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**Speech, Writing and Phenomenology  
Derrida's Reading of Husserl**

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## Abstract of Thesis

This thesis is a study of the two major texts of Derrida on Husserl's phenomenology. Engaging in a close reading of *Introduction to the Origin of Geometry* (1962) and *Speech and Phenomena* (1967), this thesis tries to bring together, and reconstruct, under the title of speech and writing, those Husserlian questions which never stop occupying, motivating and intriguing Derrida's thought, from his student studies and the *Introduction to Rogues* (2003). These were the questions or themes of origin and of historicity, of scientific objectivity and truth, of reason and responsibility, as well as of the living present, of living speech, of egological subjectivity and the alter ego. The question that this thesis raises is the following: why are these Husserlian themes of historicity, of the idea of the infinite task, of the living speech, etc., not simply the first objects or targets, subsequently to be abandoned, of Derridean deconstruction? Why is deconstruction, the event, the advent or invention of deconstruction, irreducible to some methodical or theoretical procedure, or to an operation of problematization or delegitimation of transcendental questioning?

As we show in the first part of the thesis, these questions were investigated and developed by Husserl as a "responsible" response to the *Crisis* of the European sciences and humanity. Our investigation into Husserl's teleological discourse of history and responsibility shows that this crisis, which is anything but an empirical accident, threatens the very thing that Husserl wants to keep safe and sound (or to *immunize*, as Derrida writes in *Rogues*): the transcendental freedom of an egological subjectivity. For Husserl the possibility of crisis (of the subject) remains linked with the moment of truth, i.e., with the production and tradition of scientific objectivities, and *in fact* has an *essential* link to writing. Husserl's teleological determination of writing as *phonetic* writing is an attempt to limit, tame and economize the essential ambiguity of writing: it threatens with passivity, forgetfulness and irresponsibility the very thing that makes possible, i.e., the transcendental and ideal community of a we-human-subjects-investigators-responsible-for-the-history-of-truth/reason.

In the second part of the thesis, following Derrida's reading of Husserl in *Speech and Phenomena*, in *Form and Meaning*, *Signature Event Context*, and *Eating Well*, we show that Husserl's phenomenology of language and of *phone* is also a great philosophy of the transcendental subject. The essential and phenomenological distinctions between nonlinguistic and linguistic signs, sense and meaning, expression and indication, which are at the centre of Husserl's doctrine of signification, have also a teleological character: they are destined to define the limit, the *arche* and *telos* of language, as human language or human (i.e., phonetic) writing. In our reading we give great emphasis to Derrida's phenomenological analysis and deconstruction of this unique experience of auto-affection, the experience of *hearing oneself speak*. This is the experience of the human subject, the experience of a free, voluntary, auto-affecting egological subjectivity conscious of its voice, its speech and its humanity.

Denying the possibility of phonic auto-affection of the human subject, in favour of the hetero-affection of writing was never the point of Derridean deconstruction. Deconstruction, the concept of writing or *arche*-writing, the graphics of differance, of iterability, are not imposed from the outside on Husserl's discourse on the human subject, the *zoon logon echon*. Rather, phenomenology itself interrupts or deconstructs itself, according to Derrida, as soon as it addresses the question of time and of the other, of the *alter ego*. Deconstruction was never only a theoretico-philosophical, or academic affair. In our conclusion, we argue for the right of deconstruction, i.e., the right or demand to deconstruction. This right or demand to deconstruction, to ask questions about truth, consciousness, language, responsibility and so forth - so many powers, capacities or possibilities of which the animal is said to be deprived and poor - and the right or demand to do so performatively, by writing, by transforming and producing new analyses, new events and texts, new events of thought in the history of the concepts of man, of truth, of the subject and of human rights, is according to Derrida, an ethical *and* political demand.



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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

Derrida throughout his work shows a continuous and insistent preoccupation with Husserlian phenomenology. From his student years and his first publications to his latest texts, Derrida persistently repeats the same great Husserlian questions, the questions or themes of historicity, of scientific objectivity, of responsibility, of reason, of living speech (and of the living present.) In his first publications in the 1960's all these questions were grouped together, and reinterpreted, under the title of writing or arche-writing, the graphics of differance, of iterability, and the supplement. And in *Rogues*, in the second *Essay on Reason*, forty years later, in 2003, Derrida calls his readers to "hear today what Husserl said then" and tries to situate his duty or responsibility, as an heir of Husserl's phenomenology and phenomenological reason, with the greatest difficulty. The question that this thesis raises is the following: why are the Husserlian themes of historicity, of responsibility, of truth and of the infinite task (first part of the thesis), of living speech, of intentionality, of sense and meaning (second part), not simply the first objects or targets, subsequently to be abandoned, of Derridean deconstruction? Why is deconstruction, the event, the advent or invention of deconstruction, irreducible to some methodical or theoretical procedure, or to an operation of problematization or delegitimation of transcendental questioning? What does deconstruction have to do with this "excessive fidelity", that Derrida acknowledges, "to a certain phenomenological inspiration"?

Derrida's first work on Husserl *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Phenomenology* was a comprehensive study of almost all of Husserl's published, and also some of unpublished, work. It was a "student study", a dissertation submitted "for a diploma of advanced studies" in 1953-54 at the *Ecole Normale*. It was the time when phenomenology gained an access and a sort of legitimacy in France and in the French Universities mainly through the phenomenology of perception of Merleau-Ponty and Sartrean ontology. With *The Problem of Genesis* Derrida introduces and gives privilege to those aspects of Husserl's work and to those questions that the then "dominant versions" of French phenomenology had overlooked or indeed seemed to avoid. These were the questions pertaining to the phenomenology of genetic constitution: of the genesis of mathematical objects, of the genesis of objectivity and science, but also the questions of tradition and historicity of the sciences and of ideal objectivity *in general* (thus, not only in the sciences, but also in politics and in ethics). In 1962 Derrida published a translation and an Introduction to Husserl's *Origin of Geometry*, a text which he had already read, commented and critiqued, not so "respectfully", we must recognize, in *chapter 9* of *The Problem of Genesis*. In

this *Introduction* Derrida offers a more “respectful” and more nuanced reading of Husserl’s phenomenology of historicity, while emphasising its originality and radical rationality.

Derrida has often insisted on the political and strategic character of his decision to privilege the genetic and “historico-teleological route” of phenomenology. In some “autobiographical” interviews about his first years at the *Ecole Normale* (“this strange institution and the no less strange ‘community’ that it housed,”) Derrida often refers to the philosophical and political map of France in the 1950’s and 60’s and to his philosophical or political “friendships” which made him to “read intensely” Husserl without or in opposition to the readings of Merleau-Ponty and Sartre. With regard to these political friendships Derrida refers to the names of Trun-Duc Thao and Althusser (who invited Derrida in 1963-64 to give his first courses at the Ecole.) His critical engagement with Thao’s Marxist approach of phenomenology in “Phenomenology and Dialectical Materialism” (1949), however, did not bring Derrida closer to Althusser, but rather prompted questions that seemed to pass over Althusser’s “concept of *history*” and “*scientific Marxism*”. As Derrida notes in these interviews in *Positions* (1972), *Politics and Friendship* (1989), *The Taste for the Secret* (1997) and elsewhere, these were precisely Husserl’s critical, transcendental questions about the conditions of possibility of scientific objectivity, of truth, of history, etc.

Derrida’s initial engagement with Husserl’s questioning of the origin and tradition of the ideal objectivities of the sciences has left an ineffaceable trace on a great number of questions that we find in Derrida’s *corpus*: the question of the historicity of ideal objects of the sciences and of literature *in general* (but also of the *nondiscursive* idealities of architecture, of plastic arts, etc), the question of writing and *living* speech, of linguistics and *grammatology*, of *signature*, *event* and the *context*, of archives, of truth and of the *Enlightenment to come*, and especially the question of the irreducible alterity that divides and defers the self-identity of the origin (of the living present), a question without which neither ethics nor politics of “deconstruction” would be imaginable or indeed possible.

This Husserlian trace or inheritance is difficult to miss even if we consider the questions, the difficulties, and *aporias* (Derrida will “no longer dare” call them “problems”<sup>1</sup>) which will not stop occupying him till his last work. These are the *aporias* of responsibility, of invention, of democracy, of hospitality, of the gift and of forgiveness, and so forth, which are described by Derrida as experiences of the law that binds the *possible* with the *impossible* and commands our thinking. As we are going to show, it is in the space of transcendental phenomenology, of the

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<sup>1</sup> Derrida, Jacques. *As If Were Possible*, published in *Negotiations*, translated by Elizabeth Rottenberg, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2002, p. 349

phenomenological question of the transcendental “*condition of possibility*”, that we find Derrida for the first time to speak of a certain “*condition of impossibility*” and to engage himself in this “*aporetology*” or “*aporetography*” which links deconstruction to “the dominant thinking of the *possible* in philosophy”. In our reading of Derrida here, deconstruction, the deconstruction of the powerful concept of the *possible* in phenomenology, turns up as a certain “*aporetic experience of the impossible*”. This thesis will maintain that the question for Derrida was never simply “whether deconstruction, the procedures of deconstruction is successful?” This question would suppose that deconstruction is a response, and moreover a *possible* response, an already articulated organization of response, to a problem. The question, as has been formulated in numerous texts, and precisely in reference to phenomenology, for Derrida is “*is deconstruction possible, of the order of the possible*”?<sup>2</sup>

Of course, the claim that an understanding of Derrida’s subsequent work and thinking demands a careful consideration of his engagement with Husserl is not only ours. Rudolph Bernet in his highly influential article “*On Derrida’s Introduction to Husserl’s Origin of Geometry*”, (1989) Paola Marrati in her *Genesis and Trace* (1998), Leonard Lawlor in *Husserl and Derrida* (2002), and Joshua Kates in *Essential History* (2005), trying to be faithful both to Derrida and Husserl, have, more or less successfully, established in the literature the indebtedness of Derridean deconstruction to Husserl’s investigations concerning the question of history, his analyses and descriptions of the movement of temporalization, of the constitution of the ego and of the alter ego, etc. As far as the question of history and of the deconstructive critique of the metaphysical concept of history is concerned, the above readers of Derrida have identified in his work “a thinking of another dimension of history” (Marrati, pp. 20, 24, 31), a thinking of an “other sense of history” (Lawlor, p. 132) and “the moment when Derrida decides he wishes to depart”, to “overcome history, or outdo history” “turn against” and “contest” Husserl’s historicity (Kates pp. 210, 211, 213). These commentators have this in common: they all refer to the decisive role of the infinite Idea in Husserl’s phenomenology of history. Marrati finds the Idea *too* idealistic, *hyperbolically* idealistic and sees Derrida as breaking with this idealism already since his *Problem of Genesis* (1953-4). Kates and Lawlor are in agreement with Marrati on this point, except for the fact that Derrida “contests” the Idea, successfully according to them, not in the *Problem of Genesis*, not even in the *Genesis and Structure* (1959) or in the *Introduction to the Origin* (1962), but in his 1967 texts, especially in *Speech and Phenomena* and in *Of Grammatology*. According to Lawlor, Derrida “abandons the Husserlian notion of horizon” (p.

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<sup>2</sup> Derrida, Jacques, *The University Without Condition*, published in *Without Alibi*, edited and translated by Peggy Kamuf, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2002, p. 234. See also *Negotiations*, pp. 192-5, 358ff.

139) and comes up with an “other sense of history”. In this “other sense”: history is nothing but “a series of different *eschatoi* and *teloi*,” “history no longer makes or has sense”, “history, in other words, is *devoid of direction; there are only histories*” (Lawlor, 1996, p. 132). In this thesis we will claim, on the contrary, that Derrida has nowhere written that the notion of horizon, or of the *Telos* must be abandoned, or that there is no “heading” or “direction in history”. In this thesis, engaging in a close reading of Derrida’s texts, we will try to be more sensitive toward certain aspects of the *deconstructive rethinking* and *reworking* of the idealist notion of the *Idea*, which can allow us to hear the Derridean *warnings*, for example in *The Other Heading*, with regard to those discourses which, without second thought, proceed to oppose straightforwardly and head on the *Idea*, the idea of the *Telos* or of the heading, and announce triumphantly its abandonment. It is out of fear of seeing return the “*worst*”, that Derrida in *Rogues*, and precisely referring to the *Idea in the Kantian sense*, writes “I cannot swear that I will not one day give in to it”.<sup>3</sup>

This thesis has two parts, each dealing and focusing respectively on the two major Derridean texts on Husserl, the *Introduction to the Origin of Geometry* (1962) the *Speech and Phenomena* (1967) We are not going to argue for some kind of development, continuity and discontinuity, between the 1962 and 1967 work, nor for some kind of periodization between, for example, pre-deconstructive and deconstructive texts. The method of reading adopted is one that mistrusts such a periodization, and instead tries to respect the stages and sequences of Derrida’s arguments, while remaining attentive to the *letter* of the text: its vocabulary, terminology and conceptuality. This is also the only way we could remain faithful to the themes and the audacity of a thought which makes its arguments, gestures, and lines move not only from one book to the next, not only, that is, within a book, a supposedly coherent whole, but at times within a single paragraph, or in single footnote.

The first part of the thesis engages in a close, patient and “dry” reading of the *Introduction* and focuses upon certain Husserlian questions and gestures, around the concepts of historicity, responsibility, subjectivity, writing, the *Idea* of an infinite task, which consistently keep their importance for Derrida in texts written at the time and long after his first publication in 1962. In the second part we read Derrida’s *Speech and Phenomena* and we follow closely, again in a classical style of commentary, Derrida’s re-inscription and re-interpretation of the great Husserlian themes of intentionality, of meaning (*Bedeutungsinention*), of the transcendental ego and the alter ego, particularly in reference to and in the context of Husserl’s *Logical Investigations* and his doctrine of language and signification.

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<sup>3</sup> Derrida, Jacques, *Rogues, Two Essays on Reason*, translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2005, p. 83.

We will start our reading of Derrida's reading of the *Origin of Geometry* and with a claim found also in "'Genesis and Structure' and Phenomenology" (1959). The historico-teleological route of genetic phenomenology is not merely one route among others: with the thematization of the transcendental and teleological historicity of the sciences, phenomenology has reached a new form of radicality. According to Derrida, the originality and singularity of the *Origin* consists in the incomparable rigour with which Husserl thinks and links the question of historicity of ideal objectivity and of the sciences with the question of responsibility. As is well known, the motif of the *Rückfrage*, of the radical historical investigation of the origin and tradition of scientific reason, the prescription of a rigorous and total repetition (or *reactivation*) of the tradition's origin, was perceived and developed by Husserl as a matter of utmost philosophical urgency, as a responsible response to "the crisis of European sciences and humanity". And it is, indeed, as a response to the crisis of European reason, and from the point of view of a *teleology* of Reason, that is, of the *infinite task* of Reason, that Husserl relates the adventures and misadventures of the transcendental motif (recounted in *Crisis*: from Galileo and Descartes, to Hume and to Kant). Phenomenological reason is presented in *Krisis* as a criticism of historic reason (and in particular of this rationalism of the *Aufklärerei*, of which Husserl speaks in such a pejorative fashion in the *Vienna Lecture*), a criticism made *in the name of* unconditional truth (*unbedingte Wahrheit*) and of the man of infinite tasks. However, a critical evaluation of the *Origin* and its singularity would remain incomplete, according to Derrida, without reference to the "proper transcendental step" which Husserl took with the intentional analysis of *writing*. This step enabled him to attain a new form of radicality, and to situate the question of writing at the heart of what ties the question of historicity and of responsibility of the sciences together.

Not only in the *Introduction* but also half a century latter, in *Rogues* (2003), and in another context, Derrida speaks again, *in the name of* reason and of the "Enlightenment to come", and with regard to the radical and "unconditional rationalism" of phenomenological reason, of a duty and a task, of the responsibility of the heir, of the responsible guardian of this heritage of phenomenology and of phenomenological reason. Should one assume, and how does one assume this responsibility, how does one respond? Does one remain faithful, does one respond faithfully by repeating or by breaking with, by continuing and reactivating the Husserlian gestures or by opposing and displacing then? Is there an alternative or a double bind? How did Derrida respond to Husserl's *Krisis*, to the transcendental questioning of historicity and Husserl's discourse on responsibility, to the Husserlian call to a philosophical and European responsibility in the experience of a crisis of reason and of the sciences?

Already in his 1953-4 dissertation Derrida has expressed his suspicions on the concept of “crisis” and on Husserl’s *teleological* discourse on history which accompanies it. The very idea of crisis in the history of reason seemed very problematic to him: how can there be a crisis of the transcendental idea? How is it possible? The teleological idea which supports Husserl’s thematization of transcendental history should withstand any empirical historical threat. According to the young Derrida, Husserl could maintain his discourse on crisis without contradicting the premises of his transcendental phenomenology, only if he assigned an empirical signification to it: although the teleological idea which opens and orients all history is *transcendental*, its crisis is *empirical*. Even if Husserl is right in his diagnosis of a sickness of European society and culture, the teleological idea and the distinction between transcendental history and empirical crisis, which guide his historical analyses, *prevent* him from thinking the “sense of any crisis and of any history”<sup>4</sup> and hence, as Paola Marrati writes, from thinking “*another dimension of history.*” (Marrati, 20, 22, 31)

Our reading does not start with Derrida’s very first text on Husserl *The Problem of Genesis*. We can justify our beginning with Derrida’s *Introduction* by pointing out a) that in the first “problematization” of the concept of “genesis” the themes of speech and writing are absent and b) the change of attitude towards Husserl’s phenomenology of history. Derrida had not yet (in 1953-4) acknowledged the new form of radicality that is attained by Husserl’s phenomenology of history. With regard to the latter, Derrida’s *Introduction* can be seen as a self-critical response to his own earlier reservations and criticisms in the *Problem of Genesis*, namely, that Husserl’s thematization of transcendental genesis or historicity fails because of the very problematic status of the teleological idea within phenomenology.

In the **first chapter** of the thesis we will try to bring out Derrida’s reading of Husserl’s phenomenology of history as a training in anti-historicism (that is to say in anti-relativism, anti-empiricism and anti-skepticism). As Derrida demonstrated in his *Genesis and Structure*, the systematic and rigorous critique of historicism, from the *Philosophy as Rigorous Science* to the *Origin*, was for Husserl a matter of theoretical or scientific rigor, the first axiom of any problematic of scientificity, objectivity, or truth. In the *Origin*, moreover, the critique of historicism is articulated along with Husserl’s critique of objectivism. According to Derrida, this **double critique of historicism and objectivism (section 1)** is the necessary condition for an access to the unique historicity of the ideal objectivities of science, to the *sense* of their origin and

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<sup>4</sup> Derrida, Jacques, *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl’s Philosophy*, translated by Marian Hobson, London. The University of Chicago Press, 2003, p. 171, see also p. 154.

traditionality. It is only by going beyond the alternative between historicism (Dilthey) and objectivism (Galileo) that Husserl will be able to penetrate from *within* the *internal* history of geometrical ideal objectivities and describe the concrete conditions of its possibility. These conditions of possibility, however, are not only concrete (since they are always, as Derrida writes in the *Introduction*, *experienced* under the form of *horizon*) but also *a priori* and *teleological*. It is this reduction of history to an *eidos* or to a *telos* which bothers Derrida in the *Problem of Genesis*, but which in the *Introduction to the Origin* is defended in its rights and dignity. The conclusion which Derrida was able to draw from this thematization of historicity, from Husserl's description in the *Origin* of the "apodictic invariants" and "teleological absolutes of historicity", is indeed different in his *Introduction*. It will be argued that the irreducible and "originary contamination" between the empirical and the transcendental, which Derrida had already described in *Problem of Genesis* (pp. xv, xl, 159) and allowed him to define the limits of phenomenology and to call for a new ontology (even though it is not of a Heideggerian inspiration), does not go totally unrecognized by Husserl in his teleologico-transcendental investigation of the origin of geometry.

In the first chapter we also engage with Derrida's argument in the *Introduction* that **the sense and the method of the Rückfrage (section 2)**, and the historical character of the reactivating reduction, must be investigated anew, clarified and even rehabilitated. It will be shown that Husserl's methodological reflections on the eidetic and transcendental reductions, and on their essential interplay (*Wechselspiel*) are seen by Derrida in 1962 in a completely different light. In contrast to previous assessments of the phenomenological method, notably that of Levinas who denounces the *geschichtlose naivete* of the transcendental reduction, Derrida, looking for "its most radical implications", shows that the method of the reductions, as it is renewed in historical phenomenology, "is not the neutral preface or perambulatory exercise of thought. Rather, it is *thought itself in the consciousness of its complete historicity*."

In section 2 we argue that the history of geometry, which Husserl thematizes in the *Origin*, as a *non-empirical* but "*institutive history*", as the originary production of sense and its traditional sedimentation, is, according to Derrida, the profound area where *sense* is indissociable from *being*, where the *de facto* is indissociable from the *de jure*. What Derrida failed to see in his earlier dissertation is that what Husserl reveals in his inquiry into the genesis of geometry is precisely the "*eidetic singularity*" of the "*first time of geometry*", of the originary act of geometry, and the indissociability of *sense* and *fact*, of the *transcendental* and *wordly* origin, in the singularity or oneness of the instituting act of the protogeometer.

In **section 3** we deal with Husserl's treatment in the *Origin* of the question of **intersubjectivity, speech and writing** as the common, interrelated and concrete conditions of



**Objectivity and traditionality** (or historicity). Considering Husserl's description of the apriori structures of historicity, Derrida introduces a set of stipulations with regard to the *transcendental* role or function of language and of writing. Derrida shows that to the extent that speech, and especially writing, does not simply come to express, signify or record, but to produce and ground truth's Objectivity, it is not merely an empirical constituted body (*Körper*), a constituted means in the service of truth. Taken in its pure intentionality, it is also a properly constituting flesh or body (*Leib*), and thereby the *sine qua non* condition of Objectivity's *internal* completion. It is the indissociability of *Verleiblichung* and *Verkörperung* in the constitutive function of language (spoken or written) that interests Derrida and leads him to claim that "the transcendental must be rethought". According to Derrida, Husserl's intentional analysis of language and writing brings indeed a breakthrough in the phenomenological studies of constitution. Derrida does not break with Husserl, and Kates is right when he emphasises that, on the contrary, Derrida's defence of Husserl's late history program (against Ricoeur, Merleau-Ponty and Cavailles) is a major contribution to phenomenological discourse generally. In this section we also pay attention to a crucial difficulty (underestimated by Kates): The theme of "traditional sedimentation of sense" which Husserl introduces in the *Origin* is not easily reconciled with an axiomatic which, as we are going to see in the second part of the thesis, has dominated phenomenology since the *Logical Investigations*, namely the *de jure* anteriority of *sense* in relation to *meaning* and *expression*, that is, in relation to the *act* of language whose own value or productivity is limited to that of giving conceptual expression to sense.

In **section 4** we deal with Husserl's **archeo-teleological doctrine of tradition** and what he calls "the universal *a priori* of history", "the immense structural *a priori*" of all traditional culture, i.e., *the historic present*, they are at the heart of the *Origin*. We will engage with some essential distinctions ("real" and "ideal object", "bound ideality" and "free ideality") and some more "formal and radical generalities" which, according to Husserl, if correctly investigated will lead us to recognize the phenomenological Absolute, the *ground* of all historicity, i.e., the historic present. According to Husserl, the historic present is the most universal and most general *form* of all actual or *possible* historical experience (*Erlebniss*). This "universal apriori" of history prescribes, for every discourse which moves "within the limits of reason alone", that there is no historical experience, no *possible* experience which can be *lived* by an ego other than *in* the present. This absolute impossibility of *living* (of acting, intervening, posing or changing the heading of the history in which one finds oneself thrown) other than *in* a present, this impossibility defines the archeo-teleological limits of phenomenological reason: what will remain

for ever impossible and unthinkable. This impossibility becomes *thematized* and thought *otherwise* in Derrida's work on writing, trace, iterability, supplement, exappropriation.

Examining these "formal and radical generalities", Husserl reveals a characteristic common to all ideal objectivity, to all forms of culture and science: they move entirely within the spiritual sphere of tradition. Geometry itself is a tradition, its progress or development is a *traditional* development, defined by Husserl as the originary *production* and traditional *sedimentation* of its sense. We can understand the privilege given to the science of geometry in Husserl's investigation into the origins of our philosophical and scientific tradition, if we pay attention to the difference between the mode or style of sense-sedimentation pertaining, on the one hand, to the history of a bound ideality (and to the history of all empirical culture in general) and, on the other hand, to the history of the absolutely free ideality of geometrical objects or states of affairs. The historical advent and adventure of the science of geometry, and of scientific reason, represents an "revolutionization of historicity" (*Vienna Lecture*), or as Derrida put it, an "irruption of the infinite as a revolution within empirical culture". It will be shown that an infinitization, a passage to the infinite limit and a certain relation to *telos* (as aim and as end or death) is involved in their genesis and life. The transcendental historicity of the ideal objectivities of geometry, as well as "the capacity for reactivation", is opened with writing and this relation to death.

In **section 5, Speech, Writing and the Transcendental Historicity of Scientific Reason**, we present Husserl's description of speech and language as ideal objectivities and we investigate how writing, taken as both the *Verleiblichung* and the *Verkörperung* of scientific sense or truth, defines and completes "the transcendental disquietude of language". Language frees the ideality of sense in the very work of its binding: the historical incarnation of the originary sense of geometry in a linguistic medium (in Greek language) sets free the transcendental constitution of its objects. Speech, spoken language, alone cannot free the absolute ideality of geometry's objects from the institutive community in which it appeared in history for the first time. Only with the crucial and critical addition or supplement of writing can the transcendental history of geometry, and of scientific Reason more generally, be sanctioned and complete, at the price however of being exposed to a serious danger. The ultimate merit and the most interesting difficulty of the *Origin* lies, according to Derrida, in Husserl's description of the necessity of this exposition of scientific and of philosophical reason to wordly inscription, to the danger of writing. The phenomena of forgetfulness, of passivity, of crisis are bound to, and *in fact* need, the essential possibility of writing.

In the **second chapter** of the thesis **Writing and Responsibility** we continue our reading of Derrida's *Introduction*, while keeping an eye to other texts too, particularly to the *Economies of Crisis* (1983), *Other Heading* (1991), and *Rogues* (2003), especially to the second *Essay on Reason*, and we engage in **Husserl's teleological discourse on crisis (section 1)**. Derrida in section VII of his *Introduction* refers to the moment of crisis, to the critical moment of writing in the course of examining the danger or the possibility of truth's disappearance after it has been inscribed in the wordly element of writing. As many commentators have suggested Derrida's discussion of "truth's disappearance" does not "give voice to some linguistic or scriptural relativism" (Kates, p. 67). Indeed, we will argue, one of the most manifest and incontestable gestures of Derrida is to reaffirm the validity and value of the phenomenological critique of relativism and historicism *in the name of* truth as an infinite task, an infinite task of reason. The entire weight of our effort will fall on the following questions: can we criticize historicism (scepticism, relativism) *in the name of* something other than *truth* and *episteme*? What happens to *episteme* when the teleological dignity or value of truth have been put into question, not by going against reason, but again "*in the name of* reason", and of reason to come, of a reason which, as Derrida put it in *Rogues*, will not conceal for itself what might come or happen to it, affect or indeed infect it, in its sovereignty, in an autoimmune fashion?

As we will argue, Husserl himself did not assign to the possibility of forgetfulness and crisis a merely empirical or factual signification. For Husserl, crisis, the crisis of the European sciences, the "ill" or "evil" of objectivist *amnesia*, has the signification of an ethical irresponsibility, that of an ethico-philosophical failure of the subject of Europe, but also (a third signification) that of an eidetic necessity: it is prescribed and produced by the very progress of the sciences, by the production and traditional sedimentation of ideal objects. This last signification is continually emitted or underestimated in the literature.

It is the concept of the *Telos*, of the spiritual telos of European sciences and humanity, namely, the infinite idea of an infinite task of reason, that we propose to rethink in the following sections. Bringing forth Husserl's teleological discourse on the capacity or possibility of the total *reactivation* of the origin of geometry and the teleological necessity of a *univocal language*, we will show that, with regard to the history and the present situation of the objective and exact natural sciences (of which geometry is an example), the crisis, however serious, is, as Husserl writes, only an "apparent failure of rationalism", and it can be "overcome". Reason, phenomenological reason is not disarmed or defenceless against the objectivist threat, against objectivist amnesia or irresponsibility. This amnesia is a passivity, an inability to be rendered "responsible" for sense in an authentic activity or reactivation of the origin, and it is what Husserl

condemns in the historical progress of the technical activity of the sciences of nature. an immense progress uninhibited or even facilitated by the abdication of responsibility, by the suspension of an authentic act of *Krinein*, of an active, voluntary, responsible and “heroic decision” (*Vienna Lecture*).

In the last chapters of the first part of the thesis we try to listen to those echoes of the Husserlian call resounding between Derrida’s *Introduction* and *Rogues*, and bring forward what binds the rationality and responsibility of phenomenological reason to Husserl’s *faith in reason*, to this “*Heroismus der Vernunft*” of which Husserl speaks in the *Vienna Lecture*. As we will show in **section 2 “The irruption of the Infinite in the Finite**, in the *Introduction* and in *Rogues*, Derrida situates the radicality of phenomenological rationalism in two moments: a) The moment that phenomenology, by making the distinction between rigorous and exact knowledge, renounces a certain calculability (which is indissociable from the exactitude of mathematics) and accepts the possibility of something incalculable, and thereby affirms that the rationality of the rational can never be limited to calculability, to reason as calculation, as *ratio*, as account, an account to be given or settled. And b) the moment that a certain unconditionality (that of the infinite Idea or of truth) acquires in Husserl’s phenomenological investigations the ultimate *honor* and *dignity*, and becomes the absolute principle of phenomenological reason. a principle that Derrida, in *Rogues*, calls *sovereign*. (For it happens that sovereignty is first of all one of the traits by which reason defines its own power and element, i.e., a certain unconditionality.)

We present the process of idealization with which geometry came into being as an irruption of the infinite Idea into empirical and finite culture. It is the “strange presence” of the Idea, as *Telos* or *Vorhaben* for a concrete and finite subject, which, according to Husserl, permits the passage to the infinite limit and the production of geometrical exactitude. In effect, as we are going to show, the accession of human consciousness to the Idea of an infinite task of reason, is announced not only with geometry and philosophy (the institution of geometry is a philosophical act), but already in prescientific mankind, in the most elementary forms of human life and history. In the course of examining the teleological dignity of the Idea for the totality of human history we will consider Husserl’s analysis and concrete descriptions in *Ideas I* of two intentional phenomena or experiences: that of external and internal perception. We will show, following Derrida, that Husserl’s reference to the *Idea* (in the Kantian sense) designates the infinite opening of what is *experienced* or *lived* under the form of the *horizon*, the infinite opening of what is to-come in general from out of some horizon.

In **section 3** we present the profound **historicity of the Idea** and what binds it with the rationality of phenomenological reason as *Selbstbesinnung* and *Verantwortung*. We will show

that according to Derrida, in order to assess the radicality and *unconditionality* of phenomenological reason it is necessary to get rid of those conceptions which take the *Idea* as a thing or an essence (an *eidos*) and of those conceptions of reason as psychological faculty or ability.

If the infinite idea, we will argue, is neither an existent thing nor an essence, this is because the infinity of the idea is offered within phenomenological evidence as the teleological condition (*itself unconditional*) for the emergence and determination of every thing and every essence. The fact that the telos of the Idea is not to be *fulfilled*, and cannot be fulfilled or actualized in some plenitude by an intuition of an object, this fact is, according to Derrida, the sign of its profound historicity. We want to argue that this Idea does not designate “one possibility among others” (as argued by Kates, p. 81), but the opening of the infinite horizon of *history* and of the *possible* for a concrete, living and finite consciousness in general. It will be emphasized that phenomenological consciousness, as consciousness of possibility, is a teleological consciousness, a consciousness of the infinite task that is always finite in its factual being. We conclude by maintaining that, like the Idea, the *teleological reason*, which “runs throughout all history”, is not a positive and actual infinite situated beyond transcendental subjectivity and its linguistic objectifications. Reason, for Husserl, is the *logos* which is produced *in history*, the *sense (Sinn)* which is produced, expressed and heard as speech by (or in view of) a transcendental subject. “It is speech as auto-affection: hearing oneself speak.” It is not an accidental de facto ability, but the universal and essential structure of transcendental subjectivity and transcendental historicity.

What we aim at showing in the first part of the thesis is far from what readers such as Lawlor see as the “inadequacy of phenomenology” but, on the contrary, its juridical, *rightful* priority in all *philosophical* discourse or thematization of historicity and responsibility. We close our reading of Derrida’s *Introduction*, by drawing the most general contours of a phenomenological reasoning or program of *European* responsibility.

In the **Second part** of the thesis we will take up again the question of reason, of the phenomenological reason of ideality and telos, and reason’s demand for sovereignty, for a certain unconditionality, for knowledge or truth, now formulated through a close reading of *Speech and Phenomena*. This reason, will be put into question precisely in terms of the superpowerful supremacy of the *Idea* (of the *eidos* and of ideality) and of the *Telos* and with respect this time to Husserl’s doctrine of signification as it is formed in the First of the *Logical Investigations*

Firstly, we are going to show, following and focusing on Husserl's logical and epistemological concerns as they are formulated in his *Introduction to the Logical Investigations*, that the *intuitionist* imperative of Husserl's "authentic theory of knowledge" is essentially indissociable from a certain privilege of *expression (Ausdruck)*, from a certain privilege of *verbal (sprachliche)* expression, i.e., of the *phone*, a privilege which, even though, according to Derrida, characterizes the whole history of western metaphysics, in Husserl's hands undergoes a profound radicalization. Of course, to the extent that there is no concept of "voice", at least not by that name, in Husserl's first *Logical Investigation* which could assume this profound radicality, is this radicalization not rather, we ask, Derrida's contribution to phenomenological studies? One could read Derrida's "*Le Voix et le Phénomène*" as a phenomenological investigation of the constitution of the human egological subject through the experience of the (living) voice, and the operation of hearing oneself speak, as an investigation similar to the one conducted by Husserl in *Ideas II* (§§35-42). In Section Two "The constitution of Animal Nature" Husserl investigates the constitution of "psychic reality through the Body (*Leib*)" – i.e., the living, animate side of the body proper that is "my own", living and human, the body of an "*Ich Mensch*", in its solipsistic moment – and through the tactile experience of touching-touched, the experience of my fingers touching and being touched by fingers. (The Husserlian studies into the tactile constitution of the body, the living body of an *Ich Mensch*, and especially into what "I can say", from there, "I" "the subject of the body", will acquire a prominent place in Derrida's *On Touching*.) These fingers, moreover, the fingers which touch but also show, the showing, signifying or *indicating* fingers are not entirely absent from Derrida's reading of Husserl's phenomenology of the *phone* and his First *Logical Investigation* into expression and meaning (*Ausdruck und Bedeutung*). As we are going to see, according to Husserl, signs (*Zeichen*) always refer to the system of *Zeigen*, to the pointing or showing finger and the eye movement.

The **third chapter** of this thesis begins with Husserl's discussion of the sign (*Zeichen*) (linguistic or non-linguistic) and of the necessity for a distinction between *expression (Ausdruck)* and *indication (Anzeigen)*. Derrida insists on the phenomenological and *de jure*, but also *teleological*, character of "the whole system of distinctions" which supports Husserl's doctrine of language (sense and meaning, expression and indication, linguistic and non-linguistic sign, etc). Contrary to what many interpreters (such as Bernet) have argued, we will show that, Derrida also insists on showing the "primary interest" of Husserl's analysis, its complexity and difficulty, and especially its "openmindedness toward the more subtly folded pleats of the phenomenological experience".

At the centre of our interpretation of Derrida's reading of Husserlian phenomenology in *Speech and Phenomena* and in *Form and Meaning*, is a proposition in *Ideas* §124 in which Husserl, after having brought out that every intentional act has a "logical" core, declares, that is, describes and prescribes the *arche* and *telos* of language: **Logical meaning is an expression** (*Logische Bedeutung ist ein Ausdruck*) (**chapter 3, section 1**). The indicative sphere of non-linguistic signification (gestures, the pointing finger, etc) will represent everything that *cannot be said*, that *cannot* be brought into *meaningful* speech or expression, and into the *conceptual generality* that properly constitutes the logicity of expression.

In our reading we will bring together *Speech* and Derrida's *Form and Meaning* (1967) and we will show how Derrida puts into question Husserl's privilege of expression, and the *teleological* idea of expressive language, first as a *medium* and then as the *best* medium of exteriorization. It is this teleology that excludes gestures and facial expressions from expressions properly speaking, i.e., from linguistic expressions. Gestures or facial expressions, according to Husserl, are only empirical and subjective media of exteriorization of an internal experience and do not belong to the element of universality. The only signifying element which is able to reach and express the innermost inwardness of the "solitary life of the soul" and, at the same time, to open itself to universal signification is the element of the voice, the phonic element. Of course, when we say voice we do not mean the physically uttered speech, the physical voice, but the pure active intention (*will, spirit, life*) which *animates* speech and gives it meaning, what Husserl calls meaning-intention, *Bedeutungsintention*.

In **section 2** we deal with **the reduction to pure and inward expression**, to what Husserl calls "*im einsamem Seelenleben*", to the solitary speech and inward life of the subject. This transcendental reduction to interiority or ownness (*Eigenheit*), which is not a simple but a most differentiated interiority, will reveal, through the experience of the subject that speaks and hears itself, the *power* or *excellence* of the voice, whose speech can take the form "S is p."

We will assess the force of Husserl's argument in the *Logical Investigations*, that expression is more full than indication, that it can function as pure expression in the self-presence of solitary speech, by having recourse to his 5<sup>th</sup> *Cartesian Meditation*. A text to which Derrida repeatedly and insistently returns, from *Violence and Metaphysics* (1964) up to *On Touching* (2000) and *Bélier* (2003). By contrast to solitary speech, when I listen to another in a real communication expression gives away to indication because the sense aimed at by the other and his lived experience are not *immediately* present to me, and can never be. As soon as the other appears expression gets contaminated by indication.

The confirmation of the phenomenological excellence or privilege given to the voice that is heard in soliloquy comes forth immediately after the most difficult, most interesting, and less commented moment of Husserl's argumentation in §8 of his *First Investigation*. Derrida situates the difficulty and importance of this moment in what Husserl calls in *Ideas I* the *irreality* of the *noema*, of the *image* of the word. Husserl, by going beyond a classical psychology of imagination, shows that the interiority of inward expression is the most differentiated structure: that the *image* of the word is intentional but *irreal*, it exists even less than the *imagination* of the word, which is a *reel* (and not *real*) component of lived experience. From the very first publications to *Speech, Of Grammatology* and up to *Specters of Marx* and *On Touching*, Derrida will not stop measuring the consequences and the deconstructive force of the Husserlian "discovery" and thematization of this nonreal inclusion of noemata in the phenomenological life (*Erlebnis*) of consciousness.

In **section 3 The ideality of Speech: Presence and Ideality**, we focus on Husserl's last paragraph in §8. Derrida devotes three chapters of his *Speech* (4, 5, 6) to it. In this paragraph Husserl invokes two kinds of argument in order to support the essential, de jure and phenomenological distinction between inward language (pure expression) and outward language (indication). We want to show that neither of these two arguments, nor the whole system of traditional metaphysical distinctions which is employed in them, withstand a *rational* deconstruction. What we also want to emphasize is that, in questioning and calling the differences which Husserl applies to language (between reality and representation, truth and fiction, the represented and the representative, etc.) "illegitimate", Derrida never sought an excuse in them that would lead him to a conclusive verdict, or to discredit, disqualify or abandon phenomenological work. And this is especially so when this work works against certain axiomatic principles of phenomenology. Moreover Husserlian phenomenology is itself, according to Derrida, in the grips of autodeconstructive movements, especially when it determines the structure of the sign and of expression in terms of ideality, the (lower) ideality of the signifier or expression and the (higher) ideality of the signified or *Bedeutung*. The concepts of ideality and repetition have been used and worked over in *Speech* as deconstructive concepts: according to Derrida, they offer the locus where what we hold to be deconstructible is constituted.

We close this section with a brief discussion of Derrida's fourth chapter *Signs and the Blink of the Eye* where Derrida tries to show how the force of Husserl's argument about the fullness and immediacy of pure expression emitted in a living present is weakened by his own descriptions of the movement of temporalization of sense and of the living present itself.



In the last section of the chapter<sup>3</sup> “**The will to hear oneself speak**” (section 4) we address the question of the relation between phenomenological voice and being, voice and the sense of being (and the word “being”), voice and ideality (of sense and of the object), voice and objectivity. According to Derrida, the Husserlian reduction to soliloquy, to the inward life of the soul, reveals to us the originality and power of the voice (the *Bedeutungsintention*), of that inward expression of the subject that can *speak and hear itself* saying “*S is p*” (where “S” is the name not of a person but of an object given to perception.) It is the *form* of expression, the predicative statement or proposition “S is p”, that receives a major importance in our reading of Derrida’s interpretation of Husserl’s distinctions between sense and meaning and between expression and indication. It is here that we also find the reason or necessity that pushed Husserl to study language from a logico-epistemological point of view, and to determine the predicative *form* of judgement (S is p) as the pure and irreducible core of expression. We believe that it is only if one pays attention to the concept of *form*, and, as Derrida has suggested in *Form and Meaning*, to Husserl’s profound reactivation of its primordial sense, that we can assess his critical project to institute an “authentic *theory* of knowledge.” Husserl is interested in the *phone* to the extent that it can say with words that S is p. That is to say, to the extent that it can constitute human transcendental intersubjectivity, i.e., to the extent that it can make *us see* and *know* an object “as such”, i.e., as the intersubjective consciousness of its objective unity.

As we will show, in phenomenological interiority, *hearing*, *seeing* or *touching* myself are very different experiences. They are different forms of auto-affection, especially with regard to what constitutes human, egological subjectivity, the human relation to the self and to the other *as such*. The phenomenological privilege given to the pure *spirituality* of the *living* voice, of the *Bedeutungsintention*, is directly related with the questions of man, of the *zoon logon echon*, and of life, the question of animal or human life and the question of human rights, the question of the subject, the subject of rights, the sovereign or autonomous subject which gives itself its own law and right, the reason and the right of speech, first of all, since the right of speech cannot be one right among others.

Having set out to explain if not justify the phenomenological and human excellence of audio-phonetic auto-affection and the importance of the radical difference between *hearing-*oneself- speak and *seeing-*oneself-write or gesture, in the last chapter of the thesis we turn to the questions of **Speech, Writing, and Subjectivity** (chapter 4, section 1) in Husserl’s phenomenology. In *Speech and Phenomena* Derrida also showed that Husserl’s phenomenology of the phone is also a great philosophy of the transcendental subject where “the origin of the world” is described, after the phenomenological reduction to *inner* discourse, as an originary

speaking egological consciousness. If the experience of hearing-oneself speak is a unique experience of auto-affection this is because the possibility of this experience is, according to Husserl, *the possibility of transcendental subjectivity*. The experience of hearing oneself speak and the phenomenon of mastery over the exteriority of the signifier is, according to Husserl, the experience of a free, voluntary, auto-affecting subjectivity conscious of its voice and speech.

Derrida will return once again to the *Lectures of Internal Time Consciousness* and to *Cartesian Meditations*, to Husserl's concrete descriptions of the movement of temporalization and of intersubjectivity in order to speak of a *hetero-affection* which is at work in the pure *auto-affection* of the voice in the living present. Derrida does not only salute Husserl's preference in the 5<sup>th</sup> *Meditation* "to betray phenomenology (the intuitionism of his principle of principles) rather than transform indirect appresentation into direct presentation". In a move, that Derrida later repeats in *On Touching*, and in relation to tactile auto-affection, he attempted in *Speech* to go further than Husserl and to extend the field of this appresentation and hetero-affection so as to recognize its irreducible interruption or *differance* even in the supposedly pure, immediate, and living auto-affection of the *phone*. More than any other signifying substance given to consciousness, the phone has imposed an hetero-affection, a *detour*, leading through representation and a certain "intersubjectivity" to indication and writing, when it was meant by Husserl to illustrate the pure audio-phonic autoaffection of the solitary and monadic ego.

In section 2 **The supplement of the subject: speech as writing** we continue the discussion of *differance within the absolute authority of the phenomenological voice* and we try to investigate the supplementary structure of speech as writing, what Derrida calls, the "dangerous" supplement of origin, the "supplementary *differance*". According to Derrida, even if Husserl recognized the necessity of speech and writing at the origin of sense and truth, he did not ask, or he forgot to ask about the ultimate *raison d'etre* of their *prosthesis*, the foundation of their *supplementarity*.

In order to approach this "dangerous" supplement Derrida, in the last chapter of *Speech*, returns once again to Husserl's *First Logical Investigation* and to his idea of a "pure logical grammar", of a "pure morphology of meaning", a move which if not entirely underestimated in the literature, has given rise to some confusions with regard to Derrida's indebtedness to Husserl. In the §9 of the first *Logical Investigation* Husserl, according to Derrida, proceeds to one of the most rigorous and audacious reductions: Husserl reduces as *nonessential* components of meaningful expression the acts of intuitive cognition which fulfil the act of meaning. As we are going to maintain, it is only by following the logic of the distinctions which support Husserl's project of pure morphology of meaning, in particular the distinctions between

*Gegenstandlosigkeit* and *Bedeutungslosigkeit*, *Widersinnigkeit* and *Sinnlosigkeit*, that Derrida can bring to light the nonempirical but essential and constitutive possibility of nonintuition, and of nonpresence in general (which is also the possibility of the supplement).

In the last two sections, we undertake to discuss *Speech* together with *Signature Event Context* (1972), *Limited Inc* (1977), and *Eating Well* (1989) and we try to bring forward, by introducing the Derridian concepts of *differance*, *iterability* and *exappropriation*, the deconstructive force of the *Bedeutung* i.e., its *graphematic* structure, the essential possibility of its functioning being cut off from its *origin*, i.e., the originary *Bedeutungsintention*. We will show that, given the structure of iteration, the subjective intention animating the expression will never be through and through present to itself and to its content. We will not conclude from this, however, that “there can no longer be any trace of purity, no autoaffection” (Marrati), nor that Derrida’s deconstruction does not call into question the supposedly “genuinely pure autoaffection” of the voice (Kates).

In the last **section 3 The non-end: the infinite differance is finite**, we take up once again the question of the *telos* in Husserl’s phenomenology of the phone. One of our strongest claims is that what Derrida questions in the *Introduction to the Origin*, in *Speech*, in *SEC*, *Eating Well*, *Rogues*, etc., with the concepts of writing, differance, iterability, supplement (or pharmakon in other texts and auto-immunity in other), is not intentionality but its *telos*. This *telos*, like desire, as Derrida writes in *On Touching* (p. 121), is intuitionistic. And even if it responds or corresponds to some absolute necessity or desire, this *telos* must be questioned and rethought.

What is questioned with the concepts of iterability, differance, exappropriation, etc, is the *telos* as an *identifiable heading*, namely, a *telos* which opens, orients and organizes the movement of intentionality *as well as the possibility of its fulfilment* in a plenitude, in the fullness of a *parousia*. The *telos* of fulfilment in a plenitude, in the experience of adequation between intuition and expression, is not separable from intentionality. Husserl was right, Derrida insists, in including it in the structure of intentionality described in the first *Investigation*. In the last section we examine the subjective expression “I am”, a supplement whose *raison d’etre* is not made clear by Husserl. What is clear to him, however, according to Derrida, is the fact that the full presence of the *Bedeutungsintention* to itself and to its content, the *will* or *desire* of the subject to say what he means to say and the experience of hearing *himself* say it, the demand for knowledge (*gnothi se auton* or *cognosce te ipsum*), for sovereign self-determination, for a sovereign and reappropriating gathering of self through the voice, belongs to the essence of meaning and saying, to the arche and *telos* of intentionality. We argue that the graphics of iterability or differance

limits the archeo-teleological structure of intentionality: it is the condition of its possibility (of the movement of intentionality toward plenitude) and the condition of its impossibility (the impossibility of full *parousia*, of pure re-appropriation of the same). The writing of *differance* determines this re-appropriation as an ex-appropriation and, at the same time, prevents it from being stabilized in the form of the human subject. "Ex-appropriation", as Derrida says in *Eating Well*, "is not what is proper to man."

Finally and in concluding, one of the goals of this thesis is to show that it is only through an engagement with Derrida's reading of Husserlian phenomenology, and especially a phenomenology that, *where necessary, interrupts* its axiomatic principles, that one can begin to estimate the importance and audacity of Derrida's ethical and political thought. For we believe that in order to recast, if not rigorously re-found, an ethical, political, etc, discourse on the "subject", or to ask what the rights of the human subject are (*can be and should be*), and, perhaps, to call for different kind of rights, one has necessarily to go through an experience of deconstruction. The great phenomenological themes of *intentionality*, of the "*as such*", and of the *alter ego*, are some of the places where deconstruction takes place. The enormity involved in the question of ethics, of politics, of the human subject and rights, according to Derrida, always leads back to these places.

## Part I

### Chapter One: Writing and Historicity

#### 1) The Historicity of Ideal Objects: the Critique of Objectivism and Historicism.

We will start our reading of Derrida's reading of Husserl with his *Introduction to the Origin of Geometry*.<sup>1</sup> This text, together with the other texts surrounding *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*,<sup>2</sup> especially what came to be known as the *Vienna Lecture*, belong to the last period of Husserl's oeuvre. This is the period in which the question of history, of the history and historicity of ideal objectivities, of the history of truth, of the origin and traditional development of scientific reason, of European philosophy and its "crisis" become the main and "unavoidable", as Husserl writes, preoccupation of transcendental phenomenology. According to Derrida, the originality and singularity of the *Origin* consists in the incomparable rigour with which Husserl thinks and links the question of historicity and the question of responsibility of the sciences (and first of all, of the finite philosopher or investigator, the responsibility for one's own finite discourse) with the question of writing.

In "'Genesis and Structure' and Phenomenology"<sup>3</sup>, a lecture delivered in 1959 at Cerisy-la-Salle, Derrida followed the major developments or steps in Husserl's phenomenology, from the *Philosophy of Arithmetic* to *Philosophy as Rigorous Science* and *Ideas I* and up to the *Origin*, and presented a double motif which runs throughout Husserl's itinerary: anti-psychologism and anti-historicism. As Derrida maintains in the *Introduction* and in "'Genesis and Structure'", this persistent anti-historicism, was accompanied by Husserl's elaboration of the transcendental question of historicity, i.e., of the origin and traditionality, of ideal objects ("the higher forms of products of reason"), and in particular of mathematical objects. The systematic and rigorous critique of historicism (as relativism, empiricism and scepticism) is not, however, the only merit of Husserl's "unheard-of style of historic reflection" about the about the idea of objectivity, of truth, of science and philosophy (Where does it come from? How are the values of objectivity, of

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<sup>1</sup> Derrida, Jacques, *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, translated by John P. Leavey, Jr, Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 1978. Hereafter cited as *IOG*. In this *Introduction* we find also the translation of Husserl's *Origin of Geometry*, cited in our text as *OG*.

<sup>2</sup> Husserl Edmund, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, translated by David Carr, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1970. Hereafter cited as *Crisis*.

<sup>3</sup> Published in Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, translated by Alan Bass, London, Routledge, 1978.

truth, of *episteme*, etc., constituted?) Husserl has also brought to light the indispensable role of writing as the condition of possibility of scientific objectivity and historicity. According to Derrida, Husserl's recourse to writing in the *Origin* has revealed the most interesting difficulty in his phenomenology of history: the description or prescription of "the infinite task of reason", of the idea of truth and of universality, is inseparable from the recognition of the necessary exposition of reason in a *wordly inscription*.<sup>4</sup>

Before we present (in sections 2 and 3) what Derrida considers as the ultimate merit of the *Origin*, as the proper transcendental step of Husserl's investigation into the historical origin and becoming of scientific reason, we will read his *Genesis and Structure* together with the *Introduction* in order to show why Husserl has believed necessary to reduce the factual history of the sciences in *Philosophy as Rigorous Science*, in *Ideas I*, and why Derrida claims that the "historico-teleological route of phenomenology" taken with the *Crisis* and the *Origin*, which maintains the initial reduction of empirical history, reaches a new breakthrough.

According to Derrida, with the *Origin of Geometry*, and all the other texts surrounding the *Crisis*, phenomenology reaches "a new form of radicality"<sup>5</sup>: there the "formidable task of a universal genetic phenomenology", already prescribed in previous works (notably in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, and in *Cartesian Meditations*), measures its depth and its seriousness in the face of new, more profound and more general problems arising this time from within the horizon of *universal history*, the ultimate horizon, according to Husserl, not only of the history of geometry and of all the other sciences, but of all sense and all objectivity. Reading the *Origin*, Derrida attempts an introduction to "the historico-teleological route" of phenomenology where every ideal object (logical, mathematical, scientific or cultural in general, technological, political or ethical), that is to say, every object capable of being transmitted and indefinitely repeated as the same, is considered by Husserl as a historical product, since it appears only in a historically determined territory thanks to the temporal and absolutely creative acts of a concrete speaking subjectivity.

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<sup>4</sup> *Genesis and Structure*, p. 166. Lawlor, *Derrida and Husserl* (p. 47) and Kates *Essential History* (pp. 54, 84) maintain that Derrida's *Genesis and Structure* is a synopsis, an "abbreviation" of his student dissertation (*The Problem and Genesis*), and belongs to the "pre-deconstructive" period of Derrida's thought. According to Lawlor, Derrida even "engages in a classical phenomenological critique in which claims [namely, Husserl's discourse of *arche* and *telos* of history] are limited with evidence, with presence." (pp. 3, 141) We cannot agree with this interpretation. According to our reading, it is not only the question of writing, which is not posed in the *Problem of Genesis*, but also Derrida's reinterpretation of the "historico-teleological route" of Husserl's phenomenology, and of the Husserlian reference to the Idea (in the Kantian sense), that make his *Genesis and Structure* to stand closer to the *Introduction*.

<sup>5</sup> IOG, p. 34.

In the *Origin* an *archeo-teleological* discourse on European and universal history will gradually take shape and its clues from a historical sense-investigation of the genesis of a particular science, that of geometry. Even if every ideal object (scientific or not) is, according to Husserl, a spiritual product, a historical and cultural formation, geometrical ideal objects will stand out as an example, a good example or a model not only for the whole of European sciences but also for the historical life of the cultural world in its totality. According to Derrida, the exemplary character of the science of geometry in the *Origin* lies in its fully historical character: the possibility of something like a history of geometry, will impose or prescribe a reawakening of the question of the history of science and above all of universal historicity, i.e., of the sense of history in general. (IOG, p. 27) Also in connection with the example of the origin, i.e., the historical creation, of geometry's ideal objectivities (which are among "the highest products of reason"), Husserl will disclose the prescription of a more general and universal task or *telos*, within which the science of geometry itself must have been inscribed and from which it derives its ultimate ground. Husserl will thereby recognize and affirm that an infinite task of reason, a universal teleology of reason was at work in human history well before the advent of mathematics and philosophy. (OG, p. 180, and IOG, pp. 131, 146)

The originality of the *Origin*, what distinguishes it, according to Derrida, from previous investigations of "origins", and the new form of radicality that it attains, consists in "*the new type or profundity of historicity*" that this text brought to light. This new and radical reflection on history will give us access to the unique historicity of the ideal objects of science, i.e., to their *origin* and *tradition*. Why Derrida speaks of a new radicality? Because the "unheard-of style" of historical meditation which Husserl is obliged to follow, in the *Origin*, in order to penetrate the *internal* history of scientific objectivities, seems more and more difficult to accommodate itself within the regional limits which, since the *Ideas I* (1913), were prescribed for it. According to Derrida, the architectonic relations and the hierarchy of ontologies already established in *Ideas I* and in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* – according to which all regional and materially determined ontologies, for example, that of geometry and of history, are subordinated to a formal ontology – seem to be "complicated, if not inverted", with the *Origin's* exemplary sense-investigation of the history of geometry.

In *Ideas I* (1913), Husserl is concerned exclusively with *formal* ontology and treats the articulation between *Objectivity* in general, whatever its regional appurtenance (mathematical, psychological, historical, etc), and consciousness in general, as the *primal region* ( *Urregion*).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> In *Ideas I* the "object in general" is defined as the final "category" of everything that can be accessible and available, that can *appear* or *be* for a pure and concrete consciousness. "The realm of transcendental

He defines the forms of self-evidence in general, that is, the *formal a priori* supposed by every material science, either eidetic or empirical, and thereby seeks to attain, as Derrida says, “the ultimate critical and phenomenological jurisdiction, under which the most ambitious genetic description later will be subsumed.”<sup>7</sup> In this work, history, as an empirical or eidetic science, is still one science among others, a distinct and dependent sector of a more general phenomenology.<sup>8</sup>

And again having opened the “logical route” of *genetic* phenomenology, with *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (1929) in which Husserl describes the transcendental genesis of logic and, responding to the *critical* situation of European sciences, prescribes the “*radical investigation of sense (radikale Besinnung)*”<sup>9</sup>, the architectonic design remains intact: the anteriority of formal logic, as the “science of science”, with respect to the question of the origin of the other sciences seems again unquestionable and legitimate. “These investigations, concerning the possible sense and possible method of genuine science as such, are naturally directed first of all to what is essentially common to all possible sciences. They should be followed secondarily by corresponding sense-investigations for particular groups of sciences and single sciences.”<sup>10</sup> But by admitting also that the logical route is not the only route for genetic phenomenology, that “other paths are possible for sense-investigations with a radical aim”<sup>11</sup> it may seem at first sight that the *Origin of Geometry* will simply apply to the domain of a material ontology, namely that of the science of geometry, the critical motif which orients *Formal and Transcendental Logic*. And yet, Derrida will show that, in the sense investigation which the *Origin* puts forward with regard to the new type of historicity (that of the ideal objects of geometry), the rationality of this historicity cannot and must not, if one is to respect its

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consciousness as the realm of what is, in a determined sense, ‘absolute’ being, has been provided us by the phenomenological reduction. It is the primal category of all being (or, in our terminology, the *Urregion*), the one in which all other regions of being are rooted, to which according to their essence, they are relative and on which they are therefore all essentially dependent.” Ideas I, §76, p. 171. Husserl, Edmund, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, First Book*, translated by F. Kersten, London, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1983.

<sup>7</sup> “‘Genesis and Structure’ and Phenomenology” p. 161. (Hereafter cited as *GSP*)

<sup>8</sup> In *Ideas I* § 60 Husserl suspends the eidetic sciences of history, psychology and sociology as sciences which, like the empirical or eidetic sciences of Nature, “have not as yet received a proper grounding.” in other words, as sciences that have not asked yet the question concerning the *sense* and *value* of their ideal objectivities.

<sup>9</sup> “The present condition of European sciences necessitates radical investigations of sense.” Husserl, Edmund, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, translated by Dorion Cairns, The Hague, Martinus, 1978, p. 5. Hereafter cited as *FTL*. See also for the transition from the *descriptive* phenomenology of *Ideas I* to the critical sense-investigation perceived and practiced in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* Bachelard, Suzanne *A Study of Husserl’s ‘Formal and Transcendental Logic*, translated by Lester E. Embree, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1968, p. xlvi.

<sup>10</sup> *FTL*, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*



originality, be directly derived from the previously established hierarchical order between formal logic and material sciences. Nor should one, however, as Husserl says, *reverse* it – such a type of reversal (*Umkehrung*) announces, according to Husserl, nothing less than the phenomenon of crisis of European sciences.<sup>12</sup>

With regard to the exemplary character of this “unheard-of” style of historical investigation which Husserl practices in the *Origin*, and the “transgression” of its regional limits “toward a new form of radicality” Derrida writes:

Concerning the intentional history of a particular eidetic science [that of geometry], a sense-investigation of its conditions of possibility will reveal to us exemplarily the conditions and sense of historicity of science in general, then of universal historicity – the last horizon for all sense and Objectivity in general. Consequently, the architectonic relations evoked a moment ago are complicated, if not inverted. This would demonstrate, [...] at what point the juridical order of implications is not so linear and how difficult it is to recognize the starting point. IOG, p. 34.

Before we attempt to deal straightforwardly with the status and the difficulty of every *starting point* of a reflection on universal historicity, before we come across this strange *zig-zag* way of proceeding which characterizes Husserl’s investigation into the origin and historicity of geometry, and in order to assess the originality and singularity of the *Origin*, we have to point out its dependency with regard to previous phenomenological investigations. Derrida will refer several times in the *Introduction* to the dependent status of Husserl’s text, so as to bring forward the originality and irreducibility of his phenomenology of historicity. (IOG, pp. 32, 69, 120, 123n)

Husserl first of all supposes the results of previous formal investigations and analyses concerning the transcendental constitution of ideal objectivity *in general*, formal investigations which are indifferent to the *peculiarities* of the various particular material regions of objectivities, and therefore indifferent to the *peculiarity* and irreducibility of various specialized sciences or *rationalities* and of their *historicity*.<sup>13</sup> He also supposes the investigations concerning the correlative constitution of intersubjectivity (correlative since intersubjectivity is the source and the concrete condition of objectivity), and of course the method of the eidetic and transcendental reductions.

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<sup>12</sup> Husserl’s investigations in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* are a response to the modern *reversal* of the relations between logic, as a science of pure normative principles of every possible science, and the particular sciences. The result of this reversal being not only that the sciences have made themselves independent but also irresponsible: aiming “at a sort of merely technical productivity”, they are unable to understand in a rational way the sense of their practical or theoretical activity and how this activity is related to the sense of *life*, the sense of *our* whole world and culture. FTL, pp. 4–6.

<sup>13</sup> Derrida, Jacques, *Rogues, Two Essays On Reason*, translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2005. pp. 120, 128.

Husserl's return inquiry (*Rückfrage*) in the *Origin* concerning the historical genesis of geometry, is according to Derrida, the "proper historical repetition" of the question which inaugurated and defined the very project of phenomenology since the *Logical Investigations* and even the *Philosophy of Arithmetic*: the question of the phenomenological *origin* of ideal objectivity in general, and the question of the *foundation* of the objectivity (*Objectivität*) of logic and of arithmetic in particular, in the concrete and *productive* acts of a nonempirical and constitutive subjectivity.<sup>14</sup> This "proper repetition" of the old question will accentuate its difficulty to the point of making it "the crucial difficulty" of all Husserl's philosophy of history: not only *how* is the objectivity of geometry possible, but *what is the sense* of geometry's coming to being and appearing as a cultural formation within a historically determined culture? (IOG, p. 72)

What Derrida emphasises in his *Introduction* is Husserl's *double* critique of objectivism and historicism. In the *Origin* Husserl relied on the interrelation of these two critiques which had already been developed separately and put to test, successfully according to Derrida, in previous investigations. But when the question of history breaks into phenomenology the conjunction of this double refutation of historicism and objectivism becomes decisive for the fundamental problem of the radical *foundation* of objectivity (*Objectivität*): it will bring into light the peculiar and unique *historicity* of the ideal *objectivities* (*Gegenständlichkeiten*) of science itself. Husserl's question in the *Origin* concerning the historical sense of geometry's origin (and geometry is the exemplary index of being-scientific) is not put from an ahistorical point of view. Rather, by going beyond the opposition between objectivism and historicism, Husserl opens the space for an unheard-of style of historical (*historische*) questioning of the idea of objectivity, that is, of the idea and sense of truth. Where does this idea come from? How is objectivity's value and sense constituted? Who is responsible for it? Or how was it constituted in the "spiritual space of a single nation, the Greek nation?" Or how is theory's order or authority constituted, how theory and the "theoretical attitude" become prevalent in the history of European philosophy? How they

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<sup>14</sup> For the definition of the phenomenological origin in distinction to genesis in the *wordly* human and natural sciences see *LI, I, Prolegomena to Pure Logic*, §67, p. 238. Phenomenology is not a wordly science but, according to Fink's formulation a science of "the origin of the world." Fink, Eugen, "The Phenomenological Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Contemporary Criticism", in *The Phenomenology of Husserl*, ed.. R.O. Elveton, Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970, p. 95. For the influence of Fink's interpretation of Husserlian phenomenology on Derrida's interpretation see also Leonard Lauler "Derrida and Husserl, The basic problem of phenomenology", Indiana University Press, 2002, pp. 11-23. Derrida in his *Introduction* will discern the Kantian retrospection towards the origin of mathematics from the Husserlian *Rückfrage* by reaffirming Fink's formulation of the difference between the *intra-wordliness* of the Kantian critique and Husserl's investigation of the *origin of the world*. (IOG, p.. 42n)

have become degraded in an irresponsible theoritism, in the “objectivist attitude”? How one should respond to the “crisis” of European sciences and philosophy?

The critical denunciation of objectivist and technicist irresponsibility in the practice of science becomes the starting point or the inaugural motif in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*. In the *Introduction* to this work “the tragedy of modern spirit, the defect in our scientific situation” is recognized by Husserl in the fact that “science as a special science has become a theoretical *technique*” and has abandoned “scientific self-responsibility.”<sup>15</sup> The specialized sciences have made themselves independent from logic as “the theory of the pure principles of possible cognition and science”, and “technical productivity” has been substituted for “the productivity of a radical self-testing by normative principles.” These emancipated specialized sciences fail to understand the *necessary* “one-sidedness of their productions” (necessary since each science has necessarily its own rationality, that is, its own eidetic objectivity and region, method, and historicity.) They fail because they do not relate their specialized researches “to the universality of being and its fundamental essential *unity*.” Husserl denounces the “objectivism” or “self-forgetfulness” of the scientific investigator who in his studies and theoretical productions remains exclusively within the *a priori* and *objective* thematic field of his science, but who lacks “insight into the *ratio* of [his] accomplished production” and “who ... accordingly knows nothing of the inwardness of that producing - who lives in producing, but does not have this productive *living itself* as a *theme* [our emphasis] within his field of vision”.<sup>16</sup> A formal and *transcendental* logic, as the science of science, must, according to Husserl, reinforce the objective attitude of the traditional scientist or logicist with a *reflective* attitude: a radical sense investigation (*radikale Besinnung*) will criticize the evidences of traditional logic, by returning, once again, to a constituting transcendental subjectivity and to the clarification of its activities and logical productions (*Leistungen*).

It is however in the *Crisis*, in the so-called *Vienna Lecture* and in the *Origin* that the *paradoxical* renunciation of objectivism will acquire its sharpest expression. Galileo, that “discovering and concealing genius” – whose name in the *Crisis* is an exemplary index of the objectivist attitude – has made possible, by a “revolutionary” invention, the infinite mathematization of nature, and the objective-exact science of nature (as an infinite project or task), but at the same time he concealed the creative and historical activity of a concrete subjectivity which alone could be responsible for the creation and tradition of this science. For Husserl, on the contrary, the temporal and creative acts of this historical subjectivity are always

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<sup>15</sup> FTL, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

based on the life-world as a cultural world. Having in fact brought about “the surreptitious substitution of the mathematically constructed world of idealities for the only real world, the one that is actually given through perception that is ever experienced and experienceable – our everyday *life-world* (*Lebenswelt*)”, it was “*a fateful omission*” that Galileo did not inquire back into the original sense of the mathematical idealization, into the sense of the subjective and historical praxis which engendered it.<sup>17</sup>

As Husserl describes it, the critical significance of *our* situation, the failure of our sciences is determined less, if at all, as an epistemological problem (related to some epistemological conflict inherent in the historical becoming of these sciences) than as the detachment, in their theoretical and practical activity, from their bases in the *life-world*, as the falsification of the sense of their activity and objects, and as the forgetfulness of their origins. What is fundamental for a genuine science with radical responsibility is, according to Derrida’s interpretation, its “*sense for life*” and “the possibility of being related to *our* whole world”. According to Derrida, Husserl acknowledges that

this freeing of science with respect to its bases in the *Lebenswelt* and its founding subjective acts undoubtedly remains a *necessary condition* of its conquests (our emphasis). But this freeing also involves the threat of an objectivist alienation, which conceals the instituting origins and renders them strange and inaccessible to us. ... To meditate on or investigate the sense (*besinnen*) of origins is at the same time to: make oneself responsible (*verantworten*) for the sense (*Sinn*) of science and philosophy, ... and put oneself in a position of *responsibility* for this sense starting from the total sense of our existence. IOG, p. 31.

Does this critique of objectivism, however, and the return to history, to the *life-world* as cultural-historical world, compel Husserl to reconsider his criticism of historicism which he has formulated already in the *Philosophy as a Rigorous Science (1911)*? Not at all. According to Derrida, the critique of historicism, along with the critique of psychologism in *Logical Investigations*, is in Husserl’s trajectory, but also for the entirety of phenomenology’s project, a crucial and decisive motif: the essential possibility of philosophy and of science in general is what is at stake there. This, however, is not to say that Husserl wished to give up history *in general*, or to relegate it to some relativism or empiricism. Quite the contrary. According to Husserl, historicism not only fails to acknowledge the irreducible and unique historicity of science and philosophy, but also, driven by “the superstition of the fact,”<sup>18</sup> eliminates it by reducing it to a historical factuality (a factuality which can be totally embraced and investigated

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<sup>17</sup> *Crisis* §9h has the title: “*The life-world as the forgotten meaning-fundament of natural science*” p49, see also §§ 7 9l, 15.

<sup>18</sup> *Philosophy as Rigorous Science* (hereafter cited as PRS), in Husserl, Edmund, *Shorter Works*, edited by Peter Mc Cormick and Frederick A Elliston, Brighton, Harvester University Press, 1981, pp. 166-197. [the above quote is found on p. 193.]

by an empirical science of facts, a *Tatsachenwissenschaft*.) And by reducing the origin and history of science to factuality, historicism reduces the question of an infinite responsibility. “the responsibility”, Husserl says, we philosophers “have in regard to humanity”, to a “provisional morality.”<sup>19</sup>

Husserl’s *Rückfrage*, the sense of the return inquiry and of the question concerning origins, concerning the birth of philosophy, of science and of the idea of truth, cannot be reduced to a factual history. Despite its incontestable interest, this history is always reduced by Husserl as “factuality or science of constituted and intrawordly factuality.” This reduction, however, is not a simple refutation: after we have questioned its primordial sense, an empirical history of the sciences can be given, by all right, free reign.

In “‘*Genesis and Structure*’ and *Phenomenology*” (1959), Derrida follows Husserl’s itinerary and reconstitutes the development of the sense of the question of origin from the *Philosophy to Arithmetic* to *Ideas I* up to the *Origin*. Derrida discerns two major stages or steps in this development: a) the transition from the first genetic investigations tainted by psychologism in the *Philosophy of Arithmetic* to the first phase of phenomenology, with the reduction of psychologism in *Logical Investigations* and of historicism in *Philosophy as Rigorous Science*, and b) the transition from structural analyses of static constitution in *Ideas I*, to the analyses of genetic constitution in *Cartesian Meditations*, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, analyses which open phenomenology to a teleological history in *Crisis* and *Origin of Geometry*. These stages are seen by Derrida as different attempts, different ways of reconciling the “structuralist demand” with the “genetic demand”.<sup>20</sup> Phenomenology throughout this development is conceived as a science of eidetic-transcendental structures, of a priori and objective essences, but also a science of genesis, of lived experiences, a science which describes the origin of the world (the world being the totality of structures and essences) as originary *egological* consciousness.

Despite the extraordinary and undeniable evolution of Husserl’s thought on the problem of the foundation of the ideal sense-structures of sciences, the steps he took all along his itinerary reveal a fundamental continuity and unity: *anti-psychologism* and *anti-historicism*. (And Derrida has often emphasized the profound influence that these two Husserlian motifs of anti-

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<sup>19</sup> *GSP*, p. 161.

<sup>20</sup> “Husserl ... ceaselessly attempts to reconcile the *structuralist* demand (which leads to the comprehensive description of a totality, of a form or a function organized according to an internal legality in which elements have meaning only in the solidarity of their correlation or their opposition), with the *genetic* demand (that is for the origin and foundation of the structure).” *GSP*, p. 157.

psychologism and of anti-historicism had on his work and thought).<sup>21</sup> Already in his genetic researches in the *Philosophy of Arithmetic*, Husserl poses the question of the origin or foundation of “the objectivity of a structure, that of numbers and arithmetical series” by returning to the structure of perception (organized in a pre-mathematical level) and the acts of a *concrete* subjectivity.<sup>22</sup> This is also the difficulty of the question from which the phenomenological attitude will be born: how to reconcile an analysis of the subjective origin of the objects of arithmetic in the lived experiences of their production with the recognition of their absolute objectivity and ideal normativity? But if Husserl did not as yet resist completely the psychologist temptation, he refused to assign to the positive acts, facts or psychic events of an empirical consciousness the epistemological validation of the ideal objectivity of arithmetic.<sup>23</sup> For Husserl, and here lies the originality of his analysis, ideal mathematical objectivities have their original place neither in some *topos ouranios* nor, however, in the natural operations of a psychological consciousness. The sense (*Sinn*) of the number is not bound to the intentionality of a factual consciousness. This sense, as the ideal objectivity and normativity of the number, is, on the contrary, independent and absolutely free with regard to every *de facto* empirical or psychological consciousness.

According to Derrida, the transition to the phenomenological and structuralist attitude, reached in *Logical Investigation* and especially in *Ideas I*, was not an easy route since Husserl “had to navigate between the Scylla and Charybdis of logicizing structuralism and psychologistic genetism”. The former would, “in the then Platonic or Kantian style”, uproot the ideality of numbers (or of logic) from all *concrete* subjectivity and history and the latter would reduce it to the empirical facts of a psychological subjectivity.<sup>24</sup> The transition is accomplished only with the discovery of a *concrete, but nonempirical*, transcendental subjectivity which would be *constituting*, the absolute and living source of all sense and all ideal objectivity. Husserl prepared the access to this constituting subjectivity through the practice of diverse reductions which were presented initially as neutralizations of all psychological and factual subjectivity. Similarly, to the extent that every genesis is considered to be associative (in the sense of empirical psychology), causal, factual or, what Husserl calls, *wordly*, it is also reduced, as the domain of

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<sup>21</sup> See for the anti-psychologist attitude in Derrida’s thought in *A Taste for the Secret* (translated by Giacomo Donis, Polity Press, 2001) p. 35-6, *Speech and Phenomena*, pp. 10ff. and for the anti-historicist attitude, which is also an anti-relativism, in *Positions* (translated by Alan Bass, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1981) p. 104-105, and *Negotiations*, p. 156-7.

<sup>22</sup> *GSP*, p.161.

<sup>23</sup> “...he bases his entire psychological analysis on the *already given* possibility of an objective *etwas überhaupt*, ...which designates the intentional dimension of objectivity, the transcendental relation to the object that no psychological genesis can institute but can only presuppose in its own possibility. Consequently the respect for arithmetical *sense*, for its *ideality* and its *normativity*, forbids Husserl any psychological deduction of the number.” *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>24</sup> *GSP*, p. 158.

*Tatsachenwissenschaften*, in view of a *transcendental* genesis or origin. As Derrida says, even in the beginning of Husserl's itinerary, "it is not genetic description *in general* which is disqualified, but only the genetic description which borrows its schemas from naturalism and causalism, and depends upon a science of 'facts' and therefore on an empiricism; and therefore, concludes Husserl, depends upon a relativism incapable of insuring its own truth; therefore, on a scepticism."<sup>25</sup>.

According to Derrida, Husserl's critique of psychologism was followed by a refutation of historicism in *Philosophy as Rigorous Science* and by the reduction of factual history in *Ideas I*. In *Philosophy as Rigorous Science* posing the question of the ultimate theoretical foundation of the idea of philosophy and science, Husserl has recognized the seductive power of Dilthey's *Weltanschauungsphilosophie*. By making the radical distinction between natural reality and history of the spirit (an essential and decisive distinction for the possibility of the science of history itself), by making the distinction between physical structures and mental structures, by avoiding causalism (as the principle of all relationships in natural reality), Dilthey criticized the positive naturalization of the life and history of the spirit. Furthermore, Dilthey also renewed the structuralist project by recognizing "that there exist totalitarian structures endowed with a unity of internal sense, cultural worlds all of whose functions and manifestations are solidary and to which *Weltanschauungen* correspond correlatively,"<sup>26</sup> and by making them, according to Husserl, "understandable" and "explicable" by means of investigating "the spiritual motivation" that determines them and "by *reliving* them from *within*."<sup>27</sup>

Dilthey's "instructive" structuralism, however, remained a historicism: the spiritual structures or essences of finite totalities and the typology of cultural totalities (as figures of spirit) remain *relative* or "*bound*" to empirical history.<sup>28</sup> It is only by means of historicism, Husserl says, that Dilthey can remain exclusively within the factual sphere of the empirical life of the spirit and confuse it with the ideal value and history of truth (i.e., of philosophy and science). But then *Weltanschauungsphilosophie*, by reducing the idea and value of truth to a historical factuality, can avoid neither relativism nor scepticism.<sup>29</sup> Contrary to the historicism of

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>27</sup> PRS, p. 186.

<sup>28</sup> About the difference between the "bound ideality" of *Weltanschauungen* and the "free ideality" of scientific objectivities we will speak extensively below.

<sup>29</sup> Husserl writes "I do not understand how he [Dilthey] thinks that from his so instructive analysis of the structure and typology of *Weltanschauungen* he has obtained decisive arguments against scepticism. For [...] a humanistic science that is at the same time empirical can argue neither for nor against anything laying claim to objective validity." PRS, p. 197n. "The science of history, or simply humanistic science in general, can of itself decide nothing, either in a positive or in a negative sense, as to whether a distinction is

*Weltanschauungsphilosophie* which remains dependent on an empirical history, on a history as *Tatsachenwissenschaft*, the phenomenologist and “certainly the mathematician too will not turn to historical science to be taught about the truth of mathematical theories. It will not occur to him to relate the historical development of mathematical representations with the question of truth.”<sup>30</sup>

Faithful to this anti-historicism, Husserl will announce in *Ideas I*, and precisely concerning the question of geometry’s history or heritage, the distinction between an empiricist *extrinsic* circumspection and a phenomenological *intrinsic* penetration of history. In §25 Husserl criticizes the empiricism, both psychologistic and historicist, which remains “*outside*” the *internal* history of the purely eidetic science of geometry. “One must not philosophize and psychologise about geometrical thinking and intuiting *from outside* instead of livingly entering into these activities and determining through direct analyses their *immanent* sense.”<sup>31</sup> Once factual or extrinsic history is reduced or neutralized, in order for the ideal normativity and objectivity of geometry’s sense to be revealed, Husserl can proceed to the penetration of the internal, i.e., essential, sense and its historicity. According to Derrida, this initial neutralization of factual (or wordly) genesis and history “will never be removed in the *Origin* [...] This is because “*Philosophy as Rigorous Science*” was concerned with responding to the kind of historicism which reduced norm to fact, and *Ideas I*, with situating geometry in an exemplary fashion among the pure essential sciences. Since no *existential thesis* (*Daseinthesis*) was necessary or permitted, these sciences were immediately freed from all factuality. No sensible figuration in the world, no psychological experience, no factual [*événementiel*] content have, as such, any instituting sense” (IOG, p. 44).

From *Ideas I*, then, up until the *Origin*, the essential phenomenological distinction between wordly and transcendental genesis (or origin) remains irreducible, and factual history is granted only a mediocre interest, since it remains *extrinsic* and in the best case strictly *parallel* to the internal history of the geometrical *eidōs*. But it remains for us to see, however, how in the *Origin* Husserl will complicate this distinction by returning to the *constitutive* history of geometry, and by investigating the history of geometry as a *cultural form and tradition*. In *Ideas I*, Husserl describes geometry’s truth only in a *negative* way, but in the *Origin* “the positive ground of truth” will be “investigated for itself”. (IOG, p. 44n) In *Ideas I* Husserl describes the

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to be made between art as a *cultural formation* and *valid* art, between historical and valid law, and finally between historical and valid philosophy.” Ibid., p. 187

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 187.

<sup>31</sup> *Ideas I*, §25 p. 46.



*nondependence* of geometrical truth with regard to all *factual existence*, its autonomy compared to natural reality and the lived experience of perception.<sup>32</sup>

As we are going to see, a perception of the immediately present, natural shape of a real thing can, to be sure, ground idealities, but only *bound* idealities, i.e., bound to an empirical subjectivity and to the sensible reality that it intends. It cannot ground absolutely geometrical idealities, which are *free* idealities, absolutely free from every empirical subjectivity and factual reality. Husserl's merit, however, and the difficulty of his historical investigation consists, according to Derrida, in revealing the *apriori* system of self-evidences pertaining to the empirically perceived or intuited (and always culturally informed) world of bodies, the "*universal life-world a priori*"<sup>33</sup> as the *ground* of all theoretical life, the ground, in particular, of the geometrical idealization of *lived* space. Without this grounding, the apriori system or systems of mathematics are hanging "in mid-air". (*Crisis*, § 36, p. 141, IOG, p. 119)

And yet Husserl's itinerary from *Ideas I*, the transition from the structural and static phase, which justifies the reduction of *wordly* history, to the *Origin*, to the historico-teleological route of phenomenology, according to Derrida, "is still a simple progress which implies no 'surpassing' and still less an option, and especially not a repentance."<sup>34</sup> Derrida will often emphasize in his *Introduction* the indispensable character of the previous structural descriptions for the genetic project itself: the ambition of the latter depends on the former, on the rigor of the distinctions and method of structural phenomenology. (IOG, pp. 51, 55, 97) Before we attempt to follow this "movement interior to phenomenology" and the transition to the historical investigations, we should emphasize the radical "*impossibility of closing a structural phenomenology*", as well as, the "*transcendental of the opening*" which characterizes, according to Derrida, the structure of all transcendental consciousness, the infinitely open structure of consciousness which Husserl describes in *Ideas I*.<sup>35</sup> Without this transcendental or

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<sup>32</sup> In *Ideas I* §7, p. 16, Husserl describes the eidetic intangibility of geometry's truth by having recourse to hallucination.

<sup>33</sup> Derrida will emphasize that the Husserian return or reduction to the pre-scientific life-world does not abdicate "scientific quality in general". Contrary to the "irresponsible empiricism" of those "phenomenologies of prescientific perception, Husserl's "'thematization' of the Lebenswelt **must** be 'scientific'", that is, it must disclose the "universal life-world a priori". IOG, p. 120.

<sup>34</sup> *GSP* p. 156. The phenomenological description and the constitutive analyses of pure consciousness (as the *Ur-region*) in *Ideas I* are static in their very design, they are developed, as Husserl says, from within a "constituted temporality" (*konstituierter Zeitlichkeit*) §85. Also in *Ideas I* §81 Husserl indicates, while justifying them, the limits of static description and the necessity of passing to the *genetic description*. See also *GSP*, pp. 167, 322, and *IOG*, p. 96.

<sup>35</sup> *GSP*, p. 163.

essential opening of consciousness itself, no genetic preoccupation of the phenomenologist would ever be possible or, indeed, necessary.

After the discovery of the transcendental reduction in *Ideas I*, Husserl will describe transcendental intentionality as “an original structure, an archi-structure (*Ur-Structure*) with four poles and two correlations: the *noetico-noematic* correlation or structure and the *morphe-hyle* correlation of structure.”<sup>36</sup> Now these two structures are totally *open*, they are two poles of *opening*, and Husserl, according to Derrida, describes them as the very possibility of genesis itself, i.e., as the possibility of consciousness to exercise its intentional activity as well as the possibility of *noema* or sense in general. We will come back several times to it. For the moment let us underline the impossibility of closing this “structural phenomenology”, an impossibility which, according to Derrida, is principled, essential and structural. The impossibility of closure, that is, of fulfillment or realization of a lived experience in a plenitude, in an experience of adequation, belongs to the *telos* of all experience, and is indicated by Husserl with his reference to the *Idea in the Kantian sense*, to the idea of the infinite *horizon* of a lived experience. With regard to the infinite opening of the *telos* (of the teleological *Idea*) which guides Husserl’s description of transcendental experience, Derrida writes:

It is the infinite opening of what is experienced, which is designated at several moments of Husserlian analysis by reference to an *Idea in the Kantian sense*, that is, the irruption of the infinite into consciousness, which permits the unification of the temporal flux of consciousness just as it unifies the object and the world by anticipation, and despite an irreducible incompleteness.<sup>37</sup>

As we are going to see, this philosophical teleology, guided by the *Idea in the Kantian sense* and intimately bound up with the Husserlian theme of intentionality, develops into a veritable philosophy of history in the *Crisis* and in the *Origin* where it is linked to the idea of a philosophical *task*. Derrida here follows Paul Ricoeur’s “Husserl and the Sense of History”, in which the latter recognizes the unity of Husserl’s thought, from the reduction of factual history in *Ideas I* to the historical phenomenology of the *Crisis*, in “the mediating role between consciousness and history which is assigned to Ideas (to Ideas in the Kantian sense.)”<sup>38</sup>

Derrida will not follow Ricoeur, however, in his critical assessment of Husserl’s conception of history and of the teleological *Idea* as a “theoretical project” and as failing to understand “the historicity of history”, as “sacrificing the ethical and aesthetic aspects and the other cultural traits of the *Idea*.”<sup>39</sup> As Derrida will emphasise several times, and, in particular, in

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid. p. 162.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>38</sup> Paul Ricoeur in Paul Ricoeur, *Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology*, translated by Edward G. Ballard and Lester E. Embree, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1967, p. 145.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 169-70

a crucial footnote referring to Levinas, the *Idea* (in the Kantian sense) is “the common root of the theoretical and the ethical. ...theoretical consciousness, is nothing other, in itself and thoroughly understood, than a practical consciousness.” (IOG, p. 136n)

## 2) The Sense and the Method of the Question of Origin: the Rückfrage

According to Derrida, Husserl in his radical investigation of the primordial and *originary* sense of geometry discloses and describes the prescription of a more general and universal task of reason: a universal *teleology* of reason was at work in human history well before the advent of mathematics, of science in general and of philosophy. The phenomenological sense of history, of the sciences but also of all human production, will be shifted so as to be indissociable from its teleological sense. This shift is not irrelevant to a certain concept of writing, which in the *Origin* will have a decisive role. According to Derrida, Husserl's "*original merit*" in these historical meditations concerning the genesis of geometry lies in his description, "in a properly transcendental step (in the sense of that word which Kantianism cannot exhaust), [of] the conditions of possibility for history which were at the same time *concrete*" (IOG, p. 117).

This transcendental description of the *conditions of possibility* goes beyond Kantianism for two basic reasons. Firstly, because these conditions are not only formal but also, as Derrida writes, *concrete*: they are always *lived* or *experienced* under the *form* of the *horizon*. And secondly, Husserl was able to make the concrete, but *nonempirical*, historicity of geometrical ideal objects his theme, and to acquire an access to the *eidos* of historicity in general, only by taking the decisive transcendental step with an intentional analysis of language and, especially, of writing.

In connection with one particular example, namely that of the ideal objectivities of geometry, Husserl will demonstrate that writing is not an auxiliary means in the service of science but first of all the condition of the possibility of ideal objects and therefore of scientific objectivity. Before being a means or an object of science, *writing is the condition of episteme*. But even further, if it is not just a mnemotechnical device for the archivation and historical sedimentation of truth, if truth, but also every spiritually (i.e., culturally) constituted *sense* in general, could not exist before or outside it, writing is the *sine qua non* condition of history, and of the historicity of truth itself. It is also on the basis of Husserl's analysis of writing in the *Origin* that Derrida will attempt to demonstrate in *Of Grammatology* "that historicity itself is tied to the possibility of writing; to the possibility of writing in general, beyond those particular forms of writing in the name of which we have long spoken of peoples without writing and without history. Before being the object of history – of an historical science – writing opens the field of

history – of historical becoming. And the former (*Historie*) presupposes the latter (*Geschichte*).<sup>40</sup>

Husserl's "unheard-of style" of historical investigation, this new reading and discourse on the origin and tradition of scientific idealities will proceed according to the movement of a *radical* sense investigation, of a radical *Rückfrage*. According to Derrida, we can disclose the radicality of the *Rückfrage* if we pay a closer attention to some methodological reflections, which for Husserl are nothing but some "formal generalities" – "This return inquiry (*Rückfrage*) unavoidably remains within the sphere of generalities, but, as we shall soon see, these are generalities which can be richly explicated" (*OG*, p. 158). If the explication, clarification and sense investigation of these generalities or "trivialities", as Husserl calls them in *Crisis* (§9h), acquire such an important significance in a historical retrospection into the birth of the sciences, it is because they have been forgotten and buried by the objectivist naiveté of all modern science and philosophy: the question of the responsibility of the sciences themselves is at stake here.

According to Derrida, Husserl is a philosopher of the method. But, as he also notes, "despite certain appearances, philosophers of method are perhaps more profoundly sensitive to historicity, even though they seem to remove digressions from history's path" (*IOG*, p. 38). We should not take this method as some "neutral preface or *perambulatory* exercise of thought". Rather, as Derrida will try to show, "phenomenology as method of discourse ... is thought itself in the consciousness of its complete historicity."<sup>41</sup> These *methodological* reflections devoted to the history of geometry in the first pages of the *Origin*, are not only exemplary for sense-investigations pertaining to other sciences, but also fully historical in character: they concern the phenomenon of history in general, the phenomenal system of "what happens in general", of what can *appear* for a concrete and constituting consciousness, they concern, as Derrida puts it in *Violence and Metaphysics*, the origin and legitimacy of all scientific discourse (and therefore of a

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<sup>40</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, London, The John Hopkins University Press, 1974, p. 27. At the same time Derrida will point to a writing that "is" older than "truth", and even older than "history," which is always the history of man, the animal rationale. This *arche-writing* – as the graphics or "the processes of difference, trace, iterability, ex-appropriation", that is, the processes which are not proper to man alone – is what provided, according to Derrida, the most formidable difference, and never stopped threatening the philosophical project of truth or knowledge since its inception.

<sup>41</sup> *IOG*, p. 147. The Derridean affirmation of the historical character of the reductions comes to correct an interpretation of the Husserlian method which has become dominant since Levinas, who in his first work writes that "the historical role of the reduction and the meaning of its appearance at a certain moment of existence are, for Husserl, not even a problem." *The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology*, translated by André Orianne, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1995, p. 157.

discourse on history), and ultimately, as Derrida puts it in the *Introduction*, “phenomenology’s juridical priority in all philosophical discourse” (IOG, p. 152).

According to Derrida, Husserl’s *Rückfrage* in the *Origin* puts into practice the method of the reactivating reduction: its aim is to *reactivate*, reawaken and bring to present evidence the primordial *sense* of the instituting acts of geometry, of the subjective and historical acts which created the science of geometry. As we are going to see, reactivation, the “capacity for reactivation that”, as Husserl says, “belongs originally to every human being” (OG, p. 164), is an essentially *voluntary* operation: it signifies the will, the freedom, the decided return of the subject, of the scientific investigator, back to the forgotten sense, and to the hidden historical ground of all scientific objectivity in general. For the phenomenologist, reactivation signifies the *possibility* or *ability* to open and penetrate a hidden historical field, the *intentional* and *internal* history of a nonempirical object, that of geometrical objectivities.

The return inquiry (*Rückfrage*) into the instituting or founding acts which bestowed geometry with its originary sense cannot be contained within an empirico-historical determination of the factual beginnings of geometry. Husserl is not interested in the empirical content of the origin, he does not seek to determine the empirical facts of the birth of geometrical sense and truth, he does not ask what were *in fact* the first geometrical acts or who were *in fact* the first geometers. Historical information about names, dates, places, and documents can certainly be provided and thereby confirm the *de facto* rootedness of geometrical representations, i.e., of truth, in intrawordly factuality, in a historical *here and now*, but it can say to us nothing, we learn nothing, Husserl says, about the *sense* of its originary and instituting acts: a sense which is necessary and compared to which all the facts of the world related to geometry can have only an exemplary signification. *In comparison with the sense or the truth of geometry, whose proper historicity Husserl wishes to grasp, all facto-historical interconnections of geometrical representations should be variable at will.*

In order for an empirical history of geometry to be conceived of, one must already have an understanding, an implicit and more or less dogmatic pre-comprehension of *what* geometry and history *is*, of *what is the sense of its origin and historicity, and under what conditions they are possible*. The classical historian of science, who investigates and utilizes factual givens (the first geometrical documents and writings, but also other geographical or cultural givens), does not ask this question and hence precipitates the answer by presupposing a phenomenological clarification which has not yet taken place. Husserl will attempt to disclose the presuppositions which *every* empirical investigation necessarily implies in its very possibility and enactment. Furthermore, empirical history remains caught up in the self-evident truth of geometry without

making this truth itself, and the *how* of its origin a theme of sense-investigation (*Besinnung*).<sup>42</sup> After the illumination of the sense of this origin, empirical history can be given free reign. Phenomenological critique as the apriori determination of formal and material essences, as the investigation of the “sources” of different regions of being and of the ontologies that belong therewith, should *de jure* precede every empirical investigation, and therefore every material historical investigation. In this sense, the phenomenologist has no need of the historical facts *as such*, of the historical content of the fact, in order to bring back the historian to the unnoticed presuppositions of his discourse and to reveal to him the apriori sense of his investigation and objects.

Husserl’s *Rückfrage* is not a historico-empirical question. The reference to the Greek origin of geometry, to the historical birth place of science and philosophy, does not have for Husserl an *external*, historico-empirical sense. The notion of internal or inner historicity of sense, as it is elaborated by Husserl in *Ideas I* and in the *Origin*, and precisely by freeing himself from all historical factuality and from all historical authority, forbids us to understand this return to Greece as a historicism or even an Occidentalism. The truth of science and philosophy does not depend upon its relation to the *actuality* of the Greek event: the latter is only the *factual* index of an *internal sense* of origin, of an *internal* history of sense. We can say that, on the contrary, Husserl gains access to the Greek or European *eidōs* through “the irruption of philosophy and its branches, the sciences.” This is “the irruption of the infinite as a revolution within empirical culture” (IOG, p. 59), i.e., the irruption of, what Husserl calls in the *Vienna Lecture*, “a new sense of infinity” and of “a new sort of praxis” which have brought about nothing less than a “revolutionization of historicity” itself. The *eidōs* of Europe, the “spiritual figure” of Europe, refers to the ideal of a “new sort of praxis,” to the idea of an infinite task as philosophical *theoria*, to what has also inaugurated the perpetual transformation of mankind into “a mankind with infinite tasks”. The origin of European *eidōs* merges then with the spiritual *telos* of European humanity, “in which the particular *telos* of particular nations and of individual men is contained.”<sup>43</sup>

As an archeo-teleological reading of history (of geometry and of the sciences in general), the phenomenological *Rückfrage* would have to show and clarify, according to Derrida, before everything else three things:

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<sup>42</sup> The meaning of the *Rückfrage* can not be reduced to an investigation of a general concept of geometry that could be “extracted or abstracted from various known geometries.” Rather it is the “*primordial concrete essence of geometry*”, which is the object of Husserl’s investigation, and which “makes such a generalizing operation possible” (IOG, p. 52). As we are going to see, in order to question the sense of its origin, Husserl will also get rid of constituted geometry and of *all* geometrical habits.

<sup>43</sup> “*The Vienna Lecture*” published in *Crisis* pp, 273, 275, 279, 283.

- 1) that history, as empirical science, is, like all empirical sciences, dependent on phenomenology – which alone could reveal to it its fund of eidetic presuppositions.
- 2) that history – whose own content (contrary to that of other material and dependent sciences) is, by virtue of its sense of being, always marked by oneness and irreversibility, i.e., by *nonexemplariness* – still lent itself to *imaginary variations* and to eidetic intuitions.
- 3) that, in addition to the empirical and non-exemplary content of history, a certain *eidetic content* has been produced or revealed in a history which irreducibly inhabits its being-sense. (my emphasis) IOG, p. 30.

Let us explicate how the question of the *arche*, or the origin of a sense-structure (of “an eidetic content”) is indissociable from the question of its *telos*, how they are mutually implicated and merge into each other. The Husserlian *Rückfrage*, as we saw, *de jure* precedes and conditions the empirical determination of the historical facts of geometry. (OG, p. 158) Now this juridical and methodological priority of the *Rückfrage* does not contradict the factual priority of the history of geometry, on the contrary, in a sense which we have to make precise, it supposes it: before and in order for the phenomenologist to pose the question of the sense of geometry’s origin, there must always have been the fact of the history of geometry, the fact that the *eidos* of geometry has already been created in the past, and the fact that it has been transmitted, developed and reached its present-day form through generations of geometers.

As a phenomenologist I find myself in a sort of a circle: I can perform an eidetico-teleological reading of geometry only *after the fact* that geometry has already been constituted, transmitted and given to me in its present day form by tradition. As a matter of fact, I do have experience of this “ready-made, handed-down” geometry as one cultural formation among others given to me beforehand, as a cultural tradition bearing within it its sense. “I must already have a naïve knowledge of geometry and I must not *begin* at its origin.”<sup>44</sup> According to Husserl, I must start with existing, ready-made geometry in order to go back through it, following a *zigzag* way of proceeding, which is the way of the phenomenological reductions, so as to attain to and question the origin of its *sense* (as well as the *sense* of its origin and its tradition). The phenomenologist, then, finds himself in a circle, which is, according to Derrida, “only the pure form of every historical experience” (IOG, p. 51). Husserl writes:

Thus we find ourselves in a sort of *circle*. The understanding of the beginnings is to be gained fully only by starting with science as given in its present-day form, looking back at its development. But in the absence of an understanding of the *beginnings* the development is mute as *development of sense*. Thus we have no choice than to proceed forward and backward in a ‘*zigzag*’ pattern; the one must help the other in an *interplay* (*Wechsenspiel*) ... (our emphasis)<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> IOG, p. 38. I do not produce geometry, I do not perform the inaugural and institutive of the science of geometry reduction: this reduction – a reduction which, according to Husserl is the highest form of culture – which frees the geometrical *eidos* from all sensible and imaginary space, i.e., from all lived space, by an act of idealization or infinitization, this reduction has already been done by the absolutely creative acts of the proto-geometer.

<sup>45</sup> *Crisis*, §91, p. 58.



Let us emphasize this last word. It is important in order to understand the relation between the eidetic and transcendental reductions, as they are practiced by Husserl in the *Origin*, and see that there is no question of priority of one reduction over the other, but only an interplay of reciprocal inspiration, an interplay which underlines the difficulty of every starting point guiding investigations on historicity and which forces Husserl to go back to the origin through a series of zigzags.

If, as Derrida stresses, the phenomenological method (in its two aspects, the eidetic and the transcendental) takes *de facto* its starting point in historical factuality (and the historical production and tradition of the geometrical eidos is such a fact), if the *Rückfrage* is put or has meaning only *after the fact*,<sup>46</sup> this means that an “irreducible delay” (*starting from the fact, after the fact*) which is neither a mere accident nor a misfortune, has a fundamental and constitutive value for the historico-phenomenological project, for its method, its discourse and its responsibilities. Now this irreducible or inevitable delay of phenomenology, as the method of *Rückfrage*, this *after the fact*, does not signify, as Husserl insists, any *real* dependency on the historical content of the fact, it is rather an *eidetic* dependency or limitation.

(We have to see up to what point we can say that Kant and Husserl are in agreement here, and how Husserl’s project, as Derrida says, is “more hazardous”<sup>47</sup> than Kant’s: they both recognize the necessity to start from the fact of constituted geometry but in order to return back to a *nonempirical* origin. Due to the absolute objectivity of the geometrical eidos, the factual content and the *de facto* subject of the first geometrical act or evidence are equally indifferent both to a Kantian and a Husserlian historical retrospection towards origins. Also both Kant and Husserl are attentive to the historical, i.e., the first, emergence of science or truth, whose birth or coming on the scene in a historically determined territory inscribes and prescribes *omnitemporality* and *universality*.<sup>48</sup>)

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<sup>46</sup> “We have translated [Rückfrage] by return inquiry (*question en retour*). Like its German synonym, return inquiry is marked by the postal and epistolary reference or resonance of a communication from a distance. Like *Rückfrage*, return inquiry is asked on the basis of a first posting (*envoi*). From a received and *already* readable document, the possibility is offered me of asking again, and *in return*, about the primordial and final intention of what has been given me by tradition.” IOG, p. 50.

<sup>47</sup> Even to the point of being mad, as Derrida writes in *Cogito and the History of Madness*: the mad audacity of the Husserlian reduction in the *Origin* of the *totality* (i.e., of every factual stage of the history of constituted geometry and of each determined factual tradition) which precedes the reduction, in order to have access and to think the *sense* of the *totality*, the primordial and final sense of its historicity. *Cogito and the History of Madness*, published in *Writing and Difference*, p. 60.

<sup>48</sup> Speaking of this “transformation (*Umänderung*)” which gave birth to mathematics, Kant writes “... the transformation must have been due to a *revolution* brought about by the happy thought of a single man, the experiment which he devised marking out the path upon which the science *must* enter, and by following which, secure progress throughout *all time* and in *endless* expansion is infallibly secured.” Kant, Immanuel

This nondependency (on the pure materiality of the historical fact) far from denoting a forgetfulness or a negation, rather manifests the radical theoretical *freedom* of the reductions, which is at the basis of phenomenology's methodological revolution. (IOG, pp. 70n, 125n) The historical fact does not disappear, it is merely preserved or retained in its essential structure or possibility: the eidetico-transcendental reduction, which operates by imaginary variation, will simply make the *exemplariness* of the fact emerge and hand over the sense of the fact outside the factuality of the fact.<sup>49</sup> In this phenomenological delay or limitation of the reductions (starting from the fact, *after* the fact), it is the character of the *after* that we will have to make more precise in the course of this chapter: to the extent that, as Derrida writes, the "a priori normativity of history is recognized starting from the fact, *after* the fact, this after is not the indication of a dependence. The fact does not teach us through its factual content but as an *example*. It is due to this *after's* own specific character, to the necessity of preserving transcendence or reduced factuality as clue, that the *particular historicity of phenomenological discourse* is announced."<sup>50</sup>

So if we say that in a historical retrospection toward the origin of geometry the factual priority of history would finally be irreducible this should not be taken as meaning that we "must learn from the facts", as Merleu Ponty would have wanted it.<sup>51</sup> If the *eidetic* reduction is never abandoned but always supposed in this "unheard- of style" of historical investigation, this means that historical facts continue to operate in the *Rückfrage*, to be sure, not *as such*, not in their untamed factuality, but still as variable examples, as possibilities in a historico-eidetic intuition which seeks to attain to the sense of the fact. And it is "in order not to fall back into the philosophical nonsense of irrationalism or empiricism," that we must recognize the authenticity of the eidetic *limitation*. "...phenomenology alone, by going to the end of eidetic determination,

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*Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Norman Kemp Smith, London, Macmillan, 1929, Preface to Second Edition, p. 19.

<sup>49</sup> IOG, pp 48-9, 113. See also for the eidetic reduction in phenomenology Bernet's *An Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology*, pp. 77ff.

<sup>50</sup> IOG, 50n, see especially pp. 149, 153.

<sup>51</sup> Merleu Ponty writes "The eidetic of history cannot dispense with factual historical investigation. In the eyes of Husserl, philosophy, as a coherent thought which leads to a classification of facts according to their value and truth, continues to have its final importance. But it must begin by understanding all lived experiences." Cited in *IOG*, p. 112. What we want to demonstrate in our reading of Derrida's *Introduction* is that Husserl was never interested in historical facts, in *factual* lived experiences, or in "how it really was", that he moreover never dreamt or pretended "to deduce factuality a priori" or "to foresee, by some eidetic reduction, all the facts", that this dream and this pretension would "contradict the very premises of phenomenology." (ibid.) What we want to show is that Husserl's indifference to factual history is at the basis of "phenomenology's *methodological* revolution" and of Husserl's *thematization* of the "apriori essences of historicity concerning every *possible* culture, every *possible* language, every *possible* tradition." *IOG* p. 112. For a similar approach to the difference between Derrida's and Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of Husserl's thought of history see also Kate's *Essential History*, p. 55-56.

by exhausting itself, can strip pure materiality from the fact. It alone can avoid the confusion of pure factuality with such and such of its [material] determinations" (IOG, p. 152n).

But here, in the *Origin*, the question remains: what happens if the historical fact (about which we are wondering whether it can be used otherwise than as a contingent example in a historical intuition) concerned the historical origin and institution of the geometrical eidōs itself? What if this historical fact were institutive and creative, what if it concerned the fact of an event, the event of the instituting act of geometry?

We will be able to understand Husserl's response to this question, if we take into consideration the difference we alluded before with regard to Kant's return to the nonempirical origin of the (nonempirical) object of mathematics. Even if they are both equally indifferent to the factual origin, while recognizing at the same time its historical dimension, its revolutionary and prescriptive nature, there is a crucial difference.<sup>52</sup> For Kant this "revolution," the historical genesis of geometrical truth, could only be a profound "revelation" for the first geometer, *it was not produced by him*. The construction to which the geometer gave himself was only "an operation of explication of an already constituted concept", it was not a founding. (IOG, p. 40) But for Husserl, the first geometrical idealization, the first intuition of the geometrical essence, the first geometrical *Wesensschau*, is absolutely constitutive and creative. For Kant, on the contrary, it is due the *a priori* nature of the geometrical concept (it is free from all empirical and material sensibility) and its essential structure of *a priori* prescription that something like a geometrical intuition could be possible or could make any sense. The geometrical concept is not produced by the intuitive acts of a concrete subject, it is always already constituted for any factual consciousness, for any factual geometer and gives sense to his acts: it is always already made possible and prescribed by the ideal nature of the geometrical space or object. This is not the case with Husserl who takes the exact ideality of geometrical space to be the result of a new sort of praxis, and the first geometer, the proto-geometer, as the primally instituting (*urstiftende*) geometer, as a subject responsible for the historical (because it happened for the first time) production of an ideal (pure and exact) space, that is, for the historical production of the science of space which, taken together with philosophy and philosophical reason, represent a rupture, a radical and creative origin in the history of mankind and its reason. Derrida writes:

Undoubtedly, Husserl's production (*Leistung*) also involves a stratum of receptive intuition. But what matters here is that this Husserlian intuition, as it concerns the ideal objects of mathematics, is

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<sup>52</sup> With regard to historical dimension of the nonempirical origin see *Critique of Pure Reason*, p.19. Another similarity concerns the fact that for Kant geometrical space is not imaginary, it is not "a mere creation of our poetic imagination." Kant, Immanuel, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, translated by Lewis White Beck, Indianapolis, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1950, §13, p. 34.

absolutely constitutive and creative: the objects or objectivities that it intends did *not* exist *before* it; and this “*before*” of the ideal objectivity marks more than the chronological eve of a fact: it marks a transcendental prehistory. IOG, p. 40.

The original place of the absolutely objective and universal *eidos* of geometry is not to be found in some *topos ouranios* or in a divine mind. Husserl has refused from the very beginning an ahistorical rationalism according to which science’s eternal truths are only the deployment of an infinite reason which first exists in its plenitude in some intelligible heaven and then descends into history. The origin of geometry is historical through and through. It is so because the universal structure or *eidos* of geometry does not pre-exist the acts of a *every* subjectivity, and because, on the contrary, the intentional and indeed intuitive acts of a *concrete* and *living* subjectivity, in which the originary sense of geometry must have appeared as *evidence*, have precisely the character that define historical facts, namely, “singular and empirical existence, the irreducibility of a here and now” (IOG, p. 47).

Going beyond Kant then, Husserl will attempt to thematize a history that remains hidden for Kant, the concrete and transcendental, i.e., institutive history of nonempirical objects, “*a history for which the consideration of facts themselves would be indispensable, because here for the first time, as singular historical origin, the instituting fact would be irreplaceable, therefore invariable. History as institutive would be the profound era where sense is indissociable from being, where the de facto is indissociable from the de jure.*” And Derrida adds “the notion of ‘origin’ or genesis could no longer be recognized in the pure phenomenological sense that Husserl so doggedly distinguished” (IOG, pp. 46-7).

We can say therefore that in the *Origin of Geometry*, where the *constitutive* or transcendental history of an nonempirical science (geometry) is in question, where, that is, the intentional acts of a *concrete constituting* subjectivity are taken as the ultimate ground of all Objectivity and all sense, not only is there no conflict between the factual priority of history and the phenomenological, juridical question of (its) *essence* but that they are essentially indissociable, they overlap. Husserl acknowledges that a pure and internal history of the instituting sense of the first acts is indissociable from an empirical or external history of facts and he affirms the “*inseparability of fact and sense in the oneness of an instituting act*” (IOG, p. 47). But is he not also justified to maintain that a *de jure* distinction between internal history of geometry’s sense and external history of facts is always possible? Possible as well as necessary because otherwise the *sense* of the institutive acts of the protogeometer would be for ever buried under the immense density of centuries of factual history and denied to us, impenetrable by all return inquiry and all reactivation. But what would a history of geometry, and a consciousness of its historicity, be if access to its origin were radically prohibited?

Let us insist a bit more on the phenomenological character of the fact of “the first time of geometry”. What if this fact, then, were institutive and creative, what if it concerned the event of the instituting act, the absolutely irreducible and irreplaceable *here and now* of the “first time” of geometry? How should we understand Husserl’s firm indifference to empirical knowledge at the same time that he affirms the indissociability of sense and fact in the singularity of an instituting act? How can he still believe that he can reduce the factual content and interconnections of geometry’s real history once he has admitted that the instituting act is absolutely unique and irreducible? By practicing the imaginary variation, which both reductions (the eidetic and the transcendental) require, do we have the right to substitute *another* fact as an *example* in order to decipher the essence of this unique fact? Absolutely not, since the uniqueness of this fact consists in creating, as we just said in relation to Kant, for the first time a sense that did not exist before it. Is the path to the originary act, to the first production of sense, then barred for the phenomenological reductions? Is the eidetic attitude to be abandoned from there on? Certainly not, since this instituting act which is, in its empirical existence and factual singularity, irreplaceable, irreversible and cannot be repeated *as such*<sup>53</sup>, this inaugural act has created an essence, “a certain eidetic content”, that is, an ideal object which *can* always and in principle be intentionally and voluntarily repeated or transmitted as the *same* through absolutely *other* moments or subjective acts. The first instituting act, which has the irreducibility of a *here and now*, this irreplaceable fact, or factual invariance of an inaugural signification, which can never be repeated as such, is, nevertheless, necessarily inseparable and indissociable from its eidetic invariance, i.e., from its sense, which is always reproducible whatever its *de facto* content may be. As we are going to show, it is the universal structure of the constituted eidōs of geometry and the absolute ideality of its sense (its sense-of-being as truth, which is not *in* the world) which ultimately will authorize Husserl to reduce the opacity of the instituting fact (its *factual* singularity or invariance) so as to affirm and show the apriori necessity of the *eidetic singularity of the first production of geometrical sense*. It is this extraordinary operation, the production of an eidetic content, of an infinite eidōs, which gives Husserl the right to speak of geometry’s pure history of sense, of pure interconnections of sense, which remain radically independent with

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<sup>53</sup> This factual singularity as such will remain opaque and impenetrable and therefore kept forever in a darkness which will never offer itself to phenomenological light. For phenomenology, “the singular,” that is, the oneness of the fact in its pure factuality, pure existential factuality as wild singularity (which does not obey the rule of the strict, eidetic subsumption, *OG*, p. 159), “is eternally the *apeiron*. Phenomenology can recognize with objective validity only essences and essential relations, and thereby it can accomplish ...whatever is necessary for a correct understanding of all empirical cognition and of all cognition whatsoever (*Philosophy as Rigorous Science*, p. 183). See also *Ideas I*, §13.

regard to all *empirical* subjectivity and all *factual* life. This is why he can also maintain that a *de jure* and phenomenological distinction between pure and factual history is possible and necessary.

It is here that we should think the interplay (*Wechselspiel*) of the two reductions (i.e., of the eidetic and the reactivating or transcendental reduction), an interplay which is (at) the heart of the *Rückfrage*, and through which Husserl opens the way for an unheard of style of historical questioning of the transcendental history of geometry (and even of a transcendental pre-history. We can discover this pre-history only after Husserl's final reduction in the *Origin*: the reduction of the scientific superstructures and, therefore, of their history too, and the discovery of the nakedness of the prescientific world, "the world of immediate intuition and experience.")<sup>54</sup>

*On the one hand*, with the *eidetic* reduction we can determine *once and for all*, in a static and structural analysis, the universality of the geometrical phenomenon or *eidōs* and the sense or *noema* of geometry *constituted* as an eidetic science, by imaginatively varying the actual *here and now* of the pure spatial figure as well as the psychological lived experiences of the geometer *who was not its inventor*. *On the other hand*, with the historico-transcendental or *reactivating* reduction we can disclose the *pure and singular eidōs of geometry's origin*, i.e., *of the instituting acts* of the geometer who must, then, be conceived of as its inventor. The reactivating reduction, which must maintain the eidetic reduction, "if one is to know what one will continue to speak about"<sup>55</sup>, will reveal to us, in the absence of every factual knowledge, the dependence (a dependence which has a juridical and transcendental signification) of the constituted and objective *eidōs* and sense of geometry on the inaugural and intuitive act which brought about this sense for the first time.

If the eidetic or iterative reduction – which reveals the eidetic intangibility of the geometrical object, the fact that it remains free from all empirical or psychological consciousness, and uprooted from all sensible ground in general – can teach us something about the essential structure of constituted, *ready-made* geometry as such, about the constituted *eidōs* of geometry, it can say nothing to us about geometry in the act of being instituted, nothing about the sense of its founding. A founding, moreover, that must have been preceded necessarily by a sort of non-geometry, an institution that sprang from the soil of pre-geometrical experience. We reach this soil of pre-scientific experience only with the reduction of constituted geometry. As we are going to see, although the geometrical *eidōs* may be produced starting from the traditional, i.e.,

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<sup>54</sup> Husserl, Edmund, *Experience and Judgment*, translated by James S Churchill and Karl Ameriks. Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1973, §10, pp. 44-45. The title of §10 is "*The retrogression to the self-evidence of experience as retrogression to the life-world. Destruction of the idealizations which veil the life-world*" (my emphasis.) See also *Crisis*, §9h.

<sup>55</sup> *GSP*, p. 163.

spiritually shaped, materials of the pre-scientific world, this *facto-historical departure* in an empirical culture is nullified as a *ground*, as the *fundamental* founding *within* constituted geometry, within the *internal* history of geometry. (IOG, pp.. 95, 97, 125) The insight, however, into the sense of this founding will be the purpose of the *reactivating* reduction which will reveal the pure consciousness of the origin as an intuition of an essence or eidos, the infinite eidos of geometry. This inaugural intuition which, as we saw in contrast to Kant, is absolutely constitutive and creative, i.e., *historical*, must therefore be distinguished from an iterative *Wesensschau*.<sup>56</sup> The latter is possible only because an inaugural act of idealization has *already* created the geometrical object, whose eidos or essence, *within* constituted geometry, can be reproduced and determined in an iterative intuition, i.e., in a noncreative geometrical act. (IOG, p. 135) The purpose of the reduction of constituted geometry then will be to attain to a constituting historical subjectivity which, on the basis of the prescientific and intuitively given surrounding world, creates nonempirical objects by inaugurating a new sort of praxis and a new sort of attitude, the purely theoretical attitude.

Let us now underline the apriori and transcendental necessities concerning the *nonempirical singularity* of the origin of geometry, the necessities that, according to Derrida, only a phenomenological history of geometry can bring forth through the interplay of the reductions. To be attentive to these necessities is, on the one hand, to familiarize oneself with those formal *generalities* or *commonplaces*, of which Husserl speaks, and whose “essential indigence” will mark the whole content of his return inquiry. But, on the other hand, the requirement to recall the “apriori banalities” which are buried by scientific and cultural naivete, is the demand of a science with radical responsibility.

*The eidetic necessity of a past fact, of the singular and unique origin of geometry, of the first time of geometry* is threefold. Before and beyond all historical knowledge of facts, we know a priori and with absolute certainty at least three things:

a) that geometry, the eidetic and exact science of pure space, did not exist since ever, that it *must* have “sprang from the soil of pregeometrical experiences”, b) that geometry not only *must* have *an* origin in the past, in the lived experiences and productive acts of a concrete and historical

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<sup>56</sup> In the Kantian “revelation” of the birth of mathematics, the operation of the geometer which is historical, i.e., the synthetic explication of the geometrical concept, is contrasted to the *a priori* concept of geometry which is not historical and within which the first geometer (“be he Thales of some other”) must operate. This synthetic explication resembles Husserl’s eidetic or iterative *Wesensschau*. But for Husserl this concept is not *revealed* to the protogeometer, revealed as free with respect to empirical and material sensibility, this freedom is itself *produced* only by him. This is why Husserl now needs the *reactivating* reduction in order to reveal the sense of this inaugural, i.e., historical production. (IOG, p. 135)

subject, but also, c) that it *must* have *such* an origin, such a *sense* of origin, that the creative acts of the protogeometer bestowed *such* a sense that *the* science of geometry issued from them with *the* sense as we know it today. (IOG, p. 48)

Without asking, for the moment, about the historical content of the instituting sense, of the act or evidence which inaugurated geometry, we should note that this last necessity concerning the past fact of an instituting sense, the necessity “of an *apriori prescription*” assigned to a past fact, is at the centre of Husserl’s archeo-teleological discourse on tradition, which as Derrida says, is at the heart of the *Origin*.

This instituting act, which is determined by Husserl as the origin or *arche* of geometry, has the double sense of *commencement* (there where history *commenced*) and of *commandment*, of an eidetic prescription. This is what is, for Husserl, extraordinary about the institutive and historical acts of the protogeometer: the creation of geometrical *aprioriness*, the inscription and prescription of geometry’s infinite eidos and infinite historicity. What is extraordinary about the first acts or significations is the production of the *unified* sense of the geometrical eidos: they opened and at the same time prescribed the unity of geometry’s truth as the unity of an infinite project or tradition of sense. This tradition of sense has, according to Husserl, the unity of an “*infinite horizon*”. The notion of “horizon” describes not only the totality of the science of geometry as an infinitely open totality, i.e., as open to its own future metamorphoses or revolutions, but also the totality and unity of the communal subjectivity which makes itself responsible for it in a transcendental adventure.

That the unity of geometry is infinitely open means, for Husserl’s *teleology*, that this unity will be for ever *to come*, through the acts of a constituting subjectivity, but only on the basis of a sense that has been produced in its origin. Geometry’s *primordial* sense is only its *final* sense, or *telos*, the opening of the horizon of knowledge as that of an infinite project or task (*Vorhaben, Aufgabe*). As we are going to see, Husserl determines the unity of geometry, the unity of geometry’s sense as that of tradition, i.e., as the unity of traditional sedimentation of sense.

In effect, it is of little importance for Husserl that we know nothing of the “first inventor”. Husserl believes that, because they have produced a transparent and absolutely free ideal object, the sense of the first productive acts can, *de jure*, be rigorously reactivated or reawakened, even if the factual origin of these acts is forever lost or forgotten under the infinite mediations, passivities, and sedimentations of intentional sense which have been produced all along the immense historical development of geometry. (For Husserl will not fail to name the danger, an interior and intimate danger, which accompanies geometrical sense in its originary



constitution and traditional sedimentation in language and writing: failure of reactivation, passivity and forgetfulness, in a word, the phenomenon of crisis.)

In the *Origin*, faced with something like a history of a purely eidetic science (geometry), a history which with regard to the factual and empirical content of its real progress, its forward development and marvellous advances, remains absolutely singular and irreversible, Husserl will maintain that a phenomenological i.e., an *eidetic* and *teleological* reading and discourse of this history *is possible*. To be sure, “Husserl did not invent such a possibility; it was simply disclosed as what implicitly has always conditioned the existence of ideal objects of a pure science and thus of a pure tradition, and consequently of a pure historicity, the model of history in general” (IOG, p. 66). Such an archeo-teleological reading is moreover *possible* since this irreplaceable and irreversible factual history of geometry is inhabited in its being-sense by an *eidetic* content, i.e., it is the history, the birth and development of the absolutely objective *eidos* of geometry, of the ideal and exact essences of pure spatiality.

Now an eidetic science of history, or a science which acquires access and treats the *eidos* of historicity in general, cannot be one science among others; its object cannot be assigned to a distinct, delimited material and regional ontology, which would still remain dependent and subordinated to a formal and transcendental ontology. This science having to treat *eidetic singularities*, the eidetic singularities of origins, namely of the *instituting acts* of sense and Objectivity in general and, therefore, of all eidetic sciences, “is the most *independent*, the most *concrete*, and *the first of the sciences*” (IOG, p. 49). Having considered the method and the sense of the question (*Rückfrage*) that guides him in this historical investigation of the origin of geometry, Husserl writes “We stand within the historical horizon in which everything is historical, however little we may know about determined things. ... This inquiry prescribes all the possible specialized questions, thus including, for the sciences, the inquiries back into origin which are *peculiar* to them in virtue of their *historical manner of being*” (OG, p. 172).

According to Derrida, what Husserl attempted to demonstrate in the *Origin*, and in *Crisis*, is that the region of history is not one region of being among the others, that history is prescribed for the infinite totality of being and sense, that being itself (and the totality of its specialized sciences or regional ontologies) is constituted as history, as the movement of the interweaving of original productions and sedimentations of sense, but also, as an infinite task or project, i.e., as a *teleological ought to be*.

### 3) Intersubjectivity and Language as the Conditions of both Objectivity and Historicity

Husserl writes, “[... ]we enquire into that sense in which it appeared in history *for the first time*”, “Clearly, geometry must have arisen out of a *first* acquisition, out of *first creative activities*” (OG, p. 158). For a phenomenology of history to return to the “positive ground of truth”, to the historical ground and the primordial origin of geometry’s truth, means then to return to a historical, constituting subjectivity whose experience, i.e., the *production* and *evidence* of geometrical sense, even if it is unique and buried under infinite acquisitions and linguistic sedimentations of sense, should be able, *de jure*, to be reactivated. Such a history should start *de facto* and *de jure* from the *eidetic singularity* of the instituting acts, i.e., the creative experiences, the interconnections of sense and the *evidences*, of a monadic ego. (IOG, p. 63n) In the *Origin* Husserl speaks of a “primary intrapersonal origin”, of an “*original self-evidence*”, and of “the originally *self-evident* production, as the pure fulfilment of its intention.” “Self-evidence means nothing more than grasping an entity and the consciousness of its original being-itself-there (*Selbst- da*)” (OG, p. 160-61). Husserl’s reference to *evidence* is absolutely crucial here. It recalls, Derrida writes, phenomenology’s “principle of all principles”, the *a priori of a prioris*, and is the “ultimate court of appeal” for the whole of the phenomenological discourse on history.

According to Husserl, before even asking what is their historical content, we know *a priori* the *form* of these creative experiences and the *form* of this evidence: this evidence, the instituting evidence of geometry, according to the axiomatic *principium* of phenomenology, as it is defined in *Ideas I* §24, cannot not have, like all evidence in general, the *form* of a *presence to intuition*, the form of a primordial, *immediate* and *actual* presence of sense itself. (IOG, pp. 62, 99n, 137)

The aim of the *Rückfrage*, then, is nothing other but to go back through the constituted and *wordly* factuality of geometry’s real history to the *simple* and *absolute* origin of its sense: an egological, historico-transcendental subjectivity will then be revealed as “the *absolute origin*, the *constituting* and *present* source” of geometry’s sense or truth.<sup>57</sup> To be sure, this historico-transcendental subjectivity, which is not to be confused *in its pure possibility* with any *de facto*

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<sup>57</sup> To be sure, as Derrida writes, “egological subjectivity cannot be responsible for this development [...] Only a *communal* subjectivity can produce the historical system of truth and be wholly responsible for it. However this community, whose unity must be absolute and *a priori* (otherwise even the slightest truth would be unimaginable) is but the *common place of all egological subjectivities*, whether actually present or possible, whether past, present or future, whether known or unknown.” “Phenomenologically, the transcendental we is not something other than the transcendental *Ego*” IOG, pp. 60-61.

empirical subjectivity, resides in the historical life-world, in the sense that its “temporal and creative acts are based on the sensible world and the life-world as cultural world” (IOG, p. 60).

Now after he has determined the sense and the method of the question of origin, Derrida tells us, “Husserl performs a *detour* which may seem disconcerting” (IOG, p. 62). It should not, however. Although he has affirmed not only that the objective sense of geometry had its origin in the absolutely productive acts of a concrete subject, but also that this first production of sense must have appeared and presented itself as *evidence* in the individual consciousness of the proto-geometer, Husserl does not proceed head on to describe the historical content of this inaugural and unique operation or evidence, neither its primordial sense. This is to be done much later and only after the most general conditions of the Objectivity of all sense in general *or* the conditions of all traditional development in general have been sufficiently investigated and illuminated - and not just of geometry’s sense, which is nevertheless taken by Husserl as an exemplary guide in this investigation.

As Derrida writes, underscoring once again Husserl’s methodological concerns, only after the latter has accounted for the conditions of Objectivity in general he gives himself the right to return to one of these ideal objectivities, that of geometry, and to engage in a more concrete description concerning the conditions of geometrical ideality itself and the sense of the subjective praxis which has engendered it. It is not until the last pages of the *Origin* that Husserl’s descriptions starting from human, historical praxis draw near to the constitution of geometrical protoidealities in the prescientific sphere of the cultural world. (IOG, pp. 62-3, 118)

So Husserl will provisionally abstain before the historical content of the first act (*Erstmaligkeit*) of geometry, and instead he will ask, how *can* the sense of this act, and indeed, how *can* the sense of every subjective and intentional act become objective, i.e., how it can enter into an intersubjective circulation and thereby be repeated and verified as the *same* sense by any concrete subject whatsoever? (IOG, pp. 85-6)

In the *Origin* the phenomenological question of Objectivity<sup>58</sup>, *how* can subjectivity go out of itself in order to encounter *or* constitute the object<sup>59</sup>, will be repeated as the historico-teleological question of Objectivity, which is at the core of Husserl's doctrine of tradition. As soon as he returns to a *constitutive* history of ideal objectivities (either scientific or cultural in general), Husserl needs a *doctrine of tradition*, he needs to describe the movement of history, a movement which is necessarily a rational *and* a teleological movement, the vital movement, as he himself describes it, of the originary creation and traditional development of an ideal objectivity.

The *detour* then is necessary, it is the necessary path or way of the *Rückfrage*: the *zigzag* way of proceeding back to the origin, to the creative acts of a historico-transcendental subjectivity. *How* the ideality of sense proceeds, then, from its *subjective* origin and evidence to its Objectivity? Derrida will formulate this *historico-teleological* question linking gradually Objectivity, intersubjectivity and history or tradition: "*how* can the *egological-subjective* evidence of sense become objective and intersubjective? How can it give rise to an ideal and true object, with all the characteristics that we know it to have: omnitemporal validity, universal normativity, intelligibility for 'everyone', uprootedness out of all '*here and now*' factuality, and so forth?" (IOG, p. 63) "How could ideal sense, *already constituted* in subjective immanence, be objective and engage in history and in the movement of intersubjectivity?" (IOG, p. 118)

For the moment then Husserl does not ask about the conditions of the inaugural act of geometry, of the idealizing and theoretical act which produced the geometrical ideality itself

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<sup>58</sup> We can find its first formulation in *Logical Investigations* when the epistemological clarification of pure logic revealed its dependency on the most general question of knowledge, on the question of objectivity: "How are we to understand the fact that the intrinsic being of objectivity becomes 'presented', 'apprehended' in knowledge, and so ends up by becoming subjective?" LI, Vol II, Introduction, §2, p. 254. According to Levinas, when Husserl in *Philosophy as Rigorous Science* asks "Was besagt dass Gegeständlichkeit sei", he raises the essential question of phenomenology. Levinas recognizes in *The Theory of Intuition* the great philosophical merit of the question of objectivity in the fact that it is raised and linked by Husserl with the problem of *constitution*, which is also the "ontological problem": "The problem of being thus arises with the problems of constitution. To analyze the *constitution* of an *object* is to follow the intention of the *life* which is directed toward it and the meaning these intentions give to it. Existence is but the mode in which consciousness *meets* its *objects* or the role played by objects in the concrete *life* of consciousness, since the very origin of being is in life." *Theory of Intuition*, pp. 131-32, 154. According to Derrida, it is to the notion of a "*constitution* of an alter ego" that Levinas refuses any merit. One encounters the Other, Levinas would say, one does not constitute it.

<sup>59</sup> In Husserl's phenomenology there is no choice to be made between "encounter" and "constitution". In an important footnote in *Violence and Metaphysics*, with regard to "Husserl's philosophical prudence" Derrida writes "constitution is not opposed to encounter. It goes without saying that constitution creates, constructs, engenders, nothing: neither existence, nor the fact, which is evident, nor even meaning, which is less evident but equally certain, provided that one takes some patient precautions, and provided that one distinguishes the moments of passivity and activity within intuition in Husserl's sense, and the moment in which the distinction becomes impossible. That is, in which the entire problematic opposing encounter to constitution is no longer meaningful, or has only a derivative and dependent meaning." *Violence and Metaphysics* (hereafter cited as VM), published in *Writing and Difference*, p. 316.

within the individual consciousness of the proto-geometer, but about how it *can* “afterwards” enter into history, about the conditions for geometrical ideality in an intersubjective horizon (IOG, p. 86). What Husserl is interested above all to demonstrate with this question is that the conditions of the Objectivity of an ideal objectivity *are also, and at the same time*, the conditions of its traditionality or historicity. These conditions are at once *a priori* and *teleological*: an *intrasubjectively* created sense *can* enter into history *only if it can* become an absolute object, i.e., *only if it can* be freed from the ties which binds it to the de facto and actual subjectivity of its inventor, and be handed over. Derrida writes: “**The conditions of Objectivity are then the conditions of historicity itself**” (IOG, p.64). What are these conditions?

As soon as he has affirmed that the “original self-evidence” of geometrical ideality “occurs purely within the subject of the inventor”, Husserl adds a precaution which is absolutely decisive and which complicates the question of a *simple* and absolute, *self-present* origin of geometrical ideal Objectivity.

But geometrical existence is not psychic existence; it does not exist as something personal within the personal sphere of consciousness: it is the existence of what is objectively there for “everyone” (for actual and possible geometers, or those who understand geometry). Indeed, it has, from its primal establishment, an existence which is peculiarly supratemporal and which – of this we are certain – is accessible to all men, first of all to the actual and possible mathematicians of all peoples, all ages.” (OG, p. 160)

So there is not *first* a subjective *evidence* of geometrical sense which, having been fully constituted *as such* within the head of the proto-geometer, may *afterwards*, following a factual chronological order, become objective or enter into history. “This is only a fiction”. There is geometrical evidence *only if* the originary production of sense *can* be put into an intersubjective horizon, and thereby become a true object, *only if* the originary production is “a production of a *common* object, i.e., of an object whose *original* owner is thus dispossessed” (IOG, p. 78). Derrida writes,

thus *only retroactively* and on the basis of its results can we illuminate the pure sense of the subjective praxis which has engendered geometry. The sense of the constituting act can only be deciphered in the web of the constituted object. And this necessity is not an external fate, but an essential necessity of intentionality. The *primordial* sense of every intentional act is *only* its *final* sense, i.e., the constitution of an object (in the broadest sense of these terms). That is why *only a teleology can open up a passage, a way back toward the beginnings*. (my emphasis) IOG, p. 64.

The intersubjective circulation and recognition of geometrical evidence, its uprootedness from every *here and now* factuality and actuality, is not an empirical possibility which may or may not accompany the subjective origin or genesis of geometry, a contingent, happy eventuality: it is the *a priori* and *cine qua non* condition for the possibility of geometrical objectivity itself. (This again repeats an original theme of phenomenology: the possibility of *objectivity* involves

always already the possibility of transcendental, i.e., nonempirical, *intersubjectivity*: they are interrelated possibilities.) From the first moment of its production, then, the value of this ideal objectivity is such that it must be able to alienate itself from its original inventor and owner, so as to be (re)appropriated and reworked by any geometer, by any subject whatsoever, and thereby to capitalize on itself *ad infinitum*. Paradoxically, the possibility of this originary alienation of objectivity from the factual subject who alone could claim absolute responsibility for it, permits the freeing of its ideality. The ideal value of objectivity then stems from that which in a historical development and capitalization delimits itself, that which exceeds every factual and sensible limit, the particularity of a determined historical totality and every particularity in general in order to open into the infinite and give rise to the universal.

The question of Objectivity will now become: what is the condition that allows the communication and transmission of the ideal Objectivity of sense among several individuals and among generations of investigators no matter how distant they are? How can the absolute subjectivity of sense open itself to the horizon of intersubjectivity, and thereby to the horizon of history, and how is intersubjectivity itself possible?

It is here that language (and/or writing) is necessary: *the possibility of (human) intersubjectivity and history is for Husserl the possibility of language*: they are interrelated possibilities. **This necessity of language has not an empirical but an eidetic and transcendental signification**: language is prescribed for all *constitution and sedimentation* of sense, and therefore for all history. “*Ideal formations*”, Derrida writes, “*are rooted only in language in general, not in the factuality of languages and their particular linguistic incarnations*” (IOG, p. 66).

According to the *Origin* the ideality of sense comes to its Objectivity “*by means of language, through which it receives its linguistic flesh*” (OG, p. 161). Husserl speaks of *Sprachleib* and he refers precisely to the *proper* body, the *living* body, to the *proper body (Leib)* of language and not to its *Körper*, the *inanimate and soulless body*, which left to itself is without signification, without meaning (*Bedeutung*).

The insertion of the analysis of language into the context of the historical constitution of objectivity means that Husserl is first of all concerned with the possibility of pure, *constituting* language and not with *constituted* language, i.e., the factual and empirical language which is actually spoken in a historically determined territory. Husserl makes the essential and phenomenological distinction – a distinction which as Derrida demonstrates is indispensable to the phenomenological project of the critical reinstitution of metaphysics – between “transcendental language” or constituting language and the constituted body of language (which

in its ideality is always bound to an empirically determined historical community of speaking subjects). Husserl in the *Origin* seems to have reversed the traditional procedure: to the extent that speech, linguistic expression does not simply *signify or record, but produces, deposits and grounds* truth's Objectivity, it is not merely a constituted body, a means in the service of truth, but also a properly *constituting* flesh, the flesh of a *living* sense-truth. (IOG, p. 97) Considering the possibility of pure or transcendental language,<sup>60</sup> Husserl refers to this pure and intentional act of consciousness which, in view of the presence of the signified (sense or object), gives meaning to an expression by giving or breathing life into its sensible constituted body, making it pass from the state of inert corporeality to that of an animated, *living* proper body (*Leib*). This pure meaning-intention, this living and life giving act, what Husserl calls *Bedeutungsintention* and Derrida has translated as *vouloir-dire*<sup>61</sup>, is, according to Husserl, the soul of language. Husserl has distinguished them rigorously even if he had to defer for ever the problem of their mysterious unity: in a spoken word, as in an animal body, *Leib* and *Körper* are in fact one and the same existent. The absolute and traditional distinction between soul and body is at the centre of Husserl's analysis here. However, language, as constitutive language is always a *Verleiblichung* as well as a *Verkörperung*. Since the sensible aspect of language, the corporeal exteriority of the sign (phonic or written) is always given over to the world as something audible or visible, since it is "straightforwardly", "sensibly" and "intersubjectively experienceable" (OG, p. 164), the ideality of sense (which is nonwordly, i.e., free from sensible spatiotemporality) can be sedimented and deposited there and communalized. With sensible embodiment, sense and truth are *gathered* into linguistic signs, into the language of words or expressions (*bedeutsame Zeichen*.) We could provisionally utilize *Fink's* formulation and say, with regard to the peculiar virtue of language (and of the linguistic event): "in sensible embodiment occurs the 'localization' and the 'temporalization' of what is, by its being-sense, unlocated and untemporal."<sup>62</sup>

Now Husserl did not pose the problem of the origin of language in the *Origin*, even if he writes that it "arises here". "We shall not go into the general problem which also arises here of the origin of language in its *ideal* existence and its existence in the real world grounded in utterance and documentation" (OG, p. 161). There are essential reasons for this reluctance or deferral to treat the specific problem of language, both that of its origin and that of its usage in

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<sup>60</sup> Derrida writes: "Here we are speaking of transcendental language insofar as, on the one hand, the latter is "constituting" compared with ideal Objectivity [which is always "constituted"], and, on the other hand, insofar as it is not confused in its pure possibility with any de facto empirical language" (IOG, p. 77n).

<sup>61</sup> Derrida, Jacques. *Speech and Phenomena, Introduction to the Problem of Signs in Husserl's Phenomenology*, translated by David B. Allison. Evanston. Northwestern University Press. 1973. p. 18. We will come back to this in the second part of the thesis.

<sup>62</sup> Cited in IOG, p. 89.

transcendental phenomenology.<sup>63</sup> “At bottom,” Derrida writes, “the problem of geometry’s origin puts the problem of the constitution of intersubjectivity on par with that of the phenomenological origin of language” (IOG, p. 79). The creation of ideal objectivities, of objects capable of being put into an intersubjective horizon, of being infinitely repeated or transmitted as the same in a traditional development, is one with the historical origin of language, that is, with the advent of the *phone*.<sup>64</sup> Now the origin of language is certainly indissociable from the origin of historical humanity, and both must have preceded the origin of geometry. For the moment, according to Husserl, it is enough to know, if not *how*, at least *that* language and intersubjectivity, language and consciousness of being-in-community are indissociable possibilities and *already given* to the proto-geometer (and to his fellows) the moment he instituted the science geometry. (OG, p. 162)

Without the pure possibility of language the “original self-evidence” of geometry’s sense would remain an absolutely empirical and subjective moment, a sense which, even though indubitably given and present in the personal consciousness of its creator, would remain ineffable, for ever private and hidden therein, “an empirical formation imprisoned as fact in a psychological subjectivity – in the inventor’s head” (IOG, p. 77). But since the possibility of language is already given to the proto-geometer, he can express the sense he has produced in himself and assure its transmissibility first by means of speech, and then also by writing. By means of this linguistic expression another geometer can always reawaken and repeat the original sense, that is, the act of pure thought which created the ideality of sense. Husserl writes in the *Origin*, “In the contact of reciprocal linguistic understanding, the original production and the product of one subject can be actively understood by the others”<sup>65</sup> (OG, pp. 163-4).

Now it might seem (at least in Fink’s formulation we quoted above) that geometrical sense as it has been produced, Husserl says, “within the conscious space of the first inventors soul” pre-exists the act of speech, or, better, that geometrical sense can be fully constituted before and independently of its ability to be linguistically incarnated. It seems as if linguistic

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<sup>63</sup> If Husserl “did not first ask himself about the meaning of his operative instruments *in general*, it is not due to naivete, dogmatic precipitation, or a neglect of the historical weight of language.” GSP, p. 167. The reasons why language (as also writing) does not become a theme of phenomenological description will appear clearer in the course of our thesis.

<sup>64</sup> There is an unfailing complicity, Derrida writes in *Speech and Phenomena*, between the production of ideal objectivities and speech (or phone) and, since sound is the element of speech, between idealization and sound, a complicity which supports Husserl’s entire discourse on history: “The passage to infinity characteristic of the idealization of objects is one with the historical advent of the *phone*. ... What makes the history of the *phone* fully enigmatic is the fact that it is inseparable from the history of idealization, that is, from the “history of mind”, or history as such.” SP, p. 77. This question is also raised in *Of Grammatology*, p. 12.

<sup>65</sup> With regard to this essential connection between the problem of *constitution* and the problem of *language* or *expression* see also Husserl’s *Logical Investigations, I, Introduction §§2,3, Ideas I §124*, and *Formal and Transcendental Logic §73*.



embodiment, the *effective* use of speech which puts sense into intersubjective circulation, will come as an exterior cloak to sense, like a body to a soul. As we are going to see in the second part of the thesis, Husserl indeed believes that, even though, *in fact*, sense and speech are always interwoven, in order for the communalization of sense to be possible, a rigorous and phenomenological distinction between sense (*Sinn*) and expression (*Ausdruck*) is, *in principle*, possible. Since the *Logical Investigations* and *Ideas I*, Husserl maintains in his description of transcendental experience a *pre-expressive or pre-linguistic substratum of sense*, an intuitive and silent ground of the presence of sense, a base of silence upon which the expressive, supplementary and superstructural stratum of language can firmly stand and operate. And language can operate only, as Husserl writes since the First of his *Logical Investigation*, “when a speaker produces it with the intention of *expressing* himself about something (*über etwas sich äussern.*)”<sup>66</sup>

Considering this aspect of Husserl’s work which is dominated by the metaphysical theme of full presence, and the intuitionist “principle of principles”, Derrida writes “it would be absurd for sense not to precede – *de jure* – the act of language whose own value will always be that of expression.”<sup>67</sup> This is also, according to Derrida in *Speech and Phenomena*, what follows directly from phenomenology’s principle of principles: the immediate presence of sense to *primordial intuition* as the experience of the absence or uselessness (*Zwecklosigkeit*) of signs, namely of *indicative* signs, since only an indication (*Anzeigen*) is truly a sign for Husserl.<sup>68</sup> According to Derrida, however, the *Origin* demonstrates precisely this: how difficult is for Husserl to reconcile this limitation of language to a secondary and reproductive *stratum* of experience with the thematic of the traditional *sedimentation* of meaning, i.e., with the *necessity* of linguistic sedimentation, a thematic that we are to pose and follow in the next sections. Geometrical propositions, writes Husserl, “like other cultural structures, appear on the scene in the form of tradition; they claim, so to speak, to be *sedimentations* of truth-meaning. ...” (OG, p. 170)

This difficulty to determine the status of meaning in relation to sense, the difficulty and even impossibility of maintaining a rigorous and essential distinction between pre-linguistic sense and linguistic expression or meaning is, according to Derrida, what puts the principium

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<sup>66</sup> *LI*, §7, pp. 276-277.

<sup>67</sup> IOG, p. 69n and *Form and Meaning*, published in *Speech and Phenomena*, p. 118.

<sup>68</sup> Derrida discusses the Husserlian “essential distinction” between “indication” and “expression” in his *Speech and Phenomena*. Already in the *Introduction*, however, Derrida has pointed to the importance of this distinction for the interpretation of the phenomenon of crisis. IOG, p. 92n, *SP*, pp. 42, 80-81, and *Form and Meaning*, p. 118.

phenomenology, the axiomatic principle of intuitive, *actual* and *immediate* presence of sense into question.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> This crucial difficulty is important for us for another reason. According to Kates, who follows a developmental approach, or rather a *chronological* one, as he himself maintains several times (pp. xvii, 200, 241n21), and examines the development (the “continuity and discontinuity” (pp. 43, 84) of Derrida’s reading of Husserl, the *Introduction* belongs to the “pre-deconstructive texts”, it does not break “definitively” with the “unthought axiomatic of all Husserlian phenomenology”. Kates claims, for instance, that “the notion of sedimentation points back toward the construal of the sign solely as *leib* (79). We cannot help but be astonished with this claim: how can there be any proper density to history, how can there be any traditional and especially written sedimentation of sense without the sensible surfaces of language, without the corporeal exteriority of signs in which sense can be deposited and communalized? Corporeal exteriority, Kates is right, does not *constitute* the sign *as such*, “but in a sense that we must make clear, is *indispensable* to it.” (Derrida’s emphasis) (IOG, p. 94) Kates in order to defend his “Essential History”, and its essentially chronological and linear understanding of development of Derrida’s thought will maintain innumerable times in his text that Derrida “arrives at” or “invents deconstruction” in 1967 (pp. 66, 81) In p.73 we see the impasse of this approach: Derrida invents deconstruction “in 1966 or thereabouts”(!) ,writes Kates, forgetting however to cite any text of Derrida from this year, as if this deconstruction took place “outside the text”. The fact that he is obliged to accept in a footnote that Derrida *did* raise the “**problem**” of the “unthought axiomatic” of phenomenology, does not change his basic thesis: as he writes, it did not “hold the center stage” of the *Introduction*, it was only raised in some footnotes and “on the works outskirts.” (p. 235n23) In this thesis we are going to maintain that, if deconstruction has something to do with the *event*, with what is to come, if deconstruction is possible otherwise than as some guaranteed method or operation of problematization, or as a pre-organized and programmed response to a problem, if deconstruction is *possible* then “this is because it mistrusts any sort of periodization and moves, or makes its gestures, lines, and divisions move, not only within a corpus in general, but at times within a single sentence, or a microscopic element of a corpus” *Taste for the Secret*, p. 9, see also, *As If it were possible*, in *Negotiations* p. 358.

#### 4) The Archeo-Teleological Doctrine of Tradition. The Historic Present.

In the *Origin* Husserl defines intersubjectivity and language, and, as we are going to see, the capacity of *reactivation*, as the interrelated but also *concrete* conditions of possibility of both the Objectivity *and* the traditionality (or historicity) of geometrical sense. Before we enter into these interconnected “*structural aprioris*”, as Husserl calls them (OG, p. 174), *of* tradition and genesis itself, before we enter into the discussion of *how* the ideality of sense proceeds with the help of language from its *subjective* origin to its Objectivity, or *how*, as Husserl put it, does “linguistic embodiment (*sprachliche Verleiblichung*) make out of the merely intrasubjective structure the *objective* structure ...” (OG, p161), we have to consider the fact that ideality (or ideal objectivity) is a characteristic not only of geometry’s sense but the essential characteristic of all cultural formations, of all language, and of sense *in general*. The structure of all culture, scientific or not, can be described by Husserl only in terms of ideality. The science of geometry is first presented in the *Origin* as an indistinguishable example of the cultural world in general, as one cultural *ideal* formation and as one form of traditional culture among others. But even if it is a traditional culture, its ideal character should not be confused with that of a de facto empirical culture; geometry and science in general have “quite another manner of being, quite another temporality.”<sup>70</sup>

It is as early as the *Philosophy as Rigorous Science* (1911) that Husserl elaborated some essential distinctions, which are very important for phenomenology in general and for a phenomenology of history in particular, and with which he attempts to disentangle once and for all the confusions involved in every empirical or historicist investigation of Dilthey’s type: the confusion of value and existence,<sup>71</sup> of all types of realities and all types of idealities. In the *Origin* Husserl supposes the distinctions between several types and degrees of Objectivity, and most importantly the distinction a) between real object and ideal object, and b) between bound ideal objectivity and free ideal objectivity, on the bases of which he be able to present the exemplarity of the science of geometry and its historicity.

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<sup>70</sup>*Crisis*, p. 278.

<sup>71</sup> Speaking for that feeling of power of the historian who evaluates the work of a past philosopher and judges its relative worth, Husserl writes “we obviously still maintain that the principles of even such relative evaluations lie in the ideal sphere, which the evaluating historian who will understand more than mere developments can only presuppose and not – as historian – justify. The norm of the mathematical lies in mathematics, for the logical in logic, for the ethical in ethics, etc.” *PRS*, p. 188.

With the first distinction, which partially<sup>72</sup> corresponds to the difference between natural reality and spiritual culture, Husserl (like Dilthey) will react against naturalism and causalism, against the positive naturalization of the life of spirit. The ideal objectivities of science (but also of culture in general and of language itself) cannot be reduced to a mode of being which pertains to the sensible existence of the real and transcendent thing belonging to nature.<sup>73</sup> Since spiritual culture, which is constituted as the domain of ideal objectivities, intersubjectivity, tradition and responsibility, is not a natural reality, it cannot be subsumed under the category of external causality.

From very early Husserl condemns in a Platonic manner those who can “understand by “being” (*Sein*) only real being, and by objects only real objects.”<sup>74</sup> Here we must be careful: whenever Husserl affirms the non-existence and non-reality of ideal objectivity it is always in order to recognize *not* that it is a nonbeing, but, on the contrary that, *ideality is a way of being that is irreducible to sensible existence or empirical reality*: ideality is unreal, but it *is* – as object or as sense present for an egological subject, for an indubitable cogito.

With the second distinction between bound and free idealities Husserl wants first of all to save the ideal Objectivity and truth of science (and philosophy) from historical relativism. In *Philosophy as Rigorous Science* Husserl attacks Dilthey who reduces the Idea of truth, of philosophy and science, which is an *infinite Idea*, to the subjective immanence of the *Weltanschauung*, to the *doxa*, or even *wisdom* which belong to the cultural-world’s subjective-relative *truths*. Undoubtedly, *Weltanschauung* (and *Weltanschauungs -philosophie*) is not like a real thing in objective time and space, even if it belongs to the real world: it is an ideal formation with its own origin and tradition, a “sense-structure” which remains bound to a determined historical totality by the *finitude* of its very project. It is this *finitude* in the project of prescientific cultural objectivities which make them unfit, or less exemplary, to provide a guide for a sense-investigation of “universal historicity” – the ultimate horizon, according to Husserl, for every science, and for all sense and Objectivity in general. A finitude not only in their project, but also

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<sup>72</sup> We say partially since the distinction between ideality and reality is necessary also for the analysis of all cultural objects. Husserl writes “We call *real* in a specific sense *all that* which, in real things in the broader sense, *is, according to its sense, essentially individualized by its spatiotemporal position; but we call unreal every determination which, indeed, is founded with regard to its spatiotemporal appearance in a specifically real thing but which can appear in different realities as identical* – and not merely as similar.” For example, “the same geometrical proposition can be uttered as often as desired: every *real* utterance has ... identically the same sense.” *Experience and Judgment, Investigations in a Genealogy of Logic*, translated by James S Churchill and Karl Ameriks. Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1973, p. 266.

<sup>73</sup> Naturalism reduces the mode of being of consciousness and of ideal objects to the mode of being of the physical world: to exist means to belong to nature and to be subsumed under its categories, such as time, space, and causality. See also PRS, p. 179, and Levinas’s *Theory of Intuition*, pp. 8ff.

<sup>74</sup> *LI*, pp. 330, 345.

in the recollection of sense: the capacity of their reactivation is, as Husserl would say, of “an obvious finitude.” (OG 168)

We have mentioned already that Husserl’s historical meditations on the question of the birth and tradition of geometry begins with “the most obvious commonplaces” and remains “unavoidably”, as he writes, “within the sphere of generalities” (OG, p158-9). What authorizes the reactivating reduction with respect to the originary sense of the first geometrical acts (but also with respect to all instituting acts) are some formal, but “radical generalities” concerning the subject of tradition. Why radical? Because if these generalities are investigated correctly they will lead us, according to Husserl, to the ultimate juridical instant in which the most radical unity of history is announced: the *universal and concrete a priori* of history, i.e., the *historic present*. (OG, p174) As the primordial itself, the *historic present* is the phenomenological *Absolute* of history, the *ground* of all historicity: the ultimate, universal *form*<sup>75</sup> outside of which no egological constituting subjectivity can go since it is that *within* which, *toward* which and *starting* from which every possible historical experience or adventure (of heading off, of taking the initiative, of setting and keeping the direction or of changing the heading) can be lived as its own. This universal a priori of history also prescribes that there is no historical experience which *could* be lived by an egological subjectivity other than *in* the present. The very notion of a historic past or future whose sense *could* not be thought in the *form* of a (past or future) present, defines for phenomenology the *unthinkable* and the *impossible* itself, the absolute *limit* of historico-phenomenological *reason*.

Moving within the *limits* of reason alone, Husserl’s historical investigation of the origin of geometry, “continually calling us back to the unnoticed presuppositions of ever recurring problems” (IOG p52), will exhaust itself in a sense-investigation of “generalities” and, as Husserl says with regard to a science with radical responsibility, it “can be only a delimiting form; it can only plant fences, the crossing of which indicates absurdity or aberration.”<sup>76</sup>

One of these generalities concerns a characteristic common to all ideal objectivity, to all forms of culture and science: every cultural ideality moves entirely within the spiritual space of tradition. Husserl writes, “Our human existence moves within innumerable traditions. The whole cultural world, in all its forms, exists through tradition. These forms have arisen as such not merely causally” (OG, p. 158).

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<sup>75</sup> For the concept of form, for the profound, as Derrida believes, phenomenological reinterpretation of the traditional concept of form (*eidōs, morphē*) see *Form and Meaning*, especially pp. 107-109, 127-128, and SP, p6. We will come back to this in the second part of the thesis.

<sup>76</sup> FTL, p. 6.

Now these generalities, as *a priori* and structural determinations, retain their “*unconditioned (unbedingten)*”<sup>77</sup> general validity” (OG, p. 159), despite the absence of every material, factual-historical determination. On the subject of tradition in general we have, as we were saying before with respect to the eidetic singularity of the origin of geometry, an absolutely indubitable knowledge extending beyond all historical factuality. We know *a priori* that every ideal-cultural formation we can encounter for ourselves in our surrounding historical world, whatever its materially determined content, has its origin in the past, in the productive acts of a historical subjectivity. It is also evident in advance that these productive acts were able to create an ideal objectivity that it did not exist before “only by disposing of raw or already traditional, i.e., spiritual shaped, materials” (IOG, p. 57). A reference to the origin, to the inaugural production of sense, is necessarily inscribed, then, in the very sense of every ideal formation and its historicity. Every cultural ideality is born “out of a *first* acquisition” of sense, “out of *first* creative activities” (OG, p. 158). This sense must have first been created and presented itself as evidence in a primordial and constituting act in such a way so as to be then linguistically expressed and communicated among different subjects. Now without, for the time being, asking about the historical content of this originary evidence, we know *a priori* the form of this evidence as well as that its content *is already*, precisely with the help of language, *transmitted and acquired*. Were this transmission and acquisition never take place or were it impossible, no objectivity and no history would ever appear or make any sense whatsoever.

But apart from the form of the original self-evidence and its ability to be transmitted, we also know *a priori* the form of the movement which pertains to the transmission of its content. This movement is analogous, if not the same, in all cultural objectivities, scientific or prescientific. Moreover, the sense-content of a science like geometry, just like that of every other constituted cultural formation, is transmitted according to a movement that pertains also to the primordial temporalization of egological consciousness. Were we to respect and to repeat Husserl’s descriptions concerning the primordial production and the form of development of geometry and of traditional culture *in general*, Derrida tells us, we would be led back to the description of the unique and essential *form* of temporalization: the *living present (lebendige Gegenwart)* of consciousness, the *ultimate ground of all constitution*. For Husserl every historic present, every cultural and every scientific present, is grounded in the living present of an

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<sup>77</sup> We will come back to this “*unconditional* rationalism of the *unconditional*,” to this great theme, Derrida says, of *unconditionality*, which for Husserl remains the absolute principle of pure reason (either theoretical or practical). It is at the center of Derrida’s reading of Husserl in *Rogues*, in the second Essay on Reason. Let us simply say here that the *infinite task* of philosophy as science and theory, as it is described or prescribed by Husserl, especially in the *Crisis* and in the so called *Vienna Lecture*, is itself *unconditional*. (*Rogues*, p. 134.)

egological and historical consciousness. All history passes, it cannot not pass, *de facto* as well as *de jure*, through the intentional and inner history of the totality of egological subjectivities: “The historical world is, to be sure, first pregiven as a social-historical world. But it is historical only through the inner historicity of the individuals, who are individuals in their inner historicity, together with that of other communalized persons” (OG, p. 174).

In the course of this thesis, we will have the chance to return many times to Husserl’s descriptions of the movement of temporalization, i.e., of the temporality of the *synthetic* interconnections of sense. (We will have particularly to see what binds these descriptions with Husserl’s descriptions of the constitution of intersubjectivity especially in *Cartesian Meditations*, and also with the problem of signification.) For the time being let us underline that this movement of temporalization of the living present is, according to Derrida, dialectical through and through: the indefinite and mutual implications of sense- retentions and sense- protentions (of “primary memory” and “expectation”) (IOG p152). As the ultimate, universal and absolute *form* of transcendental experience in general, and as, we must not forget, the most primordial and *concrete* lived experience, the *living present* is nothing but the indefinite maintenance of this dialectic.

Here we find once again the peculiar virtue of language: as the means for a sedimentary depositing of sense, it takes this dialectic movement of sense beyond the individual finitude so as to make its transmission or tradition in the communal world possible. As the condition for the constitution of the ideal identity of sense in thought, language permits the intra-egological permanence or sedimentation of sense as well as the traditional sedimentation of sense in the communal world. (IOG, pp. 85-86, 143) The protogeometer can produce the pure ideality of the geometrical object in his thought and, at the same time, assure its transmissibility to other geometers only by means of (unequivocal) speech.

According to Derrida, the themes of intentional history of sense, of sedimentation, of passivity and reactivation, as they are dealt in the *Origin*, make explicit this dialectic of protention and retention described in Husserl’s lectures on the *Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1905)*. This description, after the reduction of psychological temporality as successiveness in objective time, will reveal the *living present* of consciousness as the “primordial Absolute of temporality”: as the absolute *maintenance* or *nowness* of the *origin* which has the power of synthesizing protentions and retentions and of incessantly reassembling them under the *universality* of its *form*. Derrida writes:

The present appears neither as the rupture nor the effect of the past, but as the retention of a present past, i.e., as the retention of a retention, and so forth. Since the retentive power of consciousness is finite, this consciousness preserves significations, values, and past acts as habitualities (*habitus*) and

sedimentations. Traditional sedimentation in the communal world will have the function of going beyond this retentional finitude of individual consciousness. Of course, sedimentary retention is not only the condition of the possibility of protention: it also belongs essentially to the *general form* of protention, which is itself conceived under the absolutely unique and universal *form* of the Living Present. The latter, which is the primordial absolute of temporality, is only the maintenance of what indeed must be called the *dialectic* of protention and retention, ... IOG, pp. 57-58.

The *absolute* of the Living Present then is only the indefinite maintenance of the mutual implications of protentions and retentions, the *form* in which an infinite diversity of (materially determined) sense-contents can be produced. Without this dialectical and indefinite implication of sense protentions and sense retentions, always *lived* and unified by an egological subjectivity in the absolute and concrete identity of the living present, which is nondialectical in itself<sup>78</sup>, no production and no transmission of sense could ever be possible.

Now what is said of the living present is, according to Husserl, also valid for the historic present, since the latter is grounded in the living present of egological subjectivity (that is, in intra-egological sedimentations of sense). In order to translate the *synthetic* style of the movement which pertains to the totality of the life-world as cultural world, Husserl uses the geological image and metaphor of *sedimentation*. (IOG, pp. 60, 98-99) Sedimentation in the traditional world has the form of a produced and acquired sense that is continually and internally recapitulated: cultural objectivities, scientific or not, are sedimented traditions. All ideal objectivities *in general* "have the mobility of *sedimented traditions*" (OG, p. 171).

With regard to the tradition of sense of a constituted ideal formation let us note "the most obvious commonplaces." We know that the sense which enters into tradition, the sense which can be transmitted to and acquired by another *speaking* subject, is continually and internally recapitulated within every new historical acquisition and sedimentation, that is, we know that every acquisition is unceasingly worked upon, again and again, by a subjective activity of producing new structures of sense out of the old ones and of handing them down; we know that this traditional sense extends enduringly through time "since all new acquisitions are in turn sedimented and become working materials" (OG, p. 171). Geometry's progress or development is a traditional development as sense-sedimentation: every enrichment of sense retains a sedimentary reference to the past and acquired sense at the bottom of the new sense and does not dispense with it. (OG, p. 166)

Whatever our ignorance on the subject of the actual history of a cultural formation, we know *a priori* that, the traditional development of every cultural formation is brought about by

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<sup>78</sup> The movement of temporalization, "as every authentic dialecticity wants," is, Derrida writes, "only the dialectic between the dialectical (the indefinite mutual and irreducible implication of protentions and retentions) and the nondialectical (the absolute and concrete identity of the Living Present, the universal form of all consciousness." IOG, p. 143.



the permanent totalization and repetition of its acquisitions, and that the unity of this unceasing traditionalization is always brought about in the universal *form* of the historic present. As Husserl writes “the whole of the cultural present, understood as totality, implies the whole of the cultural past ... it implies a continuity of pasts which imply one another, each in itself being a past cultural present. And this whole continuity is a *unity* of traditionalization up to the present which is our present as [a process of] traditionalizing itself in flowing-static vitality” (OG, p. 173). From these generalities and self-evidences result, as Husserl writes, the universal a priori of history (*das universale Apriori der Geschichte*): “The **historic present** is the historical Absolute - *the vital movement of the coexistence and the interweaving of original formations and sedimentations of sense*” (OG, p. 174).

Similarly, this is how Husserl describes the unity of sense pertaining to the production and to the becoming of the ideal Objectivity of geometry: it has the unity of a tradition, geometry is a traditional system of ideal objectivities. What is acquired through scientific activity, which is not something real but ideal, is serviceable as material for the possible production of idealities on a higher level. Husserl writes: “We understand our geometry, available to us through tradition (we have learned it, and so have our teachers), to be a total acquisition of spiritual accomplishments which grow through the continued work of new spiritual acts into new acquisitions. We know of its handed-down, earlier forms, as those from which it has arisen; but with every form the reference to an earlier one is repeated. Clearly, then, geometry must have arisen out of a *first* acquisition, out of the first activities” (OG, p. 159).

Clearly then, the objectivities of geometry are, like any other form of empirical culture, spiritual productions which move necessarily in the space of tradition. And Husserl immediately adds, in order to describe the unique style of the synthetic interconnections of sense pertaining exclusively to the tradition of geometry (or to the tradition of an objective and exact science): “We understand its persisting manner of being: it is not only a forward process from one set of acquisitions to another but the *continuous synthesis* in which all acquisitions maintain their *validity*, all make up a totality such that, at every present stage, the total acquisitions is the total premise for the acquisitions of a new level” (OG, p. 159).

For Husserl’s dialectics *the creative activity of sense implies always a passivity regarding constituted and acquired sense*. It belongs to the essence of the results of each scientific stage not only that their ideal sense “in fact comes later” but that, since sense is grounded upon sense, the antecedent sense gives something of its validity to the new sense and becomes part of it. “Geometry necessarily has this mobility and has a horizon of geometrical future in precisely this style; this is its meaning for every geometer who has the consciousness (the constant implicit

knowledge) of existing within a forward development understood as the progress of knowledge being built into the horizon” (ibid.)

The logic of exemplarity is at the centre of Husserl’s archeo-teleological doctrine of tradition: geometry is one example of traditional culture among others and a *good* example, a teleological model. According to Husserl we should distinguish between the spiritual productions of science from that of prescientific and empirical culture. The latter have only a passing existence in the surrounding world, “death is possible for them alone” (IOG, p. 94). In opposition to them, an essential privilege is reserved for the sciences and for philosophy. “Philosophy, science, is the title for a special class of spiritual products.” “They are imperishable.”<sup>79</sup> A certain infinitization, a certain passage to the limit, and a certain relation to *telos*, is involved in their genesis and life.

Geometrical acquisitions, then, have another manner of being, another temporality and they bring about, Husserl writes, a “revolutionalization of historicity.” The origin of geometry has been marked, Derrida writes, by an “irruption of the infinite as revolution within empirical culture” (IOG, p. 59). As we are going to see, this infinite had already broken through, it was already at work in the first idealizing acts of the protogeometer who produced the geometrical object; these inaugural acts were already an infinitization. Geometrical sense, even if it is always produced within the individual consciousness of the scientific investigator, has “the miraculous new way of containing intentional *infinities*” within itself. A new form of communal subjectivity appears in history, one which, “living in *finitude*, bears within itself the future horizon of infinity”. This subjectivity, always finite in its factual being, “lives towards poles of infinity.”<sup>80</sup> A new type of communalization of finite subjects arises, one which, being guided by the *new sense of infinity*, that is, by the idea of an infinite task or project, is not bound to the soil of the national tradition, and is not inhibited in its spread by any national boundaries.<sup>81</sup> This new sense or idea of infinity is a practical and unconditional idea, and indissociable from the “*new sort of praxis*”, which is nothing but that of “the universal critique of all life and all life-goals, all cultural products and systems that have already arisen out of the life of man; and thus it also becomes a critique of mankind itself and of the values which guide it explicitly or implicitly.”<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *Vienna Lecture*, p. 276ff.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 277.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 277, 286. As infinite idea or project, philosophy postulates a universal beyond all relativism, culturalism, ethnocentrism, and especially beyond or against nationalism.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* p. 283.

Why insist here on the peculiar structure of the ideal objectivities of mathematics? Since we have affirmed (in the second section of this part of the thesis) the eidetic singularity and uniqueness of the origin of geometry, and the indissociability of fact and sense in the inaugural act, a very important question has been left hanging over us: what authorizes the return inquiry? How the reactivation of the originary or instituting sense is possible if it is buried under the infinite history of geometrical acts and sense-structures whose sedimentations are superimposed and implicated in their totality in each stage? What authorizes and permits the reactivation of the originary sense of geometry is what makes it possible. For Husserl this is the possibility of a twofold inquiry a) into pure tradition, into “the possibility of a pure history of sense” and b) into the possibility of pure language and of univocity. What makes geometry the exemplary index of being-scientific and the exemplary case for a sense-investigation on universal history is precisely the absolute ideality of its objectivities, objectivities which, since they are free from any sensible and factual limit, may appear to offer the chance for a pure tradition of truth and for *perfect univocity*, i.e., for infinite traditionality.

Furthermore, the sense-sedimentation pertaining in the tradition scientific truth, whose ideality is absolutely normative, is rigorously distinguished from the sense-sedimentation pertaining to a de facto empirical culture, a sedimentation which “does not exclude the fact that validity (which is rooted in language, terrain, epoch, and so forth) can become dated” (IOG, p. 59). The successful description of the latter was in fact what Husserl was conceding to Dilthey’s historicism with regard to the relative and subjective validity of all *Weltanschauungen*. All world-views are ideal cultural formations whose internal sense is definitely motivated in the given historical relationships by the acts of a total, factual subjectivity. As a cultural formation, a *Weltanschauung* is also an ideal formation that is *concretely* and *traditionally* valid or true for the total historical subjectivity in question. As such it has “the relativity proper to the historical world”, it comes and goes; it belongs to the time and changes with the time, the consequence being that, since its validity is “bound” to an empirical, determined temporality, “the absolute validity of any particular form of life-interpretation, of religion, and of philosophy disappears.” What was once held valid (by a historical community) is not at the present (or is not for another historical community). “The factual truth of what is said here” Husserl writes, “is obviously indubitable.” Historical relativism still can claim its rights, but it will never be “the last word of scientific knowledge”<sup>83</sup>.

Both the *Weltanschauung* and the empirical cultural world, the determined historical totality to which the *Weltanschauung* corresponds correlatively, are sedimented traditions of sense

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<sup>83</sup> PRS, p. 186.

animated by an “idea”, by a project. But in prescientific culture there are no infinite tasks, “no ideal acquisitions whose infinity is itself the field of work.” “Extrascientific truth, culture not yet touched by science, consists in tasks and accomplishments of man in finitude. The openly endless horizon in which he lives is not disclosed; his ends, his activity, [...] all this moves within the sphere of finitely surveyable surrounding world.”<sup>84</sup> The idea or the project which animate the *Weltanschauung*, which together with “wisdom” belong to the cultural community and to the times, is marked Husserl writes in *Philosophy as Rigorous Science* by an irreducible finitude: “*Weltanschauung, too, is an ‘idea’, but of goal lying in the finite, in principle to be realized in an individual life by way of constant approach....*”<sup>85</sup>

Now what happens with the sense-sedimentation pertaining to the culture and tradition of truth? The ideality of truth, by contrast to the ideality of *Weltanschauung*, is absolutely normative: if “the ‘idea’ of *Weltanschauung* is a different one for each time ... The ‘idea’ of science, on the contrary, is a supratemporal one, and here that means limited by no relatedness to the spirit of one time [...] Science is a title standing for absolute, timeless values.”<sup>86</sup> Likewise in *Vienna Lecture*, Husserl has shown that the idea of “unconditioned truth” (*unbendingte Wahrheit*), the idea of truth and of science, is an infinite idea and one cannot account for it on the basis of a determined historical totality, since, on the contrary, the history of science or truth is the transcendence of all finite historical and cultural totality. The exemplarity of geometry, and of every objective-exact science in general, consists in the fact that *it is not proper to any determined historical culture*, that it is made possible, as the highest possibility of all culture in general, by the reduction of every empirical cultural determination. This latter reduction was made possible by the inaugural idealization or infinitization of the protogeometer which created the geometrical object or *eidōs*, “by the irruption of the infinite as a revolution within empirical culture” (IOG, p. 59). This is again what is so extraordinary about the institutive and historical acts of the protogeometer: the creation of geometry’s infinite *eidōs* which opens the horizon of geometrical knowledge as that of an infinite project. It is therefore only in contradistinction to the

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<sup>84</sup> *Vienna Lecture*, p. 279.

<sup>85</sup> *PRS* p. 191. To be sure, *Weltanschauung*, according to Husserl, gives “the relatively most perfect answer to the enigmas of life and the world, that is, leads to a solution and satisfactory clarification, in the best possible way, of the theoretical, axiological, and practical disagreements of life, which experience, wisdom, and pure apprehension of life and the world can resolve only imperfectly. [...] In the urgency of life, in the practical necessity to take a position, man cannot wait – perhaps for millennia – that science be there, supposing that he already knows the idea of rigorous science.” Likewise in the *Vienna Lecture* Husserl speaks of those forms of knowledge not yet touched by science, the forms of mythical or mystical knowledge, a speculative knowledge that aims to serve the *life* of humankind: “all this speculative knowledge is meant to serve man in his human purposes so that he may order his wordly life in the happiest possible way and shield it from disease, from every sort of evil fate, from disaster and death” (Crisis, p. 284).

<sup>86</sup> *PRS*, p. 191.

finite unity of the bound idealities of empirical and de facto culture and its history that the infinitely open unity of the history of geometrical idealities will stand out as the model for every other traditional development. But even here we must be careful, we must not forget Husserl's ambiguous attitude before the science of geometry. Even though Husserl has valued geometry as an infinite project, on the other hand, the whole *Crisis* tends to show how geometry, the ground of the mathematization of nature, hides *true Nature*.<sup>87</sup>

If, then, the possibility of reactivation is illuminated by Husserl in the *Origin* it is because the instituting' fact opacity can be reduced from the very beginning, because the instituting evidence to be reactivated is that of a created and absolutely objective ideal formation, namely the geometrical *eidos* "pure spatiality", whose being-sense is precisely independent from all factuality, and first of all from all empirical culture and from the *here and now* subjective act which intends it. Undoubtedly the case would be very different were he to investigate the origins of a nonmathematical object, of a created, but still bound to a certain *de facto* historical culture, ideal objectivity. *In its origin and possibility*, the ideality of sense and its validity would remain for ever dependent and relative to a de facto temporality and the factuality of the subjective acts which intend it, for ever dated and contingent. And its history would never constitute a pure unity and continuity of its own, since it will always have let itself be intrinsically, i.e., in the becoming of its sense, affected by the empirical content of a real history, by determined cultural interconnections, by determined subjective motivations and interests (which are themselves valid and ongoing projects) to be realized in a finite individual or communal life. Its unity and the totality of its becoming would always be finite and empirical, an empirical aggregate of finite and accidental units.<sup>88</sup> Husserl writes about this difference between bound empirical culture and free culture of truth:

Even cultural systems are not always completely free idealities, and this reveals the *difference between free idealities* (such as logicomathematical systems and pure essential structures of every kind) and *bound idealities*, which in their being-sense carry reality with them and hence they belong to the real world. [...] When we speak of truths and of the fact that validity "once and for all" and "for everyone" belongs to their sense as the *telos* of judicative stipulation, then these are free idealities. They are bound to no territory, or rather, they have their territory in the totality of the universe. ***In what concerns their reactivation, they are omnispatial and omnitemporal.*** (my emphasis)<sup>89</sup>

Only the creation of a *transcultural* ideal objectivity, i.e., a cultural ideal objectivity which is not proper to any de facto historical culture, may appear then to offer the *chance*, which is also the *Telos* or the infinite task, of universal intelligibility, omnitemporality, absolute

<sup>87</sup> *Crisis* §9h, p. 51, see also IOG, pp. 33n, 118n.

<sup>88</sup> Husserl does not deny the historicity or genuine traditionality of those cultural systems or formations, he simply does not find in them the transcendental value (IOG, p. 82), or the transcendental depth (IOG, p. 89) that he finds "in logico-mathematical systems and pure essential structures of every kind." *Experience and Judgement*, §65, p. 267.

<sup>89</sup> *EJ*, §65, p. 266.

univocity and infinite translatability, i.e., of pure and infinite traditionality. This would also be the chance or task for man's communal being to be "lifted to a new level" and to become a transcendental *we*.

### 5) Speech, Writing and the Transcendental Historicity of Scientific Reason.

As we saw in section 3 with regard to the conditions of both objectivity and traditionality, according to Husserl, the ideal formations of culture, scientific or pre-scientific, are rooted in language, but language itself, which offers the chance for intersubjectivity and history, is also an ideal objectivity, an ideal formation through and through. Only as ideal objectivity can language provide the milieu within which the ideal sense of a cultural formation can be deposited and sedimented so as to offer itself, in the form of persisting linguistic acquisitions, to be heard or read, to be translated and worked upon again and again, and so indefinitely. There is no aspect of the cultural world, no moment of human life *in general* which could resist “the seduction of language” (OG, p. 165). Speaking of a whole class of ideal formations of the cultural world, Husserl says that they belong to “the broadest concept of literature” since “it belongs to their objective being that they be linguistically expressed and can be expressed again and again; or, more precisely, they have their objectivity, their existence-for-everyone, only as signification (*Bedeutung*), as the sense of speech (*Sinn von Reden*)” (OG, p. 160n). Husserl refers to the “broadest concept of literature” to the “literary object” which includes everything written, not only “fine literature” but also scientific literature. The literary object, which is taken by Husserl in the *Origin* as a clue for analyzing the ideality of cultural objectivities, is a nonmathematical or non-mathematizable object, and also an object that differs from objects of technical art, like tools, and from objects of plastic or musical art.<sup>90</sup>

As we are going to see in the second part of the thesis, the structure of language and of speech has been described by Husserl, already since the *Logical Investigations*, in terms of ideality, or rather in terms of more or less free ideality. In the *Origin* he writes: “...language itself, in all its particularizations (words, sentences, speeches), is, thoroughly made up of ideal objectivities, for example, the word *Löwe* occurs only once in the German language; it is identical throughout its innumerable utterances by any given persons” (OG, p. 161).

Derrida discerns three *degrees* of ideal Objectivity. We must pay attention here.

a) There is, first, what Derrida calls *primary ideality*, the ideality of the word (or *expression*), of its sensible form – or, as Saussure would say, of the *signifier*, of the acoustic

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<sup>90</sup> “What is literature? And first of all, what is it to write? How is it that writing can disturb the very question “what is?” and even “what does it mean? ...” These are questions which Derrida was able to formulate, develop and sharpen only with the help of transcendental phenomenology. Phenomenology, especially in its preoccupation “with the history of ideal objects and of truth” is, “as I still see it today, in a different way, a discipline of incompatible rigor.” *Punctuations: The Time for a Thesis* in Derrida, Jacques, *Eyes of the University, Right To Philosophy 2*, translated by Jan Plug & Others, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2004, p117.

image<sup>91</sup>. The identity of the signifying form (of the word *Löwe*), what allows it to be recognized as the *same* word through the multiplicity of its real and sensible embodiments (phonetic or graphic), is not real, it is ideal. But this ideality, what allows a certain identity in repetition that is independent of the multiplicity of the factual events, of the word or expression is still very far from being a free ideality, since it is still relative and bound to a certain factuality, that of a German speaking community. Derrida writes:

Only within a facto-historical language is the noun “*Löwe*” free, and therefore ideal, compared with its sensible, phonetic, or graphic incarnations. But it remains essentially tied, as a German word, to a real spatiotemporality; it remains interrelated in its very ideal Objectivity with the *de facto existence of a given language* and thus with the *factual subjectivity of a certain speaking community*. IOG, p. 70.

b) We pass beyond this sensible spatiotemporality of the word *Löwe* and factual linguistic subjectivity (the German speaking subjectivity) when we consider that the ideality and unity of the *sense Löwe*, of its intended sense or signified, can be made accessible to *several* languages (lion, *leo*, etc). The ideality of sense, of the signified, which Derrida calls secondary, is therefore a higher, a *more free* ideality than that of the word /signifier, and what therefore allows the latter to be translated. “The *same* content can be intended starting from several languages, and its ideal identity assures its translatability. This ideal identity of sense expressed by lion, *leo*, *Löwe*, and so forth, is then freed from all factual *linguistic* subjectivity” (IOG, p. 71). However heterogeneous are the essential structures of several constituted languages or cultures, translation is, *in principle*, a possible task.

But even this ideality of *sense lion*, the ground and condition of its translatability, is not a completely free ideality since it is still bound to an *empirical* subjectivity. This is why, “even if all men had been able to and could *in fact* encounter and designate the lion”, its translatability would never be absolute and universal. This is because the object lion, the flesh and blood lion, which is neither the word nor the sense *lion*, is not an ideal objectivity but a real and natural objectivity, a worldly existent. It is not an “objectivity of the understanding” but an “object of receptivity”, according to a distinction that Husserl makes in *Experience and Judgement* (§63) and which corresponds to the difference between *ideal* and *real* object that we mention earlier.<sup>92</sup> Because it is a natural and contingent reality, the ideal Objectivity of the sense *lion* will remain marked (even if, as we just said, it has freed itself from all factual *linguistic* subjectivity) in its

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<sup>91</sup> The equivalences signifier/expression and signified/*Bedeutung* could be posited here were not the *bedeuten/ Bedeutung/ sense/ object* structure much more complex for Husserl than for Saussure. See also *Speech and Phenomena*, p. 46n.

<sup>92</sup> As Derrida comments on the §63 of *Experience and Judgement*, “The objectivities of the understanding are on a ‘higher level’ than those of receptivity. They are not preconstituted, like the latter, in the pure passivity of sensible receptivity, but in predicative spontaneity. ‘*The mode of their original pre-giveness is their production in predicative activity of the Ego ...*’” (IOG, p. 71n).



very origin and possibility, by another contingency, that of the *lived experiences* of an *empirical subjectivity* in which the factual existence of a lion may be posited, apprehended, and expressed. The expression lion would be marked by an “unavoidable” equivocation that no translation would ever overcome. “The translatability of the word lion, then, will not in principle be absolute and universal. It will be empirically conditioned by the contingent encounter in a receptive intuition of something like a lion. The latter is not an ‘objectivity of the understanding’, but an ‘object of receptivity.’ The ideality of sense and of what it evokes irreducibly adheres to an *empirical subjectivity*” (IOG, p. 71).

c) Finally, we attain to the ideality of the object itself, to a *tertiary* ideality, with the historical constitution of the ideal objectivities of geometry. With the ideal object of geometry we pass beyond the bound ideality of language (both of the signifier and of the signified concept or sense) and beyond all factual and *empirical* subjectivity and thereby we can assure infinite translatability and infinite traditionality.

With the objects of geometry, the “objects of understanding” we pass beyond all de facto empirical subjectivity because we also pass beyond the finite and factual limits of the sensible intuition of the real object, beyond the constitution of the natural Objectivity of a wordly existent, for example, that of the lion. We pass beyond empirical subjectivity because the object of geometry, constituted as it is by the acts of a concrete historical subjectivity, is **more objective** than the natural existent lion.<sup>93</sup> “For if the latter resists or opposes anything, it would always be”. Derrida says, “a de facto empirical subjectivity. Therefore, the real object can never attain that absolute Objectivity which can be proposed *for all subjectivity in general in the intangible identity of its sense*” (IOG, p. 67). The difference between the constitution of the ideal object and the constitution of “objects of receptivity” is also a difference in their temporality. Unlike the real object which has its individual place in the objective time of the world, the ideal objectivity of geometry is totally free of factual, wordly temporality (or spatiality), it is *Zeitlos*, says Husserl in *Experience and Judgement*, §64. But this timelessness of the objectivities of the understanding, their being “everywhere and nowhere”, i.e., their supratemporality (*Überzeitlichkeit*) is only another “mode temporality”, namely omnitemporality (*Allzeitlichkeit*). In what concerns then their possible reactivation (and, we could add, translation), they are omnispatial and omnitemporal. (§65)

If absolute translatability is denied to a supposedly pre-cultural and natural objectivity we cannot say the same thing with regard to a transcultural object like that of geometry, whose

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<sup>93</sup> The lived experiences and acts of this concrete and constituting subjectivity always presuppose “the predicative activity of the Ego”, which is common to the constitution of natural and ideal objectivities, and of which Husserl speaks in *Experience and judgement*, §63.

Objectivity is absolute, removed from all real and subjective contingency, and therefore without any kind of limits – a cultural formation which is not proper to any *determined* historical culture.

Husserl writes:

The Pythagorean theorem, [indeed] all of geometry, exists *only once*, no matter how often or even in what language it may be expressed. It is identically the same in the ‘original language’ of Euclid and in all ‘translations’; and within each language it is again the same, no matter how many times it has been sensibly uttered, from the original expression and *writing*-down to the innumerable oral utterances or *written* and other documentations. OG, p. 160.

But we should not confuse the ideal Objectivity of language, of the geometrical expressions or propositions, which is bound to a factual linguistic community (geometry was first spoken in Greek) with the ideal Objectivity of the sense, with “the theme” of these expressions, which here, in the case of the exact science of geometry, is *identical* with the object itself, with the absolute ideal Objectivity of the geometrical object itself. Husserl specifies in an absolutely decisive paragraph:

*But the idealities of geometrical words, sentences, theories – considered purely as linguistic formations – are not the idealities that make up what is expressed and brought to validity as truth in geometry; the latter are ideal geometrical objects, states of affairs, etc. Wherever something is asserted, one can distinguish what is thematic, that about which it is said (its sense), from the assertion, which itself, during the asserting, is never and can never be thematic. And the theme here is precisely ideal objectivities, and quite different ones from those coming under the concept of language.* OG, p. 161.

So geometrical truth, the ideal Objectivity of the geometrical object or state of affairs is beyond every particular and factual language *as such* (Greek, German, and so forth.) and therefore also beyond all factual subjectivity or factual speaking community: and this is the reason why it is also universally translatable, namely, the reason why we can speak of a geometrical tradition, of a pure tradition of sense that is free from historically determined cultural interconnections. This freedom is necessary for geometry to be transmitted, exported or delivered to every *possible* language and every *possible* cultural tradition in general.

But even though the geometrical object has given us the chance to go beyond the bound ideality of a historically determined language, the latter was necessary for the constitution of truth: how is that? This is the paradox which Derrida, after Husserl, invites us to think: instead of binding it, historical incarnation in a factual and constituted language *sets free* the transcendental constitution of truth. **The transcendental must be rethought.** (IOG, p. 77). Here we are faced with the most interesting difficulty of the *Origin*. For if geometry was born and inscribed in a particular language, if it has a root in Greek language and culture, its project or task consisted, from the very beginning, in liberating itself from its territorial, cultural or other determinations, in a will to deracination, in pulling up, uprooting the roots and in making it such that what has been thought or written in Greek is delivered and acquired into several languages.

The grounding of geometry's ideal objects, i.e., of objects capable of being expressed, transmitted and infinitely repeated as the same, in and through the intentional acts of a constituting historical subjectivity, could not be possible without the element of language. What, therefore, makes Husserlian idealism infinitely more interesting for Derrida is not simply the absolute privilege accorded to pure consciousness as the absolute origin of sense and history, since this consciousness would not be possible without the *addition or supplement* of speech. In the investigation of the origin and tradition of geometry's sense, Husserl will return to the primordially of the *speaking* subject as what constitutes geometrical Objectivity and the whole sphere of ideal Objectivity. Put otherwise, in the constitution of ideal Objectivity the element of consciousness and the element of language are indistinguishable. Now this *supplement* is dangerous, it has an ambiguous or indeed a threatening value.<sup>94</sup>

Husserl has shown that, since the ideality and the sense of, for example, the Pythagorean theorem is not fully constituted, is not fully objective (i.e., intelligible for everyone), as long as it is not linguistically expressible, as long as it is not *able* to be set down in the world, to be embodied and deposited in linguistic *signs*, then the act of language cannot be simply restricted to the secondary and unproductive function of reproducing, reflecting and depositing a pre-expressive constitution of sense, that is of a sense which would not wait for speech in order to be what it is, i.e., an absolute object. But if "to constitute an ideal object is to put it at the permanent disposition of a pure gaze"<sup>95</sup>, the linguistic incarnation of speech, the act of language, which brings sense into an intersubjective horizon, and which thereby makes sense accessible and available for every consciousness whatsoever, is constitutive through and through: "Whether geometry can be spoken about is not, then, the extrinsic and accidental possibility of a fall into

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<sup>94</sup> The supplement is ambiguous: *sometimes* the supplement (speech as natural supplement or writing as a technical supplement) adds itself, it is a surplus, a plenitude enriching an other plenitude, namely the presence of sense to intuition and of intuition to itself: it cumulates and accumulates presence, but, *at other times*, if it is not *at the same time*, the supplement supplements the *for-itself (für sich) of self-presence*, it adds (first speech and then writing) only to replace, it takes (the) place and intervenes *in-the-place-of (für etwas)*. In the case of the history of geometry, it takes the place of or usurps geometry's absolute origin, the constituting and present source of its truth. Language (and writing in which the truth of geometry is sedimented) would substitute themselves for their own origin, for that which engendered them and has been engendered from itself: the living present of a constituting transcendental consciousness. We will come back to it in the second part of the thesis.

<sup>95</sup> IOG, p. 78. If, for Husserl, sense is neither an "in-itself" nor a pure spiritual interiority, if it is an object through and through, if, as Derrida writes a few pages earlier, "the sense of sense in general is here determined as *object*: as some thing that is accessible and available in general and first for a regard or gaze" then "the wordly image of the *gaze* would not be the unnoticed model of the theoretical attitude of pure consciousness but, on the contrary, would borrow its sense from that attitude. This is very much in accord with the initial direction of phenomenology: the object in general is the final category of everything that can appear, i.e., that can be for a pure consciousness in general" (IOG, p. 64).

the body of speech or of a slip into a historical movement. Speech is no longer simply an expression (*Aüßerung*) of what, without it, would *already* be an object: caught again in its primordial purity speech constitutes the object and is *a concrete juridical condition of truth*" (IOG, p. 77).

To be sure, going beyond the bound ideality of language (Greek, German, etc.,) toward the infinite pole of geometrical Objectivity or truth is itself precisely an eidetico- transcendental reduction, which makes the unconditionality and eidetic intangibility of truth appear with respect to all de facto historical culture and language. "Undoubtedly geometrical truth never keeps the ideal objectivity or identity of its particular de facto linguistic incarnations compared to which remains free. But this freedom is only possible precisely from the *moment* truth *can* in general be said or written, i.e., *on condition* that this *can* be done" (IOG, p. 90). As we have already seen, this independence of truth from all factuality (and from all factual subjectivity) is marked in phenomenology by a juridical and transcendental dependence: it refers to the concrete and constituting acts, to the pure linguistic acts of speaking or writing, of a *transcendental* subjectivity. So we can say that the pure history of geometrical truth resists the reductionist attempts of historicist relativism to the extent that it does not let the purity of its sense to be exiled for ever in the bound ideality of its *de facto* language. But it can certainly provide such a resistance only *if* this truth is *able* to be said, only *on condition* that it *can* be embodied and deposited (with the danger of becoming alienated) in sensible spatiotemporality.

We should therefore reverse Fink's formula we mentioned before (that in sensible embodiment occurs the localization and the temporalization of what is by its being-sense, for example geometrical truth, unlocated and untemporal) and say together with Derrida that "the ability of sense to be linguistically embodied is the only means by which sense becomes nonspatiotemporal" (IOG, p. 90). All cultural and historical production, scientific or not, of the spirit is necessarily involved in the essential ambiguity, the transcendental disquietude of language: "*As the process of that essential and constitutive capacity for embodiment, language is also where every absolutely ideal object (i.e., where truth) is factually and contingently embodied*" (IOG, p. 92).

We cannot therefore say that language can be subjected to truth or even that there can be a truth of language or of signification in general. Inasmuch as truth has its origin and exists only in language, "in the pure and simple *right* to speech"<sup>96</sup>, it can be found nowhere else. This is what

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<sup>96</sup> IOG, p. 92. The *right* of speech (together with the totality of "human rights") is obviously, for Husserl and for the whole philosophical tradition (and we should not forget that the idea of "human rights",

Derrida has inherited from Husserl and gave us to think: sense or *noema* in general must await being said or being written in order to inhabit itself, and in order to become, by differing from itself and by running all sort of risks, what it is, i.e., sense. So it seems that Husserl – when he affirms that the *sign* is the possibility of truth, that there is theoretical truth only in statements, that the activity of linguistic expression conditions the origin, the movement and the concept of truth – reverses the traditional and the most classical procedure of philosophy according to which signification is only a representation, a modification of the simple and full presence of sense in truth.

Now, although spoken language, verbal expression is an essential presupposition for intersubjective thinking, it is not enough to ground the absolutely free Objectivity of geometrical truth and its tradition. It allows the circulation of sense within a given, factual community of speaking subjects, it certainly frees the ideality of sense from an *individual* empirical subjectivity but still leaves it bound to the *synchrony* of an exchange, to an oral communication within the determined community from which it arises. The Objectivity of geometrical sense is *still not complete* with oral, that is, with synchronic, immediate and present, communication among the first geometers. It is not complete because the ideal Objectivity of sense in oral, present communication has not yet freed itself from an *actually present speaking* subjectivity in general. According to the *Origin*, only the possibility of writing, the possibility of being written permits the *ultimate freeing* of geometrical ideality from all factuality and sensible spatiotemporality. Without writing, not only geometry's truth, but all cultural formations and all language (and therefore all sense) would remain for ever bound to the *de facto* and *actual* intentionality of an empirical community of speaking subjects. This is how Husserl takes, according to Derrida, the *proper transcendental step* in this “unheard of” style of investigation into the nonempirical history of geometry. Husserl writes

Now we must note that the objectivity of the ideal structure has not *yet fully constituted* through such an *actual* transferring of what has been originally produced in one to others who originally reproduce it. What is lacking is the *persisting existence* of the “ideal objects” even during periods in which the inventor and his fellows are no longer awake to such an exchange or even, *more universally*, are *not longer alive* (my emphasis). What is lacking is their *continuing-to-be* even when *no one has realized them in self-evidence* (my emphasis). OG, p. 164.

Now what is this “thing” which can offer the possibility for truth to be fully objective, i.e., to enter into tradition, to be intelligible for all and indefinitely perdurable over and above any

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together with the institutions which try to implement this idea. is essentially one of the most powerful *philosophemes*, a philosophical idea through and through) denied to animals. The simple right to speech, then, as the quasi-transcendental condition of all other human rights (i.e., as their condition *and* as one right among others), is reserved only for the subjectivity of man.

determined community of speaking subjects? What is called this “thing” within which truth is gathered and which can make truth endure (and we must not forget, that *perdurance* or *persistance* is the very element and sense of truth itself) even when no *empirical* geometer has realized or thought it *in act* or *in fact*, or, and this amounts to the same thing, even when all *actual* and *present* geometers are dead?

Writing is the common name for signs which function despite the total absence of the empirical subject because of his death, which continue to be legible or readable and to produce effects when the subject no longer *answers* for them, for what he has written (in his name). It is a mark that subsists, which does not exhaust itself in the moment of its inscription and which gives rise to *iteration* in the absence of the empirically determined subject.<sup>97</sup>

Because writing frees the geometrical sense or truth from its *actually present evidence* for a real subject or for a real community of subjects, because this truth, in order to be what it is, can and must endure or survive in its written body beyond the death of its actual author(s), “the *conditions of its survival*,” Derrida tells us “*are included in those of its life*” (IOG, p. 90). Truth is imperishable inasmuch as it can be inscribed or deposited in real spatiotemporality, in a certain historical linguistic idiom, but also inasmuch as the possibility or necessity of the death (or the absence) of its actual author is already and in some way announced in the actual event of its written inscription. His death or absence is not merely an empirical possibility or eventuality, but *structurally necessary* to the writing of the geometrical protodocument. Geometrical ideality and truth (as an infinite task or project) is constituted by and appears to the acts of a pure, transcendental subjectivity only insofar as the later is finite in its factual being.<sup>98</sup> Geometry and science in general, and language are possibilities only for a mortal being.

Now what we said about the death of the writer holds also, and for the same reasons, for the reader or receiver. For the writing of the protogeometer, the protodocument itself must be readable not only after his death, but also after the death of any of its receivers, better it must be legible or *iterable* after the absolute disappearance of any empirically determined addressee or collectivity of receivers. A truth which can be written and cannot remain readable or *iterable* beyond the disappearance of the actual community of speaking subjects from which originally arose, and beyond the death of all actual receivers or readers, this “truth” would not be absolutely

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<sup>97</sup> *The possibility* of a certain non-presence, of a non-actuality, pertains to the structure of the functioning of the mark (oral or written). What is the structure of the mark that renders the factual non-presence or death of its author *possible*? And is this possibility an *empirical* possibility, a possibility qua *eventualité*, or a structural, i.e., *necessary* and *essential* possibility, a possibility qua necessity? We discuss more extensively Derrida’s concept of “*iterability*” in the second part of the thesis.

<sup>98</sup> “The transcendental end can appear to itself and be unfolded only on the condition of mortality, only on the condition of a relation to finitude as the origin of presence and ideality.” *The Ends of Man*, in *Margins* p. 123, and *SP*, p. 55.

objective truth, and its history or tradition would remain for ever bound to a *de facto* empirical community, and like the latter, for ever vulnerable to *factual* destruction. Husserl writes about the transcendental effect or value of writing:

*The important function of writing, documenting linguistic expression [writing for Husserl is always an indication, it indicates or refers to an already constituted unity, that of the oral expression] is that it makes communication possible without immediate or mediate personal address, it is communication become virtual.* Through this, the communalization of man is lifted to a new level. OG, p. 164.

This **virtuality** is ambiguous, since, on the one hand, writing, as one of the most powerful technical mediations, communicates or circulates a thought-content to those that are absent, extends infinitely the domain and the power of the voice and of oral communication, makes telecommunication and the infinite transmission of truth to the most distant generations, possible. It makes thereby a transcendental community possible, i.e., a possible task. But, on the other hand, by absolutely virtualizing dialogue, by freeing communication from all present and actual intentionality, in other words by breaking with the horizon of communication as communication of presences, i.e., as communication of the actually present intention of the subject to say what he means (*vouloir-dire*), writing makes passivity, forgetfulness, and all the phenomena of “crisis” *possible*. (This is indeed the crisis of the subjectivity of the “we”, of the European philosophy and humanity of which Husserl speaks in *Crisis*. We will come back to it.)

But then writing, as what produces an absolutely ideal Objectivity and as the place where Objectivity or truth dwells, can no longer be a simple, continuous and homogeneous modification of presence, a progressive extenuation of presence, a site of potential presence, of the author’s intention to what he has written and of the receiver’s reading: the death or absence of the author and of the receiver is always already inscribed in the structure of writing, in the very possibility of its functioning, i.e., of signifying something.<sup>99</sup> The field of transcendental history, the origin and the transcendental telos of a productive act of writing opens only on the condition of a relation to *finitude* as the origin of presence and of ideal Objectivity.

The specific spatiotemporality of writing (a spatiotemporality which, as Derrida writes, escapes the alternative of the sensible and the intelligible IOG, p. 90) then completes and sanctions the constitution of absolutely permanent ideal objectivities and their traditionality as the place from which every *present* subject, every *present* evidence of sense, and every *present* reading can be absent. Thereby, the space for a pure and transcendental history of sense is opened in all its enigmatic depth. This is the enigma of the parallelism between empirical and

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<sup>99</sup> See *Signature Event Context* where Derrida links the value or effect of transcendentality to the possibility of writing and of death, thus analysed. *Signature Event Context* is published in *Limited Inc.*, translated by Samuel Weber, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1988, pp. 8, 48.

transcendental history, the parallelism which respects both the perfect correspondence between the two and their nonconfusion.<sup>100</sup>

With regard to this writing effect (or transcendental effect of writing), i.e., the absolute virtualization of dialogue, of communication and, therefore, of tradition, Derrida invokes, following Jean Hyppolite, the essential possibility and necessity of a “*subjectless transcendental field*”. (IOG, p. 88) Writing, as precisely what constitutes such a subjectless transcendental field is, Derrida writes, one of the conditions of transcendental subjectivity, of a transcendental, i.e., nonempirical but constituting, “we”. In this sense Husserl can say that the authentic act of writing, its primordial and/ or final sense, is a reduction (of all factual existence and of all empirical subjectivity) performed *by and in view of* the transcendental *we*.

This absence of subjectivity from the transcendental field of writing, is the *factual* absence of a *determined empirical subjectivity*, i.e., “an absence whose possibility frees absolute Objectivity” (IOG, p. 88). But the text, in order to be what it is, must be readable and intelligible for a *transcendental* subject in general. Derrida writes

The originality of the field of writing is its ability to dispense with, due to its sense, every present reading in general. But if the text does not announce its own dependence on a writer or reader in general (i.e., if it is not haunted by a *virtual* intentionality), and if there is no purely juridical possibility of it being intelligible for a transcendental subject in general, then there is no more in the vacuity of its soul than a chaotic literalness or the sensible opacity of a defunct designation, a designation deprived of its transcendental function. IOG, p. 88.

What we said about the structurally indispensable role of language in the intersubjective constitution of ideal Objectivity of sense is true, *a fortiori*, for writing: *historical incarnation in language, in a linguistic idiom sets free the transcendental*. Analyzed in its pure intentionality, writing, as constitutive writing, is not merely a sensible phenomenon, the sensible body (*Körper*) of the letter, the constituted bound ideality of the graphic sign, the milieu in which truth is embodied and sedimented, “but a properly constituting body (*Leib*), the intentional primordiality of the here and now of truth” (IOG, p. 97). Inasmuch as writing permits the absolute freeing of the ideal Objectivity of sense, i.e., of truth, from its *actually* present evidence for a real subject, this writing cannot be only a mnemotechnical aid to truth, a technical prosthesis in the service of (spoken) truth, the exterior redoubling of the *actual* presence of truth to a *full* speech.

The possibility or necessity of sense to be incarnated in a graphic sign is no longer simply extrinsic and factual in comparison with ideal Objectivity: it is the *sine qua non* condition of its internal completion. As long as ideal Objectivity is not, or rather, *can* not be engraved in the world – as long as ideal Objectivity is not in a position to be party to an incarnation (which, in the purity of its sense, is more than a system of signals or an outer garment) – then ideal Objectivity is not fully constituted. Therefore, **the**

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<sup>100</sup> For the notion of *parallelism* which defines the relation between the empirical or wordly consciousness and the transcendental consciousness as the origin of the world, and how the first *incorporates* the latter without being confused with it see Derrida’s *Introduction to Speech and Phenomena*, pp. 10-12.



act of writing is the highest possibility of all “*constitution*,” a fact against which the transcendental depth of ideal Objectivity’s historicity is measured. (my emphasis) IOG, p. 89.

According to Derrida then, writing defines and completes the transcendental disquietude of language to which we referred before: “as the process of that essential and constitutive capacity for embodiment, language is also where every absolutely ideal object, i.e., truth, is factually and contingently embodied.” Writing, both as *Verleiblichung* and as *Verkörperung*, frees the ideality of sense (or of truth) at the same time that it binds it to a certain idiom, i.e., at very work of its historical binding. In order for geometry’s truth to be what it is, in order for geometrical sense to attain infinite universality and infinite omnitemporality (IOG, pp. 73n, 77n), it must be able to be set down and inscribed in the world, to be deposited in sensible spatiotemporality (that of the *de facto* existence of Greek language). Derrida writes: “From then on sense is gathered into a sign, and the sign becomes the exposed, wordly residence of an unthought truth. We have previously seen that truth can *perdure* in this way without being thought *in act or in fact* (our emphasis) – and that is what radically emancipates truth from all empirical subjectivity, all factual life and the real world” (IOG, p. 92).

Here also lies, according to Derrida, the ultimate merit of the *Origin of Geometry*: it describes the necessary exposition of truth, i.e., of the infinite task of philosophical and scientific *Reason*, in the wordly inscription of writing. This exposition, which is structurally necessary to the emergence and indefinite development of sense, i.e., to the progressive advent of Reason, is also the *danger* to Reason. A danger both interior and intimate to reason. As the condition or the chance for the constitution of truth of geometry, the condition of the historicity and traditionalization of its ideal Objectivity, sense sedimentation in writing is simultaneously a threatening value, a trap, what opens the possibility of passivity and forgetfulness, the possibility of crisis or absence of sense: what makes the subjective and historical origins of the ideal objectivities of geometry become strange and inaccessible to us.

For Husserl this possibility of crisis, the possibility of the crisis or absence of sense – that is, the crisis of reason: where reason loses its sense, loses itself or gets lost, where consciousness, conscience, or science, i.e., lucid, responsible sense-investigation or reactivation, is lost or forgotten – remains linked with the production and tradition of scientific ideal objects i.e., with truth, with the progressive and infinite becoming of reason: it is thereby bound up with the essential possibility of writing. The iterable structure of writing, writing cut off, as we said, from its original production, i.e., from the original and actually present intention of its author, forbids or devastates the possibility (the power, capability, potentiality) or value of absolute responsibility. This is why it is condemned by Plato in the *Phaedrus*: writing signifies

forgetfulness, it is a mnemotechnic means (*hypomnesis*), a supplement of good, living and spontaneous memory (*mneme*).<sup>101</sup> Some centuries later, writing will still be recognized as a critical moment for the history of reason and truth. For Husserl, writing, the written inscription, which is not simply an *hypomnesis* but as we said the essential condition of truth, the *khora* of truth, makes forgetfulness the faithful shadow of the progressive advent of reason.

It is as if, according to Husserl, nothing else but reason itself made itself run such a danger, as if it wrongly gave itself reason to transgress *with writing* the factual *finiteness* of its historically determined figures, acts and events, and to consider itself, in its purity, as *unconditional* and *infinite*, as an infinite idea or task.<sup>102</sup>

Let us examine more closely this strange possibility, namely, the possibility that scientific reason itself and as such would ever come to acquire the power to threaten itself, the power to throw itself into crisis, to inflict upon itself such a disease, such an ill or evil, “in an autonomous and quasi-autoimmune fashion”, as Derrida writes in *Rogues*. Before Husserl we knew that reason had the power (*dynamis*) to immunize itself, to protect itself from irrationalist prejudices, madness and from the *doxa* of the times, to throw light and dispense once and for all with the violence of the night, and therefore the power to *save* the world and the humanity of the world, but we had never examined the possibility of it being suicidal, we never thought that reason had the power to autoimmunize itself, “to threaten itself, to lose the meaning and the humanity of the world”.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Plato, *Phaedrus*, pp. 274c-275e.

<sup>102</sup> *Rogues, Two Essays on Reason*, p. 126.

<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*, p. 123. See also *Economics of Crisis*, pp. 70-73

## Chapter Two: Writing and Responsibility

### 1) The Issue of Responsibility: Husserl's Archeo-Teleological Discourse on Crisis

In his *Introduction* to the *Origin* (section VII) Derrida refers to the moment of crisis, to the critical moment of writing in the course of examining the danger, namely the possibility of the disappearance of truth after it has been inscribed in the wordly element of writing. Derrida examines the hypothesis of radical forgetfulness, of the death of the absolute Objectivity of geometrical sense by the destruction of all factual writings (in which geometrical truth has been inscribed and sedimented) but also by the death of all actual geometers. How can the infinite task of the science of geometry protect its truth from factual corporeal disaster?<sup>104</sup>

Derrida here repeats a *fiction* which Husserl has used in his famous §49 of *Ideas I* in order to bring to light the eidetic intangibility of pure consciousness as the absolute origin of sense and of the world. In *Ideas I* Husserl reveals the essence of transcendental consciousness after the reduction of the totality of the existing world in general. (We will come back to this reduction or fiction in the second part of the thesis in our discussion of the Husserlian reduction, in the first *Logical Investigation*, to the “solitary mental life” of the speaking subject. After the employment of a certain type of fiction (*Phantasievorstellung*.) Husserl reveals the experience of solitary speech, of the subject hearing-himself-speak as a *nonwordly* experience, as a phenomenon which has already suspended the existential thesis of the world. Hearing- oneself speak is an experience which even though is produced in the world, it is also the origin of the world, since without it no world would ever appear *as such*.) According to Derrida, this fiction of the annihilation of the existing world does not have any other purpose but to “reveal to the *Ur-Region* – transcendental consciousness – the essential relativity of the world’s sense (the world being the totality of regions). Since transcendental consciousness can always and with complete freedom modify or suspend the thesis of *each* (therefore of *all*) contingent existence and of *each*

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<sup>104</sup> In “*Essential History*” Kates gives a great emphasis in this Derridean fiction in order to make the point that Derrida continues to affirm the Husserlian distinctions and the constitutive role of pure writing, that Derrida is still a Husserlian, albeit a rather unorthodox one” (pp. 73, 83). Derrida’s intention were never to “give voice to some linguistic or scriptural relativism” (67) Derrida in the *Introduction*, “will never be able to impugn the transcendental function of writing” (p. 70). We agree, not only in the *Introduction* though: the question for Derrida was never to “impugn” the transcendental function of writing but to see what writing, precisely in its transcendental function, still owes to *phone*. As we are going to show in the second part of the thesis, for Husserl writing is only *phonetic writing*, in the sense that **outside the horizon of the phone** (of what Husserl calls *Bedeutungsintention*) **writing means nothing**.

(therefore *all*) transcendence, its very sense is de jure and absolutely independent of the whole world” (IOG, pp. 95-96).

Likewise, it is also in *Ideas I* that Husserl put the geometrical object, the truth of geometrical objectivity, to the test of hallucination in order, once again, to reveal its eidetic intangibility. To claim for example that “whether I am hallucinating or not a square has only four sides” means that no existential thesis in the real world and no psychological experience will ever be relevant to the constitution of truth.<sup>105</sup> But hallucination can be truth’s accomplice only in a static world of constituted significations. When Husserl in the *Origin* turns his attention to the sphere of sense and its traditional sedimentation, the true contrary of hallucination, is not the clear, distinct and immediate perception of the thing itself but history: the lucid consciousness of the historicity of ideal objects and the reawakening of origins. (IOG, p.46)

Well in his *Introduction to the Origin*, Derrida repeats this *fiction* of the destruction of the world in order to reaffirm the eidetic intangibility of the geometrical eidos and *its history*, its independence from all empirical historical subjectivity: What would happen if the graphic sign, the guardian or guarantee of genuine objectivity and truth, was in fact destroyed, and all actual geometers were in fact dead? Would such a factual destruction have any effect on the sense of geometry itself? “Even if all geometrical documents – and as well all *actual* geometers – had come to ruin one day to speak of this as an event ‘of’ geometry would be to commit a very serious confusion of sense and abdicate responsibility for all rigorous discourse” (IOG, p. 97). Geometry, in its *sense-of-being* as truth which is not *in* the world, and in its pure *being-for* a transcendental subject, can survive the death of factuality to which it has been originally entrusted.

This hypothesis of such a factual destruction would not have the transcendental signification it has for the case of scientific objectivities, if this same hypothesis were to be applied to another cultural ideality which is bound to a determined temporality or factuality. For this ideality, and for this we are certain, “a universal conflagration, ... or a catastrophe of monuments or ‘documents’ in general” would *intrinsically* ravage them as well. Because they are still bound to some wordly factuality, these idealities, *in their very sense*, would share the same

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<sup>105</sup> Before Husserl, Plato in *Theaetetus* (190b) and Descartes in his *First Meditation* had also recourse to dream: “whether I am awake or asleep” “the odd is not even” and “two and three add up to five”; and it seems impossible, Descartes says, to suspect the obviousness of the truth of geometry: the latter is invulnerable to natural doubt. Descartes, René, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, translated by John Cottingham, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 14. Plato, *Theaetetus, Sophist*, translated by Harold North Fowler, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1921, p. 181. See also *Cogito and the History of Madness* pp. 47, 49. But whereas for Descartes “the primordial ground of these constituted truths, .... will be delegated to a veracious God” for Husserl, on the contrary, the ground of this truth is the historical and instituting acts of a transcendental subjectivity.

fate with the idealities of “prehistoric arcana and buried civilizations” (IOG, p. 88): these ideal formations, bearing within themselves their sense, would not survive the death of the community in which they had originally arisen and developed, forgetfulness would be radical, their sense would never be possible to be reactivated and brought back to life. Since the essences of finite totalities (of empirical culture) will always be idealities bound to empirical history, then “*death is possible for them alone* and has the transcendental signification we just now granted it, *but only insofar as* the bound ideality is animated or traversed by a transcendental intention, *only insofar as* it is guided by *the Telos of an absolute freeing which has not been yet fully attained*” (my emphasis) (IOG, p. 94).

What is this transcendental signification of death? This transcendental signification concerns the constitutive activity of writing and the relation to death which this constitutive writing necessarily implies in its very possibility, in its very enactment. It concerns the constitution and sedimentation of an ideal Objectivity in and through the *finite* acts of a new sort of intersubjective transcendental community, which is responsible for the historical system of truth that it itself produces; it concerns a community of the transcendental *we* that uproots itself from the soil of every determined historical totality and every national tradition and lives, even if it is *finite* in its factual being, “towards poles of infinity”.<sup>106</sup> With writing “man’s communal being is lifted to a new level” (OG, p. 164).

The problem of the disappearance of truth is quite shifted. Since death, as factual disaster, is not possible for geometrical Objectivity or truth (precisely because its sense and value is independent from all factuality), the forgetfulness which follows the destruction of truth’s wordly embodiment (and of the actual community of the geometers who thought and practiced geometry) will never be as radical as in the case of bound idealities. By contrast to the finiteness of historically constituted *bound* idealities, the primordial evidence and sense of geometrical ideality may *de jure* be brought back to life, i.e., it may be actively reactivated or rediscovered with a new infinitization or idealization: “If geometry is true, its *internal* history must be saved integrally from all sensible aggression. Since geometry is tied neither to this moment here, nor to this territory here, nor to this world here, but to all world (*Weltall*), nothing will ever stand between the wordly experiences which incarnated geometry and what they have begun again: discovering afresh (without any traces after the shrouding of this world here) the paths of the adventure buried in another real history” (IOG, pp. 95, 97).

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<sup>106</sup> *Crisis*, p. 277.

Now we should emphasize that this fiction of the destruction of wordly and empirical existence belongs to the *necessary* and *provisional* phase of the phenomenological *Rückfrage*, where historico-empirical subjectivity has to be neutralized in order for the infinite idea of truth (here the truth of the idealized space of geometry) to come into light. As we are going to see Husserl does not stop there. With a new reduction this time he will come back to a constituting historical subjectivity which lives and creates in the cultural world. This fiction belongs to the “objectivist” period or moment of thought, or even to that objectivist “tendency,” which even though offers the target of Husserl’s critical denunciation, is nevertheless “only a *period*, an essential, and therefore irreducible, movement of thought” (IOG, p. 83)<sup>107</sup>

The danger of which Husserl speaks concerns a forgetfulness that threatens the historical system of truth *in* the world, i.e., the truth which has been gained through the speech and writing of a historico-transcendental subjectivity. The historical movement of truth that Husserl describes, and which is in danger, would be nothing outside the concrete and instituting acts of a transcendental (inter)subjectivity, outside its linguistic, either spoken or written, objectifications and sedimentations. The foundations of this history of truth, which is also a (rational) history of reason, are always, for Husserl, “the temporal and creative subjectivity’s acts based on the sensible world as cultural world” (IOG, p. 60). The creative and intentional act of *actual* signification, of speaking or writing, of **wanting or meaning to say** the truth (what Husserl calls the *Bedeutungsintention*, and Derrida has translated as *vouloir-dire*, i.e., the living and life-giving act, the *Lebendigkeit*, the spiritual act which animates and bestows an expression with meaning), the free will to say or ex-press the truth, is for Husserl the ultimate authority, the absolute ground of truth and of all sense, and is absolutely responsible for its history, for the internal becoming and tradition of sense. Derrida writes

In order to grasp the nature of the danger threatening truth *itself* in its constitutive speech or writing, *in order not to leave* “*internal*” *historicity* [my emphasis], Husserl is going to track down the intention of writing (or of reading), in itself and in its purity; [...] only in the intentional dimension of a

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<sup>107</sup> Derrida’s reading of Husserl in the *Introduction to the Origin* is not a criticism of his objectivism as Lawlor claims in his *Derrida and Husserl: The Basic Problem of Phenomenology*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002, p. 112). On the contrary what Derrida is trying to bring forth is the importance and audacity of Husserl’s last reduction: the reduction of the ideal sedimentations of objective-exact sciences in order to return to and reveal their historical ground in the life-world. Husserl’s merit, moreover, lies in his insistence that the return and thematization of the life-world should not abdicate “all scientific quality in general and all philosophical dignity.” Derrida’s intention cannot be clearer at this point. Marking his distance from that “irresponsible empiricism” to which “all the ‘phenomenologies’ of prescientific perception are condemned” Derrida writes “The return to the structures of prescientific experiences must continually keep alive the **question: How can the apriori of scientific Objectivity be constituted starting from those of the life world?** (Derrida’s emphasis) (IOG, pp119-120.)

properly animate body, of the *geistige Leiblichkeit*, more precisely, in the *Geistigkeit* of the *Leib* (to the exclusion of all factual corporeality), is sense intrinsically threatened. IOG, p. 98.

Now what Husserl calls *crisis* is not a mere accident since it affects what is absolutely essential: it threatens, or rather, it happens to this historical subjectivity which is responsible for the advent and adventure of scientific reason. This ultimate foundation, the origin of the instituting, historical and subjective acts of objective science as cultural or spiritual formation is precisely what *objectivism* forgets, neglects or conceals. Hence the *paradoxical* character of Husserl's critical denunciation of naïve objectivism and naturalism: the amnesic evil called objectivism is an *essential* accident, it is born on the inside of scientific reason itself<sup>108</sup>, it is produced by reason itself, i.e., by the production and written sedimentation of ideal objects which "as if" by themselves cover over and conceal their relation to the *Lebenswelt* and to the instituting or founding historical and subjective acts. As we have already said, writing is the condition for the constitution and history of ideal Objectivity as the place from which the actual intention to say what one means (*vouloir-dire*, *Bedeutungsintention*) may be absent. How can we determine the possibility or necessity of this absence?

According to Derrida, the possibility or necessity of forgetfulness, of this amnesic evil that threatens the historical movement of truth in the world, has taken in Husserl's work *three* significations.<sup>109</sup> It is an empirical possibility or necessity, an accident that befalls the factual history of the sciences, and in this sense it has the character of "an extrinsic necessity, one which is thereby contingent in comparison with the sense and teleology of reason." (IOG, p. 36n) It happened, without foreseeing it and without calculation, in the course of a long history of scientific reason, and it happens again. This crisis is a massive and serious historical fact but it is not an "impenetrable destiny", and, illuminated by the teleology of reason it can be understood and eventually overcome. But this irresponsible forgetfulness can be overcome (this is the second signification) only by a voluntary *Selbstbesinnung* or return back to the origins, only by a decisional act of judgement, by a *heroic* decision of reason, as Husserl writes in the *Vienna*

<sup>108</sup> "The reason of the failure of a rational culture lies in its entanglement in 'naturalism' and 'objectivism' (in seiner *Versponnenheit* in 'Naturalismus' and 'Objectivismus')." *Crisis*, p. 299. See also Derrida's interpretation of this metaphor of "*versponnenheit*" in *Rogues*, pp. 130-131.

<sup>109</sup> See the very important footnote in p. 36 of Derrida's *Introduction* concerning the three significations of "forgetfulness in general" in the work of Husserl, "each varying according to text and context". This note has puzzled Marrati who has quoted it twice in her *Genesis and Trace*, in p. 24 where she mentions only the two and omits the third signification of forgetfulness, and in p. 40 where she presents this time along the other two and the third signification mentioned in Derrida's footnote: the eidetic, structural necessity of forgetfulness. But even now she seems less willing to accept that Husserl himself has identified, "although rather less often" as she writes, a structural necessity of forgetfulness, and therefore, of crisis. Her reluctance to accept Husserl's recognition of crisis in any other way than in the form of a subjective fault or accidental forgetting shows us how much her reading of Husserl owes to Derrida's 1953-4 dissertation rather than to the *Introduction*.

*Lecture.* And finally, the third signification of forgetfulness in Husserl's historical investigations is that of an "eidetic necessity: the necessity of sedimentation prescribed and for all constitution and all traditionalization of sense, therefore for all history. This prescription in turn is sometimes valued as the condition of historicity and the progressive advent of reason, sometimes devalued as what makes origins and accumulated sense become dormant. It truly is a threatening value." (IOG, p36n) With writing, reason, reason itself and as such, acquires the power to threaten itself. This amnesic evil called objectivism is inevitable, a "transcendental evil", a necessary possibility since it remains linked with the very movement of truth and the production of ideal objectivity, since it is prescribed by the constitution and development of science itself, since it is inflicted by reason itself to itself. Derrida writes in *Rogues*, in the second *Essay on Reason*,

Husserl knows it and says it: objectivist naiveté is no mere accident. It is produced by the very progress of the sciences and by the production of ideal objects, which as if by themselves, by their iterability and their necessary technical structure cover over or consign to forgetting their historical and subjective origin. Scientific reason, in its very progress spontaneously produces the crisis. It is reason that throws reason into crisis, in an autonomous and quasi-autoimmune fashion.<sup>110</sup>

Far from denoting a simple negativity then, the concept of crisis, as forgetfulness of origins, is not without a certain ambiguity. To the extent that it remains necessarily linked with writing (and therefore with the absence of every *present* act of signification or reactivation) it is the *positive* condition of the history of ideal objects. According to Derrida, there is an entire aspect of Husserl's work that makes us think that the concept of crisis understood on the basis of a dialectical and teleological reading of history, is not only ambiguous but also more suspect than ever. The question for us, however, is: what is it in this transcendental and *teleological* investigations of the origin of European reason and philosophy, that allows Husserl to describe, recognize, and in one and the same move efface, this essential or necessary possibility of crisis, the possibility of nonintuition and nonpresence in general? It is the concept of the Telos, of the spiritual telos of European philosophy and humanity, namely the infinite idea of an infinite task of reason, that will be of major importance for us here.

If the Husserlian concept of crisis remains ambiguous, perhaps the only possible conclusion one could draw is that the crisis of European sciences (and of European humanity), however essential and serious, can be overcome. Especially with regard to the science geometry, the model of *exact* and objective sciences of nature, which is responsible for the naturalization of the psychic sphere (IOG, p. 33n), a sense investigation or reawakening of its origin as a cultural historical formation would protect us from the irresponsibility of objectivist naiveté which having lost its own rational sense of life borders on irrationalism. As we are going to see, if naturalism

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<sup>110</sup> *Rogues*, p. 127.



and objectivism are denounced by Husserl as irrationalist perversions of reason this is because, as Derrida writes, the “risk that is run has to do with what links the ideality of the object to exactitude and thus to a certain type of *calculability*.”<sup>111</sup> Now only an archeo-teleological conception of history could reduce this ambiguity of crisis into a provisional, accidental threat, or into an *apparent* defeat of reason so as there to be any chance of limiting or delimiting it, of *economizing* it, or of taming it, and, finally, of overcoming it.<sup>112</sup>

According to the teleology that commands the Husserlian discourse on history, sense sedimentation and objectification in writing, in “letters and signs” (*Crisis*, §9g), offers not only the chance for an infinite history of sense, but also involves the danger of passivity and forgetfulness: it provides the occasion of the technician’s and objectivist’s irresponsibility which had degraded science with radical responsibility to “a game” (*ibid.*) By means of written inscription one should always be able to repeat or reactivate the original sense of the subjective and inaugural act of idealization which created and bestowed sense to the ideal Objectivity of geometry.<sup>113</sup> But with the possibility of progress that the written sedimentation of sense allows, and to the extent that science moves away from its beginnings, i.e., to the extent that its structures of sense are accumulated more and more at higher levels, it becomes more and more difficult to reactivate, Husserl says, the “primal beginnings.” With infinite traditionalization assured by writing there is the ever growing risk of “forgetting” and loss of sense. With the immense development of the sciences there comes the time when the act or capacity of reactivation fails. “Unfortunately this is our situation, and that of the whole modern age” (OG, p. 169).

If “crisis” does not imply stagnation in the history of science this is because, the geometer can learn to use signs, to handle mathematical symbols, and thereby produce new results, new theories, new propositions, even if those signs or symbols are void of their primordial sense, that is, even when the sense of the instituting acts has been lost or buried under sedimentations and *passivities*<sup>114</sup>. But if to reactivate writing is always to reactivate the linguistic expression of sense

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>112</sup> Derrida, Jacques, “Economies of Crisis”, published in *Negotiations*, pp. 69-74.

<sup>113</sup> Husserl writes “... Sentences give themselves in consciousness as reproductive transformations of an original meaning produced out of an *actual*, original activity; that is in themselves they refer to such a genesis” (OG, p. 168).

<sup>114</sup> With regard to the danger that arises with the written sedimentation of geometry’s sense. Husserl makes the distinction between, on the one hand, “*passively* understanding the written expression” and, on the other hand, “*making it self-evident by reactivating its sense.*” The question then is what happens with the tradition of a science like geometry (where sense is grounded upon sense) when geometrical thinking is “supposed to produce something new without first being able to reactivate the previous levels of knowledge back to the first?” This problem then concerns the possibility of a tradition of geometry empty of its sense, of its being dynamically developed throughout centuries and “still not be genuine”. The moment of crisis

which arose out of the instituting evidence, i.e., to reanimate the spoken expression (the expression as the fulfilling of the instituting truth-intention) in the body of the letter, the latter as a symbol may *empty* itself from sense (IOG, p. 92n), take flight from reactivation, and may remain forever closed and mute. As we are going to see in our discussion of *Speech and Phenomena*, the distinction between, on the one hand, *sign-expression* in living speech, in which the investigator actualizes the clear evidence of sense and the full presence of the signified in its truth, and, on the other hand, *sign-indication* in writing, in which the investigator may use letters as symbols, i.e., *empty* of sense, is absolutely decisive here. The empty symbolism of the written notation in mathematical technique (Crisis, §9g, p. 46), the degradation of a diaphanous expression to an opaque indication, is the most dangerous obstacle to *Sebstbesinnung* and *Verantwortung*: it is what exiles the investigator from the clear and present evidence of sense, from the actual intention to say and write the truth, and thus what opens up the possibility of crisis. The investigator's intention to say and write the truth means, for Husserl, nothing more than the *actual* and *present* intention to reactivate any passively received sense given by tradition *and* to take upon himself the transmission of sense. Objectivist and technicist irresponsibility, the crisis or emptiness of mathematical sense in the theoretical and practical activity of the natural sciences, does not pose limits to their technical progress. Husserl will refer to the "fateful omission" of the putatively *rationalist* investigator who moves freely within the *naivete* of mathematical *aprioriness*, who inherits, utilizes and advances a historical system of truth (with its symbols, concepts, propositions etc) but who remains "insensitive to the problem of origin" (OG, p. 170n) and does not ask himself "what am I in the process of doing", who does not occupy himself with questions about his *responsibility*, about the historicity or origin of this truth, of his praxis and discourse. In the *Crisis* the name of Galileo becomes the exemplary index for this attitude, for this naïve and irresponsible objectivism. Indeed one could say that the whole weight of the *Crisis* (see especially §36) falls upon the "*epoche*" of the objective sciences, upon the reduction which, without renouncing all scientificity, has no other purpose but to reactivate their historical and subjective origin, i.e., to bring back to light the primordial ground concealed under the sedimentary deposits of scientific culture and objectivism themselves.

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does not entail a halt in scientific production, on the contrary, an immense expansion of its conquests is possible even when its primordial sense is "forgotten". "The inheritance of propositions and of the method of logically constructing new propositions and idealities can continue without interruption from one period to the next, while the capacity for reactivating the primal beginnings, i.e., the sources of meaning for everything that comes later, *has not been handed down with it*. What is lacking is thus precisely what had given and had to give sense to all propositions and theories, a sense arising from the primal sources which can be made self-evident again and again" (OG, p. 170).

This *crisis* here has the character of the “sickness” that Husserl talks about in the Vienna Lecture: “The European nations are sick; Europe itself, it is said, is in crisis.”<sup>115</sup> This crisis, according to Derrida’s commentary, has the ethical sense of an abdication of responsibility, “the profound ethical sense of a fall into ‘passivity’, of an *inability* to be rendered ‘responsible’ for sense in an authentic activity or authentic reactivation. Technical activity (that of science also) as such is a passivity in comparison to sense; it is the agitation of the sick and, already, the tremors of delirium” (IOG, p80n). Husserl here utilizes the vocabulary of medicine, even if this sickness, which is the sickness of reason itself, as he says, is not natural and gets no relief from “natural doctors.”<sup>116</sup>

This crisis, however, can become understandable, as Husserl says, and even transparent only on the basis of a teleological or intentional history. “By developing the philosophical-historical idea (or the teleological sense) of European humanity” it will appear that it is neither “an obscure fate” nor “an impenetrable destiny.”<sup>117</sup> The teleology that guides the analysis of history and the very history of crisis is itself guided by the idea of transcendental community, for which Europe would be at once the name and the exemplary figure. What Derrida writes in *The Other Heading* for Paul Valery is true for Husserl as well: to say crisis is to appeal to the subject of Europe, to recall it to itself, to its unity and its freedom.<sup>118</sup>

The failure of reactivation, Husserl says, is a historical fact, it happens “today” (but not only in his days, Husserl mentions the *whole modern age*, and of course we always have to ask ourselves if this is happening today). It is moreover a historical accident that nobody was foreseeing, an accident without expectation and without calculation, an event.<sup>119</sup> It happened, it is happening, and one must suspect that affects what is essential, it is an essential accident. But this

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<sup>115</sup> *Crisis*, p. 270. For a Derridian critique of *nationalism*, of ethnocentrism, and of relativism see *Rogues*, especially p. 149. This critique is inspired by a reading *Crisis* and especially of the *Vienna Lecture* in which Husserl alluded not only to Europe and the rest of the world but also, and most importantly for us here, to the national communities and nations states, whose “supposed rationality” Derrida writes, “formed the horizon of the lecture.” (*Rogues*, p. 154)

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.* This medical or biological vocabulary would, in the first instance, justify Derrida’s use of the term “auto-immunity” and his speaking of “transcendental pathology” already in the IOG (p. 80) but especially in *Rogues*. With respect to the crisis or sickness of European reason, Derrida writes “I would risk speaking, in the wake of Husserl, of a transcendental pathology and even a transcendental autoimmunity.” (p. 125) “As I have done elsewhere, I have here granted to this autoimmune schema a range without limit, one that goes far beyond the circumscribed biological processes by which an organism tends to destroy, in a quasi-spontaneous and more than suicidal fashion, some organ or other, one or another of its own immunitary protections.” (p. 124)

<sup>117</sup> *Vienna Lecture*, p. 299.

<sup>118</sup> Derrida, Jacques. *The Other Heading Reflections on Today’s Europe*, translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael B Naas, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1992, pp. 31-35. See also *Economies of Crisis* in Derrida, Jacques, *Negotiations*, translated by Elizabeth Rottenberg, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2002, pp. 69-73.

<sup>119</sup> *Rogues*, p. 122.

failure, however serious, is not an irreversible one. It is more a lapse than a defeat of scientific reason, and even though it affects what is essential to it, it is only an apparent defeat, an “apparent failure”<sup>120</sup>. A failure, however, on what is essential, and therefore one that calls, on its behalf, for a responsible decision and *Selbstbesinnung*: for a philosophical or European coming to awareness, for a reflection by which, in regaining consciousness, the subjectivity responsible for the history or adventure of truth (the captain, the headman at the head of the crew and the ship that he commands), finds again its lost heading, its direction or sense (*sens*), and the pole for a safe return back to the shore, i.e., to the origin, in order to re-embark, to head off again by keeping or changing the heading. Husserl speaks of the “crisis of European sciences,” of “the crisis of European humanity” in view of a decided, calculated and voluntary return to the forgotten sense and to the hidden ground or origin of scientific objectivity, i.e., in view of the responsibility and freedom of a transcendental historical subjectivity.

According to this arche-teleological programme, as Derrida writes in his *Introduction to the Origin*, “forgetfulness of truth itself will thus be nothing but the failure of an act and the abdication of responsibility. Forgetfulness will never be radical, and sense can always, be reactivated” (IOG, p. 98). Let us follow the phrasing of this programme in the *Origin*. Husserl writes “In view of the unavoidable sedimentation of mental products in the form of persisting linguistic acquisitions there is *a constant danger*” (OG, p. 165). This is the danger of passivity (we just mentioned) and of equivocation of linguistic expression. In reading the sign is first of all given in the pure passivity of sensible receptivity, and then is again passively awakened to a familiar to us signification through association. The possibility of giving way to this first *expectation* of sense is a lasting danger. But only the *freedom* of the transcendental subject could let itself to be threatened in this way. The transcendental subject, however, is always *free* to reawaken any passively received sense and transform it back into the corresponding activity which has originally produced it: this freedom is “*the capacity of reactivation that belongs originally to every human being as speaking being*” (OG, p. 164).

We can therefore say that *voluntary reactivation* is, in the domain of tradition, of the traditionalization of ideal objectivities, the very act of sense-investigation (*Besinnung*) and of responsibility (*Verantwortung*). Reactivation permits bringing to life, under the sedimentary surfaces of linguistic and cultural acquisitions, the sense arising from instituting evidence. What is at stake here is nothing but the question of responsibility. Now responsibility for the tradition of sense and for its reactivation is for Husserl co-responsibility: it engages the one who receives

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<sup>120</sup> *Crisis*, p. 299.

the sense, certainly, but also and first of all the one who creates it and assures its transmissibility by speech and then by writing. “The danger [involved in the sedimentation of mental products] is avoided if one ...assures oneself from the start, after the self-evident primal establishment, of its capacity to be reactivated ...This occurs when one has a view to the *univocity* of linguistic expression” (OG, p. 165).

The sedimentation of mental structures threatens the transmitability and translatability of the constituted sense “only insofar as there are surfaces for this. The *equivocity* of expression is”, Derrida writes, “the chosen field of sedimentary deposits” (IOG, p. 100). Now if equivocity is “unavoidable” in the language of every day life and not just a chance ambiguity, this is because, as Husserl says in *Logical Investigations*, it consists mostly of “essentially occasional expressions” i.e., of expressions whose actual meaning is bound “to the occasion, the speaker and the situation.”<sup>121</sup> This unavoidable equivocity is of subjective origin, it depends on original intentions, on always new lived experiences which animate the ideal identity of sense (as we said before with regard to the ideal objectivity of the sense lion), and make it enter into unforeseeable and multiple interconnections or associations of sense. But if equivocity is “the congenial mark” of every empirical culture, one could suppose that the mission and power of scientific expression consists in mastering and overcoming it, so as to permit the possibility of a limitless and exact translatability of sense.<sup>122</sup>

*Geometrical expressions are objective expressions*, expressions where the circumstances in which they have been uttered, the context, and the situation of the speaking subject do not affect their univocity. Univocity and exactitude are overlapping notions for Husserl. Only the exactitude of a sense, for example, that of geometrical theorem, can assure the exactitude or univocity of expression. Geometry, the model of the sciences whose objects are exact, can attain univocity more easily than the descriptive sciences, phenomenology in particular. (IOG, p. 102n)

Now if for the constitution of geometry’s sense, and of the sense of science in general, speech and writing are indispensable, its functionaries should not allow the slightest deformation in the submission to them either. The equivocity of expression provides the occasion for the deformation or obliteration of sense, it signals the crisis of science itself. This is why the protogeometer and all geometers after him must assure the transmissibility of the sense that they

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<sup>121</sup> *Logical Investigations*, I, §26, “Essentially occasional and objective expressions”, p. 315. We will come back to the difference between subjective and objective expressions in the second part of the thesis.

<sup>122</sup> It belongs to the essence of science to demand strict univocity, an absolute transparency of *logos*. Scientific sense needs language, i.e., ex-pression, as pure, logical meaning (*bedeuten* or *vouloir-dire*), but this language, according to Husserl, serves only for guarding and preserving the sense that science alone has conferred it. Nowhere can speech be closer to its *telos*, i.e., more productive and simultaneously more unproductive, than as an (transparent) element of theory. (*Ideas I*, §124)

themselves create by using a univocal language, and secure “by a very careful coining of words, propositions and complexes of propositions, the results which are to be univocally expressed.” “In accord with the essence of science, then, its functionaries maintain its constant claim, the personal certainty, that everything they put into scientific assertions has been said ‘once and for all,’ that it ‘stands fast,’ forever identically repeatable, usable in evidence and for further theoretical or practical ends- as *indubitably able to be reactivated with the identity of its genuine sense*” (OG, pp. 166-167).

The problem with the capacity of reactivation is essentially linked with the question of univocity: without a minimal transparency of speech or writing how could any reading, whose aim would be not simply a minimum of comprehension but also an adequate understanding of the intended meaning, and how could any reactivation of the original meaning ever be possible?

Derrida will try to show that the Husserlian imperative or demand for univocity, the demand for the reduction of the equivocal sense of natural language should not be interpreted as a refusal of history: it does not refer to an impoverished factual language that would not let itself be touched by history but to a language that should maintain its univocal and translatable elements as transparent as possible so as to permit the constitution, transmission and reactivation of sense. Univocal language refers then to a language reduced or limited to what by being transmittable, i.e., able to be placed in tradition, constitutes the *condition for all historicity*.

The exactitude or univocity of geometrical expressions removes the absolute objectivity and exactitude of geometry’s sense out of history’s reach, out of the empirical content of a real history and of determined cultural interconnections. It allows the exactitude of translation and thereby the unrestricted and pure communication among generations of investigators no matter how distant in time or different in their cultural backgrounds and national languages. So what might appear at first sight as refusal of history, the value of univocity conforms to and respects historicity’s own peculiar signification and possibility: “the very moment univocity”, Derrida writes, “removes sense beyond the reach of historical modification, it alone makes pure history possible, i.e., as the transmission and recollection of sense” (IOG, p. 102). But if Husserl readily admits that absolute equivocation would surely preclude any history (since history would be then an empirical accumulation of untranslatable idioms) he also knows that absolute univocity, as Derrida says, “would sterilize history in the indigence of an indefinite repetition” (Ibid.) The distinction between *de facto* equivocity and absolute univocity has only a purely teleological value.

Husserl then admits an “irreducible, enriching and always renascent equivocity into pure historicity” (IOG, p. 103) and poses absolute univocity as an infinitely inaccessible ideal, as an

*Idea in the Kantian sense.* Not only then Husserl admits that equivocity is irreducible in the historical praxis of science, but he also recognizes that it is wrong to say that *de facto* equivocity is an obstacle to the development of science and therefore that it should be reduced by the teleology of scientific speech. On the contrary Husserl says that the telos of scientific speech itself and as such demands this “renascent equivocity”. There is a pure history of geometrical ideal Objectivity, infinitely open to its future acquisitions and metamorphoses, only in so far as the linguistic idiom into which this Objectivity is inscribed and sedimented is irreducible, in so far as the *de facto* and pure equivocity, which comes always with the medium of language and with every factual language, is irreducible.<sup>123</sup> Every new investigator of geometry, who comes to work upon and enrich the sense he has received from the tradition, and who thereby pushes forward or changes the direction of an infinitely open project of knowledge, by constructing and handing down new geometrical propositions out of old geometrical propositions, deals with something which is absolutely ideal, namely with geometrical objects or state of affairs (which is the theme or sense of his propositions).<sup>124</sup> And as we have underlined, with regard to the noncoincidence between the *bound ideality of language* and the *free ideality of the object*, the ideal identity of the geometrical *object* or *Sachverhalt*, which is empirically unchangeable and absolute, should not be confused with the linguistic ideality of propositions and words, whose ideality is always that of a “thematic index” and not a theme. Derrida writes:

If, *in fact*, equivocity is always irreducible, that is because words and language in general are not and can never be absolute objects. They do not possess any resistant and permanent identity of their own. They have their linguistic being from an intention which traverses them as mediations. The “same” word is always other according to the always different intentional acts which thereby make a word significative. IOG p. 104.

To the extent that the absolute ideal objectivity of geometry needs the body of a historical and factual language in order to inscribe and thereby constitute itself, equivocity, which depends on original, subjective and historical intentions (*bedeuten*), on the intentions of the investigator who works within the infinite horizon of his scientific field, will always be irreducible. Absolute univocity is interminably deferred or delayed, like absolutely objective knowledge is an infinitely

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<sup>123</sup> Derrida will return to the problem of univocity in *Speech and Phenomena* and *Form and Meaning*. Particularly in *Form and Meaning* Derrida shows that the conceptual form, the formality of logical expression and meaning is the condition for scientific univocity: there is univocity to the extent that the complete repetition of the *pre-linguistic* sense (which is always subjective) in expression and writing is given up. FM, pp. 120ff.

<sup>124</sup> Geometrical ideality does not keep and will never keep the ideal identity of its particular *de facto* language, compared to which remains always free, even if, as we have said, this freedom is possible *only on the condition that truth can be said or written*. Once this ideality is constituted in writing (as *Verleiblichung* and as *Verkörperung*) it conditions, in its turn, the latter as an empirical fact.

removed ideal. As Husserl writes, “*objective, absolutely firm knowledge of truth is an infinite idea*” (OG, p. 166).

Any factual geometry, as any factual science, that exists at a given historical time is a more or less successful attempt to realize the guiding idea of infinity, i.e., of universality. Scientific (or teleological) reason and the rationality of its history is for ever destined, and for every possible future and development, to contend with the interminable difference which separates science as an infinite idea and science in the factual finiteness of its determined figures. As Husserl says in the *Vienna Lecture*, the idea of the truth of science “*wants to be unconditioned truth*. This involves an *infinity* which gives to each factual confirmation and truth the character of being merely relative, of being a mere approach in relation precisely to that *infinite horizon* in which the truth-in-itself counts, ... as an *infinitely distant pole*.”<sup>125</sup> (my emphasis)

Now Husserl not only has admitted that *within* the pure tradition of geometry’s sense equivocality cannot, *in fact*, be reduced, that this “equivocality grows in the very rhythm of science” (IOG, p. 104) but also that the individual and social capacity (or power) of reactivation of “the primal beginnings” is necessarily finite. Husserl speaks, with regard to geometry and its extraordinary development, of an “*obvious finitude* of the individual and even social capacity to transform the logical chains of centuries, truly in the unity of one accomplishment, into originally genuine chains of self-evidence ...” (OG, p. 166). Like what we said before with regard to the demand of univocity, “a total recuperation of origins”, as Derrida writes, “is still only a teleological horizon” (IOG, p. 105).

Is this “obvious finitude” the *essential* finitude which we can never go beyond? What if we took this obvious finitude as the starting point for our reflection on the history of geometry? Should we also conclude then that the reactivating reduction is radically impossible, that the

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<sup>125</sup> *Crisis*, Vienna Lecture, p. 278. Here the reference to infinity, to the infinite idea, to the infinite telos or horizon does not signify a dissimulation of the “primordial finitude” as many commentators of Derrida’s reading on Husserl have tried to show, following and staying closer rather to the “young” Derrida, to his “*memoire*”, his very first work on Husserl, *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl’s Phenomenology* (1953-4) See especially Marrati, Paola, *Genesis and Trace, Derrida Reading Husserl and Heidegger*, translated by Simon Sparks, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2005, p. 41-42 and Hobson, Marian, *Opening Lines*, London, Routledge, 1998, pp. 51, 52, 54. But according to Derrida, in *Rogues* and as we are trying to show in the *IOG*, the reference to infinity and to the *telos* of scientific objective reason not only does not conceal the relation to finitude but, on the contrary, reveals the possibility of it being suicidal. “For the Husserlian diagnosis implicates an evil that concerns the very thing that, in inaugurating a ‘perceptual transformation in the form of a new type of historicity (*Crisis*, p. 277), inscribed and prescribed the spiritual telos of European humanity, namely the infinite idea (in the Kantian sense) of an infinite task as *theoria* ... Now, it is precisely this ideal of a ‘new sort of praxis’ (*Crisis*, p. 283), namely, Husserl says, ‘universal scientific reason’, that produces this evil as if by an irresistible internal secretion that is nothing other than finitude. Finitude, that is, the inevitable forgetting of the origin of subjective and historical acts.” *Rogues*, p. 125.



possibility of pure history of geometry's sense should be, *de facto* but also *de jure*, doubted, and that Husserl's *Rückfrage* is nonsense?

## 2) The Irruption of the Infinite in the Finite: the Idea in the Kantian Sense

Husserl does not reduce or “neutralize” this obvious finitude, as it has been argued by Paola Marrati, in the name of an infinite idea.<sup>126</sup> If for Husserl the primordial finitude of a constituting historical subjectivity, as Derrida comments, “can *appear* precisely in its primordiality *only* given the Idea of an infinite history” (IOG, pp. 105-106), we have to examine the process of idealization or *infinitezation* with which the history of geometry begins and with which the horizon of geometrical knowledge is opened as an infinite project or task. We have to show that “the openness of the infinite is only, on the contrary, the openness of history *itself*, in the utmost depths and purity of its essence” (IOG, p. 131)<sup>127</sup>.

We need a better understanding of this “*new sort of praxis*” which authorizes a move beyond finitude, beyond the “obvious finitude” we mentioned above, and permits, as Husserl says, “in a certain sense its infinitezation” (OG, p. 168). This is the praxis with which philosophical and scientific reason “revolutionizes”, as Husserl writes, universal historicity, i.e., the whole historical culture and the whole manner in which humanity creates culture. By turning his attention to this move by which scientific reason gives itself the right and the power to go beyond finitude, by pointing to this decisive *passage to infinity* as the essential characteristic of the idealization of space (but also of the idealization of all objects), Husserl does not neglect the finitude of consciousness responsible for the idea of infinity, rather this is the only way he can make its finitude appear in its primordiality and irreducibility.

We need to have a closer examination, then, of this “*extraordinary revolution*” which inaugurates and grounds the history of the ideal objectivities and eternal truths of science and which will disclose a “*primordially constituting finitude.*” (IOG, p. 45n) This history, Derrida says, will take its sense from an *infinite Telos*. But we should not think that this infinite is a positive or actual infinite which first exists in some heavenly place, in the plenitude of its full presence in order afterwards to be inserted in history, in the event or historical fact of geometry’s becoming.<sup>128</sup> For Husserl this infinite, which is given as an *Idea in the Kantian sense*, and which

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<sup>126</sup> If the power of reactivation is of an obvious finitude, according to Marrati, “Derrida is able to draw the conclusion that the possibility of a pure history of sense is a decidedly *unlikely* one.” Marrati, Paola. *Genesis and Trace*, p. 41.

<sup>127</sup> See also Derrida, Jacques, *Positions*, translated by Alan Bass, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1981, p. 59.

<sup>128</sup> As many commentators of Derrida’s work on Husserl have sufficiently noted, Derrida has written extensively on the question of the Idea, and on the question which the Idea poses for the whole of

is at work in geometry's origin, maintains within itself the indefiniteness of the *ad infinitum*, the negativity of the indefinite, of the *apeiron*.<sup>129</sup> The infinity of the Husserlian *telos* has the form of an infinite opening, i.e., it offers itself without any possible end (as factual limit) to the negativity of constitution, the negativity of an indefinite, endless objectification which is synonymous, as we have seen in the *Origin*, with indefinite *traditionalization*.

We have to ask then how the historical origin of philosophical reason, in which Husserl sees "the primal phenomenon of spiritual Europe", announces a new sort of historicity, and how the phenomenological *sense* of this historicity, the *eidos* of historicity merges with its *teleological* sense. According to Derrida, they merge for two reasons: a) because "the *eidos* of a historicity and thus of the movement of sense – which is necessarily a rational movement – can only be a norm, a value more than an essence"<sup>130</sup> and b) because the origin of philosophy, which has conditioned that of geometry, is inscribed within a more universal *Telos* which runs throughout all historicity and which precedes, animates and goes beyond the philosophical one.

If for Husserl the history of the sciences signifies first of all the Idea of an infinity of tasks, then we can understand better his ambiguity before the objective sciences, and especially the exact science of geometry: in *Crisis* he demonstrates how geometry, the ground for the idealization and naïve objectification of nature, hides *true* nature, that geometrical idealities are nothing more than a "garb of ideas", which without a proper grounding in the world of immediate intuition and experience they are "in mid-air".<sup>131</sup> Husserl values science as a project, the project of universalization, i.e., the universal project of a will of deracination or liberation from its territorial, ethnic, linguistic and cultural limitations, and not in its capacity to cover over or conceal.

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As we saw (in our chapter 1, section 2) with regard to the sense and the formal generalities of Husserl's return inquiry (*Rückfrage*), we have an *a priori* knowledge. "a truly apodictic certainty" concerning the most general form of historical development. Intersubjectivity, language (and/or writing), tradition and the capacity of reactivation were presented then as the invariants of the most universal *eidos* of historicity. Insofar as there is no humanity without language, without community and tradition, without the transmittable capacity of reactivation, i.e., memory or recollection, historicity is the essential horizon of all humanity.

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phenomenology, since his very first work, his "memoire" on Husserl, *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Phenomenology*. (Hereafter cited as PGHP) See particularly Marrati's *Genesis and Trace*, p. 20 and Hobson's *Opening Lines*, pp. 46ff.

<sup>129</sup> PGHP, p. 196, and, especially, VM, pp. 114, 119ff.

<sup>130</sup> GSP, p. 165.

<sup>131</sup> *Crisis*, pp. 51, 141.

Husserl was able to question and penetrate the pure sense of universal history, its essential and teleological structures, by having recourse to the phenomenological method.<sup>132</sup> With this method he can have access not only to the peculiar historicity or traditionality of scientific sense-structures and ideal objectivities, but also bring to light the a priori structures of the prescientific, cultural world on the basis of which scientific objectivity has been produced and developed, the transcendental pre-history of geometry.

We need then above all to contemplate on this mutual *interrelation*, about which Husserl speaks in the *Crisis* §36 between the two truths, between the objective or scientific truth, science's unconditioned truth, truth in itself, and, on the other hand, *Lebenswelt's* subjective-relative truths and finitudes, in order to a) comprehend this "irruption of the infinite as a revolution within empirical culture" and b) in order to avoid the objectivist naivete and irresponsibility.

In order to avoid the naivete of objectivist science which "takes what it calls the objective world for the universe of all that is without ever noticing that no objective science can do justice to the very subjectivity which accomplishes science", a naivete which thereby becomes irresponsibility, we have to ask *how* can the *a priori* of scientific Objectivity be constituted starting from the *a priori* of life-world?<sup>133</sup> With regard to the very remarkableness of Einstein's naivete, Husserl asks "where is that huge piece of method subjected to critique and clarification that leads from the intuitively surrounding world to the idealization of mathematics and to the interpretation of these idealizations as objective being? Einstein's revolutionary innovations concern the formulae through which the idealized and naively objectified *physis* is dealt with. But how formulae in general, how mathematical objectification in general, receive meaning on the foundation of life and the intuitively given surrounding world – of this we learn nothing; and thus Einstein does not reform the space and time in which our vital life runs its course."<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> "Through what method do we obtain a universal, fixed a priori of the historical world which is always originally genuine? Whenever we consider it, we find ourselves with the self-evident capacity to reflect – to turn to the horizon and to penetrate it in an expository way. But we also have, and know that we have, the capacity of complete freedom to transform, in thought and phantasy, our historical existence and what is there exposed as its life-world. And precisely in this activity of free variation, and in running through the conceivable possibilities for the life-world, there arises, with apodictic self-evidence, an essentially general set of elements going through all the variants; and of this we can convince ourselves with truly apodictic certainty" (OG, p. 177).

<sup>133</sup> *Crisis*, §36 has the title "How can the life-world, after the epoche of the objective sciences, become the subject matter of a science? The distinction in principle between the objective-logical a priori and the a priori of the life world. pp. 137-141.

<sup>134</sup> *Crisis*, p. 295.

Here we arrive at the *last zigzag* of Husserl's *Rückfrage* in the *Origin*: having brought to light the formal and radical generalities concerning the traditional development of scientific culture, Husserl will reduce the scientific naivete (that is, all scientific superstructures and their traditional sedimentations) in order to bring to light the world of prescientific experience within which alone the products of science acquire their ultimate sense. Ultimately Husserl will reveal that, however heterogeneous in themselves, the truth of *doxa* and the truth "in itself" of *episteme*, as Derrida writes, "*science's truth 'in itself' is not any less truth-of the subjective-relative world in which it has its bases*" (my emphasis) (IOG, p. 119).

Let us see now how Husserl in the *Origin* returns to the soil of pre-scientific experience in order to make it his theme without, however, renouncing or "abdicating all scientific quality *in general* and all philosophical dignity." Derrida insists on this: the *epoche* of objective sciences does not signify forgetfulness, negation or "devaluation of what it methodically de-sediments or neutralizes" (IOG, p. 119).

What are the invariants of the prescientific world, the finite sense-structures which the protogeometer had at his disposal and which conditioned his "new sort of praxis" (the praxis of pure thinking), the first geometrical idealization, i.e., the first passage to the infinite limit? The essential structures of the prescientific world can be discovered by a *double reduction*, that of all determined factual culture and, more importantly for us here, that of the scientific idealizations or superstructures. These prescientific finitudes have the world of natural reality as their lowest stratum and the cultural world as their highest stratum. The natural world is a world of real and transcendent things disposed of according to an *anexact* space and time,<sup>135</sup> these things (that is, stones, animals, plants, human beings) have corporeal forms, they are bodies<sup>136</sup>, and these bodies have spatiotemporal shapes (shapes of motion and "alterations of deformation") and "material (*stoffliche*) qualities (color, warmth, hardness, etc.) which concretely fill out the spatiotemporal shapes. Also the prescientific world is a cultural world, a world of bound, i.e., finite idealities, among which the most important for us here are: language, values, the practice of measurement, of induction, and of imaginary variation. In the prescientific (and finite) life of practical needs

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<sup>135</sup> *Crisis*, pp. 25, 139, OG, p. 178. As Derrida writes, it is scientific or objectivist naivete which causes this anexactitude of prescientific determination to be considered an inexactitude, a defect. See also Levinas' *Theory of Intuition*, p. 118, "Husserl's essential idea is to assert the primacy of anexact morphological essences over the exact mathematical essences."

<sup>136</sup> Corporeality, bodily existence is a particular determination of thinghood (*Dinglichkeit*) in general. But since, according to Husserl, culture already had to have left its mark on the world (because language and intersubjectivity must have preceded geometry), corporeality does not exhaustively overlap thinghood: "since the necessarily coexisting human beings are not thinkable as mere bodies and, like even the cultural Objects which belong to them structurally, are not exhausted in corporeal being" (OG, p. 177). See also *Crisis*, p. 292.

and interests the perception, preference and production of certain shapes or types of shapes and their progressive improvement by a real and empirical praxis of perfecting “again and again” were accompanied by the empirical technique of measuring, surveying, calculating, predicting. Now “such a technique is always already there, already abundantly developed and pre-given to the philosopher”, Husserl writes in the *Origin*, “who did not yet know geometry but who should be conceivable as its inventor” (OG, p. 178).

With the philosopher protogeometer a new attitude toward the intuitive actual world is born, the purely theoretical attitude. From the world of immediate intuition (or experience), the world of real praxis, the geometer passes to the world of the ideal praxis of pure thinking and he remains exclusively there. There is a paradox here with regard to “applied” geometry: as absolutely ideal, i.e., totally estranged from our world of immediate perception and imagination, geometry becomes a method of knowing the real, sensible space. Whence the difficulty to distinguish the idealized and exact space of geometry from the lived (and anexact) space of “true nature”: “so familiar to us is the shift between a priori theory and empirical inquiry in everyday life that we usually tend not to separate the space and the spatial shapes geometry talks about from the space and spatial shapes of experiential actuality, as if they were one and the same.”<sup>137</sup>

Now geometrical space is neither a sensible nor an imaginary space. By sensible intuition and imaginary variation we do not obtain exact essences of space (for example, circles) but only anexact shapes and “vague” morphological types (roundness). In the intuitively given surrounding world we never encounter pure geometrical shapes, triangles or circles, but only sensible *idealities*, sensible shapes and types of shapes. No doubt the morphological type “roundness,” attained with imaginary variation, is free from pure sensible *reality*, and therefore should not be confused with the multiplicity of natural shapes which more or less correspond to it in sensible intuition. But pure sensible *ideality* must still be situated on a pregeometrical level: no matter how arbitrarily we transform these natural shapes in fantasy, the free and ideal possibilities we thus obtain are anything but geometrical ideal possibilities. Morphological types are conceivable and determinable in imaginative- sensible idealization only as qualitative gradations, as more or less perfect shapes, as more or less round, more or less straight lines, and so on. And this gradualness is going to reverberate in the technical capacity of perfecting: the capacity to make the straight straighter. As long as the ideal of perfection is pursued further and further “we have an *open horizon* of conceivable improvement to be further (*immer weiter*) pursued.”<sup>138</sup> But

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<sup>137</sup> *Crisis*, §9a, p. 24.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.* And Husserl immediately adds “out of the praxis of perfecting, of freely pressing toward the horizons of conceivable perfecting *again and again (immer wieder) limit shapes* emerge toward which the particular series of perfecting tend as towards invariant and never attainable poles.”

even if with imaginary variation we are free to go beyond sensible *reality* we cannot go, as Husserl says, beyond the limits of *sensible* ideality, we “can transform sensible shapes only into other sensible shapes.”<sup>139</sup> Imaginative-sensible idealization then “can only give rise to an unforeseeable and inorganic proliferation of morphological types”, of *anexact* spatial shapes and types which, since they are not absolutely objective, cannot reassure us that “we have not two but only *one* universal form of the world.”<sup>140</sup> Now even if this universal form and objective unity of the world is *anticipated* in imaginative-sensible description of space, it cannot be affirmed or recognized *as such* but only through the exact science of geometry.<sup>141</sup>

These morphological *anexact* idealities or essences are the object of a *descriptive* scientific investigator, of a *descriptive* or morphological science of space, of “*geography*”. Here belongs also the very important (for our discussion of **equivocity**, of **translation** and of the possibility of reactivation) difference between *descriptive* concepts and *exact concepts*:

Geometrical concepts are ‘*ideal*’ concepts, they express something which one cannot ‘see’; their ‘origin,’ and therefore their content also, is essentially other than that of the *descriptive* concepts as concepts which express the essential nature of things as drawn directly from simple intuition, and not anything ‘*ideal*’. Exact concepts have their correlates in essences, which have the character of ‘*Ideas*’ in the *Kantian* sense. Over against these Ideas or ideal essences stand the *morphological essences*, as correlatives of descriptive concepts.<sup>142</sup>

The geometer constructs the exact object of his science (and the project of geometrical univocal language would be unimaginable without the exactitude of its object) by *abstractly* directing his gaze to spatiotemporal shapes, i.e., by disregarding the *concrete* totality of the bodily things which are always given to immediate intuition not only in their spatial shapes but also in their sensible and material qualities.<sup>143</sup> But by idealizing the world of bodies, in respect to what has spatiotemporal shape in the world, he creates an infinite totality of ideal objects (i.e., of

<sup>139</sup> Ibid. §9a, p. 25.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., §9c, p. 34. Speaking again of this “amnesic evil” of objectivism Husserl writes that “it was overlooked that this method of idealization in the end accomplishes nothing other than an anticipation, infinitely extended, of what is to be expected in experience.” EJ, §10, p. 44.

<sup>141</sup> Speaking of the mathematics of spatiotemporal shapes as leading the way for Galileo’s mathematization of nature Husserl writes: “out of the undetermined universal form of the life-world, space and time, and the manifold of empirical intuitable shapes that can be *imagined* into it, it [mathematics] made for the first time an *objective world* in the true sense – i.e., an infinite totality of ideal objects which are determinable *univocally, methodically, and quite universally from everyone*. Thus mathematics showed for the first time that an infinity of objects that are subjectively relative and are thought only in a vague, general representation is, through an a priori all-encompassing method, objectively determinable and can actually be thought as determined in itself or, more exactly, as an infinity which is determined, decided in advance, in itself, in respect to all its objects and all their properties and relations.” Ibid., §9b, p.32.

<sup>142</sup> *Ideas* I, §74, p. 166.

<sup>143</sup> “Exactitude is always a product derived from an operation of ‘idealization’ and of ‘transition to the limit’ which can only concern an abstract moment, an *abstract* eidetic element (spatiality, for example) of a thing materially determined as an objective body, setting aside, precisely, the other eidetic elements of a body in general.” GSP, p. 162.

possible shapes), which are *determinable, through an a priori method, univocally and universally for everyone.*

Now Husserl, as Derrida writes, does not pose the question of the origin of the sensible types that we find in prescientific cultural world even if the exactitude of geometry is not only grounded but also anticipated there. In order not to leave and to respect geometry's internal history in its originality, Husserl must start from the first production of a nonsensible ideality, a production which effects a radical discontinuity from its past conditions and from all sensible (i.e., finite) ground in general. Geometry's internal history, the pure and infinite tradition of its sense, therefore, started the moment its objectivities uprooted themselves from every factuality and every sensible reality, and, first of all, from the finite and de facto empirical subjectivity which has actually produced them in a determined space and time. The origin of *sensible* idealities, and of the idealizing ability of imagination which pertains to all empirical subjectivity, is not, then, what is absolutely fundamental for the production of geometrical truth *as such*, it can therefore remain, as Derrida writes, "provisionally in the dark."

Although this origin is the origin of what precedes and conditions geometry, it is not to be confused with the origin of geometry itself and all of its related possibilities; it only authorizes what we earlier called a geography. In every phenomenological regression to beginnings, the notion of an internal or intrinsic history and sense lets us delineate some safety catches, as well as articulate, if not avoid, all *regressus ad infinitum*. The internal sense of geometry, which provides us with a static analysis<sup>144</sup>, prescribes that the question of geometry's origin stop at the constituted sense of what has *immediately* conditioned geometry. (IOG p125)

Although geometrical ideality, for instance, the "circle", has been produced *starting* from the ideal morphological type "roundness" by an operation of "substruction", the "circle" as a nonsensible, higher, exact, absolutely objective spatial figure (or essence-limit) has been produced without the help either of sensibility or of imagination. Rather it broke away *by a leap* from every subjective, sensible or imaginary, intuition. The geometrical ideal object was made possible by an act of pure thinking, by an operation of pure and exact idealization, and the accomplishment of a decisive "passage to limit." With the production of the geometrical exact essence, the essence-limit circle we pass to the ideal and infinite limit of the subjective (and finite) imaginative-sensible intuition of roundness<sup>145</sup>. Starting from the anticipatory structure of imaginative idealization (a structure present already to all prescientific experience of space), the protogeometer goes beyond an exact essences toward a pure ideal limit which functions as a pole

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<sup>144</sup> This is one of the occasions in which Derrida will remind us that the static and structural analysis, practiced especially in *Ideas I*, always functions for Husserl as the indispensable guard rails for every genetic project.

<sup>145</sup> Geometrical idealization or production, Husserl writes, "gives ideal essences as *ideal 'limits'*, which cannot on principle be found in any sensible intuition, and to which on occasion morphological essences approximate more or less, without ever reaching them" (*Ideas I*, §74, p167).



for infinite approximations. The institution of geometry, Husserl says, could only be a *philosophical* act. The philosopher is the man which inaugurates the pure theoretical attitude.

Now from the moment Husserl is given *both* the prescientific cultural world (with language, imaginative morphological types, the art of measurement etc) *and* the philosopher as proto-geometer (as the man who performs, under the guidance of the Platonic doctrine of ideas, the inaugural reduction, the reduction of the *lived*, sensible-imaginary space, the man who inaugurates the purely theoretical attitude), *as the indispensable conditions for geometry's origin*, "the absence of all concrete description of the institutor's acts", Derrida says, "should not be surprising. Nor disappointing" (IOG, p. 132).

This is how Husserl describes *exhaustively* in two sentences the sense of the inaugural and instituting act of geometry: the finite ideal-cultural formations which the proto-geometer philosopher has at his disposal

as formations developed out of praxis and thought of in terms of perfection, clearly serve only as bases for a new sort of praxis out of which similar new formations grow. It is evident in advance that this new sort of formation will be a product arising out of an idealizing, spiritual act, one of 'pure' thinking, which has its materials in the designated universal pregivens of this factual humanity and human surrounding world and creates 'ideal objectivities' out of them. (OG, pp. 178-179)

In the last stage of Husserl's investigation into the *internal* historicity of an eidetic and exact science, we are in front of an institutive and infinitizing operation "whose activity has never been studied for itself and *whose conditions are never to be so studied*" (IOG, p. 133). This is so because it is an operation which must have *immediately* conditioned the ideal Objectivity, i.e., the geometrical *eidōs*, it itself created; an operation which, by accomplishing the "decisive passage to the limit", must have been radically emancipated from all *empirical* subjectivity and from all *factual* historical life, that is, an operation which must have *immediately* and decisively uprooted itself from its past conditions. As we are going to see, the *Idea in the Kantian sense*, and the mathematical inaugural idealization which supposes it, are operative but not thematic concepts: they are not phenomenizable, i.e., they do not offer themselves to phenomenological light. This is why, as Derrida says, they are kept in an "essential darkness". (IOG, p. 137)

The correlative of this inaugural idealization, Derrida tells us, is an *Idea in the Kantian sense*, i.e., both an infinite theoretical anticipation *and* an infinite practical task<sup>146</sup>, an infinite horizon of ideal repetitions, transmissions and acquisitions of sense, whose infinity is itself the field of scientific work. This *Idea* acquires in Husserl's phenomenology the highest teleological

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<sup>146</sup> As Derrida will continually confirm, from *IOG* (p. 136) to *Rogues* (pp. 126, 131), theoretical consciousness is a practical consciousness through and through, a consciousness of an infinite task and "the site of absolute value for itself and for humanity as rational subjectivity".

value and dignity, since it is nothing but the regulative pole of every infinite task: the infinite *Telos* from which all internal and intentional history takes its sense, its direction or heading.

The presence of the Idea in the Kantian sense, as *Telos* or *Vorhaben*, which opens the intentional and internal history of geometry, indicates for Husserl the essential and irreducible infinite overflowing of the historical horizon which, by reason of an absolute necessity, *never can be completed by an immediate intuition or perception of an object*. “Even by God’s intuition.”<sup>147</sup> This infinite horizon cannot become an object given to intuition since it is the unobjectifiable source of every constituted ideal objectivity, that is, the pure possibility of its infinite determinability.<sup>148</sup>

Now only the production of an absolute ideality which has cut itself from every finite, factual totality can open “*an infinite, yet self-enclosed, world of ideal objects as a field of work*.”<sup>149</sup> Only an absolute ideal objectivity can sanction the pure openness and unity of the infinite geometrical horizon, i.e., the constitution of a sense whose historical repetition or tradition is opened ideally to infinity. Absolute ideality then is the correlate of a possibility of indefinite historical repetition. “There is no ideality without there being an Idea in the Kantian sense at work, opening up the possibility of something indefinite, the infinity of stipulated progression or the infinity of permissible repetitions.”<sup>150</sup> The origin of ideality is the possibility of repetition of a productive act (and the relation to finitude or death which this origin implies).

The unity of geometry’s history is given as an Idea in the Kantian sense, i.e., it is teleologically prescribed as *totally open*, as always *to come* on the basis of and through the indefinite historical acquisitions of the geometrical *eidōs* and sense which have been announced in its origin. This is why the history of the eidetic science of geometry acquires such an exemplary signification for Husserl: by virtue of the exactitude of geometrical ideality and its *eidōs* (namely *spatiality*, which as we said concerns only an abstract moment of the material determined thing in general), the sense of its origin is always rigorously implicated with its teleological sense. This is why every new idealization or production of sense in the history of geometry, every move forward, every advance toward the horizon is at the same time, in effect, a return to or a genuine reactivation of its primordial sense. This again means that the *primordial*

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<sup>147</sup> *Violence and Metaphysics*, p. 120.

<sup>148</sup> Husserl rigorously distinguishes *Idea* from *eidōs*. The Idea, then, is not essence, and still less an existent. Hence the difficulty of an *intuitive grasp* or *evidence* of what is neither an existent nor an essence. But it is also necessary to say that the Idea has *no* essence, for it is only the openness of the horizon for the emergence and the determination of every essence, and of every factuality. This is why Derrida writes in *Violence and Metaphysics* that, “in phenomenology there is never a constitution of horizons, but horizons of constitution.” p. 120.

<sup>149</sup> My emphasis. *Crisis*, p. 26.

<sup>150</sup> *Speech and Phenomena*, pp. 52ff.

sense of the instituting act of geometry is only its *final* sense, that is, the constitution of an absolutely objective objectivity free from all *de facto* cultural and historical determinations: the ideal and exact *eidos* of space. And since the possibility of the Objectivity of the geometrical *eidos* is also the possibility of its indefinite traditionality (or translatability), the unity of geometry's sense necessarily corresponds with the unity of its tradition or history, both of which, as we have said again and again, are irreducible to empirical history.

That is why geometry is this extraordinary operation: the creation of an eidetic. It follows that geometry's infinity history will always see its unity prescribed by the eidetic structure of a region, or more precisely, by the unity of an abstract 'moment' (spatiality) of a region. This unity certainly is not historical, it is empirically unchangeable. But it is only the unity of the infinite historical development of the eidetic called geometry. It is nothing outside the history of geometry itself. (IOG p135)

Now if the science of geometry and its history have the openness and the unity of an infinite horizon, this openness and unity *suppose*, according to Husserl, the *horizon of the world* itself as their ground. The historical advent and adventure of the science of geometry as cultural formation is inscribed *within* the horizon of the *world*<sup>151</sup> i.e., *within* the infinite horizon of all *possible* experience in space, whose unity too is always given as an *Idea in the Kantian sense*. In the last analysis, the infinite project of geometry is itself always grounded in the primordial movement of temporalization of egological consciousness, "the ultimate ground of all constitution." As Derrida writes, the movement of geometrical idealization, of the production of essence-limits and their launching into an infinite tradition, "is *analogous* to the constitution of the unity of the world's infinite horizon or (beyond the finite interconnection of retentions and protentions) to the constitution of the evidence for a total unity of the immanent flux as an *Idea in the Kantian sense*" (IOG, p. 106). Derrida writes "analogous": we should then take into consideration the difference between *exactitude* and *rigor*, between geometrical essences and the essences of pure consciousness, between the *closed* infinite totality of all possible formations in geometrical space and the *open* infinite totality of possible experiences in *lived* space, which can never be mastered or appropriated.<sup>152</sup>

Phenomenology as an eidetic, material and descriptive science of the essences of pure consciousness, may be a *rigorous science*, as Husserl has demonstrated in his *Philosophy as Rigorous Science*, but can never be an *exact* science. Rather, phenomenology is *necessarily*

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<sup>151</sup> The world Husserl is talking about is not the real world, the world right here, whose factuality is, for phenomenology, anything but a variable example; it is the world "not as a finite totality of sentient beings, but as the infinite totality of possible experiences in space in general" (IOG, pp. 52, 84). This world, "the world-horizon", which is historical through and through, as Husserl taught us in the *Origin* (pp. 161ff), is not the factual, real world of which the historical subject would be a prisoner, but the infinite totality of all possible historical experiences: it is the **infinite horizon of *history* and of the *possible***.

<sup>152</sup> *GSP*, p. 162 and *Rogues*, p. 132.

an exact due to no defect on its part. Phenomenological, i.e., rigorous description and knowledge concerning the transcendental and concrete structure of all consciousness can be indubitable but it cannot and *must* never claim exactitude. Geometry, on the contrary, is an exact science because it is also an “abstract” science: from the concrete totality of the corporeal thing isolates, idealizes and treats only certain of its eidetic components (shape) and disregards others (the “material” /*Stoffliche* sensible qualities of the thing) For Husserl not only it will be wrong and absurd for someone to try to establish something like an exact science of phenomena, “a mathematics of phenomena”, or a ““geometry” of mental process,”<sup>153</sup> but also irrational and extremely irresponsible. Geometry, as the model of objective sciences, not only is responsible for the naturalization of the psychic sphere but also, as the ground for the mathematical idealization of Nature, hides *true* Nature too. A descriptive or morphological science of space, *geography*, works with inexact, vague and descriptive concepts which do not compromise its rigor. Husserl writes: “the most perfect geometry and the most perfect practical mastery of it cannot enable the descriptive natural scientist to express (in exact geometrical concepts) what he expresses in such a simple, understandable, and completely appropriate manner by the words ‘notches,’ ‘scalloped,’ ‘lens-shaped,’ ‘umbiliform’ and the like – all of them concepts which are *essentially, rather than accidentally, inexact* and *consequently* also non-mathematical.”<sup>154</sup>

Now why the essences of consciousness cannot belong to the structure pertaining to mathematical phenomena? For Husserl it is a question of calculability and incalculability, of *opening* or of *closure*. Husserl writes in *Ideas I*

With the help of the axioms, i.e., the primitive eidetic laws, it [geometry] is then in a position to derive purely deductively *all* the spatial shapes existing, that is, ideally possible shapes, in space and all the eidetic relationships pertaining to those shapes in the form of exactly determining concepts which take the place of the essences which, as a rule, remain foreign to our intuition. The generic essence of the province of geometry, or the pure essence of space, is of such a character that geometry can be completely certain of dominating actually by its method all the possibilities and of determining them exactly. In other words, the multiplicity comprising all spatial formations has a remarkable fundamental logical priority, indicated in the names, “*definite manifold*” and “*mathematical manifold in the pregnant sense*”, which we hereby introduce. Such a manifold is characterized by the fact that a *finite number of concepts and propositions* derivable in a given case from the essence of the province in question, *in a manner characteristic of purely analytic necessity* completely and unambiguously determines the totality of all the possible formations belonging to the province so that, of essential necessity, nothing in the province is left open.<sup>155</sup>

If naturalism and objectivism are denounced by Husserl as irresponsible perversions of reason, this is because they are indissociable from the project of exactitude and, therefore, from a certain power and force of calculation. For Husserl, on the contrary, as Derrida writes in *Rogues*,

<sup>153</sup> *Ideas I*, §72, p. 161

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, §74 See also Levinas’ *Theory of Intuition*, pp. 117-119, 140, where this quotation from *Ideas I* serves as a response to Bergson’s critique of conceptual thought.

<sup>155</sup> My emphasis. *Ideas I*, §72 p163. See also *Crisis* §9, p 27, 33

in the second *Essay on Reason*, the rationality of the rational was never limited to calculability. Within Husserl's phenomenology, which is a philosophy both of essences (which are always a priori and objective but anexact) and of experience (i.e., of the origin, of becoming, and ultimately, of the temporal flux of what is lived), a *rational incalculability* presents and announces itself, an *incalculability*, Derrida says, which defies appropriation and resists, in the most rigorous way, the objectivist reason of the sciences as the technical control of nature, as calculation, as *ratio* or as account, an account to be given or settled.<sup>156</sup> Derrida writes

in opposition to the *lived* space in which the indefiniteness of the adumbrations is a transcendence that essentially can never be mastered, the *idealized* space of mathematics allows us to go immediately to the infinite limit of what is in fact an unfinished movement. Thus, the transcendence of every *lived* future can be absolutely appropriated and reduced in the very gesture which frees that future for an infinite development. ... The developments of mathematical space will never *de jure* escape us; that is why it might seem more reassuring, more *our own*. But is that not also because it has become more foreign to us? (IOG, p. 136)

In opposition to the closed field of mathematical reason (IOG. p130n), Derrida, after Husserl, demonstrates the *principled, essential, and structural* impossibility of closing a structural and transcendental phenomenology<sup>157</sup>. Or passing very quickly to a vocabulary that at first sight might appear foreign to phenomenology: phenomenological reason is a welcome, insofar as it welcomes the idea of infinity. And this welcome is always *rational*.<sup>158</sup>

In his *Introduction to the Origin*, Derrida examines two cases of intentional phenomena in which Husserl refers to the *Idea in the Kantian sense*. This reference, according to Derrida, indicates nothing but the "infinite horizon" which is virtually present in every consciousness, the infinite openness of what is experienced or lived: the *external* perception or intuition of the transcendent, extended thing and the *internal*, immanent perception of a lived experience (*Erlebnis*) occurring within the horizon of the flux of consciousness. In both cases it is the Idea of infinity, which unifies the indefiniteness of the adumbrations of the transcendent thing by anticipation, and which permits the unification of the temporal flux of consciousness, despite their *irreducible incompleteness*. In both cases it is a matter of the *irruption of the infinite into a finite consciousness*, a matter of an opening, or rather of the transcendental of an opening, an opening from *within* the transcendental structure of all consciousness that can never be mastered or calculated.

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<sup>156</sup> *Rogues*, p. 132-133

<sup>157</sup> GSP, p. 162.

<sup>158</sup> Derrida, Jacques, *A Word of Welcome in Adieu*, translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 26.

Considering the case of external perception, Husserl notes that it belongs to the very essence of transcendent, extended things existing in space that they should be given to perception (i.e., to a lived experience which is not something spatial) only through a multiplicity of one-sided views and “orientations” or adumbrations (*Abschattungen*).<sup>159</sup> Now in an perceptual process, which intends the spatial thing itself as a whole, new adumbrations always succeed previous ones without, however, being able any one of them, nor in their totality, to bring about a *complete* givenness of all sides of the thing. However successful and in accordance<sup>160</sup> with one another these adumbrations are, however certain we are that we perceive and confront always the same thing, there is always a hidden side of it, an essential and indefinite incompleteness in its perception, which is irreducible. Now the possibility of going around to see things from the other side, the possibility of an ordinary perception of their hidden side is, in principle, an open possibility, i.e., a possibility experienced and anticipated by the perceiving subject as sense itself. The (finite) thing itself, as it is described by Husserl in *Ideas I* §143 (*Adequate Physical Thing-Givenness as Idea in the Kantian sense*), functions as an Idea in the Kantian sense, i.e., it is only indicated by an anticipation through which the perceptual process is regulated *without ever attaining it intuitively*. To be *in infinitum* incomplete or “imperfect in this manner is part of the unannullable essence of the correlation between ‘physical thing’ and perception of the physical thing” (*Ideas*, §44, p. 94). Although “all realities” belonging to Nature “cannot be given in complete determinedness and, likewise, in complete intuitiveness in any limited *finite* consciousness” “as Idea its perfect givenness is nevertheless predestinated ....”<sup>161</sup>

What is of great importance for us here is that *whether* this strange evidence of the Idea concerns the incomplete givenness of the transcendent, real and finite thing belonging to nature *or* the infinitely open unity of geometrical Objectivity, this absolutely indubitable evidence cannot but be *rational* and *finite*: it appears only, and therefore cannot be described by phenomenology otherwise than, in the concrete and finite acts or intuitions of a concrete and constituting egological consciousness.

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<sup>159</sup> “It is neither an accident of the own peculiar sense of the physical thing nor a contingency of ‘our human constitution,’ that ‘our’ perception can arrive at physical things themselves only through mere adumbrations of them. Rather it is evident and drawn from the essence of spatial physical things ...that, necessarily a being of that kind can be given in perception only through an adumbration. [...] A spatial being can “appear” only in a certain “orientation,” which necessarily predelineates a system of possible new orientations, [...]” And then Husserl writes about this *essential incompleteness* which characterizes the concrete perceptions of the external thing: “to their essence belongs the ideal possibility of their changing into determinable ordered continuous multiplicities of perception which can always be continued, thus which are *never complete*.” *Ideas I*, §§41–42, pp. 90–1.

<sup>160</sup> To be sure, discordance is also an essential possibility in the way external things appear to perception.

See Levinas’ *Theory of Intuition*, p. 27.

<sup>161</sup> *Ideas I*, §143, p. 342.

Is not the same movement, the same Idea (in the Kantian sense), involved in the internal (supposedly adequate) perception of a lived experience (*Erlebnis*) as occurs within the immanent flux? Unlike the perception of external things, a mental process is not adumbrated (*ein Erlebnis schattet sich nicht ab*); an immanent perception as it is lived in the present instant is absolute and adequate.<sup>162</sup> Such an adequate perception of self by self would suppose, however, that the self-presence of experience is always produced in the present taken as a *now*, in the undivided unity of a temporal *present*. That each lived experience of the immanent flux is adequately given means that the identity of experience is instantaneously and immediately present to itself. This adequation then refers to the self-same identity of the *living present* taken as a *now*. According to the principle of principles of phenomenology, to the original self-giving evidence, the idea of primordial presence (of the *living present*) always refers to this *now* as the “source point”, that is, as the absolute origin.<sup>163</sup>

But how does the *Idea* of infinity announce itself within the phenomenological self-giving evidence of the *living now* as the Absolute of phenomenological consciousness, as the *absolute origin* of all sense?<sup>164</sup> Supposing that a single lived experience can be adequately given in an immanent intuition or perception, and be determined in phenomenological evidence, how is the continuous, endless flux of lived experiences given to consciousness as a unity? Husserl in *Ideas I*, §83 (*Seizing Upon the Unitary Stream of Lived Experiences as “Idea”*), writes:

We do not seize upon [the flux of mental processes as a unity] as we do a single lived experience but rather in the manner of an *idea in the Kantian sense*. It is not something posited or affirmed by chance; it is instead an *absolutely indubitable givenness*. Even though it is also grounded in intuition, this indubitability has a source entirely different from that which exists for the being of lived experiences, which therefore becomes given in the perception of the immanent. It is precisely the peculiarity of the

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<sup>162</sup> If a lived experience, say a feeling, is not given through *Abschattungen*, this is because a feeling is not something spatial, so there is no place for discordance here: “The perception of an *Erlebnis* is a simple seeing of something which is (or can become) *perceptually given as something absolute*, and not as something identical in modes of appearance by adumbrations. Everything we have worked out about the givenness of the physical thing loses its sense here and must make that fully clear to oneself in detail. A feeling is not adumbrated. If I look at it I have something absolute; it has no sides that could be presented sometimes in one mode and sometimes in another.” *Ideas I*, §44, p. 95-96.

<sup>163</sup> Compare *Ideas I*, §24 and *On the Phenomenology of Consciousness of Internal Time (1893-1917)*, translated by John B. Brough, London, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991, §10.

<sup>164</sup> To be sure, this necessary and absolute privilege of the *living, actual present or now* is not exclusively Husserlian. According to Derrida, “*within philosophy there can be no possible objection concerning the privilege of the present now, it is evidence itself, conscious thought itself, it governs every possible concept of truth and sense*. No sooner do we question this privilege than we begin to get at the core of consciousness itself from a region that lies elsewhere than philosophy, a procedure that would remove every possible security and ground from discourse” (SP, p. 62n). How can one begin thinking the unthinkable or the impossible, that is, how can one take the first step (as if it were a matter of a step, of crossing or trespassing an identifiable and indivisible border, or of crossing something that can be crossed and left behind), outside of philosophy, outside of the thinking of the possible, of what am I capable of, i.e., of capacity, potentiality, power, of the masterly and sovereign *I can* or *I cannot*? This question constitutes the wider horizon of this thesis.

ideation which sees a Kantian 'idea' that it does not on that account, perhaps, lose the insight because the adequate determination of its content, here the stream of lived experiences, is *unattainable*.<sup>165</sup>

As in the case of perception of the transcendent thing belonging to nature, whose unity can be given only as an Idea, the unity of immanent flux, the indefinitely open unity of the movement of internal-time consciousness *cannot* phenomenalize itself, it *cannot* present itself immediately and "in person" in a finite intuition. The unity of the temporal flux can only be animated by the Idea, that is, given or anticipated as an Idea, as the anticipated unity of an essentially indefinite movement of temporalization. But how are we to understand phenomenologically this absolute certainty of an egological consciousness concerning the total unity of its own immanent flux, its "*absolutely indubitable givenness*", if this unity is, by all rights, infinitely open and therefore *impossible* to phenomenalize itself, *impossible* to appear as such or to be contained in the living present of this finite consciousness? How can we understand this *finite certainty of the infinite openness of every lived future* which, nonphenomenalizable in itself, is the condition of phenomenalization of time itself?

Before we refer to the questions which this absolute certainty without evidence (this "absolutely indubitable givenness" of what can never appear and be determined in a phenomenological evidence) poses for the whole of phenomenology, let us see how the Idea permits the unification of the temporal flux of consciousness despite its irreducible openness. We have already said that for Husserl the movement of temporalization of consciousness is dialectic through and through, that the living present of consciousness (as the phenomenological Absolute) is nothing but the *indefinite maintenance [nowness] of the dialectic* of protentions and retentions (themselves horizons of potential presence.)

But this Maintenance itself appears *as such*, it is the *Living Present*, and it has the *phenomenological sense* of a *consciousness* only if the unity of this movement is given as *indefinite* and if its sense of indefiniteness is *announced* in the Present (*i.e., if the openness of the infinite future is, as such, a possibility experienced as sense and right.*) [my emphasis] Death<sup>166</sup> will not be comprehended as sense but as a fact extrinsic to the movement of temporalization. The unity of infinity, the condition for that temporalization, must then be *thought*, since it is announced without appearing and be contained in a Present. This thought unity, which makes the phenomenalization of time as such possible, is therefore always the Idea in the Kantian sense which never phenomenalizes itself. IOG, p. 137.

If, then, the Absolute of the living present, as the indefinite maintenance of protentions and retentions, cannot simply appear to itself, cannot be identical with itself and can only be

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<sup>165</sup> *Ideas* I, §83, p. 197.

<sup>166</sup> We will be dealing with the problem or "aporia" of death (or telos or end, which has not only the sense of a factual anthropological limit, as it is the case in this paragraph) in the next chapter, and only after we have rethought, as Derrida is asking us to do in *Limited Inc* (p. 129), the infinite *Telos* which for Husserl were never a positive infinite. As Derrida writes in *Speech and Phenomena*, only "compared to the ideality of the positive infinite, this relation to my- death becomes an accident of empirical finitude." SP, p. 102.



announced as the infinite pole of all repetition, if the form of presence to consciousness (the presence of the thing and of consciousness to itself) can be indefinitely repeated without ever being attained or actualized in some plenitudinous, self-identical instant or *stigme*, this means that the Absolute is present only in being deferred, that the living present is, in fact, really, effectively deferred ad infinitum, that the Absolute was never meant to designate the full presence of positive infinite but only the form of a Telos – that is an Idea in the Kantian sense.<sup>167</sup>

What Derrida is interested to show, with respect to Husserl's dialectical description of the movement of temporalization and with respect to the original infinitization and historicity of geometrical sense, is the "strange" presence in both cases of this idea of *infinity* (as an infinite pole of determination and as a task or project of reason) for a *concrete* and *finite* historical consciousness. Phenomenology would then, Derrida tells us, occupy the place between "the *finitizing consciousness of its principle of principles*"<sup>168</sup> and "the *infinitizing consciousness of its final institution (Endstiftung)*", i.e., the ethico-teleological prescription of the infinite task. (IOG, p. 138)

As the "final institution" of phenomenology "indefinitely deferred in its content and always evident in its regulative value", the Idea cannot, however, be accounted for, and even less grounded by phenomenology itself, since it is "the basis on which phenomenology was set up in order to achieve the final intention of philosophy" (IOG, p. 141).

This Idea of infinity, that is, of the infinite task of theoretical and practical reason which is inseparable, let us recall, from the negative form of infinity, of the indefiniteness of the *ad infinitum*, never became a *theme* for phenomenological description by Husserl. But there are essential reasons for this nonthematization or nonphenomenalization of the Idea. Derrida in the last two sections of his *Introduction* examines the phenomenological status and value of the Idea and describes the phenomenal system of its nonphenomenalization.

According to Derrida, if Husserl never *directly* defined the type of the Idea's presence or evidence for a transcendental consciousness, if he had nothing to say about the Idea *itself*, if its status within phenomenology remains rather strange and mysterious, it is not by chance, or

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<sup>167</sup> "The impossibility of *resting* in the simple maintenance of a Living Present, ...the inability to live enclosed in the innocent undividedness of the primordial Absolute, because the Absolute is *present* only in being *deferred-delayed [différant]* without respite, this impotence and this impossibility are given in a primordial and pure consciousness of Difference." IOG, p. 153.

<sup>168</sup> According to the *principle of principles* of phenomenology, the universal and archetypal form of evidence, the original self-giving evidence, is the immediate presence of the thing itself "in person" in a finite intuition. "Implicitly", this presence of the *thing itself "in person"* for a finite consciousness refers to the presence, as Derrida writes, "of the phenomenally defined or definable thing, therefore the *finite* thing. (The motif of the finitude has perhaps more affinity with the latter implication that it first seems to have with phenomenology's principle of principles.)" IOG, p. 138.

because Husserl has overlooked its actual signification. If the Idea, which has no essence and is neither an existent thing nor an essence, never phenomenalizes itself, if, that is, it cannot be given “in person” nor determined in an evidence (as an existent thing or an essence, by all rights, can) this is because the Idea is nothing but the pure possibility of evidence, the possibility of an infinite determinability of every thing or essence, the openness of the horizon for the encounter and the determination of every object (real or ideal). The Idea, according to Derrida, can only have a purely regulative value: it is the *Telos* of the infinite determinability of beings as objects for a finite and constituting consciousness. The certainty of its presence for a finite consciousness is to be found only in what it regulates (i.e., the infinite determinability of the object in general) and not in the evidence of its content, since the content of this Idea is not, and can never be, a present determined object. If, therefore, it is essentially inaccessible to all finite intuition, i.e., if it can never be phenomenally defined or definable, it is because the Idea is *the horizon of every intuition* in general, sensible or eidetic, the horizon for the appearance and determination of every “finite thing” in general (or to use a platonic language, the Idea is the invisible condition of visibility, of sensible or intelligible visibility). But from the fact that an adequate determination of its content is radically impossible one should not, Derrida insists, conclude that there cannot be a *rational* evidence of the Idea as regulative possibility. Rather one can rightfully say that there is *concrete* evidence of the Idea for a *concrete* consciousness, i.e., there is “a concrete and *lived* evidence” of the infinite, *only insofar as this evidence is finite and formal* (i.e., without a materially determined content.) Since the Idea is *nothing* outside the intentional and productive acts of a historico-transcendental subjectivity, phenomenology cannot “*directly* describe it otherwise than in its *finite acts, intuitions, results or objects.*” Nothing, Derrida says, can be added to this *formal* definition of the Idea:

In the Idea of infinity, there is determined evidence only of the Idea but not of that of which it is the Idea. The Idea is the pole of pure intention, empty of every determined object. It alone reveals, then, the being of intention: *intentionality itself.*

Thus, for once, nothing appears in a specific evidence. What does appear is only the regulative possibility of **appearing** and the *finite certainty* of infinite phenomenological determinability, i.e., a certainty without a corresponding evidence. [The Idea] as the infinite determinability of X, is only *relation with an object.* It is in the broadest sense, *Objectivity* itself. IOG, p. 139.

It is only on the basis of this *finite certainty* that the historicity of geometry, and the historicity of sense in general, i.e., of Reason, are set free from all historical factuality, from its ethnic, geographical, etc., limits. This finite and teleological certainty, this “certainty without corresponding [i.e., materially determined] evidence” of the infinite determinability of objects in general, this pure and *empty* from any adequate intuition intention, this *intentionality*, pertains to and defines every consciousness of the infinite task. The infinite task of Reason, then, is always

entrusted to “a *concrete* consciousness which is made *responsible* for it despite the *finitude* of that consciousness, and insofar as it grounds transcendental historicity and transcendental intersubjectivity” (IOG, p. 141).

As the *invisible* condition of (sensible and intelligible) visibility, and as the *unconditional* condition of evidence itself, the Idea will remain, for Husserl as it was also for Plato, for ever *epekeina tes ousias*. (*Republic*, Book VI, 509b) “As the Telos of the infinite determinability of being, it is but being’s openness to the light of its own phenomenality, it is the light of light, the sun of the visible sun, a hidden sun which shows without being shown. And it is no doubt what a Plato muted of Platonism tells us about” (IOG, p. 144). As in the platonic discourse of “*the idea of the Good*”, the Husserlian reference to the Idea of infinity, indicates for Derrida the *hyperbolic*<sup>169</sup> moment of phenomenology, the *Endstiftung* of phenomenology, and reveals to us the Idea as *to ep’arkhen anypotheton* (510b), as the of first figure of the unconditional which conditions all the phenomenological possibilities or capabilities: of consciousness, presence, evidence, originary and unitary intuition or perception, sense and meaning, etc.<sup>170</sup>

This Idea is the common root of theoretical and practical reason. Or better, the idea of “*unconditional truth*,” the unconditionality of the Idea of truth as an infinite task or duty (*Aufgabe*) of philosophy as *theoria*, remains what binds practical reason to the theoretical reason it subordinates and exceeds<sup>171</sup>. As Derrida affirms from the *Introduction to Rogues*, theoretical reason, for Husserl as for Kant, is first of all a practical reason, a practical ideal, a prescriptive task through and through.

This is what Husserl writes in *Philosophy as Mankind’s Self-Reflection*, in a *constative* and *prescriptive* mode: humanity “is rational in seeking to be rational; [...] this signifies an infinity of living and striving toward reason; reason is precisely that which man *qua* man, in his innermost being, is aiming for, that which alone can satisfy him, ...”, and he adds

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<sup>169</sup> It is immediately after Socrates has defined the Idea of the Good, as the sovereign (*Kurion, basileus*), superpowerful (*dunamei hyperekhontos*) (509b) origin of reason, that Glaucon cries out loud “Heaven save us, hyperbole can no further go. (*daimonias hyperboles*)” (509 C). Plato, *Republic*, books 6-10, translated by Paul Shorey, Harvard University Press, London, 2006, pp. 106-7. Marrati, Lawlor, and Kates did not react very differently from Glaucon when they maintained that Derrida has critiqued Husserl’s recourse to the Idea because “Husserl does not obey his own principle of principles” Lawlor p.141, Marrati, p. 41-42, Kates, p. 57, 238n14. For a different, and closer to our reading, interpretation of Husserl’s reference to the Idea see Bernet’s *On Derrida’s Introduction*, pp.. 149ff.

<sup>170</sup> But if Husserl is ready to accept this hyperbolic instant of his discourse “how can he distinguish his idealism as a theory of knowledge from metaphysical idealism. ...Husserl doubtless would respond thinking of Plato, that the ideal was *realized* within metaphysical idealism, that is, that it was substantified, hypostasized, as soon as it was not understood essentially, in each of its aspects, as noema, as soon as one imagined that it could be without in some way being thought or envisaged.” *Violence and Metaphysics*, p. 135

<sup>171</sup> *Rogues*, pp. 126, 131, 134

*reason allows for no differentiation into 'theoretical', 'practical', 'aesthetic,' or whatever ...: being human is teleological being and ought-to-be, ... this teleology holds sway in each and every activity and project of the ego ."* (Crisis, pp. 340-1)

We can therefore interpret Husserl's teleological discourse on history as the *prescription* and as the transcendental *description* of the fact of prescription. According to Derrida's interpretation of the ethico-teleological dignity of the Idea, Husserl "locates *the space* where consciousness notifies itself of *the Idea's prescription* and thus is recognized as transcendental consciousness through the sign of the infinite: this space is *the interval* between the *Idea of infinity* in its *formal* and *finite*, yet *concrete*, evidence and the *infinity itself* of which there is the Idea" (IOG, p. 140).

### 3) The Historicity of the Idea and the Question of European Responsibility

According to Husserl then, this “strange” presence of the teleological *Idea* authorizes not only the origin of geometry, i.e., the inaugural, idealizing act which has produced the geometrical *eidos* with the decisive passage to the infinite limit, but also prescribes the total unity of geometry’s tradition as the production *and* indefinite transmission of an originary sense.

But what would that mean for the historicity of geometry and of its origin, indeed for the historicity of every ideal cultural formation? Is the origin and the historical sedimentations of geometry’s sense, the concrete history of the science of geometry, such as it has been inscribed in the totality of its productions and sedimentations, in the totality of its factual writings, a foreign place where the metaphysical transcendence and plenitude of an absolute *Idea* would let itself descend, expropriate or differ from itself so as to re-appropriate itself?

Does this “strange presence” mean to say that this teleological *Idea* is an “ahistorical *Idea*”, an “eternal” or absolutely independent and objective *Idea*, which lies beyond all concrete and non-formal subjectivity, beyond all concrete and constitutive history? Is this a supratemporal or timeless<sup>172</sup> transcendental *Idea*, which, like the “absolute *Logos*,” occurs *in* a wordly history, or passes *through* factual historical temporality as a foreign empiricity, and from which it will let itself, at the end of the infinite pole of history, be derived?<sup>173</sup>

Derrida writes “*The presence of the Idea alone, therefore, authorizes the leap to pure ideality, a fact that could give rise to doubts about the origin’s specific historicity. Are we not confronted then with an ahistorical Idea? What we truly need is to investigate the sense of the Idea’s profound historicity*”(IOG, p. 141). In the last chapter of his *Introduction* Derrida will investigate and demonstrate the transcendental sense of the *Idea*, i.e., “the *Idea’s* profound historicity”, and what binds it with the radical *rationality* of phenomenological reason as

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<sup>172</sup> We should emphasize here – with regard to the mode of temporality which pertains not only to the *Idea*, but also to every ideality, and most significantly for us here, to the ideality of sense (*Sinn*) – that, according to Husserl, “timelessness” (*Zeitlosigkeit*) and “supratemporality” (*Überzeitlichkeit*) are defined in their negativity or transcendence only in relation to wordly, factual temporality, i.e., in relation to the temporality pertaining to real objects. Once factual temporality is reduced, they appear as *omnitemporality* (*Allzeitlichkeit*), which for Husserl is but a mode of temporality. (*Experience and Judgement* §64c p258-261) More importantly still, omnitemporality and supratemporality are the characteristics of time itself: my *living present* is “*die urzeitliche, überzeitliche ‘Zeitlichkeit’*” says Husserl (cited in IOG, p. 148n).

<sup>173</sup> Husserl in fact has written: “The absolute *polar ideal* *Idea*, that of an absolute in a new sense, of an absolute which is situated beyond the world, beyond man, beyond transcendental subjectivity: it is the absolute *Logos*, the absolute truth ... as *unum, verum, bonum* ...” Cited in IOG, p. 146n.

*Selbstbesinnung* and *Verantwortung*.<sup>174</sup> At the same time, Derrida will recognize there, and within the horizon of the infinite idea as an infinite task for practical reason, an extremely powerful teleology.

In this last chapter Derrida discusses the last page of the *Origin* where Husserl deals with “the great and profound problem-horizon of reason” (OG, p. 180). In effect the inaugural infinitization which created geometry, and which also freed geometry and its history from empirical culture, the irruption of the infinite as a revolution within empirical culture, that is, the accession to human consciousness of the infinite task of reason, Husserl tells us, is always already indicated in prescientific humanity. Reason, like the Idea, is *present* in every man and in the totality of his history, although it is also “*hidden*”, Husserl writes in *Philosophy as Mankind’s Self-Reflection*, “in a state of concealment, of nocturnal obscurity.”<sup>175</sup>

And having invoked once more the “absolute a priori” of history (and a bit further on, the concept of internal (*innere*) history) as what alone could authorize and give sense to the establishment of historical facts related to geometry, Husserl asks “Do we not stand here before the great and profound problem-horizon of Reason, the same Reason that functions in every man, the *animal rationale*, no matter how primitive he is?” All communities, all types of factual community, Husserl writes “... facticities of every type have a root in the *essential structure of what is universally human*, through which **a teleological reason running throughout all historicity** announces itself. With this is revealed a set of problems in its own right related to the totality of history and to the total sense which ultimately gives it its unity” (OG, p. 180).

This teleological Reason, like the teleological Idea, was already present to human history and civilization well before the advent of philosophy, before the irruption in spiritual Greece of the infinite telos of scientific and philosophical rationality. Philosophy as the sense investigation of the historicity of this teleological reason, i.e., as the sense investigation or the awakening of what was already there in obscurity, “marks a rupture and, consequently, a radical and creative origin” (IOG, p. 146) By investigating the sense of pure history as well as the unity pertaining to its movement, in a word its *rationality*, Greek or European philosophy has awakened history to its own proper telos: universality, infinite traditionality, infinite translatability and infinite

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<sup>174</sup> The rationality of phenomenological reason is not that of the *Aufklärung* which, according to what Husserl said in the *Vienna Lecture*, is totally unable for this radical universal self-understanding of science in the form of “*responsible universal science*.” This rationalism of the *Aufklärerei*, as Derrida notes underlining the pejorative character of this word in the *Vienna Lecture*, in fact shares the responsibility for “the critical situation of European sciences and humanity.” It is *rational* prejudices and presuppositions which share the responsibility for the crisis of Europe. (See *Rogues* p126) Husserl, on the contrary, wants to be more “radical” and more “revolutionary” than those conservative and reactionary rationalists of the *Aufklärerei*. *Crisis*, p. 290.

<sup>175</sup> *Crisis*, p. 338.

discursivity. According to Derrida, the philosophical sense-investigation “which awakened Reason to itself, announced the pure sense of historicity, i.e., the very sense *of* Reason, to history.” (Ibid.) This idea of philosophy, as the sense investigation of the most universal eidos of *rational historicity*, is also a European idea. Within the universal eidos of historicity, Husserl will discern three degrees of differentiation, three stages of historicity. The first stage (*Stufe*, stage or step, a notion which has both a structural sense and a genetic sense) is that of prescientific humanity, i.e., “historicity in the most general sense as the essence of all human existence, inasmuch as human existence necessarily moves in the spiritual space of culture or tradition” (IOG, p. 115). Within this stage any society at all can serve as an example, i.e., can be taken as a guide in an eidetic recognition of historical rationality.<sup>176</sup> The second stage is the Greek or European moment, i.e., that of the philosophical or scientific project, of the infinite task of reason. The third and last stage would be “the conversion of philosophy into phenomenology”.<sup>177</sup>

Thus philosophy is nothing other than rationalism, through and through, but it is rationalism differentiated within itself according to the different stages of the movement of intention and fulfilment; it is *ratio in the constant movement of self-elucidation [Selbsterhellung]*, begun with the first breakthrough of philosophy into mankind, whose innate reason were previously in a state of concealment, of nocturnal obscurity.<sup>178</sup>

Now in order to assess the *radical rationalism* of phenomenological reason (which is not the “old rationalism” of the *Aufklärung*) and of the infinite *Idea* (as an infinite task), and in order, at the same time, for the particular historicity (or *finitude*) of the phenomenological discourse itself to appear, we have, according to Derrida, to *get rid of* those conceptions of the *Idea* as “some thing”, as something existent, and of reason as some “psychological faculty or ability” (IOG, p. 144).

The *Idea* in the Kantian sense which is “present” to consciousness and which, as Husserl says, is eternal, is neither an existent thing nor an essence. The *Idea* is not given the way an essence is given, it is, as we said, *epekeina tes ousias*. Rather, it is even less existent than an essence, since an essence is always given, phenomenology’s principle of principles tells us, “in

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<sup>176</sup> It is only with the revolutionary step of philosophy that Europe acquires an exemplary signification for universal historicity. Husserl writes “Just as man and even the Papuan represents a new stage of animal nature, i.e., as opposed to the beast, so philosophical reason represents a new stage of human nature and its reason.” *Crisis*, p. 290.

<sup>177</sup> Cited in *IOG*, p. 115. Derrida makes two very important points here. Firstly, at each stage or step “the revolution which overthrows the previous project by an infinitization is only the sense investigation of a hidden intention.” And secondly, the three stages which “are stratifying structures of different heights, [...] are not in fact mutually exclusive: not only do they coexist in the world, but one and the same society can make them cohabit within itself, in the differentiated unity of an organic simultaneously.”

<sup>178</sup> *Crisis, Philosophy as Mankind’s Self-Reflection*, p. 338.

person” in a finite intuition, whereas the Idea is not and never will be. Being without essence, the *infinity* of the Idea is offered within phenomenology as the concrete condition (itself unconditional) for the determination of every thing and every essence or *eidos* in general, or, in other words, as the ideal and infinite horizon for the appearance of every object for a consciousness, as the horizontal seeing-come of the *eidos*, or of the form of what remains to come. It is not simply “one possibility among others” as Kates writes<sup>179</sup>, but the opening of the infinite horizon of *history* and of the *possible* for a finite and pure consciousness in general.<sup>180</sup>

If, as phenomenology teaches us, not only the possibilities of factual reality but also the possibilities of essence or *eidos* must have a *noema* (or sense) for a concrete consciousness in general, if therefore every *determined* object and every *determined* essence supposes the possibility of *noema* in general, we should perhaps try to think the irreality of the Idea, its “strange presence” for a transcendental *living* consciousness, together with the general possibility of *noema*, which is neither an object nor a subject, neither real transcendence nor real immanence, neither of the world nor of consciousness, and certainly not of any other world either.

The ideality or irreality of the *eidos*<sup>181</sup> is not the irreality of the *noema*. The irreality of the *noema*, which Husserl described in *Ideas I* (§§ 88, 97ff.), characterizes the type of inclusion, a *not real (reell)* inclusion, of every *noema* in a concrete and essentially finite lived experience, whatever the type of the intended object (a real or an ideal object.) “However there is no doubt”, Derrida writes, “that this non-reality of the *noema* (a very difficult and decisive notion) may be what in the last analysis, permits the *repetition* of sense as the “same” and makes the idealization of identity in general [of a real thing or of an *eidos*] possible.” The Idea’s iterative structure of

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<sup>179</sup> Essential History, p. 81.

<sup>180</sup> The Kantian Idea refers to an infinity that constitutes a horizon, to the infinity of the horizon. And, as its Greek name indicates, a horizon is both the *opening* and the *limit*; it defines either an infinite, unending development or a limit from which one can see what is coming, a limit from which one can foresee or know beforehand the form that will have to be taken by what is still to come. The horizon – both as the possibility of the infinite opening of the future and as the limit from which one experiences, i.e., anticipates, the future, pre-comprehends it and waits for it – is given to a *lived* evidence, to a *concrete* knowledge, which, as Husserl says and Derrida stresses, is not one evidence or knowledge among others. (OG, p176, IOG. p. 117) It is, rather, a knowledge that is never “learned”, that is a *primordial* evidence or knowledge concerning the totality of possible historical experiences, concerning, that is, the form of what is still to come during or after the life of a concrete and finite consciousness: the form of the living and historic **Present** as the universal form of every **possible** historical experience. This limit of the horizon is also the limit of phenomenological reason, a definitive and absolute limit: **the impossibility of a future that would be lived other than in the present**. According to Derrida, the notion of a future whose sense could not be thought in the form of a future *present* marks the impossible and unthinkable of phenomenology and defines the very limit of phenomenological reason, as well as the power of the phenomenological limit.

<sup>181</sup> The irreality of the *eidos*, which according to Husserl is *nonimaginary*, “is *nothing other than* the sense and possibility of factual reality to which it is always related, immediately or not, as the rigorous prescription of the *eidos*’ essential mode of appearing.” IOG, p. 144.



“again and again,” the possibility of the indefinite repetition of the same, “belongs to the evident structure of the *noema* of the thing in general” (IOG, p. 135n).<sup>182</sup>

In that sense we can say that the transcendental sense of the infinite Idea, its eternity *and* omnitemporality, is a purely teleological value for a constituting historical consciousness: it is the *Telos of the infinite determinability of being* in general, the *possibility of being*, of any object or sense whatsoever, *appearing* for any concrete and finite consciousness. This value, or transcendental norm, is not a static or a determined value which would make possible. order, inform and orient from the outside the unity of sense’s movement, its production and tradition.

The Absolute of the Idea, which Derrida writes “is the Absolute of historicity,” is not an independent, objective Absolute that is disclosed in the finite acts of a subjectivity which is relative to this Absolute, waits for it and conforms to it. Rather the production and tradition of all sense, and in particular geometry’s sense, is inscribed within the horizon of an infinite Idea as the infinite task of universal reason which, according to Husserl, in its turn is grounded in the *living present* of egological consciousness, the “ultimate ground of all constitution.” (This teleological reason also runs throughout the unity of the history of the ego.<sup>183</sup>) Since, in the institution of a science like geometry (as in the production of every cultural formation), this *Telos of the Idea*, as *Vorhaben*, i.e., as the common root of theoretical and practical reason, is indefinitely and totally open, or is openness itself to future metamorphoses and revolutions, the “supratemporality *and* omnitemporality” of the Idea is only the regulative and the most concrete possibility of geometry’s history appearing and having or acquiring sense for any consciousness whatsoever.<sup>184</sup> The Idea of infinity, as the indefiniteness of an “*ad infinitum*”, as what opens the possibility of something indefinite or unending, the infinity of historical progress for a constituting subjectivity, is not an actual infinity. The infinite opening of what is experienced by a historical subjectivity, and the opening of the “absolute subjectivity of sense to History”, i.e., to the indefinitely open traditionalization of sense, is not a positive infinite, and therefore is *nothing* outside the history that it makes possible.

Its transcendence, therefore, is not a *real* transcendence but a teleological one. it is *beyond* only compared with the *constituted* moments of historicity, with the *constituted* and *sedimented* sense which, however, appears and acts as such only within the infinite *project* of a new production or constitution. It is a transcendental norm, the infinitely distant “pole *for itself* of

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<sup>182</sup> Dastur, Françoise. *Finitude and Repetition in Husserl and Derrida*. The Southern Journal of Philosophy (1993) Vol, XXXII, Supplement, p. 122.

<sup>183</sup> *Cartesian Meditations*, §37, p. 75.

<sup>184</sup> The teleological Idea is, as Derrida writes, “the most powerful structural a priori of historicity. ... It is the concrete possibility, the very birth of history and the sense of becoming. It is structurally genesis itself, as origin and as becoming.” *GSP*, p. 167.

*constituting* historicity and *constituting* subjectivity.” Husserl will not hesitate to call this pole God.<sup>185</sup> Derrida writes about the omnitemporality or profound historicity of the Idea:

Undoubtedly the Idea and the Reason hidden in history and in man as “*animal rationale*” are eternal. Husserl often says this. But this eternity is *only* a historicity. It is the *possibility of* (Derrida’s emphasis) history itself. Its supratemporality – compared with empirical temporality – is only an omnitemporality. The Idea, like Reason, is *nothing* outside the history in which it displays itself, i.e., in which (in one and the same movement) it discloses and lets itself be threatened. Since the Idea is nothing outside history but the *sense of* (Derrida’s emphasis) all history, only a historico-transcendental subjectivity can be made responsible for it. The Absolute of the Idea as the Telos of infinite determinability is the Absolute of intentional historicity. IOG, pp. 141-142.

The question about the transcendental sense or historicity of the infinite Idea can be repeated analogously in the direction of the historicity, i.e., the eternity *and* omnitemporality, of Reason. Is intentional, transcendental historicity and its correlative, transcendental speaking subjectivity, only the medium through which Reason appears to itself, i.e., expresses and hears itself as *logos*, so as to regain possession of itself, re-appropriate itself through this subjectivity and its objectifications? Is this (infinite) *logos* a positive and actual infinite which is situated “beyond transcendental subjectivity,” a real transcendence which is self-present in the plenitude of its essence before descending or condescending to a wordly history and historical discursiveness? If we take into consideration what we said above with respect to speech and writing in their *constitutive* value, and about the *necessary* exposition of truth, i.e., of the progressive advent of reason, to the factual contingency of its wordly inscription, then the answer to the above questions is certainly not. Derrida writes:

Logos is nothing outside history and Being, since it is discourse, infinite discursiveness and not actual infinity, and since it is sense. Now the irreality of sense was discovered by phenomenology as one of its very own premises. Inversely no history as self-tradition and no Being would have sense without the *logos* which is the sense which projects and proffers itself.<sup>186</sup>

By describing the historic Present, which is the universal form of every possible historical experience, and the Absolute of all transcendental history, as *rational* and *dialectical* as it gets, i.e., as “the vital movement of the coexistence and the interweaving of primordial formations and sedimentations of sense” (OG, p. 174), by discovering the irreality of sense or *noema*, and by recognizing the transcendental necessity of linguistic and written sedimentation for all formation and all traditionalization of sense, and especially for the constitution of ideal objects and of truth, for the unveiling and the progressive advent of reason, in a word *for all history*, Husserl makes,

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<sup>185</sup> IOG, pp. 45n, 147.

<sup>186</sup> GSP, p. 166.

according to Derrida, intentional historicity appear as rational and infinite historicity, “as infinite discourse and infinite dialecticalness” (IOG, p. 152).

If there cannot be any intentional history (as the pure and indefinite tradition of sense and speech toward an infinite polar telos, that is, as the infinite history of an ideal objectivity) without the acts, the linguistic objectifications and sense-sedimentations of a concrete and constituting historical subjectivity, if there can be no history without the rational acts of a speaking egological subjectivity and no reason outside history (which is always the history of an ideal objectivity) it is because reason is not an “ability concealed in the shadows of a historical subjectivity or in the subworld of becoming” (IOG, p. 144). Rather, according to Husserl, reason is historical through and through, the universal structure of transcendental historicity and, correlatively, of transcendental subjectivity.<sup>187</sup> Reason, as Husserl writes and emphasizes in the *Cartesian Meditations*, “is not an accidental *de facto* ability, not a title for accidental matters of fact, but rather a title for an *all-embracing essentially necessary structural form belonging to all transcendental subjectivity*.”<sup>188</sup>

The “teleological Reason,” which traverses universal history, but also “the unity of the history of the ego”, is the *logos*, the sense which is produced and inscribed in history, the *logos* as sense which expresses and hears itself in the living present of its self-presence. *Hearing-oneself speak* is the teleological destiny of all sense and the essence of all speech or discourse, i.e., the teleological essence of Reason. Hearing oneself speak is precisely the condition of subjectivity, of transcendental living subjectivity, of the for-itself (*für sich*) of self-presence, of the presence to itself of a living, sense-giving and speaking subjectivity. As Derrida writes:

Reason unveils itself. Reason, Husserl says, is the *logos* which is produced in history. It traverses Being with itself in sight, in sight of appearing to itself, that is, to state itself and hear itself as *logos*. ***It is speech as auto-affection: hearing oneself speak*** [my emphasis]. It emerges from itself in order to take hold of itself, hearing oneself constitutes itself as the history of reason through the **detour of writing**. *Thus it differs from itself in order to reappropriate itself*. *The Origin of Geometry* describes the necessity of this exposition of Reason, and of the becoming of Reason, in a wordly inscription. An exposition indispensable to the constitution of truth and the ideality of ideal object, but which is also the **danger** to sense from the outside of the sign.<sup>189</sup>

Before we speak, once again, of this *danger* which reason seems to make itself run, before we speak of this danger which seems to be interior, intimate and immanent to the very

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<sup>187</sup> “If Reason is the essential structure of the transcendental *ego* and the transcendental *we*, it *is*, like them, historical through and through. Conversely, historicity, as such, *is* rational through and through.” (IOG, p. 145) At this point we may ask again *why* is an experience (transcendental or empirical) which could not be lived by an *egological* consciousness in general **impossible**? This impossible is again nothing less than the limit of **reason** in general. See *Violence and Metaphysics* pp125, 131.

<sup>188</sup> *CM*, §23, p. 57.

<sup>189</sup> *GSP*, p. 166.

progress of the sciences and to the production of ideal objects, we should note that the “supratemporality and omnitemporality” of the Idea is a characteristic which is not peculiar to this phenomenological history of reason alone, to the rational historicity of an intersubjectively constituted sense. Rather, it is a characteristic which can be peculiar or proper to it, only because it is ultimately *the* characteristic of Time itself, of the *living present*, the irreducible and pure *place* and *movement*, the *ground of all constitution and traditionalization of sense*. Husserl’s description of the rational and teleological movement of universal historicity develops, as Derrida says, his discovery of intentionality. Now intentionality, the intentional activity of Husserlian subjectivity, appears, after the most radical transcendental reduction, “at its greatest depth,” as the dialectical movement of the temporalization of the living present.<sup>190</sup> If that is so, we perhaps do not have to wait long to see that the danger which reason (as the essential structure of all history, egological or communal) faces in its advent and in its very becoming has its “ultimate reason” in the very structure of the present and of all life, in the temporality of the living present.<sup>191</sup>

This danger threatens the Absolute of all transcendental life, the absolute origin of all constitution, the absolute origin of the world, which has been described by phenomenology as transcendental and *living* egological subjectivity. The life of the transcendental ego, all egological life has as its absolutely universal *form* the living present.

Following Husserl’s descriptions of the movement of temporalization, of the constitution of intersubjectivity, and, as we will see in the second part of the thesis, of the movement of signification, Derrida will bring forward at the heart of what ties these descriptions together “an irreducible *nonpresence* as having a constitutive value [for the history of reason and of truth itself], and with it a *nonlife*, a nonpresence or nonself-belonging to itself of the living present, an irreducible nonprimordiality.” According to Derrida, we can discern three instances of *nonpresence*, with regard to the relation to self and to the other in the temporalization of lived experience, in the experience of the other, and in hearing-oneself-speaking, three instances where “the lack of foundation is basic and nonempirical.”<sup>192</sup> As Derrida insists, these instances do not simply accompany or befall the self-identity of the living present, they rather destroy any possibility of such a simple self-identity, and of a simple and simply present to itself, living and

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<sup>190</sup> “For phenomenology alone can make infinite historicity appear: infinite discourse and infinite dialecticalness as the pure possibility and the very essence of Being in manifestation. It alone can open the absolute subjectivity of Sense to Being-History by making absolute transcendental subjectivity appear (at the end of the most radical reduction) as pure passive-active temporality, as pure auto-temporalization of the living present, i.e., as we already saw, as intersubjectivity. The discursive and dialectical intersubjectivity of time with itself in the infinite multiplicity and infinite implication of its *absolute origins* entitles every other intersubjectivity in general to exist...” IOG, p. 152.

<sup>191</sup> *Violence and Metaphysics*, p. 133 and *Rogues*, p. 127

<sup>192</sup> SP, pp. 6-7.

absolute origin of sense. By determining teleologically this essential possibility of nonpresence as crisis, so as to limit it, domesticate it and tame it, one simply protects or immunizes oneself against a more formless and more normless threat, against an unforeseeable im-possibility: the im-possibility of full presence. One cancels out a future, "the world of the future", which always proclaims itself at present beyond the closure of this *teleology* as presence. "The future can only be anticipated in the form of an absolute danger. It is that which breaks absolutely with constituted normality and can only be proclaimed, *presented*, as a sort of monstrosity."<sup>193</sup>

Toward the end of his *Introduction* Derrida presents once again what is the originality and singularity of the *Origin of Geometry*: the link between the question of historicity, of language/writing, and of responsibility. Husserl responds to the "crisis of European sciences" with a call for a voluntary, calculated and radical return to the origins of the tradition, for sense-investigation which would reactivate and bring back to light, i.e., to present evidence, what lies still hidden and dissimulated beneath the sedimentary surfaces of their real history: the primordial sense of the sciences, of their development or becoming. The method of the reduction (the *Wechsenspiel* of the two reductions and the zigzag way of proceeding) and the reactivation of the tradition's origins is the *prescriptive* discourse of phenomenology, always brought forth in the name of "a new humanity made capable of an absolute self-responsibility".<sup>194</sup>

The reactivating reduction is, as we saw, always a reduction which is practiced by, or toward, a transcendental subjectivity of an "ego" or a "we", that is in view of a community of responsible egological subjectivities, for which Europe would be at once the name and the exemplary figure. Europe would be, in a constitutive way, this very responsibility. In its spiritual (and not natural) geography, Europe is inhabited exclusively by the *animal rationale*, the man of infinite tasks. As it is presented in the *Vienna Lecture*, Europe is nothing but the name of this *arche* or *telos*, or rather of their merging in

a new sort of praxis, that of universal critique of all life (*universale Kritik alles Lebens*) and all life-goals, all cultural products and systems that have already arisen out of the life of man; and thus it also becomes a critique of mankind itself and of the values which guide it explicitly or implicitly. Further, it is a praxis whose aim is to elevate mankind through universal reason, according to norms of truth of all forms, to transform it from the bottom up into a new humanity capable of absolute self-responsibility on the basis of absolute theoretical insights.<sup>195</sup>

<sup>193</sup> *Of Grammatology*, p. 5.

<sup>194</sup> *Crisis*, p. 283.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.* Contrary to what many commentators of Derrida's reading of Husserl's discourse of the spiritual essence of Europe maintain, namely Derrida's alleged attempt to "problematize" and correct Husserl's teleological discourse by evoking the empirical facticity or historical existence of Europe (see Bernet's "On Derrida's Introduction" p. 152 and Marrati's *Genesis and Structure* p 46-7), we would like to note Derrida's insistence, from the *Introduction* (p. 114-6) to *The Other Heading* (p. 71-5), to stress the "ambiguity" and the "capital paradox" of the European "example", which Husserl himself has brought to

This phenomenological discourse on crisis in the *Krisis* (and especially in the *Vienna Lecture*) which presents itself not only as the discourse on European tradition, but also as the archeo-teleological autobiography of Europe, is as Derrida writes in the *Other Heading*, an archeo-teleological programme of European discourse about Europe.<sup>196</sup>

Having brought forward Husserl's affirmation that a teleology of reason runs throughout all history, and first of all throughout the history of the ego, that a *living* transcendental consciousness as the absolute origin of sense *can* only be a *teleological* consciousness of historicity and of crisis, and Husserl's diagnosis with regard to the danger which reason, i.e., the movement of sense, faces in its genesis and historical becoming, in its linguistic or written sedimentations, the threat of forgetfulness and passivity, Derrida draws the broadest contours of a phenomenological, arche-teleological discourse on historical responsibility, i.e., of a discourse or programme of European responsibility.

According to Derrida, only phenomenology – or phenomenological reason, the reason of the eidos and of the idea, the reason of *ideo*-logy and of *teleo*-logy, of the infinite becoming of ideal objectivities, the reason of what presents itself in the horizon or of what announces its presentation according to the eidos, the ideality, the idea, the regulative ideal or the telos – can disclose the possibility of history simply as the *possibility* of pure tradition of ideal objectivities, i.e., as the *possibility* of infinite discursiveness and infinite dialecticalness. This possibility, however, is marked and traversed by the danger of a perverse and amnesic use of reason, or, in other words, by the im-possibility of full and immediate intuition, the im-possibility of presence or of absolute responsibility. What Husserl calls “*Krisis*”, the crisis of European science or

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light. Man and the name of man, the man of universality, i.e., of infinite tasks, is, according to Husserl, the European man, the man who assumes the responsibility of testifying for universality. This name, the name of European man, is reserved neither for the Greeks, nor for the Germans, nor, to be sure, for the Europeans. The man who is committed to universal reason and to a “new sort of praxis”, and who is prepared to *respond*, to respond *before* the other, to be responsible for and to what has inherited from the tradition (i.e., from the other), this man does not reside in the natural geography of Europe. Everything that Husserl says on the question of “spiritual Europe” seems to suggest that it is the *concept of responsibility* which marks the origin of Europe, which is responsible for a European birth certificate. Moreover, insofar as the European philosopher complies with the demand of universal reason and assumes responsibility for it, he is also, Husserl writes, “a functionary of mankind” (*Crisis*, p. 17).

<sup>196</sup> According to Lawlor's interpretation of Derrida's reading of the *Origin*, Derrida shows, in particular in the passage we are to quote in a moment, the “inadequacy of phenomenology”. Since what is at stake here is the “responsibility” of phenomenology we ask Lawlor: is there an adequate discourse to what we call responsibility? “What is disturbing” and motivates Derrida's thought is not that the Husserlian conception of historicity or subjectivity is inadequate, “rather it is the case that there is not nor there should be an adequate concept to what we call responsibility”. *Eating Well*, p. 272. However, according to Lawlor in the Introduction “Derrida conceives responsibility in terms of a response to a question” and this “shows that epistemology even absolute knowledge, still orients him in these closing pages.” *Derrida and Husserl*, pp. 133, 141.

humanity, the crisis of reason which is produced in history as logos is the moment of sounding the alarm, of awakening, but also the moment of decision, the moment of *Krinein*, the constitutive moment of a we-voluntary-responsible-historical-human-subjects or philosophers. If Husserl affirms that the movement of “our” history is indefinite, infinite discursiveness, “the passage of Speech, the pure tradition of a primordial logos toward a polar telos” (IOG, p. 149), he also recognizes that

This movement is also *Danger(ous) as the Absolute [l' Absolu d'un Danger]*. For if the light of sense is only through Passage, that is because the light can also be lost on the way. Like speech, light can be lost only in an inauthenticity of a *language* and by the abdication of a speaking being.

And Derrida immediately adds

In that respect, phenomenology as Method of Discourse is first of all *Selbstbesinnung* and *Verantwortung*, the **free resolution** to take up ones own sense, regain consciousness, in order to make oneself **accountable**, through speech, for an imperilled pathway. This speech is historical, because it is always a *response*. **Responsibility** here means shouldering a word one hears spoken, as well as taking on oneself the transfer of sense, in order to look after its advance. In its most radical implications, then, Method is not the neutral preface or *preambulatory* exercise of thought. Rather, it is thought itself in the consciousness of its complete historicity. IOG, p. 149.

We must ourselves be responsible for this discourse on responsibility, as Derrida says, “we bear the responsibility for this heritage, . . . , we did not choose this responsibility; it imposes itself upon us, and in even more imperative way, in that it is, as other, and from the other, the language of our language.”<sup>197</sup> And in order to be the responsible guardians of this heritage, we should not accept it unquestionably: rather we should be worried and critical about the *ideology* and *teleology* of this Reason, about the *unconditional supremacy* or sovereignty of idea and of telos, of the Reason (or *logos*) of ideality and of telos that tends to annul or neutralize what announces itself as im-possible, what “presents” itself in its unrepresentable, formless or monstrous, demonstrable as un-monstrable character: a future thought *otherwise than* in the *form* of the future *present*.

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<sup>197</sup> *The Other Heading*, pp. 27-28.

## Part II

### Chapter One: The Arche and Telos of Language

#### 1) Expression as Logical Meaning

In the second part of the thesis we are going to read *Speech and Phenomena* and take up again the question of reason, of the phenomenological reason of *ideality* and telos, and reason's demand for knowledge, for capacity (*dynamis*, *potential*, *Vermögen*), for the power to know, for knowledge *as* power.<sup>1</sup> This reason, which is also the *raison d'être* of phenomenology itself, will be put into question precisely in terms of the superpowerful supremacy of the *Idea* (of the *eidos* and of ideality) and of the *Telos* and with respect this time to Husserl's doctrine of the *Logos* and of signification in general as it is formed in the first of the *Logical Investigations*.<sup>2</sup> Taking now the opposite direction in the chronological order of Husserl's itinerary, moving from his latest texts to his first major work, we will try to show the extraordinary continuity and consistency which characterizes his thought, especially with regard to what bounds the phenomenological question of the origin or constitution of scientific objectivity and of truth to that of speech and writing.

In the first section we are going to take up the logico-epistemological interests of Husserl's doctrine of signification and argue that the *intuitionist* motif or imperative of his critical project of an "authentic theory of knowledge", the imperative of the *presence* of *sense* to a

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<sup>1</sup> Already since Plato, as Derrida reminds us in *Rogues*, in the second *Essay on Reason*, "this question about *dynamis*" is first of all a question "about a force and a power but also about *the possible and its limits*, about the possible and the impossible, about a sovereign 'I can' and an 'I cannot', about the potential and the virtual." In the *Republic* this question or concern of Socrates about *dynamis*, was a question about "a power assured of knowing or assured by knowledge", a question concerning "the *cause (aitian)* of science and truth in so far as they are known." See *Republic* (508e) and *Rogues*, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> We insist in putting the question of reason, of the phenomenological *Logos* and rationality, of the phenomenological rationalism of the *unconditional*, and of a "rational deconstruction" of this rationality of the *Idea* and of the *Telos*, in order to stay clear from and denounce a certain tendency of some of Derrida's readers to "re-christinize" his interpretation of Husserl. See for instance Lawlor's attempt to christianize the imperative of deconstruction as an injunction of thinking that "does not come from reason but elsewhere", i.e. from the "generosity" and "compassion" of the heart, "the Sacred Heart of Jesus." (Lawlor, "With My Hand Over My Heart, Looking You Right in the Eyes, I Promise Myself To You ...: Some New Reflections on Derrida's Interpretation of Husserl", in *Husserl and the Logic of Experience*, edited by Gary Banham, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 268, 270) Our effort, on the contrary, throughout this thesis, is to show Derrida's faith in reason. This faith, however, "is another way of *keeping within reason [raison garder]*". It has to do first of all with this *experience* "that consists in being *responsible* for a reason [here, the phenomenological reason, the reason of ideality and of telos] of which we are heirs." *Rogues*, p. 150.



primordial intuition, is essentially indissociable from a certain *privilege* given by Husserl to the *medium* of expression, to verbal expression (*sprachlichen* Ausdruck) or to *phone*. We will argue, following Derrida, that the essential distinctions which support Husserl's doctrine of signification in the first Investigation, the distinctions between linguistic and non-linguistic sign (*Zeichen*), expression and indication (*Anzeigen*), (and the distinction in the *Weisen*, between *Beweis* proper to expression and *Hinweis* proper to indication), have a *teleological* character. On the basis of these distinctions, which are also oppositions, Husserl is able to determine the limit or horizon, the *arche* or *telos* of language as *logical* language, as *logical meaning*.

With regard to the question of language and of signification in general, the *Logical Investigations* opened a path which was, according to Derrida, to be followed by Husserl up until his latest texts, especially the *Origin of Geometry*. We have already seen Husserl's insistent return to the primordially of a *speaking subjectivity*, and the essential and basic function which is assigned to *linguistic*, and especially *written*, *signification* with respect to the historical constitution of scientific objects and of truth itself. By recognizing in language the indispensable condition for the *constitution* of ideal Objectivity, i.e., of truth, Husserl was unable to see in it just one problem among others. "In this area more than elsewhere, a patient reading of the *Investigations* would show the germinal structure of Husserl's thought."<sup>3</sup> Indeed, in the *Introduction to Logical Investigations* Husserl begins by uprooting thought in general, and the phenomenological insights and results of these *Investigations* in particular, from what they would be "solely ... in the acts of verbal expression", but in order to emphasise that these results could not become "truth" without "*stating* such results" and "*communicating them to others*", (§3) about which he also wrote in the *Origin of Geometry*. In the second paragraph of the *Introduction* Husserl writes :

All theoretical research, though by no means solely conducted in acts of *expression* (*ausdrücklichen* Acten) or complete statement (*Aussagen*), none the less terminates in such statement. Only in this form can truth, and in particular the truth of theory, become an abiding possession of science, a documented, ever available treasure for knowledge and advancing research. Whatever the connection of thought with *speech* may be, whether or not the appearance of our final judgements in the form of verbal pronouncements has a necessary grounding in essence, it is at least plain the judgements stemming from higher intellectual regions, and in particular from the regions of science, could barely exist without *verbal expression* (*sprachlichen* Ausdruck).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Speech and Phenomena* [hereafter cited as SP], p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Husserl Edmund, *Logical Investigations I, Introduction to Vol II* of the German edition, translated by J.N. Findlay, New York, Humanities Books, 1970, p. 250. Hereafter cited as *LI*

But it is not only the question of *spoken* language and “verbal expression” which allows Derrida to claim that in the *Logical Investigations* we find the germ of Husserl’s later work.<sup>5</sup> It is also the question of the phenomenological method. For the method, far from being a neutral preface of thought, shelters, under the guise of a technique, an anticipated view of the *sense* of being which one encounters, here the being of language. As Derrida has shown, the phenomenological practice of the reduction, in its eidetic and transcendental aspect, as well as the essential distinctions in which the reductions are articulated (reality/ ideality, factuality/ essentiality, wordliness / nonwordliness) are, in effect, already present in Chapter One “*Essential Distinctions*” of the *First Investigation*, which bears the title *Expression and Meaning (Ausdruck und Bedeutung)*.

Now, according to Derrida the question or problem of language (as *expression*), far from being one question or problem among others, defines the totality of phenomenology’s horizon. All the essential distinctions (reality/ ideality, factuality/ essentiality, etc) which define and delimit the very space of the phenomenological question, and which constitute the source of its value and legitimacy, presuppose the possibility of language. These distinctions do not exist outside or before the question of language so as to then be applied to it, enter into it “as into an already bounded domain or as one problem among others; they are discovered only in and through the possibility of language” (SP, p. 21). In *Speech* Derrida tries to show that the sense, the value and the right to these distinctions depend entirely on language, and in language on the validity of the radical, essential distinction which Husserl poses, in the first page of his *First Logical Investigation*, between *expression* and *indication*.

*Chapter One, Essential Distinctions*, opens precisely with an essential and rigorous distinction between two concepts of the sign (*Zeichen*) which, in ordinary as well as philosophical language, “are often treated as synonyms,” Husserl says, and improperly attached to a single word. The phenomenologist begins his investigations by disentangling this ambiguity which confuses the concept of *expression (Ausdruck)* with that of *indication (Anzeichen)*. In Chapter One, the phenomenological distinction and description of essences, the essence of indication (§§2-4) from the essence of expression (§§5-16), will have to bring forward a *ground* that would absolutely and plainly found both types of signification, expressive and indicative, a ground of non-signification, an intuitive or perceptual and *silent* ground. This *ground* is recognized and

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<sup>5</sup> For example, in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* we read: “The problem of constitution is again broadened when we recall that *verbal expression*, ... is an essential presupposition for *intersubjective thinking* and for *an intersubjectivity of the theory accepted as ideally existing*; and that accordingly an *ideal identifiability* of the expression, as expression, must likewise raise a problem of constitution.” (my emphasis) §73, p.188.

defined by Husserl's phenomenology as the source and guarantee of all value and sense, as the *primordial self-giving evidence*.

According to the logico-epistemological programme of the *Logical Investigations*, "Phenomenology ... discloses the 'sources' from which the basic concepts and ideal laws of pure logic 'flow' and back to which they must again be pursued in order to provide them with 'clarity and distinctness' needed for an understanding, and for an epistemological critique of pure logic." (*Logical Investigations, Vol II, Introduction, §1, p. 249*) These sources are nothing other than the intentional and lived experiences (*Erlebnisse*) in which the logical objects, laws and concepts, are intuitively given: "logical concepts, as valid thought-unities, must have their origin in intuition: they must arise out of an ideational intuition founded on certain experiences." (*ibid.*, §2, pp. 251-2.) But since not only logical objects but all kind of ideal objects must lead us back to intuition and to the intentional lived experiences of a concrete subject, the epistemological clarification of pure logic is necessarily confronted, Husserl writes, with "the most general questions of basic concern to the theory of knowledge." (*ibid.*, p. 253) In the next paragraph (§4) Husserl stresses that the interest of his studies lies with logical lived experiences (*logischen Erlebnisse*) which are not "mere expressions" but fully meaningful experiences in the function of *Bedeutungsintention*, and that the relation between *Bedeutung* and *Ausdruck* (as well as the association between the "sensuous linguistic side" of expression and its purely spiritual side, the "meaning that animates it") must be made analytically clear. And in §7, which closes the *Introduction*, Husserl poses the freedom from presuppositions as the *principle* of an authentic "theory of knowledge" (*Das Prinzip der Voraussetzunglosigkeit erkenntnistheoretischer Untersuchungen*). This principle of presuppositionless phenomenology demands that one "return to the things themselves" only by means of respect to the sole authority of intuition. According to Husserl then, the authority of intuition should not be understood as a presupposition, not even the last one: it is neither presupposed, nor posited, nor given, but *originally giving*. This reminds us of phenomenology's "principle of principles" defined by Husserl in *Ideas I* and which Derrida renders as "the original self-giving evidence, the present or presence of sense to a full and primordial intuition" (*SP*, p. 5).

The notions of *sense* (*Sinn*) and *meaning* (*Bedeutung*), the presence or absence of sense or meaning, are at the core of this phenomenological disentanglement of the confusion between expression and indication. An indicative sign, either linguistic or nonlinguistic<sup>6</sup>, for example a

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<sup>6</sup> In contradistinction to an expressive sign which is *always* purely linguistic, an indicative sign can be either linguistic or nonlinguistic. Husserl starts with nonlinguistic indications: something natural (for

gesture, is certainly a sign (to the extent that it indicates, refers or points (*Zeigen*), to something other than itself, i.e., to an inner experience), but, according to Husserl, it expresses nothing, it does not bear within itself and does not convey what he calls *Bedeutung*, it is not *bedeutsame*, or rather it is *bedeutunglos*. An expression, on the contrary, is always a purely linguistic, a *logical* or meaningful sign (*bedeutsame Zeichen*.) The expressiveness of expression supposes then the presence of meaning (*Bedeutung*), which comes into the sign and transforms it into expression only by means of the voice. According to Husserl, only speech, oral discourse, has the power of expression (and therefore, as he wants also to demonstrate, the character of pure logicity). Speech, being in absolute proximity to what within thought as *logos* relates to sense (*Sinn*), is essentially ex-pressive since it consists in exteriorizing, in bringing outside a sense-content of interior thought. And conversely, to the extent that sense, which is defined in phenomenology always on the basis of an intuitive or cognitive relation to an object, is always able to receive expression, to be reflected or copied in a meaning, Husserl can declare as a universal rule that “*logical meaning is an expression/ Logische Bedeutung ist ein Ausdruck*”.<sup>7</sup> As we are going to see, the essence or telos of language is determined by Husserl as *logical meaning*, i.e., as expression.

On the other hand, gestures or facial expressions (for example, the gestures of the hand, the finger showing or pointing to what is before the eyes<sup>8</sup>) are not expressions properly speaking, they are nonlinguistic indications: they are indicative exteriorizations (*Äusserungen*) of internal experiences. But the nature of this exteriorization is radically different from that of verbal or phonic exteriorization or ex-pression. According to Husserl, gestures are not *logical* expressions, because they do not *say* something, because they do not *mean* or *want* to say something. (What Husserl wants also to demonstrate with the difference, for example, between indicative facial expression and proper linguistic expression is that there is a radical difference or discontinuity between the language of the body and the language of words.) If the phenomenon of communication proper to historical subjects begins only with oral discourse, only with the language of words, this is because only a *logical meaning* – what is considered, not only by

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example, the canals in Mars *indicate* the possible presence of some form of life), or conventional (for example, the knot in the handkerchief which one uses to remind oneself to become a better man). Also a gesture or a facial expression always functions as indication. More importantly for us here **writing**, the sensible inscription of signs in space is, as we are going to see, always indicative since it always indicates a phonic expression, it is the signifier of the primordial phonic signifier.

<sup>7</sup> Ideas I, §124, p. 295.

<sup>8</sup> This deictic dimension of the finger refers or points not only to some transcendent thing, to an external object or body, but also to “my own proper body (*Leib*). This would be the auto-deictic function of the finger: pointing or referring to my body (*Leib*) in order to indicate “*this is me*” or “*this is my body*.” *On Touching – Jean-Luc Nancy*, translated by Cristine Irizarry, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2005, p. 163.

Husserl but also by the whole tradition of metaphysics as phono-logocentrism, as the undecostructable or undecomposable unity and immediacy of *thought* and *phone* in *logos* – only a logical meaning (*bedeuten, vouloir-dire*) can be an expression (proper to human intersubjectivity) for Husserl. Derrida writes:

Without forcing Husserl's intention we could perhaps define, if not translate, *bedeuten* by 'mean' or 'want to say' (*vouloir-dire*), in the sense that a speaking subject '*expressing himself*' as Husserl says, 'about something' *means or wants to say (veut-dire) something*. One would thus be assured that the *Bedeutung* is always what a discourse or somebody *wants to say*: a sense of discourse, a discursive content. SP, p. 18

Now in the very first paragraph (§1) of the first logical investigation on *Expression and Meaning*, in which Husserl introduces the dissociation or difference between expression and indication, it appears that, as far as some elements of the substantially *discursive* order (words or parts of speech) are concerned and inasmuch as they are involved in communication, this difference is *functional* or *intentional* and not substantial. Husserl speaks of an *addition* of functions but also of an *intimate* association, an intimate involvement and *entanglement* (*Verflechtung*): one and the same speech act, an utterance which is involved in oral synchronic communication functions as expression for the one who speaks and as indication for the one who listens. The difference then depends on the character, the purity or impurity of the intentional act (the *Bedeutungsintention*) which animates those elements of the discursive order and makes them meaningful. In communicative speech, where real and existing words are animated by the speaking subject through an intentional act (*bedeuten*) in order to be heard (or understood by others, the animation of words (supposedly purely spiritual) encounters a definite limit: the sensible body of the word. Pure, spiritual animation is incarnated and to some degree hides or loses itself in the opaqueness of the body, under the surfaces of the sensible body of language – precisely like the soul which animates the animal or human body. Every time the act of meaning, which animates the sensible body of language, takes part in a communication, pure expression gets involved in an indicative function. Husserl writes, "...meaning (*bedeuten*) – in communicative speech – is *always interwoven* (*verflochten*) with such an indicative relation." (LI, I, §1)

Every meaningful expression, Husserl says, is *in fact* and *always* (*allzeit*) interwoven with and, thereby, contaminated by an indicative function. *In fact and always*: indication enters into speech whenever expression fulfils the function of communication, a function that was, nonetheless, "originally framed" only for it. (LI, I, §7) Whenever the meaning intention (*bedeuten*) of a speaking subject comes to animate a verbal expression in order to make an internal sense, the content of a lived experience (which is present, Husserl believes, only to the

inner intuition of the subject and can always remain silent,) to be heard or understood by another speaking subject, the meaning (*Bedeutung*) of this verbal expression functions indicatively. As he writes a little further on "...all expressions in *communicative* speech function as *indications*. They serve the hearer as signs of the "thoughts" of the speaker, i.e., of the sense-giving inner experiences [...] This function of verbal expressions we shall call their *intimating or manifesting function (Kundgebende Function)*"(LI, I, §7). In the communication of his lived experience "the hearer perceives the speaker as *manifesting* certain experiences, and to that extent he also perceives these experiences themselves: he does not, however, himself experience them (*er selbst erlebt sie nicht*), he has not an *inner* but an *outer* percept of them." (*ibid*)

The manifesting function is an indicative function: in real colloquy therefore an expressive speech, Derrida writes, "acts *like* gestures" (SP, p. 38), that is, the words of the other, like his body and gestures, may be perceived by me, but they only *indicate* a content, the *probable* existence of an inner experience which is hidden for me (the hearer), which is not and will never be immediately present to me. But what does this mean, that "words act like gestures"? Does it mean that expression is a species of the more extensive genus of indication, or even that expression is a specific "form of gesture"? Now this is, according to Derrida, what Husserl wants to contest above all. (SP, p. 21)

According to Derrida, Husserl by contesting this genus-species relation, and, consequently, by excluding facial expressions or gestures from expressions properly speaking, i.e., by excluding the "language of action" or "the language of the body" from language in the strict sense, from the "language of words", he wants first and above all "to grasp the expressive and logical purity of meaning/*vouloir-dire* as the possibility of *logos*" (SP, p. 20). That is, as we are going to see, he wants to grasp the power of the expressive *phone*. In order to do that Husserl will have to demonstrate that however incontestable and irreducible the *de facto* or empirical necessity of the contamination of expression by indication in real communication, there is a *phenomenological* situation which can, if properly investigated, prove that a pure expression (the pure intention to say something meaningful) without indication (without the indicative function which belongs to the bodily aspect of the language of words) is possible. It will then be clear that the *de facto* necessity of entanglement, intimately associating expression and indication, must not exclude the possibility of a rigorous distinction of essence. This possibility is purely *de jure* and phenomenological. "The whole analysis", Derrida writes, "will thus advance in this separation between *de facto* and *de jure*, existence and essence, reality and intentional function" (SP, p. 21)<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Derrida does not "reject", as Rudolf Bernet writes (in his "*Derrida and his Master's Voice*", published in *Derrida and Phenomenology*, edited by W. R. McKenna and J. C. Evans, London, Kluwer Academic

In the first Investigation then Husserl believes that he has every right to make the *hypothesis* that between the two functions of expression and indication, whose unity can be rigorously circumscribed and delimited, there is a difference in essence and, therefore, a relation of a simple *exteriority*: indication, involved either in gestures or in words, will be a stratum in the activity of signification which comes to pure expression (to the pure will or intention to say something) from outside as an empirical and exterior stratum or cloak, like a body to a soul.

Communication itself, either with gestures or especially with words, is for Husserl a stratum of experience extrinsic to inward expression, i.e., to the pure meaning-intention. Husserl writes, "To mean (*bedeuten*) is not a particular way of being a sign (*Zeichenseins*) in the sense of indicating (*Anzeige*) something." And after having recognized that "meaning – in communicative speech – is always interwoven with such an indicative relation (*Anzeichensein*)" he immediately adds that "expressions function meaningfully even in *solitary mental life*, where they no longer serve to indicate anything." (LI, I, §1)

Now before Husserl proceeds to the reduction to solitary mental life (*einsamen Seelenleben*) in order to bring forth and determine the unity of the phenomenon of pure expression within it, he must first *delimit and reduce* the domain of indication. He devotes three paragraphs to "the essence of indication (*Anzeige*)" (LI, I, §§2-4). What is an indicative sign (*Anzeichen*)? What is the *unity* of the indicative sign which may be determined sometimes as *natural* (for example, as Husserl writes, the canals of Mars are signs of, i.e., indicate, the possible existence of intelligible beings) and other times as artificial or *conventional* ("sign language", all marks, all instruments of conventional designation, and writing in general)? Husserl defines its essential character in the most general way: an *Anzeigen* is a *motivation* (or a simple *because*) that moves a "thinking being" to pass by thought from something to something else. For example, volcanic phenomena indicate that the earth's interior is molten. But the motivation behind this

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Publishers, 1995, pp. 1-21), the Husserlian distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* (a distinction which, to be sure, is not one distinction among others since it defines the very space of phenomenology), he does not reject "the value of the distinction" on the basis of the "impossibility" (p. 10) to find not even a single "example" which could "in fact" (p. 8) demonstrate that there is pure expression without indication. On the contrary, as we are going to see, it is *only to the extent* that the above distinction is recognized, respected and rigorously demonstrated, and *only to the extent that* its necessity is felt that some deconstruction may take place. We say "some" deconstruction in order to remind ourselves that there is no *a* deconstruction, *the* or *one* deconstruction, but rather deconstructions *and* deconstructions. In his attempt to approach and show us without prejudices Derrida's deconstruction and his main argument in SP, Bernet writes: "Derrida is not completely convincing when he wants to persuade us of the impossibility of the phenomenological reduction." As we will try to show, according to Derrida, there is nothing, at least in his work, which can reject the value or *discredit* the phenomenological reduction. The latter is rather, as Derrida put it in "As if it were possible", the only force that resists empiricism and relativism. See *Negotiations*, p. 363

indication, which can provide us with an *empirical* certitude concerning “a connection of *probability*” between empirical *existents in the world* (the exterior and interior phenomena of the earth) is an *empirical* motivation, that is, only a *limited* case of motivation. The field of motivation, however, extends well beyond empirical factuality and the phenomena of worldly existence.<sup>10</sup>

*Anzeigen* or motivation, defined more generally, goes beyond indication *in the strict sense* since it does not link only subjective acts or judgements bearing on worldly, existing realities but also judgements on the *contents* of ideal objectivities, for example the objective expressions or propositions involved in a mathematical syllogism. In the latter case, where motivation links or infers mathematical states of affairs (*Sachverhalten*) with *evidence* and insight, we should not speak, according to Husserl, of indication (*Anzeigen*) or sign (*Zeichen*) but “of demonstration (*Beweisen*) in the strict logical sense.” (LI, §3, p. 271) And Husserl adds a distinction which is indispensable in his demonstration of the distinction between expression and indication.

a) *Hinweis* covers the contingent and empirical order of indicative allusion (of *nonevident* demonstration) that links lived experiences and judgements bearing on worldly realities. *Hinweis* is the pointing-out (or, as Derrida translates it, showing with the **finger** /*montrant du doigt*) of the nonseen, of the existence (at best a *probable* existence) of what is indicated, in our example the real existence of volcano indicates (with the highest probability) that the interior of the earth is molten. Indicative *Hinweis* then, to employ a classical distinction, will always cover the domain of the “truths of fact” and will never be a *Beweis*, a demonstration of “truths of reason”.

b) *Beweis* covers the domain of deductive and apodictic demonstration which exhibits in the *evidence* of proof. According to Husserl, only the demonstration, or the “because”, which unite the *contents* of ideal (for example, mathematical) objects in the *Beweis is not a case of indication*. To be sure (nonevident) indication does intervene in a *Beweis*, in a demonstration of “truths of reason”, but always, as Derrida explains, “on the side of psychic motivations, acts, beliefs, etc., and never on the side of the *content* of truths involved” (SP, p. 29).

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<sup>10</sup> Husserl defines indication in the most general way. Let's pay attention to the concepts of *Sein* and *Bestand*, (which Derrida tells us are not reducible to *Dasein*, *existieren*, *Realität*) in Husserl's definition of the indicative function. What is the common element of all indicative functions? Husserl answers “... the fact that certain objects or states of affairs of whose *Bestand* someone has *actual knowledge* **indicate** (**anzeigen**) to him the *Bestand* of certain other objects, in the sense that his *conviction* in the *being* (*Sein*) of the one is experienced (though *not* at all *evidently*) as **motivating** a conviction or *presumption* in the *being* (*Sein*) of the other. LI, §2, p. 270. This definition includes not only the knowledge which concerns empirical reality, i.e., empirical *existents* in the world, but also the knowledge of absolutely ideal objects or states of affairs (such as logicomathematical systems and pure essential structures of every kind). This is the reason why in the next paragraph (§3) Husserl adds the distinction between *indicative Hinweis* and *evident Beweis*, a distinction which, as we are going to see, is indispensable for him.



For Husserl, the question here, in *Logical Investigations* and in his later work up until the *Origin of Geometry*, is to reduce empirical subjectivity, all psychic motivations and experiences, and worldly existence in general in order to respect and show the ideal objectivity of the logical *Bedeutung* which governs pure expression. Already from the *Prolegomena to Pure Logic* no existential thesis (*Daseinthesis*), no worldly experience and no empirically determined subjectivity is allowed to interfere and confuse the transparent, evident and objective necessities and significations of a pure logic. It is the same attitude, as we saw, in the *Origin of Geometry* where the *sense* of geometrical truth does not depend either on any empirical subjectivity or on any of its factual significations (or worldly writings in which this truth, nonetheless, could be sedimented so as to be handed over.) Derrida writes, “[...] for the order of signification in general, the whole of psychic experience (under the surface character of its *acts* – even when they intend idealities and objective necessities) contains only indicative concatenations. The indicative sign falls outside the content of absolutely ideal objectivity, that is, outside truth” (SP, p. 30) *Anzeigen* in the strict sense, indicative signification in language “*always connects empirical existents in the world*”. It therefore, Derrida says, “covers everything that falls subject to the *reductions*: wordliness, empirical existence, factuality, essential nonnecessity, nonevidence, etc.” (ibid)

The reduction to “solitary mental life” (LI, I, §8) has precisely this purpose: to reveal, after the reduction of the totality of worldly existence, a transcendental, i.e., nonempirical, speaking subject as the absolute origin, the constituting source of all sense and all meaning, i.e., as the absolute origin of the world. In the third chapter of *Speech and Phenomena*, “*Meaning (vouloir-dire) as Soliloquy*”, Derrida reflects on this reduction, on the phenomenological reduction to the silent intention of meaning (the *vouloir-dire*, or *Bedeutungsintention*) and tries to demonstrate the systematic interdependence (or complicity) of the concepts of meaning, expression, sense, ideality, objectivity, truth, perception or intuition. At the end of this demonstration we will see that what ultimately allows a consistent and rigorous articulation between them is the *ethico-teleological* determination of *being* in general as *presence* and as *ideality*.

Focusing on the logico-epistemological concerns of the *Logical Investigations* Derrida shows how the reduction to “solitary mental life”, to the inner life of a speaking subject, should also reveal, *within* the purity of inward speech, a *transcendental* intentionality aiming at an object, i.e., a relation to what is *outside* and to a beyond in general. For, as Derrida will try to show, the aim of the reduction to inward monologue is to restore or re-establish inward speech “not as ‘talking to oneself about oneself’ unless this can take the *form* a ‘telling oneself that S is

p'”, where S is not the name of a person but of an object. (SP, p. 74) The system of *Zeigen*, Derrida writes, “*the pointing finger and the eye movement*” and what bounds it to space, visibility, to objects in general and therefore to intuition and to evidence, in a word, to *light*, is not absent in phenomenological interiority. As Husserl has determined it, the phenomenological voice, i.e., the silent intention to say something meaningful, belongs to the same system. The system of *Zeigen*, the whole of the *visible* and the *spatial* as such, does not break with the solitary mental life of the *speaking* subject. On the contrary, and this is Husserl’s contribution to the metaphysics of presence, that is, to an “*authentic*” *theory of knowledge*, this system functions better than ever in the voice, in what Husserl calls *Bedeutungsintention*. According to Derrida, the optical intuitionism of Husserl’s “theory of knowledge”, his explicit philosophy of the gaze (as the noun *Anschauung* indicates), functions or works better with the support of a profound phonocentrism, of an acoustical intuitionism.<sup>11</sup> Phenomenology, in its very project of criticism of naïve ontology and of all classical theories of knowledge, would be incomplete without the possibility of an incorporeal, disembodied *phone* which speaks and *immediately* hears itself.

Expression, as we said, is a sign animated and inhabited by a meaning as *vouloir-dire*. *Meaning (Bedeutung)* then comes to the sign and transforms it into expression only by means of spoken language. The *bedeuten- Bedeutung* structure or correlation, “the *noetic-noematic stratum of Logos*”, as is described by Husserl in *Ideas I* (§124), cover exclusively the order of expressive speech, the order of “speech in the strict sense”. “In the strict sense”, that is, in the phenomenological sense: not the effectively and physically uttered speech, not speech in the world, but the animation of a verbal expression by an intentional and pure act of meaning (the *Bedeutungsintention*). The essential condition of expression, according to Husserl, is not the physical body of the word, but only this pure act of the animating intention (the spirituality of the breath as *bedeuten or vouloir-dire*) which can do without this body (which in its ideal form belongs to a determined factio-historical language) and can therefore remain physically silent. What is absolutely free and primordial for Husserl is only the *will*, i.e., the *Geist*, the animating,

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<sup>11</sup> As Derrida writes in *On Touching*, Husserl’s transcendental idealism, the hegemony an “optical intuitionism”, of eidetics, of the *eidos* as visible form accessible to a disembodied, incorporeal *Anschauung*, the privilege of sight – metaphorical and literal – or the privilege of objectivity, is indissociable not only from an “acoustical intuitionism,” but also from a certain “*haptical* intuitionism”, from a “quasi-transcendental privilege of touch and of the tactile.” *Ideas II*, § 37,38, and *On Touching*, especially pp. 120-122, 159-182. What has conferred on “touch” an absolute privilege, and has inaugurated the Western history of touch, was the great idealist tradition itself starting from Plato’s *Phaedo*, and Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* to Berkeley to Kant and Husserl. See *On Touching*, especially pp. 40-41, 98-99, 120ff. According to this idealism, the idealization process pertaining to the linguistic constitution of objects *in general*, and at work, for example, in the expression “*this is my body*”, would consist in maintaining the sense of hearing within sight and in contact with touching, so as to assure for the seeing eye the fullness of immediate presence, and for the showing finger the potentiality of a contact.

life-giving act of meaning (*bedeuten*), which, just as in the case of the human body, gives life and transforms the body of words into a living or spiritual flesh (*geistige Leiblichkeit*), into an expression endowed with meaning (*Bedeutung*).<sup>12</sup> This living act, this life-giving act, the *Lebendigkeit*, which in the history of metaphysics has taken several names, “psyche,” “will,” “spirit,” “life,” or “transcendental life,” and which Husserl calls *Bedeutungsintention*, is awakened and maintained in life as much with its body as despite of it. Without this act of meaning (*bedeuten*), without this *Lebendigkeit* or *Geistigkeit*, there would be no expression, no discourse and no language whatsoever.

Now if the concept of *Bedeutung* is reserved, by Husserl, for the order of oral discourse, for “the stratum of Logos”, the concept of *Sinn* extends further, overflows the expressive sphere and covers the totality of noetic-noematic sphere of experience right down to its preexpressive or prelinguistic stratum.<sup>13</sup> So, as Derrida writes in *Form and Meaning*, “as soon as the extension of *sense* absolutely overflows the extension of meaning/ *vouloir-dire*, discourse will always have to *draw its sense*; it will only be able somehow to *repeat* or *reproduce* a sense content, which does not wait for speech in order to be what it is.”<sup>14</sup>

Considering an entire and most evident aspect of his work, starting with the rigorous distinctions between expression and indication (*Logical Investigations*) and between sense and meaning (*Ideas I*), we will try to show, after Derrida, that Husserl never wanted to assimilate experience in general with language and signification, and strives, it seems endlessly, to keep signification in general (indicative as well as expressive) outside the self-presence of transcendental experience or life. And indeed, as we are going to see reading his *Ideas I*, Husserl believes that there is, notably in the experience of perception, a pre-expressive and prelinguistic stratum of sense, which the phenomenological reduction must disclose in its primordially by

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<sup>12</sup> For what is at stake (nothing more and nothing less than the re-Christianization of phenomenology) in the translation of *Leib* as *flesh /chair* see Derrida Jacques, *On Touching*, pp. 188, 233-38, and especially p. 361n26

<sup>13</sup> Husserl does not accept Frege’s distinction between “sense” and “meaning” in *Logical Investigations, First Investigation* (§15), and in *Ideas I* (§124) the dissociation he introduces between these two notions does not have the same function as for Frege. “We shall restrict our glance to the ‘meaning content’ (*Bedeutung*) and the ‘act of meaning’ (*Bedeuten*) Originally these words concerned only the linguistic sphere (*sprachliche Sphäre*), that of ‘expression’ (*des Ausdrucks*) But it is almost inevitable, and at the same time an important step for knowledge, to extend the meaning of these words, and to modify them suitably so that they may be applied in a certain way to the whole noetic-noematic sphere: to all acts therefore, be they **interwoven** (*verflochten*) with expressive acts or not. Thus we have continued to speak of ‘sense’ (*Sinn*) in the case of all intentional experiences – a word which is used in general as equivalent to ‘meaning’ (*Bedeutung*). For the sake of distinctness we shall prefer the term ‘meaning’ when referring to the old concept and, in particular of the complex locution of ‘logical’ or ‘expressive’ meaning. We shall continue to use the word ‘sense’ as before in the most all-inclusive range.” (translation modified) *Ideas I*, p. 294.

<sup>14</sup> *Form and Meaning* (hereafter cited as FM), published in *Speech and Phenomena*, p. 115.

excluding the *stratum* of language. Expression, as the essence or telos of language, is thus added as a supplementary and supervening stratum upon the self-presence of an inner life or existence, upon the certainty of an experience of sense which can reflect its own presence in silence. For Husserl, sense and the ideal presence of sense should *de jure* precede the act of language whose own value will then be that of ex-pression, a *medium* of exteriorization.<sup>15</sup>

Speech, and *inward* speech first of all, the speech which is not addressed to the other, could not operate without this *sich-aüssern* that Husserl talks about in his First Investigation (§7): speech is ex-pressive because it consists in exteriorizing a sense content that is first found “in a certain inside.” The first distinctive characteristic of inner and pure ex-pression is then the *exteriorization*, the outward transposition of a sense which is constituted in its unity without it and before it. And since we are still following Husserl in this reduction to phenomenological interiority, we must emphasize that this exteriorization of sense does not refer to an outside of consciousness, to the spatiality of nature and of the world (or to the spatiality and visibility of the human body which, as something external, always begins by being exposed in the world). This exteriorization, which is accomplished or attained with pure and inward expression, remains, Derrida tells us, “in” consciousness, “in the *with-oneself* or *before-oneself*, which Husserl first determined as solitary mental life” (SP, p. 33). Moreover, the phenomenological interiority of this life is not compromised, on the contrary, its radicality is brought forth more clearly when we take into consideration precisely Husserl’s “logical and epistemological concern” or criterion: to reveal and secure the originality of expression, of pure and inward expression, as a relation to an ideal object and as “meaning”/*vouloir-dire*. The presence of sense, which is expressed in a meaning (*Bedeutung*), which the transparency of the inward speech will reproduce or reflect silently within consciousness, is always a correlate of an “intending of an objective ideality, which stands face-to-face with the meaning intention, with the *Bedeutungsintention*” (SP, p. 22).

In *Ideas I* §124 Husserl resorts to a perceptual example in order to explain the difference between pre-expressive *Sinn* and expressive *Bedeutung*: the silent perception of a “this white” denotes a pre-expressive process, an intentionality which aims at a sense, a perceptual sense which can be constituted in its distinctiveness and clarity before and independently of the perceptual expression. After the noematic sense of “this white” has been constituted silently in consciousness we can make it *explicit*, we can say it, i.e., repeat it, reproduce it and transform it into meaning and expression, without deforming it or adding any content to it, through *concepts*. Still remaining within the pure interiority of solitary mental life, the originality of the milieu of logical expression consists in the fact that, even though it brings sense to the *logical* order of

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<sup>15</sup> FM, p. 115. IOG, p. 69n.

conceptuality, it does not introduce something new (a new sense), it is unproductive; it effaces itself like an unproductive transparency before the passage of sense. Moreover, not only perceptual sense but every intentional sense and every lived experience can *in principle* be repeated or reflected into an expressive experience, or brought into the *conceptual form* which “belongs to the essential nature of expression itself.”<sup>16</sup> Husserl writes

The stratum of expression – and this constitutes its peculiarity – apart from the fact that it lends expression to all other intentionalities, *is not productive*. Or if one prefers: its productivity, its noematic production, is exhausted in the expressing, and in the form of the *conceptual* which first comes with ‘the expression’.<sup>17</sup>

If the unproductive stratum of expression comes to reflect every other intentional act, to “mirror (*widerzuspiegeln*) every other intentionality according to its form and content”, that is to say if not only the sense of a perceptual or intuitive (i.e., cognitive) act, but also the sense of aesthetic, moral, etc., acts or experiences must be capable of being said, of being expressed or of giving themselves to *logical speech* controlled by the predicative form, then Husserl is able to declare that “logical *Bedeutung* is an expression.” (*Ideas I*, §124)

If inward or outward ex-pression is determined as exteriorization, as the exteriorization of sense, this is so, according to Derrida, because in this phenomenology of the phone a **powerful teleology** is at work. All sense is teleologically destined to meaning/ *vouloir-dire*, sense *wants* to be ex-pressed, to be said or signified in a *medium* which achieves two things at once: a) it protects and preserves the presence of sense to intuition; it is an unproductive medium, a neutral and transparent element that receives, accepts or lets itself be impressed by sense without adding anything to it, without deforming it, without changing its original colours<sup>18</sup>, and b) it brings this sense to conceptual generality, to “the universality of the logical,”<sup>19</sup>; it is a “medium of universality”<sup>20</sup>, a productive medium, a means of giving sense a conceptual form, a means of imposing the universality of the concept. This unproductive productivity of the medium is the *telos* of perfect expression: i.e., the total restitution in the form of presence of a sense actually

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<sup>16</sup> *Ideas I*, §126, p. 299.

<sup>17</sup> *Ideas I*, §124, p. 296.

<sup>18</sup> FM, pp. 113-19

<sup>19</sup> “ ‘*Expression*’ is a distinctive form which allows for adapting to every ‘sense’ (to the noematic ‘core’) and raises it to the realm of ‘Logos’, of the *conceptual* and, on that account, the ‘*universal*’. *Ideas I*, p. 295.

<sup>20</sup> *SP*, pp. 78, 79. According to what we said in our previous chapter considering the *bound* ideality of expression or of the signifier and the *more free* ideality of the signified or conceptual sense, it is the ideality of the (signified) concept, of the conceptual form – an ideality which is free with regard to all de facto existing constituted languages or idioms – which makes the *concept* indefinitely repeatable or transmissible as the same, and which, thereby, makes it fit for universality, for a medium of universality.

given to intuition. As we will confirm the authority or the imperative of intuition weighs very heavily on Husserl's doctrine of language.

The privilege of phone, of oral and linguistic expression in phenomenology is not a matter of decision or choice that could have been avoided, it is, rather, disclosed by Husserl as what conditions the objectivity of the object itself: the ideality of the object (the geometrical object or any other type of cultural object) can be (intersubjectively) constituted, repeated and expressed only in a medium which will not put in danger the presence of the object before the act of intuition but also will protect self-presence, the absolute proximity of the acts which aim at it to themselves. In the first part of this thesis we saw the risks "truth" makes itself run with the *written* sedimentation of geometry's meaning: Husserl has interpreted the phenomenon of forgetfulness and of crisis, the crisis of mathematical symbolism, as the degradation of full expression, in which sense is present and expressed in its original evidence, into indication, into an empty letter or symbol.<sup>21</sup>

Now Derrida says that expression is a *voluntary* exteriorization because it depends entirely on the free, autonomous and explicit will or intention of a subject who animates his voice in view of the ideal presence of a sense that may remain internal and mute, and because the expressed sense, the *Bedeutung* *does not exist, it is unreal or ideal*, it exists nowhere in the world, even if it does not come from another world either. This ideality or *irreality of Bedeutung* comes into being (within the solitary life of the subject) only by virtue of the subjective acts of repetition: its origin and its being itself depend entirely on the possibility of repetition of a subjective act. The same *Bedeutung*, however, comes into the world at the moment when it is physically uttered in a real communication, when by animating the physical body of expression the act of meaning (*bedeuten*) is united with it and thereby becomes a sensible, empirical existent. It acquires wordly existence, and thereby the function of indication, whenever it is physically incarnated or uttered in order to be heard by another person. As we are going to see, as soon as the *other* (the *alter ego*, as *another* transcendental ego, as *another* absolute origin of the world) appears, the physical side of language, i.e., indicative language, becomes irreducible.

But, on the other hand, this irreality of the purely expressive *Bedeutung* gives, according to Husserl, the assurance that pure expression, the *Geistigkeit* of the breath as voice, does not need to be effectively uttered in the world or to be physically incarnated in the body of speech in order to be what it is, or in order to be present to itself: the self-presence of will (*Geist*), the life-giving act of the silent voice, the spiritual animating act which is first present to itself in the life of its living present before going outside of itself and risk death, factual peril in the body of its

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<sup>21</sup> IOG, p. 92n96.

wordly existence.<sup>22</sup> This silent intention of meaning (*Bedeutungsintention*) for Husserl would be nothing else but the *soul* of language, which for Husserl is always the language of *words*.

Husserl's *teleology*, Derrida tells us, is a *voluntarism*: "*Sense wants to be signified, it is expressed only in a meaning which is nothing other than a wanting to tell itself proper to the presence of sense*" (our emphasis) (SP, p. 35). It is this teleology and voluntarism which also can explain why gestures are not considered by Husserl to be expressions, that is, meaningful signs (*bedeutsame Zeichen*): everything that cannot *itself* be brought to a logical discourse and everything that cannot bring an intentional or noematic sense to the ideality of conceptual and universal form is excluded from the *logical* character of the signifier, from the *universality* of the *conceptual* logos, from language "in the strict sense."<sup>23</sup> Facial expressions, "have properly speaking" Husserl tells us, "no meaning", they do not *want to say* something, because they do not intent, as an act of speech explicitly, consciously and directly does, "to put certain thoughts on record expressively (in *ausdrucklicher Weise*), whether for man himself, in his solitary state, or for others." (LI, §5, p. 275)

Also, if for Husserl expressions, properly speaking, are only those signs which are animated by the spiritual breath or the act of meaning (*bedeuten*), if the *Bedeutung* comes to the sign only by means of the voice, it is because, as Derrida writes, "the *Deutung*, the interpretation, the understanding (or hearing, *l'entente*) of the *Bedeutung*, can never take place outside oral discourse (*Rede*)" (SP, p. 34). From the moment that one identifies *Sinn* (perceptual or cognitive) and *Bedeutung* as being both strictly logical, "nothing that resists the *Deutung* can have sense or be language in the strict sense" (*ibid.*, p. 36). From the fact that I can interpret (*deuten*) a gesture or a facial expression of another person, that I can find something discursive in them, that I can make them "say" something (about his inner thoughts and emotions), we should not conclude that his gestures *express* something: they are only indicative, Husserl says, *involuntary*.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The wordly existence of the human body (as of every corporeal thing), what bounds the phenomenon of the body (its moves and gestures) to perception, to space and visibility, is also what makes the soul which animates it vulnerable to factual disaster. The same with the *soul of language*: "visibility and spatiality as such could only destroy the self-presence of will and spiritual animation which opens up discourse. *They are literally the death of that self-presence*" (SP, p. 35).

<sup>23</sup> *FM*, p. 115, 116-7. We will come back to this. For now let us say only that it is because of this **universality** of the concept and of the *logos* that Husserl will be able to differentiate between two kinds of auto-affection, two kinds interiority and of relation to oneself, between speaking to or hearing oneself and touching oneself.

<sup>24</sup> By saying involuntary we do not mean to say that the movement of the body (*Leib*), of *my body*, of *my hand or finger* is deprived of will, quite the contrary. According to Husserl what characterizes the movement *proper* to the *Leib* is precisely the freedom and immediate spontaneity of the will. See *Ideas II*, § 38 "The Body as organ of the will and as seat of free movement", pp. 159-60. It is only to note that the

manifestations or exteriorizations of his inner experiences, manifestations which are not yet worked over by *Geist*, by his *Bedeutungsintention*, his explicit will to say with words what he means to say – expressly, conceptually, and consciously. It is I, the interpreter, a speaking subject, who brings them to a meaningful speech and thereby *express myself* about them.

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*will to move my body* is not a purely *spiritual* will, i.e., a properly *human* will, like *the will to speak and hear myself speaking*, a properly subjective or human will open to universal signification.



## 2) The Phenomenological Reduction to Inward Speech

The essential distinction, which Husserl draws in the very first paragraph of the first *Logical Investigation*, between indication and expression does not correspond to the distinction between non-linguistic and linguistic signs. Husserl in this investigation is particularly interested in the *logical* function of language and in the boundary that passes from within language itself. If oral discourse is the essential medium of expressivity, if there is no expression or meaning without speech, Husserl stresses that, not everything in oral discourse is expressive. After he has excluded gestures as indicative and non-linguistic signs and as being extrinsic to meaningful speech (§ 5), Husserl comes across a considerable sphere or stratum of the nonexpressive within speech itself (§§ 6,7). This stratum which is not expressive but belongs to language itself, to the effective use of speech, this extrinsic stratum must also be reduced so as to make the element of *logos*, in its pure logicity and in its expressive form itself, to appear free from all indicative contamination. The nature of expression in its pure intentionality and pure spirituality will be revealed to us only if we follow Husserl's practice of the phenomenological reduction which, according to Derrida, opens the transcendental field of language and the solitary mental life of the subject.

According to Derrida the primary interest of Husserl's analysis in *Logical Investigations* of the solitary mental life of the egological subject and the reduction of the sphere of communication, consists in the fact that it announces a) certain themes which will be meticulously and systematically elaborated in the fifth *Cartesian Meditation* as well as b) the double motif of the transcendental reduction (or *epoche*) and of the irreality of the noema.<sup>25</sup> Firstly, Derrida shows that it is precisely the metaphysical attachment of phenomenology to the *theme of presence* that led Husserl to exclude from the expressive phenomena of meaning "as belonging to indication, everything that belongs to the *communication* or *manifestation* (*Kundgabe*) of mental experiences" (SP, p. 37).

The force of Husserl's argument, namely that expression can function as pure expression in the self-presence of solitary speech and as indication in communication, is not to be underestimated. To speak to the other and to hear the other speaking, for Husserl first of all means that between me and the other there is absolute separation, the irreducible distance of

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<sup>25</sup> SP, pp. 39, 47, and *On Touching*, p. 229.

absolute origins.<sup>26</sup> Between my primordial world, the world as it appears for me (i.e., for an ego in general), and the world of the other (the other as *alter ego*, as *another absolute origin of the world*) there is no relation and no commensurability: what is proper to the *alter ego* can never be accessible, *as such*, to me and to my originary *presentative* intuition, but only to what Husserl calls an “analogical appresentation.” To present the irreducibly indicative character of the manifestation of the other’s lived experiences in speech, as it is argued by Husserl in the first *Logical Investigation*, Derrida will have recourse to the fifth *Cartesian Meditation* where Husserl elaborates on the theme of analogical and mediate ap-presentation as what constitutes intersubjectivity and the relation with the other. “Outside the transcendental monadic sphere of what is my own (*mir eigenes*), the ownness of my own (*Eigenheit*), my own self-presence. I only have relations of *analogical appresentation, of mediate and potential intentionality*, with the other’s ownness, with the self-presence of the other; its primordial presentation is closed to me.” (SP, p. 39) The most central affirmation of the 5<sup>th</sup> *Meditation* concerning the radical separation of the absolute origins can be found already in Husserl’s first *Investigation* with regard to what happens in a real colloquy between two (finite) egos, the speaker and the hearer:

The hearer perceives the manifestation (*Kundgabe*) in the same sense in which he perceives the manifesting person – even though the mental phenomena which make him a person cannot fall, for what they are, in the intuitive grasp (*Anschauung*) of the another. [...] The hearer perceives the speaker as expressing certain inner experiences (*Erlebnisse äussert*), and to that extent he also perceives these experiences themselves: *he does not, however, himself experience them (er selbst erlebt sie nicht)*, he has not an “inner” but an “outer” percept of them. Here we have the big difference between the real grasp of what is in adequate intuition, and the putative grasp of what is on the basis of inadequate, though intuitive, presentation (*anschaulichen aber inadäqueten Vorstellung*). LI, §7, p. 278.

What in effect happens when I am involved in real communication? If my intention is to be heard and, indeed, understood by the other everything in my speech which manifests (*Kundgabe*) a lived experience to him must necessarily pass through the *physical side*, the sensible body of my expressions. This necessary detour, this mediation, marks, according to Husserl, every communication, as communication of (egological) consciousnesses or presences, with an irreducible indicative function.

Even if I (an ego in general) have an immediate intuition or perception of the other’s body, gestures, words, I will never have a primordial and immediate intuition of the other’s lived experiences “in person”; I will never be able to have an intuition of the sense-giving acts by

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<sup>26</sup> According to Derrida, Husserl and Levinas are very close here: as for Levinas, for Husserl also, seeing the other and the glance by itself does not *respect* the other. I cannot and will never have primordial intuition or perception of the other’s lived experiences. This is why for Levinas the *face* of the other is not only his gaze but the primordial unity of gaze and speech: the other does not simply look at me, he can also speak to me, listen to understand and, eventually, command me. *Violence and Metaphysics*, pp. 98, 100. We’ll come back to it

which he animates his voice in order to make manifest to me a content (*Bedeutung*) which is actually and immediately present only to him (to an inner intuition or perception) in the same instant that he expresses it. The lived experiences of the other are made known (*Kundnahme*) to me only insofar as they are mediated by the physical incorporation of his living and actual *bedeuten*, by the body of his speech which is in the world. As soon as *the other* appears the manifesting function of speech as indicative function, i.e., the relation to the other through the *delegation* or *representation* of indicative signs, cannot be reduced. This is why the expressions of the other in their function of *Kundgabe*, can certainly be understood but can render nothing manifest to me, if by manifest we mean evident, originally presented “in person”. A *Kundgabe* can only announce what it necessarily conceals or dissimulates, namely the other’s lived experiences, the subjective face of his experiences such as he has lived them. (SP, p. 40)

The irreducibility of the *Kundgabe* function in communication, as it is argued in *Logical Investigations*, will be reaffirmed in the fifth *Cartesian Meditation* as the irreducibly mediate nature of the intentionality aiming at the other as other. What Husserl calls “analogical ap-presentation” not only forbids an analogical reduction of the other to “the same”, to a real moment of my life, it also recognizes and respects the unsurpassable necessity of mediation. “It is evident”, Derrida writes in *Violence and Metaphysics*, “by an essential, absolute and definitive self-evidence [a strange evidence, to be sure, but one that, according to Derrida, only phenomenology can bring to light] that the other as transcendental other (other absolute origin and other zero point in the orientation of the world), can never be given to me in an original way and in person, but only through analogical ap-presentation.”<sup>27</sup> We shall refer later to this strange and unique phenomenological evidence in which the alterity of the other appears *as such*, an evidence which permits the recognition of the radical separation of absolute origins: I cannot approach the other immediately and silently<sup>28</sup>, in communion with his lived experiences, without going through the mediation or representation of his indicative signs. If I attained to the other originally and immediately, if what belongs to the other’s *ownness* (*Eigenheit*), what is proper to the other’s lived experiences was directly accessible to me the other would cease to be other, and I myself and he himself would be the same. This is, however, an absolute impossibility.<sup>29</sup>

But this mediation of the physical side of speech (of its corporeal exteriority), which is irreducible in real communication and which involves every expression in an indicative operation, seems not to be necessary in inward speech, in the interior monologue of the ego. In

<sup>27</sup> VM, p. 124.

<sup>28</sup> This would be the first gesture of violence, for Husserl as for Levinas.

<sup>29</sup> CM, §50, p. 109.

solitary mental life, when I speak to myself I do not pass (because I do *not have* to pass) through this mediation: the immediate and full *presence* of what is signified, the pure transparency of what I want to say with my expression is not concealed for me as it is for the other in the opaqueness of the signifier's body, beneath the surface of my speech.

Derrida recognizes the *core* of Husserl's analysis of *indication* in the nonplenitude or non-self presence of the act of meaning: whenever the *Bedeutungsintention*, the (living and life-giving) act which confers meaning to an expression, is not fully present to itself and to its content (or signified *Bedeutung*), expression is contaminated by indication. "The notion of presence", Derrida writes, "is at the core of this demonstration. If communication or manifestation (*Gundgabe*) is essentially indicative this is *because* we have no primordial intuition of the presence of the other's lived experiences. Whenever the immediate and full presence of the signified is concealed, the signifier will be of indicative nature" (SP, p. 40).

So to suspend the manifesting or indicative function of language and to reach, thereby, pure expression, Husserl has to exclude communication and the relation with the other. Now the phenomenological reduction to the solitary mental life, according to Husserl, accomplishes precisely this: solitary discourse retains the essence of speech, its expressive function, while dropping its communicative function, i.e., its indicative veil. In the interior monologue, in the interior life of the subject the ap-presentational detour is no longer necessary, the ego does not have to pass through the mediation of the other's signs, the manifesting function of signification is absent. In silent discourse there is no indication because *there is no communication*, and there is no communication because *there is no other, no alter ego in me*. I indicate nothing to my self, because I communicate nothing to myself, because my experiences are immediately *self-present*, because they are, as Husserl writes a little further on, *lived by me "in the same instant (im selben Augenblick.)"* (LI, I, §8)

Let us follow Husserl in this phenomenological reduction to the inward speech of solitary life: from within my interiority the indicative function of my words in communication will appear as an extrinsic stratum superimposed upon the stratum of pure expression, the stratum of meaning, of my pure intention to say something meaningful. Husserl opening the section §8 *Expressions in solitary life* writes:

So far we have considered expressions in their communicative function, [...] *but expressions also play a large role in uncommunicated, life of the soul* (im Verkehr nicht mitteilenden *Seelenleben*). This change of function plainly has nothing to do with whatever makes an expression an expression. Expressions continue to have meanings (*Bedeutungen*) as they had before, and the same meanings as in dialogue. A word only ceases to be a word when our interest is directed at the sensible, when it becomes a mere sound formation (*Lautgebilde*.) But when we *live* in the *understanding* of the word, it expresses

something and the same thing, whether we address it to anyone or not. It seems clear, therefore, that an expression's meaning (*Bedeutung des Ausdrucks*) [...] cannot coincide with its activities of manifestation (*kundgebenden*). LI, §8, pp. 278-79

What is for Husserl the “first advantage” from this reduction to interior mental life? The sensible, and physical aspect of language, the *Lautgebilde* of words, the corporeal exteriority of words, without which every communication with the other would be simply impossible, can very well be reduced whenever in speaking to myself I can hear and understand myself without having to pass through the exterior surface of my words. Even if I do not physically utter them, even if I do not move my lips or tongue, my words, to the extent that they are “heard” by me in the present moment, are *full* with meaning and absolutely *alive*. And even if this need not happen *in fact*, it belongs to the *teleological structure* of this speech act that, when I speak to myself I hear myself, i.e., I understand my own expressive intention, what I want or mean to say. As we shall see when we come to consider the phenomenological value of the voice and its superiority over other signifying substances, this operation of *hearing- myself- speaking*, as the experience of the effacement of the *exterior corporeality of the signifier in my voice*, is an absolutely unique experience, “an *auto-affection of a unique kind*”, in which I do not have to pass beyond myself, beyond the monadic sphere of what is absolutely my own, in order to affect, speak to and hear myself.

Now if the physical event of language, this irreducible mediation of the sonorous substance of the voice through which the other must necessarily pass in an intersubjective, real communication, appears to be absent in the case of inward speech, does this mean that when I speak to myself I communicate nothing to myself? Are the *Kundgabe* and *Kundnahme* functions of indicative language, i.e., of language involved in communication, suspended? Husserl asks “Shall we say that, even in solitary mental life, one still uses expressions to manifest something (*Ausdruck etwas kundgeben*), though not to a second person? Shall one say that in soliloquy one speaks to oneself, and employs words as signs (*Zeichen*), i.e., as indications (*Anzeichen*) of one's own experiences? *I cannot think such a view acceptable*” (our emphasis) (LI, §8, p. 279)

Husserl's argumentation, according to Derrida, is absolutely decisive here. The whole theory of signification introduced in the first chapter, the rigorous separation between indication and expression, would be fundamentally compromised if the words I use in inward speech still functioned as indications for me, if the *Kundgabe* function of language, which is irreducible in real communication, could not be reduced or effaced in the sphere of my own lived experiences – “in short, if the ideal or absolute solitude of subjectivity ‘proper’ still needed indications to constitute its own relation to itself” (SP, p. 42).

At this point of his argument, and in order to secure the hypothesis of non-communication, of absence of indications, i.e., of signs, in the interior monologue, Husserl describes the radical heterogeneity between the two modifications of reference (or substitution), whose dissociation has been introduced in the very first paragraph of his investigation: the expressive reference (*Hinzeigen*) of the sign and the indicative reference (*Anzeigen*) of the sign. But what is a sign? Husserl writes “Every sign is a sign for something (*für etwas*)”, in order then, to immediately add in the same sentence the distinction between indication and expression, “but not every sign has ‘meaning’, a ‘sense’ that the sign ‘expresses’” (LI, §1) But what does “für etwas” mean? What “being in the place of” in general signifies, or again what is a sign (*Zeichen*) in general? Husserl does not ask these questions.<sup>30</sup> He seems to avoid them and several paragraphs later he proceeds, supposing that we implicitly know what “being-for” in general means, supposing that we are already familiar with the structure of substitution or reference, to demonstrate the difference between “being-for” as *Hinzeigen* and “being-for” as *Anzeigen*.

If “words function as signs here [in soliloquy] as they do everywhere else”, if “everywhere they can be said to show or point to something (*Hinzeigen*),” then, Husserl writes, in the silent monologue “the showing or pointing (*Hinzeigen*) is not an *Anzeigen*”, for, in speaking silently to myself the passage from my expression (which, according to Husserl, consists of *vorgestellt* words and not of *existing* or *wirklich* words) to my sense-giving acts is absolutely transparent, absolutely immediate and certain: it is not mediated by empirically existent or real words. Whereas in real communication the other’s expression gives way to indication (*Anzeigen*), since the *existence* of his experiences can only be known or indicated to me, though without any evidence at all, through real and *existing* signifiers or words. The notions of existence and of reality (*Dasein*, *existieren*, *Realität*) which we referred to before (with regard to the indicative showing as *Weisen* in the *Beweis*) are also very important at this point of Husserl’s argumentation: for as Husserl himself writes “an indication is always an existent (*daseiend*). This holds also of expressions used in communication, *but not of expressions used in soliloquy*” (our emphasis) (LI, §8, p. 279).

Solitary discourse then, which dispenses with the wordly existence of signs, seems to retain the essence of speech, its expressive purity, while losing its communicative or indicative function: the sense content or *Bedeutung* of inner speech as it is lived by the speaking subject has

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<sup>30</sup> Or what is the relation between *Zeichen* and *Zeigen*, what is *showing* (*Zeigen*) in general before its dissociation into *Hinzeigen* and *Anzeigen*? “If showing is the unity of gestures and perception in signs, if signification is assigned to the pointing finger and the eye” (SP, p. 72), every sign, expressive or indicative, linguistic or nonlinguistic, shows or points with the finger, Derrida says, to the invisible, to what is *provisionally* invisible, to what is not *yet* present in its visibility to be seen, to a deferred but also anticipated, through the detour of the sign, missing presence.

no need to be indicated (*Anzeigen*) to itself since it is *immediately* present to itself and evident, i.e., absolutely certain.

The reduction to uncommunicated, interior and solitary life of the soul which isolates the silent *Bedeutungsintention*, the subjective experience of meaning or of wanting-to-say-something as the sphere of inner and absolute existence, the sphere of absolute certainty, is in effect, Derrida says, a transcendental reduction, “a putting of empirical *wordly existence* between brackets.”<sup>31</sup> The voice of the subject in its spiritual flesh (*geistige Leiblichkeit*), what Husserl calls the *Bedeutungsintention*, is the being which is present to itself and to what it says, the being that continues to speak and hear itself, i.e., to be present to itself, after the absence or radical transformation of the world, that is, after the complete “imaginary variation” of empirical existence or factuality, in our case, of the existent, wordly, and contingent signifiers.

According to Derrida, even if Husserl in *Logical Investigations* conducts his description and the analysis of the phenomenon of expression within the realm of the psychic (the *wordly* region called *psyche*) rather than the transcendental<sup>32</sup>, he nonetheless distinguishes, speaking of the phenomenon of pure, inward expression (the phenomenon of silent *vouloir-dire*) as *Phantasievorstellung*, the essential, intentional moments of a transcendental structure, the archi-structure (*Ur-Structure*) that will be delineated and described twelve years later in *Ideas I*, and under the surveillance of a renewed and vigorous transcendental reduction. And, in particular, in §124, the paragraph which Derrida discusses in detail in his *Form and Meaning*, Husserl describes the originality and the organization of the expressive stratum of language (the *bedeuten-Bedeutung* correlation) according to the noetico-noematic structure of experience. This is also what Husserl describes in the first Investigation (in a paragraph that we shall quote in full in a moment): the experience of pure, inward expression, even if it is an experience of an entity which is *in* the world, suspends the existential thesis of the world, it is a nonwordly or transcendental

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<sup>31</sup> SP, p. 43. We have already noted, in our reading of Derrida’s *Introduction to the Origin of Geometry*, and with regard to the eidetic intangibility of geometrical ideality and its history, the decisive role that is reserved in the method of the reactivating reduction to imagination and fiction: “the vital element of phenomenology and of all eidetic sciences, writes Husserl in *Ideas I* (§ 70). Similarly, in *Ideas I* §49, Husserl reveals the essence of intentional, transcendental consciousness only after he has employed a certain type of fiction: the reduction or annihilation of the totality of the existing world. I can empty all empirical content, I can imagine an absolute overthrow of the content of every possible experience, but the very sense of consciousness, as the absolute origin of the world, would remain intangible. The clearest intention of this fiction, according to Derrida, is to demonstrate the eidetic intangibility of consciousness as the *Ur-region*: since pure consciousness can always with complete freedom suspend the thesis of all contingent **existence** and of all contingent transcendence its very sense is *de jure* and absolutely independent of the whole world. (IOG, p. 96) See also Paul Riceour, *A Key to Edmund Husserl’s Ideas I*, Marquette University Press, 1996, pp. 68, 147

<sup>32</sup> SP, pp. 11-13, 33, especially p. 47. See also Bernet, *Introduction to Husserl’s Phenomenology*, pp. 60, 90, and Levinas’s *Theory of Intuition*, p. 54.

experience, it does not belong to reality (*Realität*), and even if the *Bedeutungsintention*, the intentional or *noetic* moment of this experience, is a real (*reell* and not *real*) component of consciousness, the *noema* (the expressive *Bedeutung*) does not *really* (*reell*) belong to it. These subtle phenomenological differences – the differences between the “*real*”, the “*reell*” and the “*irreell*” moments of experience which define, in *Ideas I*, the concept of the noema – have already taken shape, according to Derrida, in the first of the *Logical Investigations* in Husserl’s description of pure expression as *Phantasievorstellung*.

Before we proceed to the clarification of these differences in order to bring forward the *irreality* of inner discourse, let us note that, according to Derrida, the clearest intention of this reduction of the *Factum* of language, not only of every *de facto* constituted language, but of the fact of constituted language in general, is to return to the primordially of the speaking subject, to the primordially of his will, of his voice, i.e., of his *Bedeutungsintention* without which no discourse and no language would ever be possible. As we saw in our reading of Derrida’s Introduction to the *Origin of Geometry*, “The question is simply to parenthesize constituted language, which is what Husserl continues to do in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* and in the *Origin*, in order, subsequently, to let the originality of *constitutive* language come to light.”<sup>33</sup> The essential condition of inner and outward expression is not the mundane, contingent signifier, the existent and physical body of the word, but only this pure act of the animating intention, the act of will which can do without this body (which in its ideal form, as constituted language, is bound to a determined historical community of speaking subjects<sup>34</sup>) and can therefore remain physically silent. This silent voice or *Bedeutungsintention* is supposed then to be independent even from the sensible and animated “proper body” [*Leib*] of language.<sup>35</sup>

Now, to return to what Husserl actually says in the first Investigation, in solitary mental life we no longer use “real (*wirklich*) words” but only “*vorgestellt*”, represented or *imagined* words (LI, §8, p. 279). The whole of Husserl’s argumentation with regard the rigorous distinction between expression and indication depends entirely on the status of this representation (of *Phantasievorstellung*, but also of *Vergegenwärtigung* and of *Repräsentation*) that he is willing to concede to inward language and speech, i.e., to the inner sphere of subjective experience. When I speak to myself my words can appear in my **imagination** (*Phantasie*). In order to speak to myself, in order to hear my voice and understand what it says, I do not have to use real words, I do not need the empirical occurrence of the word, I am indifferent to its existence or non-

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<sup>33</sup> *IOG*, p. 78.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67, 70.

<sup>35</sup> *Form and Meaning*, p. 113.



existence, “the word’s non-existence (*Nicht-Existenz*) neither disturbs nor interests [me]”, says Husserl (LI, *ibid.*).

Obviously this is not the case in the **real and actual communication** of lived experiences, in the communication of the other’s lived experiences where real (*wirklich*) words, the verbal sound of the utterances of the other in a *here-and-now*, and their sensible existence in the world, are necessarily implied in the phenomenon of perception itself, i.e., of hearing the other speak. When I listen to the other I have an immediate intuition of his words, his body and gestures, but I do not have an intuition of his sense-giving acts which animate the body of his speech and make it meaningful. These acts are immediately present only to his own (inner) intuition and forever indicated to me, that is, hidden for me under the sensible surface of his words. But when I speak with my self I do not have to go through any exterior, indicative detour, I content myself with the image of the word, with simply imagining the word.

Derrida devotes some very important paragraphs to this difference between, on the one hand, the *perception* or primordial presentation (*Gegenwärtigung, Präsentation*) of the word, and real presence of the word in effective communication, and on the other hand, the *imagination* of the word, ideal presence in the representation of the word as *Phantasievorstellung*.

First of all, we should say that for Husserl perception and imagination are lived experiences, intentional-noetic acts. Considering now the perception (or the imagination) of the word as lived experience, we must make a distinction between the *lived* appearing (*apparaître vécu*) of the word and the word’s sensible appearing (*sensible apparaissant*), in order to avoid, as Derrida notes, the worst and most prevalent confusions. (SP, p. 44) The real word, the existent word (spoken or written) which *is in the world* belongs to a radically different order from that of the *phenomenon* of the word, from the lived experience or appearing (either in perception or in imagination) of the word, from the order of the word’s being perceived (or imagined) by any consciousness whatever.

Now in perception, which for phenomenology is the *Ur-Erlebnisse*, the absolute origin or primary source of all other intuitive acts of consciousness, in the phenomenon of the perception (in the hearing or seeing) of the word reference is necessarily made to the *existence* of the word. In the perception of the word the listener is present in a real communication where the speaker utters real (*wirklich*) and existing words with the intention to be heard and understood. The existence of the word, however, belongs to a different and radically heterogeneous order from that of the lived experience of its perception. In this lived experience we must distinguish, according to Husserl (*Ideas I*, §§85, 97) between the *hyle*, the sense-data of hearing or seeing, the

sphere of pure *passivity*, from the *noetic-noematic* structure, which is the *intentional* moment of transcendental experience.

According to Derrida Saussure was not as cautious as Husserl. Saussure in his *Course in General Linguistics*, and at the point where it was a question of determining the spoken *word* (the atomic unity of sound and sense) as the object of linguistics, was also attentive to the distinction between, on the one hand, the real, objective word which is in the world and, on the other hand, the image of the word, the impression that it makes on our senses, the psychic imprint of the word, what he called the “sound image”. It is the sound-image that Saussure calls signifier, keeping the “signified” not for the thing or referent, since the latter has been immediately reduced by the act and the ideality of language, but for the “concept”, for what Husserl calls *Bedeutung*.<sup>36</sup> “The linguistic sign unites not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound image. The latter is not the material sound, a purely physical thing, but the psychic *imprint* of the sound, the impression that it makes on our senses.”<sup>37</sup> But according to Derrida, Saussure, following a classical psychology of the imagination, saw the originality of this imprint, or sound-*image* in its being an internal *reality* coping an external one. “For such psychology, the image is a picture sign whose *reality* (whether it be physical or mental) would serve to indicate the imagined object” (SP, p. 45). For Husserl, by contrast, the sound-image, being the intentional object or sense of the perception (hearing) of the word, the *noematic* correlate of the lived experience of perception, the *noema* of perception, is not a reality (*Realität*) duplicating another reality, it does not really belong either to the world or to lived experience.

The *hyle*, the sense-data (*Empfindungsdaten*) of the hearing of the sound, the *Abschattungen* of the objective sound, is a lived experience.<sup>38</sup> The hyletic level of consciousness is constituted by what Husserl calls *sensations* in the case of perception (presentation), and by what he calls *phantasms* in the case of memory or imagination (re-presentation)<sup>39</sup>. Now according to Husserl, the *hyle* (the *nonintentional* and passive moment of experience without which consciousness would have nothing but itself to receive) and the *noesis* (the *intentional* moment, the animating act which gives *noema* and *form* to the hyletic data) are *reell* but not real (*real*) components of lived experience. And the noematic correlative of this intentional act of perception, the content of the image is a non-*reell* component of lived experience.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> “We propose to keep the term sign to designate the whole, but to replace *concept* and *sound-image* respectively by *signified* and *signifier*.” Saussure, Ferdinand, *Course in General Linguistics*, tr. Roy Harris, Chicago, Open Court, 1986, p. 67.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>38</sup> *Ideas I*, §41, pp. 87-9. See also Levinas’s *Theory of Intuition*, pp. 38,70.

<sup>39</sup> *Ideas I*, §§41, 85, and for the difference between “sensations” and “phantasms” §112, p263.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, §§85, 97.

Now the core unity of the *noema* – i.e., the word's appearing (*l'apparaître du mot*) and not the reality of the word, the appearing word (*le mot apparaissant*) in the world (spoken or written) – can be intended according to different acts of intuition and various intentional modes: the image of the word, being an intentional *noema*, can be intended and attained in its distinctness and in all its characteristics not only in perception and memory but also, and more significantly, in imagination. But this intentional *noema*, in its irreality, is not and cannot be attained as such by, or in, one, single, and unique act of perception or imagination. The *noema*, the word's appearing *as such*, supposes an open horizon and the breakthrough toward the infinite of an "again and again" (*immer wieder*). What is important for the *noema*, what constitutes it in its ideality or irreality, is not the type of the intuitive acts which strives to attain it, perception or imagination, but the possibility of its repetition *ad infinitum*. It can, therefore, only be the correlate of indefinite acts of repetition, thanks to which the *same* (image or *noema*) will appear in and through absolutely different acts and moments. The *noema* must be iterable, i.e., infinitely repeatable as the same, in the absolute absence of any *determined, here and now* factual act and event which attain it. As Derrida writes "the *power* of repetition that opens up ideality [here the ideality or irreality of the *noema*] and the *power* which liberates the imaginative reproduction of empirical perception cannot be foreign to each other; nor their products" (SP, p. 55). This is precisely the irreality, the essentially repetitive structure of the *noema* which, as we are going to see frequently in Derrida, indefinitely divides and defers presence, the presence of the *noema* to a lived experience (to perception or to imagination) and the presence or proximity of the lived experience to itself; the structure which opens up *presence*, i.e., *living*, the lived experience of *noema*, to *differance*, i.e., to the processes of the trace, writing, expropriation and death.

Why is Husserl, in this reduction to the interior life of the speaking subject, not content with the perception of the word? Why does he need the imagination of the world, if the essential and phenomenological difference between the existing word and the being-perceived of the word is already at work in the lived experience of perception? It is because, as we have seen, in the phenomenon of perception, in the intentional sense of perception (or hearing, which in our case takes place between two alter egos) reference is necessarily made to the reality and the existence of the word, whereas in the phenomenon of pure inward expression, which is described by Husserl as the imaginative representation (*Phantasievorstellung*) of the word, any such reference is totally absent. This is why imagination and fiction acquire a primary position over perception with regard to the phenomenological reflection and method. (*Ideas I*, §§ 4, 70, )

According to Husserl, imagination (*Phantasie*), in contradistinction with the other two intuitive acts of perception and memory which are positing acts (they posit the existence of what is so perceived or remembered)<sup>41</sup>, is a *neutralizing* act, and the *image* is not a positional but a neutralizing representation (*Vergegenwärtigung*), it neutralizes the *wordly* and *factual* existence of the word. This is why imagination offers to the phenomenological reduction to solitary mental life, as Derrida says, “its privileged medium.” Husserl writes in the first *Logical Investigation*:

... [with] expressions used in soliloquy, we are in general content with *represented* (*vorgestellt*) rather than with *real* words. In imagination a spoken or written word floats before us, though in truth it has no existence. We should not, however, **confuse** imaginative representations (*Phantasievorstellungen*), and **still less** the image contents they rest on, with their imagined objects. The imagined verbal sound, or the imagined printed word, **does not exist**, only its imaginative representation does so. The difference is the difference between imagined centaurus and the imagination of these things. *The word's nonexistence neither disturbs nor interests us, since it leaves the word's expressive function unaffected*” (my emphasis) (LI, §8, p. 279)

In the phenomenon of solitary discourse (whose expressive purity Husserl wants above all to bring to light) the speaking subject does not need real words, he is indifferent to the existence or not existence of the word; the existence of the word is not implied in the phenomenon of imaginative representation (*Phantasievorstellung*), not even by virtue of its intentional sense. There exists only the act of the imagination of the word, whose existence, for the subject who lives in it, cannot but be absolute and absolutely indubitable. In the interior monologue then *nonexistent* signs show or point to (in the sense of *Hinzeigen* and not of *Anzeigen*) *Bedeutungen* which are also nonexistent or irreal and absolutely *certain*, since they are present to an inner intuition. We attain then to the subjective experience of solitary, uncommunicated discourse only by means of a phenomenological reduction. Once we have reached this inward speech, the voice which hears itself speaking, no transcendental reduction is possible. The reduction to inward speech, Derrida writes “is already a phenomenological reduction which isolates the subjective experience as the sphere of absolute certainty and absolute

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<sup>41</sup> With memory, where a past perception appears in the lived experience of remembering, pure consciousness cannot be freed from the positing of factual existence: by contrast to the image, memory is a positional re-presentation. As Derrida writes in a very important footnote concerning, once again, some essential distinctions which constitute “the very possibility of phenomenology” and on whose basis Husserl will criticize a classical, prephenomenological psychology of the imagination: “The original phenomenological data that Husserl thus wants to respect lead him to posit an absolute heterogeneity between perception or primordial presentation (*Gegenwärtigung*, *Präsentation*) and re-presentation or representative re-production, also translated as presentification (*Vergegenwärtigung*). Memory, images and signs are representations in this sense.” To this distinction “we must add that between positional [*setzende*] re-presentation, which posits the having-been-present in memory, and the imaginary re-presentation [*Phantasie-Vergegenwärtigung*], which is neutral in that respect” (SP, p. 45n). Everything in Husserl’s critique of psychology depends on the possibility or validity of the above distinctions.

existence. This absolute existence only appears by reducing the relative existence of the transcendent world” (SP, p. 44).

The reduction to solitary mental life, then, or to the absolute existence of inward speech as imaginative representation (*Phantasievorstellung*), free from all wordly existence or empirical factuality, is the move by which, according to Derrida, the phenomenologist will attain to pure transcendental consciousness as *Bedeutungsintention*, as the pure intention to say something meaningful, without the mediation of existent signs. The subjective experience of speaking to myself, however, the experience of solitary discourse, which is revealed only after the phenomenological reduction, is the most differentiated structure: firstly, it does not belong to reality (*Realität*), it is a transcendental experience. In this experience, what Husserl calls *noesis* as well as the *hyle-morphe* structure are real (*reell* and not *real*) components of experience but the *noema* does not really (*reell*) belong to this subjective lived experience.<sup>42</sup> Not only, then, does the imagination of the word belong to a radically different order from that of the real, existent word, but the image of the word (its *noema*) exists even less than the act of imagination. Whereas *noesis* (the noetic act of imagination) belongs to intentional consciousness, the *noema* (which is equally intentional as the *noesis*) **does not really (reell) belong to it**. It is included but not really included in the phenomenological life (*Erlebnis*) of consciousness: the noema is neither a subject (or a really inherent moment of the subject) nor an object (a real transcendence), since it is the objects’s Objectivity, the appearing (*apparaître*) of the object *as such* for a consciousness. Derrida writes in *Genesis and Structure* about this “difficult and decisive theme” concerning the noema’s being non-really included in consciousness (the *Ur-Region*):

Noesis and noema, the intentional moments of the structure [of transcendental experience], can be distinguished in that the noema does not belong to consciousness in a *real* way. *Within* consciousness in general there is an agency which *does not really* belong to it. ... Noema, which is the objectivity of the object, the sense and the “as such” of the thing for consciousness, is neither the determined thing itself in its untamed existence (whose appearing the noema precisely is), nor it is a properly subjective moment, a “really” [*reell*] subjective moment, since it is indubitably given as an object for consciousness. It is neither of the world nor of consciousness, but it is the world, or something of the world for consciousness.<sup>43</sup>

Derrida will often return in his later work to Husserl’s “surprising and forceful” analysis of the irregionality of the noema, to the “anarchy”<sup>44</sup> of the noema cut off from consciousness as the *Ur-region*, the ultimate authority, the absolute *arche*. Unlike the other moments of *hyle*, *morphe* and *noesis* which belong or pertain to consciousness, the *noema* can appear and can be

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<sup>42</sup> See *Ideas I*, Part Three, Chapter Three §88 and especially Chapter Four, §97, “*The Hyletic and Noematic Moments as Really Inherent Moments, the Noematic Moments as Really Non-inherent Moments, of Lived Experiences*” pp. 236-240, and §124 “*The Noetic-Noematic Stratum of ‘Logos.’ Meaning and Meaning Something*”, pp. 294-297.

<sup>43</sup> GSP, p.163, see also IOG, pp. 66n, 144.

<sup>44</sup> GSP, p. 163.

phenomenalized, by really pertaining neither to the appearing thing nor to the stuff of my lived experience (*Erlebnis*). According to Derrida, “such is the law of *phainesthai*”<sup>45</sup>: this real nonappurtenance to any region at all, even to the archi-region, this *anarchy* of the *noema*, whose possibility would put automatically to work the processes of *indication*, of *exappropriation* and of *death* in the very *inside* of the lived experience of the *noema*, this real anarchy then is, at the same time, the root and the very “condition of any experience, any objectivity, any phenomenality, namely of any noetico-noematic correlation, whether originary or modified.”<sup>46</sup>

From the very first publications of *Genesis Structure and Phenomenology* and the *Introduction to the Origin to Speech and Phenomena, Of Grammatology* and up to *Specters of Marx* and *On Touching*, Derrida will not stop measuring the consequences and the deconstructive force of the Husserlian “discovery” and thematization of this nonreal inclusion of noemata in the phenomenological life (*Erlebnis*) of consciousness. According to Derrida, if one follows Husserl’s descriptions of this anarchic interruption at the heart of the lived experience, one would find oneself in a zone where phenomenology without being powerless or disqualified meets the strongest resistance against the authority of its principle of principles, the absolute authority of its intuitionistic principle of principles, namely, that of the immediate presence of the expressed *Bedeutung* to the act of pure expression (as *Fantasievostellung*).

Without, however, neglecting or underestimating the novelty and radicality of the phenomenological description of images (as intentional *noemata*), we should note that, as Derrida writes already in his *Introduction to the Origin of Geometry*<sup>47</sup>, the status of imagination in Husserl’s work remains rather ambiguous: *On the one hand*, Husserl’s analysis of the image (it is unreal, neither reel nor real) profoundly renewed the question of imagination: the power of imagination which frees the ideality of the image (here, of the word) from pure sensible *reality* and from empirical *perception*, and the power of repetition that opens ideality, the ideality of *Bedeutung*, of the *noema*, and of the ideal object in general, are not strange to each other.

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<sup>45</sup> *On Touching*, p. 229.

<sup>46</sup> Derrida, Jacques, *Specters of Marx, The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International*, translated by Peggy Kamuf, Routledge, New York, 1994, p. 189. And Derrida continues in the same footnote, “Without the non-real inclusion of this intentional component (therefore inclusive and non-inclusive inclusion: the noema is included *without being a part*), one could not speak of manifestation, of any phenomenality in general (that being-for-a-consciousness, that appearing appearance which is neither consciousness nor the being that appears to it.) Is not such an ‘irreality’, *its independence both* in relation to the world *and* in relation to the *real* stuff of egological subjectivity, the very place of apparition, the essential, general, non-regional possibility of the specter? *Is it not also what inscribes the possibility of the other and of mourning right into the phenomenality of the phenomenon?*”

<sup>47</sup> IOG, p. 125n.

But, *on the other hand*, as Derrida stresses, Husserl also reduces imagination by describing it as a merely reproductive and derived ability. He reduces imagination (but also, at the same moment, the power of repetition) to the extent to which the image refers still to an origin or to an originary perceptive intuition. As Husserl's analyses and descriptions make clear, in particular in *Ideas I* (§111), the image in phantasy is not a pure neutralization: it is classified, like memory, as re-presentation (*Vergegenwärtigung*), i.e., as the *re*-production of a full and simple presentation (*Gegenwärtigung*), the reproduction of a primordial perception, even if the product of this re-presentation is a purely *fictitious* object (for example, the imagined centaurs). Better, imagination does not lose its neutralizing function, rather – and this how Husserl can show that the irreality of the essence or *eidos* (the *eidos* horse) attained through the neutralizing imaginary variation is not fictitious<sup>48</sup> – it applies it to memory: imagination neutralizes a *positional* re-presentation, i.e., a re-presentation which *posits* the *having-being-present* in memory. But by retaining a primary reference to a primordial presentation or perception, Husserl makes imagination a derived and founded re-presentation, a representative re-production of a full and simple presentation.

These essential distinctions, the *distinction* between perception or primordial presentation (*Gegenwärtigung* or *Präsentation*) and imagination (*Phantasievorstellung* as *neutralizing* representation, as *Ver-gegenwärtigung*), and the *distinction* between the lived appearing of the image of the word (an appearing that is no more sonorous than luminous, since it is indifferent to the existence of the word and, therefore, to whether the word is spoken or printed) and the sensible appearing of the word, is, as Derrida writes, the indispensable instrument for a *critique* of a classical psychology of the imagination and of the sign. With the critique of classical psychology, phenomenology overcomes the naturalization of the psychic and the naturalistic opposition between “internal” and “external” experience.<sup>49</sup> “But can't one accept the necessity of this critique of naïve psychology only up to a point” (SP, p. 45n)? For the reason that, as Derrida writes, phenomenology is also an accomplice of this classical psychology: to the extent that Husserl posits an absolute heterogeneity between perception and imagination and believes that a pure and primordial presentation is *possible* and given *in the original*, he reduces or derives imagination from primordial perception (*Gegenwärtigung*, *Präsentation*). To the extent that Husserl maintains this difference, the difference between intuitive perception or presentation of

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<sup>48</sup> This is the Husserlian thesis of the **non-fictive irreality** of *eidos* about which Derrida wrote also in *IOG*: “an irreality which is *nothing other than* the sense and possibility of factual reality to which it is always related, immediately or not, as the rigorous prescription of the *eidos*' essential mode of appearing.” (p. 144)

<sup>49</sup> *Of Grammatology*, p. 64

the real word in real communication and the ideal presence of the word in imaginary representation (*Phantasievorstellung*), in order to legitimise and secure the rigour of the distinction between indication and expression, phenomenology does not break with the psychology of intuitive consciousness and thereby reaffirms its attachment to the metaphysics of presence.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 40.



### 3) The Ideality of Speech: Presence and Repetition

According to Derrida, the metaphysical attachment of phenomenology, its complicity to the metaphysics of presence is evidenced in the very last paragraph of (§8) “Expressions in solitary mental life (*Ausdrücke in einsamen Seelenleben*)”, where Husserl gathers the entire thrust of his argument about the essential distinction between expression and indication and about the status of representation pertaining to them. The reduction to soliloquy, to the inward speech of the solitary subject is necessary for Husserl in order to isolate and define the pure function of expression and meaning, and, thereby, pure logicity. As we said, the pure function of expression (which is indissociable from the *power* of the *voice*) is not to communicate, inform, or manifest a lived experience to another subject. The infinite distance that separates the absolute origins, the ego (the hearer) from an alter ego (the speaker), makes the indicative function of expression irreducible. The expression of these experiences is always, and necessarily, carried off into indication whenever they are animated by a meaning (*bedeuten*) in order to be heard by another person. But when I speak to myself, the meaning (*Bedeutung*) or sense of these expressions are not indicated (*Anzeigen*) to me through *existing* signs, rather “the expression seems to direct interest away from itself towards its sense (*von sich ab und auf den Sinn hinzulenken*) and to point (*hinzuzeigen*) to the latter” (LI, §8, p. 279). The purely expressive reference of the sign (*Hinzeigen*), supposedly at work in soliloquy, is rigorously distinguished by Husserl from the indicative reference (*Anzeigen*) of the sign, from the sign as it functions in real communication. The exclusion or reduction of indicative speech (i.e., of the communication with the other) in the interior monologue, will reveal to us the strange prerogative of the voice, of oral discourse, for the whole of phenomenology, as well as the allegedly essential and irreducible tie between phone and expression. Husserl writes in the last paragraph of §8:

One of course *speaks*, in a certain sense, even in soliloquy, and it is certainly possible to think of oneself as speaking, and even as speaking to oneself, as, e.g., when someone says to himself: “You have gone wrong, you can't go on like that.” But in the genuine sense of communication, there is no speech in such cases, nor does one tell oneself anything: one merely **represents** oneself (*man stellt sich vor*) as speaking and communicating. In a monologue words can perform no function of indicating the existence (*Dasein*) of psychic acts, since such indication would there be quite purposeless (*ganz zwecklos* *ware*). For the acts in question are themselves experienced by us in the same instant (*im selben Augenblick*). LI, §8, pp. 279-280.

Now Derrida before asking why Husserl has chosen this example “You have gone wrong, you can't go on like that”, why take his example from the *practical* order (as if inner life or inner speech is always essentially practical or axiological), or whether and how the choice of the

example is revelatory of Husserl's project, he poses the question of *representation* in language. Derrida devotes three out of the seven chapters of his *Speech and Phenomena* to this paragraph of the §8. He will return to the first *Investigation* (§9) in his last chapter and only after he has meditated at length on the questions of repetition, of fiction, of imagination, of memory, and of internal-time consciousness which accompany and gather together around the question of representation as it is posed in the above quotation from §8.

In the above paragraph Derrida discerns *two arguments* concerning the *external* relation between inward language (pure expression, which is the pure spirituality of the *Bedeutungsintention* and not the body of words) and outward language (indication, the effective practice of speech, the sensible and bodily aspect of language). Husserl seems to argue that between, on the one hand, the subject as he is in his inner life, that is as he represents or imagines himself speaking or communicating with the other and, on the other hand, the subject as he is, or presents himself in real communication, as he is in his effective experience of the other, there is only a relation of exteriority. Let us try to formulate these two arguments.

a) In truth, in inward language I communicate or indicate nothing to myself, I can at most represent or imagine myself doing so. When I imagine myself speaking, and even speaking to myself as if to a second person ("You have gone wrong"), as if there was an indicative communication between the self and the self (the self taken as other and the self taken as self), this communication is only an *imagination* (*Phantasie*). Whenever I speak to myself, my (imagined or nonexistent) signs do not function as *Anzeigen* but as *Hinzeigen*. Furthermore, it is a purely fictitious speech, a feigned communication: in my inner life there is no relation to the other as in indicative and real communication between two alter egos, there is no alter ego within me. When such an alter ego appears in inward speech this is only a *fiction* or an illusion: in reality the subject simply reproduces or repeats in himself an expression that can *effectively* and *truly* take place only in real communication.

b) If indicative communication with the other in the sphere of inner life is only imaginary, if it is only fictitious or illusory, if, in truth, in inward speech I communicate or indicate nothing to myself, if I learn nothing about myself, that is, if I do not give any knowledge to myself in the sense of either *Kundgabe* or *Kundnahme*, this is *because there is no need and no reason for me to do so*. The speaking subject indicates nothing to himself. Husserl believes, because such an indication would be useless, without purpose (*ganz zwecklos*): the existence of lived experiences (in Husserl's example, the feeling of remorse) does not have to be indicated through the intermediary of signs, i.e., of indications (*Anzeigen*), because these experiences are immediately present to the subject in the present moment, Husserl writes, *im selben Augenblick*.

This experience of the absence or uselessness of signs in the subject's relation to itself, this purposelessness of inward indication or communication of the lived experiences to themselves is, according to Derrida's commentary, nothing else than "the *nonalterity*, the *nondifference* in the identity of presence as self-presence" (SP, p. 58).

Husserl in order to maintain the argument about the extrinsic relation between expression and indication (the inside of pure expression comes only in real and factual communication, i.e., only contingently, to be associated or conjoined with indication), seems to apply to language a fundamental distinction, the distinction between, on the one hand, reality (real presence or real communication, where the speaker is present to himself, to what he actually says, and to the other) and, on the other hand, representation (ideal presence to imaginative representation, where the speaker is present to himself and alone with himself), imagination and fiction.

According to this argument, it seems not only that reality, real communication or real presence can dispense with all representation (in the sense of *Vorstellung*, but also in the sense of *Vergegenwärtigung* and *Repräsentation*<sup>51</sup>) but also that the difference between them is such that the act of representation, the representation or imagination of self as speaking subject, can be *added* only as an accident, as an extrinsic and empirical fact to the act of real, present and effective communication. Accordingly, representation or represented speech is not essential to real communication, the possibility of representation itself does not constitute that which is said to be simply represented by it, that which is supposed to be simple and simply present to itself, it only befalls the latter from without as a subsequent fact foreign to the essence and unity of real communication. Husserl then seems to allow, on the basis of an example taken, let us note it, from the practical sphere, that as concerns the same signifiers, the same signification/ *Bedeutung* ("You have gone wrong, ...") an essential and rigorous distinction can be drawn between outward speech and inward speech, and within each of them a further distinction between real, effective or veridical speech and imaginative or fictitious speech: the same signifiers animated and uttered effectively in a real, veridical communication, the same words used effectively by the speaker in order to enjoin a decision and blame a second person, may also be animated in solitary mental life but give rise therein merely to an imaginative or fictitious communication.<sup>52</sup> Husserl's argument

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<sup>51</sup> "Representation can be understood in the general sense of *Vorstellung*, but also in the sense of representation, as repetition or reproduction of presentation, as the *Vergegenwärtigung* which modifies a *Präsentation* or *Gegenwärtigung*. And it can be understood as what **takes the place of**, what occupies the place of another *Vorstellung* (*Repräsentation*, *Repräsentant*, *Stellvertreter*)." SP, p. 49. It is this structure of **substitution** or **reference (renvoi)** that is of major interest for Derrida. We will deal with it later.

<sup>52</sup> This does not mean that, for Husserl, inward language is always and purely fictitious. According to Derrida, Husserl allows the possibility that in real, effective speech but also in soliloquy an essential distinction can be made between fictitious and effective use of language. This is what Husserl wants above all to demonstrate: "Inside the pure interior 'representation' in 'solitary mental life' certain kinds of speech

comes down to this: unlike effective speech, “represented” speech in soliloquy does not have the function of either *Kundgabe* or *Kundnahme*. (SP, pp. 71, 89)

Now, Derrida asks, can we apply the difference between reality and representation to language, can we *legitimately* maintain a border line between effective real communication (in the case of which indication would be irreducible) and “represented” communication (in the case of which internal speech would preserve its expressivity while losing its indicative exteriority, the external surface of words), between real presence in (effective, indicative) communication and ideal presence in represented (*vorgestellt*) communication? Is the representation or imagination involved in inward speech external to real and effective communication, so that it can be excluded without danger from the latter and from its essential conditions of possibility? Is not the possibility of representation and imagination then constitutive of real communication? But Husserl himself, Derrida says, has given us to think the reasons why the latter is indeed the case. “*But there is every reason to believe that representation and reality are not merely added together here and there in language, for the simple reason that it is impossible in principle to distinguish them. And it doesn’t help to say that this happens in language; language in general – and language alone – is this*” (SP, pp. 49-50). Is it not Husserl who described the structure of language and of the sign in general in terms of ideality and repetition? Is it not Husserl who gave us to understand that “the sign is not an event, [...] an irreplaceable and irreversible empirical particular”, that “a sign which could take place but ‘once’ would not be a sign, that a purely idiomatic sign would not be a sign,” in other words that the identity of the sign, its signifying form – which should not be confused with the multiple events of its empirical, phonetic, or graphic materialization, since it is what allows it to be issued again and again and recognized as the *same* through all possible linguistic acts or events – is ideal, and therefore that, as ideality, depends entirely on the possibility of repetition and representation?

Derrida can assert then, and precisely by following Husserl’s description of the ideal Objectivity of language<sup>53</sup>, that *within* language and *within* the sign the difference *does not take place* between reality and representation, neither between simple presence in real communication and its reproductive repetition in imaginative re-presentation, nor between veridical and fictitious communication, nor between the represented and the representative, nor even between signified and signifier. Since every sign (as signifier and as signified) as well as every act of signification, every signifying event in general, whether it is purely expressive and involved in interior and

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could *effectively* take place, as *effectively* representative (this would be the case with expressive language and language with a purely objective, theoretico-logical character) while certain others would remain purely *fictitious*...” (SP, p. 56), this would be the case with the axiological language of our example.

<sup>53</sup> IOG, pp. 67-72. SP, pp. 52-53 and Husserl’s *LI* §§11, 12, pp. 284-89.

silent monologue or indicative and involved in real communication, is ideal, it necessarily implies repetition and representation. But this representation does not have *only* the sense of *Vorstellung*, the locus of pure ideality reached by the neutralization of the wordly existence of the sign. Which is precisely what Husserl wants to demonstrate by supposing that it is only pure expression and not signification in general that belongs to the order of representation as *Vorstellung*. In the sphere of subjective interiority, in the sphere of ideal presence in representation as *Vorstellung*, “expressive phenomena in their expressive purity are, from the start, taken to be imaginative representations (*Phantasievorstellungen*).” (SP, p. 56) Since the sign is ideal it implies not only *Vorstellung* but also re-presentation “as *Vergegenwärtigung*, the possibility of reproductive repetition in general, and as *Repräsentation*, insofar as each signifying event is a *substitute* (for the *signified* as well as for the ideal form of the *signifier*).”<sup>54</sup>

If that is so, I (an ego in general) cannot speak to myself or enter into effective dialogue with the other without being *from the start, always already* involved in unlimited representation: I must *from the outset* operate within a structure of repetition whose basic element is representative. But if the **primordial structure of repetition** belongs to and governs the function of every speech act and of every sign in general, then, whether speech is involved in communication or in soliloquy, the distinction between effective speech and representation of speech, between effective usage of the sign and imaginary or fictitious usage of the sign, becomes not only questionable but also suspect. If the structure of language is ideal, i.e., originally dependent on the acts of repetition, “there is every chance”, Derrida tells us, “that effective language is as imaginary as imaginary speech and that imaginary speech is just as effective as effective speech” (SP, p. 51). If we admit that all signs are of an originally repetitive structure, then we must also admit that, “in both *expression and indication* the difference between reality and representation, between the veridical and the imaginary, and between simple presence and repetition has already begun to wear away” (ibid).

For Husserl, however, this system of differences is indispensable in order to prove that indication (the indicative function of the sign in real communication) is external to inward expression (pure expression in soliloquy). By declaring this system of differences “illegitimate,”

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<sup>54</sup> SP, p. 50. Let us recall here that for Husserl (who writes “Every sign is a sign for something/ für etwas”) the structure of *für etwas sein*, the structure of “being in the place of” or of “being for”, that is, the structure of *substitution* or reference (*renvoi*) belongs to every sign in general, and to every act of signification, expressive (*Hinzeigen*) or indicative (*Anzeigen*). It is only by assuming the possibility of substitution as a matter of course, by neglecting to put in into a critical questioning, Derrida writes, that Husserl was able to maintain the rigorous distinction between the represented (the *for itself* of simple and real presence of the subject) and the representative (the *in the place of* the subject) in general, between real presence of the self in effective communication and representation of the self as speaking subject in imagination and in fiction. We will come back to this.

and by deconstructing them, starting precisely from the *repetitive structure* of the sign, “we anticipate a whole chain of formidable consequences for phenomenology” (SP, p. 57). According to Derrida then, the maintaining of these differences “in the history of metaphysics and in Husserl as well – answer to the obstinate desire to save presence and to reduce or derive the sign and with it all the powers of repetition” (ibid., p. 51). Now how is this *metaphysical* desire to eliminate the sign, to submit the sign to the presence of sense, the desire to save presence, i.e., *desire itself*, to be deconstructed? First of all by avoiding this kind of circle, this “unique circle” within which all “destructive discourses” find themselves trapped when they are not ready to recognize that, as Derrida writes in *Writing and Difference*, “we cannot pronounce not a single destructive proposition which has not already had to slip into the form, the logic, and the implicit postulations of precisely what it seeks to contest.”<sup>55</sup>

There are two heterogeneous ways, Derrida says, of eliminating the sign and the power of repetition: the first, the classic philosophical way, consists in a move which derives the sign (and with it re-presentation and repetition) from the fullness and simplicity of the self-presence of experience. *Vergegenwärtigung*, re-presentation and re-petition are simple modifications or reduplications which befall a simple presence, a primordial perception or presentation (*Gegenwärtigung* or *Vorstellung*)<sup>56</sup>. To the extent that the Husserlian concept of transcendental experience remains governed by the intuitionist motif, i.e., by the possibility or the *telos* of full and simple presence (the ideal presence of the object to intuition and of intuition to itself), it participates, according to Derrida, in the philosophical movement of the reduction of the sign, of the exterior, contingent signifier.

The second way consists in restoring and affirming the *primordially* of repetition and the *irreducibility* of the sign by putting into question the whole philosophical and *teleological* system of oppositions and concepts (presence, representation, repetition, difference, supplement etc) which allowed the reduction of the repetitive structure of the sign in the first place.<sup>57</sup> But because it was the Western philosophy itself, that is, as Derrida writes

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<sup>55</sup> *Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences*, published in *Writing and Difference*, pp. 280-281.

<sup>56</sup> If the ideality reached with *Vorstellung* is always that of an ideal “ob-ject” (*Gegenstand*) which stands in front of (open to view), or is pre-sent (*Gegenwart*) before the act of repetition or reproduction, then *Vorstellung* is “the general form of presence as proximity to a viewing.” (SP, p. 53.) And as Derrida writes a little further on “The *pre* of the *present* object now-before us is an against (*Gegenwart*, *Gegenstand*) both in the sense of the ‘up-against’ [*tout-couvre*] of *proximity* and as the *opposition* [*l’encontre*] of the op-posed.” SP, p. 75.

<sup>57</sup> Referring to the deconstruction of the oppositional logic of metaphysical conceptualization (presence/representation, presence /repetition, expressive speech/indicative writing, etc) Derrida writes in *Signature Event Context* that this opposition “is never the confrontation (*le vis-à-vis*) of two terms, but a *hierarchy* and an *order of subordination*. Deconstruction cannot be restricted or immediately pass to a

*the* philosophy and history of the West, which has so constituted and established the very concept of the sign, the sign is *from its origin and to the core of its sense* marked by this will to derivation or effacement. Thus, to restore the original and nonderivative character of signs, in opposition to classical metaphysics, is, by an apparent paradox, at the same time to eliminate a concept of signs whose whole history and meaning belong to the adventure of the metaphysics of presence. SP, p. 51.

To affirm that full and simple presence, either real presence (*Gegenwärtigung* or *Präsentation*) in communication or ideal presence in imaginative representation as *Vorstellung*, is not primordial, that there is no absolute “beginning”, that re-presentation is “older” than presentation, or that re-presentation and re-productive repetition in general are more primordial than what is phenomenologically primordial (i.e., intuitive presence), that “somehow everything begins by ‘re-presentation (*Vergegenwärtigung*)’” (SP, p. 45n), is not to go against or “reject” phenomenology, or “to retreat from the level of transcendental phenomenology toward either an ‘empiricism’ or a ‘Kantian’ critique of the claim of having primordial intuition” (ibid., p. 46n). What Derrida describes as “primordial repetition” or

[as] primordial representation can be provisionally designated with this term only within the *closure* whose limits we are here seeking to transgress by setting down and demonstrating various contradictory and untenable propositions within it, attempting thereby to institute a kind of insecurity and to open it up to the outside. This can only be done from a *certain inside*. SP, p. 57n.

This would perhaps mean that Derrida’s deconstructive discourse does not take a step *outside* the epoch of metaphysics whose *closure* it, nevertheless, can outline, that it is not a matter of crossing a border, an *indivisible* border or line (i.e., of a border or line *identical* with itself) and remaining exclusively there, pure and uncontaminated by metaphysical conceptuality.<sup>58</sup> Now what is this *inside*, this opening from within philosophy, from within Western philosophy which is always a metaphysics of presence and which relentlessly exhausts itself in trying to circumscribe and *close* it?

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neutralization: it must through a double gesture, a double science, a double writing – put into practice a *reversal* of the classical opposition and a general *displacement* of the system. It is on that condition alone that deconstruction will provide the means of *intervening* in the field of oppositions it criticizes and that is also a field of nondiscursive forces.” SEC, p. 21.

<sup>58</sup> The question of metaphysics and of closure, of the relation between the *inside* and the *outside* of philosophy, between *belonging* to the tradition that one inherits and *responding* to the tradition, is a frequent and important question for Derrida in his early but also later writings. For instance in *Violence and Metaphysics*, and with regard to the metaphysical concepts of “inside/outside” “same/other”, Derrida poses the question of the responsibility of one’s own philosophical discourse (pp. 116, 130). For him the question as to whether one can shake the ultimate foundations of the tradition (of philosophy) one inherits while renouncing all philosophical discourse, is an ahistorical and absurd question. “And, if you will, the attempt to achieve an opening toward the beyond of philosophical discourse, by means of philosophical discourse, which can never be shaken off completely, cannot possibly succeed *within* language – and Levinas recognizes that there is no thought before or outside of it – except by *formally* and *thematically* posing the question of the relations between *belonging* and the opening, the question of closure.” VM, p. 110.

The concepts of idealization and of repetition are at the centre of Derrida's *deconstruction* of the system of differences which Husserl applies to language. These concepts have been used or worked over as deconstructive concepts<sup>59</sup>: the ideality and repetitive structure of the sign allow the deconstruction of what they make possible, namely *Vorstellung* itself, ideal *presence* to an ideal or transcendental consciousness, to a *consciousness as meaning* (*vouloir-dire, Bedeuten*). We thus come to make - with the help of Husserl's description of the movement of the idealization of the sign (both as signifier/expression and as signified/meaning) *and* by contradicting his *explicit* intention to take pure expression in solitary mental life to be a pure *Vorstellung*, i.e., an ideal and simple presence of the *Bedeutungsintention* to itself and to its content, anterior to and free from representative re-production or reproductive repetition - "we thus come to make", Derrida writes "*Vorstellung* itself, and as such, depend on the possibility of re-presentation (*Vergegenwärtigung*). *The presence of the present is derived from repetition, and not the reverse.*" (my emphasis) (SP, p. 52)

The concepts of ideality and repetition (but also, as we are going to see, of difference, of substitution and of supplement) have a deconstructive value: they allow the deconstruction of what they make possible, or as Derrida puts it in *A Taste for the Secret*, they offer "the locus where what we hold to be deconstructible is constituted."<sup>60</sup>

Our claim is that, with regard to the concept of the sign (ideality, etc), everything depends on how one sets it to work: it can at the same time reassure the phono-logocentric system of metaphysical thought (in which this concept was born and destined to serve) *and* shake or disturb it, by uprooting it from its own soil (the metaphysical system of differences between presence and representation, the represented and the representative, signifier and signified, the sensible and the intelligible). Having said this we also maintain our disbelief in decisive breaks, in unequivocal transgressions, since the latter are always and fatally inscribed, undertaken and understood, in an old code or discourse, to which metaphysics is tied irreducibly, and which must interminably be undone. There is no metaphysical and nonmetaphysical concepts, there is work, metaphysical or not, performed and to be done on conceptual systems. Deconstruction, as the "transgression" of metaphysics, implies that this "transgression" will never present itself as a *fait accompli*, that the limit will and must be always at work, and that the task of transgression, of the work to be done on one side and the other of the limit, is an infinite task. It was never then a question of rejecting

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<sup>59</sup> "There is no concept that is metaphysical in itself. There is labor - metaphysical or not - performed on conceptual systems" *SEC*, p. 21. See also especially *Of Grammatology*, p. 14.

<sup>60</sup> Derrida Jacques, Ferraris Maurizio, *A Taste for the Secret*, translated by Giacomo Donis, Polity Press, 2001, p. 77. "The paradox of this concept of idealization, as I make use of it within a deconstructive process, is that it is borrowed in some way from a sort of Platonism that, from Plato to Husserl, privileges the form of sensible-insensible or insensibilized intuition." (ibid)



or opposing another discourse on the same “thing”, but of interminably analysing the whole conceptual machinery and its interestedness, a question of transforming, displacing and reinscribing the old concepts in new chains and texts, and therefore of modifying the field and performatively producing new contexts for future work, for the work to come. Moreover Husserlian phenomenology is itself, according to Derrida, in the grips of autodeconstructive movements, precisely when it determines the structure of the sign and of expression in terms of ideality and repetition.

As we have already seen in the first part of the thesis, the structure of speech is described by Husserl exclusively in terms of ideality, and more precisely in terms of more or less free ideality. Derrida in the *Introduction to the Origin of Geometry* discerned three degrees of ideality: the ideality of the signifier (or *expression*), of the signified (or *Bedeutung*) and of the object. Only the absolute ideality of the geometrical object, which is a transcultural objectivity, we said then, can assure the ideal transparency and univocity of the expressive *Bedeutung*. Now this ideality does not belong to *reality*, it *is unreal*. It does not *exist* in the world (as real things exist), but it does not come from another world either. The *being (Sein)* of ideality is nonreality and non-existence; ideality does not exist but it *is*.<sup>61</sup> This non-existence or nonwordliness “is not another wordliness, this ideality is not an existent that has fallen from the sky; its origin is always the possible repetition of a productive act” (SP, p. 6). When Husserl affirms the non-existence or nonreality of ideality, it is always in order to acknowledge the *authentic* mode of ideality, i.e., *ideality as a way of being that is irreducible to sensible existence or empirical reality*. This is indeed, according to Derrida, the *abc*, the first word of phenomenology. In the very first pages of *Speech and Phenomena* he cannot emphasize enough the importance of the concept of ideality for the Husserlian critique of “degenerated” metaphysics. By affirming *Being (Sein)* as the *nonreality* of the *ideal*, that ideality is unreal, but it *is*, by providing an access to the sense of *Being* that cannot not be exhausted by reality, Husserl has begun to restore an “authentic metaphysics (which will owe its accomplishment to phenomenology)”.

The unique and permanent motif of all the mistakes and distortions which Husserl exposes in ‘degenerated’ metaphysics [...] is always a blindness to the authentic mode of ideality, to that which *is*, to what may be indefinitely *repeated* in the *identity* of its *presence*, because of the very fact that it does not exist, is not real or is unreal – not in a sense of being a fiction, but in another sense which may have several names, whose possibility will permit us to speak of nonreality and essential necessity, the noema, the

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<sup>61</sup> Husserl writes “Each attempt to transform the being of what is ideal (*das Sein des Idealen*) into the possible being of what is real, must obviously suffer shipwreck on the fact that possibilities themselves are in turn ideal objects. Possibilities can as little be found in the real world, as can numbers in general, or triangles in general.” *Logical Investigations*, Second Investigation, §8, p. 352.

intelligible object, and in general the nonwordly. This nonwordliness is not another wordliness. this ideality is not an existent that has fallen from the sky; **its origin will always be the possible repetition of a productive act.** In order that the possibility of this repetition may be open, *ideally* to infinity, one ideal form must assure this unity of the *indefinite* and the *ideal*: this is the present, or rather the presence of the *living present*. SP, p. 6.

Being is determined, by Husserl, as ideality i.e., as infinite repetition, and, paradoxically as Derrida writes, as presence. Why paradoxically? Because, on the one hand, only pure ideality – the **ideality** of the Bedeutung and of the expression, the **ideality** or *irreality* of the *noema*, noema's non-real (*reell*) inclusion in consciousness,<sup>62</sup> and the **ideality** of the object, for example, the geometrical object – only pure ideality then can give Husserl the assurance or the promise that presence to consciousness can be infinitely repeated, ideal presence to an ideal or transcendental consciousness. This presence of an ideal object whatever to an intentional act of consciousness *as well as* the presence of the temporal present as the living present (the ultimate ground of all intentional acts aiming at objects), is the presence of nothing *existing* in the world; it is the correlate of acts of repetition. Pure ideality then is “the preservation or salvation (*salut*) and mastery of *presence* in repetition” (SP, pp. 9-10). For ideality is the form in which the presence of an object in general may be indefinitely repeated as the *same*, but also the *form* of the living present. And the living present is the ultimate form of ideality, i.e., the ideal and the absolute form of all *experience* and of all *life*, the form within which the possibility of the infinite repetition of the same can be accomplished and assured.

We underlined the word *life*, *lived* experience because, on the other hand, Derrida tells us, a certain relation of an existent, of an existent subjectivity to its own *death*, lurks in this determination of being as presence, as ideality and as infinite repetition. The passage to infinity, to the infinite repetition of the same, characteristic of the idealization of object, can appear in the acts of a *speaking* subjectivity only by virtue of its finitude and mortality. This **relationship with death** produces ideal objects but also produces signification, *bedeutsame Zeichen*, meaning, and, as Derrida wants to show, it produces intuition, intentionality and the living present itself.

What are the consequences of describing the sign in general exclusively in terms of ideality (as an ideal form)? Is there a case where I effectively use signs, either in writing or in speech, either in a monologue or when I address a second person, where my signs do not have an ideal identity, where the ideal identity of my signs does not entail the possibility that my speech or writing can always function (make sense and be intelligible) quite independently from my *here and now actual* intention, from my present desire to say what I want to say, consciously and

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<sup>62</sup> An includedness, which as Derrida writes, “is neither a subject nor an object, and therefore is nothing but the objects’ Objectivity, the appearing of its ‘as such’ for a consciousness.” IOG, p. 144.

explicitly, i.e., expressly? Is not my *hic et nunc* nonpresence or absence, my death not only tolerated but most fundamentally required by the ideal identity of the sign, i.e., by the originally repetitive structure of the sign and of the signifying event? We will come back to this. For the moment let us say that, according to Derrida, to the extent that the Husserlian concept of **experience**, and in particular the experience of the voice or inward expression, of speaking and hearing myself as the experience of the absence of indication, remains subordinated to the theme of presence it participates to the reduction or elimination of the sign and to the dissimulation of this relationship to death. However, it is Husserl's descriptions of the movement of temporalization, the descriptions which do not tolerate the simplicity and domination of the metaphysical form of presence, that can reveal to us to what extent phenomenology belongs to the classical metaphysics of presence.

Let us come back to the second argument we mentioned above in order to see the adherence of phenomenology to metaphysics. The communicative discourse that a subject may address to himself ("you are thus and so") is completely imaginary and fictitious, *because* it is useless. The subject communicates or indicates nothing to himself because his lived experiences, and in particular the acts by which he gives sense to his expression, are *immediately* self-present, they are in absolute proximity to themselves and *immediately* certain. The manifestation of self to the self through the delegation or the representation of an indicative sign is impossible because it is superfluous and without finality, without reason and without purpose (*zwecklos*). In the sphere of my own lived experiences I do not need the mediation of signs, i.e., indications<sup>63</sup> in order to constitute a relation to myself. It is the possibility of such self-relation in silence which would make signs, i.e., *Anzeigen*, useless and without purpose. This purposelessness (*zwecklosigkeit*) of indicative communication in solitary mental life supposes, however, the pure and simple presence, the immediate belonging to itself of the living present, the simple self-identity of the *im selben Augenblick*, "the non-alterity, the non-difference in the identity of presence as self-presence" (SP, p. 58).

The self-presence of the living, of experience (the *Erleben*), what is called in the history of metaphysics "consciousness", the self-presence and direct immediacy of the pure intention which gives sense and meaning to signs, must be produced in the *present* taken as a *now*, in the undivided unity of a living present, so as to have nothing to reveal to itself by the agency of signs.

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<sup>63</sup> For Husserl only indications (the external surface of language, and the elements of spatiality, sensibility and wordly existence that are implied there) are signs, since pure expression as pure living intention, as the animating act of expression has not yet gone out of itself and into the world, space and sensibility. SP, pp. 40, 42.

The immediate presence of the signified *Bedeutung* (it is immediately present to an inner intuition or perception, and not, as we have said, to the perception of the other person in communication), and what supposes, the present or the *now* of self-presence would be indivisible as the blink of an eye. As re-presentations, language and signs in general are added on to a consciousness that is simple and simply present to itself, they are added on to an experience that could reflect its own presence in silence. Signs are foreign to this self-presence of the present in the living present, which is the ground of presence in general. (Only in this way, can Husserl claim that they are foreign to presence in (external) intuition or perception.<sup>64</sup>) Such self-presence, such perception or intuition of self by self in presence, such self-relation would be the case where signification could not occur, but also the case which could “assure the general possibility of a primordial perception or intuition, i.e., of nonsignification as the principle of principles” (SP, p. 60). As Husserl argues:

In a monologue words can perform no function of indicating the existence (*Dasein*) of psychic acts, since such indication would there be quite purposeless (*ganz zwecklos wäre*). For the acts in question are themselves experienced by us in the blink of an eye, or in the same instant (*im selben Augenblick von uns selbst erlebt*). (LI, §8)

Now Derrida devotes his fourth chapter, *Signs and the Blink of an Eye*, to what he calls “the metaphysical assurance par excellence”, to the privilege assigned to the temporal present taken as a *now*, to the present and actual now as the absolute source, the living core of time itself. The force of the Husserlian argument, namely the *Zwecklosigkeit* of inward communication, the uselessness of indications in self-presence or self-relation, *the absence of another in myself*, should indeed be diminished as soon as this confidence or self-confident presence of the living present starts trembling.

As Derrida shows, the *im selben Augenblick* refers to the undivided unity of the actual and living now, i.e., to the identity of the source, of the absolute beginning, to the non-displaceable centre or *arche* of temporality, the absolute perceptual source or the eye of temporality. “The force of Husserl’s demonstration presupposes the instant as a point, the identity of experience instantaneously present to itself” (SP, p. 60). “A certain concept of the *now*, of the present as *punctuality of the instant*, discreetly but decisively sanctions the entire system of essential distinctions” (ibid., p. 61).

This is, according to Derrida, in agreement with phenomenology’s *principle of principles*, with the idea of *originary presence* and of the self-identity of the now as a “source point.” Only a temporality, we said before, determined on the basis of a living present as its source can ensure

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<sup>64</sup> For example, as Husserl writes in *Ideas I* § 124, in the silent perception of a “this white” the passage to enunciation adds nothing new (a new sense content) to the perceptual (preexpressive) sense of experience. And in §43 we read that “between *perception*, on the one hand, and *symbolic representation by means of images or signs*, on the other hand, there is an unbridgeable eidetic difference.”

the purity of ideality, i.e., openness to the infinite repeatability of the same. The living present, the most primordial and concrete lived experience, is also the universal form of all experience. (SP, p. 53) But if the metaphysical theme of presence, the motif of the living present, the *living, punctual now* as the “*primal form*”, the *Urform of consciousness* is at the heart of the argument about the rigorous distinction between expression and indication, we should expect that “if the punctuality of the instant is a myth, a spatial or mechanical metaphor, ..., and if the present of self-presence is not simple, if it is constituted in a *primordial synthesis*... then the whole of Husserl’s argumentation is threatened in its very principle” (SP, p. 61).

Even if Husserl himself, as early as the *Phenomenology of Consciousness of Internal Time* (1905), has recognized the impossibility of spatializing and dividing the flow of time into parts, phases or points, the impossibility of isolating the *now* as pure punctuality, as a pure instant (*stigme*) or a point which could be by itself, even if he spoke instead of an irreducible running-off (or *spreading-out*, as another translation puts it) of inner phenomena<sup>65</sup>, and of an essence of lived experiences “that must be extended in such a way that a punctual phase can never exist by itself”<sup>66</sup>, he nonetheless cannot give up the idea of a primordial presence, of an “absolute beginning”, the “myth” of an *arche*, as source or centre, of temporality: the primal datum, the primordial character of the living now in its self-identity, as evidence itself and as the absolute source of certitude in general. He also emphasises, then, that “first of all” temporal phenomena and experiences “have a beginning, a *source point*. This is the running-off mode with which the immanent temporal object begins to exist. It is characterized as now”.<sup>67</sup> And as Husserl famously puts it in *Ideas I*, “the *actual now* is necessarily something *punctual* and remains so, a **form** that persists through continuous change of **matter**.”<sup>68</sup>

Now despite the motif of the punctual and actual now **as a form**, the form in which an infinite diversity of (materially determined) contents can be produced, Derrida, following Husserl’s descriptions, brings to light those instances which undermine, from *within* phenomenology, the possibility of a self-identical, absolutely present to itself living now, and *a fortiori* the possibility of a purely expressive language in soliloquy, in the monadic sphere of

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<sup>65</sup> *PCIT*, §10, p. 29.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, §19, p. 49.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, §10, p. 30.

<sup>68</sup> *Ideas I*, §81 p. 195. With this phenomenological determination of the *concrete and lived* experience of the *now* (or *present*) as the universal and absolute **form** of all experience in general, the opposition between form and matter, the opposition which according to Derrida inaugurates metaphysics, finds in phenomenology its ultimate and radical justification.

egological subjectivity, the possibility, that is, of a monadic subject speaking with *himself* and hearing *himself at the same time* that he speaks.

Derrida argues then that, despite this metaphysical theme, Husserl in *Phenomenological Consciousness of Internal Time* demonstrates the irreducibility of the processes of repetition and reproduction to a primordial impression or perception, to the pure actuality of the living present or now: “Following the rigorous development of this text... one sees quickly that the presence of the perceived present can appear as such only inasmuch it is *continuously compounded* with a nonpresence and a nonperception, with primary memory and primary expectation (retention and protention)” (SP, p. 64).

What Husserl demonstrated in his critique of Brentano, according to Derrida, is that if we do not want to collapse retention (primary memory) to reproduction (secondary memory or recollection), or perception to imagination, the difference between perception and retention *within* the “continuously flowing, *absolutely originary* phase, i.e., the moment of the living *now*”<sup>69</sup> should not be as radical as the difference between perception and reproduction (secondary memory and imagination). In this sense Husserl says that retention is a perception inasmuch as in it “*we do see* what is past”, inasmuch as it gives us to see, not in a re-presentative but in a presentative way<sup>70</sup>, not an actual present (which is given only in a primordial perception or impression), but a just-present, that is, a *nonpresent*, a past and inactual present.

According to Derrida, it is “fidelity to the things themselves” that led Husserl to keep this retention (as perception of the just-now) in the sphere of primordial certitude (understood “in the broader sense”) together with primordial perception or impression, and to move the frontier between primordial re-tention and re-productive or secondary recollection, between the absolute certainty pertaining to retention and the relative certainty of representation. Which does not mean that there is no difference between primordial impression or perception and primordial retention (or primary memory)<sup>71</sup>, but only that it is less radical than the difference between the primordial and the nonprimordial (re-presentation, *Wiedererinnerung*).

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<sup>69</sup> *Ideas I*, §78, p. 180.

<sup>70</sup> “... if we call perception the *act which all ‘origin’* lies, the act that *constitutes originally*, the *primary memory is perception*. For only in primary memory do we *see* what is past, only in it does the past become constituted – and constituted presentatively, not re-presentatively. [...] On the other hand, recollection, like phantasy, merely offers us re-presentation.” *PCIT* §17, p. 43.

<sup>71</sup> Husserl writes “If we now relate what has been said about perception to the *differences of the givenness* with which temporal objects make their appearance, then ***the antithesis of perception is primary memory***, and the primary expectation (retention and protention) that occur here: in which case, ***perception and non perception continuously blend into one another***.” *PCIT*, §16, p. 41. It is not that there is no discontinuity between perception and retention, it is rather that it is not so radical as between re-tention and re-production.

But as soon as Husserl admits that “perception and non perception continuously blend into one another”, that there is a “continual transition from perception to retention” *within* the sphere of primordial certitude, when he says that there is an “interweaving/ *Verflochtene*” of “sensation as actual presentation with retention and protention”<sup>72</sup>, when he thus admits the continuity of the actual now and the not-now within the living now within the blink of the eye, then Derrida can say, without forcing him, that Husserl admits “the **other** into the self-identity of the *Augenblick*.” And he goes on

*This alterity is in fact the condition for presence, presentation, and thus for Vorstellung in general; it precedes all the dissociations that could be produced in presence, in Vorstellung. (my emphasis) SP, p. 65.*

The other and alterity *in general* do not reside “outside” the same (i.e., the living present), which would suppose that the same is first constituted in its absolute interiority, i.e., in its self-identity and self-presence, before it is exposed to the outside, to the alterity of the other. *Alterity* is already “in” the same: this is the structure of what Derrida calls the *trace*.

Whatever the importance for phenomenology of the difference between retention (or primary memory, in which I see or perceive a non-now, a past or inactual now) and representation (or secondary memory, the representative reproduction of a past now in recollection), and however irreducible the difference or indeed “the abyss” which may separate them, retention and reproduction are both *modifications* of nonperception (of the actual now or present) and of nonpresence, they are, as Derrida writes, “two ways of **relating to the non-presence of another living present.**”

From this difference between *re-tention* and *re-production* we can also infer, Derrida writes, “two forms of the *re-turn* or *re-stitution* *of* the present.” But again, whatever the phenomenological difference between retention and reproduction, “we should be able to say *a priori* that their common root, is the possibility of *repetition* in its most general form, that is, the *trace* in the most universal sense, a possibility which not only must inhabit the *pure actuality of the now* but must constitute it through the movement of *differance* it introduces”. SP, p. 67.

Such a trace, or movement of differance within repetition, what Derrida calls also *arche-trace*, is more primordial than what is phenomenologically primordial, since it is the origin and the condition of the phenomenological origin. The presence of the perceived actual now, of the living present, is derived from the possibility of a repetition retaining the other as other in the same. This is already inscribed within the *form* of the living present itself, which, as we saw, is determined by Husserl as the ideal and absolute form of all experience. The form of the living

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid, Appendix III, p. 112.

present is always already a trace.<sup>73</sup> If, as Derrida describes it, the ideal *form* of presence necessarily implies

a) that it be infinitely re-peatable, that its re-turn, as the return of the same, is necessarily ad infinitum: and is inscribed in presence itself;

b) that the re-turn is the return of a present which will be retained in a finite movement of retention;

c) that the relation with infinity can be instituted only in the opening of the form of presence upon ideality, as the possibility of a re-turn ad infinitum (SP, p. 67)

then we can say that the presence of the perceived present, of the actual now and of primordial impression arises from the movement of repetition, from the folding back of a re-turn, and not the reverse. It is the movement of repetition which, being older and irreducible to presence, produces the presence of the living present and relates or opens the present to its other and its outside, i.e., to *another* living present, and which thereby makes the simple self-identity of the living present, of the *im selben Augenblick*, radically impossible. The structure of the trace describes the most intimate relation of the living present with its other (or its outside) in the movement of its repetition, the relation to the non-presence of another living present, to the absence of another absolute origin: to “the absence of another here-and-now, of another transcendental present, of another origin of the world appearing as such, presenting itself as irreducible absence within the presence of the trace.”<sup>74</sup>

Without an originary synthesis, not preceded by absolute simplicity, without an arche-trace in which the present is produced by means of this very relation to what it is not, to what absolutely is not (not even a past or a future as modifications of presence), no temporalization and no effect of the living present would be possible. It is this constitution of the present as *syntheses* or traces of retentions and protentions that Derrida calls *arche-trace* or *arche-writing* or *differance*. Derrida speaks of *arche-trace* in order to wrench the concept of the trace from the classical scheme which would derive it from presence or from an originary nontrace and which would make of it an empirical mark.

Derrida speaks also, in *Of Grammatology*, of the general structure of the trace as that which opens and connects within the same possibility the movement of temporalization, the relationship with the other (the *alter ego*), and speech as writing.<sup>75</sup> However, it is in *Speech and Phenomena* where Derrida brings out, and from within Husserl's text; from within his

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<sup>73</sup> FM, p. 127n.

<sup>74</sup> OGr, p. 47.

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 47, 60. Derrida speaks of the *general* structure of the trace since this structure articulates its possibility in the entire field of being-present.



descriptions of the movement of temporalization and of the constitution of intersubjectivity: an irreducible *nonpresence*, a *lack* of plenitude, an emptiness or void in need of a *supplement*: that of speech and writing, of speech as writing, of a mark in general, i.e., of a *trace*. But first we have to see in what sense Husserl's thematization of transcendental experience as presence – seen from within the horizon of another experience, the experience of the *subject* hearing itself speak in the present, the experience of the voice that is heard *and* understood (*s'entendre*) *immediately* by *whoever* emits it – is a metaphysical gesture, the metaphysical (and humanistic) gesture par excellence: the reduction of the movement of the trace.

#### 4) The Will to Hear- Oneself- Speak

Husserl can reach phenomenological silence, the solitary mental life, or the silent and inward speech of the subject, by putting to practice a *double* reduction or exclusion: the reduction of the indicative stratum of speech (i.e., speech addressed to or heard by the other) but also of expression itself as a supplementary stratum that is external to the presence of sense and to the self-presence of transcendental experience or life. But even before one practices the method of the reduction, phenomenological silence can be attained quite spontaneously (and rather naively). “... Even before becoming a method the ‘reduction’ would be at work,” Derrida tells us, in the most spontaneous exercise of the voice, in the most simple experience or “practice of the *spoken word*”.<sup>76</sup> Now the voice that keeps silence is heard only insofar as the spoken *word* does not have to be physically incarnated or effectively uttered in the world in order for the *lived experience* of the word to be absolutely certain and present to itself (the word taken, quite naively, to be the calm, present, undeconstructable unity of the signified concept and the voice). This experience of the voice can be considered in its greatest purity, and in the condition of its possibility, as *the experience of “being”* pure and simple. It is the relation between voice and being, voice and the word or the sense of being, voice and the ideality of sense or meaning, as well as the complicity between voice and objectivity which are Derrida’s themes in the penultimate chapter (*The Voice That Keeps Silence*) of *Speech and Phenomena*.

Husserl will be able to exclude signification from the presence of sense, from the experience of the voice as the most *primordial* and *concrete lived experience of being*, because, as he has determined it, inward *expression* – when it is full, i.e., when the *Bedeutungsintention* which animates the expression is fulfilled in a perceptive intuition, as in the perceptual expression “this white”<sup>77</sup> – departs in a certain manner from the concept of the sign. The expression “this white” does not function as a sign, i.e., as an *indicative* reference (*renvoi indicative, Anzeigen*) for the one who thinks it or silently states it while looking at it, but as expressive reference (*Hinzeigen*). In this lived experience, the existence of the perceptual sense does not have to be indicated or manifested through the intermediary of existent words because it is immediately

<sup>76</sup> *SP*, p. 31, see also *I OG*, p. 67.

<sup>77</sup> We have already referred to Ideas I §124, where Husserl resorts to a perceptual example, the perception of a “this white”, in order to clarify the distinction between pre-expressive sense (*Sinn*) and expressive meaning (*Bedeutung*) and in order to isolate the logical stratum of expression and to delimit rigorously its unity on the basis of its strictly reproductive function. The expression “this white” simply makes explicit, restates or proffers a constituted perceptual sense, it is only reproductive, that is, according to Husserl, unproductive. Or rather the whole productivity of the function of ex-pressing is exhausted in “the form of the conceptual” introduced with this function (*Ideas I*, p. 295.)

present to the speaking subject, and therefore absolutely indubitable. But Husserl is not content with the exclusion of indication, he wants also to exclude the stratum of inward expression itself as a secondary event superadded to a primordial and pre-expressive stratum of sense. According to Derrida, it is in the relation between these two exclusions, the exclusion first of the stratum indication and then of expression, and in their common logico-theoretical determination, that the absolute prerogative of the living voice (under the fine control of the "is") will become clear.

In order to question the phenomenological privilege of the voice (the *Bedeutungsintention*), which as Derrida tells us in the *Introduction to Speech and Phenomena*, has radicalized "the necessary privilege of the *phone*, which is implied by the whole history of metaphysics, and exploited all its resources with the greatest critical refinement" (SP, p. 16), we should ask whether there is not a metaphysical complicity between what we call *sense* (*Sinn*) and *meaning* (*Bedeutung, vouloir-dire*), between being as being-present in the pre-expressive form of sense *and* being as being-present in the voice, in the expressive form of meaning, a complicity so powerful that not only implicates but fuses and articulates the two strata (that of sense and of meaning) by already having *teleologically* destined the one to the other. And finally, we should question the unity of sense and phone in the word, and from all words, in the word "is" (*esti*), whose privilege or authority is, ever since the origin of philosophy, indissociable from the historical determination of the sense of being as presence.<sup>78</sup>

Now when Husserl determines, in *Ideas I* §124, the unproductive productivity of expression as the *telos of language*<sup>79</sup>, and thereby sanctions the very idea of an *expressive language* (i.e., of language as a transparent *medium* for the exteriorization of sense, as the best medium, a medium which does not deform or add anything to the sense that it faithfully expresses), is there any reason why he should take a certain type of statement or proposition as more proper than any other? The same question applies for his earlier work: the answer to this question,

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<sup>78</sup> While it is rightly stressed in the literature around Derrida as a reader of Husserl, that Derrida's descriptions of the reduction to the interior monologue are faithful to Husserl's spirit and letter, that Derrida is after the "transcendental-phenomenological postulations that govern language" (Kates, p. 64, 130-5, 147, Lawlor, p. 188, 192), that Derrida faithfully renders this phenomenological reduction to an incorporeal and disembodied voice, the *Bedeutungsintention*, something important in Derrida's reading is neglected, namely that Husserl privileges this *phone* only to the extent that its speech can take the form "S is p." This failure to acknowledge the importance of the *formalist* motif in Husserl's analysis of *Bedeutung* in *Ideas I* is due, in our opinion, to the fact that none of Derrida's readers include in their reading of *Speech* Derrida's *Form and Meaning*, which is what we undertake to do here.

<sup>79</sup> Husserl writes " [...] the stratum of expression – and this makes up its own peculiarity – is not productive. Or, if one prefers, its productivity, its noematic production, *is exhausted in the expressing* (Husserl's emphasis) and with the form of the conceptual which is introduced with the expression." *Ideas I*, p. 296.

Derrida says, will tell us a lot about Husserl's intentions and his project in the First of his *Logical Investigations*.

To recall the last paragraph §8 of his first Investigation, why has Husserl chosen to take his example from the practical order ("You have gone wrong")? Is it because inner language is essentially or exclusively practical, affective or axiological? Are there not any other types of propositions (or statements) that a subject may effectively address to himself (or even to the other) without compromising the expressive purity of his intention?<sup>80</sup> How important is it for the phenomenological distinction between pre-expressive sense, expressive meaning and non-expressive indication the *form* of propositions in their relation to the expressive stratum of experience? Is there some excellence deserved for the relationship between expressiveness and a certain sentence *form*, namely that of the *form* "S is p? Is there any decision concerning a hierarchy and the relationships between different types of statement – to take Husserl's example, statements as expression of axiological experiences ("you *are* thus and so") and statements as expression of cognitive judgements ("it *is* thus") – within the general system of expression? Is there, and for what reason, in the expressive order of *meaning or vouloir-dire* an unquestionable privilege attached to the third person present indicative of the verb *to be*? What is so unique or special about this word "being"?

These questions are posed by Derrida in *Speech and Phenomena* but also in *Form and Meaning* where the problem was once again the relationship of the pre-expressive stratum of sense or *noema* with the formality, the conceptual form of expressive *noema*, the relationship between the sense of being and the formality of the expression (or word) "being", "between *is* and formality in general."<sup>81</sup> In question was above all a certain decision about the status of sense in general, its *de jure* anteriority in its relation to *vouloir-dire*, *to logos*, and, *a fortiori*, in its relation to indication.<sup>82</sup>

The questions we are following here concern the unquestionable, by the whole history of metaphysics, unity of *sense* and *word* in the "is", the complicity between the "is" (*esti*) and "form" (*ousia, morphe*). In other words they concern the limit which has always constrained us,

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<sup>80</sup> An example for such a proposition can be taken from mathematical sciences, about which we have said that it is not a case of indication: as the correlate of a deductive, evident, and apodictic demonstration (*Beweis*), a mathematical expression is an absolutely *objective* expression and therefore an absolutely *pure* expression, i.e., *free* from indicative contamination. (*LI, I, §11*, p. 285)

<sup>81</sup> *FM*, p. 127.

<sup>82</sup> This decision, concerning the *de jure* anteriority of sense to the act of speech, whose own value will always be that of exteriorization, of ex-pression, does not depend on phenomenology, on the contrary, as Derrida writes, "it opens up phenomenology in a noncritical movement". *FM*, p. 118. In his *Introduction to the Origin of Geometry*, Derrida has shown how difficult it is for Husserl to reconcile this decision with the latter themes of historicity and sense- sedimentation in language and writing.

Derrida says, as inhabitants of a language and a system of thought, to formulate the sense of being in general as presence. This complicity discloses itself in the link between what makes us think the *sense of being* (and, as Derrida reminds us, Heidegger and Aristotle have always insisted that this sense must precede the general *concept* of being) in the verbal *form* of the third person present indicative and the metaphysical determination of the sense of being as presence, indeed as the present.

True to this metaphysical tradition of the concept of *form*, which Husserl wants to reactivate in its primordial sense, he determines the living present as the universal, absolute *form* of all experience, and therefore of all life. As we have already seen with regard to Husserl's sense investigation of "formal generalities", according to the "*principle of principles*" of phenomenology which define the archetypal form of evidence and the source of all sense, form and only form, i.e., the *form* of the living present and the *form* of the clear and present intuition of an object whatever, is evidence itself. According to Husserl only form is evident, only a form presents itself as such, and only a form has or is sense.<sup>83</sup> As Derrida writes in *Form and Meaning*, with regard to this profound complicity in phenomenology between the authority of the "is" (the word "is" as the verbal form of the present) and the determination of the sense of being as presence, indeed as the present:

It is through the evidence of the (present) *is*, in evidence itself, that the whole of transcendental phenomenology is put forth in its supreme ambition: aiming to achieve both an absolutely *formal* logic and a transcendental description of self-*presence* or primordial consciousness.<sup>84</sup>

According to Derrida, Husserl would not be able to determine the relationship between the pre-expressive stratum of sense and the expressive stratum of meaning (but also of indication), if he had not taken from the beginning the "predicative judgement" and form, the third person present indicative of the verb "to be" as absolutely privileged: as the pure and teleological *form*, the irreducible core of all expression. This move certainly corresponds to and reveals once again Husserl's logico-epistemological interests and their subordination to the authority of intuition which is already at work from the first pages of the *Logical Investigations: the model of language in general* (whether expressive or indicative) is determined, in the most traditional manner, Derrida tells us<sup>85</sup>, on the basis of *logical theory*, of *theorein*. It is *only if we*

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<sup>83</sup> FM, p. 108, SP, p. 98.

<sup>84</sup> FM, p. 127.

<sup>85</sup> According to Derrida, Husserl's relation with the tradition is neither simple nor unambiguous: the phenomenological critique of naïve ontology, of all classical theories of knowledge and of all preceding formalisms have as their clearest aim nothing but the reanimation of the "primordial sense" of form, as well as the reactivation of an authentic and metaphysical theory of knowledge. "Husserl works always to restore a primordial sense to these terms, a sense which *began* to be perverted as the time of its inscription into the tradition; thus Husserl often goes against the *first* thinkers, against Plato and Aristotle. Whether it is a

pay attention to the concept of form that we could assess the critical project of phenomenology and the privilege which is assigned by Husserl to *theory* therein. As Derrida says, the concept of form (*eidos, morphe*), since the very origin of philosophy and including Husserl's profound reactivation of its primordial sense, has "assigned to the sense of being the closure of presence, the form-of-presence, presence-in-form, or form-presence".<sup>86</sup> More particularly, Husserl's reactivation of the concept of form is guided by the concept of sense (*Sinn*): and sense, which is not a pure spiritual interiority, is always determined on the basis of a transcendental relation to an object, to some thing that is accessible and available in general for a pure consciousness, and first of all for its gaze. In this way, within Husserl's project of an authentic theory of knowledge, logical theory is subjected to intuitive perception, and sense (*Sinn*) in general is subjected to *seeing*, to the sense of *sight*, and to *light*. The whole relationship between sense and expressive meaning and the distinction between the stratum of sense and the expressive stratum of meaning is understood and posed by Husserl with regard to this *putting on view*, with regard to light or visibility (intelligible rather than sensible visibility.)

According to Derrida, here we can find the necessity which pushed Husserl to study language from a logico-epistemological point of view. If, as Husserl has determined it, only a logical meaning (*Bedeutung*) is an expression, nowhere can speech be in conformity to its essence or telos, i.e., nowhere can it be both more *productive* and at the same time more *unproductive* (in comparison to affective, axiological speech which is thoroughly productive<sup>87</sup>), than as an element of theory. It's whole productivity, according to Husserl in *Ideas I*, is exhausted in bringing sense to *conceptual* form (and thereby to a *universal* form). However careful Husserl may have been in respecting and showing the novelty and originality of practical or affective experience and speech, he never stopped reaffirming the reducibility of affective or axiological experiences and expressions to logical speech, that is, to a speech controlled by the universality of the predicative

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question of determining the *eidos* against 'Platonism', the form (*Form*) (in the problem of formal logic and ontology) or *morphe* (in the problem of transcendental constitution and in its relations with *hyle*) against Aristotle, the force, vigilance, and efficacy of the critique remains intrametaphysical in its motives." (FM, p. 108)

<sup>86</sup> FM, p. 127. But in order to pay justice to Husserl's reactivation of the concept of form in the *Logical Investigations* and in *Ideas I*, we should not think that "the sense of being has been limited by the imposition of form", that the thought of being as form, or that thought as the thought of form and the formality of form has only limited, restrained or prohibited a more open thought of being. We might instead try to think something else: "that thought, controlled by the concept of form, has the power to extend itself beyond the thought devoted to being" (ibid., p. 128).

<sup>87</sup> Contrary to what Marrati maintains, the predication in an axiological proposition ("You are wrong"), in comparison to a perceptual or theoretical judgement which is totally *unproductive* (or rather whose productivity is exhausted in a simple, unproductive redublication of pre-expressive sense), *is thoroughly productive*, it produces new sense or new noematic contents, since it envelops a valuative and productive act. *Ideas I*, §116, p. 277 and §127, p. 300-1 and FM, pp. 124-26. See Marrati, *Genesis and Structure*, p. 74.

form, by the present indicative of the verb *to be*. In some very suggestive paragraphs in *Ideas I* Husserl confirms, rather than discovers, in the *pre-expressive* and *silent* stratum of *sense*, in perceptual but also in practical or affective experiences, a “doxic core”, a core of logical sense under *the universal and silent form of being-present*.<sup>88</sup>

Every act, as also every act-correlate, harbours explicitly or implicitly a logical factor [...] From this results the fact that all acts generally – even acts of feeling and will – are ‘objectifying (*objectivierende*) acts, original factors in the ‘constituting’ of objects, the necessary sources of different regions of being and of the ontologies that belong therewith. [...] Here lies the deepest of the sources for shedding light on the *universality of the logical*, in the last resort that *of the predicative judgement*. *Ideas I*, §117, p. 282

It is this universal and silent form of “being present”, which Husserl brings out in the pre-expressive stratum of *all* acts (theoretical, practical or aesthetic), which guide his analyses of expression and indication. In the last analysis, the axiological proposition “You have gone wrong” that a subject may address to himself is not indicative because, as we have seen, a) nothing is shown with it, in the sense of *Zeigen* as indicative reference (*Anzeigen*): the subject communicates nothing to himself, he does not inform himself in the sense of either *Kundgabe* or *Kundnahme*. His language *refers to* or indicates (*Anzeigen*) nothing that “exists.” As we have said, only an existence (*Dasein, Existence*) is indicated, an existing sign motivates or refers to content (a *Bedeutung*) whose existence is only probable.<sup>89</sup>

And b) it is not indicative, according to Husserl, because it is not expressive either, and it is not expressive because as non-theoretical, non-cognitive, and non-logical, it does not give us to see and know an object. Nothing is shown (*Weisen*) directly or indirectly, either in the sense of indicative showing or pointing-out (*Hinweis*), which connects empirical existents in the world, or in the sense of apodictic or evident demonstration (*Beweis*) which links evident idealities and ideal objectivities. It does not promise any knowledge, since it does not recognize knowledge as its norm, or telos. Nothing is indicated or communicated in this proposition, it is an example of

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<sup>88</sup> Not only the originality of practical, ethical, etc., sense is not diminished with its “a priori possible conversion” (§114) into logical or predicable speech, but rather, as Derrida says, it is this possibility of conversion which “will assure them the possibility of an unlimited formalization.” According to Derrida, in §114 of *Ideas I* Husserl tried to bring forth “the evidence for a ‘doxic’ core which, still allowing us to think of values as states of being (the wished-for as the being-wished-for, the agreeable as the being-agreeable, etc.), constitutes, so to speak, **the logicity of the pre-expressive stratum**. It is because it can always convert its affective or axiological experience, its relation to what is not present into an experience that has the **form being-present** (the beautiful as being-beautiful, the desired as being desired, [...] and, as a limited case, the absent as being-absent), that it gives itself unreservedly to logical speech, speech controlled by the predicative form, that is, by the present indicative of the verb ‘to be.’” *FM*, p. 124.

<sup>89</sup> But when I speak to myself I do not have to go through the ap-presentational detour of existing signs: in inward speech *nonexistent, vorgestellt* signs show, or refer (*Hinzeigen*) to *Bedeutungen* which are also *nonexistent*, that is, which are ideal and which are also absolutely indubitable, since they are immediately present to my inner intuition, that is, lived by me at the same instant (*im selben Augenblick*). In this sense my experiences cannot be indicated (*Anzeigen*) to me.

fictitious communication, an example of false language. Not only expression then but also that which is excluded from it, i.e., indication, is determined by Husserl strictly on the basis of *theorein*, of logical theory. Moreover, Derrida notes, the *temporal modality* of the proposition is also highly significant for Husserl: its grammatical form is not in the present, “You have gone wrong” refers to a past in the form of a reproach. Which again means that this type of proposition which expresses an axiological, evaluative experience or act, is not directly or explicitly logical, insofar as it does not offer *directly* the possibility of relation to a being-present.<sup>90</sup> If we determine the essence or telos of speech as logical, as Husserl authorizes us to do in *Ideas I*, and if “‘S is p’ is the fundamental and primitive form, the primordial apophantic operation from which every logical proposition must be derivable by simple construction,” we then have to recognize that, as Derrida writes, “the third person present indicative of the verb *to be* is the pure and irreducible core of expression”, and therefore of indication. (SP. p. 73)

It is on the basis of this common theoretico-logical determination of expression and indication that Husserl will exclude indication from expression and then reduce both of them in order to reach phenomenological silence (i.e., the silent presence of sense) in its primordially. Between the *Hinzeigen* proper to expression and the *Anzeigen* proper to indication, there is, according to Husserl, the essential unity of *Zeigen*, of showing or pointing to an object in its visibility (sensible or intelligible). Signs (*Zeichen*), then, refer to *Zeigen*, and signification in general, expressive or indicative, “is assigned to the pointing finger and the eye.” (SP. p. 72) In this way Husserl recognizes that expression, and especially the expression of a perceptual act, is necessarily contaminated by *Zeigen*: *the relation to the object as indicative showing, the pointing out of what is before the eyes, of what in its visibility is always capable of appearing to an intuition*. As Derrida put it “In the final instance signs (*Zeichen*) always refer to *Zeigen*, to the space, visibility, field, and compass of what is objected and projected; they refer to phenomenality as a state of encounter [*comme vis-à-vis*] and surface, as **evidence** or **intuition**, and first of all as **light**.” (SP. p. 72)

Husserl, however, is not worried about this contamination, the contamination of the purely inner life of inward speech with the exteriority, spatiality and visibility of the *Zeigen*. What Husserl is trying to show is that the latter far from threatening inward life, is rather *interiorized* and functions better than ever in the voice, in the voice that is heard. So the solitary

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<sup>90</sup> Husserl, in *Ideas I* §127 referring to all these sentences which are not of the type “*So ist es*”, sentences which embody questions, presumptions, wishes, reproaches, and so forth, writes that “as far as their meaning is concerned, are not in truth predicative propositions. [...] all pertinent act-formations, e.g., those of the emotional sphere, which in themselves are not acts of judgement, can achieve “expression” only in a roundabout way through the mediation of an act of judgement founded on them.” (Ibid. p. 301)



mental life of the subject, the inner discourse, the talking to oneself that Husserl wants to re-establish and secure in its pure expressive function is not a talking to oneself about oneself. It is rather a “telling oneself that *S is p*”, in which the *S* is not a person that one could replace with a personal pronoun (I, you, he, ...) but the name of an *object*: for in real speech the personal pronoun, as we are going to see, has only an indicating value.

As we have said, the *telos* of logical expression, i.e., its unproductive productivity, consists in the total restitution in the form of presence of a sense actually given to intuition. And since sense is determined by Husserl only on the basis of a relation with an object “the element of expression must protect, respect, and restore the presence of sense, both as the object’s being before us, open to view, and as a proximity to self in interiority” (SP, p. 75). In chapter 6 “*The Voice that Keeps Silence*”, Derrida brings forward the systematic interdependence of the concepts of intuition or perception, objectivity, sense, meaning, and expression and then tries to show that what brings them together, under this *teleological* determination of expression as logical meaning and as relation to an object, is the determination of being as presence, i.e., as ideality.

Now before we see why *words* get involved with the determination of being as presence and as ideality let us remind ourselves that for Husserl there is an essential relation between the history of language and the history of idealization. We have seen in our discussion of the *Origin of Geometry* that the power of the voice or speech and the privilege which is attached to it by phenomenology has to do with the constitution and tradition of ideal objects, with their history, i.e., with history as such. According to Derrida: “in order to understand where the power of the voice lies, [...] we must think through the objectivity of the object” (SP, p. 75). At the same time we will begin to understand why Husserl privileges in a teleological manner the experience of the voice, the experience of *hearing* oneself speak, in comparison to seeing oneself or touching oneself. According to Husserl what is possible for hearing, and first of all, for hearing the voice (but is there hearing in general without this possibility of hearing one’s voice?), is in no way possible for the other senses: only the experience of hearing one’s voice, and not of seeing or touching oneself, makes a subjective experience of sense open to universality.<sup>91</sup> Husserl privileges the *phone* to the extent that it can say with words that “*S is p*”. That is to say, to the

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<sup>91</sup> The power and originality of the voice, of the vocal medium of expression, consists precisely in its unproductive productivity: in the fact that it restates the preexpressive sense by giving it conceptual, i.e., *logical*, form. At the heart of what unites Husserl’s *phonologism* and his *logocentrism* lies this unproductive production of the logos, of the *logische Bedeutung*, as the medium, the element and means of universal signification. (Ideas I, §124) The phenomenological excellence of the voice that is heard, can be explained and justified by the fact that it alone is an absolutely *pure* auto-affection, and thereby, it alone is open to universal signification: every other form of auto-affection (visual or tactile) “remain purely empirical for they could not belong to the medium of universal signification.” SP, p.79.

extent that it can constitute human transcendental intersubjectivity, i.e., to the extent that it can make *us see* and *know* an object. If Husserl was not the first philosopher of the tradition who privileged the sense of hearing<sup>92</sup>, he was, according to Derrida, the one who radicalized the necessary privilege given to *oral* speech by thinking through what *necessarily* links it with the objectivity of the object (the “*as such*” of its objective unity) and the subjectivity of the subject (the subject in its innermost properness.)

An ideal object, for example, the geometrical triangle which is more objective than a real object, can be constituted, repeated, expressed in a medium which does not impair but secures and protects the presence and self-presence of the acts of intuition to which this object is given “in person”. It also appears that I (an egological subject in general) can constitute, repeat and express this object, i.e., its sense or *noema*, without going outside ideality or without having to pass through the exteriority of the world: this is according to Husserl where the power of the voice lies. Derrida writes: “The ideality of the object, which is only its being-for a nonempirical consciousness, can only be expressed in an element whose phenomenality does not have wordly form. *The name of this element is the voice. The voice is heard.* Phonic signs (“acoustical images” in Saussure’s sense, or the phenomenological voice) are heard/understood by the subject who proffers them in the absolute proximity of their present.” SP, p. 76.

Let us examine more closely the phenomenological value of the phonic element of expression that makes it fit better than any other signifying element (that of writing, for instance) to express, to respect and to save the presence of sense to the acts of intuitive cognition. *The voice is heard.* When I speak, it belongs to the phenomenological essence or telos of my operation that, I hear myself in the present. This is also the teleological structure or essence of speech: the speaking subject hears himself *at the same time* that he speaks. When I speak to myself I am in absolute proximity to myself: I don’t have to go outside myself, outside the sphere of what is absolutely my own, outside my *Eigenheit* and into the world, in order to affect myself. Every other time that I write, make gestures, see or touch myself, it is necessary to go forth beyond myself, to go outside the interiority of my own self-presence and into the world, into the visibility and corporeality of space, and first of all the spatiality of my own body. In all those cases the surface of letters as well as the surface of my body as something external must begin by being exposed in the world. In seeing or touching myself, the experience of auto-affection itself and as

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<sup>92</sup> In *Speech and Phenomena* (p. 77), *Violence and Metaphysics* (p. 99-100) and *Of Grammatology* (p. 12), Derrida singles out Hegel’s privilege of hearing and his attention to the essential proximity that exists between sound, voice and ideality, between sensible sound and the sound of thought as intelligible speech, between sensibility and signification, and especially between the senses and sense (in the word *Sinn*).

such admits the world as a third party, space and visibility are irreducible. Tactile or visible auto-affection, therefore, cannot be pure and complete since I always have to borrow from the world, from what exists outside the sphere of what is my own (*mir eigenes*), outside the interiority of my self-present life, the very substance of my auto-affection. Requiring the use of no instrument, no accessory, no force taken from the world, and depending on nothing but my free spontaneity and pure will, the operation of hearing myself speak, belongs to a higher order of experience as self-relation. Hearing myself speak is experienced as an absolutely unique and absolutely pure auto-affection, “occurring in an absolute self-proximity that would in fact be the absolute reduction of space.” (SP. p. 79)

Now what is the substance of speech that makes it fit for this unique experience? This sonorous substance appears to be purely temporal. It appears that the phenomenological voice exercises and accomplishes the operation of auto-affection purely in time: it does not borrow from *outside* of itself, i.e., from space (and space is this being outside itself *proper* to time) that by which it is affected. Auto-affection has necessarily the form of time, and time for Husserl is “absolute subjectivity.” (SP, p. 84) We will come back to this. Now how can it appear that way<sup>93</sup>? How is this reduction of space possible? What happens to the spatial exteriority, to the corporeality of the signifiers the moment I use them in order to speak to myself, in order to relate to myself? Do they not intervene or impose themselves as an element of mediation and opacity in the proximity or transparency of self-relationship, in the purity of audio-phonetic auto-affection? What about the substance of speech, the substance of sound then, does it reduce the indicating spatiality, the mediation and opacity of my signifiers, does it temporalize them without remainder? And since when I speak to myself it is, as we said, in order to say that “S is p” (S being the name of an object) how can I reduce the other indicating spatiality or mediation, that is, that of the relation to the “S”, to an object in general, to the positing of its existence, as indicative showing (as *Anzeigen*, or as *Weisen in the Hinweis* )?

We said that pure expression, uncontaminated from the indicative function, is a pure animating act, a *bedeuten* that animates the body of a speech whose content (*Bedeutung*) can be present to the inner intuition of the speaking subject and not to the originary intuition of the hearer. “Is present to an inner intuition” means that the *Bedeutung* “is present to the self in the life

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<sup>93</sup> For, as Derrida wants to demonstrate, the reduction of exteriority in the hypothesis of the “interior monologue” is only an appearance, an illusion. But this appearance, as he writes in *Speech and Phenomena* and in *Of Grammatology*, is not an illusion among others, this appearance is the “very essence of consciousness and history” (SP, p. 77) or “this illusion is the history of truth and it cannot be dissipated so quickly” (*OGr.* p. 20).

of a present that has not yet gone forth from itself into the world, space or nature" (SP, p. 40). As soon as it is effectively uttered in the world, the expression of a lived experience is covered with an indicative veil. Let us now see again how the teleological structure of hearing-oneself-speak supposes the presence of the act of meaning (*bedeuten*) to itself and to its content (*Bedeutung*.)

When I speak to myself, the *phenomenological* body of the phonic signifier (that is, its *ideal form* which is not to be confused or mistaken with any sensible plenitude, with any of the empirical incarnations or materializations of the word), the words that I emit in soliloquy do not escape my intention or attention<sup>94</sup>, they do not fall outside my breath, outside the self-presence of my *Bedeutungsintention* at some visible distance (like the letters of my writing). They, rather, seem to fade away, to efface themselves (efface the surface of their body) at the very moment they are emitted in front of the presence of the signified. The words (i.e., or acoustic images, as Saussure calls them) that I use or, as we said, that I *imagine* in inward speech, are not real words, they are *vorgestellt* or *imagined* words (i.e., words reached through *Phantasievorstellung*) and they belong from the very beginning to the element of ideality. The unity or the sameness of the word is ideal: it depends entirely on the possibility of acts of repetition<sup>95</sup>. Being an expression for me, in my silent monologue, in hearing myself speak, the expressiveness of the word does not depend on its empirical existence: I do not need the existence of the word, its empirical body, but only the *ideal form* of this body, insofar as I can explicitly, consciously and intentionally reanimate, as many times as I want, this body by an act of meaning (*Bedeutungsintention*).

Here idealization is the movement by which sensory exteriority, that which affects me or serves me as a signifier, submits itself to my **power** of repetition [to an **I can**, which in this sense precedes the *I am*, as its *quasi-transcendental condition of possibility*] to what thenceforward appears to me as my spontaneity and escapes me less and less.<sup>96</sup>

The signifier that I produce does not fall outside the ideality of the signified (or *Bedeutung*), it rather remains, in its ideal identity, sheltered and well protected within the pure interiority of audiophonic auto-affection, within the purity of my inner and absolute existence. And since the act of meaning, the animating or life-giving act, the act that confers *Bedeutung* is the aim of a relation with an ideal object, in soliloquy my *Bedeutungsintention* *shows* (in the double sense of *Zeigen in Hinzeigen* and *Weisen in Beweis*) the ideal object, and the *Bedeutung* connected to it, without going outside ideality, without falling outside the interiority of my acts

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<sup>94</sup> This is precisely Socrates argument in the *Phaedrus* (275c) against Theuth (or Hermes) the servile god of writing: auto-production of speech declaring itself *alive* and capable of *helping*, assisting or attending itself, by contrast to writing which "has no power to protect or help itself".

<sup>95</sup> "The *power* of repetition that opens up ideality and the *power* which liberates the imaginative reproduction of empirical perception cannot be foreign to each other; nor their products." SP, p. 55.

<sup>96</sup> OGr, p. 166.

and of my own self-present life. Considered from a purely phenomenological point of view, this effacement of the wordly and bodily opacity of the signifier (i.e., of the exterior surface of language) in my voice, will reveal to me, who *live* in the understanding of my expressive intention, the unique experience of a signified (*Bedeutung*) producing itself spontaneously from within my self. What appears in my voice as the signified, as the expressed *Bedeutung*, that is as an ideality that is *idealiter* indefinite repeatable as the same, is *immediately present* in the act of meaning, itself ideal. This effacement of the exteriority or wordly opacity of its body in front of the pure spirituality of the living *Bedeutungsintention*, this transformation of the signifier into a perfect, unproductive transparency in the voice (the spiritual flesh) is nothing but the self-presence of a silent *vouloir-dire* in the fullness of its living present, i.e., the inwardness of life with itself. This effacement of exteriority and spatiality is also the absolute inside, the inside of the nonspatial that we call “time” or “internal time consciousness.” This effacement *is* the living voice, the voice without writing, i.e., without *differance*.

Here again a phenomenology of speech will confirm the absolute proximity of voice and the ideality of meaning (*Bedeutung*), voice and the sense of being, voice and being: *the experience of the voice is the experience of being in its simplest, purest and universal form, i.e., being as presence*. Within the closure of this experience, the word that I (a speaking egological subject in general) emit is lived as the absolute proximity of the *signified* concept or *Bedeutung* and the transparent *signifier*.

This is not the case with writing where, even if the ideal form of the written signifier (the *grapheme*) does not belong to the world either, a reference to spatiality, to what is outside my *interiority* (i.e., the self-presence of my will to signify, of my *vouloir-dire*) is necessarily implied in its very phenomenon. In phenomenology to hear *myself* speak is not the same as to see *myself* write: the proximity of sense to the signifier (the phoneme) in the voice breaks with writing, and so the proximity or presence of the original intention (of the *vouloir-dire*, which animated the written signifier) to itself. Here we see again, with regard to the printed word (the written signifier), the same essential differences and phenomenological nuances which were involved in our discussion of the perception and imagination of a spoken or written word. Derrida affirms the importance and necessity of this phenomenological distinction between these two relations to self, between hearing *myself* speak and seeing *myself* write, by responding to an objection: “The objection will perhaps be raised that this *interiority* [reached through the spiritual transparency of the voice, or of the phoneme] belongs to the phenomenological and ideal aspect of every signifier. The ideal form of a written signifier, for example, is not in the world, and the distinction between the *grapheme* and the empirical body of the corresponding graphic body *separates an*

*inside from an outside*, phenomenological consciousness from the world. And this is true for every visual or spatial signifier. *And yet* every nonphonic signifier involves a spatial reference in its very phenomenon, in the phenomenological (nonwordly) sphere of experience in which it is given. *Apparently* [our emphasis] there is nothing like this in the phenomenon of speech" (SP, p. 76).

It is on the basis of this *appearance* ("Apparently there is [no reference to exteriority, no necessary detour by way of a foreign exteriority and spatiality] in the phenomenon of speech"), and on the basis of the most rigorous phenomenological distinctions that we could confirm Husserl's adherence to the entire tradition of metaphysics as logocentrism and phonocentrism. Derrida writes that Husserl cannot reduce the substance of oral expression, he cannot question the metaphysical value of the voice, "its transcendent dignity with regard to every other signifying substance", that is, he can not question the supposedly irreducible simplicity, the elementary unity of sense and the phone, the transparent substance of expression, without menacing his whole enterprise, without diminishing the founding value or axiom of the transcendental arche or telos: pure egological consciousness *as meaning (bedeuten or vouloir-dire) in self presence*. (As we will see in the last section of the thesis, Husserl (LI, I, §36) makes a distinction, with regard to the expression "I am", between speech and writing.)

Within this experience of the effacement of the signifier in the voice, the word is lived by the speaking subject as the elementary, natural and therefore undecomposable unity of the signified (*Bedeutung*) and its silent voice, of the concept and the transparent substance of expression. Now it seems that this living and absolute unity comes to be threatened as soon as I start to write. A new possibility opens then, the possibility that my signifiers can function (like a sort of machine<sup>97</sup>) free from my attention or intention, free from my actual and living intention to say what I wanted to say by writing, that is, they can function without my being present, without my desire and assistance. *Writing, the act of writing, the distribution and articulation of signs in space, comes only to be added up and from the outside to the primordial experience of being, i.e., of speaking and hearing oneself speaking*. As we are going to confirm again and again, writing for Husserl, who never questioned the proximity of the phone to thought, will always be phonetic and therefore always indicative. It indicates a pure phonetic expression: hence it is the occasion and the cause, as we saw in *Crisis* and in the *Origin of Geometry*, for the degradation of the sign-expression into a sign-indication, of the pure and clear intention to say or express the truth into a symbol empty of sense.

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<sup>97</sup> SEC, p. 8.

What governs here, in this subordination of writing to the absolute *arche* of the living voice, is the absolute difference between body and soul. Writing, Derrida shows in *Of Grammatology*, the letter, sensible inscription in space has always been considered as the body and the matter external to the spirit, to the breath of speech and to the logos. Writing, the letter as the signifier of the primordial signifier, is an exterior body that has meaning (*Bedeutung*) only if we can actually reactivate, that is, pronounce or proffer again, the word, the verbal expression (the primordial signifier) which has supposedly animated it in the first place. The body of the letter can express something only if the space of its inscription is interiorized, i.e., temporalized in the experience of the voice, in the pronouncement of the living word. (At the same time, and conversely, that a speech supposedly alive and primordial can lend itself to spacing and to visibility in writing is what relates it to its own death, to its own factual disaster.)

Now this phonocentrism, as logocentrism, merges, according to Derrida, with the historical determination of being as presence. The epoch of the logos is the epoch of the sign, of the metaphysical distinction between *signifier* and *signified*. The experience of being as the pure immediate experience of hearing-oneself-speak (proper to human, egological subjectivity), the experience of the effacement of the signifier, or, in other words, the phenomenon of mastery of the exteriority of the word in the voice (Husserl's *Bedeutungsintention*) will reveal the formal essence of the *signified* (*Bedeutung*): presence, that is, the life of an intention, of a voice present to itself and to what it says, living consciousness itself. In this sense Derrida can write that "the prerogative of being cannot withstand the deconstruction of the word" (SP, p. 74).

The system of hearing-myself-speak through the phonic substance has given rise and dominated an entire historical epoch within which writing, and the essence or *telos* of writing, has been confined to a secondary, instrumental function: writing as the sensible inscription of a full, living phone that is present to itself, is a *phonetic* writing. Within this epoch of the logos, the essential and original link with the phone is never broken, from Plato's *Phaedrus* and Aristotle's *De Interpretatione* to Husserl's *Logical Investigations*.<sup>98</sup> The essence of phone is immediately and absolutely proximate to what within thought as logos relates to sense, produces it, receives it, and speaks it. Since the voice is closest to the signified, all signifiers, but first of all the written signifier, are derivative with regard to what weds the voice (the phonic signifier) and sense. The privilege of the proximity of the signified to the voice is the privilege of presence. The difference between signifier and signified belongs to this epoch of logos which debases writing as a

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<sup>98</sup> OGr, pp. 11, 34, 37.

mediation of mediation (or the signifier of the signifier) and as a fall into the exteriority of meaning. It is a difference whose age is, Derrida has taught us, *essentially theological*.<sup>99</sup>

Derrida asks in *Of Grammatology*: is not this subordination of writing to the primordial signifier, to the living *phone*, is not the recognition of this massive fact of *phonetic* writing (but since this fact commands our entire culture, scientific or not, is certainly not one fact among others) also Saussure's gesture at the moment, precisely, when he institutes the science of language, when he determines (to be sure, by responding to the most legitimate of the exigencies of the science of linguistics, namely, by securing that its field have hard and undivided frontiers, a system of internal necessity) the inner system of language, i.e., the field of its objectivity, by taking the spoken word as its sole object and by excluding what is exterior to it?<sup>100</sup> Modern linguistics then must recover the "natural", i.e., simple and original relationships between speech and writing, between an inside and an outside, and thereby restore and secure the purity of language's origin. This is exactly the project of Saussure: to institute a science of language on the basis of the privileged immediate unity, which founds significance and the acts of language, the unity of voice and concept, of sound and sense within the voice or within the *spoken* word, the unity or bond, "the natural bond (*lien naturel*), the only true bond, the bond of sound and word."<sup>101</sup> With regard to this (preconstituted) unity, writing, which must necessarily operate from already constituted units of signification in the formation of which has played no role, would be always derivative, accidental, exterior, doubling the primordial signifier, that is *phonetic*: Sign of the sign, said Aristotle, Hegel, and Saussure. The system of language, intimately associated with phonetic or alphabetic writing ("On all accounts the most intelligent", writes Hegel in

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<sup>99</sup> The age of the sign, the age of the difference between signified (which is intelligible) and signifier (which is sensible), of this strange separation of their parallelism, and the exteriority of the one to the other, "is *essentially theological*", since it belongs "in a profound and implicit way to the totality of the great epoch covered by the history of metaphysics and in a more explicitly and more systematically articulated way to the narrower epoch of Christian creationism and infinitism when these appropriate the resources of Greek conceptuality." The difference signified /signifier, the idea of the sign itself, is inseparable from the difference intelligible-sensible, and the latter imply "a reference to a signified able to take place in its intelligibility before its 'fall' or expulsion into the exteriority of the sensible here below. As the face of pure intelligibility, it refers to an absolute logos to which it is immediately united. This absolute logos was an infinite creative subjectivity in medieval theology: *the intelligible face of the sign remains turned toward the word and the face of God.*" (our emphasis) "The sign and divinity have the same place and time of birth. The age of the sign is essentially theological. Perhaps it will never end. Its historical *closure*, however, outlined." OGr, pp. 13-14.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, p. 30-31

<sup>101</sup> *Course in General Linguistics*, translated by Roy Harris, Chicago, Open Court, 1986, p. 26. The whole of chapter VI is devoted to "the representation of language by writing": this "representationist" conception of writing comes to fulfill the exigency of linguistics by excluding writing from the interiority of its system, by subordinating writing to an originally spoken and full language.



Encyclopedia, sec. 459), is, according to Derrida, that within which *logocentric metaphysics*, determining the sense of being in general as presence, is produced.

## Chapter Four: Speech, Writing and Subjectivity

### 1) Speech and Writing: the Inside and the Outside

In our previous chapter, we tried to explain if not justify the phenomenological excellence of phonic auto-affectation and the importance of the radical difference between *hearing-oneself-speak* and *seeing-oneself-write* or gesture. In the last part of the thesis we turn to the question of language and human (inter)subjectivity. We will try to show that Husserl's phenomenology of the *phone* is also "a great philosophy of the transcendental subject" where "the origin of the world" is described, after the phenomenological reduction to *inner* discourse, as an originary speaking egological consciousness. The experience of hearing oneself speak and the phenomenon of mastery over the exteriority of the signifier is the experience of a free, voluntary, auto-affecting subjectivity conscious of its voice and speech.

In *Speech and Phenomena* and in *Of Grammatology*, Derrida reads the history of western philosophy, the history of metaphysics of presence, in which Husserl's phenomenology remains the most radical and most critical moment,<sup>102</sup> as the powerful and "absolute will-to-hear-oneself-speak", through the phonic element which presents itself, in its pure *logicality*, as the nonexterior, nonwordly, nonempirical and noncontingent signifier. This metaphysics of *logos* is also a metaphysics of *will* and has necessarily, but provisionally, according to Derrida, dominated the history not only of *episteme* but also of the world, as well as the concepts of "science", of "history" and of "the world". This epoch of living logos, of full speech has always subordinated writing and suspended or suppressed, for essential reasons, a free reflection on its status and origin. This *will*, or "transcendental voluntarism" (SP. p. 35), has also limited the scope of a consistent problematic of writing in Husserl too, even though, as we saw in the first part of the thesis, the necessity of such reflection or problematic had been marked out in the *Origin of Geometry* with such an unprecedented rigour.

The subordination of the exteriority of writing to phone, however, supposes that the latter is purely phonetic, i.e., in absolute proximity to itself and to the signified (*Bedeutung*), and therefore, absolutely alive. Derrida reconstructs Husserl's argument, in which his phonologism and his optical intuitionism merge into each other, as follows:

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<sup>102</sup> OGr, p. 49.

the [phonic] signifier animated by my *Bedeutungsintention* is in absolute proximity to me. The living act, the life giving act, the *Lebendigkeit*, which animates the body of the signifier and transforms it into a meaningful expression, the soul of language, seems not to separate itself from itself, from its own self-presence. It does not risk death in the body of the signifier that is given over to the world and to visibility of space. It can *show* the ideal object or ideal *Bedeutung* connect to it without venturing outside ideality, outside the interiority of self-present life. SP, p. 77.

So we can say that, according to Husserl, not only is the self-presence of the *Bedeutungsintention* in the experience of telling my self that “S is p” not threatened by “the system of *Zeigen*, the finger and eye movements”, i.e., by the externality of the object which stands face-to-face with my pure intention to express its *noema* or sense, but, on the contrary this system is interiorized and works better than ever in the *phone*. The *phenomenon* becomes an object for me (for an ego in general) only in my *phone* and my *phonems*. The power of the phone can be understood if we understand its relation to *techne*, to the technical mastery or *domination* of objective being. “The phenomenon continues to be an object for the voice: indeed insofar as the ideality of the object seems to depend on the voice and thus becomes *absolutely accessible* in it, the system which ties phenomenality to the possibility of *Zeigen* functions better than ever in the voice. *The phoneme is given as the dominated ideality of the phenomenon*” (Derrida’s emphasis) (SP. p. 78.) And the phenomenon of the phoneme, the lived and spontaneous reduction of the sensible signifier, is the origin of what we call “presence”.

The experience of hearing myself speak, this inwardness of inner speech or life with itself, is an experience of a unique auto-affection. For Husserl consciousness is precisely the *possibility* of this experience of auto-affection through the medium of *logical* meaning (*Bedeutung*), which is for Husserl the medium of *universality*. No consciousness (and we should add, no “consciousness-of-being-in-community in one and the same world”<sup>103</sup>) without the living voice, without the animating act or *Bedeutungsintention* which is present to itself and to its content (*Bedeutung*). This is again the teleological essence of the *voice*: it requires that it be heard and understood *immediately* by whoever emits it or breaths with it. I hear my voice, is this also what we call *conscience*?

In agreement with the whole metaphysical tradition which links subjectivity with the *zoon logon echon* (the *animal rationale*), and with the power of the voice, Husserl determines audiophonic auto-affection as the condition of all subjective egological experience, of all human subjectivity.<sup>104</sup> It is affirmed then that only a subject capable of self-identification, of being with

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<sup>103</sup> IOG, pp. 79ff.

<sup>104</sup> Let us here note that the experience of the voice is reserved, and Husserl is not an exception here, only for human subjectivity, only for the human relation to self, that is, as an experience or operation on the basis of which a clear cut distinction, if not opposition, between animal relation to self and human

itself (in speaking to itself or in speaking for itself before the other), of being for-itself (*für sich*) and *with* itself, capable of indefinitely turning and re-turning to itself, and affecting itself, speaking to and hearing itself, only a subject conscious of its speech, an entity capable of consciousness, of language, of self-determination, may let *itself* be affected by the other in general. No human subjectivity, no sovereign subjectivity without this power of an "I can", without the power or possibility of sovereign self-determination, of automobilitic or autonomic repetition, the power of indefinitely turning and re-turning toward the self and upon the self, no subjectivity without an autonomous and sustained relation to self, without permanent presence, without the possession or positioning of the self as oneself, *without mastery over its own self-presence in repetition, over its own voice and its signifiers.*

With regard to the possibility of pure auto-affection as the phenomenon of mastery over the exteriority (or the wordliness) of the signifier in the subject's voice, Derrida writes

Requiring the intervention of no determinate surface in the world, *being produced in the world as pure auto-affection*, it is a signifying substance absolutely at our disposition. For this voice meets no obstacle to its emission in the world, precisely because it is produced as pure auto-affection. **This auto-affection is no doubt the possibility for what is called subjectivity** or the *for-itself*, but, without it, no world *as such* would appear. SP, p. 79.

It is the "as such" of the world, of the intersubjective constitution of the *world's objective unity* which is decisive here. In particular it distinguishes human *speaking* intersubjectivity (from that which created between animals, men and animals, children, etc.) as the constituting origin of the world "as such": *as such*, i.e., in its independence or objectivity *and* as a pole of infinite determination. The phenomenological "as such" distinguishes human intersubjectivity by revealing the world as the infinitely open common place, the infinite horizon of every possible experience, of every experience which is linguistically expressible, i.e., communicable or translatable.<sup>105</sup>

Now what is said for the interior monologue of the monadic subject appears to be also the case in the oral (present, synchronic and immediate) communication of two egological subjectivities, i.e., of two absolute origins of the world, which are also two origins of audiophonic

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subjectivity could be legitimately posed and rigorously demonstrated. But what about the animal relation to self? Why are animals not granted subjectivity even if they are capable of auto-affection? How about the structure of the relation to self, and of re-appropriation in animals, if it is acknowledged that they are capable of (non-linguistic, i.e., according to Husserl's teleological determination of language, non-logical, non-theoretical, or non-objective) audio-phonetic auto-affection (animal sounds, cries, etc.)? We will come back to this in our conclusion.

<sup>105</sup> For the phenomenological *as such* see IOG, p. 81n and *Eating Well*, pp. 267, 274-5, published in *Points...Interviews, 1974-1994*, translated by Peggy Camuf & others, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1995.

auto-affection. The phenomenon of mastery over the signifier, and the latter's reduction, the purloined body of speech in the voice (speech stealing its body by itself, concealing it in front of the present and diaphanous *meaning*) is also the *myth of immediacy* in the live conversation between two egos. If to speak to the other is to hear myself but also to be heard by the other, to speak is to *auto-affect the other*: to make him repeat as immediate echo in himself the auto-affection which I produced with my voice; it is "to make him repeat immediately in himself the hearing-oneself-speak in the very form in which I effectuated it" (SP, p. 80).

As Derrida notes, it is the absolute proximity of the signified to the signifier (and the reduction of its sensible exteriority) in the experience of the voice that speaks and hears itself, which provides for Husserl the condition for the teleological determination of the essence of language as expression, as a transparent element, an unproductive medium that accepts and reflects the presence of sense by giving it conceptual form (Ideas I, §124). In as much as it is assigned an unproductive and reflective function, a pure and diaphanous expression facilitates things: it can then be reduced by Husserl without any cost so as to affirm that there is, especially in perception (both internal and external), a pre-expressive and prelinguistic stratum of lived experience or sense, an intuitive ground or base of silence that absolutely founds all acts of signification, both expressive and indicative. Now Derrida asks "how can we understand this reduction of language [and of expression as such, since the essence or telos of language is determined in *Logical Investigations* as *expression*] when Husserl, from the *Logical Investigations* to *The Origin of Geometry*, continually thought that scientific truth, i.e., absolutely ideal objects, can be found only in 'statements' and that not only spoken language but *inscription* as well was indispensable for the constitution of ideal objects, that is, objects capable of being transmitted and repeated as the same?" (SP, p. 80)

It is because, *on the one hand*, true to the whole Western tradition that controls in theory and in practice (even *in the principle of its practice*) the relationships between speech (the living word) and writing (the letter, the body of the word, which by itself alone is soulless or lifeless, needs the voice, the soul of language, in order to be animated, and thereby to acquire meaning). Husserl does not recognize in the latter more than a derivative function subjected to a full and originarily spoken language: writing is only a phonetic writing, i.e., a writing which retains an immediate relationship with the presence of the represented voice.

But if, *on the other hand*, Husserl had to recognize the necessity of this incorporation of the pure spirituality of the voice (of *Bedeutungsintention*) in a body, that of a word but also that of a letter, even as a *critical* moment for the history of reason and truth, as a beneficial threat (it

allows the transmission of sense over distant generations of investigators at the same time that it brings about the *degradation* of full speech into empty symbol, of the sign-expression into sign-indication, and makes passivity and forgetfulness the faithful shadow of the progressive advent of reason), it is because, according to Derrida, "an underlying motif was disturbing and contesting the security of these traditional distinctions from within and because *the possibility of writing dwelt within speech*, which was itself at work in the inwardness of thought" (SP, p. 82).

Examining this *possibility* (the capacity or power) of the phenomenological voice to protect and conserve, to *save* presence, the possibility that we also call "*life*", or "*living*" (in the spiritual or teleological sense and not in the physiological sense), Derrida finds once again, following Husserl's descriptions, all the incidences of nonpresence and otherness (indicative language, writing) which have a constitutive value, that is, which do not simply befall or surround the identity of presence, the presence of sense in its self-identity, but rather make it possible as "the self-identity of non-self identity."<sup>106</sup>

We should note then that, as Derrida writes, "even while repressing *difference* by assigning it to the exteriority of the signifiers, Husserl could not fail to recognize its work at the origin of sense and presence" (SP, p. 82). But for Husserl *difference* does not concern only the order of the sensible and exterior signifier in its relation to the inward, spontaneous production of the signified content or *Bedeutung*. Husserl also recognized that *difference* is indispensable to the movement of temporalization, to the temporalization of all lived experiences and of the living present itself. *On the one hand*, Husserl speaks of a *pure* difference within auto-affection, of a pure difference that comes to constitute *originarily* and, at the same time, to *divide* the *im selben Augenblick*, the absolute and ideal form of the living present.<sup>107</sup> But, *on the other hand*, as Derrida will try to demonstrate at the end of his chapter on the "phenomenological voice", within this pure *difference* is rooted the very possibility of everything that Husserl has excluded from the solitary mental life of the subject and its pure audiophonic auto-affection: the outside, visibility, space, the body, etc., all the predicates, that is, by virtue of which we traditionally dissociate speech from writing. And it is Husserl's descriptions of the movements of temporalization and intersubjectivity which orient or turn Derrida's thought to another difference, written this time with an "a" instead of "e".

With the reduction of the indicative sign, i.e., of the sensible body of language, of the exterior, mundane, empirical and contingent signifier, in interiority, in the experience of pure

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<sup>106</sup> VM, p. 132.

<sup>107</sup> OGr, p. 67.

auto-affection, phenomenological reduction will meet its most radical mission and final destination: “as soon as it is admitted that auto-affection is the condition of presence no pure transcendental reduction is possible” (SP, p. 82). It is indeed necessary to pass through the transcendental *arche*, consciousness as *vouloir-dire*, through the living present of the voice as the absolute origin of the world, in order, as Derrida writes, to “come closest to the movement of differance,” or in order to *start* thinking about, what he calls, “*arche-writing*” or “*arche-trace*” outside the classical scheme which derives it from presence or from an originary non-trace, and which makes of it an empirical mark, an indication or sign (*Anzeigen*) of another self-presence. The value of the transcendental *arche* or *telos* (hearing -oneself speak is the absolute *arche* and *telos* of all human, subjective and egological relation to self) must be felt, recognized and respected before being erased: “That is why a thought of the trace can no more break with a transcendental phenomenology than be reduced to it.”<sup>108</sup>

The notions of differance, *arche-writing* or *arche-trace*, ex-appropriation, etc., come to describe, according to Derrida, the movements or processes which are at work in the constitution and appearance of what we call the *subject* – and the sub-ject always assumes presence, i.e., substance, stasis, stance, as well as the power of an *I can*, the power to determine oneself, of self-determination, the possibility to possess oneself, to be master of oneself, the autonomy of the self, of the *autos*, of the *ipse*. “Differance within auto-affection” does not befall a subject which would choose it or would passively let itself be drawn along with it. It rather constitutes the subject at the same time that it dislocates it, it makes possible the very thing that it makes impossible: the simple self-identity of the subject, actually and fully present to itself, master of itself before the presence of the other. Derrida inverting an apparently absolute order which could authorize the thinking of differance on the basis of presence, of a being present to itself as (empirical or transcendental) consciousness, as will, intentionality, freedom, ego or subject, writes

This movement of differance is not something that happens to a transcendental subject: it produces a subject. Auto-affection is not a modality of experience that characterizes a being that would already be itself (*autos*). It produces *sameness as self-relation within self-difference*; it produces *sameness as the nonidentical*. SP, p. 82.

The question now can be put like this: if a subject in his self-identity, in his consciousness of his identity with himself, becomes a *speaking* subject *only* by involving himself in language, in the transcendental disquietude of language (in the movement of idealization, that is, in unlimited representation, repetition or substitution), or, having recourse to Saussure’s discourse, *only* by drawing from the system of rules of language as a system of differences, if the

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 62.

*speaking* subject cannot be present to itself outside the play of linguistic differences, can we conceive of a subject which would be able to gather itself together and into its presence (i.e., able for a sovereign and reappropriating gathering of self) before distributing its signs or signifiers in space and in the world? Returning to Husserl's vocabulary, Derrida asks whether we can "maintain the possibility of a pure and purely self-present identity at the level of pre-expressive experience, the level of sense prior to *Bedeutung* and expression?" (SP, p. 83)

Let us see why this possibility is contradicted and effectively undermined by the very movement of transcendental temporalization of *Erlebnis*, and precisely as it has been described by Husserl himself. Phonic auto-affection has necessarily the form of time. According to Husserl, the experience of auto-affection as the experience of a spontaneous production of sense from within the self, is not an experience of a sense that is itself nontemporal: on the contrary all sense or *noema*, as *ideality*, is temporal through and through. Its "supratemporality implies omnitemporality", and omnitemporality is only "a mode of temporality".<sup>109</sup> Now in the very process of this temporalization of the noema (or experience of sense), in the experience itself of auto-affection, which is supposed to be a purely temporal process, we will find once again all those instances of nonpresence and otherness that have a constitutive value in the emergence and functioning of the sense or noema itself.

What is the relation between phonic auto-affection and the temporalization of the lived experience? First of all, auto-affection does not concern only the operation of the voice: "as soon as one takes the movement of temporalization into account, as it is already analyzed in *The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*, the concept of auto-affection must be employed as well" (SP, p. 83). We have already seen how important is the motif of the living present as a form, the punctual *now* as the *Urform* of consciousness, for the whole system of the distinctions put forward in *Logical Investigations*. Only a temporality determined on the basis of a *now* as the "absolute beginning" (as the "source point" or "primordial impression") can assure the purity of ideality (of sense), i.e., openness to the infinite repeatability of the same. And the form of the living present or *now* as the primordial absolute is ideal, the ultimate form of ideality, the ideality of ideality: the universal form *in which*, *starting* from which, or *in view of* which, an ego *in general* may anticipate or recall all repetition. To the extent that Husserl believes that the voice of the speaking subject hears itself *im selben Augenblick*, that the self-presence of the voice is produced in the undivided unity of the present, the *present* is that from which he still believes he

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<sup>109</sup> *Experience and Judgement*, §64 and IOG, pp. 77, 148.



is able to think time, effacing the *inverse* necessity, namely, that of thinking the present from time as *differance within autoaffection*.<sup>110</sup>

In what manner, however, is Derrida given by Husserl himself the reason and justification to proceed to such an inversion? First of all, the *living present*, the *now*, that out of which the movement of temporalization is produced, is already a pure auto-affection. Derrida quotes from *The Phenomenology of Consciousness of Internal Time (Appendix I: Primal Impression and its Continuum of Modifications)*, where the question for Husserl is to bring forward, in relation to the *actually present now* (as the “zero point” or “the absolute beginning”), the peculiarity of the primal spontaneity of consciousness. What is this peculiarity? According to Husserl it consists in the fact that the living now and each *new living now*, the absolute *novelty* of each *now* is not a new being, it is not a produced object; its generation is not a production of a being (Sein): the *new now* is pure spontaneity, it consists in a “*primordial impression*” that *spontaneously engenders* itself. Husserl writes

The primordial impression is the absolute beginning of this generation – the primordial source, that from which all others are continuously generated. In itself, however, it is not generated; it does not come into existence as that which is generated but through *spontaneous generation*. It does not grow up (it has no seed): it is primordial creation. (*The Phenomenology of Consciousness of Internal Time*, Appendix I, p. 106)

Now how can we describe this movement (infinitely open in its content) by which a new now, the next now continuously forms on the living now which, in its turn, passes over into a non-now (a past now) assuring thereby the indefinitely renewed upsurge and virginity of the actual living now? How to describe this movement of temporalization by which the living now (of primordial impression) affects itself in order to be retained and gone beyond itself as past now, and in order to constitute a new and *another* living now? How, in other words, to describe this movement without borrowing one’s own concepts “from the order of the objects of experience, an order this temporalization makes possible”<sup>111</sup>? The peculiarity of this *pure* movement consists, according to Derrida, in the fact that it not only makes possible the absolute novelty and presence of primordial perception or impression (the *Ur-Erlebnis*) but that, at the same time, it undermines the possibility of a simple self-identity of primordial impression, i.e., of

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<sup>110</sup> *OGr*, p. 166.

<sup>111</sup> What is indescribable, indeed ineffable or unnameable, here, namely the primal source of time, will be, nevertheless, designated by Husserl as “absolute subjectivity.” Speaking of the immanent flow, of this strange and pure movement, Husserl writes “This flow is something we speak of in conformity with what is constituted, but it is not ‘something in objective time’; it is *absolute subjectivity* and has the absolute properties of something to be designated metaphorically as ‘flow’; of something that originates in a point of actuality, in a primal source point, ‘the now’, and so on. In the lived experience of actuality we have the primal source-point and a continuity of moments of reverberation. For all this, we lack names.” *PCIT*, §36, p. 79. See also Derrida’s *A Taste for the Secret*, pp. 67-69, and his *IOG*, p. 82n.

the *actual* and *living* now. This movement is a *pure* auto-affection which indeed constitutes “the *same as the nonidentical*” or “the absolute identity of the living now as the self-identity of non-self identity.” Auto-affection constitutes the *auto*, the same, as it divides the same. Hetero-affection does not wait, it is already at work in the pure auto-affection of the living present. Derrida writes:

The process by which the *living now*, produced by spontaneous generation, must, in order to be a now and to be retained in another now, *affect itself* without recourse to anything empirical but *with a new primordial actuality* in which it would become a non-now, a past now – this process is indeed a process of pure auto-affection in which *the same is the same only in being affected by the other, only by becoming the other of the same*. This auto-affection must be pure since the primordial impression is here affected by nothing other than itself, by the absolute “novelty” of another primordial impression which is *another* now. SP, p. 85.

*Within* the temporal, constantly flowing stream of my consciousness, it is precisely this pure difference between my living absolute origin and *other* absolute origins, which are still mine despite their radical *alterity*, the difference between my actually living present and my *other* presents (as past or future presents), that introduces all the instances of *nonpresence* and *otherness* into the relation to self, and therefore, as Derrida wants to show, the absolute necessity of *indication* and *signification*.

As we said before (Ch3, sec2) with regard to the fifth *Cartesian Meditation*, *nonpresence*, *otherness* and *indicative* language are the essential predicates for the definition of every intersubjective relation between different origins of the world, between transcendental alter egos. We have seen that in the case of oral communication between two egological subjects there can be only analogical ap-presentation and the detour through indication, i.e., through signs, the structure of which is determined by Husserl as “*Anzeigen*” and as “*für etwas sein*.” Now it is precisely in Husserl’s description of the relation to the self and to the other involved in immanent experience and in the movement of primordial temporalization where Derrida finds the origin of *indication* and therefore the roots of everything that participates in the determination of indication as impure expression, the roots of everything that Husserl excludes from the supposedly pure inwardness of solitary life: *spacing*, the world, writing, death.

Considering the temporalization of the lived experience of sense, Derrida often recalls this “instructive comparison” to which Husserl refers in the *Cartesian Meditations* (§52). The comparison is to be made between the constitution of the other as *other present* and the constitution of the other as *alter ego*.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> IOG, p. 86, n90, *Violence and Metaphysics*, p. 132-33, SP, p. 68-69, *On Touching*, p. 176

According to Husserl the appresentational constitution of “another monad ... in mine”<sup>113</sup> can be illuminated by having recourse to the movement of primordial temporalization: *within* the absolute identity of the living present (but it is precisely the *effraction* of the “within” that we are approaching here) which dialectically maintains and projects itself, all temporal alterity and all alter egos can be constituted and appear *as such*: as *other* absolute origins of the world. Derrida writes, “the possibility of constituting within the absolute and universal *form* of the living present (unchangeable in itself and always other in its material content) another now, another absolute origin of my absolutely absolute origin, this possibility is the root of intersubjectivity.”<sup>114</sup> We should note, however, that, given that both constitutions or movements are dialectical through and through, there is not just an *analogy* between the dialectic of temporalization and the dialectic of intersubjectivity, and no question of anteriority in the relation between the one and the other: they are rather inseparable and refer to the same structural root, i.e., the *possibility of noema or sense*.

Now, even before sense enters an intersubjective circulation acquiring thereby (and with the help of speech in which it is deposited and sedimented) its ideal objectivity, it must appear and be repeatedly identified as the *same* within an intrasubjective circulation and verification: speech is therefore necessary for the constitution of the ideal identity of sense in thought and for its intersubjective transmission.

In as much as sense is, like all ideality temporal through and through, it is never *simply*, *immediately* and *actually* present to a self-identical intuition. The *irreality* of the inclusion of sense in consciousness, the presence of sense to consciousness is not the presence of some thing existing in the world (or in some other world). Rather, as we have repeatedly said, this “strange” presence, this “inclusive *and* non-inclusive inclusion” is, in its pure form, the correlate of acts of repetition. Since the unity of sense, within the “solitary mental life” of the subject, owes nothing to an empirical or worldly existence, since it is ideal, its *sameness* is nothing but the ideal possibility of an indefinite repetition of a subjective and productive act: once sense has appeared in an egological subjectivity, after an originary and transitory evidence, after a finite and passive<sup>115</sup> retention, it does not return to nothingness by the vanishing of the retentions of

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<sup>113</sup> CM, §52, p. 115. See also *Violence and Metaphysics* where Derrida maintains, defending the Husserlian expression “alter ego” against Levinas’s interpretation of the “alter” as an epithetical and accidental modification of my real empirical identity, that the alter ego, according to Husserl, is not a *real* moment of my egological life, that *the inclusion of the another monadic ego in mine* is not a *reel* inclusion since if it were I would have a primordial presentation of the other’s lived experiences: this is an absolute impossibility. VM, p. 125-26.

<sup>114</sup> IOG, p. 86n.

<sup>115</sup> *On the one hand*, this passage from passive retention to memory, to the intentional activity of recollection, the passage which “produces ideality and pure Objectivity *as such* and makes *other absolute origins appear as such*, is always described by Husserl as *an already given possibility*, as a *structural*

retentions. This sense can, always and in principle, be repeated, reanimated and reproduced as *identically the same* in another lived experience, in the act of recollection.<sup>116</sup> The ideality of sense is announced then in this coincidence or overlapping (*Deckung*) of identity, which can undoubtedly be repeated indefinitely and verified anew in and through absolutely *other* moments and acts of the *same* egological subject. So before becoming with speech “the ideality of an identical object for other subjects”, Derrida writes, “sense is this ideality for *other* moments of the same subject. In a certain way, therefore, *intersubjectivity* is first the *nonempirical* relation of Ego to Ego, of my present present to other presents as such; i.e., as others and as presents (past presents).”<sup>117</sup>

According to Derrida we should think the two movements at once, that is a) the transition from passive retention as primary memory to the activity of intentional recollection (*Wiedererinnerung*) as secondary memory and re-presentation, the transition which “‘produces’ ideality and pure Objectivity *as such* and makes *other* absolute origins appear *as such*”<sup>118</sup>. And b) *intersubjectivity*, i.e., the necessary transition by way of ap-presentation and indication in relation to an *other* ego, to an *other* present, to an *other* absolute origin, that is, in relation to what makes the ideal Objectivity of sense possible. It is because there is such a circulation of different, *nonidentical* absolute origins that the *same* sense can appear in, through, and in view of absolutely *other* moments and acts of repetition. Intersubjectivity is then inseparable from the movement of temporalization, to the extent that the later, as Husserl has described it, is taken as the irreducible openness of the present upon an outside of itself, i.e., upon *another* absolute present. (SP, p. 84n)

This necessary transition, however, from one present to another present *as such*, from ego to ego, as the condition of ideal objectivity in general, necessarily happens, as Husserl himself shows in the fifth *Cartesian Mediation*, by way of analogical ap-presentation and of signs. This entails that the relation of ego to ego in the movement of temporalization, that is, the relation of one absolute origin to another absolute origin as “a *nonderived* re-presentation”, *as interval, genuine separation or distance*, i.e., *as spacing*<sup>119</sup>, produces and makes necessary the structure of

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*ability* whose source is not made a problem.” (IOG, p. 86, and especially p. 100n) But, *on the other hand*, as Derrida also writes in *Genesis Structure and Phenomenology*: the possibility of sense, and its originary iterative structure, is for Husserl the common root of passivity and activity. *WD*, p. 158.

<sup>116</sup> For the description of the passage from retention to memory in the constitution of the ideal object of geometry see Husserl’s *Origin of Geometry*, p. 163.

<sup>117</sup> IOG, p. 86.

<sup>118</sup> *ibid.*, p. 86n

<sup>119</sup> “Intersubjectivity is inseparable from temporalization taken as the openness of the present upon an outside of itself, upon *another* absolute present. This being outside itself proper to time is its *spacing*: it is a *proto-stage [archi-scène]*. This stage, as the relation of one present to another present *as such*, that is, as a

the sign as indication (*Anzeigen*) as “reference” and as “being-for-something”, and thereby makes the reduction of indication in my “solitary mental life” radically impossible.

Speech, the incorporation of *sense* to the body of the sign which is exposed in the world, is therefore structurally necessary to the intersubjective *and* intrasubjective circulation or repetition of sense, i.e., to the constitution and temporalization of sense. Being ideal or unreal, which means neither bound to the objective time of the world nor to a pure subjective interiority, sense must *await* being *said*, i.e., incarnated in sensible spatiotemporality, in the wordly element or body of speech which belongs to an intersubjective horizon, in order to inhabit itself but also in order to maintain and lengthen its sojourn there, in order to become what it is: *omnitemporal* (i.e., nonspatiotemporal, *free* from the factual historical temporality to which Greek or German words, in their ideality, are still *bound*)<sup>120</sup>. It must be able to be said, to go forth beyond and engage itself with the expressive and then indicative “stratum” of real communication, i.e., it must be able to defer itself *and* differ from itself, in order to become what it is: ideal, virtually present for every speaking subject whatsoever. It is not simply by accident then that the linguistic “stratum” is intermixed with the silent “substratum” of sense, or that the inside of expression comes to be affected by the outside of indication. Their entanglement (or contamination) is not dictated simply by a factual or empirical necessity, that of a real and actual communication, as Husserl wanted it in order to keep the distinction between inward speech and indicative communication, between expressive *phone* and indicative *graphie*. To the extent that indication *must* come to be added to the stratum of expression, and the latter *must* come to be added to the stratum of sense, in order for an ideal Objectivity to be *fully* constituted, their addition and entanglement, far from denoting an extrinsic or contingent necessity, is essential and absolutely irreducible.

We say that “sense must await being said” but we should also say that it must await being *written* so as to gather all those elements which we usually associate with writing, i.e., spacing, visibility of the letter, exteriority, the world, death, etc, all the elements therefore which find their origin in the movement of temporalization and threaten from the “inside” the “absolute inside”, i.e., the immediate self-presence of the living present, as well as the myth of the living voice. Hearing oneself speak then is not the absolute inside (the spontaneous reduction of the expressive or indicative signifier in front of the presence of sense) because it is not purely temporal (which also means, in our case, that it is not purely living), and because time itself and the

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nonderived re-presentation (*Vergegenwärtigung* or *Repräsentation*), produces the structure of signs in general as ‘reference’, as being-for-something (*für etwas sein*), and radically precludes their reduction.” *SP*, pp. 84-85n.

<sup>120</sup> *IOG*, pp. 89n, 90, 92.

temporalization of a lived experience of sense are not purely temporal either, not more acoustic than luminous, not more *sonorous* than *luminous*, no more *in* time than *in* space. “*The temporalization of sense is*”, Derrida writes with emphasis, “*from the outset, a ‘spacing’.*” And he goes on

As soon as we admit spacing both as ‘interval’ or difference and as openness to the outside, there can no longer be an absolute inside, for the outside has insinuated itself into the movement by which the inside of the nonspatial, which is called ‘time’, appears, is constituted, is ‘presented’. Space is ‘in’ time: it is time’s pure leaving-itself; it is the ‘outside itself’ as the self-relation of time. The externality of space, externality as space, does not overtake time; rather, it opens as pure ‘outside’ ‘within’ the movement of temporalization. SP, p. 86.

If we recall now that the inwardness of pure audiophonic auto-affection supposed the purely temporal nature of the *living* voice, the externality or spatiality of indicative signification and of writing, could only destroy the self-presence of the *living* present, it is literally the *death* of that self-presence.<sup>121</sup> The consequences of this irreducibility of indication in inward speech are more disquieting than ever. We will never stop counting them.

The privilege of the living voice (together with the radical distinction between pure inward expression and outward indication), the solitary mental life of the subject, seems to be threatened and undermined then not by something that is “external” to it, which would presuppose that the subject is first constituted by itself in its self-identity, in the self-identity and self-presence of its life and *then* faces, confronts or lets itself being affected by what is outside, by the other, the alter ego, or death. It is, rather, as Derrida writes, “undermined *by its own origin, by the very conditions of its self-presence, by time* to be conceived now on the basis of *differance within auto-affection*, on the basis of identifying identity and nonidentity within sameness” (SP, p. 68). But what is called here “time” is not the proper noun or name to designate this movement of differance within auto-affection, which is not even a movement or an operation, an operation of a substance or a subject, of a thing in general, i.e., of a being identical and present to itself that would come eventually to defer and differ. Time, as differance within auto-affection, cannot be conceived on the basis of an “absolute subjectivity”, on the basis of a present being, a being that is present to itself and to its voice, present whether speaking to himself or to the other. Constituting it and dislocating it at the same time, “time” is other than the subject. (SP, p. 84n.) If the living present is the absolute form of all subjective and egological life, then “time” produces.

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<sup>121</sup> This writing as spacing, Derrida writes, “marks the *dead* time within the presence of the living present, within the general form of presence.” *Of Grammatology*, pp. 68, 70.

what it forbids, or, as Derrida put it in *Of Grammatology*, it makes possible what it makes impossible: the absolute identity of the subject as self-presence.<sup>122</sup>

The hypothesis of the voice, of the purely spiritual breath, of a *fully present and alive* voice, a voice without difference and without writing, that is, of a purely inward speech, of the pure and absolute inside of an *inner* life, and therefore the hypothesis of pure and simple *life* identical and present to itself is contradicted *by time itself*, by the temporalization of lived experience and of sense itself. Since time is conceived of as the openness upon *another* absolute present, i.e., as the openness of the present upon the outside of itself, then spacing, visibility, the world, death, writing, etc, are primordially implied in the movement of temporalization. Which again means that they do not simply befall and overtake the pure interiority of the living present from without, for the very reason that space, the world, death, etc, open as pure “outside” “within” the movement of the temporalization and presentation of the living present itself. There can no longer be neither an absolute inside (called presence, life), nor an absolute outside (called nonpresence, nonplenitude or death). As it always happens the outside bears with the inside a relationship that is anything but a simple exteriority. The sense of the outside was always inscribed in the inside, confined outside the outside. “The living present is originally marked by death.”<sup>123</sup>

The above can be confirmed if we think through what we referred to at the end of the previous section as the “paradoxical” relation between the determination of being as presence and its determination as ideality, i.e., as the infinite repetition of the same. The possibility of the infinite repetition of the *same* in different acts and moments, which is the common root of the intersubjective and intrasubjective constitution of sense in its ideal Objectivity, the possibility that presence to consciousness (the presence of sense to consciousness and of consciousness to itself) can be indefinitely repeated, is experienced by the subject as *sense* and *right*, as *life itself*.<sup>124</sup> This experience, itself ideal and absolute, signifies the absolute certainty of the subject that the universal form of all *possible* experience, and of all life is the presence of the living present. There is no experience, past or to come, which can be *lived* other than in the present (other than in

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid, p. 143.

<sup>123</sup> *Violence and Metaphysics*, p. 133.

<sup>124</sup> IOG, p. 137.

an ordinary or modified form of presence.) The notion of a past whose sense (*Sinn*) could not be thought in the form of a (past) present is an absolute *impossibility* for phenomenology.<sup>125</sup>

But in order for such a relationship with presence, as the absolute and universal form of all experience and of all *life*, to be instituted, the subject must open itself to the knowledge (which is not one knowledge among others) that after its empirical death or factual disappearance, or even after the annihilation of the totality of the existing world in general, the living present alone *is* and will ever *be*. Consequently this relationship with death becomes the *concrete* structure of presence, indeed of the living present. Derrida writes

The relation with the presence of the present as the ultimate form of being and of ideality is the move by which I transgress empirical existence, factuality, contingency, wordliness, etc. – first of all *my own* empirical existence, factuality, contingency, wordliness, etc. [...] I can empty all empirical content, imagine the absolute overthrow of the *content* of every possible experience, a radical transformation of the world. I have a strange and unique certitude that this universal form of presence, since it concerns no determined being, will not be affected by it. The relation with *my death* (my disappearance in general) thus lurks in this determination of being as presence, ideality, the absolute possibility of repetition. SP, p. 54.

Similarly, the possibility of sense and of language in general is given only by this relationship with death. Hence the transcendental sense of death<sup>126</sup>. *My death*, my factual or actual disappearance will not be comprehended as sense (as having or making sense), but neither simply as a factual horizon, as an empirical possibility or a contingent eventuality extrinsic to the living production and movement of sense and signification. The possibility of my death, of my nonpresence or disappearance in general is an *essential* possibility inasmuch as it is *necessarily* inscribed in the functioning of my signs, of my meaningful speech or writing. My mortality, the possibility of death, of my *factual* disappearance, and as we are going to see, the factual absence of my *hic et nunc* meaning or *vouloir-dire*, is *necessarily* implied in the pronouncing of any meaningful expression whatsoever, for example, in the statement *I am*, or *I am alive*. Derrida writes about this strangely murmured implication of death and mortality in the statement *I am*:

If the possibility of my disappearance in general must somehow be experienced in order for a relationship with presence in general to be instituted, we can no longer say that the experience of the possibility of my absolute disappearance (my death), occurs to an *I am*, and modifies a subject. The *I am*, being experienced as *I am present*, itself supposes the relationship with presence in general, with being as presence. The appearing of the I to itself in the *I am* is thus originally a relation with its own possible disappearance. Therefore, *I am* originally means *I am mortal*. *I am immortal* is an impossible proposition. SP, p. 54.

<sup>125</sup> It is this *im-possibility* that we are attempting, following Derrida in *Speech and Phenomena*, here to think *otherwise*, by putting into question, by deconstructing the dominant thinking of the possible, this *superpowerful* concept of the *possible* in Husserl's transcendental phenomenology.

<sup>126</sup> IOG, p. 88. And in *Signature Event Context*, p. 8 "the value or effect of transcendental is linked by Husserl to the possibility of writing and 'death' thus analysed."



*I am immortal*, is an impossible proposition, i.e., absurd (with the absurdity of *Widersinnigkeit*), and *a fortiori* false according to the distinctions that Husserl himself has elaborated for his *pure logical grammar*, but since, as we are going to see in the next section, the very (teleological) idea of truth, i.e., of knowledge, which guides from afar these distinctions conceals the relationship with death, this false proposition is the truth of metaphysics, “the very truth of truth.” (ibid., p. 54n)

Only by employing rigorously the logic and the rules of the distinctions which Husserl establishes in his pure logical grammar, Derrida in the last chapter of *Speech and Phenomena*, will engage in a discussion about the “*possibility of my death*”, and write, without absurdity, that “*my death is structurally necessary to the pronouncing of the I.*” (ibid., p. 96)

## 2) The Supplement of the Subject: Speech as Writing

In the last chapter of *Speech and Phenomena*, “*The supplement of Origin*”, Derrida returns to Husserl’s §9 but only after having taken a long detour. The three preceding chapters of *Speech* were devoted to a close commentary on the last paragraph of §8 in which Derrida brought forth and described the experience of audio-phonetic auto-affection in the living present as *the* egological and subjective *form* of all experience (transcendental or empirical) and of all life. Derrida, however, does not deny this experience on the basis of being a solipsistic hypothesis.<sup>127</sup> Breaking away from solipsism, was never, for Derrida, a question of abandoning phenomenological justification. This experience describes, in its most general and universal but also most concrete form, the human relation to self, human (inter)subjectivity.<sup>128</sup> Hearing-oneself speak is the hypothesis<sup>129</sup> or the ground on the basis of which phenomenology can describe the objectivity of the object (*Gegenstand*) and the presence of the present (*Gegenwart*) from a certain *inside*, which, as we have seen, is not a *simple* inside but the intimate possibility of a relation to an outside and to a beyond in general. Hearing oneself speak is a unique operation, the pure production of the *phenomenon* as an object *for* a subject and its voice; it is also the possibility for what is called *subjectivity* or the *for itself* (*für sich*): the subject relates to itself, reflects on or returns to itself and reappropriates itself through the power (the possibility or capacity) to repeat presence, through the *technical prosthesis* of the voice and the power of repetition which idealizes itself. “Here idealization is the movement by which sensible exteriority, that which

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<sup>127</sup> And indeed Husserl wanted to describe it as such, by insisting that the processes of indication is absent in the interior *monologue* and “*solitary mental life*” of the ego, and that “*analogical*” and “*empathic apprehension*” comes *afterward* (as the exiting moment out of solipsism), only to find itself grounded in the intuitive presence of an “*I am*”. On the other hand, only *prejudices* could give to an investigation into the solipsistic sphere of the ego a bad name. Speaking of the *egoic* essence of experience as *Urtatsache*, of “*this I am*” which “*is for me, for the I who says it and understands it accordingly, the primordial intentional foundation of my world*”, Husserl writes “*Whether convenient or inconvenient, and even though (due to whatever prejudices) it may sound monstrous to me, I must hold fast before the primordial fact (Urtatsache), which I, as a philosopher, must not disregard for a single instant. For children in philosophy, this may be a dark corner haunted by the spectres of solipsism and, perhaps of psychologism, of relativism. The true philosopher, instead of turning away, will prefer to fill the dark corner with light.*” *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, p. 237 and particularly §95 with the title “*Necessity Of Starting, Each From His Own Subjectivity*”, pp. 236-7.

<sup>128</sup> “*Eating Well*” or *the Calculation of the Subject*, p. 79. The distinction between human intersubjectivity and that which is created between animals is also the distinction between, *on the one hand*, the human relation to self, that of a being capable of phonic auto-affection, capable of consciousness and of speech, i.e., capable of the phenomenological *as such* and, *on the other hand*, the nonhuman or animal relation to self incapable of the phenomenological *as such*. IOG, p. 81n.

<sup>129</sup> For the Greek notion of *hypo-thesis* as “*the base or basis, the infrastructure posed beneath or at the bottom of a foundation*”, or as “*the subject, substance, supposition of a discourse*” see *Rogues, Two Essays on Reason*, p. 136.

affects me or serves me as signifier, thenceforth appears to me as my spontaneity and escapes me less and less".<sup>130</sup> This possibility of inward speech and of the *consciousness* of speech, is the phenomenon of auto-affection lived as the *immediate* presence of the signified and the effacement of the exterior, empirical or contingent signifier. This limitless power over the mundane signifier, this lived and spontaneous reduction of the opacity of the signifier is the *origin* of presence.

This origin, however, which according to "the principle of principles" of phenomenology constitutes the absolute point of departure, the rightful beginning, the unique origin of a principal responsibility and accountability, this origin present to itself and identical with itself, is what has already been deconstructed and what has deconstructed "itself", offered itself since for ever to the deconstruction "of itself". If analogical appresentation and indication partake and are irreducible in the solipsistic operation of auto-affection, then the self of the origin, the autonomy of the self, of the "*ipse*" or "*autos*", has opened and subjected itself, from the very beginning, starting at the threshold of the speaking-hearing, to the processes of differance, of writing, of substitutive supplementation, of exappropriation,

Now even if Husserl has recognized the necessity of the linguistic incarnation of sense, the necessity of the linguistic threads to be woven with the pre-linguistic threads of experience for an experience of auto-affection to be possible, for *subjectivity*, and the *for-itself* of a self-present egological subjectivity to be possible, he never gave an unambiguous answer to the question concerning the ultimate reason, the *raison d'etre* of their interweaving or addition. Why does the ego (that is, the transcendental ego as the absolute origin of the world) have to say *I, I am*, so as to affect or hear itself, if the silent, but full, immediate and actual intuition or perception of itself were possible? What is the *raison d'etre* of this *prosthesis* of the expression *I, I am, etc.*? What is the cause or foundation of this *supplement*, if the *immediate* presentation of the ego to itself were *possible*, if the lived experiences of the ego were instantaneously self-present in the mode of absolute certitude?

If indication, for example, writing in the colloquial sense, does not simply come as a supplement to be added to speech, if the "inside" of expression is not accidentally affected by the "outside" of writing, and if expression itself is not added from the outside like a stratum to a pre-expressive, silent stratum of lived experience or sense, then one should suspect that their addition or interweaving is not simply an empirical accident but an absolutely irreducible and essential necessity. The constitution of ideal objects and their transmissibility, history itself, is at stake here. If writing, as the sensible and durable inscription of a sign or a mark in space, *must*

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<sup>130</sup> Of Grammatology, p.166.

supplement speech (which is supposed to be alive and fully present to itself), and speech *must* supplement sense (which is supposedly immediately present as evidence at the same moment it is produced), then this perhaps means that the “presence” of speech and the “presence” of sense *have already from the start fallen short of themselves*.

If that is so, if “presence” is marked by an anterior default or deficiency (an emptiness or void) which needs to be filled up by a supplement, we can speak of speech and writing as “*primordial supplements*”, of that “strange” structure that – contrary to all good and traditional, that is, metaphysical logic – comes to dislocate, to replace or to hold the place of that which is supposed to supplement. Its strangeness consists in the fact that, “by a *delayed* reaction” (SP, p. 89), the possibility of an addition, of a simple supplementation produces *presence*, the *origin* itself, i.e., that to which it is supposed to be added on. The supplement thus becomes the origin of the origin, which means either that there is no absolute origin or that the absolute origin is only the supplement of the supplement.<sup>131</sup>

Now this supplementary and technical prosthesis<sup>132</sup> of the signifier or mark to the purity of self-relation, to the simplicity of a consciousness that is simply present to itself, Derrida calls *differance*. *Differance* takes the place or *stands in the place of* “presence” (i.e., of the living, self-identical origin) due to the latter’s primordial self-deficiency. What is supplementary is the process of *differance* which submits presence simultaneously to a primordial division and delay.<sup>133</sup>

[The] concept of originary supplementation not only implies nonplenitude of presence (or, in Husserl’s language, the nonfulfillment of an intuition); it designates this function of **substitutive supplementation** in general, the in-the-place-of (*für etwas*) structure which belongs to every sign in

<sup>131</sup> OGr. pp. 298, 313ff

<sup>132</sup> If we speak of the *technical* addition of the phone this is in order to argue that there were never such a thing as a natural phone, a natural unity of sense or thought and phone, of sense and the sense of sound, and in order to highlight the primordial unity of *phone* and *techne*: without the voice there would be no “world as such”, that is to say, no idealization of sense (*Sinn*), no culture, no objectivity of the object, no project of truth, and no history whatsoever.

<sup>133</sup> According to the most traditional and classical semiology, the sign is put “in the place of”, it takes and occupies the place of the thing itself, of the present thing (sense or referent): it represents and supplements the absence of presence. Whenever the present, sense or referent, cannot be presented, we signify. The sign is *deferred* presence: the circulation of signs *defers* the moment in which we encounter, perceive, touch, etc., the present thing itself. The sign is thought on the basis of a presence, of a presence that is deferred and at the same time anticipated or foreseen through the sign. According to this semiology the *substitution* of the sign for the present thing is both *secondary* and *provisional*. It is this “provisional secondariness” which is put into question with the notion of “primordial substitution” or “primordial differance”. But again we shouldn’t even call it “primordial” since the values of *primordiality*, of *absolute beginning*, of *arche*, *origin* (and *telos*) have always denoted presence, *ousia* or *parousia*. See *Differance*, p. 9 and *Of Grammatology* p. 61. The notion of supplement has the same deconstructive value as the notion of the sign: to restore the original and nonderivative structure of the supplement, to speak of the *primordial* supplement is at the same time to upset or disturb the binary and hierarchical oppositions on the basis of which, within the history of metaphysics, the function of substitutive supplementation was always subordinated to the absolute and founding value of presence.

general. [...] What we would ultimately like to draw attention to is that the *for-itself* of self-presence (*für sich*) [...] arises in the role of **supplement** as **primordial substitution**, in the form of “in the place of” (*für etwas*), that is, as we have seen, in the very operation of signification in general. The *for-itself* would be an *in-the-place-of: put for itself, instead of itself*. SP, pp. 88-89.

In order to approach this “strange” structure of the supplement of origin we have to investigate more closely into the primordial interweaving (*Verflechtung*) between indication and expression. As we saw, according to the intuitionism and phonologism which commands the whole of Husserl’s discourse (and the distinction between expression and indication), expression is *more full*, *more immediate*, than indication since the ap-presentational detour which is irreducible in real communication is no longer necessary in inward speech, and since it can function as *pure expression* in the alleged self-presence of a silent and fulfilled *Bedeutungsintention* (LI, §8). But in §9 speaking again about confusions and the *interweaving* (*Verflechtung*) of several relations which remain to be disentangled, Husserl invites us to the last reduction, “the most audacious one”, according to Derrida, whose aim is to isolate and reveal “the specific purity of expression.”

Considering the strange and “dangerous” supplement of origin, Derrida presents Husserl’s last and most audacious reduction: in §9 of this first *logical* investigation he reduces as *nonessential components* of expression the acts of intuitive cognition which “fulfil” the meaning-intention (the *Bedeutungsintention*). According to Derrida, with this move Husserl goes “against the whole philosophical tradition” (SP, p. 90) by recognizing that intuition, cognitive intentionality, the fulfilment or actualization of the aim of meaning in a plenitude (in intuitive perception), is *not* essential to the functioning of meaning (*Bedeutung*) or of expression. Even though the movement toward plenitude, the *telos* of fulfilment in a plenitude is not an accidental element of intentionality, even though it has been described by Husserl as being constitutive of the *Bedeutungsintention* itself, it is not *necessary*, says Husserl, that it be attained for an expression to have meaning and, thereby, to acquire the status of genuine speech. The question we have to tackle now is how Husserl can maintain these two moves, which are not simply antithetical: how he can organize the subordination of language to the norm of knowledge and how at the same time leave open a space for the description of language’s freedom. As Derrida writes

It is important to see how from a distance – an articulated distance – an intuitionist theory of knowledge determines Husserl’s conception of language. *The whole originality of this conception* lies in the fact that its *ultimate subjection* to intuitionism does not oppress what might be called the freedom of language, the candor of speech (*franc-parler d’un discours*) even if it is false or contradictory. SP, p. 89.

Here, in order to estimate or measure the “originality” of Husserl’s conception, we must consider the formalist motif of his “pure *logical* grammar”.<sup>134</sup> Employing the distinctions from this *logical* grammar we can say, with Husserl, that *one can speak without knowing* and this speech is still genuine speech. One can speak without *seeing*, one can *very well* speak outside the *horizon* of truth, provided one’s speech conforms to grammatical rules which do not immediately figure as rules for knowledge. When Husserl speaks of “pure logical grammar” what he means by it is an elaboration of a formal doctrine of conditions, a building up of a universal system of rules which a speech or a discourse must satisfy in order to have *sense*, in order to *mean*, even where it makes no knowledge possible. In this sense, pure logical grammar, i.e., the general morphology of that *meaning*, is independent of all logic of *truth*. The cognitive intuition through which we come to see and know objects is not essential to normal speech, to the meaning of a speech which obeys purely *grammatical* forms<sup>135</sup>: the absence of intuition does not imply the absence of the meaning of speech. Speech, to be sure, must make *sense*, but the question now becomes: is a contradictory, false or absurd speech, a *widersinnig* speech also an unintelligible or *sinnlos* speech? Husserl’s institution of a pure logical grammar depends entirely on the distinctions between *Sinnlosigkeit* and *Widersinnigkeit*, *Gegenstandlosigkeit* and *Bedeutungslosigkeit*: expressions like “a golden mountain” or “the circle is square” may offer no knowledge, since they give us no object to see (for empirical or *a priori* reasons), may even be *widersinnig*, but they are definitely neither *sinnlos*, nor *Bedeutunglos*. The absence of the object (*Gegenstandlosigkeit*) is not the absence of meaning (*Bedeutungslosigkeit*). Since it obeys certain grammatical rules, an absurd expression “the circle is square” is not nonsense (*Unsinn*). Pure

<sup>134</sup> Both in the *Prolegomena to Pure Logic* (§§ 67-69) and in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (§§ 12-15), Husserl designates, but also arranges and hierarchizes, the most essential tasks of pure logic : 1) in the first place, at the most fundamental level or stage, comes the “pure logical grammar” also called “the pure morphology of *Bedeutungen*”, 2) the logic of consequence or noncontradiction and 3) the theory of the possible form of theory. The aim of the *forth Logical Investigation* is to distinguish in this stratification of logic the first most fundamental and most elementary logical stratum as the ground on which the remainder logical edifice is founded. The question pertaining to the most elementary logical stratum is: how can one put *Bedeutungen* together in order to make a new, more complex *Bedeutung*, by considering exclusively their **form** and by disregarding the question of their objective validity, i.e., the question of the *possible truth* of *Bedeutungen*? For the importance of the “pure morphology of *Bedeutungen*” in Husserl’s project in *Logical Investigations I* and in *Formal and Transcendental Logic* see also S. Bachelard’s *Study of Husserl’s Formal and Transcendental Logic*, pp. 5ff.

<sup>135</sup> In order to explain the purely grammatical, Husserl refers to a *general* morphology of *Bedeutungen*, and he notes that this general, meta-empirical grammar does not cover the entire *a priori* of language but only the logical *a priori* of language. Husserl writes in the fourth edition of the fourth Logical Investigation: “In the first edition I spoke of ‘pure grammar’, a name conceived and expressly devised to be analogous to Kant’s ‘pure science of nature’. Since it cannot, however, be said that the pure morphology of *Bedeutungen* comprehends the entire *a priori* of general grammar – there is, e.g., a peculiar *a priori* governing relations of mutual understanding among psychic subjects, relations very important for grammar – talk of pure logical grammar is to be preferred.” *LI, Vol II*, p. 527.

logical grammar excludes from normal discourse only what is nonsense, the agrammaticalness of *Sinnlosigkeit*, for example “abrakatabra” or “green is or.” (LI, §15, p. 293)

Now in order to support this last and most audacious reduction of cognitive intuition, Derrida follows one by one the distinctions on the basis of which Husserl was able “to redefine a pure *logical grammar*” and thereby to isolate and “delineate the *logical a priori of language* within the general *a priori of language*.” (SP, p. 9) These are mainly the distinctions between the pure intention (the *Bedeutungsintention*, the intention to signify, to say something *sinnvoll* or meaningful) and the (fulfilling) intuition, between *Bedeutungslosigkeit* and *Gegenstandslosigkeit*, between *Widersinnigkeit* and *Sinnlosigkeit*, and finally between meaning, expression (as idealities) and the *object* (which need not be ideal). “Without such distinctions, no pure logical grammar would be possible. The possibility of pure forms of judgements, which supports the entire structure of the *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, would be blocked” (SP, p. 91). According to Derrida, with the constitution of a general and pure morphology of *Bedeutungen*, Husserl shows how language can function freely and entirely by itself when its intention (*bedeuten*) is cut off from cognitive intuition, i.e., from intuitive presence.

It is only by following the logic of these distinctions that Derrida can bring to light the essential possibility of *nonintuition* or of *nonpresence*, a possibility which, even if it seems to be simply negative, has a constitutive and positive value: it constitutes the *Bedeutung* as such. Here an apparently negative possibility of form, the possibility of an im-possibility, i.e., the im-possibility of plenitude, of full intuitive presence, or, as we are going to see, the im-possibility of adequation between perception and expression, is not simply negative but also a chance, the positive condition of signification itself. Now as we have seen in the first part of the thesis, Husserl has examined and determined this possibility of nonplenitude, i.e., of nonintuition or nonpresence, in a teleological manner, as a simply negative, inferior, and even dangerous or critical possibility: it opens the phenomenon of the crisis of sense, as the crisis of *logos* itself. But Husserl also recognized, as we read in Derrida’s Introduction to his *Origin of Geometry*, that this critical possibility is also an eidetic possibility or necessity: crisis, as the forgetfulness of the origin, is linked to the very moment of truth and the constitution of ideal Objectivity, and thereby it is bound to the *essential possibility of writing*. The negativity of crisis, of forgetfulness is not a mere accident. It is then the notion of “crisis” that becomes suspect, together with what ties it to “a dialectical and teleological determination of negativity.”<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>136</sup>Negotiations, p. 402. OGr, p. 40, IOG, p. 36n..

What Derrida intends to show, following Husserl's pure *morphology* of meaning, is that signs (*Zeichen*) as expressions endowed with meaning (*bedeutsame Zeichen*) not only do not necessarily imply fullness in the intuition of the object, but that, on the contrary, what is structurally original about the *Bedeutung* is the absence of any object given to intuition, the *Gegenstandlosigkeit*.

Let us now look more closely at the relation or, indeed, the *tension* between, *on the one hand*, Husserl's *formalist* motif, the formality of pure logical grammar, the institution of a pure *morphology* of *Bedeutungen*<sup>137</sup>, and, *on the other hand*, Husserl's intuitionism (optical or acoustical), the motif or *telos* of plenitude in a perceptive intuition and in the living voice or *Bedeutungsintention*. According to Derrida, it is Husserl's phonologism, his "naïve treatment of the concept of word" (SP, p. 16) that left unresolved the tension between these two major motifs: the purity of formalism and the radicality of intuitionism (which is also a teleologism). This tension can explain how "Husserl describes, and *in one and the same move* effaces the emancipation of speech as nonknowing" (SP, p. 97).

Derrida takes two examples of speech acts which according to the intuitionist motif or imperative (the norm or *telos* of intuitive knowledge, of the intuition, external or internal, that is adequate to its object, and of the meaning that is adequate to itself) should prove the hypothesis that in the full presence of the perceptual sense which comes to *realize* or actualize the aim of signification or expression (the aim of a *logical meaning*), the fulfilling *intuition* and the meaning-*intention* "form an intimately blended unity of an original character" (LI, I, §10, p. 282.). As Husserl put this hypothesis in the previous paragraph:

In the *realized* (*realisierten*) relation of the expression to its objective correlate, the sense informed expression becomes one with the act of meaning-fulfilment (*Bedeutungserfüllung*). The sounded word is made one with (*ist einst mit*) the meaning-intention (*Bedeutungsintention*), and this in its turn is made one (*as intentions in general are made one with their fulfilments*) with its corresponding meaning-fulfilment. (my emphasis) LI, §9, p. 281

1) First Derrida takes the case where a perception comes to fulfil the meaning-intention of the speaker, the statement about a perception, "I see a man by the window." Now is this fulfilling perception necessary or indispensable for the functioning of the *Bedeutung* of this statement? Husserl himself says that it is only contingent, an eventual possibility which does not

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<sup>137</sup> Husserl in *Logical Investigations* determines the category of the sign in general as *a form*, and not as a *genus*. LI, I, §23, SP, p. 23.



affect what is essential to the perceptual expression, to what is aimed at by the meaning-intention (*Bedeutungsintention*).

This objective somewhat [what is intended by perception] can either be actually present, through accompanying **intuitions** (*Anschauungen aktuell gegenwärtig*), or may at least appear in representation (*vergegenwärtigt*) e.g., in a mental image, and where this happens the relation to an object is **realized**. Alternatively this **need not** occur: the expression function significantly (*sinnvoll*), it remains more that a sound of words, but it *lacks any basic intuition that will give it its object (den Gegenstand gebenden Anschauung\_entbehrt)*. *LI*, §9, p. 280

Even if, as we have said, the *Bedeutungsintention* is always determined *in view of* a relation to an object, the acts of intuition which give the object and fulfil the *Bedeutungsintention*, Husserl writes, are “not essential (*außerwesentlich*) to the expression *as such*” (*ibid*), only this *Bedeutungsintention*, the living and life-giving act which animates and gives meaning to the body of expression (and thereby transforms it into a living flesh) is essential and indispensable. It is enough that the *Bedeutungsintention* animates this body for speech to take place; the absence of the object does not compromise the meaningfulness of the expression in the sense that it does not reduce it to an unanimated, physical body, to a “mere sound of words.” (*ibid*) An expression acquires the status of speech then only if it is endowed with a meaning (*Bedeutung*) which can function in the absence of its object, in the absence of intuitive presence, and provided that this speech also conforms to grammatical or semantic rules.

As Husserl will later (and after having first demonstrated the difference or *non-coincidence* between *expression*, *meaning* and *object* in §12) write: “We distinguish, in a perceptual statement, as in every statement, between content and object; by content we understand the self-identical meaning (*identische Bedeutung*) that the hearer can grasp even if he is not a percipient” (*LI*, §14, p. 290). The proposition “I see a man by the window” will still have meaning and be intelligible by anyone who is listening to me, even if he does not see any man, or even if I do not see any man, if I do not see him clearly, or even if I want to mislead my interlocutor etc. Not that this is always the case but this proposition can be said and be understood by any speaking subject without the presence of the object<sup>138</sup> aimed at by the acts of perception or intuition. Better, it belongs to the structure of possibility of this proposition that it can be uttered and function despite the absence of the subject’s perception *here and now*. Without this possibility there would be no meaningful speech whatsoever. Derrida writes

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<sup>138</sup> We distinguish a statement whose object (and correlatively the perception of the object) is only possible from a statement whose object is impossible, for empirical or for a priori reasons, as in the case of “a golden mountain” and “a squared circle”. The absence of the object is neither a *Sinnlosigkeit* nor a *Bedeutungslosigkeit*.

Since this possibility is constitutive of the possibility of speech, it should structure the very act of him who speaks while perceiving. My nonperception, my nonintuition, my *hic et nunc* absence, are expressed by that very thing that I say, by *that* which I say and *because* I say it. SP, p. 93.

A perceptual statement then requires, as its essential condition of possibility, the absence of perception, and therefore the absence of the empirical subject of perception, as well as the absence of the object he was able to describe. This absence of the object, the *Gegenstandlosigkeit*, as nonperception or nonplenitude, does not prevent the statement from functioning, i.e., from meaning something, on the contrary, it is this possibility of nonperception which gives birth to meaning as such, gives it out to be heard and read. Whether or not perception accompanies an expression about perception is, therefore, quite indifferent to the function of its meaning (*Bedeutung*.)

And if what is *structurally original* in a meaningful expression is the *Gegenstandlosigkeit*, its ability to dispense with the presence of the object aimed at by intuition, this also means, according to Husserl and Derrida, that a linguistic expression which *can only* function in the presence of its object, or a meaning which can be fused into intuitive presence not only loses its originality but also disappears, gets paralyzed or dies.<sup>139</sup> An expression without iterability, and, as we are going to see, a voice without difference or without writing is absolutely alive *and* absolutely dead.<sup>140</sup>

2) With the second example, the speech act which involves the personal pronoun *I*, Derrida wants to demonstrate how writing, in the generalized sense, is involved in the so-called “*living*” speech. In the last analysis, if a “*living*,” or “*original*,” or “*natural*”, i.e., “*innocent*”,

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<sup>139</sup> Husserl has to admit that the hypothesis of the intimate fusion of meaning- intention and intuition is absurd and contradictory. According to Marrati, Husserl was never able to think the originality of the *Bedeutung*: “although the originality of language lies in its ability to function without a full intuition, *its essence is still that it is fulfilled by intuition.*” *Genesis and Trace*, p. 79 According to our interpretation, the telos of fulfillment belongs to the essence of meaning but, what Husserl writes, is that the fulfillment in intuition is not essential (*außerwesentlich sind* (§10), that the fulfillment is not necessary to the functioning of meaning. Like Marrati, John Caputo believes that “the teleology of fulfillment obscures Husserl’s achievement,” and proceeds to a set of distinctions in order to describe deconstruction as “a politics of liberation”: the distinction between the “police work” of Husserl’s a priori grammar and Derrida’s work of liberation in *Speech*, between “the unemployment or uselessness of signs” in Husserl and the “full”, “gainful”, “useful” employment, and “honest work” of signs in Derrida! John Caputo, “The Economy of Signs in Husserl and Derrida: From Uselessness to Full Employment”, published in *Deconstruction and Philosophy*, The University of Chicago Press, 1987, pp.104, 108. This text, full with so many capitalistic, liberalistic, and Christian connotations (the “full”, “gainful” employment, the “honest work” of signs in Derrida) runs contrary to Derrida’s most explicitly stated intentions. Unlike Marrati and Caputo, Gasche’s interpretation wants to bring forth Derrida’s indebtedness to Husserl’s “remarkable project” and to recognize the importance and radicality of Husserl’s “rigorous distinction between meaning intention and its possible fulfillment by an intuition of an object” *The Tain of the Mirror*, p. 248.

<sup>140</sup> SP, p. 92, *Limited Inc.*, p. 128-29.

language has never existed, never been intact and uncontaminated by writing, this is because, as Derrida emphasizes in *Of Grammatology*, it has itself always been a species of writing.

What are the essential predicates of writing? Derrida in *Signature Event Context* refers to three rigorously interrelated predicates. We have already referred to one of them: spacing, writing takes place in space. The other two reminds us what Husserl himself wrote in the *Origin* with regard to the “decisive function” of writing in the constitution and transmission of geometrical objects: with writing communication becomes virtual. In the most minimal and classical determination of this notion, writing is a sign or a mark that subsists or *remains*, that does not exhaust itself in the moment of its inscription, that can give rise to an *iteration* despite the total absence of its author. This is also what enables us to distinguish written from oral communication: the possibility that a mark or a text can go on functioning despite, and beyond, the absence or death of its author (or any determined receiver). Thirdly, a written sign breaks with its context “that is, with the collectivity of *presences* organizing the moment of its inscription.” Writing carries a force of rupture especially with regard to the so called “real” context of communication: “the ‘present’ of the inscription, the presence of the writer to what he has written, the entire environment and horizon of his experience, and *above all, the intention, the wanting-to-say-what-he-means (vouloir-dire)* which animates his inscription at the given moment.”<sup>141</sup>

As it was the case with the distinction between expression and indication, the play of *presence* with *absence* (of the *Bedeutungsintention*) is at the core of the most traditional determination of the distinction between speech and writing. But, as Derrida tries to demonstrate, these predicates (death, spacing, uprootedness from the context, i.e., the infinitization of contexts) cannot be limited to the graphic mark alone, they are *generalizable*, that is, they are to be found in spoken language itself, and finally in the totality of every lived experience. Derrida tries to show that the possibility of the mark (that *remains*), the possibility of its functioning when cut off not only from the referent (or the object) but also, at a certain point, from its context and its *original Bedeutungsintention*, from every *present* and *actual* intention of communication, that is, the *possibility of a nonpresence* which would make every oral mark a grapheme in general, this possibility then is not simply an accident, an empirical anomaly of spoken language, but a

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<sup>141</sup> SEC, p. 9. To be sure, if writing breaks with the determined context of its original inscription this does not mean that there is no context for writing, that writing can be valid outside of all context, but rather that no context can entirely enclose it. “Every sign, linguistic or nonlinguistic, spoken or written, [...] can be cited, put between quotation marks; in so doing it can break with every given context, engendering an infinity of new contexts in a manner which is absolutely illimitable. This does not imply that the mark is valid outside of a context, but on the contrary that *there are only contexts* without any center or absolute anchoring” (SEC, p. 12).

structural and a necessary one. This possibility of the mark *in general*, the functioning of a certain *iterability* of the mark, is anterior to the dissociation, and therefore anterior to any subordination or hierarchy between oral and graphic marks. Like the *trace* it is, the mark that *remains*, is neither present nor absent; it is, on the contrary, the condition for this presence or absence, and the condition of what the latter commands: the difference between oral and written marks in the traditional sense.

Now in the example of the subjective expression with the personal pronoun “I”, it is supposed that whenever I (or an ego in general) say *I, I am, my life is*, etc, whether I utter these expressions for communicative ends or not, the aim of my *vouloir-dire*, of my pure intention to express something concerning myself or my life, is immediately realized, i.e., it is “filled” and actualized in an internal intuition or perception, in the present and actual intuition of myself. However, is that so?

In §26 of the *First Investigation* Husserl makes another essential distinction between subjective or *essentially occasional* expressions and *objective* expressions. Personal pronouns (*I, you*, etc., just as demonstrative pronouns and “subjective” adverbs, for example, *here, there, above, below, now, yesterday, tomorrow, before, after, etc*) are classed by Husserl among “essentially occasional” expressions, that is, among those meaningful expressions “in whose case it is essential to orient *actual meaning* to the occasion, the speaker and the situation.”<sup>142</sup> Occasional expressions, as subjective expressions and as essentially equivocal expressions (i.e., expressions which function indicatively in communication), are to be distinguished mainly from objective expressions (for instance, geometrical expressions, *the three perpendiculars of a triangle intersect in a point*) in whose case the univocity of their meaning (*Bedeutung*) cannot be affected by the circumstances of the utterance, the context, and the situation of the speaking subject. We saw in Derrida’s *Introduction to the Origin of Geometry* that absolute ideality is found only on the side of geometrical or mathematical expressions.<sup>143</sup> These expressions are absolutely objective and absolutely pure expressions, expressions whose *Bedeutung* is precisely free from every wordly or empirical synthesis, free from every empirically determined subjectivity which in a *here and now* reactivates them, utters or writes them down, free therefore, according to Husserl, from all indicative contamination, free from equivocity (which is always of subjective origin).<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> *LI*, §26, p. 315.

<sup>143</sup> See *LI*, §11 and *IOG*, p. 74n.

<sup>144</sup> *IOG*, p. 101. Nowhere is speech closer to its essence or telos, nowhere is it more unproductive and more productive than as an element of an exact science, like that of geometry. Geometry requires strict univocity and as a matter of fact it can attain it more easily than other (descriptive or eidetic) sciences, for instance

Personal pronouns, however, as subjective expressions, are without “objective sense” and in communicative speech, Husserl tells us, always function as indications:

Every expression, in fact, that includes a *personal pronoun* lacks an objective sense. The word *I* names a different person from case to case. What its meaning is at the moment, can be gleaned only from the *living* utterance and from the intuitive circumstances which surround it. (. [...] In solitary speech the meaning of *I* is essentially realized in the immediate presentation (*unmittelbaren Vorstellung*) of one’s own personality [...] Each man has his own *I* presentation (and with it *his individual notion* (*Individualbegriff*) of *I*)<sup>145</sup> ... [In real communication, however] the word “*I*” has not itself directly the power to arouse the specific *I*-presentation; this becomes fixed in the actual piece of talk; It does not work like the word “*lion*” which can arouse the presentation of a lion in and by itself. In its case, rather, an **indicative** function mediates, crying as it were “your *vis-à-vis* intends himself. LI, § 26, pp. 315-316.

The expression *I* achieves or realizes its meaning only within solitary mental life, when I speak to myself and say *I*, at the same time that I have a present, full and actual intuition of myself (if that were possible), whereas the same word functions outside my own self-presence, outside the sphere of my ownness (*Eigenheit*), Husserl says, as a “**universally operative indication**.” (*ibid.*) The *Bedeutung* of a subjective expression, of the personal pronoun *I* is carried off into indication whenever my *Bedeutungsintention* animates a real speech for someone else in a real communication. Here Husserl imposes again, this time with respect to the expression *I*, the distinction between expression and indication as well as the boundary between internal and external speech, pure expression in soliloquy and indication in real communication.

Now, if the absence of the object (*Gegenstandlosigkeit*) is structurally necessary to the functioning of the meaning of a perceptual statement, if there is no need to have a perception of the object in order to utter a meaningful or intelligible expression about it, what happens if the object of my perception, internal this time, and of my expressions is myself, my own lived experiences and self-presence? Are not the distinctions, on the basis of which Husserl himself was able to establish a pure logical grammar, between intuition and intention, between *Gegenstandlosigkeit* and *Bedeutungslosigkeit* valid in the case of the personal pronoun *I*?

The experience of saying *I, I am*, etc., while speaking to myself, is not one experience among others. This experience would sanction the essential distinction between indication and expression since it would satisfy not only the hypothesis of the adequation between (internal) perception and its expression, but also the hypothesis of the adequation between meaning and

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phenomenology. But the freedom of the geometrical *Bedeutung* from indication (which is essentially equivocal) will never, *in fact*, be absolute. Absolute univocity, the absolute univocity of objective expression, like “objective, absolutely firm knowledge of truth” is, according to Husserl, an inaccessible ideal, an infinite idea, an *Idea* in the Kantian sense. (*OG*, p. 166, and *IOG*, p. 104)

<sup>145</sup>Derrida underlines twice his astonishment at this *individual* concept, *Individualbegriff*. Does the element of *universality* proper to expressiveness *as such*, to the *sinnvol* expression “*I*”, just as it has been described by Husserl himself, not forbid the possibility that a concept be individual? SP, p. 95n, see also p. 73n

saying, the hypothesis, in other words, of saying what I mean, of meaning to say what I say. and, finally, this experience would prove that I understand what I say, that I have a *full* understanding of the *meaningfulness* of my expression *I*. My *vouloir-dire*, then, according to these *teleological* hypotheses, would be absolutely present to what I say. But, Derrida asks, is this certain?

Is it absolutely certain that when I say *I* in speaking of myself this expression is “*full*” and absolutely alive for me, that the meaning (*Bedeutung*) of the expression *I* is *fulfilled* or actualized *for me* (since no ap-presentational detour is any longer necessary within me). that my intention to signify (*bedeuten*) is present to itself and to its content (*Bedeutung*), whereas the same expression functions as indication for the other (the hearer) in communicative speech. since, as Husserl says. the other can never have a presentative intuition of “*my individual concept of I*”? LI, § 26. pp. 316 [cited above]

But as we have seen, I cannot use *effectively* any word, and in particular the word or expression *I*, I cannot give it *Bedeutung*, whether speaking to myself or speaking to another person, without being involved from the beginning in the order of *substitutive* representation (*Repräsentation*), or without operating within a structure of repetition or iteration<sup>146</sup>, which is the essential structure of ideality in general, and in particular of the ideality of *Bedeutung*.

Now with regard to the statement *I am*, is it not structurally implied in my operation that the ideality of “my” *Bedeutung* (that is to say, its sameness, its objective unity, its appearing *as such* in different acts and moments) *cannot* be endangered in any way by the factual absence of my empirical life, of my self presence? Is it not structurally necessary that “my” *Bedeutung*, as Derrida writes, “gives itself out as capable of remaining the *same* for an I-here-now *in general*, keeping its sense even if my empirical presence is eliminated or radically modified?” (SP, p95) Is not precisely the ideality of this *Bedeutung* which implies that, to the extent that it is distinct from its “object”, will remain necessarily the *same* for every ego in general who every time he speaks of himself says I? Can I (or every other ego in general) give meaning to or utter the expressions “*I am*”, “*I am alive*”, “*my life*”, *etc.*, without being implied in my operation that this *Bedeutung* will never change, i.e., will keep its ideal objectivity even if the expressed is a different object, i.e., the lived experiences of an other ego, or even if its object, my life (the life of every other in general) as self-presence, does not accompany any longer the uttering of the “I”, that is, even if I am dead at the moment when it is still functioning?

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<sup>146</sup> Iteration is not reducible to a repetition, to a reproductive re-presentation or redublication which befalls a simple presence: which is what the word repetition always wanted to say. Derrida has written a great deal about the use of this word in *SEC* and *Limited Inc*: “iterability – *iter*, again, probably comes from *itara*, *other* in Sanskrit, and everything that follows can be read as the working out of the logic which ties **repetition** to **alterity**.” *SEC*, p. 7 and *Limited Inc*, pp 56-57, 61-62, 76, 120, 126-29.

Couldn't we rather say that what is structurally original about the appearing of *Bedeutung* "I" is the absence of myself, of my self-presence, and the possibility of *substitution*? Here nothing seems to be *less* substitutable (everyone's life, the life of every other who can say "I am" "I am alive," "my life is", is *irreplaceable*, i.e., absolutely *singular*) and yet nothing seems to be *more* substitutable than the factual and actual singularity of the *Bedeutungsintention* (namely, the living and life-giving act) which animates and bestows the "I am", each time in a *here and now*, with meaning.<sup>147</sup> "My life", every other's life can precisely be taken as an example and illustration of this singularity. *Tout autre est tout autre.*<sup>148</sup> But whatever the singularity of the lived experience that the functioning of the *Bedeutung* "I am" could ever hold or possess, the declaration "I am" or "my life is" does not imply any less iteration and the possibility of substitution than every other expression, for example "my umbrella", "I forgot my umbrella."<sup>149</sup>

In this sense, is it necessary to *know* or *see* who is speaking, in order to understand the expression *I am*, or even utter it? Is the universality proper to expressiveness as such threatened if the speaker is not seen, if he is unknown, fictitious or dead? Shouldn't we rather say that the functioning of iterability, i.e., the minimal making sense of the expression, a minimal legibility or readability (its conformity to grammaticality, to a semantic and syntactic code) that is operative beyond the death of the factual and actual speaker, excludes the requirement for a *full* understanding of the *meaningfulness* of expression *I am* (or of the phrase "My life is"), and the hypothesis of a full or *adequate* understanding of the original intentionality of its meaning (*Bedeutungsintention*)?

Derrida describes the autonomy of meaning (*Bedeutung*), the deconstructive force of its formality or emptiness, with regard to intuitive presence in a formula which reveals at the same time the play of life and death, the silent implication of death in the expression or declaration *I*, or *I am*:

<sup>147</sup> If we recall here that the possibility of **substitution**, i.e., the possibility of *being-for*, of *in the place of*, is the possibility of signification in general, and therefore for expression and meaning, then the *for-itself* of the self-presence of the *Bedeutungsintention* which animates the expression "I am" would be an *in the place of itself*: put for itself, instead of itself.

<sup>148</sup> Derrida Jacques, *Aporias*, translated by Thomas Dutoit, Stanford University Press, 1993, p. 22. What Derrida writes in *Aporias* about the "dangerous law" of supplementarity or iterability in "the syntagm 'my death'" is also valid for the expression "my life", "my life is", for everything that entails a first-person grammatical form: this the law that forces the impossible by forcing the replacement of the irreplaceable.

<sup>149</sup> *Limited Inc*, pp. 62-3. "There cannot be a 'sentence' that is *fully and actually* meaningful and hence there is no 'corresponding speech act' that would be fulfilled, fully present *active and actual*." (*ibid.*, p. 58) We can therefore say that the possibility of understanding *and* the possibility of misunderstanding a meaningful sentence find their common, structural root in the graphics of iterability. Derrida writes "Iterability alters, contaminating what it identifies and enables to repeat "itself"; it leaves us no choice but to mean (to say) something that is (already, always, also) *other* than what we mean (to say), to say something other than what we say *and* would have wanted to say, to understand something other than ...etc." (*ibid.*, p. 120)

Whether or not I have a present intuition of myself, “I” expresses something; whether or not I am alive, *I am* “means something”. [...]

Whether or not the I functions in solitary speech, with or without the self-presence of the speaking subject, it is *sinnvoll*. [...]

Whether or not perception accompanies the statement about perception, whether or not life as self-presence accompanies the pronouncing of the *I*, is quite indifferent with regard to the functioning of meaning. *My death is structurally necessary to the pronouncing of the I*. SP, pp. 95- 96.

Derrida writes “my death”, but we can certainly say that: my disappearance in general, my absence pure and simple, the absence of my actual *Bedeutungsintention*, i.e., of my present, explicit and conscious intention to say what I want or mean to say, is structurally necessary to the sovereign declaration of the “*I am*”, “*my life is*”, etc.

What seems to be the essential predicate of writing (in the traditional sense, i.e., the absence or death of the subject or author) is no less so of any element of spoken language, of words or parts of speech. The functioning of iterability, in the constitution and appearance of the meaningful expression *I am*, is anterior to all regions of sensibility, and it is, therefore, not more luminous than sonorous, not more proper to the visibility of the letter than to the audibility of spoken words.<sup>150</sup> Because of its iterative structure, every phonic element, every phoneme divides its own identity *a priori*. Iterability makes possible the idealization of the element, and therefore a certain self-identity in repetition, that of the *signifying form* whose identity is ideal, i.e., independent of the multiplicity and diversity of factual events or acts of signification which intend it. But at the same time iterability limits the idealization and divides or removes the identity it makes possible: breaching it and breaching it at once. Being involved from the very beginning in the graphics of iterability, and supplementary substitution, the *word*, what is taken, quite naively we said, as the immediate, undivided unity of sense and sound, of the concept and the phonic signifier, lends “itself” to deconstruction:

Why is this identity [of the signifying form] 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 being repeated in the absence not only of its ‘referent’ which is self-evident, but in the absence of a determined 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 its context) seems to me to make every mark, *including those which are oral, a grapheme in general*.<sup>151</sup>

<sup>150</sup> In both cases, the functioning of iterability supposes the neutralization of the sensible plenitude, of the phonic or graphic substance. The process of iterability does not depend on any sensible plenitude: it is rather the condition for such a plenitude. Although iterability does not exist outside all plenitude its functioning is anterior to what we call word, letter, sign, phonic or graphic signifier, signified concept, sensibility or intelligibility. There are neither sensible phenomena nor intelligible noumena, neither sensible presence of the signifier nor intelligible presence of the signified before or outside the functioning of iterability.

<sup>151</sup> *Signature Event Context*, p. 10.



What is valid for the mark, and then for the phonic or graphic element, which is iterable, is also valid, correlatively, for the meaning intention which is directed toward it, which animates it endowing it with meaning. This *graphics of iterability* inscribes alteration, otherness and nonpresence in repetition and identification: the very moment I say “I am”, “my living present is”, the very possibility that permits the expression “I am” to function beyond this moment, the possibility of its being repeated *another* time (and of taking the place of *another* I-presentation or *Vorstellung*), broaches and breaches the plenitude and identity of my self presence, of my *actual* vouloir-dire and therefore divides and expropriates the plenitude of any adequation between saying and meaning, or of an adequation of understanding to a phrase, written or oral. Given the structure of iterability, as the *a priori* structure of the *bedeutsame Ausdruck*, the intention (the *Bedeutungsintention*) animating the expression will never be through and through present to itself and to what it says. The iteration, Derrida says, introduces into the *Bedeutungsintention* a *dehiscence* which is essential. This limit without plenitude, this *dehiscence* is also the positive condition of possibility of what is thus limited. “Dehiscence (like iterability) limits what it makes possible, rendering its rigor and purity impossible.”<sup>152</sup> Iterability then will be described as the *condition of possibility* of *Bedeutungsintention* and as the *condition of its impossibility*, of the impossibility of its rigorous purity.

The general possibility of writing, of the repetition of the mark, i.e., the trace<sup>153</sup>, and the possibility of substitution which belong to the structure of the mark (oral or written), produces that to which it is supposedly only added up: the origin, the self-presence of the subject in a living present. This trace which is “more ancient”, “older” and “more primordial” than the phenomenological origin, is not simply, Derrida insists, the disappearance of origin: the origin i.e., the constituting origin of sense and of signification in general, does not disappear. It is, however, never constituted except reciprocally by a nonorigin, the trace, the supplement, which then becomes the origin of origin, i.e., the origin of the subject.<sup>154</sup> Which does not mean that there is no effect of origin or presence, no effect of identity, no effect of monologue or of communication between subjects: on the contrary, as we just said, the possibility of repetition and

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<sup>152</sup> *Limited Inc*, p. 59.

<sup>153</sup> *Limited Inc*, pp., 53, 121.

<sup>154</sup> Here, with regard to the concepts of “trace”, “supplement” (as of “difference”, “iterability”, etc.) we have again a double gesture, a double writing: the trace or the supplement is the absolute origin of sense, of the sense of being as presence, which amounts to say that there is no absolute origin of sense. The origin of sense, to put it otherwise, is more constituted than constitutive, it is a produced effect of difference, of the supplement which thereby reintroduces *a priori* the constituted into what is constituting.

of substitution, which is irreducible to presence, makes not only these effects possible but at the same time undermines the possibility of their rigorous purity, the possibility of a plenitude, of a nonalterity or nondifference in the fullness of a *parousia*. And returning once again to the distinction between pure expression and indication, iterability is what blurs the purity of the distinction, what at once tends indefinitely to attain pure expression, i.e., the purity of the *Bedeutungsintention* present to itself and to what it says, and what forbids it, what bars access to it. Until death.

This work of iterability, this graphics of differance – this dehiscence of the outside and the other within proper phenomenological interiority, within the voice, that disturbs, but also makes the “living present” effects of consciousness, the incomparable fortune of *living* effects, possible – becomes, as Derrida writes, “the finitude of life as an essential relation to oneself and one’s death” (SP, p. 102)

The *differance within the phone*, that Derrida describes in *Speech* and elsewhere, this heteroaffection within autoaffection, does not mean that, as Marrati writes, “there can no longer be any trace of purity, *no auto-affection*.”<sup>155</sup> that there are no longer effects of acoustic, optical, tactile, etc., auto-affection, no fortune of immediacy effects, but that these happy or indispensable effects are indeed constituted, constituted precisely by *differance*, and reintroduce a priori the constituted into what is constituting. Without *differance* there would be no auto-affection, auto-affection would not appear, but with this *differance* auto-affection is never pure. It does mean, then, that the analysis of these auto-affection effects cannot escape from the hetero-affection that makes them possible and keeps haunting them. Through its signs, the phone has imposed on the monadic ego the possibility of an analogical and empathic appresentation, i.e., an exappropriation, the interminable appropriation of the nonproper, of the nonego, which conditions and, as Derrida writes in *Limited Inc*, *On Touching*, and *Eating Well*, constitutes any process of appropriation at the same time. In this sense we cannot agree with Kates who, even if he is right in insisting in the fact that Derrida remains very close and faithful to Husserl’s intentions in his exposition of the phenomenological voice, thinks, against Marrati, that Derrida’s deconstruction does not call into question this “genuinely pure auto-affection”, and that Derrida’s “own talk of differance, archi-writing, and spacing, ...proves to be an unexpectedly *autochthonous* phenomenon”.<sup>156</sup> (our emphasis) What Derrida has shown in *Speech* is that, more than any other signifying substance given to consciousness, the phone has imposed a differance or hetero-affection, leading through re-presentation and a certain “intersubjectivity” to indication and

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<sup>155</sup> *Genesis and Trace*, p.76

<sup>156</sup> *Essential History*, pp. 156, 279.

writing, when it was meant by Husserl to illustrate the pure auto-affection of the solitary and monadic ego. What we want to argue is that if Derrida's analysis of *differance within* audio-phonic auto-affection puts something into question this is precisely its purity, its uniqueness and exceptional excellence, the pure and *immediate* experience of the voice (in comparison, for example, to the impure and mediate experience of writing), of the voice that is living and purely living. As well as the purely egoic essence of this experience: the living ego is auto-immune says Derrida.<sup>157</sup> This autoimmunity does not compromise this or that particular thing of the ego auto-affecting itself, but more fundamentally the ego, the self, the *I*, the *autos*, *ipseity* itself, so as to rob *auto*-affection itself of its self-referentiality and supposed unity or immediacy.

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<sup>157</sup> *Specters of Marx*, p. 141. The living, sovereign and mortal ego auto-affects itself by way of its voice and thereby hetero-affects, and 'cruelly infects itself.' *Rogues*, p. 109

### 3) The Non-End: The Infinite Differance is Finite

What Derrida tries to show in the *Speech and Phenomena*, following Husserl's distinctions between the absence of object (*Gegenstandlosigkeit*) and the absence of meaning (*Bedeutungslosigkeit*), between intention and intuition, between expression, meaning and object, is that: not only the absence of intuitive presence, the absence of my life, of my self-presence, of my self-present and actual intention to say what I mean, does not threaten to impair with falsity the ideality of an *I am, I am alive* etc, but also and more importantly that, *the possibility* of my absolute disappearance or death *gives birth* to the *Bedeutung* "I am alive" itself, *gives it out* to be heard, understood, and *uttered again by every other*.

Given the repetitive structure of every *Bedeutung*, how can we still maintain the border between *pure expression* and *indication*, solitary mental life and real communication, between the reality and the representation of speech? Is not rather this law of the *a priori* repetitive structure of this *bedeutsame Ausdruck* that which makes the ego's intention animating the expression never be present to itself and to its content, that which, in other words, dispossesses the ego of the full intuition of the *Bedeutung* I, and ultimately of his self-presence? *Is not the play between presence and absence, life and death, the same and the other, proper to the ideality of the Bedeutung I*, but in truth proper to the ideality of the mark itself (psychic, oral, or graphic), a limitless play, a play which overflows all the boundaries between inward and outward speech, real speech and representation or fiction, and between speech and writing?

Now why is *writing* mixed up by Derrida with the metaphysical determination of being as presence, with the desire to save presence and living speech, or with the desire to save the distinction between effective speech and representation of speech, between effective and fictitious usages of the sign? It is because Husserl himself evokes writing (the anonymity of the written I, the indicative sign par excellence) at the moment when he strives to save presence, the presence of the living speech to itself, and to reduce or limit the deconstructive force of the sign as the empty form of *bedeutsame Ausdruck* (empty from intuitive presence).<sup>158</sup> By supposing that there is an essential tie between *expression* and *phone* or "living speech" and by saying that "the word 'I' names a different person from case to case, and does so by *ever altering meaning*", Husserl makes the meaning of the word 'I' a modification of intuitive presence. Husserl writes

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<sup>158</sup> According to a distinction that Husserl makes in LI, I, §13 the category of the sign in general is not a genus but a *form*. See also *SP*, p. 23.

What its meaning is at the moment, can be gleaned only from the **living speech** (*lebendigen Rede*) and from the **intuitive** circumstances (*anschaulichen Umstände*) which surround it. If we **read this word without knowing who wrote** it, it is perhaps not meaningless (*bedeutungslos*) but at least estranged from its **normal** meaning (*normalen Bedeutung*). LI, §36, p. 315

But since the ideality of the *Bedeutung I* gives itself out as capable of remaining the same for me and for every other ego who says it, keeping its sense even if we do not know *who* says it, even if we do not have an immediate intuition of the sense-giving acts which animate it always in a *here and now*, Derrida is perfectly justified to confirm exactly the opposite of what Husserl says about speech, writing and “the normal meaning”.

Every time I say “I”, speaking either to another person or to myself (and Husserl, as we said, does not examine the *raison d’être* of this supplement if it were possible that I have a primordial intuition of my self presence), the ideality of the *Bedeutung “I”*, insofar as it does not require the intuition of its object, insofar as it does not coincide with its object (namely my self-presence), puts me in an *abnormal* situation: it is *as if* the word “I” were not uttered by me *but written*, not necessarily by me, but by someone unknown or anonymous. Every time that I say “I” the *border* between expression and indication, between solitary mental life and real communication, the supposedly *indivisible line* between real and imaginary or fictitious usage of the sign seems less certain, less rigid and all the more permeable. The experience of speaking to myself, then, is not only or simply an experience of an egological subjectivity certain for its presence or self-identity: by virtue of the primordially repetitive structure of the *Bedeutung* there is every chance that the person who I hear speaking and says I is not really me, me alone with myself, alive and fully present or identical to myself, but someone else, someone fictitious or even dead.<sup>159</sup> The question is the following: how can we still apply those distinctions (expression-indication, normal-abnormal, reality-fiction etc.) to language while maintaining at the same time the autonomy of language, of the *Bedeutung*, with regard to intuitive knowledge? This autonomy with regard to intuitive knowledge, which makes speech, Husserl tells us, to be genuine speech even if it is false or contradictory, is an autonomy with regard to what has always operated within the system of phenomenology as the source and the horizon of all value, as the *telos* or ideal *norm*, as what gives sense to all *normality*: this norm is knowledge, the intuition that is adequate

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<sup>159</sup> When I speak to myself and say “you have gone wrong, you shouldn’t go on like this” who is speaking to whom? Where does this “you” arise from in my inner life, who is this “you”, where does it take place, in reality or only in imagination, is it real or fictitious? Who says “you” within me speaking of me and to me? Who speaks and who is listening? Can I know with all certainty whether it is the same person, me or someone else, a real person or an imaginary one, alive or dead? But, by virtue of the repetitive structure of the sign, the general distinction between effective and fictitious usages of the sign is threatened in its core. “The sign is originally wrought by fiction.” *SP*, p. 56. See also *WD*, p. 178.

to its object, “the full presence of sense to consciousness that is itself self-present in the fullness of its life.” (SP, p. 98)

Derrida asks: why did Husserl, starting from the same premises and particularly from the distinction between meaning-intention and intuition, and between *Bedeutungslosigkeit* and *Gegenstandlosigkeit*, which supports the entire structure of pure logical grammar, refuse to draw the same conclusions with regard to this arche-writing, to the graphics of iterability (or of supplementarity), that is, to the graphematic structure of *Bedeutung*, of all signs and speech acts, and of all communication ? This is, Derrida writes, “because the theme of full ‘presence,’ the intuitionist imperative and the project of knowledge continued to command – at a *distance* we said – the whole of the description” (SP, p. 97). What is this *distance* which allows Husserl to describe, and in one and the same move to efface the freedom of language, the emancipation of speech as nonknowing?

According to Derrida, the originality, indeed the deconstructive force of meaning (*Bedeutung*) and of expression as meaningful sign (*bedeutsame Zeichen*), as it is elaborated by Husserl in his pure logical grammar, in the institution of a general morphology of *Bedeutungen*, lies precisely in its *formality*, in the emptiness and pure intention of *intentionality*, which is independent from all fulfilling *intuitions*, from intuitive presence and cognition.<sup>160</sup> But the formality of meaning, i.e., the formality of its pure *logical* grammar, is *limited* since the difference between intention and intuition must, according to Husserl’s profound **teleologism**, be *pro-visional*: the telos of actualization (which belongs to the structure of intentionality) the telos fulfilment in a plenitude, which is promised for later (and deferred *ad infinitum*), has from the very beginning destined all sense to an *expressive* language controlled by the predicative form, and all language to the horizon knowledge.<sup>161</sup> “The originality of meaning as an aim is limited by the telos of vision” (SP, p. 97). The true and authentic meaning is the conscious, explicit and *clear* intention to express and say the truth, i.e., to make *us* see and know an object *as such*. This telos of vision or of putting-in-view, which has also subjected sense *in general* to seeing, to the sense of sight, and to *light*, the telos of truth-intention, of the *clear* intention of knowledge merges then with the determination of the essence or telos of language as (logical) expression.

<sup>160</sup> FM, especially pp. 120-123, and Ideas I, §126.

<sup>161</sup> By delineating, in his pure logical grammar, the logical a priori of language Husserl designates the essence of the destination of language, its telos or norm. **Poetic language** and expressions which transgress the norms or telos of a pure logical language, and which do not promise any knowledge, are, to be sure, not relegated to nonsense, their undisputable force of signification is not reduced. Husserl “would simply refuse them the **formal** quality of being expressions endowed with **sense**, that is, of being **logical**, in the sense that they have **a relation with an object**” (SP, p. 99).

Here we see once again the necessity that pushed him to study language from an epistemological point of view and to take logico-scientific speech as the model for all speech. As we saw in our reading of Husserl's *Origin of Geometry*, only the *exactitude* of scientific speech can *promise* strict *univocity* and bring scientific sense to conceptual generality without deforming or adding any sense-content to it: a linguistically sedimented sense can thereby maintain its ideal identity throughout all historical development, it can remain beyond the reach of the *empirical* and *de facto* historical subjects intending it, i.e., beyond indicative concatenations, and open itself into the universal. In the first *Logical Investigation* §§11, 12 where Husserl considers the *ideal distinctions*, and *the noncoincidence between expression, meaning* (as ideal unities) and *object*, geometrical objects or state of affairs are taken again as an example of what can ensure the perfect univocity and purity of expression, that is, the *telos* of all scientific or geometrical meaning: universal intelligibility or translatability, infinite traditionality, and so forth.

Absolute ideality, truth, can be only on the side of objective expressions: When I say "the three perpendiculars intersect in one point" my judgement does not indicate or manifest a subjective experience. Nobody would happen to relate my judgement, what my assertion asserts, its sense, to an inner experience of mine: "for while what is intimated consists in inner experiences, what we assert in the judgement involves nothing subjective. My act of judging is a transient experience: it arises and passes away. But what my assertion asserts, the content *that the three perpendiculars of a triangle intersect in a point*, neither arises nor passes away. It is an identity in the strict sense, one and the same geometrical truth" (LI, §11, p. 285). Only objective expressions then are absolutely pure expressions, i.e., free from all indicative contamination, whether they are uttered in soliloquy or for communicative ends.

But what happens when some assertions are false<sup>162</sup> or absurd, for instance, when someone says "the circle is square"? The assertion's intention is absurd (in the sense of *countersense*) but in order to be so, in order at least for me (an ego in general) to judge it so, in order to make an *a priori* judgement about the absence of any possible object for this expression, it must still make, in spite of itself, some sense, it must still point in some way, like a symbolic

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<sup>162</sup> For example "the automobile is the fastest means of travel". The content or objective sense of a false assertion (whose theme remains bound to factuality, or to a determined temporality) is or can be ideal, i.e., omnitemporal. It can be infinitely repeated as the same without affecting its ideality and while it is known that it is false and out of date. In our example ("the automobile is the fastest means of travel") the ideality of its objective sense symbolically puts up with a dated and now (in the age of the airplane) *inauthentically* satisfied *intention to say the truth*. "This is because I know that such an outdated proposition *had been true* and still remains unified and animated by an intention of truth, authenticity, or 'clarity' (*Klarheit*) – these terms are in certain respects synonyms for Husserl – that I can maintain and repeat the ideal unity of its sense." IOG, pp. 74-75.

intention<sup>163</sup>, toward the telos of truth-intention, the telos of the clear and authentic intention to say the truth: “the circle is not square.” An absurd expression must say the *telos*, even if “symbolically”. Husserl writes in the first Investigation:

*If ‘possibility’ or ‘truth’ are lacking, an assertion’s intention can only be carried out symbolically: it cannot derive any ‘fullness’ from intuition or from the categorical functions performed on the latter, in which ‘fullness’ its value for knowledge consists. It then lacks, as one says, a true, a genuine, meaning.* LI, §11, p285

According to Husserl then, the authentic and true *vouloir-dire* or meaning is the will to say the truth. One can *very well* speak and say “the circle is square” but one speaks *well* when one says that is not. No doubt the sense of a false or absurd assertion is also ideal, i.e., it can be indefinitely repeated and thus becomes omnitemporal.<sup>164</sup> However, the ideality of sense must always keep up a certain relation with the absent truth, with the absent object. In truth, the *telos* which announces the *fulfilment* or *actualization* of the intention has already and beforehand opened up *sense* as a *relation with the object*. The telos is knowledge, the intuition that is adequate to its object, the clear evidence of sense, the full presence of the signified in truth. “It is the full presence of sense to a consciousness that is itself self-present in the fullness of its life, its living present” (SP, p. 98). It is this teleology which, according to Derrida, commands the entirety of phenomenology and which led Husserl to attribute to *the possibility of nonintuition* the status of something inferior, even though dangerous and critical.

Let us return once again to the distinction between *Widersinnigkeit* and *Sinnlosigkeit*, it is at the centre of Husserl’s pure logical grammar. As we said, if it obeys certain rules, which are not *immediately* rules of knowledge, an expression may be contradictory or false without being either *sinnlos* or *bedeutungslos*. Expressions like, “a golden mountain” or “the circle is square”, are not like “abrakatabra” or “green is or”. The first two may be false or contradictory but they still make sense, they are intelligible (*sinnvoll*). The grammatical form of these expressions is such that it does not prohibit the possibility of sense: put in the same form, in the third person present indicative of the verb “to be”, i.e., in the form “S is p”, *another* content would allow the possibility of the intuition of objects given in person and signified in truth. It is the minimum of sense and intelligibility, i.e., the possibility of an intuition of an object, which is denied us in the agrammaticalness of “green is or” or “abrakatabra”. It is then solely on the basis of a powerful teleology, as Derrida says, “solely in the context determined by a *will to know, by an epistemic*

<sup>163</sup> “And so expressions, even when they function outside of knowledge, must, as symbolic intentions point to categorically formed unities.” LI, §13, p. 289.

<sup>164</sup> “It is the same in the case of all assertions, even if what they assert is false or absurd. Even in such cases we distinguish their ideal content from the transient acts of affirming or asserting it: it is the meaning of the assertion, a unity in plurality.” LI, §11, p. 285.



*intention, by a conscious relation to the object as cognitive object, within the horizon of truth, solely in this oriented contextual field is the 'green is or' unacceptable.*"<sup>165</sup> But then, the institution of a pure *morphology* of meaning is only *apparently* independent from fulfilling intuitions, since it is ultimately governed by the epistemological (or intuitionist) criterion of a relation with objects, by the *form* of the relation with an object, the *form* of a unitary intuition. (SP, p. 99)

We must say then that the formality of pure logical grammar and the general morphology of *Bedeutungen* are limited. The thought of form, of the conceptual form of expression and of meaning, and of the formality of form, which, as Derrida tells us in *Form and Meaning*, lies at the centre of Husserl's critical and profound reactivation of the original project of philosophy, namely to institute itself as *theoria*<sup>166</sup>, is limited by the *sense of being as presence*. The critical purification of the concept of form (*ousia, morphe*), the phenomenological revitalization of its primordial sense, is guided by the concept of *sense* which is itself determined on the basis of *seeing* and knowing an *object*. Derrida writes about this limitation of the formalist project (i.e., of a project which has the power to go beyond the thought of being as presence<sup>167</sup>) to the *intuitionist* motif: "Form is always a form of sense, and sense opens up only in the knowing intentionality relating to an object. Form is but the emptiness and pure intention of this intentionality. Perhaps no project of pure grammar can escape this object-related intentionality, perhaps the telos of knowing rationality is the irreducible origin of the idea of pure grammar, and perhaps the semantic theme, "empty" as it is, *always limits the formalist project. In any case transcendental intuitionism still weighs very heavily upon the formalist theme in Husserl.*"(my emphasis) SP, p. 98.

According to Derrida, the fact that Husserl took an interest in language only insofar as it remained within the compass of rationality, within the limits of *theoretical* reason alone<sup>168</sup>, the fact that he determined *logos* from *logic*, and the essence of language by taking the logical ("the *universality* of the logical", i.e., Husserl says, "of the *predicative judgement*", of the third person present indicative of verb *to be*) as its norm or telos, all these facts suggest that this *telos*, the *telos* the organizes and orients the project of phenomenology in its capabilities, its achievements and in

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<sup>165</sup> SEC, p. 12.

<sup>166</sup> Derrida writes in *Form and Meaning*, "although the privilege of *theoria* is not, in phenomenology, as simple as has sometimes been claimed, although the classical theories are profoundly reexamined therein, the metaphysical domination of the concept of form cannot fail to effectuate a certain subjection to the look. This subjection would always be a subjection of *sense* to seeing, of sense to the sense of sight, since sense in general is in fact the concept of every phenomenological field." p. 108

<sup>167</sup> FM, p. 128.

<sup>168</sup> Let us recall here that for Husserl *theoretical* reason is first of all and ultimately a *practical* reason, i.e., a reason of the infinite task.

its responsibilities, is *being as presence* in the form of *ideality*. And, as we have seen time and again, there is in phenomenology no *ideality* without reference to the “*Idea in the Kantian sense*” i.e., to the *Idea* which opens the possibility of something indefinite, the infinity of possible repetitions.

The concept which holds together all the concepts we have referred to, the concepts of phone, expression, meaning, sense, intuition, truth, objectivity, is that of “*being as presence* in the form of *ideality*”. As Derrida put it, this concept of presence as “the absolute proximity of self-identity; the being-in-front of the object available for repetition, the maintenance of the temporal present, whose ideal form is the self-presence of transcendental life, whose *ideal identity* allows *idealiter* of infinite repetition”, is “the common matrix” of all phenomenological concepts. (SP, p. 99)

But, Derrida immediately introduces a clause whose clarification will be very important in our reading and interpretation of *Speech and Phenomena*: “While everything that is purely thought in this concept is thereby determined as *ideality*, the *living present* is nevertheless *in fact, really, effectively*, etc., *deferred ad infinitum*. This *differance* is the difference between the ideal and the nonideal.” (ibid)

Now let us see how we can clarify and confirm this proposition if we think over the whole system of the essential distinctions on the basis of which Husserl was able to elaborate in the first of his *Logical Investigations* the question of language. The distinctions between pre-linguistic (gestures, facial expressions) and linguistic signs, pre-expressive sense and expressive meaning, expression and indication, objective expressions and subjective expressions, between intention and intuition, but also between ideality and nonideality, objectivity and nonobjectivity, all these distinctions, Derrida tells us, have a purely *teleological* value: the *possibility* of these distinctions is “*deferred ad infinitum*”.

Thus these “essential distinctions” are caught up in the following **aporia**: *de facto* and *realiter* they are never respected, and Husserl recognizes this. *De jure* and *idealiter* they vanish, since, as distinctions, they live only from the difference between fact and right, reality and ideality. **Their possibility is their impossibility.** SP. p101.

How can we conceive this *aporia*<sup>169</sup>, the possibility *and* impossibility of these distinctions then? What does it mean here that the possibility of the distinction is deferred *ad*

<sup>169</sup> In a text bearing the same title “*Aporias*” Derrida will describe the “experience” of deconstruction as the “experience” of the *aporos* and of the *aporia*: not only there is no more path (odos, methodos, Weg or Holzweg), but the impasse itself is impossible too. The experience of the *aporos*: not only the difficult path or passage but the impossible passage, the prohibited passage, indeed the nonpassage, where what comes to pass, the coming of the (future) event, has nothing to do with passage, path, way or step. And more

*infinitum*? And if we take up again the distinction between expression and indication and in particular the distinction between *objective* expression and *subjective* expression, what does pure expression, what does *presence in vouloir-dire* mean, taken as *differance ad infinitum*? What does the *life* of the *living* voice and of the *living* present mean as *differance ad infinitum*?

As we saw with regard to the distinction between objective expressions (which are absolutely **ideal**, that is, free from indicative contamination, free from all *de facto*, empirical subjectivity) and subjective expressions, the personal pronoun “I am” is an essentially occasional expression, an expression without “objective sense”, i.e., an expression with an essential plurivocity whose meaning is always bound to original and singular intentions (*Bedeutungsintentionen*) and to new experiences. “Since each person in speaking of himself says ‘I’, the word has the character of a universally operative **indication** of this fact.” (§26) Whether it is uttered in soliloquy or in real communication, this expression cannot be replaced by an “objective expression” without being distorted and without ending up in absurdities. For instance, instead of saying “I am pleased”, by replacing the “I” with what could be taken as its objective conceptual content, I should say “whatever the speaker is now designating himself is pleased!” (§26) The attempt to replace a subjective or essentially occasional expression by an objective expression, the attempt to describe a subjective experience in an objectively fixed fashion fails and must, Husserl says, be simply abandoned as being impracticable and vain. (LI, p. 322.)

But, as Husserl actually will write two paragraphs later in §28 with the title, “*The fluctuation of meanings (Bedeutungen) as fluctuation of the acts of meaning (Bedeutens)*”, and precisely with regard to subjective expressions, the fluctuation cannot be assigned to its objective content (*Bedeutung*) without thereby impairing its ideality, the ideal unity of meaning, which is as *always a unity in plurality*. (LI, §11, p. 285.) The fluctuation then has exclusively a subjective origin: it can only be on the side of the transient and finite *subjective* experiences or acts

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importantly, what forbids or blocks our way, our step forward, but also what commands our response, here and now and without delay, has nothing to do with what we call *problem*. “There, in sum, in this place of aporia, **there is no longer any problem**”. (Aporias, p. 12) Problematization, the articulation of themata, the organization and elaboration of questions, is already an articulated organization of the response. Referring to all those historical figures and configurations of philosophy and science, however they might be named: episteme, paradigm, themata, etc. Derrida writes in “*As If Were Possible*”, that “they pre-organize, they make possible the event, the apparent invention, the emergence and reallaboration of the questions, their problematization, the reappropriation that momentarily renders them determinable and treatable.” *Negotiations*, p. 355-56. Also in *Passions* Derrida, reading Sophocles’s tragedy *Philoctetes*, has also remind us another designation of the Greek word *problema*: not only the “shield” used to protect oneself, but also “the substitute, the replacement, the prosthesis, the thing or the person that one puts forward to protect oneself while concealing oneself, the thing or person that comes in the place or in the name of the other.” *Passions*, published in *Derrida: A Critical Reader*, edited by David Wood, Blackwell, 1992, p. 30n6.

(*bedeuten*) which always in a *here and now* animate the identity of the objective *content* of expression. This allows him to conclude apparently against his former demonstration (in §26 about the ill-fated attempt to replace the subjective expression “I” with an objectively fixed expression, from which he inferred, surprisingly enough, that there is an *individual* concept of the I, and that the *Bedeutung I* differs from person to person), that in the utterance of the “I” the act (*bedeuten*) may be non-ideal and always subjective but its content may and must be replaceable. If it is to have any unity or identity at all, the content of my subjective intention must be replaceable by an ideal and objective content (*Bedeutung*), i.e., it must *tend* to be ideal and objective, it must tend to approximate what *in fact* is an inaccessible ideal. Now if the content of the “I” may *or* must always be *replaceable* by an objective and therefore ideal content, in order that the identity of the selfsame be repeatable and identifiable through different acts, then only the singular and transient act which animates this content is lost for ideality, i.e., in need of a supplementary substitution. But this last replacement or substitution is for Husserl ideal: i.e., the substitution of an objective expression for a non-objective expression and the substitution of an ideal *bedeuten* for a nonideal, actual and subjective *bedeuten*, is deferred ad infinitum. Husserl writes “... *ideally* speaking, each subjective expression is **replaceable** (*ersetzbar*) by an objective expression which will preserve the identity of each momentary (*augenblicklich*) meaning intention (*Bedeutungsintention*).” And he goes on “We shall have to concede that such a replacement is not only impracticable, ... but ... will, *in fact*, never be so *capable*. (LI, §28, p. 321.)

At this point Derrida in *Speech* reminds us of what Husserl writes in his *Origin of Geometry* with regard to the *univocity* or *objectivity* of geometrical expression as the teleological condition of geometry’s historicity: the absolute univocity of geometrical expression, the absolute transparency of geometrical language is not an actuality, an accomplished fact but the *Telos*, i.e., an infinite task of objective reason, an infinitely inaccessible ideal. But *in fact*, as we said in the first part of the thesis, univocity is deferred ad infinitum and equivocity turns out to be absolutely irreducible, always renascent and developing along with the very progress of geometry. Absolute univocity, the accomplishment or realization of the *telos* of geometrical meaning, would paralyze geometry’s history, it would bring its end, sterility and immobility.

Similarly then, with regard to the subjective expression “I am”, the substitution of ideality for non-ideality and of objectivity for non-objectivity is itself, Husserl says, *ideal*, and, *in fact*, it is deferred *ad infinitum*.<sup>170</sup> This ideal substitution would confirm, according to Derrida.

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<sup>170</sup> Husserl in fact writes in the next page, after he has referred once more to ideal task of “objective reason” (ibid, p. 321) “We are infinitely removed from this ideal ... Strike out the essentially occasional

what is said before about the play of life and death in the *Bedeutung I am* (whether or not I am alive, the *Bedeutung* “I am” means something which, even though is different from the *Bedeutung* “I am dead”, it is not necessarily different from the *fact* that “I am dead”). If the telos were to be attained, if the substitution were to be completed, and so become real or factual, if the subjective meaning or *vouloir-dire* were to be permanently replaced by an objective expression or *Bedeutung*, then this would be the end, the end of the intention and of its telos, its accomplishment, i.e., death. The presence of meaning to what it says, adequation, completion, plenitude, is the end (the goal) but were it attained it would be the end (death.)

It belongs to the essence or telos of the voice, to the telos of *living* speech and of the *Bedeutungsintention* to move toward plenitude, yet were this telos to be attained or fulfilled, were the monadic subject to hear itself immediately in the living present (which entails the reduction or exclusion of indication, i.e., of analogical or empathic appresentation, of substitutive supplementaion, of differance, etc), that will have been the end: a voice without indication, without writing or differance, would be “*at once absolutely alive and absolutely dead.*” (SP, p.102) The realization, the accomplishment of a pure expression, of a *Bedeutungsintention* absolutely present to itself and to its content (and free from substitutive supplementation and from all indication) is deferred *ad infinitum*. Differance does not op-pose reappropriation: it does not resist it, it begun by broaching expropriation, indication, representation and appresentation, and ends up by leaving reappropriation, the circular and indefinite movement by which the speaking subject turns and returns to itself in order to take possession of itself, breached. “Until death. Death is the movement of differance in so far as this movement is necessarily *finite.*”<sup>171</sup> This differance is no more infinite than it is finite, no more present than it is absent, rather, according to Derrida, it makes the opposition of finiteness and infinity, and of presence and absence possible.

Speaking of the nonplenitude of presence, of the *essential* possibility of nonplenitude and of non-presence, as the non-end or non-telos of intentionality, as the *necessary* possibility for the *appearing* of the life of the living present (and of the living voice or *Bedeutungsintention*), but for *appearing* as an *infinitely deferred* presence, Derrida invokes the *finite infinite* of *differance*.

But this appearing of the Ideal as an infinite *differance* can only be produced within a relationship with death in general. Only the relation to my death could make the infinite differance of presence appear. By the same token, compared to the ideality of the positive infinite, this relation to my-death becomes an

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expressions from one’s language, try to describe any subjective experience in unambiguous, objectively fixed fashion; such an attempt is always plainly *vain.*” (ibid., p. 322)

<sup>171</sup> Of Grammatology, p. 143.

accident of empirical finitude. The appearing of the infinite difference is itself finite. Consequently, difference which does not occur outside this relation, becomes the finitude of life as an essential relation with oneself and one's death. *The infinite difference is finite*. It can therefore no longer be conceived within the opposition of finiteness and infinity, absence or presence, negation or affirmation. (SP, p. 102)

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What Derrida calls into question in the *Introduction to the Origin*, in *Speech and Phenomena*, in *Signature Event and Context*, and elsewhere, is not the concept of intention (or intentionality) but its *telos* which orders, organizes and orients the movement of intention and the possibility of fulfilment in a plenitude which would be present to itself and identical with itself. Derrida calls into question the founding, supposedly unconditional, value or authority of being-present, the presence of a fulfilled and actualized intentionality (the *Bedeutungsintention*) adequate to itself and to its content, the presence, in other words, of an absolutely meaningful and living speech master of itself.

But, we should emphasize again and again that, the movement toward plenitude, the *telos* of plenitude, as Husserl showed (and "he was right" according to Derrida<sup>172</sup>), is not an accidental element separable from the concept of intentionality. Quite the contrary, the *telos* of fulfilment, of realization and of actualization in a plenitude, constitutes the intentional structure itself, it is therefore an integrated and essential part of its concept. But to the extent that this *telos* defines the essence of intentionality, it is not *necessary* that it be attained. Now what is the status in phenomenology of this last *necessity* of nonplenitude? What is, and this amounts to the same thing<sup>173</sup>, the *possibility* of nonplenitude, i.e., of nonintuition or nonpresence?

It *can* happen that there *can* be intentional acts of meaning, speech acts (for example, perceptual propositions or theoretical propositions) without plenitude, and in this sense plenitude is not necessary to the functioning of meaning. Nonplenitude then can be taken, and treated, as an extrinsic accident, an empirical eventuality, even though *in fact* it is *always* happening, even though it almost always affects the entirety of our speech. The possibility of nonplenitude can be interpreted then as an *empirical possibility*, a *contingent eventuality* which comes from the outside to befall an intentionality which in its essence implies a *telos*, i.e., a movement toward

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<sup>172</sup> *Limited Inc.*, p. 121.

<sup>173</sup> For a clarification of the Derridian distinction between *possibility as eventuality* and *possibility as necessity*, and for the impossibility of their rigorous dissociation see *Limited Inc.*, pp. 48, 57.

fulfilment. Nonfulfilment, nonplenitude is then reduced to “an extraneous vestige of the teleological essence of intention”.<sup>174</sup>

But this nonfulfilment or nonplenitude can also be interpreted, according to Derrida, quite differently. To recognize that nonplenitude is a massive *fact* and to say that it is not *necessary* for the intentional act that it be fulfilled in a plenitude, to say that intentionality does not *necessarily* imply plenitude is not enough, we must also say that “intentionality *cannot* and *should not* attain the plenitude *toward which* it nonetheless *inevitably tends*.”<sup>175</sup>

Firstly, as we saw with regard to perceptual statements and to the subjective expression “I am,” the intentionality which bestows speech with meaning (*Bedeutung*) *cannot* and will *never* attain the plenitude which, nonetheless, it promises to deliver. The intention or attention, which is directed toward something *iterable* and which is thereby made iterable in its turn, will strive *vainly* to actualize or fulfil itself in a plenitude: either in the perceptive intuition of its object (in some pre-expressive experience of a present content) or in the experience of adequation between perception and (pure) expression, or in the adequation of meaning to itself. This plenitude, due to iterability (structure of the mark in general, and in particular of the *bedeutsame Ausdruck*), is always already inaccessible both in perception (external or internal) and in its expression.<sup>176</sup>

What Derrida calls iterability or differance is what makes plenitude *impossible*: but this impossibility of a full and actual presence of the intention to its object and to itself, and the *possibility of this impossibility*, the possibility of nonpresence or nonplenitude, is not simply negative, but the positive and essential possibility of the intentional structure itself, of what we call experience or the relation to something in general. The very structure of the utterance, of a meaningful expression, the minimum of iterability that it implies, demands the possibility of nonplenitude, of nonpresence, that is, the possibility of functioning without the *full and actual* presence of the intentional act: that of the conscious (responsible) subject fully present to itself, to what it says, and to the other in “real communication”. Without the possibility of this impossibility, the impossibility of a self-identical and full *parousia*, there would be no utterance, no *meaningful* expression, and, therefore, no history of (human) *language* and no history of *man*.

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., p. 128-29.

<sup>176</sup> It is in Ideas I, §§124,126 that Husserl poses the difference between *complete* and *incomplete* (*unvollständig*) expression and brings to light an irreducible *inadequacy*, an *essential incompleteness of expression* that no effort can ever surmount, that no teleology could ever include (so as to reduce, domesticate, tame and eventually overcome), as an accident or provisional deficiency, within the horizon of an infinite task. It is again the concept of *form*, as Husserl uses it there, which deconstructs the axiomatic of the intuitive, pre-expressive presence of sense and its redublication, unproductive or reflective reproduction, in expression. See FM, p. 121-23.

We cannot therefore say that the de facto nonplenitude is reduced by a teleology of history or that it is included as a provisional obstacle, within the horizon of an infinite task. The telos of history, which is also the telos of man, and *as such*, involve the eschewing of plenitude, of the fullness of *parousia*.

What holds for the utterance holds also and correlatively for the act of meaning or speaking, but also for all acts of signification (discursive or nondiscursive): the graphics of iterability spear no object (as signified or referent) of intention and correlatively no intentional act, from the very beginning. Every intentional act is, *in advance*, divided and removed from itself, deported toward others, by its iterability.<sup>177</sup> Iterability, which makes a certain identity in repetition possible (promising thereby to deliver the fullness of *parousia* through idealization), is differential, it contains in its functioning both identity and difference: it alters, breaches, divides and defers *ad infinitum* the self-identity or self-presence of intention, of the pure *Bedeutungsintention* it makes possible. Iterability or difference makes possible the very thing it makes impossible, namely, plenitude, presence, mastery. "Limiting the very thing it authorizes, [...], the graphics of iterability inscribes alteration irreducibly in repetition (or in identification): a priori, always and already, without delay, *at once, aussi sec*".<sup>178</sup>

Iterability, as well as the supplement or difference, began by broaching *non*-plenitude and the movement toward plenitude, by announcing or promising, through the idealization that it makes possible, its realization, and it ends by leaving plenitude breached, divided, suspended and *indefinitely deferred*. Until death.

But it is not enough to say that intentionality *will never* attain plenitude either: we should also say that it *should not* attain this telos (even if, as we said, there would be no intentionality that does not move toward it). The movement towards plenitude, we said, is essential to intentionality, the fulfilment in a plenitude is the *telos*, the end, the *goal* of all intentional acts, but the structure of this *telos* is such (let us recall, it has been defined by Husserl as an infinitely inaccessible ideal) that if intention attained this telos, if it were realized or actualized in a plenitude it would be the end, i.e., paralysis, immobility, death. Non-plenitude is not then only an empirical possibility, nor is it simply negative, but the possibility without which there would be neither life, nor mobility, nor intentionality, nor ideal objects (language, writing, etc). and "the desire for presence would not find its breathing space."

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<sup>177</sup> But even in the case where I say "I am" while I am also "alive", in the case were the expression "I am", in fact, functions in the presence of my actual intention to say what I want to say, consciously, explicitly and expressly, Derrida asks "isn't the apparent fact" of my presence "complicated, divided, contaminated, parasited by the possibility of an absence inasmuch as this possibility is necessarily inscribed in the functioning of the mark", here of the "I am"? *Limited*, p. 48.

<sup>178</sup> *Limited Inc*, p. 62.



The relation to the *telos* is necessarily dual, divided, split. What is understood as *Telos* must therefore be rethought. And it is precisely to the extent that this relation to *telos* is also intricate, complex, split, that there is movement, life, language, intention, etc. Plenitude is the end (the goal) but were it attained, it would be the end (death). This **non-end** is not an extraneous vestige of the teleological essence of intention, it belongs to it as its most intimate irreducible other, as the other itself in it. It lasts as long as there is life, intuition, language, or, as I prefer to say in general, the mark (or vice versa.)<sup>179</sup>

To move towards our conclusion, the concept of iterability (like that of difference, supplement, trace, mark, writing) is not a concept like the others: it is at once internal and external to the conceptual or theoretical system which makes possible and organizes in a *quasi-transcendental* manner: for which it renders an accounting, presents and analyses its presuppositions, questions its interestedness, criticizes and transforms its axiomatics, interrupting and intervening at the same time, in the system of oppositions it criticizes.<sup>180</sup>

If the concepts of iterability or difference are strategically privileged by Derrida it is because they do not oppose or efface intentionality while they can reveal and show the “structural limit” of its *telos*, of its accomplishment or fulfilment, and of its hegemony. This hegemony of intentionality in the field of meaning and language is “no more the *telos* (the end) than the arche (beginning or commandment) of experience”.<sup>181</sup> The graphics of iterability or difference limits the archeo-teleological structure of intentionality: it is the condition of its possibility (of the movement of intentionality toward the *telos*) and the condition of its impossibility (the impossibility of full parousia, of pure re-appropriation of the same.)

But if the graphics or law of iterability and ex-appropriation exceeds the arche-teleological structure of intentionality it makes possible, if it transgresses, Derrida writes, the law it makes possible, if it is the law not only of intentionality (not only of human language or writing), if it is not what is proper to man alone, if it is also the law of the nonhuman, for example<sup>182</sup>, of the animal relation to self<sup>183</sup>, then the specificity of (human) intentionality in this

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>180</sup> This is the also the case with Derrida’s use of the expression “quasi-transcendental” . . . ., the use of ‘quasi’ and of ‘ultra-transcendental’ to which I have resigned myself, is still – it was already – a way of saving, even if I betrayed it, the legacy of philosophy, namely, the demand for the condition of possibility (for the a priori, for what is originary or the foundation, so many different forms of the same radical exigency of every philosophical ‘question’): to use these terms was also to engage in the task, without concealing the difficulty from oneself, of rethinking the meaning of the ‘possible’, as well as of the ‘impossible,’ and to do so in terms of the so-called conditions of possibility, often shown to be the ‘condition of impossibility’. Derrida, Jacques, *As If It Were Possible*, in *Negotiations*, translated by Elizabeth Rottenberg, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2002, p. 354.

<sup>181</sup> *Limited Inc*, p. 130.

<sup>182</sup> Even if the occasion arises quite often, according Derrida, for example, in *Ideas II*, Section Two “The Constitution of Animal Nature” where Husserl defines the phenomenological project concerning the *essence of the soul, the human or animal soul*” in its connection with the body, the proper body (Leib) and

field without limits is not lost but remains entirely open: this is why it requires a thinking of *differance* and not of opposition. Derrida asks “*what is intentionality?* What does ‘intention’ properly mean as the *particular* work, the *mise en oeuvre* of iterability?”<sup>184</sup>

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the experience of tactile auto-affection, Husserl will defer, at seems for ever, to make any serious reference to animals or to examples drawn from the nonhuman world. According to Derrida, “*it stands to reason*”, that Husserl continues to link subjectivity to man, even if he acknowledges that animals are capable of auto-affection, and even if he says that “the point of departure for our constitutive analysis. ... is related to animal subjects (*animalische Subjekte*) *Ideas II*, §35, p. 151 and *On Touching*, pp. 166-67.

<sup>183</sup> *Eating Well*, p. 267-70.

<sup>184</sup> *Limited Inc*, p. 130.

### Conclusion: The Self-Interruption of Phenomenology

What is intentionality? Derrida asks persistently since his *Introduction to the Origin of Geometry, Violence and Metaphysics*, and *Speech and Phenomena*, to *Limited Inc, A Word of Welcome* and *Eating Well*? What is the *Bedeutungsintention*, this properly human intentionality, the intentionality of human language and writing, the intentionality of the human subject, as the *mise en oeuvre* of difference and supplementarity, or iterability?

What are the consequences of redefining the Husserlian and profoundly humanistic notion of intentionality, of subjectivity, of historicity and of responsibility? As we showed in the first part of the thesis, these notions are also the great questions that Husserl has investigated and developed as a “responsible” response to the *Crisis* of the European sciences and humanity. Our investigation into Husserl’s teleological discourse of history and responsibility has shown that this crisis, which is anything but an empirical accident, threatens the very thing that Husserl wants to keep safe and sound: the transcendental freedom of an egological subjectivity. For Husserl the possibility of crisis (of the subject) remains linked with the production and tradition of scientific objectivities, and *in fact* has an *essential* link to writing. Husserl’s teleological determination of writing as *phonetic* writing is an attempt to limit, tame and economize the essential ambiguity of writing: it threatens with passivity, forgetfulness and irresponsibility the very thing that makes possible, i.e., the transcendental and ideal community of a we-human-subjects-investigators-responsible-for-the-history-of-truth. We showed that Husserl’s call for an intentional return to forgotten sense and to the hidden ground of techno-scientific objectivity, for a free and voluntary reactivation of the origin, for an essentially voluntary *Selbstbessinnung* and *Verantwortung*, is guided by the idea of a transcendental community of egological subjectivities, the subjectivity of a *we*.

In the second part the thesis we showed that Husserl’s phenomenology of language and of phone is also a great philosophy of the transcendental subject. The essential and phenomenological distinctions between linguistic and non-linguistic signs, indication and expression, sense and meaning, which is at the centre of Husserl’s doctrine of signification, have also a teleological character: they are destined to define the *arche* and *telos* of language, as human language or human (i.e., phonetic) writing.<sup>185</sup> According to this teleology, if the power of expression, as *logical meaning*, is reserved only for spoken language and not for gestures (the

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<sup>185</sup> See also *Of Grammatology* (p. 83ff) and *On Touching* (pp 152-4), where deconstruction is organized, once again, around the questions of the voice, of the *hand* and the *eye* (i.e., of writing, of the “*manual-visual script*”), and the question of the concept and the “name of man”.

movement of the hand, the pointing finger) it is because the latter are not worked over by the *Geist*, the spiritual will, the pure intention to say what I mean to say, by what Husserl calls *Bedeutungsintention*. The experience of *hearing oneself speak* is the experience of the human subject, the experience of a free, voluntary, auto-affecting egological subjectivity conscious of its voice and speech. We argued that if Husserl gave such an exceptional privilege to *oral* speech and to the phone it is because of what necessarily links it with the subjectivity of the subject (the subject in its innermost properness) and the objectivity of the object (the “as such” of its objective unity.)

By way of conclusion to our thesis<sup>186</sup> we will bring forward some of the consequences of the Derridean reinterpretation or reinscription of the Husserlian concepts of intentionality and subjectivity: for the question of ethics of politics, and of law (for example, of legal and, especially, of human rights<sup>187</sup>). It is in texts like *Violence of Metaphysics, A Word of Welcome and Eating Well*<sup>188</sup> that the ethical and political implications of Derrida’s thought on Husserl are most evident and straightforward.

As it is clear from our reading of Derrida’s reading of the *Origin of Geometry* and the first *Logical Investigation*, Derrida never meant to oppose another discourse on historicity, on the transcendental subject and language, but to ceaselessly reconstitute and analyse, in the style of “commentary and interpretation”, the whole conceptual machinery, the conceptual differences or distinctions of Husserl’s discourse, and also to bring forward their ethico-teleological limits and interests. Deconstruction was not imposed on Husserl’s discourse by Derrida, rather phenomenology throws itself into deconstruction, “in a quasi-autoimmune fashion”, as Derrida writes in *Rogues*. As we saw in the last section about the *finite infinite differance* the essential and

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<sup>186</sup> We do not intent to close this thesis with simply adding a concluding chapter on ethics, as if ethical implications, considerations or decisions were absent from our previous discussion of intentionality, as if ethical decisions did not play any role in Husserl’s call for the reactivation of origins or in his most central determinations of theoretical reason as practical reason and of being as ideality and repetition. Neither to offer our last word “about Derrida’s ultimate stance toward history” (Kates, pp 225, 293), ethics or politics.

<sup>187</sup> The example of human rights is at the centre of Derrida’s political thought. As Derrida writes “Today the renewed and reelaborated declaration of “human rights” (1948) or, as we say in French, “des Droits de l’homme,” the rights of man, and the institution of the juridical concept of “crime against humanity” (1945), *form the horizon of mondialisation and of the international law* that is supposed to keep watch over it. (I am keeping the French word *mondialisation* in preference to “globalization” or *Globalisierung* so as to maintain a reference to the world –*monde, Welt, mundus*- which is neither the globe nor the cosmos.) The concept of man, of what is proper to man, of human rights, of crimes against the humanity of man, organizes, as we know, such a *mondialisation* or worldwide-ization. *Without Alibi*, p. 203.

<sup>188</sup> This text is an interview with Nancy, about the exigency and limits of calculation (in politics, law and morality). It is published in *Points....Interviews, 1974-1994*, translated by Peggy Camuf & others, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1995. In *Rogues* Derrida returns to Nancy and to the same questions in §§ 3,4 of the first Essay on Reason.

teleological distinctions (between expression and indication, intention and intuition) are caught up in a *aporia*: their possibility is their impossibility. Given the functioning of differance, the intention animating the expression “I” will (and should) never be through and through present to itself and to its content. The functioning of differance introduces *a priori* into the *Bedeutungsintention* a dehiscence which is essential, and which dispossesses the subject of the full intuition of the *Bedeutung* “I”.

According to Derrida, every time phenomenology addresses the question of the other, i.e., of the alter ego, it interrupts or deconstructs itself; it interrupts or renounces its “principle of principles”. As Derrida put it in *Eating Well*, this “great philosophy of the transcendental subject”, which has described the *origin of the world* as originary and constituting consciousness (as transcendental living consciousness) in the form of egological subjectivity, this great philosophy of the “subjective Apriori”<sup>189</sup> is tormented *from within*, tormented and contested by Husserl’s persistence or preference to betray, in the name of phenomenology, the themes of immediate, full presence, of primordial intuitive presentation, by obstinately denying to transform analogical and indirect appresentation into intuitive, direct and immediate presentation.

To understand better “this betrayal of phenomenology *in the name of* phenomenology” let us follow Derrida’s demonstration in *Violence and Metaphysics* and see how Husserl’s notion of intentionality in the Fifth Cartesian Meditation<sup>190</sup> recognizes and respects the absolute separation

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<sup>189</sup> Speaking, in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, for the irreducibly *egoic* essence of all possible experience, for this “I am” which “is for me who says it and understands it accordingly the primordial intentional foundation of my world” (p. 237), Husserl also writes: “The relation of my consciousness to a world is not a matter of fact imposed on me either by God, who adventitiously decides it thus, or by a world accidentally existing beforehand, and a causal regularity belonging thereto. On the contrary, the **subjective Apriori** precedes the being of God and world, the being of everything, individually and collectively, for me, the thinking subject. Even God is for me what he is, in consequence of my own productivity of consciousness; here too I must not look aside lest I commit a supposed blasphemy, rather I must see the problem. Here too, as in the case of the other ego, productivity of consciousness will hardly signify that I invent (*erfinde*) and that I make (*mache*) this highest transcendency.” *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, p. 251.

<sup>190</sup> Derrida reads the fifth *Cartesian Meditation* as a response to Levinas’s reinterpretation of Husserlian intentionality in *Totality and Infinity, An Essay on Exteriority* (1961) (translated by Alphonso Lingis, Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, 1969). Derrida has argued that Levinas, who often claims his fidelity to Husserl’s “intentional analysis” (see his “Intentionality and Metaphysics” (1959), published in *Discovering Existence with Husserl*, translated by Richard A. Cohen and Michael B. Smith, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1998, pp. 123-4) when he redefines “in a profound way”, at the end of his *Totality and Infinity*, intentionality, “*consciousness of...*” as “*attention to speech or welcome to the face, hospitality and not thematization*” (p. 299) is very close to Husserl. Levinas does not believe so: the Other, Levinas says, cannot be constituted as an intentional phenomenon of the ego, as Husserl describes it in his fifth *Cartesian Meditation*, it cannot be constituted as an alter ego by and for a monadic ego proceeding through analogical appresentation. By making the other a phenomenon of the ego, Husserl, according to Levinas, represses the infinite alterity of the Other, and he fails to recognize that in the original face-to-face, the emergence of absolute alterity, of absolute exteriority cannot be derived, engendered or

of the other, i.e., the radical *irreducibility* of the other to the same, yet of an other *appearing* as other for the same (ego). It will take three steps.

a) The first step passes through the phenomenological “*as such*”, through the *possibility* of “appearing as such” (which, according to Husserl’s humanism, would allow us to make the hypothesis of the distinction of human intersubjectivity from that which is created between animals, or between men and animals) For without the phenomenon of the other. of the other appearing *as such*, without the *evidence* of the totally other *as such*, one, an ego in general, could neither encounter, nor speak nor have any sense of the totally and infinitely other, and therefore nor any respect for it. According to Husserl, the appearance of other *as such*, i.e., *as infinitely other*, is the ego’s intentional phenomenon. Husserl is first of all concerned with describing “how the other as other, in its irreducible alterity is presented to me. Is presented to me, as we will see, as originary nonpresence.”<sup>191</sup>

b) It is *evident* for Husserl, as for Derrida, that the other, as another absolute origin of the world, is radically separated from me, it is inaccessible to my originary perception, or rather, it is accessible only by way of *analogical ap-presentation*<sup>192</sup> and indicative language. Between my lived experiences, my self-presence or ownness (*Eigenheit*) and the self-presence of the other there is infinite difference, absolute separation. As we saw, in our reading Husserl’s *First Logical Investigation* with regard to the irreducibility of indication in the communication between two egos: I can have an originary intuition of the other’s body (of his *Körper* and not his *Leib*) and of his words, but I cannot have an originary intuition of the other as such, i.e., of the presence of the other’s lived experiences. The lived experiences of the other are made known to me only insofar as they are mediated by linguistic signs, by his speech. It is this evidence, this phenomenon of the other as totally other, i.e., as that which will remain eternally irreducible and inaccessible to me, as that which I can never be, which is the ego’s intentional phenomenon. Husserl describes then the phenomenon (the appearance or evidence) of a nonphenomenality (the appearance of the other *as other*, as that which I myself am absolutely not). He *thematizes* the impossibility of thematizing the other, he *speaks* of this evidence of a nonevidence or nonpresence, of the phenomenological evidence which respects and maintains absolute separation.

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constituted on the basis of anything other than itself. The other is not myself. But Husserl, we argue following Derrida, never said that it is, even if he strongly and persistently maintained that it is *an Ego*.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>192</sup> Analogical appresentation is a “co-presentation” (*Mitgegenwärtigung*) of that which cannot be presented primordially and immediately, but only through an external body (*Körper*): when I apprehend the external body of the other in analogy with my own proper body (*Leib*) I apprehend his body not as a unity belonging to my primordial sphere but as a sensing, perceiving body (*Leib*), i.e., as other. *Cartesian Meditations*, §50, pp 108-11.

As Derrida emphasises, the Husserlian reference to analogical appresentation does not signify only the resistance of the other as a finite being<sup>193</sup> to an analogical re-appropriation, the other's infinite resistance to an assimilatory reduction to the same (ego). Rather the reference to analogical appresentation (which, let us recall, as the necessary passage or transition in relation to the *alter ego*, is the essential condition for the possibility of an ideal objectivity in general, of science, and of history itself) allows us, according to Derrida, to glimpse one of the most precious treasures of deconstruction, which is also its secret. It is (at) the heart of deconstruction. *Respect for the secret of absolute separation as the experience of the other, as the experience of the alterity of the other: this is the condition of deconstruction and what will remain for ever undeconstructable. Deconstruction has a respect and a taste for the secret: this respect is also the fidelity that makes deconstruction unfaithful to phenomenology's principle of principle's.*

According to Derrida, this limit of infinite separation, this interruption or unbinding is not simply a negative condition, but a chance, the essential and necessary condition of the relation to the other (to the neighbour or the one far off, to the friend or the enemy), the positive condition of sociality, of the social bond, of peace or war: those who are separated come together or face to face without ceasing to be what they are destined to be, that is, wholly other, infinitely other in their absolute singularity, incomparable, solitary, transcendent, nonpresent to my *ego*.

c) The other appears as other for an ego in general but in the *form* of an *alter ego*, in the form of a *transcendental alter ego*. Husserl is interested in the *ego* as the *form* of alterity in order to distinguish it from the alterity of things belonging to the world, for example, from that of the animal or of the stone.<sup>194</sup> For Husserl the other is absolutely other, forever irreducible to a *reell* moment of my life, only if he is an ego, if he can say, as I do, "I am": the other as stone is simultaneously *less other* (not absolutely other) and *less the same* than I.<sup>195</sup> The Husserlian access to the alterity of the other as to its *egoity*, does not mean to imply, as Levinas writes, that "the other is known through empathy, as an other like my self, as alter ego", as if "alter" were an epithetical, accidental modification of a real, empirical subject, i.e., of a subject determined on an pre-eidetic level. Husserl describes the eidetic relationships between *nonempirical* egos and he speaks of the "transcendental alter ego": "transcendental" insofar it is not entirely *in* the world, and "ego" since it is rather the absolute origin of the world. Derrida writes:

<sup>193</sup> VM, p. 114. The other would not be for me (for an ego in general) what it is, infinitely other, except if it is finite and mortal, as I am, and only as soon as it comes into language.

<sup>194</sup> The other, the alter ego, for Husserl, is always a human subject. Only a human subject can be a transcendental alter ego, another absolute *origin of the world*. According to this teleological humanism, the animals, incapable of language and of the phenomenological "as such", are, as Heidegger also said, *poor in world, weltarm*. According to Derrida, with regard to the question of the animal, the distance between the thought of Husserl, Heidegger and Levinas, is not so great. See *Eating Well*, pp. 268, 277ff.

<sup>195</sup> VM, p. 127.

If the other were not recognized as a transcendental alter ego it would be entirely *in* the world and not, as ego, *the origin of the world*. To refuse to see in it an ego in this sense is, within the ethical order, the very gesture of violence. If the other was not recognized as ego, its entire alterity would collapse. ...The egoity of the other permits him to say 'ego' as I do; and this is why he is Other, and not a stone, a being without speech in my real economy. This is why he is face, can speak to me, understand me and eventually command me.<sup>196</sup>

According to Derrida, in Husserl's thought there is a place for the infinite secret of the other, for the irreducibility of the alterity of the other, a secret that is arguably shared also by Levinas. We could say that if there is something common to Husserl, Levinas and Derrida, is *a taste for the secret*. There is, however, also a crucial difference, according Derrida, between Husserl and Levinas. Although both *do in fact speak* of the infinitely other, their difference is that "by acknowledging in this infinitely other *as such (appearing as such)* the status of intentional modification of the ego in general, Husserl gives himself the *right to speak* of the infinitely other as such, accounting for the origin and the legitimacy of his language. He describes the phenomenal system of nonphenomenality."<sup>197</sup>

At this definite and irreducible limit, at the limit of absolute separation and dissociation, the limit of the impossibility of thematizing or phenomenologizing the other, the alter ego, "in person", phenomenology, by recognizing that there is such a non-intuitive relation, that I cannot be on the other side, that I do not know *who* or *what* the other *is*, phenomenology then interrupts itself and, according to Derrida, becomes "unfaithful to itself out of fidelity to itself". What Derrida stresses in *Violence and Metaphysics*, as well as in *A Word of Welcome*, is that this thematization, the theme of the impossibility of thematizing the other, rigorously develops the discovery of *intentionality*. Husserlian intentionality, an intentionality that interrupts or renounces, *where necessary*, thematization, *is respect itself*: the development and becoming language of the respect (or the taste) for the secret of absolute separation. Phenomenology, then, imposes this interruption upon itself; *it interrupts itself*.

The interruption is not imposed on phenomenology as if by decree. In the very course of phenomenological description, following an intentional analysis faithful to its movement, its style, its norms (my emphasis), the interruption *is produced*. It *is decided* in the name of ethics, as interruption of the self by the self. Interruption of the self by a phenomenology that gives itself over to its own necessity, to

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>197</sup> Derrida writes, "Levinas *in fact* speaks of the infinitely other, but by refusing to acknowledge an intentional modification of the ego – which would be a violent and totalitarian act for him – he deprives himself of the very foundation and possibility of his own language. What authorizes him to say 'infinitely other' if the infinitely other does not appear as such in a zone he calls the same, and which is the neutral level of transcendental description?" VM, p. 125. According to Derrida, the intelligibility of the whole of Levinas's ethical discourse on intentionality *as hospitality* depends entirely on a certain phenomenology, a phenomenology that interrupts or renounces, *where necessary*, its principle of principles: the monadic *ego cogito*, subjective egological experience as the sphere of absolute certainty and absolute existence.



its own law, right where this law orders it to interrupt thematization, which also means to be unfaithful to itself out of fidelity to itself. ...”<sup>198</sup>

Derrida calls this interruption, “the interruption of the self by the self as other” ex-appropriation. The other, we said, even if he is a finite being, is infinitely other and this infinity is precisely what resists any reappropriation. I cannot appropriate the alterity of the other, whether in the other person or *in myself*. As we saw with regard to the structure of “hearing myself speak” and the irreducibility of indicative communication in solitary mental life, there is something in myself irreducible to identity, to property and positionality (i.e., irreducible to the *living egological subjectivity* present to itself in the fullness of its life), and absolutely resistant to appropriation. As we argued in part two, Derrida wants not only to be faithful to Husserl’s analysis of analogical and emphatic appresentation in the constitution of the alter ego, but also to extend the field of appresentation, even further than Husserl would readily admit, and to recognize its irreducible gap or difference even in the pure expressivity of inward and solitary speech of the subject, in the hearing-myself-speak of the monadic ego. My self-presence, my *own* life, the life of an ego, who can speak and say “I”, “I am”, “my life is”, cannot be accessible for an originary, immediate intuition any more than the alter ego. This passage outside the monadic sphere of properness (*Eigenheit*) and through the other, this interruption or spacing, this dehiscence or difference in audiophonic auto-affection, determines the structure of reappropriation and the structure of the relation to the self (and to the other) *as such* as ex-appropriation: as the interminable appropriation of an irreducible non-proper, of an irreducible alter ego or non-ego. Speaking of this “paradoxical ex-appropriation”, i.e., of this movement of the *proper* expropriating itself in the very process of (re)appropriation, Derrida says in *Eating Well*

The logic of the trace or of difference determines this reappropriation as an ex-appropriation. Re-appropriation necessarily produces the opposite of what it apparently aims for. **Ex-appropriation is not what is proper to man.** One can recognize its differential figures as soon there is a relation to self in its most elementary form (but for his very reason there is no such thing as elementary). ... Of course the relation to self in ex-appropriation is radically different (and that’s why **it requires a thinking of difference and not of opposition**) in the case of what one calls the “nonliving,” the “vegetal,” the “animal,” “man,” or “God”.<sup>199</sup> (our emphasis)

Why we have insisted on this “difference within the phone”, or on “the originary graphematic structure of speech”? Because the Husserlian privilege of speech, of the phone, of

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<sup>198</sup> “A Word of Welcome, p. 52, published in Jacques Derrida, *Adieu*, translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1999.

<sup>199</sup> *Eating Well*, p. 269.

the pure *spirituality* of *living* voice, and of the hearing oneself speak. is essentially and teleologically linked to the question of the subject and of man: only a man is capable of consciousness, of speech, of sovereign and autonomous auto-affection, of freedom and of rights. only a man is capable of being a subject, a subject of rights, of knowledge, of culture, etc. The question of *truth* and of the *logos*, of the phone whose speech can take the form "S is p", has always been linked to the question and to the concept of man, of what is proper to man, to the human as *zoon logon echon*, as well as to the question of *zoe*, of life.<sup>200</sup> The concepts of differance, iterability, ex-appropriation has shown us that the horizon of what is proper to man, to human life, and therefore, the horizon of human rights, is not a very determinable limit. It can be determined only on the basis of a series of oppositions. Hence the *right to* deconstruction, to a *rational* deconstruction: the "*unconditional right*" to endlessly question the limits of human rights, and their presuppositions, the interests and *calculations* that order their deployment, says Derrida in *Eating Well or Calculating the Subject*.<sup>201</sup>

As long as the conventionally accepted limits, the oppositions, the supposedly linear and indivisible boundaries between the so-called human living being and the so-called animal one, but also between the living and the nonliving, the spectral, the machine, etc., have not been deconstructed, we will continue to reconstitute under the name of the human subject "an illegitimately delimited identity, illegitimately, but often precisely under the authority of rights! – in the name of a particular kind of rights."<sup>202</sup>

This right or demand to deconstruction, to ask questions about truth, consciousness, language, culture, technicity, and so forth. – so many powers, capacities or possibilities of which the animal is said to be deprived and poor – and the right or demand to do so performatively, by writing, by transforming and producing new analyses, new events and texts, new events of thought in the history of the concepts of man, of truth, of the subject and of human rights, is

<sup>200</sup> In texts like *Specters of Marx* and *Rogues* (pp 145ff) Derrida has tried to show the difficulty of maintaining the traditional distinctions and limits we thought pertained to life, between the living and the dead, the living present and its spectral others, but also between the human and the animal living; and in *On Touching* Derrida put again the question of what is proper to the *living* body (Leib) in relation to the processes of iterability and of the technical prosthesis or supplementarity (heart transplants, clones, etc) p. 229.

<sup>201</sup> "There has to be some calculation. I have never held against calculation that condescending reticence of 'Heideggerian' haughtiness. Still calculation is calculation." *Eating Well*, p. 272. Derrida deals extensively with the question or *exigency* of calculation, and of measure (for example, in a democracy, the necessity to count votes or voices), and with the *rational* necessity to endorse, develop, perfect and determine human rights in *Rogues*, especially pp 42-55, 151. We are not going to enter into the immense question of Derrida's "aporetology" concerning the double *exigency*, or the double *bind* of calculation and incalculability, of decision and undecidability, of possibility and impossibility, of the *I can* and the *I cannot*. In our thesis we only wanted to situate some of the places of Derrida's "aporetology" or "aporetography" where the Husserlian heritage is indispensable.

<sup>202</sup> *Eating Well*, p. 273.

according to Derrida, an ethical *and* political demand, the demand “to put a stop to a certain kind of rights” and to “call for a different kind of rights”.<sup>203</sup>

“Who” will then call for a different kind of rights, “who” will then take the place or replace the subject, once the most essential of its predicates (that is, presence and identity to self, positionality, property, consciousness, Ego, will, freedom, responsibility, humanity, etc) have been deconstructed? “Who” will respond thereon, for what and before whom? If there is still, not in philosophy or theory but in the text and in writing *in general*, an instance of some “who”, in its irreducible alterity and singularity, this singularity of the “who” will still have to go through the experience of deconstruction: a singularity given over to non-self-presence, a singularity that dislocates or divides itself in gathering itself together to answer to the infinite other. A discourse, a concept or, indeed, an experience of responsibility can come only at this price: at recognizing that the processes of differance, iterability, trace or writing, are at work everywhere, “well beyond humanity.” Derrida does not hide the “essential excessiveness” of this responsibility, neither its “monstrosity”: a discourse thus restructured would have to leave open a space for a relationship to the *incalculable* singularity of the other, to a singularity that does not end at humans but extends to all nonhuman living beings, or even beyond that, to all the nonliving.<sup>204</sup>

A discourse thus restructured can try to situate in another way the question of what a human subject, a morality, a politics, the rights of a human subject are, can be and should be. Still to come, this task is indeed far ahead of us. It requires passing through in particular the great phenomenological question of the *as such*.<sup>205</sup>

The question of the phenomenological “*as such*”, of *appearing as such*, has been at the centre of Derrida’s demonstration: it has taken the whole weight of the distinction between human and animal relation to self and to the other *as such*. The experience or the opening of the *as such*, which is, as we have shown, indissociable from the experience of the voice, the welcoming of the other as such, the opening of the finite threshold from which the infinite other may come to pass, is, at the same time, “that to which one *cannot* and *should* not submit the other in general, the ‘who’ of the other that could only appear absolutely *as such* by disappearing as other.”<sup>206</sup> Is not this possibility of the other appearing, coming from out of some horizon, and presenting itself *as such*, at the same time, the impossibility of ever arriving as infinitely other, as an absolute surprise, without expectation? The question for Derrida is: is the *as such*, the

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<sup>203</sup> Eating Well, p. 273

<sup>204</sup> “Hence the enormity of the task, its essential excessiveness, a certain unclassifiability or the monstrosity of the *for which* we have to answer here, or *before* which (whom? what?) we have to answer.” *Eating Well*, p. 278

<sup>205</sup> Ibid, p. 274.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid, p. 275, and *Of Grammatology*, p. 47.

phenomenon, the being *as such* of the unique and of the other, ever possible? Is the advent (the event, or the invention), the coming or welcoming of the other ever possible? Yes, Derrida answers, yes the advent is possible only as im-possible, that is, never and nowhere *as such*. Never and nowhere from out of some horizon.

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