in order to establish the law of its singularity must always appeal to "a more powerful system of laws" that would guarantee and legitimate it. This is the set of social conventions and its guardians, the author, publisher, critics, translators, lawyers, librarians, academics, archivists and so on.[195] So what would establish a text as literature would not be an essentially literary property –"there is no such thing as a literary essence"- but an extraneous yet not simply heterogeneous principle, which

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[192] Ibid., pp. 230-231.
[193] Ibid., p. 229.
[194] Derrida enumerates a set of axioms or "axiomatic trivialities" that conventionally enable and safeguard the singularity of texts. In this case he refers to Franz Kafka's "Before the Law": 1. This text must have its own identity and unity 2. It must have an author, a signatory 3. It must have a narrative form in which events are being related 4. It must have a title to name and guarantee its unity and identity. Derrida, Jacques, "Before the Law", translated by Avital Ronell and Christine Roulston in *Acts of Literature*, pp. 184-188. This system of framing, however, as Derrida points out, became established between the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries in Europe. In other cultures or in previous times the ownership of works would be guaranteed by different institutions and conventions. But texts would anyway appeal to a sort of *law* or authority. In other words, independently of the institutions they appealed to, they manifested the structure of *being-before-the-law*.

would enact a possibility already inherent and *re-markable* within the text, the possibility of its becoming literature. And again, on the basis of which criteria would a text be considered literary, if there are always "fictions, allegories, myths, symbols, or parables that are not specifically literary"? "Surely one could not speak of 'literariness' as a *belonging* to literature," understood as a pure and closed domain.[196] *Literariness* is not simply a quality proper to literature in the conventional sense. It is the general condition of the field of *textuality* and here we have to be alert to the difference between "the law that literature can be" that infinitely exceeds "the law to which literature submits."[197] In other words, literature as *instituted fiction* is circumscribed according to established criteria that determine each time whether a singular performance pertains to it or not. However, the *possibility of literature* is something that already haunts every text as its condition of iteration without assured and foreclosed destination. Each textual performance is summoned up by a generic law which assigns it a *frame* or boundary and a *reference*. But this law never appears as such in the text –it "manifests" itself in *withdrawal*- although the latter constitutes itself according to a structure of *being-for-the-law* and *before-the-law*. Texts bear a structure of *referentiality* allowing them to overflow, to be *in excess of* and thus disrupt in advance *particular* reference.[198] This is what grants their *readability* and *unreadability* at once in the sense that no text can assemble its semantic and referential potential in any of its actualisations or readings and that this incapacity or "defect" is precisely what allows it to signify in an infinite number of contexts and be read otherwise.

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[195] Ibid., p. 214.
[196] Ibid., p. 215.
[197] Ibid., p. 216.
[198] Ibid., p. 191. Derrida considers two literary texts that refer to their own mode and law of production: Maurice Blanchot's "The Madness of the Day" and Franz Kafka's "Before the Law". It was mentioned before that the distinctive trait of the genre, in the Derridean sense, need not be thematically or explicitly exposed. However, here we have two texts that take issue with their own law of coming to being and its essential unreadability and unaccountability. In the "Madness of the Day" the representatives of the law demand that a story is told. This is the only way for them to exercise their authority, to be recognised for what they stand for. However, a story is precisely what is denied in this text and in the "*récit*" included in it. What is given to them is an impossible narrative about the impossibility of narrative. In this way the "narrative" that forms part of the text and brings to light the law of impurity of the genre of "story" becomes at the same time more general and exemplary than "The Madness of the Day", an "internal pocket" larger than the whole. This impossible encounter or relation with the law (for the law is not seen), which is engendered by the author –for the law is nothing outside the text- forbids him to ever tell a story again. There is no place from which to tell a story, no definite origin, no singular or proper position but only on the condition of their overflowing, that is to say, on the condition of their dissemination and divisibility. "A *récit*? No, no *récit*, never again." This *récit* as an example of counter-law becomes a "counter-example" for the *récit* as a whole.

Let us now turn back to the testimonial condition of travel writing. We said that travel writing is structured around a truth claim to an actual experience of travel. We also argued that travel texts, like any text, bear within themselves a trait that already remarks the possibility of their becoming fiction or else, in terms of their testimonial function, a perjury. It is not implied here that travel writing does not testify. Travel texts (like all texts in a certain sense) by definition have an autobiographical function and thus also emerge from and point to a historical situation. However, since their truth value is not an inherent property, it must necessarily appeal, like literature, to a system of conventions and beliefs. Testimony and literature –and this is their common condition- do not have an essence of their own but *only functions*. And the function they each time assume depends "on a precarious juridical status."[199] In strictly juridical contexts, for instance, a testimony is admissible when it is submitted by a sane and credible witness in person, who pledges him/herself to offer a truthful and adequate account of events that occurred in his/her presence. In Austin's terms, a testimony should be performative of the type of oath or promise to tell the truth, a commitment and engagement to be truthful, uttered in the first person and met by all the necessary conditions and conventions that constitute a "serious speech act." However, what remains unrecognised and inadmissible even and especially in the "happiest" instances of such acts is, as Derrida elaborates, that "there is no testimony that does not structurally imply in itself the possibility of fiction, dissimulation, lie, and perjury –that is to say, the possibility of literature".[200] Even if this possibility is never realised, it is always there.

A testimony is a narrative that relates real events in view of giving a full account of the "truth," of "what really" happened. A reliable testimony is necessarily offered *at a present* and must testify to *a present*, that is, to the present of an experience that confers upon it unity and gathers it in itself. Thus, "for testimony there *must* be the instant."[201] The temporal condition of testimony is a present, indivisible moment to which, let us say, the traveller comes to attest. The narrative form of testimony, however, also involves temporal sequences, for instance, sentences, which moreover in order to have a meaning must be repeatable and reproducible. This repeatability introduces difference and divisibility to the very structure of testimony. It "carries the

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[199] Derrida, "Passions", p. 28.
[200] Derrida, *Demeure*, p. 29.
[201] Ibid., p. 33.

instant outside of itself."[202] Regardless of whether a testimony is false or true, its condition of possibility remains the same. The linguistic structure that engenders and infinitely divides testimony leaves open "for better and for worse" the possibility of literature. It interrupts the instant revealing fiction's and testimony's common source. This interruption is the "proper" place of literature and that which the testimony "properly" attests to. For testimony, according to Derrida, essentially attests to its impossibility of ever being adequate to itself; it primarily attests to a fact of language.

Travel writers often evoke a writing on the spot in order to make a claim to immediacy, authenticity and spontaneous expression, a validating factor that is also crystallised into a generic determination. Of course, if travel writing, mostly from the nineteenth century onwards, is a kind of impressionistic writing, this somehow paradoxically qualifies it as a discourse that is both based on the experience of a present –a unifying principle- and on *fragmentation*,[203] that can take the form of an episodic or loosely structured account. This style of writing Wendelin Guentner calls the "rhetoric of spontaneity" precisely in view of underlining that the impression of immediacy and thus authenticity and veracity is often the effect of a thought through form, of a conscious choice on the author's part and of generic convention.[204] Discontinuity hence does not necessarily appear adverse to adequacy, as a matter of fact, it can prove to have quite the contrary effect. However, on the level of experience and of truthful attestation *instantaneity* is the only thinkable and acceptable form. What we are here interested in, however, is a *discontinuity within the experience of travel itself*, which exceeds stylistics and inflicts its core with fictionality. This has to do with the division of the instant and hence with a sort of interval or else *spacing* that introduces difference within the unity of the present.

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[202] Ibid.

[203] See Dennis Porter's *Haunted Journeys, Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*, and Wendelin Guentner's *Esquisses Littéraires: Rhétorique du Spontané et Récit de Voyage au XIXe Siècle*, Saint-Genouph, Librairie Nizet, 1997.

[204] Wendelin Guentner explores the aesthetic of the fragment and what he calls "esthétique de l'esquisse" with regard to French travel literature in the nineteenth century. He considers travel writing an exemplary genre for the examination of the romantic aesthetic in literature, an aesthetic that also pertained to the arts in general and painting in particular, that came to challenge classical poetics and its taste for decorum and for the idea of the "finished" work. The genre of travel writing, according to Guentner, offered to nineteenth century authors a discursive space in which they could test out the technique of spontaneous writing. He argues that travel writing, more particularly than other genres, is characterised by a tension that is found in literary texts in general, that between a drive towards the fragmentary and a drive towards totality. He wants to show that travel writing contributed significantly to the fostering of the modern conception of art.

What is referred to here is not an anachrony or a temporal distance between the act of writing and experience, which is deemed as an invalidating factor, but rather to an *anachrony within experience itself*, an "anachronistic simultaneity" that prevents the present of experience from gathering in itself, from coinciding with itself. Beyond the condition of iterability of writing *stricto sensu*, there is, at a more fundamental level, what could be called the iterability and divisibility of the event, the structure of eventuality *qua writing* in a generalised sense. And it is in this *disjointed or interrupted present* where the event, testimony, literature, language have their common origin. In this sense, *an event never fully occurs*, never entirely takes place, for what makes it possible are the signifying structures (an event must have a meaning) which already carry it along a graphematic drift that divides in and of itself everything involved with experience: the intending subject, the intended object, the context, the event. The notion of iterability enables us to think the singularity and the concept of the event, particularity and generality, chance and necessity together by virtue of its identificatory and altering effects.

An event in the course of travel must, of course, be unique, irreplaceable and singular. No one can experience what someone else experiences in someone else's place. Even if there is more than one witnesses to the same event, each witness presents a singular point of view, s/he must speak from a unique place, from a place only s/he is entitled to attest. But this is not enough. In order to have a claim to truth, a witness has also to assert that the testimony would remain the same, that it would be repeated inalterably, if anyone else happened to be and speak *in his/her place*. A witness must say: "I was there. This is what I saw and heard. I am telling the truth and if you were in my place you would say exactly the same thing." The exemplarity of the "instant" of testimony that makes it an "instance" lies in the fact that "it is singular, like any exemplarity, singular *and* universal, singular *and* universalisable. The singular must be universalisable; this is the testimonial condition"; it must be replaceable and irreplaceable at the same time, a replaceable irreplaceability.[205] A testimony must be thus "infinitely secret" and idiomatic, for its essence "cannot necessarily be reduced to narration, that is, to descriptive, informatively relations, to knowledge or to narrative"[206] without a nonaccountable remainder and also "infinitely public", that is, repeatable, iterable and readable for and by a limitless number of subjects. From his/her singular position thus a witness/traveller "invents" the norms of his/her attestation and

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[205] Derrida, *Demeure*, p. 41.

at the same time s/he has to comply with specific sets of conventions and juridico-political institutions.

The traveller testifies to his/her being exposed to an unaccountable otherness and to the extent that s/he is able to do so, since it is no longer a matter of knowledge or imparting information, s/he essentially testifies to the miraculous:

> "Any testimony testifies in essence to the miraculous and the extraordinary from the moment it must, by definition appeal to an act of faith beyond any proof. When one testifies, even on the subject of the most ordinary and the most "normal" event, one asks the other to believe one at one's word as if it were a matter of miracle. Where it shares its condition with literary fiction, testimoniality belongs *a priori* to the order of the miraculous."[207]

This is also the condition shared by the so-called "real", fictional, and pseudo-travel writing. Belief –and also fear- is what has allowed for the popularity of travellers' tall tales and for the attraction to the wondrous, marvellous and monstrous that we are now in position to rationalise and smile about but which in truth testify to an essential condition of travel writing.

We are now going to touch upon a story about the marvellous, a *récit de voyage* to an impossible place and also upon an impossible *récit de voyage* to the same place.

In 1936 André Gide paid a visit to the USSR about which he wrote an account with the title *Retour de l'U.R.S.S* (*Back from the USSR*)[208] followed by *Retouches Á mon "Retour de l'U.R.S.S."* (*Afterthoughts, A Sequel to Back from the USSR*).[209] In 1990 with the occasion of his travel to Moscow Jacques Derrida wrote a text entitled *Back from Moscow, in the USSR.*[210] Gide's text opens up with a commitment and a promise: the promise of a "promised land", of a utopia. Derrida's text begins with an impossible promise: the promise of a *récit* about Gide's promised land.

This is how Gide embarks on his journey to and on his récit about USSR:

> "Qui dira ce que l'U.R.S.S. a été pour nous? Plus qu'une patrie d'élection: un example, un guide. Ce que nous rêvions, que nous osions à peine espérer mais à quoi tendaient nos

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[206] Ibid., p. 38.
[207] Ibid., p. 75.
[208] Gide, André, *Retour de l'U.R.S.S.*, in *Souvenirs et Voyages*, edition présentée, établie et annotée par Pierre Masson, avec la collaboration de Daniel Durosay et Martine Sagaert, Éditions Gallimard, 2001, first published by Éditions Gallimard, 1936.
[209] Gide, André, *Retouches Á mon " Retour de l'U.R.S.S."*, in *Souvenirs et Voyages*, first published in1937.
[210] Derrida, Jacques, *Moscou aller-retour, Suivi d'un entretien avec N. Avtonomova, V. Podoroga, M. Ryklin*, Saint-Etienne, éditions de l'aube, 1995.

volontés, nos forces, avait eu lieu là-bas. Il était donc une terre où l'utopie était en passe de devenir réalité."[211]

This is a utopia, however, in "process of becoming reality", "in labour" and "in the making"; it is a promise that could always not be fulfilled but, without which neither the journey to nor the return from the *USSR* would have been possible. The promise that the USSR came to embody for Gide and for many left wing intellectuals of his time was "the parturition of the future" of humanity.[212] At the time Derrida writes, when *perestroïka* was in full swing and the USSR was already collapsing, the possibility of this sort of travel texts, which he brings together under a heading, which takes on Gide's "exemplary" title, "Retours de l'URSS", is exhausted. This "type of works" that also include texts such as, for instance, Walter Benjamin's *Moscow Diary* and the journal of Etiemble's visit to USSR, which Derrida also discusses, pertains to a closed historical sequence that begun in 1917 and that had recently ended. This corpus primarily consists of political testimonies to this "unique" historical sequence and forms part of what is called *récit de voyage*, that is, a type of discourse that exemplarily relates literary form to history.[213] This is why it offers itself as fertile ground for the exploration of the relation between singularity and generality, autobiography and fiction, literature and referentiality, and of exemplarity in general. Nonetheless, Derrida wants to avoid the establishment of direct analogy between what he calls "returns from the USSR" and the texts that one would be inclined to draw comparisons with, like pilgrimages, utopias and so on. His aim is to isolate the singular traits of this corpus also in view of taking the measure of a fact that henceforth impedes, that has destroyed in its root the possibility of such narratives. Derrida asks: Why would one write a *récit de voyage* on the USSR at that particular time he himself writes, if not to take into account and give an account of the cataclysmic events that shook the whole world, to reflect on the annulled possibility of "returns from the USSR", if not to say something new about the subject in a narrative that would be otherwise confined to a private journal of which the singular instance would bear no essential relation to the world's

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[211]Gide, *Retour de l'U.R.S.S.*, p. 751.

[212] "L'U.R.S.S. est 'en construction', il importe de se le redire sans cesse. Et de là l'exceptionnel intérêt d'un séjour sur cette immense terre en gésine: il semble qu'on y assiste à la parturition du futur." Ibid., p. 750.

[213] "Il me semble bien qu'il n'y ait pas d'autre exemple, dans l'histoire de la culture humaine, de type d'oeuvres qui, comme ces *Retours de l'URSS* entre octobre 1917 et avant-hier, se lient à une séquence unique et finie, irreversible et non répétable d'une histoire politique; et se lient à cette sequence dans cela même qui soude le fond à la forme, la sémantique ou la thématique à la structure du récit de voyage ou du témoignage autobiographique." Derrida, *Moscou aller-retour*, p. 18.

political history?[214] This question can be raised to a central problematic with regard to travel writing: in terms and in the name of what sort of travel, expedition, or pilgrimage, of what kind of journey and return (*tour et retour*) is a traveller (*touriste*) prepared to avow?[215] To what sort of goals, concerns and tasks is a traveller committed and what sort of story does s/he want to relate and to whom?[216] The traveller is called upon to respond from his/her unique position to a complexity of issues that bear on historical and political circumstance, private situation, the literary institutions and generic law s/he is summoned up before. The question must remain pressing and open: what would constitute *responsible* writing? At least, a historically responsible writing, since we are dealing with texts that explicitly have a claim to representation?

Historical reference and private experience, fiction and testimony, singularity and universality, promise and utopia, expectation and disillusionment are some of the general themes and functions that traverse and operate in these texts imposing the infinite task of their contextualisation and formalisation.[217] The corpus of "returns from the USSR," more explicitly than other travel texts, utopias and pilgrimages, is characterised by a disruption of the "natural" order of travel as the displacement from a place of origin to a place of destination. In Gide's case, displacement signifies from the start a return home, to a "*patrie d'élection*". Moreover, this chosen home is a singular and exemplary place, unique in its becoming universal. The USSR incarnates the promise of the future, both history and utopia in the making and a universal quest and cause. His is thus a journey to a culture in transition, the experience of an experiment, a testimony to a process with unforeseeable future. What differentiates such texts from "traditional" pilgrimages and utopias is a sort of secular reverence pointing to a

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[214] Ibid., p. 20.
[215] Ibid., p. 57.
[216] Gide expresses uneasiness in view of his return to Paris. He knows that a travel account is expected of him and, moreover, an account that would express concrete views and respond to the expectations or reservations of people at home with regard to the USSR. But this sort of reductions and generalisations make him extremely uncomfortable for they would do disservice both to the USSR and to the cause it stands for; they would be the calculated result of an irresponsible position: "Et déjà commençait à m'étreindre une angoisse encore inconnue: de retour à Paris que saurais-je dire? Comment répondre aux questions que je pressentais? L'on attendait de moi certainement des jugements tout d'une pièce. Comment expliquer que, tour à tour, en U.R.S.S., j'avais eu (moralement) si chaud, et si froid? En déclarant à nouveau mon amour allais-je devoir cacher mes reserves et mentir en approuvant tout? Non: je sens trop qu'en agissant ainsi je desservirais à la fois l'U.R.S.S. même et la cause qu'elle représente à nos yeux. Mais ce serais une très grave erreur d'attacher l'une à l'autre trop étroitement de sorte que la cause puisse être tenue pour responsible de ce qu'en U.R.S.S. nous déplorons." Gide, *Retour de l'U.R.S.S.*, p. 785.
[217] Derrida, *Moscou aller-retour*, p. 96.

provisional situation pregnant with future and uncertainty and not to events that occurred *in illo tempore*.

The main body of Gide's text is preceded by a Greek myth that recounts Demeter's godly project and experiment to raise a child she immensely loves to a superhuman and divine status by secretly putting it through a painful ordeal. The project is called off by the mortal intervention of his mother, who, terrified by its apparent cruelty, "in order to save the child, loses the God". The exergue opens up a mythical space for the inscription of everything that follows. It thus becomes a sort of receptacle for a traveller's tale, for a visionary's quest, for the ideal of a future society. At the same time it brings forward the possibility of the end of the myth and the beginning of history that would also, nevertheless, signify the end or *telos* of history through the parturition of an absolute place or utopia that would henceforth be the prototype of all places, the embodiment of an international cause, a home that would put an end to all travels:

> "L'espace nouveau dans lequel s'avance le *Retour de l'URSS* est un champ mythique (anhistorique, *in illo tempore*) et eschatologique (mosaïque ou messianique) dans la mesure même où il reste à venir, comme la terre promise et le future d'une patrie d'élection. Mythe, religion, pèlerinage, espérance, mais aussi fin du mythe et origine (promise, voire en cours) de l'histoire même. Ce qui répond, direz-vous, à la structure même du messianisme (et certains texts de Benjamin, comme *Zur Kritic der Gewalt*, pourraient correspondre au même schéma : destruction du mythe (grec) pour accoucher de l'histoire à travers une revolution messianico-marxiste). Ce qui –au départ, je dis bien au départ –inspire à Gide 'amour' et 'admiration pour l'URSS', c'est une "expérience sans précédents" et par là-même la singularité d'un lieu déterminé, assigné par l'avenir d'une promesse. Autrement dit, comme tous ceux qui font alors cet aller-retour, Gide ne quitte pas son pays, il ne part pas *de chez lui* pour l'URSS comme on irait à l'étranger, dans un pays lointain ou excentrique, pour ensuite revenir *chez soi* et donner des nouvelles de 'là-bas'. Non, Gide va *chez lui*, son voyage, l'aller de son voyage est déjà un retour (*back home*) vers ce qui devrait être un 'chez soi' ou mieux vers un lieu, l'URSS, qui est 'plus qu'une élection: un exemple, un guide' (p. 18/15). Le 'là-bas' est l'avenir de l' 'ici' absolu vers lequel se tend se voyage."[218]

The traveller is driven by hope to a place to come, a utopia in the making, through a movement that both destroys and promises *Oikos*. However, *Oikos*, the desired place or *patrie d'élection*, is nothing present in itself but rather a process, the event of a promise. *Oikos* is announced in a mythical space as an absolute nonplace, to which the traveller never stops returning and never succeeds in arriving at. In moving towards he moves backwards and through this drifting between nonplaces (France, the home that is no longer and USSR, the home that is not yet) the sense of *Oikos* reemerges and is constantly restructured. Although Gide is disillusioned by the course

of the revolution in the USSR, he still dwells upon the promise of the place to come. This movement in-between places, in truth all that abides, that cuts across the "returns from the USSR," signals both the impossibility and the necessity of return.[219] Gide admits having read too many travel books before going to the USSR, which had perhaps raised too much expectation in him.[220] So returning from afar (the USSR) is nothing in comparison to the place of disillusionment (utopia/nonplace) he had to return from or, what amounts to the same, stop returning to. [221] A drama is played out throughout the whole movement, theme and structure of the text. Through the singularity (and exemplarity) of this "impossible experience" –impossible in the sense that it never takes place in a here and now, for the place is in transition and time (and history) has yet to begin- perhaps we can have a glimpse of the conditions of possibility and, to be sure, of impossibility of travel writing in general with regard to its testimonial function.

We have argued before that travel writing is a discourse that is *par excellence* organised around a *phenomenological motif*. This is to say that the experience of travel is based upon "the proximity of a present", upon the intuition of a present thing and situation. To have a claim to re-presentation the traveller presupposes that what s/he comes across phenomenalises itself in its essence and, moreover, that this phenomenality is accessible to him/her, even when the traveller does not speak the language of the visited culture, as was the case with Gide and Benjamin.[222] Walter Benjamin after his return from Moscow wrote a letter to Martin Buber with regard to the essay he was in process of writing. This is how he describes the way he is coming

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[218] Ibid., pp. 63-64.

[219] "Mais, autant que le plus lumineux, ce que je pouvais voir ici de plus sombre, tout m'attachait, et douloureusement parfois, à cette terre, à ces peoples unis, à ce climat nouveau qui favorisait l'avenir et où l'inespéré pouvait éclore…C'est tout cela que je devais quitter." Gide, *Retour de l'U.R.S.S.*, p. 785.

[220] "J'avais, depuis trois ans trop macéré dans les écrits marxistes, pour me trouver, en U.R.S.S. très dépaysé. J'avais, d'autre part, trop lu de récits de voyages, de descriptions enthousiastes, d'apologies. Mon grand tort était de trop croire aux louanges." Gide, *Retouches A mon " Retour de l'U.R.S.S. "*, p. 831.

[221] Particularly in French, as Derrida explains, "retour" can be charged with connotations deriving from its uses in the phrases: "ne pas en revenir," which means "amazed", astonished, and "en revenir," which signifies "losing one's faith", disillusionment, "enduring the cruelty of a deception": "Et le moment où l'on 'en revient' est ici d'autant plus grave qu'on 'revient de loin', comme dit une troisisième expression française, et qu'on revient d'un moment et d'un lieu où l'on n'en finissait pas de 'ne pas en revenir'. Au fond, c'est peut-être la trajectoire de la plupart de ces 'retours de Moscou en URSS' : on y va prêt à expliquer, au retour, aux amis et sympathisants, pourquoi et comment on n'en est pas revenu tant c'est admirable, puis on en revient et il faut 'retoucher' et dire à quel point il a bien fallu en revenir en revenant de loin." Derrida, M*oscou aller-retour*, pp. 44-45.

[222] Derrida, *Moscou aller-retour*, p. 54.

about his subject, "Moscow". The passage is quoted from Gershom Scholen's preface to the *Moscow Diary*:

> "My presentation will be devoid of all theory. In this fashion I hope to succeed in allowing *the creatural to speak for itself* inasmuch as I have succeeded in seizing and rendering *this very new and disorienting language* that echoes loudly through the resounding mask of an environment that has been totally transformed. I want to write a description of Moscow at the present moment in which *'all factuality is already theory'* and which would thereby refrain from any deductive abstraction, from any prognostication, and even within certain limits from any judgement –all of which, I am absolutely convinced, cannot be formulated in this case on the basis of spiritual 'data' but only on the basis of economic facts of which few people even in Russia, have a sufficiently broad grasp. Moscow as it appears at the present reveals a *full range of possibilities* in schematic form: above all, the possibility that the Revolution might fail or succeed. In either case, something unforeseeable will result and its picture will be far different from any programmatic sketch one might draw of the future. The outlines of this are at present brutally and distinctly visible among the people and their environment."[223] (my emphasis)

Bearing witness to a "totally transformed environment", echoing a "very new and disorienting language" of a politico-economic-social revolution imbuing and restructuring all things, would amount to no more than the description of the present moment. The traveller withdraws to let "the creatural speak for itself." All he needs to do is to attentively observe. There is no need for judgement and interpretation since "all factuality is already theory". Derrida calls this attitude of the *voyageur-voyeur* "phenomenologico-marxist". Both motifs lay claim to the lucid intuition of presence, to seeing and foreseeing the thing itself, that is, a socio-economic fact, beyond speculation, interpretation, ideology, etc., that this exceptional and unique present in Moscow makes possible.[224] However, this present moment consists of "a range of possibilities" that one should neither prognosticate nor predetermine by submitting them to a teleological program. Then what is given to intuition in the form of the present is a promise, an anticipation that breaches and inflicts experience, and thus the discourse that is based upon it, with indeterminateness within its very heart.[225]

It is not, however, simply the particularity of an "exemplary" culture allegedly in the process of realising the future of humanity that makes of the present a transient and breached moment. "Returns from the USSR" could also give the measure for the impossibility of all *récits de voyage* to render the experience of the other measurable and accountable. The encounter with otherness (another culture, language, or another person), that to which or to whom one opens oneself up, receives, visits and intends to, can never happen in a transparent and self-gathering present. The encounter with

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[223] Benjamin, Walter, *Moscow Diary*, edited by Gary Smith, translated by Richard Sieburth, preface by Gershom Scholem, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1986, pp. 6-7.
[224] Derrida, *Moscou aller-retour*, pp. 78-79.
[225] Ibid., p. 82.

otherness, if such a thing is possible, that defines the experience of travel is not of an apocalyptic type. The other, if it is to remain or respected as other, that is, if assimilation, appropriation and reduction to sameness are to be resisted, must also remain infinitely secret. The secret of the other, however, is not something well guarded and hidden waiting to be discovered. Secrecy in the experience of travel does not point to a concealed and more authentic meaning, something like the spirit or the heart of the place that the perceptive traveller could grasp or penetrate. The secret here is not a determinable hidden content but what evades consciousness as such, what resists reduction and totalisation or else, the disruptive remainder that disallows full thematisation and production of knowledge and certainty about the other. If the other is to be respected, it/s/he must remain elusive. However, this does not mean that the question *of* the other, as we shall see in the next chapter, is to be set aside, that it calls for no response and thus discharges one of all responsibility. Everything happens and is awaited and promised through this impossible encounter or else through the infinite encounter with the other. Since the phenomenological motif of travel writing and its essentially aporetic character precisely precludes the availability of and adequacy to a fully present moment, since at the moment one turns one's gaze upon the other one also blinds oneself to it, especially if one claims the opposite, travel writing is essentially turned towards the future of a place to come, of a promised land, of another arrival. However, not in a *messianic* sense: the promise *of* the other must not receive a definite or teleological content. It is an open structure, the space of a promise which must fail in order to succeed, for ever promising without delivering. An infinite task of travel, an enduring encounter (and sometimes conflict, to be sure) without resolution.

Writing on these "returns" and on the question of travel Derrida "succeeds in failing" to produce an account of his trip to Moscow. His text both thematically and structurally drifts along the movement and rhythm of the promise of an impossible *récit*. At various instances in the text this (im)possibility is re-marked: "Ce que je voudrais vous propose sous ce faux-titre, sera-ce une sorte de récit?" (15), "J'hesite encore à proposer un récit de voyage…" (16), "Je me demande si j'ai quelque chose à dire qui mérite d'être lu ou entendu" (22), "peut-être la forme ne m'en est-elle pas encore accessible" (22), "si j'arrivais à raconter mon proper voyage…"(49), "je pourrais, si j`y était prêt, enchaîner ici avec mon proper 'récit de voyage' et dire à mon tour […] mais je ne suis pas prêt à commencer un tel récit, ni même à décider si et comment je le ferait" (61), "c'est ma perplexité à ce sujet qui me paralyse au moment de parler de mon voyage à Moscou" (72). "j'hesiterais toujours à écrire de mon voyage

à Moscou" (93), etc. In the preamble to this text Derrida points to at least three reasons why he would hesitate to produce an account of his journey to Moscow. The first two concern the "risks" involved with every "reasoned" travel account (*tout récit de voyage raisonné*): 1) selectivity 2) rationalisation. The first necessarily involves a process of filtering and screening what is considered most important and worthwhile and thus signals the beginning of censure. The second one in the service of intelligibility imposes *après coup* an order even where there is none, often resulting in an overinterpretation.[226] A third reason for hesitating is related to the particularity of this type of texts that form the corpus of the *Retours de l'URSS,* which his account would necessarily follow up and of which the possibility had been recently exhausted. If he were to write a travel account about Moscow and, moreover, a historically responsible account in the wake of a new era, he would be facing another immense challenge: Gide, Etiemble and Benjamin were travelling to an exemplary place, to which the intellectuals of the time had set their eyes on filled with expectations for the future of humanity, for which USSR appeared to offer at the time a new opportunity. At the time of Perestroika, however, the situation is reversed and at least in the dominant Western discourse, shared by many travel writers, it is a matter of how and to what extent is the process of democratisation successful in the former Soviet Union and in the East in general, assuming that Western democracy is something already realised and self-proven.[227] This discourse, as well as its aversive one, Derrida wants "at all costs" to avoid. Yet, what is one to do? Should one be paralysed in the face of such difficulties? Not at all. A travel account may be what is denied to us here but what is given is more than an account, for it raises the question of possibility and impossibility of such accounts. It seeks to reinscribe travel writing with regard to both reading and writing onto the space of a promise made in the name of *the-other-to-come*, of future readings and writings and of the necessary failure to account for, allocate and speak of/for the other from predetermined, authorised positions. This, of course, cannot amount to a prescription or a program of what a responsible writing should be. These issues must be raised again and again always in regard to the singularity of each text, its history and formal structure but also to the conditions that leave it open and infinitely re-markable. Derrida's text ends with an open promise and anticipation: "si j'écrivais un jour…", a promise, however, that would only succeed in failing, as it does. A *récit*? A *récit de voyage*? No, no *récit*. Never again.

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[226] Ibid., pp. 15-16.
[227] Ibid., pp. 71-72.

Part III

Chapter IV

Colonialism, Hospitality, Ethics and Travel

A stage has now been reached in the deliberation of our focal themes, namely, travel, writing and metaphor, that allows us to consider some of their crucial implications with regard to the discourses of/on colonialism, ethics and hospitality and their relevance to recent and current historical configurations. The discussion was centred on the polar couple of *Oikos* and travel, the systematic and semantic structures that make it possible and constitute the historical *a priori* for the emergence of senses of home and away. These semantic structures move along a drive to *appropriation* or totalisation, which enables authoritative and colonising notions of the house, and a drive to *ex-appropriation*, which *a priori* and from within disrupts such reductions or metaphorisations. This is to say that totalised notions of the house or *Oikos*, of which, as will be argued, a high point and severe historical manifestation has been *colonialism*, can be challenged by the deconstructive critique of their conceptual premises that brings out internal antinomies and discrepancies. It will be argued that the self-subversive mode of emergence of senses of *Oikos* and travel, which forbids closure and already interrupts the notions of origin and *telos*, which exceeds while making possible the restricted economy or *law-of-the-house*, also makes possible and thinkable a radical sense of *hospitality*, that is, of an *unconditional* opening and welcoming towards the other. The question *of* the other, which is essentially an ethical one, can thus be posed *de nouveau*. It will be maintained that this is the only chance for *an ethics of travel*.

The first two chapters attempted to investigate the signifying structures of the notions of "metaphor" and "travel". In the third chapter this discussion was extended to consider the general conditions of the travel narrative connected to their historical manifestations and realizations. Systematic and historical considerations are not of a totally different order. To explore signifying structures is neither to reduce or essentialise nor to foreground a structural centre that could account for any transformation and historical substantiation. Systematic and historical considerations are neither adverse nor mutually exclusive approaches and do not exhibit a relation of derivation or causality either way.

To explore the historical conditions and delimitations of travel is to look into historical structures or what can be called its historical *a priori*. This is to say that, while acknowledging the contextual determinations and the particularities of instances of travel

and travel writing, we must simultaneously pay attention to the structures that make them possible and allow these notions and practices to have both a *meaning* and a *history*. There is no attempt here to delimit two separate or synthesisable processes, but rather to reflect upon the movement of signification that is nothing outside history and outside which, moreover, history would not appear at all. Sameness (sense) and difference (history) arise from a nonoriginary movement or *différance,* that is, a difference that is structurally "older" than the polar couple of identity and difference. The reference here is to general conditions of signification, to the general condition of "historicity" as the essential possibility of sense to be endlessly repeated in infinite number of contexts and thus engender more meaning and more reference. This general condition or structural law is neither present nor presentable and becomes thinkable only through its instantiations; it gives a chance to think of a *generality* which is nothing outside *singularity* and, inversely, of a singularity that is unthinkable outside generality.

Rather than positing an ideal or transcendental sense of travel before, beyond and at the origin of all travels, we are referring to a *quasi-ahistorical* condition that is, however, neither a *primum signatum* nor a regulatory idea, an Idea in the Kantian sense (infinitely removed, always inadequate to itself and unrealisable as such), but arises instead from its empirical inscriptions, in which it is never gathered or present as such. Still, we do have a general sense of travel, however vague, even if or precisely because each person may also have a particular sense of travel. Even in highly determined situations, one presupposes a generalising sense of travel. Far from suggesting here a principle of relativity, we are referring to the movement of idealization, to the emergence of *unconditionality* (transcendental meaning) out of *conditionality* (historical and empirical designation). As Derrida sustains, unconditionality and conditionality are heterogeneous, irreducible to one another but also indissociable.[1]

Travel, along with all its related themes, has dramatically changed in the course of the twentieth century, which has witnessed the phenomenon of "massive" displacements on an unprecedented scale and the deployment of high technology in transportation and telecommunication. Nowadays, one is able to travel and be constantly in contact with home, something which considerably alters one's experience of travel. Insofar as travel is essentially the opening of the house towards what lies beyond it, one can only begin to imagine the infinite possibilities and implications that are realised and brought about, for

instance, by the internet and the accelerated deployment of electronic means in communication in general for the formation of the spaces of both *Oikos* and travel. Many would argue, of course, that sitting in front of a PC is a sedentary practice that only enables a *virtual* encounter with the other. This makes recourse to the primarily *phenomenological motif* of travel, which presupposes the intuition of something or someone *available in person* in a given present to the traveller's gaze. However, as we saw, the critique of the notion of the phenomenological present and its reinscription as *trace* manifest that the experience of travel already bears an element of *virtuality* and *indeterminacy*.

Obviously, telecommunication and travelling are two separate things although they mutually condition one another. They both employ technology with the purpose of overcoming distance and of making the encounter with the other possible. Moreover, they are implicated in a more essential way. The electronic reproducibility of the voice, the image, and writing rests upon a structural possibility of meaning to be repeated, iterated, hence, reproduced essentially by detaching itself from its initial context of emergence or inscription. Now, travel writing – the form of letters or postcards is the most evident example- already bears the possibility of communicating at/from distance. It necessarily brings news from afar. Iterability and reproducibility then are common conditions for technology and travel. The question of technology becomes all the more pertinent today for obvious reasons entailing a restructuring of the space of home and travel. If the space of home is also constituted by the phone line, the fax, the email and the internet then it has no absolute control of its interior, which is intercepted by its exterior. Interior and exterior are confounded. But this also resonates and calls upon the deconstructable relation of what was posited as *Oikos* (interiority, familiality, familiarity) and travel (exteriority, foreignness). This problematic grafts itself *de nouveau* in the age of high technology. One would have to go back to the aporetic condition of *Oikos* and travel, to what allows for the space of home to be constructed and thus deconstructed, in order to draw implications for what is happening today. This is to say that in order to think what we consider "matters of urgency," we must do so also with regard to the traditional notion of the house and its aporetic condition.

For Derrida the ancient question of the foreigner (which is indissociable from that of travel) as it is formulated in the *Apology of Socrates* or in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* both lingers on and is restructured by techno-political-scientific mutation:

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[1] Derrida, Jacques, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, translated by Mark Dooley and Michael

"Today, and on that basis, let us broach the meaning of *étranger*, this time from the 'Greek world' (to presuppose provisionally its unity or self-identity), but always doing our best, since it isn't an easy thing, to multiply the two-way journeys, a to-and-fro between matters of urgency that assail us at this end-of-millennium, and the tradition from which we receive the concepts, the vocabulary, the axioms that are elementary and presumed natural or untouchable. It is often techno-political-scientific mutation that obliges us to deconstruct; really, such mutation itself deconstructs what are claimed as these naturally obvious things or these untouchable axioms."[2]

It has to be emphasised that in insisting on generality, that is, on the signifying conditions of travel and travel writing, we are not proposing a reductive explication. Far from it, we are hoping to raise an awareness of and promote the critical necessity of the notions and conceptual presuppositions that are always involved with any attempt to analyse and historically locate experiences of travel and intercultural contact. Every such experience is singular, even when we are dealing with phenomena of "massive" displacement, and must be always situated and examined within its particular context. If, however, one believes one knows what "home" and "travel" mean without pausing to think these notions through, then one would take for granted kernel and established senses, the contextualisation of which would not amount to more than semantic derivations and modifications. Even in critiques that put forward hybridity, difference, discontinuity as the constitutive forces of culture and intercultural relations and challenge monistic and hierarchical conceptualisations, there is always the danger of compromising critical rigour due to the failure of reconsidering not solely historical circumstance but also conditions of signification in general. For instance, to merely challenge Edward Said's formulations in *Orientalism* as ahistorical, homogenising and highly hierarchical, without scrutinising the conditions that have allowed for the binary thinking of West/Orient, comes short of drawing significant implications and continues to presuppose such distinctions, if only to at all costs overturn them. The world has recently witnessed the revival of such thinking and rhetoric (West Vs East) and its devastating effects. These issues will be addressed both with regard to the way they are dealt by post-colonial criticism and are implicated in travel writing.

It is the contention here that a radical thinking of travel relations and colonialism would have to bring attention to their structural conditions of emergence. This thesis attempts to respond to this need, which is why the focus is shifted from particular examples of travel writing to a reconsideration of its signifying structures. It is true that one cannot think of travel writing outside particular examples but this is precisely the point here, to show that singularity is made possible and traversed by repetitive structures that give rise

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Hughes, with a preface by Simon Critchley and Richard Kearney, London, Routledge, 2001, p. 44.

to exemplarity or generality. One cannot think the one without the other and, moreover, in order to think them together, exactly because of their simultaneous and irreducible emergence and reoccurrence, one must have first paid heed to the conditions that forbid a singular event to be considered on its own terms without addressing its structure of overflowing, what we have called the structure of *eventuality*.

One has to remember that uniqueness is not unicity. To challenge unistic or monadic formulations is to think in a deconstructive mode, which does not consist of a critique from a predetermined and stable standpoint. It has to be pointed out that the notion of *dissemination* is neither at odds with singularity nor with generality; it is the thought of the eternal reinscription or re-markability upon the body of irreplaceable singularity, a re-markability, moreover, which is unthinkable outside its singular instances. It divides and folds the singular instant (as well as itself) back upon itself while infinitely unfolding it(self): "For it is in the form of the unique, precisely, and not of the plural, as it was too often believed, that a thought of dissemination formerly introduced itself as a folding thought of the fold –and as a folded thought of the fold."[3]

If we were to overthrow binary and hierarchical, that is, metaphysical thinking, aphorisms would certainly not be enough. One must meticulously expose the way this permeates and lurks behind singular texts and attitudes in general. In other words, one must stay within metaphysics. *Oikos* and travel are, to be sure, indissociable from one another. But this does not entail that they cannot be thought in a way that exceeds their delimitation as oppositional counterparts. What is at stake is a reinscription of the metaphysical notion of travel and its displacement from the restricted economy and periphery of the house. The house, however, can never be disengaged from any notion of travel, for at the moment it ceases to be posited as its origin, it already returns as a phantom haunting travel.[4]

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[2] Derrida, Jacques, *Of Hospitality, Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*, translated by Rachel Bowlby, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2000, p. 45.
[3] Derrida, Jacques, *The Monolingualism of the Other or The Prosthesis of Origin*, translated by Patrick Mensah, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1998, p. 26.
[4] Along the course of travel the sense of *Oikos* in the form of memory, anticipation, expectation, fear and hope never ceases to hauntingly return. *Oikos*, thereby, reemerges as its own phantom, never quite present, never quite absent, an elusive, "inapparent apparition," an "invisible visibility". In the movement of iteration/idealization the house becomes a ghost that phenomenalises itself, that takes various shapes and forms along the way. But the house, which is nothing before travel, that is, before an encounter with otherness that can also be oneself as another, is never secure in its interior. It already haunts itself in the sense that it is never quite itself, never quite there as/for its own evidence. This is what is called the "phenomenological fold," the essential disjunction of anything manifesting itself or signifying fully. "The most familiar becomes the most disquieting. The economic or egological home of the *oikos*, the nearby, the familiar, the domestic, or even the national (*heimlich*) frightens itself. It feels itself occupied, in the proper secret (*Geheimnis*) of its inside, by what is most strange, distant, threatening." Derrida, Jacques, *Specters of Marx, The State of the Debt, The Work of Mourning, and The New International*, translated by Peggy Kamuf, with

The displacement of the house and its re-emergence as an effect of iteration allowed for the reinscription of *travel as writing*. Travel as writing is neither to be confused with nor disengaged from the narrow sense of travel writing. It was claimed that the latter is inscribed and given shape within the general structures of the former. Travel narrative necessarily takes shape through the totalisation of what it relates, through the reduction of the multiplying forces and possibilities that constitute it (either historical, rhetorical, generic, autobiographical and so on) as a homogenised ensemble. Travel *as* writing is what forbids the closure of the "book of travel", what suspends the end and completion of travelling and makes travel writing impossible as a finished project.

To travel, to write and read about travel is always a singular and unique performance or testimony. A testimony, however, is not simply reducible to private experience or contextual determination but must be always structurally capable of overflowing itself towards a new event of meaning and reference. To the extent that it is singular and irreplaceable, it is also infinitely secret and to the extent that it is communicable, it also complies with general rules, which allow it to be rendered public. It always balances itself between invention and conformity. Insofar as a testimony is secret it must appeal to trust and belief. This is the common condition of all travellers' tales, high or not, miraculous or ordinary, which is not simply shaken and overcome by the establishment and refinement of means of observation and techno-science. A testimony about the (cultural) other, however, cannot and should not claim adequacy to what it relates as truthful representation. Because the other is not *apocalyptic*, because it is not *phenomenalisable* in its entirety, because it does not easily give itself to *thematisation* without a remainder or surplus of meaning, it is infinitely secret. Travel writing as *the-promise-of-the-other-to-come* must pledge itself to secrecy, to a promise of u-topia as that nonplace, that is, as the groundless ground that prepares for the event of the arrival of the other without foreclosure or calculation. It is in this sense that travel writing bears the possibility of an opening up and of hospitality towards the event, to an unaccountable surprise.

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an introduction by Bernd Magnus and Stephen Cullenberg, London, Routledge, 1994, pp. 144-145. *Oikos* and travel, dwelling and travelling, haunt each other in a way that forbids their separate occurrence. "The difference between *inhabit* and *haunt* becomes here more ungraspable than ever." Ibid., p.158. What appears as a frightful condition, however, is what gives the chance for the opening of the house, for the hospitable welcoming of the other and of itself as other. It is what gives place to the house and what promises the event of the coming of the other; it is the condition of *heritage*, *urgency* and *imminence*, what is called by Derrida the *messianic*, and the atheological structural *a priori* of all messianisms.

Orientalism

Probing into the metaphysics of travel and its hermeneutic exigencies allowed us to formalise always to an extent the structural *law-of-the-house*, from which all conditional *laws* (of houses, nations, states and so forth) emanate and attest to. The deconstructive challenge to the restricted eco-nomy of the house allowed us to formalise a *counter-law*, a law before the law, that both enables and intercepts any law and any sense of legitimacy, regulatory space and rightful belonging. This counter-law emerges then as the condition of all laws, which in turn become instances or inscriptions of a radical pervertability but also of a promise. They testify, yet always inadequately, to an unconditionality, to a structure of overflowing any particular instance or condition, that lets everything signify on the condition of its self-erasure.

In order, moreover, to get a better grasp of this (counter-)law, we have to consider it on the level of its most pervasive and acutely felt historical implications. It was claimed that the metaphysical coupling of *Oikos*/travel prioritises the former over the latter, which is deemed derivative and secondary. This is to say that in Western metaphysics *nearness* has always been hierarchically favoured in disjunction to *distance*. *Oikos* here is not simply a geographical entity; it involves all semantic and discursive structures and configurations that make up senses of closed spaces of familiarity and proximity, which are by consequence separated from distant and alien ones. *Oikos* thus has everything to do with the notions and practices of *ethnocentrism* and *Eurocentrism*, of which it names here the structural and historical *a priori*. From a European perspective, assuming there is a relatively unified one, the structures of *Oikos* and travel can be said to correspond to those of the West and its Others. In spite of the risks and objections that such divisions raise with regard to the oversimplification and generalisation they necessarily entail, one cannot push them aside and discredit them as obsolete and inaccurate but must rather consider what allowed them to operate –and they still do on many levels- and be effective in the first place. Post-colonial theory that was more systematically established as a disciplinary and politically combative field during the last decades, critically and polemically discusses the profound and pervasive effects of such divisions from the colonial subject's point of view and has gone a long way in challenging essentialising and oppositional conceptualisations of the *metropolitan* and the *colonial*. But it is necessarily articulated in that discursive space opened up by such divisions as the West and the Orient, which it continues to presuppose, even if it proves them inadequate.

Edward W. Said's *Orientalism*[5], which was published in 1978, was the first attempt to address the phenomenon of colonialism on a conceptual and discursive level in a systematic way and inaugurated post-colonial theory as an academic field.[6] *Orientalism*, in spite of the controversy, objections and criticism it has provoked, is indisputably a milestone book. Said defines Orientalism as "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident.'"[7] In this "style" of thought "the relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony,"[8] which Said proposes to review drawing on Michel Foucault's model of discourse analysis of cultural formations at the intersection of power and knowledge.[9] For Said, Orientalism manifests an "internal consistency" and has the "self-containing, self-reinforcing character of a closed system"[10] constituted by a *will-to-power* over the Orient. It is, therefore, a coherent and analysable subject matter. In his analysis of the discursive "surfaces" of various types of texts (philosophical, literary, administrative, travel writing and others) on the Orient, he distances himself from Foucauldian "archaeology" by stressing "the determining imprint of individual writers upon the otherwise anonymous collective body of texts constituting a discursive formation like Orientalism."[11] The orientalist's Orient may arise as a mixture of "private fantasy", personal experience and received knowledge, which gradually became fossilised, schematic and abstract. This accounts for Orientalism's "textual attitude", which Said illustrates with reference to the travel book:

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[5] Said, Edward, *Orientalism, Western Conceptions of the Orient*, reprinted with a new Afterword, London, Penguin Books, 1995. The separate discussion of *Orientalism* here serves the purposes of the chapter to the extent that it is a good case in point for the exploration of the conceptual dichotomy between West and Orient and its discursive articulation. Although it is not plausible to detach a single work from a thinker's oeuvre and examine it on its own terms, the particularity of *Orientalism,* which has had a "destiny" of its own with regard to post-colonial studies to a great extent independently of Said's later work, allows for its separate consideration.

[6] "[Said] demonstrated that the habitual practices, and full range of effects of colonialism on the colonized territories and their peoples, could be analysed conceptually and discursively, and it was this that created the academic field of post-colonialism and enabled such a range of subsequent theoretical and historical work." Young, Robert J. C. *Postcolonialism, An Historical Introduction*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2001, p. 18

[7] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 2.

[8] Ibid., p. 5.

[9] "Therefore, Orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions; nor is it a large and diffuse collection of texts about the Orient; nor is it representative and expressive of some nefarious 'Western' imperialist plot to hold down the 'Oriental' world. It is rather a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an elaboration not only of a basic geographical distinction (the world is made up of two unequal halves, Orient and Occident) but also of a whole series of 'interests' which, by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains; it *is*, rather than expresses, a certain *will* or *intention* to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world" Ibid., p. 12.

[10] Ibid., p. 70.

[11] Ibid., p. 23.

"Travel books or guidebooks are about as 'natural' a kind of text, as logical in their composition and in their use, as any book one can think of, precisely because of this human tendency to fall back on the text when the uncertainties of travel in strange parts seem to threaten one's equanimity."[12]

Textual authority fostered a tradition and an enduring "structure of attitudes" towards the Orient that can be systematically analysed, although individual input is not disclaimed.[13] Hence, Orientalism is understood as "a system of representations" and a sort of consensus.[14] Orientalist discourse on the whole is formed through the tension and convergence of what Said calls *latent* and *manifest* Orientalism, the former referring to doctrinal and scholarly discourses and the latter to descriptions of a present, modern, "manifest" Orient articulated by travellers, pilgrims, statesmen, and the like.[15] In other words, Orientalism, according to Said, involves a conflict between schematic authority and circumstantial evidence that is resolved in favour of the former through a process of appropriation by interpretation, nonetheless without, as one would assume in this context, self-reflection and renovation: "The relation between Orientalist and Orient was essentially hermeneutical [...] Yet the Orientalist remained outside the Orient, which, however much it was made to appear intelligible, remained beyond the Occident."[16]

His study, Said admits, is of a primarily descriptive and initiatory character, lacking the dimension or proposition of something alternative to Orientalism.[17] However, his main orientation is towards a libertarian, nonrepressive, humanistic perspective that would also favour dialogue and direct encounter. In his afterword of the 1995 edition he writes: "I would repeat that this was very much a procedure of crossing, rather than maintaining, barriers; I believe *Orientalism* as a book shows it, especially when I speak of

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[12] Ibid., p. 93.
[13] Said at some point recapitulates the principal dogmas of Orientalism: "one is the absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant, undeveloped, inferior. Another dogma is that abstractions about the Orient, particularly those based on texts representing a 'classical' Oriental civilization, are always preferable to direct evidence drawn from modern Oriental realities. A third dogma is that the Orient is eternal, uniform, and incapable of defining itself; therefore it is assumed that a highly generalized and systematic vocabulary for describing the Orient from a Western standpoint is inevitable and even scientifically 'objective'. A fourth dogma is that the Orient is at bottom something either to be feared (the Yellow Peril, the Mongol hordes, the brown dominions) or to be controlled (by pacification, research and development, outright occupation whenever possible)." Ibid., pp 300-301.
[14] "Certain things, certain types of statements, certain types of work have seemed for the Orientalist correct. He has built his work and research upon them, and they in turn have pressed hard upon new writers and scholars. Orientalism can thus be regarded as a manner of regularized (or Orientalized) writing, vision, and study, dominated by imperatives, perspectives, and ideological biases ostensibly suited to the Orient. The Orient is taught, researched, administered, and pronounced upon in certain discrete ways." Ibid., p. 202.
[15] Ibid., pp. 222-223.
[16] Ibid.
[17] "Perhaps the most important task of all would be to undertake studies in contemporary alternatives to Orientalism, to ask how one can study other cultures and peoples from a libertarian, or a nonrepressive and nonmanipulative, perspective. But then one would have to rethink the whole complex problem of knowledge and power. These are all tasks left embarrassingly incomplete in this study." Ibid., p. 24.

humanistic study as seeking ideally to go beyond coercive limitations on thought towards a non-dominative and non-essentialistic type of learning."[18]

Orientalism has raised a lot of controversy and criticism and, in this sense, it is one of the most productive and groundbreaking books of the last decades. We will attempt to sketch out the main objections to this particular work by Said. The central and most recurrent argument against *Orientalism* is that it is organised around a polar division between Occident and Orient, which is too schematic, abstract and generalising.[19] The result of this is the (re)production of a monolithic, essentialising, and homogenising mega-discourse, which collapses a wide variety of texts into a unified and continuous ensemble that spans millennia failing to historise adequately, paying no attention to particularities, contradictions and inconsistencies and leaving no room for counter-hegemonic reaction. Said has been accused of not taking into consideration prominent trends of Orientalism such as the German scholarly tradition towards the Orient, of sticking to a *franglais* (and American) mixture[20] making unwarranted exclusions and favouring material that fit his argument.[21] Despite his own pronouncements, according to many scholars, Said fails to consider individual voices, which are subsumed by the uniform and univocal discourse of Orientalism, which levels instances of metropolitan dissonance and colonial insurgency.[22]

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[18] Ibid., p. 337.

[19] See, for instance, James Clifford's "On Orientalism" in *The Predicament of Culture*, Fred Dallmayr's "Exit from Orientalism" in *Beyond Orientalism, Essays on Cross-Cultural Encounter*, New York, State University of New York, 1996, Dennis Porter's "Orientalism and its Problems" in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory, A Reader*, edited and introduced by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, London, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993 and Bernard Lewis' "The Question of Orientalism" in *Islam and the West*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993. Lewis' criticism is particularly austere and intemperate and sometimes arguably beyond the limits of academic propriety but is still interesting to the extent that it constitutes an orientalist's response to the challenge of his conceptual premises.

[20] Young, p. 18.

[21] It has been argued that one of these "conspicuous" exclusions is the case of Greece, which unsettles Said's hierarchical and oppositional equilibrium. Robert Shannan Peckham maintains: "Greece is ignored because it fails to fit in with a history that is defined solely in terms of colonial occupation of the Orient by the West, just as German Orientalism is dismissed because unlike British and French Orientalisms, it was not so directly enmeshed in colonial domination. [...] Modern Greece is jettisoned from the argument precisely because it disturbs the notions and continuity upon which Said's diachronic reading of a European Greece rests. Greece unsettles the binary oppositions promoted in the book and exposes the inconsistency of Orientalism as a discourse that is characterized by its systematic nature and by a 'knitted together strength' (Said 1978, 6). Christian Greece, however, as an indeterminate space between, calls into question many of the assumptions behind Orientalism, and disturbs Said's attempt to balance a genealogical conception of intellectual history, indebted to humanist scholars such as Erich Auerbach, with a Foucauldian concern for discourse and the discursive field." Peckham, Robert Shannan, "The Exoticism of the Familiar and the Familiarity of the Exotic, Fin-de-Siècle Travellers to Greece" in *Writes of Passage, Reading Travel Writing*, edited by James Duncan and Derek Gregory, London, Routledge, 1999, p. 171.

[22] "Thus although Said claims that what interests him as a scholar is the detail and that he intends to be attentive to individual voices, virtually no counter-hegemonic voices are heard". Porter, pp. 152-153. Porter proposes an attentive reading of the "hybrid products of travel literature" in order to demonstrate the conflicting and self-subverting elements that characterize what are often assumed as strong cases of orientalist writing.

To this argument is also attached criticism of *Orientalism*'s overtly textual attitude that is dehistoricizing, treats all texts as synchronic and not as historical documents providing evidence. This, according to Robert J.C. Young, compromises the notion of discourse by estranging it from material circumstance and constructs Orientalism as the transmission of the *representation* of an unchanging Orient from text to text.[23] Said, without disclaiming that there is such a thing as a real Orient ("it would be wrong to conclude that the Orient was *essentially* an idea, or a creation with no corresponding reality"[24]), focuses on the value of representation *as* representation and not with regard to correctness or adequacy to actuality. On the one hand, he maintains that "Islam *has* been fundamentally misrepresented in the West" and, on the other, that such a thing as "truth" is inaccessible because it is itself a representation.[25]

However, as Peter Childs and Patrick Williams point out, critics may be producing themselves a monolithic Said, failing to grasp the complexity of his work.[26] It is indeed unfair to suggest that Said produces a homogenising discourse that designates Orientalism as an unchanging and ahistorical structure and pays no attention to cultural particularities and material circumstances. In this aspect, Said has been also criticised for a restricted and compromising deployment of Foucault's notion of discourse.[27] Obviously, Said does not engage with the whole range of Foucauldian notions and his alleged collusion with Foucault's strategies of discourse analysis in the immense production of works on colonialism that followed *Orientalism* often tends to make a disfiguring use of both Foucault and Said. For instance, Sara Mills' discussion of travel literature in *Discourse of*

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[23] Young, p. 388.
[24] Said, p. 5.
[25] Ibid., p. 272.
[26] "Despite a certain received wisdom that Said portrays Orientalism as monolithic, one of the things which the book does is to demonstrate the complexity of forms of intellectual production subsumed under Orientalism, as well as the range of strategies involved in that subsuming –none of which easily equates with 'monolithic' qualities." Childs, Peter and Williams, Patrick, R.J., *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory*, London, Prentice Hall, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1997, p. 112.
[27] James Clifford suggests that one should return to Foucault's "powerful discursive formations" rather than producing essentialising or organic descriptions of culture. Clifford, pp. 274-275. Robert Young maintains that Said to an extent distances himself from the Foucauldian concept of discourse and replaces it by that of representation, which is, moreover, affiliated to an essentialising idea of the Orient that is textually transmitted. He believes that many of the problems and contradictions of *Orientalism* and, subsequently, of post-colonial theory derived from this work would be resolved if they were educed more directly from Foucault's *Archeology of Knowledge*: "One problem is that commentators have consistently preferred to try to modify Said rather than retheorize colonial discourse from Foucault's original substantive treatment of the concept." Young, p. 386. "The irony is that Foucault's own model of discourse in *The Archeology of Knowledge* could be said to answer many of the fundamental objections that are made against colonial discourse. His most sustained and searching analysis and formulation of the nature of a discourse, however, has never been seriously considered by postcolonial theorists." Ibid., p. 394.

Difference, An Analysis of Women's Travel and Colonialism makes a very restrictive and reductive use of discursive formations.[28]

To the objection against the "univocal" and "essentialising" depiction of Orientalism one could counterargue that Said never claims that he is doing anything else but analysing Orientalism as a discourse with an enduring and systematic structure. Undoubtedly, one should be attentive to historical and conceptual differences and to cultural diversity with regard to the application of terms such as "colonialism", "imperialism", "post-colonialism" and so on.[29] That is to say, one must not fail to consider the local conditions and pragmatics of colonial situations. However, even Said`s critics acknowledge –and how could one not do so since what is involved is at least centuries of colonial oppression or subjugation of the Orient by the West- that there must be a certain systematicity and conceptual affinity that holds together the various and multi-level forms of colonialism. Even post-colonial critics like Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, who challenge what is seen as a polar and unidirectional approach to colonial discourse and refine oppositional thinking, for instance, the division between the metropolitan and the colonial, through notions such as *ambivalence*, *difference, hybridity* and the *subaltern*, to some extent acknowledge and largely presuppose a sort of continuity and structural commonality throughout the multiple and diverse instances of colonialism. [30]

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[28] Mills, Sara, *Discourses of Difference, An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism*, London, Routledge, 1991. Mills reads women's travel writing at the peak of British imperialism (1850-1930) as a textual surface where the discourses of colonialism and femininity meet and clash. The female subject is thus interpellated and structured by these two antagonistic discourses. Mills produces a highly technical and reductive explanation of specific travel texts deploying what is arguably a restricted conception of Foucauldian discourse analysis.

[29] Robert Young outlines the difference between "imperialism" and "colonialism". According to him, "imperialism" has a more ideological function and can be analysed as a concept, while "colonialism" is more pragmatic and can be analysed primarily as a practice: "Here a basic difference emerges between an empire [empire is a term with wide use not necessarily signifying 'imperialism'] that was bureaucratically controlled by a government from the center, and which was developed for ideological as well as financial reasons, a structure that can be called imperialism, and an empire that was developed for settlement by individual communities or for commercial purposes by a trading company, a structure that can be called colonial. Colonization was pragmatic and until the nineteenth century generally developed locally in a haphazard way (for example, the occupation of islands in the West Indies), while imperialism was driven by ideology from the metropolitan center and concerned with the assertion and expansion of state power (for example, the French invasion of Algeria)." Young, p. 16. "Neocolonialism", on the other hand, "denotes a continuing economic hege-mony that means that the postcolonial state remains in a situation of dependence on its former masters, and that the former masters continue to act in a colonialist manner towards formerly colonized states." Ibid., p. 45. "Postcolonialism" names "a theoretical and political position which embodies an active concept of intervention within such oppressive circumstances." Ibid., p. 57.

[30] Homi Bhabha disapproves of such divisions like coloniser/colonised, metropolis/colony, latent/manifest Orientalism, which are widely used by Said. In his view, one should "think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities" and focus instead on the articulation of cultural differences as the effect of "processes" rather than the result of confrontation between pregiven entities. These articulations and processes arise from the "enunciative boundaries" or "cultural interstices" that confuse the borders between "home" and "world" and eradicate the "fixity and fetishism of identities". The "unhomely" thus becomes a "paradigmatic colonial and post-colonial condition". Bhabha, Homi, K., *The Location of Culture*, London, Routledge, 1994, p. 9. Bhabha

If it were not so, neither the concept of colonialism and all its related notions, nor the longevity of the juxtaposition and opposition of the West and the Orient would be meaningful or possible. Said to an extent presupposes a pregiven, confrontational relation between the West and the Orient, even if he designates them as primarily discursive entities, of which Orientalism is the structured and regulatory expression and in this sense he does not question how these came about and emerged in the first place. Otherwise put, he does not consider their conditions of possibility. However, one cannot, independently of whether one is reproducing or challenging bipolar couples, hope to overcome the

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disagrees with the use of concepts such as "cultural diversity" and "multiculturalism", which, for him, suggest the pre-existence of given cultural contents and sustain the liberal notions of cultural relativism and exchange based on "the separation of totalized cultures that live unsullied by the intertextuality of their historical locations". Ibid., p. 34. He proposes instead the term *cultural difference*, which signifies the process through which both the metropolitan and the colonial emerge as *ambivalent* situations. *Ambivalence*, *stereotype*, *mimicry*, *difference* and *hybridity* structure the colonial space as a split or *Third Space*, beyond binary oppositions, out of which cultural enunciations and representations are constituted in a contradictory and aberrant mode. Ibid., pp. 36-39. In "Signs Taken for Wonders, Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree outside Delhi, May 1817" published in the same volume, Bhabha, both drawing on and criticising Derrida's "The Double Session", designates "hybridity" as the name of the displacement of value *from symbol to sign*. Accordingly, the revaluation of the symbol of national authority as the sign of colonial difference invalidates the opposition of two previously identified distinct cultures that could be resolved through cultural relativism. His criticism of Derrida rests upon the belief that "an inversion that would suggest that the originary is, really, only an 'effect'" still maintains a prerequisite of depth or truth and the principle or recognition: "Hybridity has no such perspective of depth or truth to provide: it is not a third term that resolves the tension between two cultures, or the two scenes of the book, in a dialectical play of 'recognition'. The displacement from symbol to sign creates a crisis for a concept of authority based on a system of recognition". Ibid., pp. 113-114. For Bhabha, "culture, as a colonial space of intervention and agonism, as the trace of the displacement of symbol to sign, can be transformed by the unpredictable and partial desire of hybridity." Ibid., 115. Bhabha apparently misconstrues Derrida's phrase the "becoming-sign of the symbol", which signifies the disruption of both symbol and sign. If symbol is a totalising figure that purportedly maintains an affinity or essential relation to the natural object and its abstract idea, whereas, the sign breaks such relation by means of its arbitrary and unmotivated character, the transition from symbol to sign would presuppose the pre-existence of the former subsiding to the transformative force of the latter. For Derrida, however, both symbol and sign become possible through the totalising and aleatory effects of writing, which always already disrupt unity, even if they make it thinkable. It is rather Bhabha that in misreading Derrida compromises his notions of ambivalence and hybridity, since he assumes, in spite of himself, that something like symbolic authority pre-exists colonial and cultural difference.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has been largely associated with her critique of the Subaltern Studies Group formed by Indian historiographers. The project of the latter is to retrieve subaltern consciousness or subjectivity through the reading of authoritative colonial narratives and official history, which tend to play down or silence Indian-peasantry as a historical agent and to overlook instances of insurgency. Spivak contends that the project of recovering the voice of the subaltern belongs to a post-Enlightenment and positivist tradition that posits consciousness as "*the* ground that makes all disclosures possible." Spivak, Gayatri, Chakravorty, *The Spivak Reader,* edited by Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean, London, Routledge, 1996, p. 211. For her, the subaltern cannot and "will probably never be recovered." Ibid., p. 213. Instead of aiming at retrieving a positive and sovereign subject-position, which is up to then the arrogant privilege but also the conceptual accomplice of an elite, Spivak dismantles sovereign subjectivity as a metaleptic effect of an effect, that is, of what she calls the *subaltern subject-effect*, a multiplied and discontinuous positionality arising at the intersection of linguistic, imperial, class, racial, generic, etc., discourses, hence, never able to speak for itself as such. Ibid.

Both Bhabha and Spivak have been criticised for their neglect of history and insurgency and for their widely post-structuralist and linguistic attitude. (See Childs, Peter and Williams, Patrick, R.J., *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory*, p. 178). One, however, should bear in mind that exploring the enduring structures of colonialism and colonial relations, something that in this thesis is treated as a matter of urgency, by no means relegates the consideration of their particular manifestations to a secondary place but, on the contrary, seeks to effectively and critically examine them, also raising

difficulties these pose if one does not scrutinise their very formation. And for sure, one cannot simply do away with oppositional thinking, especially when one is driven by the desire to react and respond to such configurations. Without suggesting that the structures that hold together senses of the West and the Orient, or at a more generalised level of *Oikos* and *away*, are substantiated or reified, one must acknowledge their persistent re-emergence and think them through on the level of their condition of signification. So, in a fashion, the problem with Said is not that he overgeneralises but rather that he does not generalise enough, in the sense that he does not look into the general conditions of possibility of the notions and discursive formations he evokes and makes use of. The appropriative force of *Oikos* manifests its most crucial and aggressive instances within the concrete historical situations of colonialism. This is not to say that the significatory structures of *Oikos* are themselves ahistorical. Far from it, they both operate in and engender historical contexts but also overflow particular historical and colonial situations. In this way, *Oikos* and away can be said to constitute the structural and historical *a priori* of Eurocentrism. If one is to radically challenge oppositions of the type West Vs East, one should look back to the aberrant structures that both allow for and undermine from within the constitution of polarities and, thus, open onto another way of thinking hegemonic rule and counter-hegemonic (hence, equally heteronomic) action. The deconstruction of the metaphysical couple of proper and metaphor and that of *Oikos* and travel can prove very useful in that direction.

Let us now proceed to two critiques of colonial travel writing, pertaining to the influential stream that follows up Foucault's discourse analysis and Said's oppositional formulations, in order to consider how post-colonial theory enables and is being used for the reading and re-examination of travel texts, as well as the limitations it often poses since it still operates along bipolar configurations and within the discursive and conceptual space opened up by the division of Europe and its others.

Our discussion of travel writing was focused on the figures of metaphor and allegory and its value as testimony. Rhetorical analysis has been the focus of many theorists who approach this genre primarily from a post-colonial standpoint. These studies tend to produce classifications of tropes, which are intrinsically related to the discursive conjunctions of structures of power and knowledge, often rearticulating ready made categories and failing to call into question the legitimacy and the conceptual

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the question of how these and the violence they induced were ever possible, moreover, without

presuppositions of their theoretical gear. For instance, David Spurr's *The Rhetoric of Empire, Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* explores colonial discourse as an ensemble of various and diverse "series" of discourses which are, however, analysed on the basis of a repertoire of twelve basic tropes emerging from the Western colonial experience, such as *surveillance, appropriation, aestheticization, classification, insubstantialisation, naturalization, resistance* and so on.[31] Spurr recognises that the rhetorical modes which organise his study are neither definite nor entirely distinct from one another, but rather overlap or are subdivided. Nonetheless, the taxonomical principle or method is maintained. This operation, in spite of Spurr's claims, demystifies "the grounds of [interpretive] authority" only to a limited extent.[32] Colonial discourse is reduced to a series of rhetorical strategies that although, as Spurr points out, they bear within themselves the "seeds of resistance", these are never seriously taken into consideration. When there is resistance it comes from an acknowledgement of and self-critique for the oppressive and unequal treatment of colonised peoples and from the affirmation of difference. Resistance then is a counter discourse to the dominant and unidirectional European colonialism.[33] This critique, however, that seeks alternative modes of expression with regard to cultural representation, as useful as it may be in unveiling the workings and the structures of power in colonial discourse, can only advance in a somewhat predetermined way for it lacks an effective revaluation of the notions it puts into use. In other words, this approach comes across the same impasses as any formalistic and taxonomical configuration. In this study "resistance" is addressed as one of the twelve tropes that structure colonial discourse. Spurr neither provides a definition of "tropes" nor does he ground the necessity for a rhetorical analysis of colonial discourse and, by consequence, he does not address the problematic distinction between fact and fiction, which he takes to an extent for granted. Although his analysis focuses on the rhetoric of colonial discourse in a diversity of texts pertaining to journalism, travel writing and imperial administration, he somewhat continues to presuppose the distinction between fictional and nonfictional discourse, for instance, that of nonliterary and literary

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restricting their examination to historical explanations and justifications.

[31] "My exploration of these questions involves two basic procedures: a) a *mapping* of the discourse, which identifies a series of basic tropes which emerge from the Western colonial experience, and b) an informal *genealogy*, in which the repetitions and variations of these tropes are seen to operate across a range of nineteenth- and twentieth-century contexts." Spurr, David, *The Rhetoric of Empire, Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, London. Duke University Press, 1993, p. 3.

[32] Ibid., p. 9.

[33] Ibid., pp. 184-201.

journalism, or fiction and journalism in general.[34] Tropes may run through and structure the totality of colonial discourse undermining established generic distinctions but, to the extent that these deform a purportedly authentic ("the travel writer is prevented from recognizing the true authenticity of the moment"[35]) and directly referential situation, the assumption is that an immediate colonial experience still lurks behind its tropological and discursive restructuring and needs to be demystified and brought forward. For Spurr, "the question remains whether [...] resistance, identified as latent and marginal within the texts of colonial discourse, can be converted into *a conscious authorial strategy* without simply recycling the conventional tropes of ideological opposition" (my italics).[36] So the issue is to move beyond the tropology of discourse and the asymmetries of power. This, according to Spurr, can be achieved through the Foucauldian mode of discourse analysis. The problem with such an approach is that it fails to radically disrupt the configurations of power relations and authoritative representation because it focuses solely on the semantics of discourse without addressing also the phenomenological conditions of experience and its essentially figurative and aporetic character. Language does not come to displace and alter an original and authentic experience of the world, for experience itself is always already "contaminated" by language; it always already emerges as *writing*.

One of the most influential studies in the genre is Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes, Travel Writing and Transculturation*, which also focuses on the rhetoric of travel writing as an instance of "Eurocolonialism".[37] Pratt explores the collateral emergence of a new epistemic paradigm of natural history in the mid-eighteenth century along with the territorial expansion of capitalism and the intensification of "interior" exploration enterprises. These developments induced a new version of European "planetary consciousness", that is, a unified, Eurocentred perspective toward "the rest of the world" that registered the mutual engagement between the new project of systematizing nature and

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[34] Spurr establishes the distinction between literary and nonliterary journalism on the basis of the former's use of figurative language conventionally pertaining to "imaginative" literature and the latter's informative function. With regard to the distinction between fiction and journalism, it is a matter of the degree of authorial intervention. In the first case, narrative succumbs to the relative mastery of the fiction writer, while in the second, it is subordinated to the aleatory nature of the event. Finally, "literary" journalism is distinguished from fiction in terms of its alternative frames of historical reference. Spurr, p. 9. These distinctions, however, which are articulated on the grounds of historical referentiality, as Spurr also admits, are not very clear. To efficiently tackle these issues one would have to first pose the question of referentiality and representation in general and, to be sure, that of the relation between "fictional" and "literary" language. Reportage and creative invention have proved not to be self-evident categories and functions after all.

[35] Ibid., p. 50.

[36] Ibid., pp. 187-188.

[37] Pratt, Mary Louise, *Imperial Eyes, Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London, Routledge, 1992.

economic and political expansionism.[38] Travel writing, caught up within these structures of power and knowledge, is formulated in what she calls the "contact zones", that is, "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination".[39] The "contact zone" is thus a space of colonial encounter where relations between the colonisers and the colonised, the travellers and the "travelees" are being formed through copresence, interaction, and the interlocking of understandings and practices.[40] Out of this interaction that constitutes subjects and intersubjective relations also emerges what Pratt calls "anti-conquest", that is, "strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony."[41] Another strategic operation is that of "autoethnography", by which she refers to instances in which "colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that *engage with* the colonizer's own terms."[42] The colonial situation, according to Pratt, is one of encounter and interaction, though in asymmetrical terms, through which the entity called Europe "was structured from the outside in as much as from the inside out."

So, according to Pratt, colonialism and its complicit discourse of travel writing from the mid-eighteenth century onwards emerges as an instance of bourgeois capitalism and ethnocentrism, which is, however, not simply a unidirectional force exercised upon the colonies but is shaped through a process of *interaction*, of which the transforming effects are brought back to the metropolis. However, one may ask, when does interaction begin? When is the so-called "contact zone" between two previously "geographically and historically separated" peoples inaugurated and how is it made structurally possible? Indeed, when does colonialism begin? We shall proceed to the consideration of an "exemplary" instance of (anti-)ethnocentrism, exemplary in also being self-defeating and contradictory, for it precisely premises itself upon and draws its own boundary according to what Pratt also tends to take for granted in spite of herself: that two previously constituted and unified in themselves cultural horizons (subjectivities or presences) meet, clash, interact inaugurating thus a colonial situation that formerly did not exist.

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[38] Ibid., p. 38.
[39] Ibid., p. 4.
[40] Ibid., p. 7.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.

Claude Lévi-Strauss in *Tristes Tropiques* engages in a critique of ethnocentrism from the remorseful point of view of the ethnologist/ intruder into the naturally "innocent" and "good" world of the Nambikwara. The foreigner inflicts violence and contamination upon the natural state of the tribe merely by the simple fact of his presence there. However, does this fact or event, which Lévi-Strauss designates as an empirical accident befalling the natural course of the life of the tribe, signal and inaugurate the beginning of violence, expropriation, in a word, colonialism? The question then is whether historical contingency is the principal agent or determining force to which the irruption and consequences of such an event can be reduced. Empirical explications and reductions introduce a contradiction in Lévi-Strauss' structuralist project. As Derrida points out, "on the one hand, structuralism justifiably claims to be the critique of empiricism. But at the same time there is not a single book or study by Lévi-Strauss which is not proposed as an empirical essay which can always be completed or invalidated by new information."[43] Lévi-Strauss' oeuvre captures an instance of ethnographic "oneirism" and nostalgia for a lost origin and natural goodness. It comes at a time in the history of European culture and in the tradition of Western metaphysics when the thought of origin, that is, the desire for a fixed point of presence or, put otherwise, for the reduction to an organising centre, is called into question. The structural centre then begins to be no longer thought as a fixed locus but rather as a function. The centre is decentred. Derrida:

> "In fact one can assume that ethnology could have been born as a science only at the moment when a decentering had come about: at the moment when European culture –and, in consequence, the history of metaphysics and of its concepts- had been *dislocated*, driven from its locus, and forced to stop considering itself as the culture of reference. This moment is not first and foremost a moment of philosophical or scientific discourse. It is also a moment which is political, economic, technical, and so forth. One can say with total security that there is nothing fortuitous about the fact that the critique of ethnocentrism –the very condition of ethnology- should be systematically and historically contemporaneous with the destruction of the history of metaphysics. Both belong to one and the same era."[44]

In the history of metaphysics the concept of the sign holds central position by way of its substitutive and supplementary function of "standing for" a lost but recoverable original and "natural" meaning. In the case of ethnology this is a primordial and natural state of things before the institution of cultural norms and prohibitions. The sign then is always already removed from the origin it represents and points to. The shaking of metaphysical premises, which Derrida describes as an "event" in the history of structure and to which one could attach the names of Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger, signals a

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[43] Derrida, Jacques, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" in *Writing and Difference*, translated, with an introduction and additional notes, by Alan Bass, London, Routledge, 1978, p. 288.
[44] Ibid., p. 282.

further dislocation in the history of the sign that is now removed from its representational function. Signs no longer point to natural things or to a *primum signatum* but rather refer to one another. Lévi-Strauss seeks to "transcend the opposition between the sensible and the intelligible [an institutive opposition for metaphysics] by operating from the outset at the level of signs".[45] However, this opposition is concurrent with that between *nature* and *culture*, which Lévi-Strauss both accepts and tries to surpass introducing antinomy in his discourse. Nature, for Lévi-Strauss, signifies that which is *universal* and *spontaneous*, while culture that which is *varying* and *instituted*. He is driven by a "Rousseauist" kind of nostalgia for a natural state of things and by a desire for the retrieval of a symbolic or natural language, a language attached to the very essence of things. This can only be the primordial language of living speech, that is, a language present and gathered in itself that is effaced or made redundant before the thing itself. In other words, a language which is not contaminated by writing. This is why, as Derrida claims, ethnocentrism, at once the presupposition and the target of criticism of ethnology, is above all a *phonocentrism*.[46] The ethnologist "accepts into his discourse the premises of ethnocentrism at the very moment when he denounces them. This necessity is irreducible; it is not a historical contingency."[47]

Lévi-Strauss refuses to attribute an ontological or truth value to the distinction between nature and culture, which he, nonetheless, utilizes and proposes to accept merely as a methodological tool.[48] Even so, he comes up against an impasse in the methodological

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[45] "This was the moment when language invaded the universal problematic, the moment when, in the absence of a center or origin, everything became discourse [the moment which the thought of the] absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely." Ibid., pp. 280-1.

[46] This relation is stated in the exergue of *Of Grammatology*: "This triple exergue is intended not only to focus attention on *ethnocentrism* which, everywhere and always, has controlled the concept of writing. Nor merely to focus attention on what I call *logocentrism*: the metaphysics of phonetic writing (for example, of the alphabet) which was fundamentally –for enigmatic yet essential reasons that are inaccessible to a simple historical relativism- nothing but the most original and powerful ethnocentrism, in the process of imposing itself upon the world, controlling in one and the same *order*". Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 3. Phonetic writing is considered by Hegel as hierarchically superior to other types of writing, for instance, hieroglyphics or Chinese ideograms, in that it reduces writing to the voice thus enabling the movement of the liberation of the spirit by elevating the material to the spiritual. The phonetic element can be interiorised by the soul because it is more easily disengaged from the material nature of things. See also "The Pit and Pyramid: Introduction to Hegel's Semiology" in *Margins of Philosophy*, pp. 69-108.

[47] Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences", p. 282.

[48] This method is called by Lévi-Strauss *bricolage*. The critical language of the *bricoleur* is a "mythopoetical" discourse, which cannot be reduced to a central or privileged myth or reference and is surrendered to the infinite play of language. The bricoleur uses, tests out and, occasionally, abandons everything that comes at hand, old concepts which s/he treats as tools. This is why *bricolage*, the critical method of the human sciences, of which ethnology is an exemplary case, is in close affinity to *empiricism*. Testing out hypothetical schemata by subjecting them to the proof of experience and on the basis of a finite quantity of information poses what Derrida calls a double postulation that considers totalization as both "useless" (a limited number of finite discourses should be methodologically adequate for the description of their grammar) and "impossible". However, the impossibility of totalization is not due to the limitless series of the finite discourses of the empirical field, which one can never hope to know or manage. As Derrida shows, it is not inexhaustibility but rather a lack, something missing from the field of play (that is, the play of infinite substitutions) that

use of this distinction; an impasse which he calls a "scandal": the prohibition of incest. The prohibition of incest defies the nature/culture opposition since it is something that Lévi-Strauss considers both universal, thus natural, and institutional, hence, cultural. However, if one were not to take this difference as self-evident, one would have to look into its very condition of possibility, into a difference that is structurally "older" than that between nature and culture, or else, *différance*: "The incest prohibition is no longer a scandal one meets with or comes up against in the domain of traditional concepts; it is something which escapes these concepts and certainly precedes them –probably as the condition of their possibility."[49]

One of the most exemplary instances in Lévi-Strauss' treatment of the opposition between nature and culture is what he describes as the "Writing Lesson" in *Tristes Tropiques*. Lévi-Strauss remains within the tradition of phonocentrism, which privileges speech over writing that is considered a derivative and dangerous supplement. Accordingly, he accepts the distinction between "peoples with writing" and "peoples without writing", which is coterminous to that between "historical societies" and "societies without history". For Lévi-Strauss, the Nambikwara live in a state of natural goodness unaffected by the exploitative implications of writing. During the "writing lesson", of which the Nambikwara supposedly have no concept but are only capable of imitating by "drawing lines", the only apt response is that of the leader of the tribe, who apprehends the secret privilege and power that writing confers upon its custodians. Writing introduces domination, exploitation and the right of legislation to a reserved minority; it is thus the instrument of power. This function of writing, of course, is well known and can be historically verified. However, by assuming that writing penetrates and upsets the peaceful culture of the tribe through this "extraordinary incident", befalling upon the Nambikwara by accident and affecting them "*as if by chance*", one fails to acknowledge that this "spontaneous borrowing" could never have taken place if it were not for the previous existence of the structures that make it possible.[50] The passage from speech to writing, which is elevated to the central problem of ethnology, that is, the passage from nature to

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which excludes totalization: the absence of a centre, what must be supplemented by the sign. Moreover, this decentring, what Derrida has called an event in the history of the concept of structure, is not a historical event –though it is nothing outside history- but rather a given fact of language and what opens the infinite play of substitution and metaphor as historical force.
The *bricoleur* is distinguished from the *engineer*, a subject who posits itself at the origin and creation of meaning and is thus a notion with theological depth. According to Lévi-Strauss, the engineer is a myth produced by the bricoleur. However, as Derrida points out, both holding up and reducing this distinction breaks down the difference upon which bricolage took on its meaning in the first place. Ibid., p. 285-289.

[49] Ibid., p. 283.

culture, can only operate within *writing in general*, what Derrida calls *arche-writing*. Lévi-Strauss performs a reduction, of which the sole function is that of "constituting the other as a model of original and natural goodness,"[51] designating at the same time Nambikwarian culture by means of a lack and exclusion: the absence of writing and of history.[52] In this way, he produces an instance of profound ethnocentrism:

> "It is, however, an ethnocentrism *thinking itself* as anti-ethnocentrism, an ethnocentrism in the consciousness of a liberating progressivism. By radically separating language from writing, by placing the latter below and outside, believing at least that it is possible to do so, by giving oneself the illusion of liberating linguistics from all involvement with written evidence, one thinks in fact to restore the status of authentic language, human and fully signifying language, to all languages practiced by *peoples whom one nevertheless continues to describe as 'without writing'*."[53]

Another "telling" incident Lévi-Strauss recounts is that of the violation of a prohibition imposed by the Nambikwara that disallowed the pronouncement of the "proper names" of the members of the tribe. Lévi-Strauss observes a group of children playing. A little girl, in order to avenge one of her friends for striking her, reveals the latter's name to the ethnologist. Eventually, Lévi-Strauss eggs on the children to reveal theirs and the adults' names, something for which they are later reprimanded. Now, Lévi-Strauss as the provoker of this violation considers himself guilty of disturbing the order of the peaceful community by making innocent children his accomplices. The mere presence of the foreigner is capable of inducing the breaking of norms and inflicting violence upon the

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[50] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 127.
[51] Ibid., p. 114.
[52] Such a division between cultures with and cultures without writing and history is also sustained by Tzvetan Todorov in *The Conquest of America, The Question of the Other*, translated by Richard Howard, foreword by Anthony Pagden, Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1999. Todorov maintains that one of the reasons the Spaniards were able to conquer the Americas was the superiority of their linguistic and communicative skills. Accordingly, Cortés had in his disposal a more advanced system of signs than Mexicans, who still spoke a symbolic and ritual language. For Todorov, "the absence of writing is an important element of the situation, perhaps even *the* most important." Ibid., p. 80. Mexican society is adumbrated as traditional, hierarchical and overstructured with limited capacity to be surprised, to improvise and perceive otherness or anything beyond its symbolic apprehension of the world. This is because its highly ritualized and repetitive language (but does this not imply, in spite of Todorov, a "writing" in the generalized sense?) is premised upon discourses that come from and are dominated by the past, as it happens with the so-called oral traditions. Spaniards, on the other hand, speak a language that is disengaged from symbolic attachment to the world and to old prophecies and are, therefore, capable of improvising, adapting to new situations and being more flexible. So here we have a conflict between two systems of signs, which is formulated by Todorov in terms of the opposition between "ritual speech" and writing. For Todorov, writing is "an index of the revolution of mental structures." Ibid., p. 81. Spaniards are more "advanced" in this sense, since they have achieved a more efficient form of intersubjective communication. Or "to generalize: societies possessing writing are more advanced than societies without writing". Ibid., p. 160. However, this does not entail the moral superiority of the Spaniards for one would have to choose between a "society of sacrifice" (Mexican) and a "society of massacre" (Western European). Mexican culture is represented as one steeped in myth and prejudice, which is unavoidably conquered and assimilated by European *logos*. Todorov adheres to Western metaphysical oppositions such as speech/writing, mythos/logos, nature/culture, which are taken as self-evident without ever being thoroughly problematised. This leads him to a reaffirmation of the ethnocentric prejudice, which distinguishes between cultures with and without writing and history and which privileges, moreover, the former. The implication, as we shall see a bit later, with regard to "the question of the other", is the formulation of a reductive "typology of relations to the other" precisely premised upon such oppositions and hierarchies.
[53] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 120.

"naturally" benevolent tribe. However, could that ever be a spontaneous response to an accidental event without the previous existence of the structural conditions that precisely allow for this to take place? The prohibition or, otherwise, the obliteration of proper names is already in place as a cultural law, of which the violation is just an empirical possibility actualised or rather encouraged by Lévi-Strauss on a level that Derrida calls "tertiary", that is, on the level of "empirical consciousness", that on which "the common concept of violence" is situated. There are, however, other levels of violence which remain unthought by Lévis-Strauss The denunciation of proper names and the violation of the interdict respectively veil and reveal a hidden classification and linguistico-social structuration based upon differences. But violence has long begun at a more radical level:

> "There was in fact a first violence to be named. To name, to give names that it will on occasion be forbidden to pronounce, such is the originary violence of language which consists in inscribing within a difference, in classifying, in suspending the vocative absolute. To think the unique *within* the system, to inscribe it there, such is the gesture of the arche-writing: arche-violence, loss of proper, of absolute proximity, of self-presence, in truth the loss of what has never taken place, of a self-presence which has never been given but only dreamed of and always already split, repeated, incapable of appearing to itself except in its own disappearance. Out of this arche-violence, forbidden and therefore confirmed by a second violence that is reparatory, protective, instituting the 'moral,' prescribing the concealment of writing and the effacement and obliteration of the so-called proper name which was already dividing the proper, a third violence can *possibly* emerge or not (an empirical possibility) within what is commonly called evil, war, indiscretion, rape; which consists of revealing by effraction the so-called proper name, the originary violence which has severed the proper from its property and its self-sameness [*proprété*]. We could name a third violence of reflection, which denudes the native non-identity, classification as denaturation of the proper, and identity as the abstract moment of the concept."[54]

A proper name would have to signify fully an entity in its entirety without attributing to it anything that would disrupt its essence. But to name properly and to designate an entity as such is to inscribe it within a differential and graphematic drift. Since there is no absolute, unique and singular proper name but always names, which introduce difference, classification, and predication the proper name is erased, obliterated from the start. Its obliteration, however, is its condition of appearance and legibility, for the proper name neither belongs as such to language, nor does it exist outside language. The loss of the proper is an *a priori expropriation*, what at once denounces and promises properness. This paradoxical force that moves simultaneously towards *expropriation* and *re-appropriation*, without the precedence of properness, that nominates and identifies, divides and classifies, giving both the condition of possibility and impossibility of unicity and univocity, is called by Derrida *arche-writing* or *arche-violence*. So the proper name exists only on the condition of its erasure, that is, of its self-erasing mode of signifying always inadequately to itself, to what it purportedly should be: it becomes part of language on the condition of its becoming noun, that is, on the condition of its translatability into

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[54] Ibid., p. 112.

generality. This is to say, there is neither proper name nor noun (due to the lack of a unique source idiom, from which the noun would be abstracted) but the endless process of the *becoming-noun-of-the-proper-name*. To name an "entity" properly –an improper proposition- is to inflict upon "it" violence by totalising it in a unique and singular manifestation and by reducing "its" radical indeterminacy, that is, the essential (im)possibility of "it" ever signifying fully. Nominative action is a *first violence* upon the entity (presumed as such by what is called *phenomenological reduction*) or else *arche-violence*. The institution of the prohibition comes second and its violation, the level which Lévi-Strauss acknowledges, third.

The obliteration of the "proper name", by way of its *a priori* inscription into a system of differences that constitutes it as a structure of erasure and deferral, is a general condition exceeding the instituted prohibition put into effect and to test by the Nambikwara. Beyond the empirical level of violence that is associated with writing and its well known dominating and exploitative implications, the generalised notion of writing that reaches back to the forces of nomination emerges through a more originary violence:

> "In other words, if writing is to be related to violence, writing appears well before writing in the narrow sense; already in the differance or the arche-writing that opens speech itself."[55]

This is why a community or culture that already obliterates proper names cannot in any way be said to be a culture "without writing". Moreover, a culture capable of obliterating proper names, cannot not be violent. The ethic of the living speech as a condition of "social authenticity" is a theme related to that of presence, of immediacy and transparency still unaffected by the absence or lack implied by writing. Yet, if presence is an illusion, a cherished dream of wholeness and of a language fully present and adequate to itself, the condition of *ethics* can only emerge from a radical inadequacy that prevents any entity from ever fully signifying in a gathered or determined meaning by precisely allowing it to appear in a *self-erasing* mode, the only possible mode of signification:

> "To recognize writing in speech, that is to say differance and the absence of speech, is to begin to think the lure. There is no ethics without the presence *of the other* but also, and consequently, without absence, dissimulation, detour, differance, writing. The arche-writing is the origin of morality as immorality. The nonethical opening of ethics. A violent opening."[56]

We are here before an (im)possible ethics that neither begins with nor absolutely necessitates presence but, on the contrary, always already disrupts given and fixed positions and precedes, at least structurally, the intrusion of the ethnographer/traveller, who supposedly inaugurates a relation to the other, for the other has always already made its

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[55] Ibid., p. 128.

mark, left its trace from the constitutive opening of consciousness to a first exteriority. The thought of the *trace* of the other is what gives the possibility of an *ethics of travel*, or better, as we shall soon see, of "travelling with", that *a priori* and from within resists judgement and decision upon the other, however, without dispensing with violence altogether: an *ethics of hospitality* as the very condition of colonialism.

Hospitality

In order to look into the structural conditions that link an ethics of hospitality to an ethics of travel and colonialism we should turn to "the question of the foreigner". By shifting the emphasis, *the* question of the foreigner could mean the question *of* the foreigner, addressed by the foreigner or *to* the foreigner.[57] Should one interrogate the new arrival? How should one respond to him or her and in what language should this question or response be uttered? Should translation be imposed on him/her? And is this phrasing that evokes legitimacy or duty ("should one…") proper to hospitality?[58] When we speak here of language we do so also in a broad sense, that is, as the ensemble of culture, its values and norms, its semiological configurations that exceed linguistic operations in the narrow sense: "Speaking the same language is not only a linguistic operation. It's a matter of *ethos* generally."[59] In this sense, the culture that receives foreigners, if only to expel them, and in receiving addresses them and is addressed by them, speaks the language of hospitality or rather *it is hospitality itself*. To the extent that language, in the broad sense, opens itself up to the other, responds to and welcomes the other, "language *is* hospitality"[60]. Language as hospitality already finds itself caught up in the aporetic and paradoxical condition that tears it asunder between the requisite of *hyberbolical* or *unconditional* hospitality and a *situational* or *conditional* hospitality. Unconditional hospitality is hospitality in a "proper" and "transcendental" sense beyond concrete situations and contexts that signifies an absolute, unconditional welcoming of the other, a

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[56] Ibid., p. 140.
[57] Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, p. 3.
[58] "Among the serious problems we are dealing with here is that of the foreigner who, inept at speaking the language, always risks being without defense before the law of the country that welcomes or expels him; the foreigner is first of all foreign to legal language in which the duty of hospitality is formulated, the right to asylum, its limits, norms, policing, etc. He has to ask for hospitality in a language which by definition is not his own, the one imposed on him by the master of the house, the host, the king, the lord, the authorities, the nation, the State, the father, etc. This personage imposes on him translation into their own language, and that's the first act of violence. That is where the question of hospitality begins: must we ask the foreigner to understand us, to speak our language, in all the senses of this term, in all its possible extensions, before being able and so as to be able to welcome him into our country? If he was already speaking our language, with all that that is shared with a language, would the foreigner still be a foreigner and could we speak of asylum or hospitality in regard to him?" Ibid., pp. 15,17.
[59] Ibid., p. 133.
[60] Ibid., p. 135.

passivity that receives without asking and without laying down norms and regulations. In other words, it is a "regulatory" ideal (albeit in view of superseding regulation), language's promise and drive towards the attainment of properness (that is, how hospitality should properly be), without which (and for sure, without its essential pervertibility in specific situations) all forms of hospitality would be impossible. Conditional hospitality is that which prescribes specific requirements upon the other, that deploys a certain program and policy towards foreigners according to pragmatic concerns and specific historical contexts. It is hospitality confined to law and duty, to the necessity of regulation and to a highly determined sense of obligation formulated and imposed by a given and rigorously circumscribed sense of self-mastery or oiko-nomia. It is subjected to *the-law-of-the-house*. A problematic thus arises:

> "We have come to wonder whether absolute, hyberbolical, unconditional hospitality doesn't consist in suspending language, a particular determinate language, and even the address to the other. Shouldn't we also submit to a sort of holding back of the temptation to ask the other who he is, what her name is, where he comes from, etc? Shouldn't we abstain from asking another these questions, which herald so many required conditions, and thus limits, to a hospitality thereby constrained and thereby confined into a law and duty? And so into the economy of a circle? We will always be threatened by this dilemma between, on the one hand, unconditional hospitality that dispenses with law, duty, or even politics, and, on the other, hospitality circumscribed by law and duty."[61]

Preoccupation with hospitality does not simply shift attention to the side of the visited culture. As we shall soon see, going and receiving from abroad do not constitute rigorously different perspectives but rather disrupt cultural and linguistic identities, in this case, those of the host and the guest, giving way to a possible *ethics of travel* and *hospitality*. The word "host" that can at once point to the master of the house and to the guest, something which is neither fortuitous nor situational, already signals a radical interruption of pregiven identities and normative behaviours. It marks the possibility of substitution (the master [host] becomes the guest [host] in realising him/herself as such upon the summon of the visitor *as if* s/he was the one visiting and vice versa), *the law of hospitality* beyond determined norms and regulations. "Hospitality" is used here in the radical sense of a primordial passivity and receptivity, that of the constitutive opening of consciousness to the world, to what lies beyond it as other, to what it intends to and through which, by the very fact and operation of intentionality, it constitutes itself. In the encounter with the other, hospitality is first. Whether this leads to aggression and hostility, the condition of hospitality is unaltered. Hostility and generosity have their very condition in hospitality in this radical sense. One must first receive and turn to the other in order to

enter in whatever relation with him or her. Derrida largely draws on Lévinas in that matter. *Intentionality* is defined as hospitality, as "attention to speech or welcome of the face", the welcoming of alterity that is more originary than and not contrary to "phenomena of allergy, rejection, xenophobia, even war"[62].

In calling upon a "law of hospitality" that exceeds prescription and regulation, we are once more raising the question of generality in relation to singularity. As we have argued before, the generality of the law is indissociable from and co-extensive to its singular manifestations. It is true that even when appealing to the general or transcendental law of hospitality or language (for language is hospitality) we only do so through a singular idiom and a singular experience, or otherwise, a testimony. In view of addressing the double bind or turn that opens culture as an at once hospitable and colonial space, we are going to consider a testimony, both unique and universal or rather universalisable, of a Jewish Franco-Maghrebian that bears the name Jacques Derrida.

In the *Monolingualism of the Other or the Prosthesis of Origin* Derrida puts forward the following in and between themselves paradoxical propositions: 1. *We only ever speak one language.* 2. *We never speak only one language*. Or otherwise formulated: "I have only one language, yet it is not mine".[63] This antinomy at once attests to a singular experience of a Maghrebian of Jewish descent in an Algeria colonised by the French and to a general law of language and culture. "*We only ever speak one language"* signifies that one always speaks from one's own unique position and experience *one idiom only*. And "*we never speak only one language"* signifies that *there is no pure idiom*.[64] Derrida relates his own story as a young Jewish boy in French Algeria, who lost his French citizenship in 1940 when the Crémieux decree, which had granted French citizenship to the Jewish population of Algeria in 1870, was abolished by Pétain, only to be restored three years later. Derrida was denied access to the French school he attended, to the only language and culture he ever recognized as his own. Of course, Hebrew, Arabic or Berber under the colonial regime had been long relegated to a marginal place in the French educational system. A sort of double "interdict" more traumatic in the first case, more subtle and ambiguous in the second, deprived of direct access to any model for cultural identification. Derrida speaks of an "identity disorder", of a "radical lack of culture [*inculture*] from

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[61] Ibid.
[62] Derrida, Jacques, "A Word of Welcome" in *Adieu to Emmanuel Lévinas*, translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michel Naas, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 50.
[63] Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other*, pp. 7 and 21.
[64] Ibid., p. 8.

which [he] undoubtedly never completely emerged."[65] French, the language supposed to be maternal, came from *elsewhere*. It came from the Metropole, to where Derrida never travelled before the age of nineteen. France, as the source of language and culture that came from afar, at once offered and withdrew a model for cultural identification, which became an endless process:

> "No, an identity is never given, received, or attained; only the interminable and indefinitely phantasmatic process of identification endures."[66]

France, the origin of culture had acquired a mythical and phantasmatic quality, it loomed everywhere but came from elsewhere; it was there but not quite present:

> "The *metropole*, the Capital-City-Mother-Fatherland, the city of the mother tongue: that was a place which represented, without being it, a faraway country, near but far away, not alien, for that would be too simple, but strange, fantastic, and phantom-like [*fantomal*]."[67]

Derrida attests to what is an *exemplary* colonial situation, since linguistic and cultural appropriation can be said to be primarily colonial strategies. However, this is not merely a conscious, even though multi-levelled and often difficult to control, procedure on the coloniser's part. Derrida does not simply attest to a historical circumstance, even a paradigmatic one, although he cannot not do so but from within a specific historical situation. Beyond determined circumstance, Derrida's singular testimony attests to something that exceeds colonial rule in the common sense. It turns back upon the structural conditions that allow for such appropriations to take place. When he postulates that he only has one language that is not his, he attests to a *universal condition*, to the very law of language: language is not a property or possession; it is given to us but never in its entirety, never as such and never as something pure and simply available; it precedes us, it passes through us and survives us. And in passing through us coming from elsewhere, from the other, it gives us but only in depriving us of the capacity of the identificatory "I", which is never purely and simply given; it submits to the law of repetition and dissemination, enduringly dividing, subverting while promising a self, a home, a language:

> "But who exactly possesses [language]? And whom does it possess? Is language in possession, ever possessing or possessed possession? Possessed or possessing in exclusive possession, like a piece of personal property? What of this being-at-home [*être-chez-soi*] in language toward which we never cease returning?"[68]

We are the hosts and hostages of language; it is what promises self-mastery, a pure idiom in which one should have the capacity of saying "I" and be at one with, present to

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[65] Ibid., p. 53.
[66] Ibid., p. 28.
[67] Ibid., p. 42.
[68] Ibid., p. 17.

oneself, and what makes of this promise a lie and a perjury because it can never be fulfilled but enduringly repeats and commits itself. But a promise is not nothing; everything happens and is awaited on its condition. From the *original exile* that gives rise to language as "the language of the other", language "can only promise and promise itself by threatening to dismember itself".[69]

In our deliberation on the essential metaphoricity of language, we claimed that its force of signification moves along a drive to *appropriation* that engenders effects of properness and a drive to *expropriation*, a radical process of alienation, that divides meaning in and of itself. In this way, language gathers itself in disseminating itself or disseminates itself in gathering itself. According to this structural antinomy, *Oikos* as the ensemble of literal and appropriated meaning and travel as a deviation from home, as the event of encounter with foreignness, are only promised and never attained as such. As we saw, the generalised notion of travel as an itinerary with no origin or destination gives rise to senses of "home" and "travel" in the "literal" sense (can we not say that "travel in the literal sense" is already part of the house?). In other words, senses of "home" and "away" emerge as effects of the appropriative and ex-appropriative forces of language and not the other way around. In this sense, every determined notion of home, culture as a place of origin, belonging, identity and everything one considers one's own, arise from this appropriative or colonising force or madness:

> "Because there is no natural property of language, language gives rise only to appropriative madness, to jealousy without appropriation. Language speaks this jealousy; it is nothing but jealousy unleashed. It takes revenge at the heart of the law. The law that, moreover, language itself is, apart from also being mad. Mad about itself. Raving mad."[70]

Language is mad because it can never come to its senses. That is, it can never fully or properly signify, it can never possess its meanings that are essentially repeatable and thus alterable. It can only promise and promise itself. Since this promise always fails, since there is not *a* language or *the* language but only *languages* and singular idioms, *a* language is promised through languages, through the movements of signification that give the impossible possibility of meaning. *Plus d' une langue*: both more than *a* language and no more of *a* language.[71] This is the law of translation or better the "law itself as translation"; what at once imposes and forbids translation.[72] This appropriative madness gives rise to

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[69] Ibid., p. 22.
[70] Ibid., p. 24.
[71] Derrida, *Memoires for Paul de Man*, p. 15.
[72] "Translation" is a recurrent and extremely important theme in Derrida's work. In the first chapter we had the chance of treating its elaboration in "Des Tours de Babel" more extensively. The Semites' quest or project for the imposition of their tongue as a "universal language" is a

totalising or colonising senses of language and culture. In this way, one can always claim that *culture is essentially colonial* and that instances of colonial appropriation in determined historical situations attest to this structural and universal law:

> "So much so that 'colonialism' and 'colonization' are only high points [*reliefs]*, one traumatism over another, an increasing buildup of violence, the jealous rage of an essential *coloniality* and *culture*, as shown by the two names."[73]

The essential coloniality of culture, an originary violence that names, gathers, circumscribes in view of assuming totality and unity, hence, in view of instituting culture itself, gives the condition of possibility of colonialism in general and in its determined historical manifestations. This is not to say, of course, that specific historical situations can be reduced to or explained through this structural law, as some would, to be sure, hastily object.[74] To say that actual and particular historical configurations attest to a universal law

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paradigmatic instance of *colonial violence* but also of the structural impossibility of such project. The possibility of a transparent idiom that translation tends to and presupposes is self-subverted by virtue of language's generality, that is, its categorical or attributive capacity, that already turns the proper name into a common noun. Derrida calls this irreducible semantic movement "the becoming-noun of the proper name", for the proper name neither precedes the noun, and so, nor does the noun derive from an abstraction of a given proper name. This is why the name is both translatable –in becoming noun- and untranslatable by virtue of language's repeatability or iterability that impedes it from fully signifying the thing itself, in other words, from naming it properly. Derrida: "In seeking to 'make a name for themselves,' to found at the same time a universal tongue and a unique genealogy, the Semites want to bring the world to reason, and this reason can signify simultaneously a colonial violence (since they would thus universalize their idiom) and a peaceful transparency of the human community. Inversely, when God imposes and opposes his name, he ruptures the rational transparency but interrupts also the colonial violence or the imperialism. He destines them to translation, he subjects them to law of a translation both necessary and impossible; in a stroke with his translatable-untranslatable name he delivers a universal (it will no longer be subject to the rule of a particular nation), but he simultaneously limits its very universality: forbidden transparency, impossible univocity." Derrida, "Des Tours de Babel", p. 174.

[73] Derrida, *Monolingualism*, p. 24.

[74] For instance, Gesa Mackenthun in " 'Terrified by novel Forms of Justice': Travelling Theories of Colonialism and the Burning of Qualpopoca" in *Studies in Travel Writing*, number 1, referring to Cortés' atrocities in Mexico and to the public torture and burning of the cacique Qualpopoca and his companions for having fought the Spaniards, expresses uneasiness with regard to certain theorists', like Paul de Man, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Jacques Derrida, response to such horrific events. The concern here is with the assumed lack of sensitivity and "cynical" indifference to human suffering within particular historical junctures: "It's *their* pain that, disappointingly not for Greenblatt but certainly for Walter Benjamin, shall not be forgotten. It is their pain, too, that should remind us that history never was, and never will be, 'a purely linguistic complication,' as Paul de Man has it, and that colonial oppression is not a matter of the past simply because we choose not so see it any longer." Mackenthun, pp. 62-63. And further on, "I do share the uneasiness of Henry Louis Gates about Spivak's 'insistence on the totalizing embrace of colonial discourse' and about the parallels between this concept and the Derridean one of the all-inclusiveness of writing (Gates 1991: 466). The danger of statements about the universality of colonialism seems to me that they too easily lose the trace of the 'historical moments in which they are located' by virtue of denying the possibility of such locatedness (Said 1983: 4)." Ibid., p. 66. Mackenthun is unfair in assuming that de Man, Spivak and Derrida do not take history and, more importantly, pain and suffering into account, though this is a highly improper expression, for pain and suffering are, to be sure, unaccountable and incalculable. In painstakingly and persistently pondering over the question of the structural possibility of (colonial) violence and appropriation, these thinkers in no way brush aside single and collective suffering and martyrdom (though martyrdom is always singular), simply because they do not solely insist on historical occasions and contextual determinations. If everything were to be reduced to contextual explications then each singular and unique story would be closed, explained, over and done with. Derrida dedicates his *Specters of Marx* to Chris Hani, who was assassinated by the Apartheid regime on the 10th of April 1993:

of coloniality is neither to generalise nor to homogenise or collapse different historical instances that should certainly be considered in their own context. We have repeatedly argued that transcendental or rather quasi-transcendental conditions are nothing outside history and of the empirical situations they both condition and out of which they also emerge. However, nor can empirical occurrences be simply taken account of merely on their own terms, since they cannot be totally reduced to or saturated by their context:

> "Quite far from dissolving the always relative specificity, however cruel, of situations of linguistic oppression or colonial expropriation, this prudent and differentiated universalization must account, and I would even say that it is the only way one can account, for the *determinable* possibility of a subservience and hegemony."[75]

If all culture is originarily colonial and if this "obscure common power" can be to some extent formalised into an aporetic structure, this in no way implies indifference to or ignorance of the suffering, persecutions and struggles colonised peoples have undergone and undertaken. On the contrary, it enduringly and persistently raises the question of how such terrible and horrific situations can ever be possible. After such a thinking as Derrida's, historical explanations and reductions, even and especially when conducted through angry responses to colonial rule, can never reach a satisfactory conclusion. Peacefulness of mind is forever forbidden. Derrida has been criticised for overformalising and even for avoiding the question of ethics.[76] Precisely the opposite is true:

> "The question here is not to efface the arrogant specificity or the traumatizing brutality of what is called modern colonial war in the 'strictest definition' of the expression, at the very moment of military conquest, or when a symbolic conquest prolongs the war by other means. On the contrary. Certain people, myself included, have experienced colonial cruelty from two sides so to speak. But once again, it reveals the colonial structure of any culture in an exemplary way. It testifies to it in martyrdom, and 'vividly' [*en martyre, et 'à vif'*]."[77]

"At once part, cause, effect, example, what is happening there translates what takes place here, always here, wherever one is and wherever one looks, closest to home. Infinite responsibility, therefore, no rest allowed for any form of good conscience.
But one should never speak of the assassination of a man as a figure, not even an exemplary figure in the logic of an emblem, a rhetoric of the flag or of martyrdom. A man's life, as unique as his death, will always be more than a paradigm and something other than a symbol. And this is precisely what a proper name should always name." Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p. xv. One should beware of angry and hasty responses. Who can dare evoke, set right, make a tribute to, or any claim on Walter Benjamin's pain? To be sure, not Mackenthun.

[75] Derrida, *Monolingualism*, p. 23.

[76] Syed Manzurul Islam in his *The Ethics of Travel, From Marco Polo to Kafka* levels a critique at Derrida's "subtle" but "monotonous" variations of Saussurian "difference", which Derrida purportedly frames in a formal linguistic structure. To Islam's mind, Derrida is "caught in a formal trap" and "Derridean difference (*Différance*), with its insistence that 'presentation of the being-present' takes place entirely in the play of difference or through the structure of traces, leaves no room for a non-textual ethics of practice." Islam, p. 21. Islam hurries to judge and overrule Derrida's thinking, especially with regard to its relation to ethics. A more persistent reading of Derrida's work, even in its early stages, would show his constant concern with the question of ethics, which moves beyond what Islam ambiguously calls "textual" or "non-textual" ethics, a somewhat curious distinction. In any case, Derrida's notion of the text exceeds its conventional sense and becomes co-extensive to the whole field of experience.

[77] Derrida, *Monolingualism*, p. 39.

As we argued in the previous chapter, a general law is never reduced to or fully realised in one of its empirical occurrences. A singular experience or testimony is unique, secret, untranslatable and irreplaceable and, moreover, it cannot be accounted for by the specific juridical or generic laws it makes appeal to. A testimony, however, by virtue of its exemplarity and iterability –for in order to have validity it must also overflow its singular instance- must also have potentially a general value, or otherwise, it must be replaceable, translatable, universalisable:

> "What happens when someone resorts to describing an allegedly uncommon 'situation', mine, for example, by testifying to it in terms that go beyond it, in a language whose generality takes on a value that is in some way structural, universal, transcendental, or ontological? When anybody who happens by infers the following: 'What holds for me, irreplaceable, also applies to all. Substitution is in progress; it has already taken effect. Everyone can say the same thing for themselves and of themselves. It suffices to hear me; I am the universal hostage."[78]

We are hostages of language for we always surrender to it. When we speak we testify from depths of "aphasia" and "amnesia" to an (non-)event, of which there is no memory, for which there is no accountability or genealogy, of a language at once given and promised, of a *monolanguage* in the sense that it is idiomatic and singular but also promises *the One of language*, the language to come. Would language be possible if it did not tend to univocity or properness? Would translation be possible if it did not seek, as Walter Benjamin puts it, to come "to terms with the foreignness of languages"[79]? In other words, if it did not promise an absolute translation of the multiplicity of languages, even if what it does is to multiply differences within the target idiom? Monolingualism in all its possible senses is irreducibly multiple. It lacks an assignable origin. This is why it always comes from the other, a "monolingualism of the other," and promises the other. This is also language's and culture's radical condition of *hospitality*. There is no such a thing as a mother tongue; all that endures is its promise, a promise without determinable content. "*Aux autres ma langue maternelle*". Coming from the other, destined to the other what is dreamed as the pure idiom, the mother tongue, is a home one always returns to failing to reach it lastingly. This is for Derrida, the "a priori universal truth of an essential alienation in language –which is always of the other- and, by the same token, in all culture."[80] And "this monolingualism of the other certainly has the threatening face and features of colonial hegemony."[81]

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[78] Ibid., pp. 19-20.
[79] Benjamin, Walter, "The Task of the Translator" in *Illuminations*, with an Introduction by Hannah Arendt, translated by Harry Zohn, London, Fontana Press, 1973, p. 75.
[80] Derrida, *Monolingualism*, p. 58.
[81] Ibid., p. 69.

What is then to be done or said about this irreducibly colonial essence of all culture and language? It is through attending to the multiplicity among and within languages, to their essential impurity and structural incapacity for (self-) mastery –for the master is nothing if s/he cannot possess what s/he calls his/her own language[82]- that an auto-decolonisation is effectuated. Derrida:

> "I will state this principle summarily: *there is no choice*, and the choice that does not exist is not between one language and another, one group of languages and another (with everything a language entails). Every monolingualism and monologism restores mastery or magistrality. It is by *treating* each language *differently*, by *grafting* languages onto one another, by *playing* on the multiplicity of languages and on the multiplicity of codes within every linguistic corpus that we can struggle at once against *colonization* in general, against the colonizing principle in general (and you know that it exerts itself well beyond the zones said to be subjected to colonization), against the domination of language or domination by language."[83]

As post-colonial studies also show, decolonisation is an ongoing process not at all guaranteed by liberation and emancipation. The appropriative violence of the coloniser that seeks to impose his own language (in the broad sense) upon colonised peoples and of which the dubious and pervasive effects and established structures are long felt, is reproduced and confirmed by virtue of the internalisation of colonial heritage by the latter.[84] Colonial appropriation thus gives way to post-colonial re-appropriation. If one fails to attend to the ex-propriative and self-subversive forces of language, appropriative violence is to be inflicted endlessly. This, of course, takes us back to our familiar theme of metaphor or rather of the radical metaphoricity of language, what Derrida also calls quasi-synonymously *writing*. As we have been arguing so far, the metaphysical notion of metaphor, which is premised upon semantic appropriation in view of self-presence of meaning, gives rise by virtue of its totalising force to the circular and self-contained notion of the house, of *Oikos* as the locus and ensemble of appropriated or literal meaning. Travel (in the generalised sense), as the pre-originary condition for *Oikos* and travel (in the conventional sense), becomes a quasi-synonymous term for the ex-appropriative force of language. It constantly undermines, while also making possible, though in a self-erasing mode, everything involved with the notion of *Oikos*: origin, itinerary, destination, arrival, etc. To take account of this unaccountable and defective fact of meaning is the only chance for an *ethics of travel*. Of travel as the promise of the event of encounter, as *the-promise-of-the-other-to-come*.

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[82] Ibid., p. 23.
[83] Derrida, Jacques, "The Crisis in the Teaching of Philosophy" in *Who's Afraid of Philosophy? Right to Philosophy I*, translated by Jan Plug, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2002, p.105.

The Promise of the Other

Indeed, what is travel if not the event of an encounter with otherness, with what lies beyond the house? To what, to where and to whom does a traveller destine him/herself, if not to the promised other? In this sense, does anyone ever travel alone? Notwithstanding situations of collective travelling or massive displacement that in any case do neither discard of the primarily *phenomenological motif* of travel, nor diminish the singularity of experience, travel gives rise to the "ultimate question-of-the-other". To travel, according to Derrida, is to *travel with*; the "with" is what gives travel its figure and limits. It opens up the relation to otherness, a sort of "nonrelation," since it is not preceded by a polarity or two previously constituted entities, a nonrelation that creates the *relata*, space and time along the movement of travel. The traveller, like a "sleep-walker", moves in-between phantasmatic places, that of home and the place of arrival, which are both destroyed and promised along the way. In this sense, one never travels alone, that is, without the memory or spectre of the house, without the promise or summon of another place, even if travelling is always a unique and singular experience. In this way, Derrida asks, is not "travelling-with", what institutes the relation with the other, what also gives the measure of "living-with" and "being-with"?

> "Quant à l'autre, celui ou celle qui m'accompagne –ou ne m'accompagnera jamais- l'expérience du voyage (l'expérience *est le* voyage, n'est-ce pas, le nom l'indique), j'y *vois venir*, comme vous diriez, le début ou la fin de tout être avec. J' appelle ainsi 'voyage' l'épreuve des épreuves, mon ultime question-de-l'autre, une question de vie ou mort: avec qui voyager? Voyager, oui, mais d'abord avec qui? L'interrogation semble logée dans l''avec' mais elle séjourne nulle part, elle s'inquiète aussi, elle remue comme une insomniaque, elle m'obsède de façon permanente, concrète, explicite, littérale: voyons, pourrais-je voyager *avec* celui-là ou *avec* celle-ci? Non pas 'vivre-avec' ou 'être-avec', aménagements alors secondaires, mais 'voyager-avec'?"[85]

How can one be with, live with, share one's habitat with another if not by accompanying one another towards this unknown place the future beholds. Along this way, of which the sedentary "being-with" and "living-with" are totalised instances, one moves towards the other that could be a person, a place, a language, oneself as another. At every instant of travel everything is at stake, the memory of the house, the invention of a new language, the passivity or receptivity of otherness, testimonial secrecy and universality. If language is "the home that never leaves us", "the native land" that travellers, exiles, foreigners "carry away on the soles of their shoes"[86] and a "place of immobility" from which all journeys and distancings are measured,[87] language is also "the experience of

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[84] Derrida, *Monolingualism*, p. 24.
[85] Derrida, Jacques and Malabou, Catherine, *La Contre-Allée*, p. 13.
[86] Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, p. 89.
[87] Ibid., p. 87.

expropriation, of an irreducible *exappropriation*."[88] In the second chapter we spoke of a figure of the traveller as *phereoikos* or home-carrier that never leaves home but at once destroys the house by turning it into a mobile place, thus bringing forward the double bind of travel. Leaving home without ever leaving, being at home without ever being *at-home-with-oneself*, this is the absolute condition of travel: "Moi sauf moi, voilà peut-être la formule la plus économique de mon 'voyager avec' [...]."[89] "Myself without myself", given up to the condition of "travelling with", that is, of moving along, towards or upon the summon of the other, that could be oneself as another, is also what opens up the possibility of *hospitality* and of an *ethics of travel*.

What does induce one to travel? Does one travel because one is being sent away for one reason or another or in order to move towards the encounter?[90] Is not "encounter" the condition of travel, what calls for it, what promises the event and, thus, gathers the structure of eventuality of travel? "Nous devrions nous arrêter pour penser le voyage au bord de la rencontre. Tout n' y revient pas à la rencontre mais imaginez-vous une traversée sans rencontre?"[91] Travel is set off by the promise of the encounter *with* space, a language, a landscape, a culture, with other persons. It acts upon the summon of the other:

> "Cette *vocation* (ne voyager qu'à l'initiative de l'autre), elle parle sans doute *conjointement* de l'essence (sans essence, justement) *et* de la decision (dont je tiens qu'elle tient et vient toujours *de l'autre, à l'autre*) *et* du voyage. L'appel de cette vocation serait le voyage *même*, le *premier* voyage, si on pouvait encore dire 'même' et 'premier'. Qu'on n'y soit point autorisé, justement, cela signifie qu'avant tout vocation-au-voyage (rien ne m'aura été plus étranger, finalement), un voyage répond toujours à quelque convocation –et venue de quelqu'un, tel jour, un jour ou l'autre. En quoi le voyage (*journey*), toujours à la merci de l'autre, est une naissance (la veille d'une mort), une venue au jour qui, si elle pouvait dépendre seulement de moi, risquerait d'être à jamais ajournée."[92]

This vocation in the sense both of summon or appellation and inclination points to the essence of travel and *decision*, for a decision only takes place when the *question-of-the-other* arises. In the restricted economy of travel, the one which submits to the eco-nomy of the house, the house is the prime mover and destination of travel. In the generalised economy of travel, which also makes room for the restricted or metaphysical one, it is the other that is always already the prime mover. Travel then primarily becomes a *response* to the summons of the other; it always responds to some "convocation". Receptivity, passivity, or else, hospitality towards the other is what gives the condition of travel as *responsiveness* or *responsibility*. As was mentioned before, this does not necessarily imply

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[88] Ibid., p. 89.
[89] Derrida, *La Contre-Allée*, p. 23.
[90] "Voyage-t-on parce qu'on est renvoyé ou pour aller à la rencontre?" Ibid., p. 58.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid., p. 145.

a good or altruistic will. We are here referring to hospitality and responsibility in a radical sense that exceeds and precedes politeness, generosity, obligation and duty. We are speaking of the general, aporetic and unconditional law of hospitality, which in its "universal singularity" is both irreconcilable with and indissociable from historical and concrete laws. Unconditional law requires conditional *laws*, which, however, sometimes corrupt or pervert it, as much as conditional or historical *laws* need the guidance and aspiration given by *the* law of hospitality.[93] Both "perfectibility" and "pervertibility" are essential to the antinomic law of hospitality. Whereas hospitality in the radical and general sense signifies an unconditional opening onto and welcome of the other, hospitality in a restricted sense, which refers to situational and pragmatic conditions, is necessarily regulated by premeditated norms and calculations. The general law can always be perverted in determined situations but it is also necessary that this pervertibility is disengaged from perversion, that is, from its particular instances; as it is also necessary that there is no decided or determined limit, no "tenable threshold separating pervertibility from perversion." [...]

> "It is necessary that this threshold not be at the disposal of a general knowledge or a regulated technique. It is necessary that it exceed every regulated procedure in order to open itself to what always risks being perverted (the Good, Justice, Love, Faith –and perfectibility, etc.). This is necessary, this possible hospitality to the worst so that good hospitality can have a chance, the chance of letting the other come, the *yes* of the other no less than the *yes* to the other."[94]

Hospitality must not be premised upon knowledge and calculation. If it is so it forgets or supersedes the alterity of the other by submitting it to the established norms and regulations of the house. Hospitality should not aspire to assimilation but, on the contrary, must assume "radical separation" as the experience of the alterity of the other.[95] It must open itself to the "infinite other"; it must offer an "infinite welcome" that resists interrogation and thematisation. We said before that hospitality is primarily intentionality, the act of consciousness through which the other is received, beyond and before recognition, thematisation and judgement. Thus even hostility and rejection presuppose hospitality in its originary sense and general structure:

> "Because intentionality is hospitality, it resists thematization. An act without activity, reason as receptivity, a sensible *and* rational experience of *receiving*, a gesture of welcoming, a welcome offered to the other as stranger, hospitality opens as intentionality, but it cannot become an object, thing, or theme. Thematization, on the contrary, already presupposes hospitality, welcoming, intentionality, the face. The closing of the door, inhospitality, war, and allergy already imply, as

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[93] Derrida, *Of Hospitality*, p. 79.
[94] Derrida, "A Word of Welcome", p. 35.
[95] Ibid., p. 46.

their possibility, a hospitality offered or received: an original or, more precisely, pre-originary declaration of peace."[96]

In the encounter with the other, if such a thing ever takes place, the ethicity of travel, that is, the possible relation with the other, opens up an infinite dynamic for better or for worse. But the reception of the other, in the sense of intentionality, must always come first, before one addresses the question of whom is the other and what is to be done with him/her. Therefore, the event of the coming of the other cannot be foreseen or awaited. Because thematisation and predication (the identification and recognition of the other according to the categories of the same) come second, radical hospitality receives without awaiting or inviting, without horizon of expectation. It awaits the other as a "messianic" other, without attributing concrete qualities or demanding of him/her specific requirements. One must not be ready to receive, must not assume the role of the master of the house but in order to be hospitable must let oneself be overtaken and surprised, "be ready not to be ready".[97]

Giving oneself up to the other that comes without warning is the *ethical condition* of travel and hospitality. It is what disrupts and deconstructs the so-called identity and subjectivity of the master. The receiving or welcoming subject becomes at once host and hostage to the other. Thus, in a paradoxical sense the welcoming one gathers him/herself as such on the condition of the visitation of the other, who becomes a guest and a host at once: "The one who welcomes is first welcomed in his own home. The one who invites is invited by the one whom he invites."[98] This play or drama of substitution is not a replacement in a homogeneous series, for the other is infinitely other beyond thematisation. In taking the place of the other, in abandoning oneself in his/her place –an asymmetrical encounter that exceeds dialogue between host and guest, which presupposes recognition, as every dialogue must- the subject recollects and gathers itself in responding to the other, that is, in becoming responsible for, in substituting for, in expiating for the other. *Responsibility* as the paradox of losing and gathering oneself before the other is not a moral norm or prescription. It can only take place at a singular and unique instance, one that calls for invention and resists reduction to already formed attitudes and preconceptions. What happens next can never be predicted or foreclosed. It is because the visiting other is beyond knowledge and thematisation, because the other does not reveal or offer him/herself as

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[96] Ibid., p. 48.
[97] Derrida, Jacques, "Hostipitality", translated by Gil Anidjar, in *Acts of Religion*, edited and with an introduction by Gil Anidjar, London, Routledge, 2002, p. 361.
[98] Derrida, "A Word of Welcome", p. 42.

such to the intuition of the hosting subject that we can speak of visitation as the rupture of symmetry and as the trace of the face of the other, that is, the intractable, elusive and irreducible effect of a coming that upsets the structures of home: "Hospitality is the deconstruction of the at-home; deconstruction is hospitality to the other, to the other than oneself, the other than 'its other,' to an other that is beyond any 'its other.'"[99]

Insofar as *the-at-home* is disrupted through the visitation of the foreigner, of the infinite other, who exceeds the symmetrical relation of identity and difference and thus renders the appropriative force of the house and the hermeneutical process of fusion inadequate, "the at-home-with-oneself would thus no longer be a sort of nature or rootedness but *a response to a wandering*, to the phenomenon of wandering it brings to a halt"(my italics).[100] One could, therefore, point to "travel" as the condition of *the-at-home*, as the aporetic law that at once challenges the authority of the house and makes a place of welcoming possible. "Travel" is what makes a host of the master of the house. But insofar as the master of the house takes cover behind his/her identity, insofar as s/he remains a master, s/he puts an end to travel and to the promise of the encounter. We are here referring to a structure of possibility that enables but also exceeds any event of encounter that cannot be, therefore, simply considered as the inaugurating moment of a relation to the other. The possibility is there at the originary and constitutive opening of consciousness to the world, to what lies outside and beyond it as its other, thus, it comes from the depths of an "immemorial past", from the originary trace of the Other. Since everything begins with the trace, with what has never been present as such, since meaning arises through chains of traces of traces, the instant of encounter can only occur by virtue of its divisibility and repeatability. It can neither gather itself in a present moment that would imply interaction between subjectivities, each present to themselves and to one another, nor reduce the other to a present and available object. Such reduction coextends with the movement of the reduction of the trace, the movement of totalisation and forgetfulness of the infinite other, who is not phenomenalisable in its entirety. The reduction of the other to the categories of the house signals what is for Lévinas *allergy*, "the inhospitable forgetting of the transcendence of the Other".[101] However, even war and allergy still testify to the very thing they forget, to the radical hospitality that makes every encounter possible.

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[99] Derrida, "Hostipitality", p. 364.
[100] Derrida, "A Word of Welcome", p. 92.
[101] Ibid., p. 95.

How is then the thinking of radical hospitality related to what are today considered matters of urgency? How can it have any relevance to pragmatic situations and what is called *politics of hospitality*? We said before that the general law of hospitality is unthinkable outside historically specific laws, as much as the latter attest to a general structure of excess and lack, since they can never be adequate to what they are examples of. We are referring here to a radical ethics of hospitality (unconditional hospitality) that overflows and exceeds the pragmatics and politics of hospitality (conditional hospitality), while being inconceivable outside the latter. For sure, there is a history of hospitality, a series of inscriptions of pervertibility and perfectability of the law of hospitality, a mad, disjunctive law that emerges through these inscriptions. What is then to be done? How should one respond and how should one justify oneself at the ethical or "mad" (because it can never be based on solid reasoning) moment of decision? There is no moral norm or prescription –as there must not be- to how one should respond to the other. One should be ready to improvise upon and invent the singular and unique instance of encounter, resisting reduction and thematisation that would reject or insult the alterity of the other. The ethics of hospitality in the radical sense is not something formalisable or teachable and this is, precisely, what it "must" not be:

> "Despite all the tensions or contradictions which distinguish it, and despite all the perversions that can befall it, one cannot speak of cultivating an ethic of hospitality. Insofar as it has to do with the *ethos*, that is, the residence, one's home, the familiar place of dwelling, inasmuch as it is a manner of being there, the manner in which we relate to ourselves and to others, to others as our own or as foreigners, *ethics is hospitality*; ethics is so thoroughly coextensive with the experience of hospitality. But for this very reason, and because being at home with oneself (*l'être-soi chez soi – l'ipséité même* –the other within oneself) supposes reception or inclusion of the other which one seeks to appropriate, control, and master according to different modalities of violence, there is a history of hospitality, an always possible perversion of *the* law of hospitality (which can appear unconditional), and of the laws which come to limit and condition its inscription as a law."[102]

This is not to pursue an "ideal" situation that would aim at overcoming what would be set up as a tenable threshold between unconditionality and conditionality through a refinement and the increasing inclusiveness of regulations in the name of good will and of a brotherhood of humanity. The aim is not to establish a programmatic ethics. Of course, matters of urgency such as issues of political asylum, immigration control and political or economic refugees call for immediate response and a new politics of action. However, one should not fail to think upon the theme of hospitality, even if this must never be exhaustively thematised and must be always posed with regard to particular cases and

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[102] Derrida, Jacques, "On Cosmopolitanism" in *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, translated by Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes, with a preface by Simon Critchley and Richard Kearney, London, Routledge, 2001, pp. 16-17.

singular instances. To pose the question of hospitality and the question of the foreigner anew would be to discourage the finality of decisions and the formation of general attitudes towards the other based on convenience and calculation.[103] And again this is not a vision of hospitality or the deployment of a program for it lacks concrete content and goals. It is rather the thought of the fold, that is, the refolding of each singular example and instant of hospitality upon itself and upon the aporetic conditions that make them possible. The thought of the fold, or mark or trace upsets determined and circumscribed localities, identities, positions, in short, everything that points to totality and closure, by unsettling their premises and bringing forward their antinomic conditions. For sure, refolding on an aporetic structure also signifies infinite unfolding. This is also what *a priori* postpones an end, gives the chance of ethics and the promise of more travels, more arrivals and more welcoming(s) to come. Infinitely.

The Ethics of Travel

Syed Manzurul Islam in *The Ethics of Travel, From Marco Polo to Kafka*, of which extensive mention was made in the second chapter, discusses the possibility of an ethics of travel with regard to what he outlines as the two modes of travel or the two figures of the traveller, those pertaining to what he calls *sedentary* and *nomadic* travel. A sedentary traveller is one who moves along rigid lines, crossing fixed boundaries according to an "egological movement" that submits to the dialectic and the economy of the house, failing to encounter otherness and succumbing to the requisite of return, thus, never leaving the conceptual space of home. A sedentary traveller, therefore, does not merit being called a traveller. A nomadic traveller, on the other hand, moves along supple lines

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[103] For instance, such a reductive attitude can be detected in Todorov's *The Conquest of America, The Question of the Other*, in which he formulates a "typology of relations to the other" consisting of three axes, on which the "problematics of alterity" could be located: first, the *axiological* level, that of value judgment, secondly, the *praxeological* level, on which the action of rapprochement or distancing in relation to the other is located and, thirdly, the *epistemic* level, that poses the question of knowledge of the other. Ibid., p. 185. Conquest, love and knowledge, according to Todorov, are elementary forms of conduct in colonial situations operating on these three levels or axes outlined above. Todorov, overtly adopts a typological perspective based at large on two forms of communication: that of the Indians, who favor "exchanges with the world," and that of the Europeans, who favor "exchanges with men". One form is distanced from the other by virtue of "an evolution in the 'technology' of symbolism; this evolution can be reduced, for simplicity's sake, to the advent of writing." Ibid., p. 252. Writing, in favoring improvisation over ritual and a linear over a circular conception of time, enables the perception of the other. His own position, however, is that neither form of communication is superior to the other on the level of moral and social values and that we need both. But Todorov also sustains that Europeans are superior to Indians on the level of human communication, which is awkwardly distinguished from that of "communication with the world". However, does not the latter evoke a kind of romantic search for primitiveness and authenticity? And is not, ultimately, ethics a question for and posed by the Westerner, who appears to be the only one capable of opening oneself to exteriority and of perceiving otherness? Todorov by adhering to traditionally Western polarities cannot by reproduce a highly reductive and axiological discourse on ethics.

deterritorialising geo-political space, breaks away from the authority and the gravitational pull of the house and opens him/herself up to the other. S/he is the one who moves towards the encounter, the one who says "yes" to the other. Islam traces the structural possibility of nomadic travel in an ontology of space, mainly drawing on Heidegger. Accordingly, space is not given beforehand or at hand but rather emerges and is allocated through the circumspective care of Dasein. Dasein finds itself in the world and in space, which thus becomes one of its existential conditions (what is called *spatiality*), but this is a pre-geometrical and pre-geographical space that only takes shape and substance through Dasein's constant involvement with the things of its environment. Space thus becomes a place of dwelling by virtue of Dasein's continuous "de-severing" engagement, which rather than moving between fixed and circumscribed locations, only allocates provisional, partial and multiple spaces. In this way, the distinction between dwelling and travelling cannot be rigidly upheld. This awareness of the nongivenness of space has vast implications for an ethics of travel since it upsets and invalidates what is deemed as natural or self-righteous boundaries enclosing homogeneous spaces.

Tracking back nomadic travel as a fundamental condition of Dasein also upsets its distinction from sedentary travel. Although Islam remarks that these two types of travel are not mutually exclusive in actuality but are rather virtual tendencies[104] and that sedentary travellers "are always haunted by the speed of nomadic travel and the possibility of encounter with the outside",[105] he organises his book around this division, which he both tries to overcome yet cannot leave behind. Yet is it simply a question of overcoming "sedentary" or "metaphysical" travel? What is the ontological and ethical value of "nomadic" travel, insofar as it is designated as a type of travel in disjunction to another? For instance, when Islam bemoans the fact that travel as a genre is located on the rigid line, even though it is still haunted by "speed of the supple line,"[106] it is not clear how these two types are interconnected. How does nomadic travel upset and unsettle sedentary travel? Is it a question of choice or attitude? An immanent possibility waiting to be taken up? To be fair, Islam makes headway in tracing the ontological and ethical condition of travel in the primordial and pre-conceptual spatiality of *Dasein*. However, he compromises to some extent his ethical project, largely because he conceives it as a project:

> "In our case, the affirmative ethics of nomadic travel, which involve saying *Yes* to the other, require overcoming the rigid boundary and the paranoia of othering, which are the

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[104] Islam, *The Ethics of Travel*, p. 58.
[105] Ibid., p. 72.
[106] Ibid., pp. 59-60.

characteristics of sedentary travel. Hence, it was necessary not only to distinguish the nomadic from the sedentary traveller, but also to trace the genealogy of the latter. However, it is worth remembering that nomadic travel is always the virtual possibility of all travel. In practice, one becomes a nomadic or sedentary traveller on one's performative actualisation or repression of this virtual possibility."[107]

If the issue is overcoming rigid boundaries and "othering," for sure, one would have to begin with a sort of division such as that between sedentary and nomadic travel and work one's way with and through it without hasting to brush it aside. Our preoccupation with the metaphysical (or restricted) and generalised notion of travel has shown that these are neither simply opposed nor do they constitute two different types of travel. To claim that nomadic travel is the virtual possibility of all travel should not merely point to a likelihood that could be either actualised or repressed, for it constantly structures and disrupts every experience of travel radically upsetting everything involved with "sedentary" travel (the house as point of departure and final destination, the boundary and so on). So it is not a question of overcoming this distinction but rather of considering the aporetic condition that allowed for it in the first place. It is not a question of discrediting sedentary travel as nontravel in favour of something else. If the distinction cannot be ultimately upheld, it is because both terms are radically and inherently always already disturbed by their self-erasing mode of emergence. Travel always promises the house, it is on this condition, however, this is an impossible promise for the house constitutes itself through the promise of the encounter with the other; it is already taken over by what is other than itself; it can never be itself. As Lévinas contends, "the possibility for the home to open to the Other is as essential to the essence of the home as closed doors and windows."[108]

The notion of the house as destined to and responsible for the infinitely other attests to the condition of an ethics of travel. This is the theme of Islam's book, which he explores in relation to literary works such as Kafka's "Before the Law" or Foster's *A Passage to India* and travel narratives, principally Marco Polo's *The Travels*. His analysis of *A Passage to India* poignantly outlines two figures of travellers, Adela, the sedentary traveller and Mrs Moore, the true, nomadic traveller. Upon the summon of the other, these two characters respond differently. Adela in the Marabar caves scene, which stages the possibility of an encounter, proves "unprepared" to endure the face-to-face with otherness, rushing "hysterically" out of the cave, withdrawing behind the boundary that divides Occident and Orient. Mrs Moore is the one who makes "the genuine passage of a

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[107] Ibid., p. 210.

traveller".[109] She is the one who says "yes" to the summons of the other giving herself up to the force that breaks down her subjectivity and flattens any sort of rigid boundary. Islam, in describing what happened or might have happened in these scenes, necessarily thematises what precisely cannot tolerate thematisation: *responsibility* and *ethics*. Who can attest to whether an ethical response ever took place or not in an encounter between two subjectivities that is infinitely secret? Who can certify the coming or not of the other? Of course, Islam can do so here since it is literature he is referring to, to what receives and tolerates everything, to what "legitimately" carries an excess of meaning without facing the danger of reducing or offending the other in every step of the way, for the other here is not a person; s/he has no face. But what happens when a discourse on the other makes claim to an accurate representation of reality? What of the question of an ethics of travel when it comes to travel writing, which by definition thematises the other?

We argued that the aporetic conditions of travel structure and, to be sure, disrupt the totalising forces of the travel text. Following de Man, we claimed that the essentially allegorical mode of the travel narrative consists in a discrepant and aberrant structure of excess and lack that gathers the text's signification together in a way that also allows it to overflow towards new meaning and reference. The disjunctive mode of the text's coming to being is endlessly repeated and reproduced through the text's imbalanced and irreconcilable yet indissociable constative and performative functions. Thus the travel text's descriptive, informative and referential functions, by way of which the other is thematised, are constantly disrupted by its performative, self-reflective or self-referential functions. Performance and contention continuously undo each other in the allegorical trajectory of the text, that produces more meaning and more reference, never allowing it to signify as such in a present moment in any given context. We called this *the promise of the text*, which more than giving the chance for what Islam calls the "supple line", is always already traversed by it. Travel narratives may engender totalising readings and representations of the other but it is precisely their inherent antinomies and aporetic formation that make them both readable and unreadable. The text's essential *unreadability*, that is, its resistance to a complete and totalising reading and to its reduction to contextual determinations is the text's own condition of *readability*, what promises what cannot be delivered and what is yet to come. This openness to a future arrival is the travel text's ethical condition that shares the same structure of possibility with the experience of travel.

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[108] Quoted from *Totality and Infinity* in "A Word of Welcome", p. 96.
[109] Islam, pp. 50-55.

Travel *and/as* writing as *the-promise-of-the-other-to-come* attests to an aporetic law of textual production and to an originary openness, to hospitality in the radical sense that makes all sorts of hospitality and hostility possible.

The awareness or non forgetting of the irreducibility of the other and of the impossible task of the travel narrative, not solely because of lack of competence or acuteness and not simply due to prejudice or ideology but for structural and essential reasons, gives the only chance for an *ethics of travel*. Of course, there are texts that manifest this awareness and that resist reduction and closure when it comes to the task of giving an account of an encounter with the (cultural) other. In the previous chapter we mentioned Derrida's *Moscou Aller-Retour* and his refusal to produce a *récit de voyage* about his journey to Moscow. Another example is Roland Barthes' *Empire of Signs*, in which in order not "to compromise no real country by [his] fantasy" he invents "Japan", a fictive nation.[110] Is this what one must do, to refuse giving an account in order not to reduce or compromise? Certainly not. But Derrida and Barthes do give accounts, do speak of journeys to Moscow and Japan and do produce knowledge and reference. To promise not to promise a *récit* when and in giving one, far from being inconsistent with what one does, far from being a "performative contradiction", is to attest to travel writing's condition of (im)possibility, to its double bind or essential aporia. Rather than having a paralysing effect, rather than making one turn its back on the other, one should be able to endure this impossible passage to a final destination, to keep promising and waiting for an unexpected arrival.

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[110] "I can also –though in no way claiming to represent or to analyze reality itself (these being the major gestures of Western discourse)- isolate somewhere in the world (*faraway*) a certain number of features (a term deployed in linguistics), and out of these features deliberately form a system. It is this system which I shall call: Japan." Barthes, Roland, *Empire of Signs*, translated by Richard Howard, New York, Hill and Wang, A Division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1982, p. 3.

Concluding

In treating questions of travel, especially at a time when travel is changing on an unprecedented scale and with increasingly rapid rhythms, at a time when the so-called *globalisation*, the satellite, the internet, new international configurations and the ethical-political institutions that support them transfigure and reinstate traditional notions of *Oikos* and sites of identification (such as the nation-state, or any type of community), it becomes more pertinent and pressing than ever to relocate "travel" in its history and semantic genealogy and to review its conditions of possibility. Even before asking what is happening with/to travel today, it is more urgent than ever to ask *what travel is*. The form of this question pertains, of course, to an ontological investigation and since ontology inquires into the question of meaning it already presupposes a *phenomenological* stand. So the investigation becomes a questioning of *what is the meaning of travel* and thus *what is the origin of the sense of travel*. Notwithstanding that one cannot advance without also inquiring into *what is the origin of sense* and *what is the sense of origin*, the phenomenological method of "questioning back" would aim at reaching the originary sense of travel. When was the first time that "travel" made sense, that is, when was its inaugurating and constitutive moment? Of course, this could not be an inquiry into an empirical or historical event, nor could it look into dates, places, give names. In other words, it would not establish a *hic et nunc*.

Inquiring into the meaning of travel can only take place within an empirical horizon, starting from examples of travel, which already presuppose a general meaning to begin with. This meaning that someone has in advance is what is called here the *exemplarity of the example*, what exceeds and overflows singular instances and attestations, what makes the experience of travel recognizable as such. It is this structure of overflowing that gives a sense, an ideal dimension but also the historicity of travel that interests us here. This signifies that there is no first time, no assignable origin, no concrete or transcendental content beyond all instances, but a certain signifying movement that becomes the "nonorigin" of origin. The impossibility of a first time, of a constitutive moment that will have made a meaning manifest and its emergence, instead, out of repetitive inscriptions of nonpresent elements brings out the essential self-interruption of the phenomenological motif of experience. Everything then signifies through this fracture that inflicts meaning with an essential figurality. Insofar as the trace is the condition for the

self-subversive occurrence of meaning beyond presence and absence, beyond appearance and nonappearance, it already bears a structure of *spectrality* or *virtuality*. Never quite being there, it is always other than itself.

So if one seeks to understand how travel operates today in the topology of "cyberspace", how it is reformulated by new technologies in transportation and communication and new modes and contexts of cultural encounter that confer upon it an increasingly "virtual" character, one can only do so by exploring its conditions of signification. In such consideration the stakes are very high since they have a bearing on politics and ethics. The question of space and boundary, which is indissociable from travel, is urgently posed in the age of *globalisation* and of the advent of what can be termed *democratisation.* (Western democracy, if such a thing exists, fosters new forms of humanism sustained and, for sure perverted, by such institutions and discourses as those on human rights, crimes against humanity, international law, forgiveness and so forth.) In a fashion, the old structures of *Oikos* are being exported in an unprecedented way but, by the same token, are also exceeded and subverted. *Oikos* has never been more powerful and more elusive. This is why an exploration of the notions of home and away is urgently called for and needs to be acutely tackled. It becomes then a matter of close analysis or reading in the broad sense, texts, contexts, institutions, attitudes, of exploring signifying conditions and delimitations, of looking into genealogies but also inventing upon singular instances that call for decisions and new responsibilities. Nothing of the above is given as such to cognition for there is always a disruptive residue of meaning that one cannot account for.

This is more poignantly shown and best formalised in the consideration of travel writing, which by definition is a representational discourse on the other that more often than not is also reductive and authoritative. In the face of the other, traveller and travel writer are summoned to take a stand, to make choices, decisions, on the whole, to respond in some way. An event of travel, however, is not simply reducible either to a present or to a text. Because the other exceeds knowledge, because an encounter never simply occurs in the immediacy of a present, any pronouncement on and attitude towards the other is disrupted from the start because it is always excessive and lacking. This is to say, it is at once too determining and too elliptical. The awareness of this "fact", however. need not bring about paralysis in the face of choices and decisions. On the contrary, it calls for more

thinking, more reading, for responsible action taking, which always implies opening up and paying attention to the other without prescribed finalities. There is no such thing as an easy decision for the latter would be the application of knowledge or the deployment of a programme. A decision, in order to be one, must go beyond knowledge and certainty. This is not to say that one should not know what one is doing or talking about in making a decision but rather that there can be no total or self-righteous justification for it.[1] *Undecidability* does not suspend action but is rather the condition of decision, that is, a responsible decision, if such a thing exists. Any action calls for a decision, even if it is the decision not to act. Any performance of writing already implies questions of inclusion and exclusion, that is, the necessary selections and omissions that circumscribe and establish a theme. But since, as was argued, thematisation always implies reduction and totalisation and thus a disruptive supplement that already discredits the former, the travel text becomes infinitely readable and unreadable as such. It becomes susceptible to more interpretations, more readings, more interruptions. This is the ethical condition not simply of travel but also of travel writing: the openness of travel *and/as* writing to the other (be it a country, a person, a language, a meaning), the self-deconstruction of any authoritative or totalising standing. Travel *and* writing then in an essential way take place on the initiative of the other; they signify on the condition of a hospitable opening (notwithstanding that this can always turn out a hostile "reception," but a reception all the same), of the *promise-of-the-other-to-come.* [2]

"Travel" here is used as a generalised term or name for an economy of (semantic) movement formalised under the structures of *Oikos* and away. It is first through the formalisation of traditional couples and their reinscription in a general economy of meaning that hierarchies and their appropriative and hegemonic effects are measured and disrupted also giving the chance for new possibilities of resistance and action. The self-disruption of the phenomenological motif of travel also constitutes its tropological and ethical conditions. What is at stake is a new *topology* of the event of travel, a topology

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[1] "Decision, an ethical or a political responsibility, is absolutely heterogeneous to knowledge. Nevertheless, we have to know as much as possible in order to ground our decision. But even if it is grounded in knowledge, the moment I take a decision it is a leap, I enter a heterogeneous space and that is the condition of responsibility." Derrida, Jacques, "Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility" in *Questioning Ethics, Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, edited by Richard Kearny and Mark Dooley, London, Routledge. 1999, p.73.

[2] "Just as there would be no responsibility or decision without some self-interruption, neither would there be any hospitality; as master and host, the self, in welcoming the other, must interrupt or divide himself or herself. This division is the condition of hospitality." Ibid., p.81.

constantly restructured, perpetually displacing, blurring and giving new senses to borders. An event of travel is always singular and excessive. This structure of excess that interests us here can be formalised into a *counter law* before the law (of the house) and all conditional laws (of houses, nation-states and so on), which always also implies a certain lack. This is to say that the meaning of an event of travel can neither be totally reduced to its context of occurrence, to conditional laws, nor to a general law or regulative principle given beforehand. The impossibility of a first time that would have given evidence of a sense of travel and would have placed it on a predetermined trajectory or destination retraceable by genealogical investigation, signifies that, although such an event is to an extent formalisable in its conditions of signification, it never simply occurred as such but was necessarily posited and thought *post-factum*. Lacking thus an absolute origin, meaning survives by its own pervertibility, which is its very law. This aporetic law that puts repetition or iteration before determined senses of travel is what we have described as its tropological or quasi-metaphorical and ethical condition, what lays down the path of travel and the way to the other: "the *aporia* is not simply paralysis, but the *aporia* of the *non-way* is the condition of walking: if there was no *aporia* we wouldn't walk, we wouldn't find our way; path-breaking implies *aporia*. This impossibility to find one's way is the condition of ethics."[3] Finding one's way home implies losing one's home. Then the loss of the house is not merely the condition of travel but also the condition of the house itself. If the house is necessarily posited after the fact of travel as an idealising effect of iteration, always at work but never quite there, the house, what is most real and familiar, what is reality itself, becomes a *spectre* haunting and inhabiting the course of travel. In this sense, spectrality is the condition of reality. Just as properness becomes the effect of metaphoricity in a radical sense, just as the phantasm of *monolanguage*, of the desired and promised *One* of language, emerges by virtue of *translatability* (for it is out of the multiplicity and translatability of languages that both *a* language or absolute idiom and, hence, languages become thinkable), *house* and *travel* in the traditional sense become effects of the itinerary.

This thesis has performed its own trajectory coming together around the theme of travel, a writing on travel that proved to be primarily a journey along impossible paths or aporias. We set off with metaphor, which far more than a deviation from literalness was shown to be the irreducible and general condition of meaning. The deconstruction of the metaphysical couple of proper and metaphorical meaning proved to be co-extensive with

that of *Oikos* and travel. Metaphor and travel were reconsidered nondialectically, in a way that exceeds their submission to the exigency of recuperation of and return to properness dictated by the restricted eco-nomy of the house as the proper place and origin of meaning. This thinking of metaphor and/as travel, however, in no way signals a breaking away from home; the house cannot be left behind in favour of a "homeless" wandering for this would be a senseless wandering. In this thinking of travel and metaphor, which is not simply another way of approaching these notions but attempts at pointing to their essential presuppositions, house and properness re-emerge from/as a place of withdrawal, that is, as a (non)originary and unprecedented movement, a movement that rather than mediating between given places engenders senses of place. But even if the house can no longer be considered as a fixed place of origin, it is still promised. Travel is in/on this condition: the promise of the house but as another place, always already given or promised by the other. House and travel as the promise of encounter with otherness haunt each other along an itinerary with no origin and no *telos*. Thus, the house as a place of identification, the place that gives what is called maternal or paternal language, the motherland or fatherland, arises as a spectrum, as what can always come back, whose visitation is always awaited if only as phantasm, that which exceeds the opposition between presence and absence. Travel is put on course by the promise of a mother or father tongue, the promise of translation into a pure idiom, for sure, an impossible but necessary promise, an impossibility *qua* necessity. We dream of speaking this pure idiom, of at last speaking this language that always comes from the other, which we can never own. We dream of this embrace of the father, of the promise of the father to come even as phantasm, the father of whom the memory we cherish from immemorial depths, given over to him at once his survivors, hosts and hostages. A father who dies and is resurrected at any given instant.

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[3] Ibid., p.73.

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