Neoplatonism after Derrida

Parallelograms

STEPHEN GERSH

STUDIES IN PLATONISM, NEOPLATONISM, AND THE PLATONIC TRADITION

BRILL

NEOPLATONISM AFTER DERRIDA

ANCIENT MEDITERRANEAN AND MEDIEVAL TEXTS AND CONTEXTS

STUDIES IN PLATONISM, NEOPLATONISM, AND THE PLATONIC TRADITION

VOLUME 3

NEOPLATONISM AFTER DERRIDA

Parallelograms

BY

STEPHEN GERSH

BRILL
LEIDEN · BOSTON
2006

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A C.I.P. record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISSN 1871-188X
ISBN 10: 90 04 15155 9
ISBN 13: 978 90 04 15155 0

PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A shorter version of chapter 3 "Margins of Augustine" originally appeared under the title "Multiplicity of Reversion in Augustine's *De Quantitate Animae*," in the volume *Being or Good? Metamorphoses of Neoplatonism*, edited by Agnieszka Kijewska, Lublin 2004. The author would like to thank the Wydawnictwo KUL for giving their permission to reproduce this material.

PREFACE

This study begins with the assumption that the relation between Neoplatonism and Derrida's writing is an important one and that the phrase "Neoplatonism after Derrida" best expresses the nature of this relation.

From one viewpoint, the term "Neoplatonism" strikes us as very obscure. Realizing that this term overlaps with "Platonism," "Christian Platonism," and so forth, we are uncertain whether the intellectual phenomenon to which it corresponds should be defined by the unknown deity of religious belief or by the allegorical theories of literary commentators, by the unitary first principle of classical thought or by the Trinitarian God of the Church Fathers. From another viewpoint, the term "Neoplatonism" seems abundantly clear. By concentrating on the "Platonism" element in the compound term, we assume that the intellectual phenomenon to which the latter refers must involve the transmission of Plato's own teachings about the separation of the intelligible and sensible worlds, the existence of transcendent Forms or Ideas beyond space and time which correspond to logical universals or ethical standards, and the immortality of the human soul.

Now it would be difficult to argue that "Neoplatonism" as a term which is simultaneously so obscure and so clear should not be a stimulus to thought in such a hermeneutically self-conscious age as our own. Yet there seems to be a factor which would provide a disincentive for such a project. That is, that Neoplatonism as both a historical and futural possibility of thinking seems inextricably associated with the doctrine that Being (*on, esse*) is primal—the transcendent Forms represent Being in Plato's dialogues, the hypostasis of Intellect constitutes Being in Plotinus' Neoplatonism, and the God of *Exodus* constitutes Being in its Augustinian counterpart. How could one imagine thinking productively with philosophers of Being in an epoch where—as a result of Heidegger's decisive critique of "ontotheology"—the word "Being" must either be crossed out or avoided entirely?[1]

---

[1] The term "ontotheology" employed by Heideggerians in order to characterize

A reading of Neoplatonism in relation to Derrida may provide orientation on this question. The latter philosopher is probably unique in supplying us not only with a paradigm of writing compellingly in the aftermath of Heideggerian thinking but also with evidence of a continuous engagement—sometimes explicit and sometimes implicit—with texts originating in the Neoplatonic milieu. Derrida's interest

---

a particular epoch in the withdrawal of Being has been a subject of debate in France for some time and more recently also in the English-speaking world. This epoch is where metaphysics considers (in an "Aristotelian" sense) *a.* beings as such and *b.* the supreme being (see Heidegger's "Introduction to 'What is Metaphysics?,'" trans. W. Kaufmann in *Pathmarks*, ed. W. McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1998), pp. 287–8), and (in a "Hegelian" sense) *a.* beings as such and *b.* beings as a whole (see his "The Onto-Theo-Logical Constitution of Metaphysics," in *Identity and Difference*, trans. J. Stambaugh (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), pp. 54–6), these two interpretations often occurring in combination. For present purposes, the most important point to observe is that it is Neoplatonism which for a variety of philosophical and historical reasons tends to function as the catalyst in such discussions of ontotheology. Although the present author's viewpoint on this question can be left to emerge in the course of *Neoplatonism after Derrida*, we may note here in the spirit of a preface that demonstrations of Heidegger's limitations as a historian of philosophy and of the problematic application of the term "ontotheology" itself have not blunted the impact of Heidegger's main philosophical arguments: 1. that European thought has always considered what can be determined according to the fixity of presence as somehow primary, and 2. that we must counter this by attempting to think temporality in a more radical way and to loosen the stranglehold of objectifying and propositional discourse. For a thorough documentation of the debates about ontotheology see the recent publications of Wayne Hankey, "The Postmodern Retrieval of Neoplatonism in Jean-Luc Marion and John Milbank and the Origins of Western Subjectivity in Augustine and Eriugena," in *Hermathena* 165 (1998), pp. 9–70; *Cent ans de Néoplatonisme en France. Une brève histoire philosophique* (published in a single volume together with Jean-Marc Narbonne, *Lévinas et l'héritage grec*) (Paris: Vrin and Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2004), "Why Heidegger's 'history' of Metaphysics is Dead," in *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 78 (2004), pp. 425–43—Hankey's essays are marked by a militant anti-Heideggerian tendency. One can gauge the magnitude of the French Heideggerian phenomenon from the recent study by Dominique Janicaud, *Heidegger en France*. 2 vols. (Paris: Albin Michel, 2001) and the volumes of conference proceedings: *La métaphysique. Son histoire, sa critique, ses enjeux*. Actes du XXVII^{e} Congrès de l'Association des Sociétés de Philosophie de Langue Française, eds. L. Langlois and J.-M. Narbonne (Paris: Vrin and Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2000)—in this volume see especially the essay by Jean-François Courtine, "Métaphysique et Ontothéologie"—; and *Heidegger e i medievali*. Atti del Colloquio Internazionale Cassino 10–13 maggio 2000 (= *Quaestio* 1), eds. C. Esposito and P. Porro (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001)—in this volume see especially the essays by Jean-Marc Narbonne, "Heidegger et le néoplatonisme," Jean-François Courtine, "Heidegger et Thomas d'Aquin," and Olivier Boulnois, "Heidegger, l'ontothéologie et les structures médiévales de la métaphysique." See also the commentary by Ruedi Imbach, "Heidegger et la philosophie médiévale. À propos d'un nouvel annuaire philosophique," in *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 49 (2002), pp. 426–35.

in Neoplatonism was probably first manifested in the "Plotinian" essays which he is said to have written as a young student from Algeria newly arrived in metropolitan France. The development of that interest is certainly shown by his thoughtful readings of pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and of Augustine's autobiographical confession in the early nineteen-eighties, all of this taking place in combination with a continuous study of Plato's dialogues themselves which is revealed in a series of works from "Plato's Pharmacy," through the "Envois" of *The Post Card*, to "Khōra." One should probably concede that several countervailing tendencies of his personal outlook decisively restrained Derrida from entering into greater intimacy with the Neoplatonists. These include his commitments to a certain radicalism in the ethical sphere and to the cultural legacy of Judaism from which the metaphysical Hellenizing of the Neoplatonists differs markedly. Nevertheless, a reading of Neoplatonism in relation to Derrida is historically justified and philosophically promising.

An adequate understanding of the relation between Neoplatonism and post-Heideggerian thought would seem to be a prerequisite for philosophical discussions of the kind which took place recently between Derrida himself and Jean-Luc Marion.[2] This well-documented debate centers on the relation between the "Above-Being" and the "Gift" in the context of pseudo-Dionysius' thought: two notions falling squarely within the domain of Neoplatonism albeit extended in a specifically patristic or Christian manner. It shows Derrida as defending a viewpoint in which the Dionysian *huperousion* maintains a continuity with the Being of ontotheology and somehow remains an object of affirmation in the constative sphere so that any excess of "givenness" which it might involve would be the presencing givenness of a metaphysical principle rather than the givenness always to come of the impossible possibility. Marion, however, is advocating a position in which the *huperousion* of Dionysius exhibits a clear break from ontotheological Being and can be conceived neither as the object of affirmation nor as an object of negation but only with

[2] For this debate see Jean-Luc Marion, "In the Name. How to Avoid Speaking of 'Negative Theology'," in *God, the Gift and Postmodernism*, eds. J.D. Caputo and M. Scanlon (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana U.P., 1999), pp. 20–53; "On the Gift. A Discussion between Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Marion," moderated by Richard Kearney, *ibid.*, pp. 54–78; and John D. Caputo, "Apostles of the Impossible. On God and the Gift in Derrida and Marion," *ibid.*, pp. 185–222.

respect to a "third way," as an event of givenness which gives itself in the pragmatic sphere, and as a "saturated phenomenon." Now without voicing criticism of the philosophical positions of Derrida and Marion *per se* or of the work of commentary done by their eloquent advocates John D. Caputo and Thomas Carlson respectively, we submit that the debate insofar as it depends on a Neoplatonic thinker like pseudo-Dionysius remains insufficiently contextualized. It is therefore the aim of the present study to set important discussions of this kind on a more secure basis.

For someone attempting to think the application of Neoplatonic thought after the demise of ontotheology in relation to Derrida's writing, two basic strategies seem possible. According to the first approach, we may endeavour to disclose "Neoplatonic" elements within the Derridean enterprise: a process which especially involves finding atemporalizing elements in a temporal phenomenon. There follows shortly an example of implementing this strategy in which the semiotic square utilized in discoursive analysis by those structuralist critics whom Derrida views as crypto-Platonists will have its application extended from the semantic to the non-semantic sphere. It will therefore be possible to show that an elaborate set of figures based on this "(a)semiotic square" not only constitutes the architectonic of Neoplatonic thought but also supplies the formula for Derridean readings, and not only governs the hierarchical emanation of causal principles in metaphysics but also the axiological inversion of asymmetrical contraries in discourse.

If the first strategy will be concerned with disclosing "Neoplatonic" elements within the Derridean enterprise, a second strategy will be concerned with the disclosing of "Derridean" elements within Neoplatonic thought: a process which conversely implies finding temporalizing elements in an atemporal sphere. But one of the main differences between Neoplatonism and Derrida is the former's predominant emphasis upon constative discourse and the latter's equal emphasis on the constative and the non-constative. Therefore, the disclosure of "Derridean" elements within Neoplatonic thought will best be achieved by bringing the non-constative aspects of Neoplatonism into relief. There also follows shortly an example of implementing this strategy in which a particularly close relation between performative utterance, non-propositional discourse, and textual juxtaposition will be established with respect to Neoplatonic thought.

Derrida published three essays entitled "Passions," "Sauf le Nom,"

and "Khōra" under separate covers in 1993. According to a notice and a detachable insert which appeared identically in each volume, the three items, although readable as distinct works, may be viewed as constituting a single "Essay on the Name." Given that this triptych elaborates many themes derived from the Platonic tradition, we shall employ it as the basis of *Neoplatonism after Derrida* which will therefore comprise an introduction dealing with general questions, a commentary on "Sauf le Nom," an interlude dealing with a different but related question, a reading of "Khōra," an extension of the commentary on "Sauf le Nom," and a reading of "Passions."[3] The chapters of our study need not be read precisely in the sequence given here. Although the first chapter numbered should probably also be the first chapter read, users of the book who wish to experiment with the different possible orders of reading the remaining materials, and with the various possible hermeneutical standpoints produced thereby, are invited and indeed encouraged to do so.

Proceeding according to the strict pagination of the volume, the reader will find: 1. *Derrida reads (Neo-) Platonism*. This chapter has two purposes. First, it provides a double discussion of the transmission of (Neo-) Platonism and of Derrida's reading of the transmission in which the highlighting of this tradition within the history of European philosophy itself constitutes a deconstructive approach to the latter. Secondly, it gives an illustration of the practice of textual juxtaposition which emerges in chapter 4.2 as an important element in the deconstruction of Neoplatonism; 2. *What is Called 'Negative Theology'?* is a study of the relation between Neoplatonism and "negative theology" suggested by Derrida's reading. The "Neoplatonic" elements relevant to Derrida's enterprise are here disclosed through the application of the (a)semiotic square on the one hand to the Neoplatonic hypostases of the One, Intellect, and Soul and on the other to Derridean general structures like *Difference* and *Trace*. It is argued that Derrida's failure to understand the overall significance of Neoplatonic

[3] Since Derrida is nowadays so widely known in the English-speaking world, direct quotations from his principal works studied in this volume are given in English translation. The standard translations listed in the bibliography have been employed in most instances, important technical terms being also quoted in French and deviations from the standard translations being noted as necessary. For the benefit of readers who will work primarily with Derrida's French texts, a concordance permitting the page-references in the English translations to be converted into their equivalents in the French texts is supplied towards the end of the volume.

elements for the deconstructive method prevents his treatment of the specific relation between deconstruction and negative theology from realizing its full potential; 3. *Margins of Augustine*. This chapter develops within the context of Neoplatonism certain applications of that figure which we have termed the (a)semiotic square but which the Neoplatonists call remaining, procession, and reversion. Augustine shows in one of his earlier works that the third component of this figure consists of many superimposed operations of both a logical and a hermeneutical kind;[4] 4.1. *Of the Abyss* continues the application of the (a)semiotic square to the Derridean general structures begun in chapter 2. Whereas earlier the various structures were treated as context-free, here the structure of *Khōra* is viewed as context-sensitive; 4.2. *From Ontology to Erasure*. The "Derridean" elements relevant to Neoplatonic thought are here disclosed through an analysis of the relation between performative utterance, non-propositional language, and textual juxtaposition, the issue of the non-propositional having been raised by Derrida's view that the application of negative theology involves propositions and by the Neoplatonic notion that the hypostatic structure is expressible in propositions. It is argued that the disruption of logic advocated by Heidegger can be treated hermeneutically as a subtext of the Neoplatonic discussions of Being and the disruption of logic and syntax by Derrida as a subtext of the Neoplatonic discussion of the One; 4.3. *Of the Secret* continues the analysis of the relation between performative utterance, non-propositional language, and textual juxtaposition begun in chapter 4.2. The notion of performativity is now intensified by the distinction between performative utterance and performative experience.

So far we have been discussing the content of this study. Regarding its form, we should briefly note first, that in composing our text on the level of language a decision has been taken to proceed by writing not in the polysemous style of Derrida but in the monosemous style of Neoplatonism; and secondly, that in composing the text on the level of concept a further decision has been taken to proceed not be deconstructing Neoplatonism directly but by juxtaposing deconstruction and Neoplatonism. If both these decisions seem to imply the presentation of Derrida's discourse in a "Neoplatonic" manner,

[4] This chapter may usefully be read not only in the position stated here but also at the end of the sequence.

it must be recalled that our "Neoplatonic" presentation is already affected by the "deconstructive" tendencies of textual juxtaposition, the reduction of propositional argumentation, and performative utterance.[5] Now an adequate justification for these decisions will emerge in the reading of this volume and indeed, given the importance of the performative element just mentioned, should only emerge in the reading of the volume. Nevertheless, it is perhaps advisable to correct at this point the potential misunderstanding of a reader who might ask what central thesis regarding the parallels between Neoplatonism and Derrida is being advanced in the present work. Obviously, the answer is that there is no *centered* thesis—such a thing would be inconsistent with the deconstructive subtext of the Neoplatonic presentation outlined above—although there are numerous *decentered* theses to be found. Having read the entire work, the more philosophical reader will perhaps appreciate this absence of a centre, and the more academic reader at least the plurality of explanations.

London, England and San Juan, Puerto Rico, March 2006.

[5] These two decisions are intimately connected given that the juxtapositional method, by transferring the disruptive element peculiar to deconstruction from the micro-structure of words and phrases to the macro-structure of paragraphs and segments, permits the coexistence of polysemy within a *ratiocinative* philosophical text.

CHAPTER ONE

DERRIDA READS (NEO-) PLATONISM[1]

Our theme will be that of deconstructing the text of philosophy or alternatively that of Derrida reading (Neo-) Platonism.[2] A more precise account of what follows would, however, stress the simultaneity of the generic and specific aims.

The "text" which is to be deconstructed with respect to philosophy corresponds not to that of a book—the everyday usage of the term—but to that which exceeds the book—a peculiarly Derridean conception.[3] In the latter case, text is understood as a container of spaces each of which, if folded back upon itself, exceeds its own limits—text, space, and fold therefore indicating various aspects of the underlying idea of reference to the Other.[4] According to Derrida's usage, text is quasi-synonymous with trace and writing. In different intertextual situations, "trace" can be delineated in relation to the transcendental phenomenology of Husserl where its connotation of temporality is revealed, in the light of Lévinas' ethical thought where the reference to the Other emerges most strikingly, and in relation to the psychoanalytic teaching of Freud where its connotation of non-causality is uppermost.[5] For Derrida, the handling of writing is perhaps more complicated than the handling of trace. "Writing"

---

[1] Earlier versions of this chapter were read at the University of Washington, Seattle (Solomon Katz Lecture) on 20 February 2001 and at the University of Notre Dame (Philosophy Department Colloquium) on 11 April 2003. I am grateful for the comments of members of the audiences on both occasions and especially to Eugene Vance and Kevin Hart for their insightful remarks.

[2] A framework for the summary of Derrida's position in the next few pages is provided by Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. G.C. Spivak (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins U.P., 1974), pp. 6–73.

[3] On the relation between text and book see also "Ellipsis," in Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. A. Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 294–300.

[4] On the notion of fold see "The Double Session," in Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. B. Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 252–74.

[5] For a discussion of trace see *OG*. pp, 61–73—Husserl is mentioned on pp. 61–2, Lévinas on pp. 70–71—; "Freud and the Scene of Writing," in *WD*, pp. 198–215.

contrasts with language not in a physical sense but in that writing represents on the one hand the formalism of language and on the other the excess of language—a duality concomitant with the writer's simultaneous ability to control and inability to control language's semantic resources.[6] Some other features of trace and/or writing should be noted here. For example, the specialized meaning of the terms is frequently suggested by introducing them with prefixes as "arche-trace" and "arche-writing."[7] The possibility of metonymically substituting the terms for one another and with terms like "difference" and "supplement" is also indicated.[8] One should also briefly mention some controversies surrounding trace, writing, and the like. To what extent can they be understood as "infra-structures?"[9] To what extent are they "conditions of possibility" in the Kantian sense?[10] In anticipation, one could also mention the link between trace, presence, and absence established by Derrida in his reading of Plotinus the Neoplatonist.

The "philosophy" with respect to which the text is to be deconstructed is alternatively styled "metaphysics," "logocentrism," and "ontotheology."[11] Primarily under the influence of Heidegger at this point, Derrida discerns a unity of a profound type underlying the history of western thought, although for Heidegger this unity represents the tradition running (roughly) from Parmenides to Nietzsche whereas for Derrida it is in the tradition running (roughly) from Parmenides to Hegel where the unity resides.[12] This philosophical

---

[6] For a discussion of writing see *OG*, pp. 6–10.

[7] See *OG*, p. 56ff. (arche-writing) and p. 61ff. (arche-trace).

[8] For difference see *OG*, pp. 52–3, 56–7, 59–65. Supplement becomes an issue especially in Derrida's reading of Rousseau. See *OG*, pp. 144–5.

[9] Use of the term "infrastructure" here was advocated in Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror. Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1986), p. 7, etc. Although it was originally suggested in his own work, Derrida has tended to avoid the ontological and transcendental connotations of such a term, preferring to speak of "most general structures . . . of textuality in general." See "This Strange Institution Called Literature: An Interview with Jacques Derrida," in Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, ed. D. Attridge (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 70–72.

[10] Reference to "conditions of possibility" in this context was made by Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 123–4. Cf. his *Philosophical Papers*, vol. 2: *Essays on Heidegger and Others* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1991), pp. 122–7.

[11] See *OG*, pp. 3–5, 10–26, 81ff.

[12] See *OG*, pp. 3–5, 10–26. For Hegel's role see also Jacques Derrida, "The Pit and the Pyramid. Introduction to Hegel's Semiology," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. A. Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 69–108.

tradition is unified through its orientation towards the question of Being as determined in a specific manner: namely, according to the temporal dimension of presence,[13] although the continuity of reflection on Being as presence is anticipated by other developments which complement it: the postulation of the transcendent signified i.e. the Forms by Plato, the interpretation of time as linear in character in Aristotle's *Physics* and the distinction between Being as most universal and Being as most excellent in the Aristotelian *Metaphysics*, to cite the main instances.[14] For Heidegger and Derrida, the unification of the philosophical tradition through its orientation towards the question of Being determined as presence also imposes upon Plato, Aristotle, and their successors certain structural underpinnings to their thought. These are first, the primacy of constative discourse and the view of thinking and being associated with it[15] and secondly, the preoccupation with oppositional structures and the similarly associated views of thinking and being.[16] The construction upon such underpinnings is particularly evident in the cases of the Platonic dialectic and of the Aristotelian logic which develops and corrects it.

Although Derrida accepts the Heideggerian notion of Being as presence together with its implications for understanding the history of philosophy, there is a certain shift of perspective. For Heidegger, the issue is closely connected with that of the difference—called at various points the "ontico-ontological difference," the "ontological difference," and the "dif-ference")—between Being and beings, where Being names the "X" sought by thinking and beings the first principles sought by metaphysics, where the difference between Being

---

[13] Throughout this chapter "Being" (usually capitalized) corresponds to the Platonic "Being" (*on*) rather than to the Heideggerian "Being" (*Sein*). From Heidegger's viewpoint, this Platonic Being is "ontic" in character.

[14] See *OG*, pp. 3, 10–26. For Plato see further Jacques Derrida, "The Double Session," in *DI*, pp. 184–94; for Heidegger also "Ousia and Grammē. Note on a Note from *Being and Time*," in *MP*, pp. 29–67.

[15] In this chapter, I shall use the terms "constative" and "performative" to signify discourse which attempts to state certain truths without embodying those truths in the mode of utterance and discourse which attempts to state its truths while embodying those truths in the mode of utterance respectively. The term "performative" has had a complex history in J.L. Austin, J.-F. Lyotard, and Derrida himself.

[16] This issue is treated especially in Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *WD*, pp. 278–80 (where the context is the question of centering) and "Tympan," in *MP*, p. x ff. (where the context is the question of limit).

and beings is either disclosed by this thinking or concealed by this metaphysics, and where the concealment of the difference is manifested through the determination of being(s) as presence. Derrida would find difference not only between Being and beings but also between the disclosure and the concealment, the former difference alone being explicit in Heidegger's writings.[17]

After dealing with the "text" and the "philosophy," what is meant by "the text of philosophy" can now be stated. In short, what has occurred in the history of the West is that the emphasis on the metaphysics of presence has been accompanied by a reduction in the status of writing. Paraphrasing this in specifically Derridean language, one might say that the sense of writing has been modified—in response to the metaphysics of presence—from that of arche-writing to that of everyday writing.[18] There is undoubtedly some empirical evidence for the historical interpretation proposed here. This includes such factors as the Socratic-Platonic association of philosophy primarily with oral discourse, the notion of language as primarily spoken and secondarily written, and so forth.

The "deconstruction of the text of philosophy" announced as a theme at the beginning of this chapter represents an attempt to reverse this situation. Although Derrida does not himself employ the term with any frequency, Derridean commentators have established "deconstruction" as the name for the quasi-method[19] whereby the reader approaches what is to be read (i) through the selection of a single detail or, perhaps more idiomatically in accordance with the sense of trace or track, a plurality of details in the object-text. Referring to this phase of the operation, Derrida speaks of remaining within

---

[17] For these reasons, Derrida holds that his difference is "older than the ontological difference or than the truth of Being" (see "Différance," in *MP*, p. 22). A good analysis of this claim—together with discussion of the relevant Heideggerian texts—can be found in Rodolphe Gasché, *Inventions of Difference. On Jacques Derrida* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1994), pp. 100–103.

[18] See passages listed in nn. 11–12, 14. See also *OG*, pp. 85–7 where Derrida connects the devaluation of writing with the preoccupation with linear (alphabetic) writing. He argues that, if one admits the connection between linearity of language and metaphysics of presence, then "the meditation upon writing and the deconstruction of the history of philosophy become inseparable."

[19] Derrida employs the term "deconstruction" in *Of Grammatology* although it becomes less common in his later writings. On this question and on the relation between "deconstruction" and the Husserlian "dismantling" (*Abbau*) and the Heideggerian "destruction" (*Destruktion*) see Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, pp. 109–20.

the limits of a term or concept, of a "mimesis," of the re-marking of that term (perhaps with emphasis upon the *marking*). A typical instance of the procedure would be to take one's terms or concepts as oppositions based on priority and posteriority (or superiority and inferiority): for example, literal and metaphorical or male and female.[20] The reader also approaches what is to be read (ii) through the discovery of one or more ambiguities or inconsistencies in the object-text. Referring to this phase of the operation, Derrida speaks of transgressing the limits of a term or concept, of a "castration," of the remarking of that term (clearly with emphasis shifted to the *re-*). A corresponding example of this procedure would be to reverse the priority and posteriority (or superiority and inferiority) of the opposed terms or concepts mentioned above.[21] The question of the relation between phases (i) and (ii) is of the greatest importance. In Derridean usage, this can sometimes be a semantic connection where the law of contradiction may be circumvented and sometimes a logical connection where the law of contradiction remains in force, the case of combining or rejecting both the original and the reversed oppositions—the famous "double negation"—perhaps crossing the boundary between the semantic and the logical.[22]

We have called deconstruction a "quasi-method." This has been done in order to emphasize that deconstruction is simultaneously a theory and a practice, therefore being from different viewpoints reducible and not reducible to a system and from different viewpoints disclosing and not disclosing definite truths. Although this issue cannot be taken up in detail here, it is worth noting that the subtle distinction between Derridean and Hegelian method (especially as regards the latter's notion of *Aufhebung* ("sublation")) resides in the precise manner of applying the above criteria.

---

[20] On "Re-mark" see Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, pp. 217–24.

[21] For the terms "castration" and "mimesis" see Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. A. Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 84. Although the negative moment is here named first, it is clear that the two operations are understood to be simultaneous.

[22] There is no fully systematic presentation of deconstructive method in Derrida's works, undoubtedly because "method" is a problematic notion in this context. See Jacques Derrida, "Letter to a Japanese Friend," trans. D. Wood and A. Benjamin, in *A Derrida Reader. Between the Blinds*, ed. P. Kamuf (London and New York: Harvester, 1991), pp. 270–76. However, for some good attempts at systematization on the part of Derridean interpreters see Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, pp. 163–76, *Inventions of Difference*, pp. 22–57, Irene E. Harvey, *Derrida and the Economy of Différance* (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1986), pp. 23–36. My summary is indebted to all these accounts.

But why should one study Derrida's reading of the (Neo-) Platonists in particular? The more general answer to this question is that this tradition, which dominates western philosophical thought from the end of antiquity to the beginning of modernity but is often ignored by historians of philosophy as they leap from Aristotle to Descartes, represents the posterior (inferior) term of a certain opposition. Therefore, to make it the central object of analysis is to perform a major deconstruction in itself. The more specific answer which is really a number of specific answers is that the tradition superbly exemplifies the orientation to the question of Being as determined by presence together with the associated features of primacy of constative discourse and preoccupation with oppositional structures, while simultaneously inaugurating the destruction of that orientation together with its associated features. Derrida has himself suggested all this in a footnote to his statement that metaphysics and language can signal their own transgression: "Thus Plotinus (what is his status in the history of metaphysics and in the "Platonic" era, if one follows Heidegger's reading?), who speaks of presence, that is, also of *morphē*, as the trace of non-presence, as the amorphous (*to gar ikhnos tou amorphou morphē*). A trace which is neither absence nor presence, nor, in whatever modality, a secondary modality" (*Margins of Philosophy*, p. 66, n. 41).

In the remainder of this chapter, we shall follow the guiding-thread of oppositional structure. It is undeniably the case that oppositions such as those of the ontological to the semantic and—within the ontological domain—of the stable to the mutable, of the orderly to the disorderly, of the causing to the caused, and of the intellectual to the non-intellectual, and—within the semantic sphere—of the monosemous to the polysemous form part of the common understanding of Platonism. In a manner highly indicative of the commitment to metaphysics of presence which Heidegger and Derrida have identified, it is equally true that the priorities (or superiorities) attributed to the stable, the orderly, the causing, the intellectual, and the monosemous over their opposites also form part of this prevailing interpretation. Through juxtaposition of Derrida's reading of Platonism and Neoplatonism, of our reading of Derrida's reading of those texts, and of our reading of Platonism and Neoplatonism, we shall attempt to exhibit the similarities and dissimilarities between philosophemes and the simultaneous establishment and transgression by philosophical writing of its own limits. The result of this endeav-

our will be to some extent cognitive and perhaps a definite set of actual propositions about Platonism or Derrida but to some extent interpretative as rather the basis of an indefinite set of potential propositions. In other words, elements of temporalization and performativity must be embraced.

Before turning to some passages in the writings of the Platonists, two preliminary clarifications should be made. The first concerns the hermeneutic decision to consider Plato himself in conjunction with the tradition which he has created. The second concerns the hermeneutic decision to examine the ancient tradition of Platonism in conjunction with the medieval and even later traditions. In order to justify these decisions, let us simply observe that the prevailing tendencies of interpreters to separate "Plato" from the Platonic tradition and also to separate the ancient and the medieval traditions of Platonism depend in the first case upon a certain naivety regarding the character of the interpretative process and in the second case upon the importation into the study of certain external historiographical criteria. The naivety concerning interpretation resides in the belief that at some point in time it was possible to distinguish adequately between what Plato thought and what his audience believed that he thought. In fact, all historians know that disputes regarding the master's intentions began during his lifetime, were magnified in the doctrinal division between the Old and the New Academies reported by Cicero, and continue even today in universities where courses on Plato are given. The importation of external criteria is represented by the assumption that there is a significant break between ancient and medieval Platonism with patristic Platonism being classed exclusively with the former or the latter according to the interpreter's specialization as a classicist or as a medievalist. In fact, the distinction between ancient and medieval depends on elements of intellectual and socio-economic history quite extraneous to Platonic philosophy itself which as a consequence of its essentially transcendent and interiorized character maintains a striking degree of consistency throughout time. Even the distinction between ancient and patristic and between patristic and medieval requires caution, since many ancient Christian writers preserved pagan philosophical materials intact, while the medieval tradition itself contains classicizing, patristic, and scholastic tendencies side-by-side. Because of all these factors, we may refrain from separating "Plato" from the Platonic tradition and the ancient from the medieval tradition as though dealing with completely discrete units.

Nevertheless, the (Neo-) Platonic tradition did represent a phenomenon which evolved through time, its changes taking place on many levels and with different overlaps.[23] This scenario might be sketched as follows:

It is a peculiarity of the medieval as opposed to the ancient phase of the transmission that Plato's writings were largely unknown and, where known, known only in Latin translation. To be more precise, the translation into Latin of the *Timaeus* together with the commentary attached to it by the fourth-century writer Calcidius was virtually the only channel for the direct transmission of Plato's thought during most of the medieval period. This translation is very accurate and the commentary, saturated with borrowings from the best Platonic and Aristotelian theorists writing in Greek during the previous century, well composed. Apart from Calcidius, we find various writers who were influenced by Plato and, in the absence of the original writings, able to pass on many of Plato's teachings in some form. Among these indirect transmitters Augustine could not have developed his remarkable blend of classical philosophy and Christian revelation without the legacy bequeathed to him by the founder of the Academy. The elusive figure who at some time in the fifth century C.E. decided to present his own philosophical doctrine as that of an early Pauline convert, the writer whom we name with concern for historical precision "Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite" but whom medieval scholars simply called "Blessed Dionysius," was likewise totally dependent for his inspiration upon the tradition going back to Plato himself. Boethius could not have composed his classic *De Consolatione Philosophiae* and an influential group of theological treatises without the Platonic legacy bequeathed to him in both Greek and Latin writings. Yet the Latin works of Augustine and Boethius and the Latin translation of ps.-Dionysius—all of which were read carefully throughout the Middle Ages—are not commensurate or even comparable with Plato's own texts. Moreover, the circumstances of this transmission become even more complex in that, although

---

[23] For analysis of the complex transfer between the ancient (Greek) and medieval (Latin) traditions of Platonism see Stephen Gersh, *Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism. The Latin Tradition*, vol. 1 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), pp. 1–50 and "The Medieval Legacy from Ancient Platonism," in *The Platonic Tradition in the Middle Ages, A Doxographic Approach*, eds. S. Gersh and M.J.F.M. Hoenen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002), pp. 3–30.

Augustine acknowledged the influence upon him of the "books of the Platonists" while Boethius admitted to having "entered into the schools of Athens and Alexandria," the reference of both men is to later ancient Platonists writing in Greek such as Plotinus and Proclus, writers whom we prefer to style "Neoplatonists," rather than to Plato himself.

Moving from the question of textual transmission to the occurrence of specific philosophemes, a reader can make some interesting discoveries. Here, we shall confine ourselves to citing three examples of (Neo-) Platonism: one from the ancient Greek tradition which had no influence on medieval Latin thought, one from the ancient Greek tradition which had a major impact on the medieval Latin world, and one originating in the medieval Latin tradition itself.

It will be recalled that two of the dualities identified as forming part of the common understanding of Platonism were those of stable and mobile and of orderly and disorderly, and that within these dualities primacy of status was attributed to the stable and the orderly respectively. This conceptual structure is fundamental to Plato's *Timaeus* where a cosmology is outlined in quasi-mythical form according to which a creative principle called the "Craftsman" reduces an apparently pre-existing material principle named the "Receptacle" which is characterized by mobility and disorder to a mathematical and metaphysical order in line with an apparently pre-existing formal principle called the "Paradigm" whose essential features are stability and order.[24] In late antiquity the interpretation of this text is complicated by the division of the stable and orderly principle into a first principle called the Good and a second principle called Being or Intellect, by the depiction of the relation between the Paradigm and the Receptacle—a relation to which the Craftsman is also assimilated—as a process of continuous emanation of power, and by the fusion of the mutable and disorderly principle with a "nature" called Matter. It is this interpretation which underlies the important developments on Plotinus' treatise I. 8 "What Are and Whence Come Evils?." Here, the Receptacle is identified with matter, non-being, and evil and begins to lose its purely subordinate status first, because of the complex relation between matter and evil whereby the term

[24] Plato, *Timaeus* 29d–31a, 47e ff.

"matter" is primarily applied to the entire emanation with the exception of its highest point but also to the lowest point of the emanation, while the term "evil" is primarily applied to the lowest point of the emanation but also to the entire emanation with the exception of some of its higher parts and secondly, because of the even more complex relation between being, non-being, good, and evil in which non-being (evil) is opposed to being as other than or contrary to being, and evil (non-being) is opposed to good within the sphere of being itself, the fact that evil can be called both non-being and being resulting from the homonymous rather than synonymous use of the term "being" in this context. It should be noted that the interpretation of the Receptacle as "place" has completely disappeared from this account.[25] (This paragraph will be called "Segment A")

Whereas in the previous example the nature of the implicit dualism has been modified by the increased role of the lower term, in the next instance the character of the implicit dualism is transformed by a partial reversal of the higher and lower terms.

It will be recalled that two further dualities identified as forming part of the common understanding of Platonism were those of causing and caused and of intellectual and non-intellectual respectively. This conceptual structure underlies an evolution traceable in late ancient texts whereby the teaching that the first principle is "beyond Being" in Plato's *Republic*[26] is developed into a doctrine that this principle is simultaneously beyond Being and coextensive with Being. The evolution takes place initially in Proclus' interpretation of Plato's *Parmenides* as teaching in the first hypothesis that certain attributes are denied of the One or Good and in its second hypothesis that these same attributes are affirmed of the henads or gods derived from the One, denial and affirmation signifying transcendence of the attributes and immanence in the attributes on the part of the One and the henads respectively.[27] The evolution takes place subsequently in ps.-Dionysius' interpretation of Proclus' *In Parmenidem* as teaching

---

[25] Plotinus, *Enneades* I. 8 [51] eds. P. Henry and H.-R. Schwyzer, Paris-Bruxelles-Leiden: Desclée de Brouwer, etc. 1951–73. For the argument about emanation see I. 8 [51] 3, 5–7, 15. The whole discussion should be compared with that in II. 4 [12] where i. a distinction is made between intelligible matter (not associated with evil) and sensible matter (associated with evil); ii. Sensible matter is distinguished clearly from "place."

[26] Plato, *Republic* VI, 509b.

[27] Plato, *Parmenides* 137c–142a (first hypothesis), 142b–155e (second hypothesis).

in the first hypothesis that certain attributes are denied of the One or Good and in the second hypothesis that these same attributes are affirmed of the One or Good, denial and affirmation now signifying transcendence of the attributes and immanence in the attributes on the part of God who both "remains" and "proceeds" emanatively.[28] Now the dialectical manipulation of these negative and affirmative attributes which on the basis of the combined authority of Plato and Scripture are called the "divine names," is applied to "Being" and "Intellect" but not to "cause." Therefore, given that the first principle becomes non-intellectual in the sense of transcending intellect while it remains causal, we find a reversal of the traditional priority of the intellectual over the non-intellectual combined with the maintenance of the traditional priority of the causing over the caused.[29] ("Segment B")

The common conception of Platonism to which we have already referred includes not only the oppositions of stable and mutable, of orderly and disorderly, of causing and caused, and of intellectual and non-intellectual—which are ontological—but also the opposition of monosemy and polysemy—which is semantic.[30] It is in this latter sphere that the lower term begins to lose its purely subordinate status in the view of certain ancient writers, since a preoccupation with formulating the criteria of monosemous discourse runs side by side with a willingness to pursue the ramifications of polysemous utterance. The requirement of a monosemous foundation of discourse is evident in the classical Platonic theory that stability of meaning in everyday language depends upon the function of certain linguistic universals which are understood to be non-spatiotemporal "Forms" or "Ideas." During late antiquity, these transcendent absolutes reappear in two slightly modified versions. First, we find the notion that Forms exist as thoughts in the mind of God in works like Augustine's *De Quaestionibus Diversis LXXXIII*, these Forms including the "Man"

---

[28] See Proclus, *Commentarius in Parmenidem* VI. 1058–64 ed. V. Cousin (Paris, 1864) for the theory (after Plutarch of Athens and Syrianus) regarding the interpretation of the hypotheses; VI. 1064ff. for the interpretation of "hypothesis I" (the detailed discussion of the later hypotheses is not extant in Proclus' commentary).

[29] See ps.-Dionysius, *De Divinis Nominibus*, ed. B.R. Suchla (Berlin-New York: De Gruyter, 1990), 7. 2, 868B-7. 3, 872B. The Dionysian interpretation of Proclus' theory is discussed in Stephen Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena. An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), p. 153ff.

[30] See Plato, *Cratylus* 385e–391a (monosemy); 391d ff., 423b–434a (polysemy).

and "Horse" which are the transcendent principles of natural substances such as men and horses.[31] Secondly, there is the notion that Forms exist as attributes of God in works like Augustine's *De Immortalitate Animi* where Forms such as "Being," "Life," and "Intellect" are the transcendent principles of existing, living, and intellectual things.[32] These two formulations are often present in the same author or text, and are transmitted in combination to the medieval world. The possibility of a polysemous expansion of discourse is suggested in the ancient grammarians' techniques of etymological and allegorical interpretation. In the former case, a word under review might be subjected to addition, subtraction, or modification of its components, each of which could then denote a single object. In the latter case, the word being studied does not undergo decomposition and recomposition but denotes a multiplicity of objects distinguished as literal and figurative senses. That these methods are often practiced in combination is illustrated by the late ancient writer Macrobius' *Saturnalia* where the name *Apollo* denotes rather abstractly that which is "not many" by division into *a* (negative prefix) + *pollōn* and that which is "from the many" by reduplication as *apo* (preposition) + *pollōn*, but also more concretely signifies the Olympian deity in the literal sense, the physical sun in a first figurative sense, and the metaphysical principle of the sun in a further figurative sense.[33] ("Segment C")

It is perhaps by now apparent that a proper understanding of the relation between Plato and Platonism and between ancient and medieval Platonism is a pre-requisite for the adequate comprehension of those issues—both ontological and semantic—which are often viewed by historians as specific either to Plato, or to ancient Platonism, or to medieval Platonism. Although an exhaustive analysis of the process of textual transmission from Greek into Latin would be necessary in order to grasp fully the relation between different stages of the Platonic tradition, it is hoped that the brief observations and

---

[31] Augustine, *De Diversis Quaestionibus LXXXIII*, qu. 46, ed. A. Mutzenbecher, *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 44A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975).

[32] Augustine, *De Immortalitate Animi* 15. 24, ed. W. Hörmann, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 89 (Wien: Hoelder – Pichler – Tempsky, 1986).

[33] Macrobius, *Saturnalia* I.17, 7–9 ed. J. Willis (Leipzig: Teubner, 1963). For a more extensive discussion of these issues see Stephen Gersh, "Cratylus Mediaevalis. Ontology and Polysemy in Medieval Platonism (to ca. 1200)," in *Poetry and Philosophy in the Middle Ages. A Festschrift for Peter Dronke*, ed. J. Marenbon (Leiden: Brill, 2001), pp. 79–98.

comments on these matters made above will have orientated us in the right direction. Clearly we have already cast some light on the ontological questions associated with Platonism by considering later discussions of the material principle and of the relation between negative and affirmative theologies, and some light on the semantic questions associated with Platonism by considering the later techniques of etymology and allegorism.

At this point, it will be instructive to turn to the modern reading of (Neo-) Platonism which we have chosen to discuss. Having earlier concluded that the real issues have frequently been obscured by modern criticism of the historiographical kind, it is pleasing to find a contemporary author whose philosophical agenda has brought many essential matters into focus. Indeed, Jacques Derrida has revealed in numerous essays written since that late 1960s—one thinks of "De l'économie restreinte à l'économie générale," "La double séance," "La pharmacie de Platon," the "Envois" of *La Carte Postale de Platon à Freud et au-delà*, "Khōra", and "Comment ne pas parler—Dénégations"—a sustained interest in questions pertinent to the Platonic tradition.[34] With perhaps one or two exceptions, Derrida has not directly addressed in their original context the questions which we have been rehearsing. However, a series of accidents has occurred which he would say where not just *chances* but *mes chances* (*méchant*) and which Plotinus and Augustine would say were accidents reintegrated within providence. This makes it possible to have Derrida at least indirectly address the Platonic tradition through a juxtaposition of texts.

We may begin by revisiting the question of textual transmission in the light of Derrida's discussion of information-transfer in the essay "Envois."[35] Although this substantial text is less a statement of theory

---

[34] See Jacques Derrida, "From Restricted to General Economy. A Hegelianism Without Reserve," in *WD*, pp. 251–77 and *DS*, pp. 173–226. For the other passages see below. There are some earlier discussions of Derrida's relation to Plato, although these could be described as "preliminary" at best. See Jasper P. Neel, *Plato, Derrida, and Writing* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois U.P., 1988), Catherine H. Zuckert, *Postmodern Platos. Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, Strauss, Derrida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[35] Jacques Derrida, "Envois," in *The Post Card, From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. A. Bass (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 1–256. Cf. the "remainder" to that work: Jacques Derrida, "Telepathy," trans. N. Royle, in *Oxford Literary Review* 10 (1988), pp. 3–41.

about communication than an enactment of the process of communication, it is possible to disengage certain intelligible theoretical assumptions from the chaos of information and disinformation carefully staged there. In the first place, Derrida establishes a schema or model according to which the process of communication takes place between a writer who is both present and absent in different ways and a reader who is similarly both present and absent. The actual process of communication is described by means of certain references to the postcard—a quasi-concept representing transfer as such—reinforced by further references to the media in general and to biological/legal inheritance. The quasi-concept is extended to include the relation between the text of a postcard and the text of a letter and also the relation between the text and the picture on retro and verso of the card. Moreover, the process of communication can be disrupted by the fortuitous or deliberate detours of the missives—indeed this must occur—or by the destruction of the correspondence altogether. Derrida goes on to indicate that the model described applies not only to his own "Envois," but also to all intertextual relations, and especially to that between Plato and Platonists—this last point emerging from the incident which started the writing of his correspondence: the discovery of an illustration depicting Plato and Socrates in a medieval fortune-telling book as reproduced on a Bodleian Library postcard. In fact, Derrida illustrates aspects of the model with references to the Platonic tradition throughout the text: for example, by speaking of the simultaneous presence and absence of Plato as the writer of authentic and pseudepigraphic works respectively. The Bodleian postcard itself depicts the relation between Plato and his disciple Socrates with emphasis upon the medium of writing, the legality of contract, etc. Plato was the author not only of the series of dialogues but also of an important epistolary collection. Moreover, fortuitous and deliberate detours have occurred in the philosophical tradition in connection not only with Platonism, but with Atomism, and with the relation between Platonism and Atomism.[36]

---

[36] For the Plato/Socrates question (and the picture) see *PC*, pp. 145–6, 226–7, 236, 251; for Derrida's attitude to the Platonic corpus pp. 129–30; for the question of the Platonic tradition pp. 200, 226–7, 233–5. Among specific works, the *Letters* are discussed on pp. 58–9, 61, 83, 85–90, 92, 129–30 (*Letter* II on pp. 58, 61); the *Phaedrus* on p. 52, the *Symposium* on pp. 53, 145–6, 164–5, the *Parmenides* on p. 130, the *Philebus* on pp. 53, 129–31, 164. Derrida mentions a few Platonic doctrines: for example recollection on p. 25. the Forms on p. 160, the theory of pleasure on pp. 129–30. For the Socratic daemon see pp. 62–3.

Moving from the question of textual transmission to that of specific philosophemes, the commentator can draw some interesting conclusions. Here, we shall confine ourselves to citing three examples of Derrida's Platonic reading, one from his earlier and two from his later career.[37]

According to the essay entitled *Khōra*,[38] this Greek word for "place" is one of the synonyms for the material principle employed in the *Timaeus*, Derrida using this philosophical notion as the starting-point for his own reading of the dialogue. The strategy here is basically to displace *khōra* from the context of Being to the context of writing and thereby, since writing is conceived as implying the deconstruction of Being, to shift *khōra* from being a component in Plato's ontology to being a challenge to that ontology. To be precise, the transition from the works of reason to the works of necessity together with the introduction of the "third kind" (*triton genos*) in Plato's cosmological account[39] provides the opportunity for an extensive development which is then turned back on the original text. Its first phase argues from the position that the third kind, the receptacle or nurse of becoming, place (*khōra*), evades the polarity of intelligible and sensible—Plato's declared view—to the position that this principle also circumvents the opposition of Being and beings—as Heidegger suggests in one passage—through the intermediate position that it evades the dualities of being and discourse, of metaphorical and proper, and of logos and muthos.[40] The second phase extends place/the third kind beyond its superficial textual connections by activating either the signified defined precisely as oscillation between the oscillations of exclusion (neither/nor) and of participation (both/and), or the signifier: the syntagmatic connection between *khōra* and *genos*, or the signified and the signifier: the conceptual distinction of kinds of kinds exhibited in the polysemy of *genos* as gender (sexuality), race (ethnography), etc.[41] This phase which is justified by reading Plato's agnosticism regarding place in intertextual combination with a negative theology regarding being contains at least four subordinate phases:[42]

---

[37] In order to reveal the textual analogies with what has preceded, we shall follow a structural rather than a chronological order in presenting the Derridean texts.

[38] Jacques Derrida, "Khōra," in *On the Name*, ed. T. Dutoit, trans. I. McLoed (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1993), pp. 87–127.

[39] Plato, *Tim.* 48c–d, 52ab.

[40] Derrida, *KH*, pp. 89–91, 100, 103–6, 123ff.

[41] *KH*, pp. 91, 106.

[42] Plato, *Tim.*52ab. Derrida also identifies *khōra* with the Heideggerian "es gibt."

history of interpreting the *Timaeus* where the text as place determines its interpretations yet removes itself from them, connection between the narrative introduction and the discourse of Timaeus himself where the speaker Socrates as place takes up a certain viewpoint while feigning another viewpoint, discovery of a chasm in the center of the dialogue i.e. the moment of distinction between the works of reason and the works of necessity, and connection between the introduction and the discourse where the speakers Critias the younger, Critias the elder, Solon, and the Egyptian priest as places present an embedded series of reports.[43] (This paragraph will be called "Segment D")

The rapprochement between the Platonic interpretation of place and the Neoplatonic notion of negative theology occurs not only in Derrida's discussion of the former but also in a discussion of the latter.

In the essay "Comment ne pas parler—Dénégations,"[44] Derrida attempts to clarify the relation between deconstruction and negative theology given that two opposite sets of objections to his method have arisen: on the one hand, that the procedures of negative theo-

---

[43] Derrida, *KH*, pp. 94–5, 98 (phase 1); 104–6, 107ff. (phase 2); 103 (phase 3); 111–12 (phase 4).

[44] Jacques Derrida, "How to Avoid Speaking. Denials," trans. K. Frieden, in *Derrida and Negative Theology*, eds. H. Coward and T. Foshay (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), pp. 73–142. Derrida's earlier references to negative theology include *Diff.*, p. 6 where the argument is that the expressions of différance are similar to and sometimes indistinguishable from negative theology, and that the denial of existence to God by negative theology remains an affirmation of *a.* superior existence and *b.* presence—both these points recurring in "How to Avoid Speaking." The earlier references also include *FRGE*, p. 271 where the argument is that there are distances and proximities between the atheology of Bataille and negative theology, although the denied predicates and categories of beings in negative theology are "perhaps" combined with affirmation of *a.* supreme being and *b.* fixed meaning. For their potentially far-reaching implications in relation to negative theology one should also study Derrida's "Violence and Metaphysics. An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Lévinas," in *WD*, pp. 79–153 which associates negative theology with the non-being equivalent to maximal being via the intertext of Lévinas; and his "On a Newly Arisen Apocalyptic Tone in Philosophy," trans. J.P. Leavey, Jr., in *Raising the Tone of Philosophy. Late Essays by Immanuel Kant, Transformative Critique by Jacques Derrida*, ed. P. Fenves (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U.P., 1993), pp. 117–71 connecting negative theology with temporal and performative elements via intertexts of Kant, the Bible, and Blanchot. The former essay also establishes a clear distinction between metaphysical ontotheology and the thinking of Being (in the Heideggerian sense) (*VM*, p. 146) and also the important connection between negative theology and logocentric alterity (as in Plato's *Sophist*) (*VM*, pp. 152–3). Several of the texts mentioned refer explicitly to Meister Eckhart.

logy have been reduced to a purely rhetorical form and on the other, that the grammar of negative theology leads to a becoming-theological of all discourse. This clarification has two stages. First, Derrida approaches negative theology in an essentializing and constative manner by contrasting its features with those of the deconstructive method in terms of a set of five criteria.[45] These are: that negative theology belongs to a predicative or propositional mode of discourse, whereas deconstruction does not, that the theological as opposed to the deconstructive method privileges the unity of the word or name, that negative theology assumes a super-*essentiality* beyond affirmative predication and Being itself contrary to the practice of deconstruction, that the theological as opposed to the deconstructive approach implies the retention of definite meaning, and finally that negative theology promises the immediacy of some presence to the subject whereas deconstruction does not.[46] Secondly,

---

[45] *HAS*, pp. 77–82. This discussion is relatively brief.

[46] There is an extensive and increasing bibliography on the (potential or actual) relation between deconstruction and negative theology. Items of special note during the last fifteen years are: Jean-Luc Marion, *God Without Being. Hors-Texte*, trans. T. Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 37–49, 73–83, etc.; David E. Klemm, "Open Secrets: Derrida and Negative Theology," in *Negation and Theology*, ed. Robert P. Scharlemann (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992), pp. 8–24; Gianni Vattimo, *The Adventure of Difference. Philosophy after Nietzsche and* Heidegger, trans. C. Blamires (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U.P., 1993), p. 137ff.; Jacques Colleony, "Déconstruction, théologie négative et archi-éthique (Derrida, Lévinas et Heidegger)," in *Le passage des frontières: autour du travail de Jacques Derrida (Colloque de Cerisy)*, ed. M.-L. Mallet (Paris: Galilée, 1994), pp. 249–61; Rodolphe Gasché, "God, For Example," in *Inventions of Difference* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1994), pp. 150–70; John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida. Religion Without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1997), pp. 1–57; Thomas A. Carlson, *Indiscretion. Finitude and the Naming of God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 155–89, etc.; Philip Leonard, "Divine Horizons. Lévinas, Derrida, Transcendence," in *Trajectories of Mysticism in Theory and Literature*, ed. P. Leonard (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 219–38; Kevin Hart, *The Trespass of the Sign. Deconstruction, Theology, and Philosophy*, 2nd. Ed. (New York: Fordham U.P., 2000); François Nault, *Derrida et la théologie. Dire Dieu après la Déconstruction* (Montréal: Médiaspaul and Paris: Cerf, 2000), pp. 227–51, p. 240, n. 30. Much of the material in these works can be reduced to variations on the theme of a triangular debate between (Neo-) Platonism, Heidegger, and Derrida. The variants are i. *What is the relation between negative theology and the ontological difference?* For Derrida, o.d. is a more general structure than n.t.; *What is the relation between negative theology and différance?* For Derrida, d. is a more general structure than n.t. although other writers suggest different readings—Vattimo bringing n.t. and d. together in adjusting d. towards n.t., while Hart brings n.t. and d. together in adjusting n.t. towards d., and Carlson brings n.t. and d. together with undecidable adjustment; iii. *What is the relation between différance and the ontological difference?* For Derrida, d. is a more general structure than o.d.

Derrida approaches the theological method simultaneously in an essentializing and constative and in a non-essentializing and non-constative manner by further describing its features within a context dominated by the practices of polysemy and deferral.[47] This development is continued through the three "places", "stages," or "paradigms" which, albeit not attaining the essence of negative theology, surround the latter with a "resonant space." *Paradigm A—Greek.* This provides a reading of Plato's *Republic*[48] where the Idea of the Good is described as "beyond Being" (*epekeina tēs ousias*) and of his *Timaeus*[49] where the Receptacle is described as "place" (*khōra*). Derrida isolates two features of each text: in the former, the fact that the Good combines the senses of *non*-being and *maximal* being and that the Good is continuous with its metaphor of the Sun; in the latter, the fact that the Receptacle which is *neither* intelligible *nor* sensible does not become—at least in one possible reading—*both* intelligible *and* sensible and that the Receptacle is no longer continuous with its various metaphors. *Paradigm B—Christian.* Derrida here reads several texts of ps.-Dionysius[50] as indicating some movement away from the essentializing approach to negative theology found in Plato through the introduction of prayers, the multiplication of discourses (through citation),[51] and the use of rhetorical apostrophe. The first and last features underline the importance of the performative aspect and the second feature the importance of the trace-structure of this kind of theological discourse.[52] ("Segment E")

As a final stage in our juxtaposition of Derrida with the Platonic tradition we shall revisit the general question of semantics with recourse to the early essay "La pharmacie de Platon."[53] Here, the writer starts from the mythical passage in Plato's *Phaedrus* where the god Theuth presents his discovery of writing to King Thamus for his approval[54] and, bringing in a Freudian intertext concerning the

---

[47] *HAS*, p. 82ff. This discussion forms the main part of Derrida's essay.
[48] Plato, *Rep.* VI, 509b ff.
[49] Plato, *Tim.* 52ab.
[50] Among the ps.-Dionysian texts are: *Epistula* 9. 1, 1105C and *De Mystica Theologia* 1. 1, 1000A–1001A. Derrida also makes use of Meister Eckhart at this point.
[51] At *HAS*, p. 113 this multiplication of discourses is associated with the dialectic of affirmative and negative predications.
[52] Derrida's essay also includes a *Paradigm C—Neither Greek nor Christian*—based on Heideggerian texts.
[53] Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," in *DI*, pp. 61–171.
[54] Plato, *Phaedrus* 274c–275b.

parricidal relation between father and son through the reference to the "father of writing," a Platonic intertext dealing with the Idea of the Good through the same reference, and a Marxian intertext concerning the relation between capital and interest through Plato's reference to the sun as "offspring" of the Good, develops an argument about the status of writing—also called *différance*, the *pharmakon*, the *supplément*, etc. of great subtlety. This discussion can be understood as simultaneously stating a theory of writing—namely, that writing is not posterior (inferior) to Being—and exemplifying the practice of this writing. Derrida reads Plato as stating the theory of writing in three stages in which a hidden complexity in the relation between different signifieds is revealed. The first stage is where Plato rejects writing and Derrida identifies King Thamus (and to a lesser extent Theuth) with the Idea of the Good and writing (and to a lesser extent Theuth) with the Sun. In the second and more complex stage of the argument, Plato actively read by Derrida—which means Plato's own text read against Plato—reveals a distinction between a higher writing interior to the soul and a lower writing exterior to it, shows that these two writings are not totally separable from one another, and indicates by this fusion a certain re-evaluation of writing. The third stage is where Plato-Derrida identifies King Thamus, writing (and by implication Theuth) with the Idea of the Good which is "beyond Being."[55] Derrida-Plato also exemplifies the practice of writing in the second stage in which a hidden complexity in the relation between the different signifieds *and their signifier* is revealed. Here, Plato's assertions in the myth that writing is a remedy for memory—the positive evaluation of writing by Theuth—and a poison for memory—the negative evaluation of writing by Thamus—are connected through the lexeme *pharmakon*. In other words, the conceptual relation between two aspects of the notion of writing is shown to be sustained by the linguistic relation between the lexeme *pharmakon* and these two aspects.[56] There are perhaps three important points to grasp concerning this Derridean writing. First, that this writing is designed to overcome the distinction between the conceptual and the linguistic as such; secondly, that this writing exhibits

[55] Derrida, *Pharm.*, pp. 75–84 (stage 1); 95–117, 120–28, and 142–55 (stage 2); and 120–28 and 156–71 (stage 3).
[56] *Pharm.*, pp. 95–100.

the infra-structural character described at the beginning of this chapter;[57] and third, that this writing serves to mitigate the rigid dichotomy between monosemy and polysemy ("Segment F").

We have perhaps now reached the really critical point in our analysis. That it would be useful to write of Derrida's reading of (Neo-) Platonism, of our reading of Derrida's reading of those texts, and of our reading of (Neo-) Platonism, in all three cases with the intention of showing how philosophical writing simultaneously establishes and transgresses its limits through the juxtaposition of textual materials has already been proposed. A detailed implementation of this proposal or at least the beginning of such an implementation might proceed as follows.

With reference to the question of textual transmission and information-transfer it becomes evident that both the Neoplatonists and Derrida view the Platonic tradition as writing. However, the difference between them is that the Neoplatonists treat the writing which is equivalent to the Platonic tradition as an external reflection of its philosophical truth whereas Derrida treats the writing which is coextensive with the Platonic tradition as an internal critique of that philosophical truth. When one juxtaposes the manner of presenting the history of philosophy in the "Envois" of Derrida with that of presenting the same thing in the work of a hypothetical Neoplatonist, the coming into relief of certain features indicates more than anything else the true natures of the Derridean and Neoplatonic notions of the history of philosophy as writing. First, there is the use of the postcard itself since this quasi-concept not only has a metonymic relation to writing and trace—the presence or absence of the sender, the disruption or detour of the communication, the singularity or generality of the message, the visual or textual aspects of the communication, the presence or absence of the receiver being associative features—but is itself an example of metonymic operation. A Neoplatonist would rather apply a metaphorical concept to his philosophical tradition: for instance, by comparing the presence of light to visible things to the presence of truth in Platonic texts. Secondly, we find the seemingly un-Platonic writer Heidegger cited as an intertext in the Derridean "Envois," whereas equally un-Platonic thinkers like the Atomists scarcely figure as intertexts in the Neoplatonists'

[57] See pp. 1–2.

own accounts. Third, there is the manner of linking the postcard and Heidegger. Here, one should note the further metonymic relations between the "sending" (*envoyer—schicken*) of the postcard and the Heideggerian notion of "destiny" (*Geschick*) and between the rectangular format of the postcard and the fourfold quasi-structure of the Heideggerian "event/appropriation" (*Ereignis*)—which are connective elements—and the blatantly technological imagery of postcards, letters, telephones, and other media incompatible with the Heideggerian ethos—which are disconnective elements.

When we shift from the materials dealing with textual transmission and information-transfer to those dealing with ontology and the deconstruction of ontology, a more complex set of juxtapositions becomes possible

All three of the Derridean discussions focused on the relation between Being (in the (Neo-) Platonic sense) and writing (as defined by Derrida). In segment D the *khōra* of the *Timaeus* was displaced from the context of Being to that of writing and from the context of being a transcendent signified to being simultaneously a quasi-transcendent signifier and a quasi-transcendent signified. In segment E the essentializing and constative presentation of negative theology—which corresponds to Being—was combined with or shifted to a simultaneously essentializing and constative and non-essentializing and performative presentation of negative theology—which corresponds to writing. Segment F explicitly refers to writing. In this reading of the *Phaedrus*, writing as the *pharmakon* appears successively in three forms: first, as something posterior and inferior to the Idea of the Good representing Being or what is "beyond Being," and therefore obviously corresponding to writing in the everyday sense; thirdly, as something neither posterior nor inferior to the Idea of the Good representing Being or what is "beyond Being," and therefore corresponding to what Derrida elsewhere calls arche-writing, these two forms of writing being mediated by the notion of a duality of higher and intra-psychic and lower and extra-psychic writing suggested by Plato. When we turn to the (Neo-) Platonic discussions, it becomes apparent that in two cases—segment A dealing with matter and segment B dealing with the divine names—the relation between Being and writing is not explicitly treated as problematic. On the other hand, segment C does initiate a movement in that direction by comparing the formulation of the requirement of a monosemous foundation of discourse in Augustine and ps.-Dionysius and that of the

possibility of a polysemous expansion of discourse in Macrobius. Thus, juxtaposition of segment A and segment B suggests a diversion and segment C an extension of Derrida's reading of (Neo-) Platonism. Of course, the story is not quite so simple. The references to writing can be understood as applying on the one hand to the graphic substance of writing and on the other to the general structure of writing, two phenomena which, although clearly to be distinguished from each other, are never totally separated.[58] If we take into account the Plotinian distinction between matter and evil and their interpretation as two overlapping stages in the emanative continuum, considering also the explanation of evil if not matter as being and non-being in different senses, then the Derridean notion of arche-writing or arche-trace comes more into view. If we add to that equation the Proclean and ps.-Dionysian application of Plato's hypothetical method to the question of divine naming, where the first principle emerges simultaneously as non-being or non-intellect and as being or intellect in different senses, then a further approach to the Derridean concept of arche-writing or arche-trace becomes possible.[59] One might object to this extension of Derrida's reading of (Neo-) Platonism on the ground that writing in this sense is not mentioned by Plotinus, Proclus, and ps.-Dionysius. Obviously, this point is correct. Nevertheless, that the *essential traits* of this kind of writing i.e. its disruptive relation to metaphysics of presence and to oppositional structure can be found in the earlier texts is shown by the following considerations:

As we have already seen, the question of the relation between (Neo-) Platonic Being and Derridean writing is closely connected with the question of the metaphysics of presence. In fact, the Derridean segment D, in describing how *khōra* evades the opposition of Being and beings in Heidegger and the Derridean segment E, by explaining that negative theology promises the immediacy of presence although beginning to displace this through polysemy and deferral, state this connection explicitly. But how precisely do Platonism and Neoplatonism stand in terms of the metaphysics of presence?

---

[58] See Derrida, *OG*, pp. 59–60.

[59] The origins of the ps.-Dionysian theory in Proclus' interpretation of the *Parmenides* have not been understood by the majority of writers on the relation between deconstruction and negative theology. For one exception see Carlson, *Indiscretion*, p. 164 (citing one of the present author's earlier studies).

A provisional response to this question may be essayed through the solution of two subordinate questions: namely, 1. Does the assumption of the *epekeina* or "beyond Being" (as mentioned in the Derridean segments E and F) represent a move away from the metaphysics of presence? and 2. Does the teaching regarding the *khōra* or "place" (as cited in the Derridean segment D) represent such a move? Derrida himself seems to answer the first question negatively in maintaining the equation between transcendence of Being and maximal Being and the second question affirmatively by activating the textual possibilities of *khōra* although, in noting the performative aspects of negative theology and the proximity between the Idea of the Good and place, he tentatively answers also the first question affirmatively. Our answer to the questions will, however, place more emphasis upon the concept of emanation[60]—something stated explicitly in the Platonic segment A and, in the form of the dialectic of affirmative and negative divine names, implicitly in the Platonic segment B. On this basis, it is possible to provide *a.* as negative answers to questions 1 and 2: the One or Good is atemporal in being prior to the creation of time by the Craftsman, and the One or Good is substantial as being the cause of an emanation of a substantial character, while the Receptacle is atemporal in being prior to the creation of time by the Craftsman, and the Receptacle is substantial as being the effect of an emanation of substantial character[61]—atemporality and substantiality being the primary features, at least in the Platonic context, of the Heideggerian Being as presence. Using the same criteria, one can provide *b.* as affirmative answers to questions 1 and 2: the One or Good is temporal in being the cause of the Craftsman's creation of time, and the One or Good is not substantial as being prior to an emanation of a substantial character, while the Receptacle is temporal in being the cause of the Craftsman's creation of time, and the Receptacle is non-substantial as being posterior to an emanation of a substantial character. By answering the two questions in the manner that he did, Derrida showed that he was intent on maintaining the separation of the Idea of the Good and *khōra* by ignoring the emanative continuum between them, or on preserving the

[60] The account of emanation presented here is elaborated in more detail in chapter 2.

[61] Here, cause and effect imply continuity while priority and posteriority imply separation between the terms.

duality at the heart of the deconstructive method by denying the most deconstructive element of all.

As we have seen, the question of the relation between (Neo-) Platonic Being and Derridean writing is closely connected not only with the question of the metaphysics of presence but also with that of opposites of prior (superior) and posterior (inferior) terms. An opposition between intelligible and sensible with primacy attributed to the former is identified as being fundamental to (Neo-) Platonism in the Derridean segment D and is shown to be substantially correct by comparing the materials assembled here from the writings of Plato, Plotinus, and ps.-Dionysius. Thus, the Platonic segment A stresses the dualities of stable and mobile and of orderly and disorderly and the Platonic segment B the dualities of causing and caused and of intellectual and non-intellectual, in all cases with primacy attributed to the first term of the opposition. However, particular attention should be paid to the Plotinian and ps.-Dionysian materials in these two segments. Here, the usual priority within the oppositions is combined, as a consequence of the complex semantic relations between being, non-being, matter, good, and evil when conceived as emanations and of the semantic shift within the divine names from negation as deficiency to negation as excess, with a reversal of that priority. In other words, such textual materials also point towards the disruption of oppositions.

We might here add a comment on the performativity to which the Derridean segment E alludes in explaining how negative theology may be approached both in an essentializing and constative and in a non-essentializing and performative manner. The second aspect would relate to the introduction of prayer—either in the basic sense where it corresponds to the negative moment or in the sense of encomium where it corresponds to the affirmative moment—into this type of discourse. Although this important notion of "address to the Other" is not paralleled in the ancient texts cited in this chapter, we shall pursue a comparison of the deconstructive and (Neo-) Platonic approaches to this question elsewhere in connection with Augustine's writing.

Segmentation and Juxtaposition

The foregoing pages have sketched in outline—seemingly for the first time—the philosophical encounter of Derrida and (Neo-) Platonism.

Some brief comments on the method of juxtaposing segments extracted from (Neo-)Platonic and Derridean texts will form a coda to this analysis.

The essay "La double séance" begins by tentatively asking the question "What is literature?"[62] The approach is tentative because of a certain suspension whereby the ensuing discussion takes place between the opposites of literature and truth—the between here also being termed the "fold", the "angle," or the "corner"—although the initial questions's form "what is . . .?" presupposes the truth which is one of the opposites. This quasi-originary dualism so typical of Derrida is immediately specified in two ways. The first way is visual. Mallarmé's short text *Mimique* is typographically displayed in the angle formed by a longer segment of Plato's *Philebus* in order to serve as an epigraph for some future development. The second way is textual. An oral presentation is announced in the corner between a text already published ("la double séance I") and a text about to be published ("la double séance II"), this material existing as a potential graft onto a future commentary (on Philippe Sollers' *Nombres*).[63]

The early paragraphs of Derrida's essay supplement these remarks about form with various suggestions regarding content. In particular, the relation between the quoted texts and a certain interpretation of *mimesis* (stated in the case of Mallarmé and illustrated in the case of Plato) is proposed as the main topic of discussion. This concept of imitation together with those of truth and meaning has governed history while the notion of history itself has been based on them. As far as the *Philebus* and other writings of Plato are concerned, imitation can be formalized in terms of a "logical" schema of two propositions and six possible consequences: 1. *Mimesis* produces a thing's double + a. the double is worth nothing in itself, b. the imitator's value is only as great as the model's value, c. the mimesis is worth nothing in itself; 2. The imitator is something + a. the imitator adds something to the model, b. what is added is never completely true, c. the imitator is an inferior replacement of the model.[64]

---

[62] Derrida, "The Double Session." in *DS*, pp. 172–286.

[63] Derrida, *DS*, pp. 175–7, 183.

[64] Derrida, *DS*, pp. 183–8. Of course, the important point is not whether this is a reasonable account of Plato's doctrine of imitation or not, but the fact that Derrida views Platonic thought and systematic mechanism as closely associated.

We cannot pursue Derrida's interesting discussion of literature, truth, and imitation beyond noting its main purpose: a deconstruction of the Platonic notion of imitation which is based on the transcendent, on metaphysics of presence, and on the constative via the Mallarméan approach to imitation which challenges transcendence by being inherently temporal and performative.[65] For our present purposes, it will be sufficient to interrogate what we have termed the visual and textual specifications of the between of literature and truth. To some extent, the juxtaposition of segments of text as the basis of a public performance reflects the structure of the Mallarméan *Livre* or at least of the latter's extant fragments edited by J. Scherer. However, the peculiarly deconstructive significance of the juxtaposition of segments, although perhaps exemplified by the unfolding of "la double séance," is only expounded theoretically in certain passages of the associated commentary on Sollers.

In "Dissémination," many of Derrida's remarks on the juxtapositional technique of Sollers' book seem particularly to address the deconstructive significance of its procedure.[66] It is not difficult to recognize this intention in the commentator's references to a given textual segment as deforming, contaminating, or rejecting another, and as modifying another text by insertion while radiating back toward the site of its removal.[67] Duality is fundamental to this configuration, given that the textual samples can only be read within the operation of their *re*-inscription. Each item is already a citation, a scion grafted onto itself, a tree consisting entirely of a root, an incessant substitution. Reference to the Other is also fundamental to the configuration, implying a thickness of the text opening to the beyond which is at once null and infinite. One is thrown outside by the power of reference which is however by no means a settled outside.

The relation between discursive and juxtaposed textualities exhibits the subtle interplay characteristic of the relation between phonetic and non-phonetic language with which it is analogous. That Sollers' *Nombres* can graft phonetic onto non-phonetic writing is highly significant. As Derrida explains elsewhere in connection with Freud,

---

[65] Derrida, *DS*, pp. 188–94.

[66] Jacques Derrida, "Dissemination," in *DI*, pp. 287–366. The comments in the next few paragraphs are based particularly on pp. 355–8 of this essay.

[67] Derrida (quoting Sollers) explains that the ellipse is a form of motion which a. preserves a contradiction and b. resolves it (*Diss.*, p. 356).

phonetic writing which has a linearity repressing meanings is to be contrasted with non-phonetic writing and the non-linear spacing out of meaning. Nevertheless, the contrast is not absolute since the non-linear graphism is always active within the so-called phonetic sequence itself.[68]

It is in this connection that the Egyptian hieroglyph (as interpreted within the Freudian *Traumdeutung*) and the Chinese ideogram (as exploited within Ezra Pound's poetics) become relevant. Contrary to the ideas of early modern interpreters like Athanasius Kircher and Leibniz for whom the Egyptian and Chinese scripts indicate the possibility of a universal language of concepts or a transcendent divine language both of which are obviously non-phonetic, Derrida draws attention to other features of such scripts.[69] These are first, the combination of phonetic and non-phonetic elements analogous with the transition between discursive and juxtaposing textualities described above and secondly, the requirement of interpretative decoding which the non-phonetic components of such a script imply.[70] Now Plotinus who was himself Egyptian in origin also describes the hieroglyphs. According to his account, when the ancient wise men wished to express something profound, they did not employ these written letters which follow discursive thinking in the unfolding of words and statements but rather certain images capable of manifesting as a substratum of thinking the non-discursivity of the higher world ("Segment G").[71] The context shows that Plotinus is elaborating the contrast typical of his thought between the non-discursive thinking of the second principle or Intellect and the discursive thinking of the third principle or Soul and associating non-phonetic writing with the linguistic expression of the former and phonetic writing with the linguistic expression of the latter. The Plotinian and Derridean interpretations of the hieroglyphs agree in stressing their combination of non-phonetic and phonetic graphisms and the immanence of the non-phonetic in the phonetic. The differences between the two

---

[68] Derrida, *FSW*, pp. 217–19. Cf. Derrida, *OG*, pp. 85–91.

[69] Derrida, *OG*, pp. 76–80.

[70] Derrida, *FSW*, pp. 218–19, "Fors. The Anglish Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok," trans. B. Johnson, in *The Wolf Man's Magic Word. A Cryptonymy*, by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, trans. N. Rand. Foreword by Jacques Derrida. (Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press), pp. xxviii–xxix.

[71] Plotinus, *Enn.* V. 8 [31] 6, 1–19.

approaches are however equally notable. These include: an explicit ontological distinction between the thinking and the expressive modes in Plotinus only, the interpretation of what is expressed by the non-phonetic as atemporality in the case of Plotinus and as an "other" temporality in that of Derrida, and an implicit epistemological distinction between the cognitive and the interpretative modes exclusively in Plotinus. For the Neoplatonist also, the assumption of a higher reality which is transcendent and causal in relation to the lower remains paramount.

As argued earlier, many of Derrida's remarks on the juxtapositional technique of Sollers' book seem particularly to address the deconstructive significance of its procedure. In fact, it seems reasonable to suggest that some of these comments are tantamount to a description of the deconstructive method itself. This is clearly the case with references to the dynamic relations between textual segments, the inherently citational character of such units being associated with the etymology *ciere* = "to move"/"to shake up." More specifically, this dynamism is reflected in spatialization, temporalization, and the relation between the two.[72] This is how we should read a reference to the gap separating the text from itself which is manifested in the silent spacings of hyphens, periods, quotation-marks, and numerals, a note on the non-phonetic graphism's *having been* inserted, *now* punctuating, and *being yet* to mark the phonetic sequence, and a reference to the non-accidental intervention of spacing into the time of language which therefore becomes not a pure continuum but a differential articulation.[73]

Finally, juxtapositional textuality exhibits a tendency towards geometrization. This emerges clearly from Derrida's comparison of the act of reading to the penetration of a surface by X rays and to the removal of a painting from one frame to another. In this context, the dynamic transformation of geometrical shapes takes on a special importance. As one unfolds the semantic configuration of a text in reading, squares turn into cubes or into circles in a continuous gesture of non-closure.

---

[72] Concerning Freud's development of such ideas in connection with the analogy of optical devices see Derrida, *FSW*, pp. 215–19.

[73] For the last point see Derrida, *FSW*, p. 219. Derrida connects these ideas with the non-linear notion of time developed by Heidegger. See Derrida, *OG*, pp. 85–7.

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT IS CALLED "NEGATIVE THEOLOGY?" . . .

In accordance with the circumstances of its origination, the essay "Sauf le Nom (Post-Scriptum)" occupies a position of singular importance within the sequence of Derrida's elaborations on the theme of "negative theology."[1] The writer continues to reiterate the interpretative stance of earlier texts like "Comment ne pas parler: Dénégations" in which it is perhaps the contrast between deconstruction and negative theology, given the ancient and medieval theologians' inability to explore the differential possibilities of their method in escaping from the framework of ontotheology, which comes to the fore. However, "Sauf le Nom" also points in a new direction. This might be characterized as an evolving interaction between deconstruction and negative theology where there occurs simultaneously a reconfiguring of the relation between affirmative and negative modes as a relation between the procedures of exemplarism and substitution and a transition from an ontological and quasi-linguistic to a linguistic and quasi-ontological viewpoint. In this chapter, we shall embark on the double enterprise of reading Derrida's important essay in the light of these criteria and of unfolding an unthought or unwritten element in that essay. Although these questions will not be considered explicitly until later on, they will be seen retrospectively to have been implied from the start in our discussion of Derrida's textual relation to Neoplatonism through Heidegger, in the contrast between the reading *of* negative theology and the reading *by* negative theology which constitutes the main conceptual opposition underlying the essay, and from time to time in our lateral exploration of deconstruction, infrastructures, and the like.

Although "Sauf le Nom" is specifically orientated towards the problematic of negative theology, having been originally published as a reply to a group of essays on this theme,[2] it can be understood as

---

[1] "Sauf le nom (Post-Scriptum)," in Jacques Derrida, *On the Name*, ed. T. Dutoit, trans. J.P. Leavey, Jr. (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1995), pp. 33–85.

[2] For a description of these circumstances, see *ON*, p. 34. Here, Derrida notes

a philosophical encounter between deconstruction and Neoplatonism in general. Leaving aside the question of whether Johannes Scheffler, the seventeenth-century German religious poet normally known under the pseudonym of "Angelus Silesius," who represents an intertextual layer of Derrida's essay, should be described as a negative theologian or as a Neoplatonist, it cannot be disputed that Neoplatonic writers rather than negative theologians in the narrow sense intervene at the most crucial points in the discourse. On one occasion, Derrida speaks of certain hyperbolic movements in the "Neoplatonic" (*néo-platonicien*) style going beyond God as being and as name.[3] Elsewhere in the essay one finds references to Plotinus as an example of a negative theologian but more importantly as proponent of the thesis that the Good can give what it does not have, one citation mentioning the specific passages in the *Enneads* which supply this formula, another noting that the formula haunts the western philosophical tradition until Heidegger.[4] Augustine is cited in a variety of contexts. His ontology is contrasted with the negative theology of Silesius in one passage and identified with the negative theology of Eckhart in another, these two references rightly suggesting the fertile ambivalence of Augustine's metaphysical doctrine.[5] At one point, Derrida alludes to the psychological teaching regarding the "cogito" in both its Augustinian and Cartesian forms.[6] Moreover, the *Confessions* are subjected to an extensive interpretation which moves along two trajectories: the first whereby the text is seen less from the cognitive than from the performative viewpoint, and the second whereby its

---

that the first version of the essay was published in English under the title "Post-Scriptum" and with the subtitle "Aporias, Ways, and Voices" in the volume *Derrida and Negative Theology*, eds. H. Coward and T. Foshay (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), pp. 283–323. Having been unable to attend in person a conference organized under the same title as that of the volume, Derrida was invited to respond in the form of a conclusion to the written versions of the papers read at the conference. A year after the production of this volume, the French version of the essay was published as a small book entitled *Sauf le Nom* (Paris: Galilée, 1993). This included a. many inserts of varying sizes exploiting the polysemy of the phrase *sauf le nom* (i.e. "except the name"/"safe—the name"/"save the name!"), b. a detachable insert entitled *Prière d'insérer* ("please insert"/"a prayer to insert", etc.) linking the booklet with two others entitled *Passions* and *Khōra* respectively. An English translation of all three texts is included in the item mentioned in n. 1.

[3] *SLN*, pp. 64–5.
[4] *SLN*, pp. 68, 70, 84–5.
[5] *SLN*, pp. 40, 52.
[6] *SLN*, pp. 65–6.

status as something written as a trace, and as post-scriptum is emphasized.[7] Elsewhere in the essay one finds references to Eckhart most importantly as proponent of the doctrine of releasement but also as citer of Augustine and as cited by Silesius, the doctrine at issue in the former case being that of simultaneously applying affirmative and negative predicates to God.[8] On one occasion, Derrida speaks of Nicholas of Cusa's notion of learned ignorance as a self-critical form of negative theology.[9] Finally there are a few references to Neoplatonism in conjunction with other philosophies: in addition to some formal contrasting of "Neoplatonism" (*néo-platonisme*) and "Christianity" (*christianisme*), he frequently juxtaposes Husserl, Lévinas, Lacan, and Heidegger with ancient sources.[10]

Mention of Heidegger brings us to the most important preliminary reflection on Derrida's treatment of negative theology since, in addition to the materials listed above, the essay "Sauf le Nom" is notable for the many Heideggerian intertexts which steer its discussions. In fact, it is undoubtedly because Derrida approaches negative theology not only in the context of Neoplatonism but simultaneously in the contexts of Neoplatonism and Heideggerianism that his

---

[7] *SLN*, pp. 38–40.
[8] *SLN*, pp. 40, 53, 71, 74, 78.
[9] *SLN*, p. 48.
[10] *SLN*, pp. 72–3. Cf. *SLN*, pp. 36, 50, 64–5, 67–8, 82, 84–5. We shall indicate the significance of Husserlian intertexts for Derrida's project—at least indirectly—when discussing the concepts of repetition and ideality below. However, two elements derived from Husserl which are introduced quite early in the text of "Sauf le Nom" may be recorded here: 1. The notion of *epokhē* at *SLN*, p. 67. Here Derrida argues that the negative moment of theology has some affinity both with the skepsis of skepticism and with the phenomenological reduction. Transcendental phenomenology, through its suspension of all positing of existence, is so similar to negative theology that it could function as a propaedeutic to the latter. 2. (In an equally important but less explicit usage) Application of the analogy of arrows to intentions at *SLN*, pp. 61–2, cf. p. 74. The idea here is that the affirmative moment (or more precisely the combination of affirmative and negative moments) in theology can be likened to arrows aimed at but always missing their target. The manner in which Derrida wishes the analogy to be understood here is illuminated by the public disagreement between Derrida and J.-L. Marion regarding the application of phenomenological ideas to negative theology. Using "God" as a paradigm of intention, we can say that for Derrida this represents an empty signifier operating in the absence of intuitive fulfillment, whereas for Marion it represents an overflowing intuition which "saturates" the intention. On this controversy see John D. Caputo, "Apostles of the Impossible. On God and the Gift in Derrida and Marion," in *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, eds. J.D. Caputo and M.J. Scanlon (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1999), pp. 192–5.

discussion turns out to be so productive from the philosophical viewpoint.[11]

In order to demonstrate the centrality of themes drawn from Heidegger in the present essay, we only have to focus our attention on a few passages in the text. At one point in his argument, Derrida explains that the phrase *Sauf le Nom* providing the essay's title can be understood as meaning both "except his name" and "safe, his name" and therefore as illustrating the infinite substitution of names on language's boundary. Apparently, this process of substitution corresponds to what Heidegger terms the *es gibt* ("there is/it gives") and the *Ereignis* ("Event/Appropriation) although strictly speaking it surpasses all such philosophemes.[12] At another point in the argument, Derrida suggests that the structural plan underlying the essay "Sauf le Nom" involves the discussion of negative theology not only as the intersection of two traditions but also through the interaction of two speakers. Apparently, these processes of interaction correspond to the *Kreuzweise Durchstreichung* ("crosswise cancellation") by which Heidegger erases the word "Being" and the *Geviert* ("Fourfold") to which he claims thereby to refer.[13] The numerous borrowings from the German thinker are mostly without explicit reference to their textual source. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify *Der Satz vom Grund* as the inspiration behind Derrida's adoption of Angelus Silesius' aphorisms as the connecting element within his own discourse.[14] *Sein und Zeit* can be identified as the source of a certain existentialist element in "Sauf le Nom": for example, where Heidegger's reference to death as "the

---

[11] The frequent recourse to Heideggerian intertexts in the present essay is consistent with the strategy followed in the earlier text "How to Avoid Speaking. Denials" where Derrida thought he could most effectively treat negative theology through an intertextual discussion of three select authors: Plato, ps.-Dionysius, and Heidegger. The final stage utilized a cluster of texts in order to show first, that Heidegger accuses Plato of failing to think adequately the transcendence of Dasein and the ontological difference and secondly, that Heidegger suggests avoidance of the word "Being" in his discussion of nihilism with Ernst Jünger and in the theology which he is tempted to write (see Derrida, *HAS*, pp. 73–142. The Heidegger discussion based on *On the Essence of Reason, Introduction to Metaphysics, What is Called Thinking?, On the Question of Being*, and the 1951 Zürich Seminar begins on p. 122).

[12] *SLN*, pp. 55–6, 80.

[13] *SLN*, pp. 62–3.

[14] See *SLN*, p. 36 where Derrida recalls Heidegger's quotation of Leibniz about Silesius and *SLN*, p. 144, n. 1 where the exact page-numbers of the German text are given.

possibility of the absolute impossibility of *Dasein*" is quoted.[15] There is a clear reminiscence of the notion that Language itself speaks in *Unterwegs zur Sprache*,[16] and another reminiscence of the notion that one transcends by detachment in *Gelassenheit*.[17] Finally, it is possible to identify *Was heisst Denken?* as the inspiration behind Derrida's emphasis upon "calling" in the formulation of the axiom upon which the discussion of negative theology in "Sauf le Nom" is based[18] and in the establishment of the relation between the text of "Sauf le Nom" and those of its companion essays.[19]

Given such clear evidence that Derrida approaches negative theology simultaneously in the contexts of Neoplatonism and Heideggerianism, we have to continue by asking two questions: first, why does Derrida use Heideggerian intertexts in order to read negative theology? And secondly, how does Derrida use Heideggerian intertexts in order to read negative theology?

The question of why Derrida exploits Heideggerian intertexts in discussing negative theology has an interesting answer.[20] It is that Derrida elaborates this intertextual connection as a by-product of what he probably believes to be a more crucial exercise: that of

---

[15] See *SLN*, p. 44. Cf. *SLN*, p. 145, n. 7 where the exact page-numbers of the German text are given.

[16] *SLN*, p. 54.

[17] *SLN*, pp. 78–9.

[18] See *SLN*, p. 48. The axiom "What is called 'negative theology' . . . is a language" (*ce qu'on appelle 'théologie négative' . . . c'est un langage*). We shall discuss this axiom below on pp. 53–4 and 80.

[19] See *ON*, pp. xiv–xvi (on this supplementary text see our discussion on pp. 169–70). That *What is Called Thinking?* is a source for "Sauf le Nom" and its companion essays is further suggested by *i.* the explicit citation of the German text in a note on the companion essay "Khōra" (*KH*, p. 148, n. 5—see our discussion on p. 135, n. 52); *ii.* the presence of specific parallels between "Sauf le Nom" and *What is Called Thinking?* These are: *a.* the function of remainder as a textual-structural element (see *What is Called Thinking?* II. 4, p. 150, etc. and our discussion on pp. 57–8, 87–8), and *b.* the association of formalization and exhaustion (see *WCT* I. 5, pp. 50–51, etc. and our discussion on pp. 56–7).

[20] Among useful studies of Derrida's relation to Heidegger one should mention John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics. Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project* (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1987), pp. 153–206 (applies an intersecting technique whereby Derrida is made to read Heidegger and vice versa); Herman Rapaport, *Heidegger and Derrida. Reflections on Time and Language* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989) (attempts to relate Derrida and Heidegger through a series of "turns" and also argues that Derrida's occasionally more sympathetic reading of Heidegger results from his use of Blanchot as a textual intermediary); David Wood, *Thinking After Heidegger* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), pp. 93–105 (provides an extensive though not exhaustive listing of Derridean passages referring to Heidegger).

reading *Heidegger* in a manner designed to emphasize a certain quasi-Platonism in the latter. A glance at Heidegger's intellectual biography reveals how the groundwork for such an interpretation can be laid. It is beyond dispute that during his earlier years, as a result of some innovative readings of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and of certain protestant theologians, Heidegger developed an extremely non-Platonic philosophy in which the practical predominates over the theoretical, transcendent categories are converted into "factical" categories, and the temporal and the particular are emphasized, the hermeneutical consequence of all this being what is loosely termed the "destruction" of ontotheology.[21] According to the most perceptive interpreters, Heidegger's thought subsequently underwent changes in which a continuing explicit commitment to the destruction of ontotheology is accompanied by the implicit re-emergence of a prejudice in favor of the contemplative, of notions enjoying some kind of transcendent status, and of a tendency towards the atemporal and the universal—although this mature Heideggerian thought contains an ambivalent movement in one direction towards a quasi-Platonic history of Being and in the other direction towards the non-Platonic language of Being's substitution with *Difference*, *Ereignis*, and the like.[22] Now Derrida is clearly sympathetic to such an account of Heidegger's

---

[21] The early period of Heidegger's work which is especially documented by his *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle*—and reflected in Hans-Georg Gadamer's later hermeneutical approach—has been studied with great care by recent scholars like Theodore Kisiel and John Van Buren. See Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

[22] The best example of such a "crypto-Platonic" reading of Heidegger by a writer sympathetic to Derrideanism is John D. Caputo, *Demythologizing Heidegger* (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1993). Caputo makes a point of generally translating Heidegger's key term *Wesen* as "essential Being" rather than as "coming to presence" (p. 222, n. 1. Cf. p. 125). Having traced the occurrence of this term through Heidegger's writings—especially in chapter 6 entitled "Heidegger's Essentialism"—Caputo makes various statements interpreting this essence in a Platonic manner. For example, "If we understand "Wesen" verbally, as what is coming to presence, is there not something *profoundly Platonic* in thought's step back from the lack of housing to the essence of dwelling?" (p. 139—our italics); and again "This logic of essentialization . . . obeys the most profound law of *Platonic* essentialism . . . *Platonism*'s most essential spirit returns . . ." (p. 164—our italics). When Caputo further summarizes Heidegger's position on this issue by juxtaposing such statements as "the essence of technology is nothing technological," "the essence of language is not found in human speaking" in tabular form (p. 123), is he not clearly inviting his reader to understand these statements as antitheses of affirmative and negative terms in the manner of some Neoplatonic theologian's litany of divine names? See further Caputo's remarks on pp. 73–4, 85, 131.

career since his deconstructive strategies with respect to this philosopher are invariably based on the extraction of passages or phrases from the latter's writing in which elements conducive to a monistic reading can be most easily disclosed.[23]

But Derrida should not be viewed as treating Heidegger as a closet Neoplatonist without further qualification.[24] Indeed, we can assume

---

[23] Among the prime Heideggerian targets of such an approach have been the treatment of *Dasein* in the *Letter on Humanism*, and of *Geist* in *Being and Time*, the Rectoral Address, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, and other works On the former see Jacques Derrida, "The Ends of Man," in *MP*, pp. 109–36; on the latter see Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit. Heidegger and the Question*, trans. G. Bennington and R. Bowlby (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

[24] The question of Heidegger's "Neoplatonism" is too difficult to address properly here, a major obstacle for this project being the fact that neither Heidegger himself nor his modern interpreters have developed an adequate understanding of the relation between "scholasticism" and "mysticism" which the term "Neoplatonism" completely undercuts. We shall confine ourselves to noting that Heidegger, in the course of many writings and with and without citing Neoplatonism by name, seems to pursue a twofold approach of simultaneous critique and imitation in relation to the latter: 1. *Critique*. In terms of general methodology, Heidegger is opposed to the *formalizing* tendency of philosophies like Neoplatonism (cf. his rejection of quantifying thought in works like *The Question of Technology*)—he also assumes that Neoplatonism represents an extreme version of the ontotheology whose destruction has been his continual preoccupation (cf. many passages of the *Contributions to Philosophy*). In consequence, many specific oppositions can be established between Neoplatonic philosophy and Heideggerian thinking: for example, the Neoplatonists speak of Nothingness as equivalent to superesssence, of being as the ground of other things; they affirm being as maximal and general; they speak of the metaphysical mind and of its atemporality; and they postulate the dependence of the soul upon being. By contrast, Heidegger speaks of Nothingness as equivalent to finitude, of Being as equivalent to grounding itself; he denies Being as maximal and general; he speaks of the nonmetaphysical *Dasein* and of its temporality; and he postulates the dependence of Being upon *Dasein*. (These oppositions are so frequent and so striking that one is tempted to think of deliberate inversion or parody). 2. *Imitation*. In terms of general methodology, Heidegger is less antagonistic to the *totalizing* tendency of philosophies like Neoplatonism (cf. his notion of the single thought about beings as a whole in his works *Nietzsche* and *What is Called Thinking?*, etc.). This means that it is possible to establish many parallels between Neoplatonic philosophy and Heideggerian thinking: for instance, the Neoplatonists' remaining and procession corresponds to Heidegger's withholding and proffering of the *Geschick des Seins*, while associated dualities like concealed/open, empty/overflowing, silent/saying are equally applicable in either case. On the probable influence of Neoplatonic and patristic texts on the early Heidegger see Thomas Sheehan, "Heidegger's 'Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion' 1920–21," in *The Personalist* 55 (1979–80), pp. 312–24, Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's 'Being and Time'* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 69–115 and 149–219, and John Van Buren, *The Young Heidegger. Rumor of the Hidden King* (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1994), chs. II, 6–8 and IV, 14. Among books which present a structural confrontation between Heidegger and Neoplatonism in general see John D. Caputo, *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1978), and Sonya Sikka, *Forms of Transcendence.*

that he is familiar enough with Heidegger's historical interpretation of Greek and "Scholastic" thought and of Neoplatonism's overlapping of these two phases to have avoided falling into such naïve reductionism. This historical interpretation is of course based on the oblivion of Being or of the Difference.[25] From early in his career, Heidegger had maintained that the distinction between essence and existence arose in the ancient world through a failure to think fundamental Difference as Difference.[26] According to his later *Nietzsche* study, there had been a primal self-disclosure of Being to the earliest Greeks expressed particularly in their words *phusis* and *alētheia*, but this primal disclosure of Being as dynamic "presencing" (*Anwesen*) quickly turned into more rigid "presentness" (*Anwesenheit*) in the hands of Plato and Aristotle and then into even more rigid "permanence" (*Beständigkeit*), this maximal covering of the original self-disclosure of Being occurring in the application to it of the Latin term *actualitas* by the Schoolmen.[27] For these reasons the ancient distinction between essence and existence which marks the oblivion of Difference as Difference came to be treated as a causal structure linking real entities.[28] Now if Derrida can be viewed as provisionally conceding this

---

Heidegger and Medieval Mystical Theology (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997). More detailed discussion can be found in Pierre Hadot, "Heidegger et Plotin," in *Critique* 145 (1959), pp. 539–56, Werner Beierwaltes, *Identität und Differenz* (Frankfurt a. M.: Klostermann, 1980), p. 131ff., Klaus Kremer, "Zur ontologischen Differenz. Plotin und Heidegger," in *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 43 (1989), pp. 673–94, and in the recent works of Jean-Marc Narbonne, "Henosis et 'Ereignis.' Remarques sur une interprétation heidéggerienne de l'Un plotinien," in *Les études philosophiques* (1999), pp. 108–21; *Hénologie, ontologie et Ereignis (Plotin-Proclus-Heidegger)* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2001); "Heidegger et le néoplatonisme," in *Heidegger e i medievali. Atti del Colloquio Internazionale Cassino 10–13 maggio 2000*, eds. C. Esposito and P. Porro (= *Quaestio* 1 (2001)), pp. 55–82.

[25] We shall discuss the Heideggerian Difference further in chapter 4.2, pp. 170–73.

[26] See Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. A. Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1982), pp. 77–121. At *BPP*, pp. 81–2, Heidegger notes the importance of Neoplatonism for the development of the essence and existence distinction from two viewpoints: *i.* Neoplatonism was the source of this doctrine as developed by the Arabs; *ii.* Suárez traces his version of the doctrine back to Augustine.

[27] See Martin Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy*, trans. J. Stambaugh (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), pp. 1–19. Cf. Martin Heidegger, "Aletheia (Heraclitus, Fragment B 16)," in *Early Greek Thinking*, trans. D.F. Krell and F.A. Capuzzi (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), pp. 112–22 and "Anaximander's Saying," in *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. J. Young and K. Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2002), pp. 261–81. For a discussion of Heideggerian texts relative to this paragraph see John D. Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas. An Essay on Overcoming Metaphysics*, pp. 62–99 and 185–210.

[28] See Martin Heidegger, *EOP*, pp. 3–5, 10ff.

narrative to Heidegger, we should understand him as reading his predecessor in the light of the latter's original non-Platonic position and of his ambivalent quasi-Platonic and non-Platonic movement in later years, but as reading him with emphasis placed on the quasi-Platonic component.[29]

The question of how Derrida exploits Heideggerian intertexts in discussing negative theology may be answered in a preliminary way by considering one of the most interesting passages in the present essay.[30] Here the dialogue's two interlocutors are considering whether it is possible to establish a connection between the Neoplatonic notion of transcendence as applied to the status of the Good—subsisting beyond what is and without what is—and the Heideggerian notion of transcendence as applied to the movement of *Dasein*—towards Being as Being and beyond what is present. Their answer seems to be affirmative given that Heidegger had described his notion of *Dasein* in terms of Plato's notion of *epekeina tēs ousias*. One speaker does suggest that there is a difference between the hyperbolic element envisaged by Heidegger, where the beyond corresponds to what is beyond the totality of beings rather than what is beyond Being itself, and by Platonists or Neoplatonists, where the beyond represents what is beyond Being itself and beyond God as either maximal being or linguistic referent. However, the other speaker reaffirms the similarity of the Heideggerian and Neoplatonic interpretations of the hyperbolic element by arguing on the one hand, that Heidegger's notion

---

[29] An excellent illustration of Derrida's double approach to reading Heidegger can be found in Jacques Derrida, *Spurs. Nietzsche's Styles*, trans. B. Harlow (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp. 109–23 where the topic is Heidegger's interpretation of the Nietzschean Will to Power as the last contribution to the metaphysical tradition. Derrida argues *a.* that this reading "subsists . . . in the hermeneutic space of the question of truth (of being)" (*elle se maintient . . . dans l'espace herméneutique de la question de la vérité (de l'être)*, yet *b.* "a certain dehiscence opens up the reading without undoing it" (*une certaine déhiscence ouvre cette lecture sans la défaire*). Typically, Derrida exploits the verbal association between the two Heideggerian terms *Eigentlichkeit* ("Authenticity") and *Ereignis* ("Event/Appropriation") in order to establish the relation between the readings *a.* and *b.* On this text see also the discussion of John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*, pp. 155–60.

[30] *SLN*, pp. 64–65. For another reading of this passage, see pp. 92–3. We cannot take up here the complex question of Heidegger's interpretation of Plato (nor that of Derrida's reading of that interpretation). On Heidegger and Plato, see William J. Richardson, "Heidegger and Plato," in *Heythrop Journal* 4 (1963), pp. 273–9 and Robert J. Dostal, "Beyond Being. Heidegger's Plato," in *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 23 (1985), pp. 71–98.

of *Dasein* moves not only beyond beings but also beyond God and on the other, that the Neoplatonists' notion of the beyond is not really a place but rather a movement.

The discussion in this passage—clearly reflecting an argument in *Vom Wesen des Grundes*[31]—places Heidegger's thinking and negative theology in a striking configuration. In the first place, negative theology is said to be metaphysical but also to cross the boundary between Neoplatonic realism and Heideggerian Being: a situation confirmed by a later observation to the effect that negative theology radically contests the tradition from which it seems to come while at the same time nothing is more faithful than this hyperbole to the originary ontotheological injunction.[32] However, the passage represents not only a statement concerning the interrelation of philosophemes but also an enactment of this interrelation. More precisely, it states that there is an ontological difference between Being and being(s) of the Heideggerian type which is produced by our transcending *Dasein*, and also that there is a henological difference between the Good and Being of the Neoplatonic kind which is traversed by our soul's reversion. It also enacts the Heideggerian movement of transcendence and/or the Neoplatonic movement of reversion by presenting the first speaker's view that the two philosophemes concerned are different and the second speaker's view that the two philosophemes are identical not as a doctrinal synthesis but as a narrative sequence. Finally, negative theology is said to be metaphysical but also to cross the boundaries between Neoplatonic realism and Heideggerian Being and Heideggerian *Ereignis*: a position restated in a later comment to the effect that negative theology is situated between the Babelian place—event, *Ereignis*, history, revelation, eschato-teleology, messianism, address, destination, response and responsibility, construction and destruction—and something without thing.[33]

Of course, the reading of negative theology in "Sauf le Nom" simultaneously against the background of Neoplatonism and Heidegger will produce a result different from that arising from a reading of negative theology against the background of Neoplatonism alone. Such is the nature of intertextuality. Moreover, this reading will be

---

[31] See Martin Heidegger, "The Essence of Ground," trans. W. McNeill, in *Pathmarks*, ed. W. McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1998), pp. 124–5.
[32] *SLN*, pp. 67–8.
[33] *SLN*, p. 80.

influenced by the particular selection of possibilities which the practitioner makes within a hermeneutical field bounded by the oppositions of proximity and distance and of critique and imitation. The main strategies revealed in Derrida's explicit reading of negative theology might therefore be classified as follows: 1. activity of critique from a standpoint of proximity; 2. activity of critique and imitation from a standpoint of proximity, and 3. activity of critique and imitation from a standpoint of proximity and distance.[34] These can be viewed as having for deconstructionists an ascending order of value.

Derrida's essay contains perhaps one example of a philosopheme subjected to critique from a standpoint of proximity: that is, the notion of the eye of the soul discovered among the aphorisms of Angelus Silesius.[35] Obviously this doctrine regarding the highest or innermost component of the metaphysical subject, here understood within its broader Neoplatonic context, presents itself more as an object of critique than as an object of imitation.

An important philosopheme subjected to critique and imitation from a standpoint of proximity is the notion that negation and affirmation represent a kind of retention and overflow. Here, Derrida speaks of being at the edge of language in a double movement of withdrawal and overflow or of the signature which is simultaneously a border, a relation to the other, and an overflow.[36] Since the metaphysical tradition has articulated a structure in parallel with this—Silesius is cited for the notion that the singularity of the unknown God overflows the essence and the divinity[37]—Derrida is here executing an imitative strategy. Another important philosopheme subjected to critique and imitation from the standpoint of proximity is the notion that one can give what one does not have. As applied to the giving of a name, according to Derrida, this formula haunts the entire philosophical tradition.[38] The metaphysical parallels noted are Plotinus, where the Good is described as not only beyond being

---

[34] Derrida would reject the technical terminology which we have applied to the classification on the grounds of its spatial metaphorics. He would prefer to speak of the three strategies as 1. "castration," 2. "mimesis," and "graft in this connection. In general, Derrida is critical of what he perceives to be Heidegger's propensity toward spatial thinking. See Jacques Derrida, *EOM*, pp. 123–34.

[35] *SLN*, pp. 72–3.

[36] *SLN*, pp. 59–61.

[37] *SLN*, p. 52.

[38] *SLN*, pp. 84–5.

but beyond its own gifts, and Silesius, where God is described as unfolding into the created because his property is not to have properties.[39]

Derrida's essay contains several examples of philosophemes subjected to critique and imitation from a standpoint of proximity and distance. First, there is what one might call the schema of self, God, and other. When Derrida cites from Augustine and Silesius the metaphysical notion that the movement of turning toward the self in a certain manner coincides with the movement of turning towards God,[40] his strategy is an imitative and proximate one. But when he develops this independently of such sources into a suggestion that the movement of turning towards an other somehow coincides with the movement of turning towards God, the strategy shifts from proximity to distance.[41] A further philosopheme is the notion that God as negative term corresponds to death.[42] Since this is presented in a thoroughly Heideggerian and totally un-Neoplatonic manner it represents critique and imitation of Neoplatonism from a standpoint of distance. What one might term the schema of without-beyond is also of significance. When Derrida argues that the phrase "without x" is equivalent to the phrase "beyond x" in Augustine or Eckhart and that both expressions signify the metaphysical transcendence of some real property,[43] his strategy is again an imitative and proximate one. But when he develops this independently of such sources into the idea that the phrase "without x" and "beyond x" are equivalent to one another and that both expressions signify the alternation of exemplarism and substitution, the strategy shifts from proximity to distance once more.[44] A further philosopheme is the notion that God's nothingness corresponds to the impossible.[45] This also represents critique and imitation of Neoplatonism from a standpoint of distance, given that this constitutes a totally Heideggerian and thoroughly un-Neoplatonic approach. Finally, there is what one might call the structure of divine substantiality and accidentality. Here, Derrida reads

[39] *SLN*, pp. 70, 73.
[40] *SLN*, pp. 37–8, 40, 43, 66.
[41] *SLN*, pp. 38, 66.
[42] *SLN*, pp. 43–4.
[43] *SLN*, pp. 35, 40–41.
[44] *SLN*, pp. 64, 76.
[45] *SLN*, pp. 43–4, 59, 74.

Silesius as reflecting the Plotinian teaching that the Good is not only beyond being but beyond its own gift.[46] This reveals distance arising through what has shifted not from a Neoplatonic to an unrelated Heideggerian position but from a Neoplatonic to an unrelated Neoplatonic one.

Outline of Sauf le Nom: *the Connecting Passage*

At this point, we may perhaps turn from the purely synthetic to a more narrative reading of Derrida's essay on negative theology. Although a definitively structured analysis of such an inherently polysemous text as a whole is neither possible nor desirable, a provisional division into two main sections—of which the second is a "repetition" of the first—and a connecting passage seems useful.[47] (i) The first section (48a–62b)—dealing with what might be termed "untranslated" negative theology—studies an axiom about this theology ("What is called 'negative theology' . . .," etc.) and can be divided into a subsection exploring the axiom (48a–51b), a reflection on the notions of remainder and place (54c–58a), and a subsection rethinking the axiom in terms of remainder and place (58b–62b), these three subsections being presented successively. The unfolding of the polysemy of an axiom or proposition is now complemented by the unfolding of the polysemy of a phrase or description. Therefore, (ii) the second section—dealing with what might be termed the "translation" of negative theology—studies a phrase applied to this theology ("paradoxical hyperbole") and can be subdivided into a subsection exploring the phrase (63d–69b), a reflection on the notions of remainder, place, and exemplarity (75b–76b), and a subsection rethinking the phrase in terms of remainder, place, and exemplarity (71a–75a, 76c ff.), the second and third subsections having an overlap.

The function of (iii) the connecting passage (*SLN* 62d–63a/*Sauf* 68d–69b) can best be indicated via a quotation:

– The appearance gives us to believe that the expression "negative theology" has no *strict* equivalent outside two traditions, philosophy

[46] *SLN*, p. 70.

[47] This is a provisional division since the proposed analysis can only be justified *after* studying the relevant texts. In order to allow precise citation, we shall henceforth add a letter (indicating dialogic item) to the page-numbers of *SLN*.

or ontotheology of Greek provenance, New Testament theology or Christian mysticism. These two trajectories, these two paths thus arrowed would cross each other in the heart of what we call negative theology. Such a crossing . . .

– Everything here, you realize, seems *crucial*: the crossroads of these two paths, the *kreuzweise Durchstreichung* under which Heidegger erases the word being (which his theology to come would have had, he says, to dispense with),[48] and the *Geviert* to which he claims then to refer, the Christian cross under which Marion himself erases the word "God" (a way, perhaps to save the name of God, to shield it from all onto-theological idolatry: God without Being).[49]

– That's true. In any case, the expression "negative theology" names most often a discursive experience that is situated at one of the angles formed by the crossing of these two lines. Even if one line is then always *crossed*, this line is situated in that place. Whatever the translations, analogies, transpositions, transferences, metaphors, never has any discourse expressly given itself this title (negative theology, apophatic method, *via negativa*) in the thoughts of Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist culture.[50]

When considered as a whole, this text reveals a pronounced tendency towards formalization. This is apparent in its use of quasi-arithmetical categories like "fourfold," quasi-grammatical categories like "translation," "analogies," "transpositions," "transferences," and "metaphors," and quasi-geometrical categories like "trajectories," "crossing," "angles," and "lines" in order to illustrate the relation between the ontotheological and the non-ontotheological, the Greek philosophical and the Christian theological. In fact, there is little

---

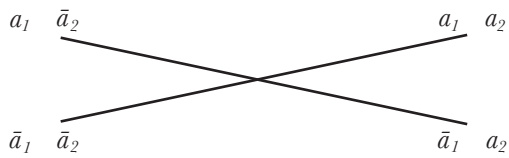
[48] For the Heidegger reference see Martin Heidegger, "On the Question of Being," trans. W. McNeill, in *Pathm.*, pp. 310–11. The quotation of Heidegger at what we take to be the pivotal point of the argument—at least structurally speaking—underlines the importance of the German philosopher for the programme of *Sauf le Nom* as a whole.

[49] For the Marion reference see Jean-Luc Marion, *God Without Being. Hors-Texte*, trans. T. Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 70ff.

[50] The following passages should also be compared:

1. "This double paradox resembles a double aporia: simultaneous negation and re-affirmation of Greek onto-theology and metaphysics" (*SLN*, p. 78a),
2. *"on the other hand*, and according to the law of the same *double bind*, the dissident uprooting can claim to fulfill the vocation or the promise of Christianity" (*SLN*, p. 72a).
3. "These shared portions, these common inclinations, or these crossed paths appear from the reading of our respective texts" (*SLN*, p. 46b).

doubt that Derrida is interpreting the discoursive context surrounding negative theology in terms of a semiotic square:[51]



Given the critique of formalization in earlier Derridean texts, it is perhaps surprising to find the present essay proceeding along these lines. Would not such a schematic conceptualization, especially considering its possibilities of locating its four terms within the single term of a larger figure and sometimes as simultaneously locating the four terms of a smaller figure within each of its own terms, be subject to the criticisms already directed against the *mise-en-abîme*?[52] A superficial explanation of Derrida's procedure is that formalization is characteristic of negative theology and therefore any deconstruction of negative theology will acquire some of this character. A less superficial explanation of this state of affairs resides in the nature of deconstruction itself.[53]

---

[51] We here introduce the "semiotic square" (*carré sémiotique*) of A.J. Greimas: a tool of discoursive analysis originally developed for the literary sphere. On this notion see Stephen Gersh, *Concord in Discourse. Harmonics and Semiotics in Late Classical and Early Medieval Platonism* (Berlin-New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996), pp. 16–17, 69–73, 139ff. Although the precise nature and function of the semiotic square will emerge as we proceed, in order to avoid potential misconceptions regarding its application here, certain initial precisions are required: 1. *Employment of the square does not imply a complete semanticization of Derrida's work.* As will become clear after our analysis of his deconstruction of Husserl, the square applies to processes within the semantic sphere (= henceforth the semiotic square), outside the semantic sphere (= henceforth the *asemiotic* square), and both within and outside the semantic sphere (henceforth the *(a)semiotic* square); 2. *Application of the square to Derrida's text is neither univocal nor uniform.* The structure of the square itself can be interpreted in various ways. This is because neither *a.* the relation between the two semes nor *b.* the precise form of the negation is specified at the outset. Moreover, The structure of the square cannot be separated from processes involving the square. The latter involve *a.* application of complete squares or parts of squares, and *b.* superimposition of two or more squares.

[52] In what follows we shall adopt Greimas' practice of calling $a_1\ \bar{a}_2$ the "positive term," $a_1\ a_2$ the "combined term," $\bar{a}_1\ a_2$ the "negative term," and $\bar{a}_1\ \bar{a}_2$ the "neutral term."

[53] The formalistic character of negative theology (as seen by Derrida) will be discussed at length below.

A background sketch of this problematic should begin with the well-known passage in Aristotle's *Physics* where the fundamental principles underlying change are discussed. At this point,[54] Aristotle explains that although there are two modes of coming-to-be: where $a_1 (\bar{a}_2)$ becomes $a_1\ a_2$ and where $(a_1)\ \bar{a}_2$ becomes $a_1\, a_2$—exemplified by "the man becomes musical" and "the unmusical becomes musical"—it is invariably the case that $a_1\ \bar{a}_2$ becomes $a_1\ a_2$. The product contains two elements: a substratum (a_2) and a form (a_1), while a third element is presupposed by the change: the privation $(\bar{a}_2)$. The substratum before the change $(a_1\ \bar{a}_2)$ was numerically one but not one in definition, since to be a man is not the same as to be unmusical. Later in the same work,[55] Aristotle embarks upon a more elaborate classification. Leaving aside accidental changes—for example, "the musical walks"—change per se would seem to be of four kinds: i. from a_1 to a_2 i.e. from a positive term to its contrary positive term, ii. from a_1 to $\bar{a}_1$ i.e. from a positive term to its contradictory, iii. from $\bar{a}_1$ to a_1 i.e. from a negative term to its contradictory, and iv. from $\bar{a}_1$ to $\bar{a}_2$ i.e. from a negative term to another negative term. However, case iv does not constitute change, since change requires terms which are opposites (either contrary or contradictory) while $\bar{a}_1$ and $\bar{a}_2$ are not related in this way. Case ii represents the change called "destruction." It is not a movement, since the latter can only take place with something that already exists. Case iii represents the change called "generation." This is also not a movement since its contrary is destruction and not rest. Case i represents movement which Aristotle goes on to classify in relation to three of his categories: alteration in respect of quality, increase-decrease in respect of quantity, and transportation in respect of place.[56]

It is easy to see that this account of change implies a semiotic structure similar to that represented in our rectangular figure mentioned above. In fact, this type of conceptualization is relatively com-

---

[54] Aristotle, *Physics* I. 7, 189b30–191a22. To pursue this problematic initially in the context of Aristotle's writings is a particularly effective strategy from our viewpoint. The Neoplatonists constructed many of their doctrines by transposing conceptual elements from the physical sphere described by Aristotle to the metaphysical sphere described by Plato. The resultant doctrines include the famous teachings regarding procession (diffusion of power) and reversion (actualization of potency) which in their turn underlie the ancient negative theology.

[55] *Phys.* V. 1, 224a2–225b9.

[56] *Phys.* V. 2, 225b10ff.

mon in Aristotle's thought, a notable instance being the distinction between things of a subject but not in a subject (a_1 $\bar{a}_2$)—universal substances like "man"—, things not of a subject but in a subject ($\bar{a}_1$ a_2)—individual accidents like "an element of grammar"—, things both of a subject and in a subject (a_1 a_2)—universal accidents like "grammatical knowledge"—, and things neither of a subject nor in a subject ($\bar{a}_1$ $\bar{a}_2$)—individual substances like "this man."[57] A further instance of this type of conceptualization is the distinction occurring in the theory of propositions between universal affirmative (a_1 a_2)—for example, "every pleasure is a good"—, universal negative ($\bar{a}_1$ $\bar{a}_2$)—for example, "every pleasure is not a good"—, particular negative (a_1 $\bar{a}_2$)—for example, "some pleasure is not a good"—, and particular affirmative ($\bar{a}_1$ a_2)—for example, "some pleasure is a good."[58] Of course, all these applications differ among themselves in various ways. With respect to the nature of the items, we are dealing with unconnected terms in the cases of physical change and the categories and with connected terms in that of propositions. The relation between the terms a_1 and a_2 is initially specified as contrariety in the context of the physical and propositional applications. Further with respect to the nature of the terms, we are dealing with a combination of (meta-) physical and logical features in the cases of physical change and the categories but with logical features only in that of propositions. Moreover, the physical theory alone introduces the notion of a transition between terms.[59]

---

[57] Aristotle, *Categories* 2. This kind of application was anticipated by—and probably influenced by—Plato's *Parmenides*. For a compact example of the exploitation of all four terms within the semiotic square see Plato, *Parm.* 160b–163b (= "hypothesis V"). It is interesting to note that the transition between terms becomes an issue at *Parm.* 162c.

[58] Although based on Aristotelian materials, this conceptualization first emerges clearly in Apuleius' *Peri Hermeneias* 5, 86–88.

[59] For a full discussion see Alain de Libera, "La sémiotique d'Aristote," in Frédéric Nef, ed., *Structures élémentaires de la signification* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1976), pp. 28–48. Undoubtedly reflecting the influence of the Aristotelian school, we find the semiotic square utilized extensively in ancient grammatical treatises. For example in Varro's *De Lingua Latina* the square is applied to the classification of parts of speech (nouns and adjectives—having case but not tense, verbs—having tense but not case, participles—having both case and tense, and adverbs—having neither case nor tense), and in Aelius Donatus' *Ars Minor* the square is applied to the classification of nouns and adjectives (masculine, feminine, common, and neuter). These examples are particularly important in demonstrating that the square can be applied to the non-semantic sphere of accidence and to the organization of semantic properties alike. On this last point see n. 51.

In order to continue this narrative we should now leap into the modern era with Derrida's powerful critique of the Husserlian doctrine of the constitution of ideality by transcendental consciousness in *La voix et le phénomène*. This critique develops around a distinction between two kinds of repetition discussed by Husserl: one which is reproductive of presence and another which is productive of presence with respect to consciousness. Here, Derrida reverses the priorities—shifting the emphasis from a process where ideality or repeatability forms the basis of repetition to a process where repeatability or repetition forms the basis of ideality—in a deconstructive move.[60] We shall provisionally suggest that what is brought into relief is a transition from $a_1\ \bar{a}_2$ to $a_1\ a_2$ (or from $\bar{a}_1\ a_2$ to $a_1\ a_2$) with $a_1\ \bar{a}_2$ indicating the repeatability, $\bar{a}_1\ a_2$ a difference, and $a_1\ a_2$ the repetition or ideality.[61]

More precisely, the critique of Husserl's explanation of the idealization associated with linguistic or mathematical meaningfulness may be analyzed into three components: 1. *Emphasis upon the possibility of unfulfilled intention.*[62] According to Derrida, Husserl had grasped that expressive intentions must be able to function without intuition and that speech can therefore be linguistically coherent in the absence of objects, truth, or consistency, although he had declined to elaborate on this point. Derrida argues that Husserl should have gone further. He should have admitted that one can formulate not only expressions like "the circle is square"—which may be converted into intuitable form on completion of certain substitutions of terms—but also something like "green is or." Since the latter embodies its own type of repeatability, for example permitting a transition to the French *vert (verre) est ou (où)*, one can identify important "modes of sense" not pointing to any possible object. 2. *Understanding of both object and*

---

[60] John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics* has made a careful analysis of Derrida's reading of Husserl on these questions. See especially, pp. 120–47.

[61] We must introduce the (so far unexplained) notion of difference. Here, we shall leave this term to be understood in its everyday sense. Later, we shall describe it formally as a "general structure." See below, pp. 74–8.

[62] Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. D.B. Allison, pref. N. Garver (Evanston: Northwestern U.P., 1973), pp. 88–99. Cf. Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, trans. J.N. Findlay (London: Routledge, 1970) I §§9–14, pp. 280–91; §§26–7, pp. 313–20. With what follows one should compare "Signature, Event, Context," in Derrida, *MP*, pp. 314–21 where the notion of "iterability" (= "repeatability")—as possible detachment from both referent and signified—is again developed in relation to Husserl.

subject as constituted products.[63] Husserl had always seen that, despite some of the language associated with "givenness," meaning has to be constituted. However, he had been hesitant to apply this insight—which in Derrida's own terms represents the effect of the productive repetition mentioned above—to the transcendental subject as well as to the transcendental object. 3. *Reconciliation of the theory of expression and indication with the theory of internal time-consciousness*.[64] As Derrida points out, Husserl had maintained a strict dichotomy between "expressions" or signs which are meaningful through themselves and internal to consciousness and "indications" or signs which are only meaningful "for something else" and externalized in the graphic or phonic. But this position is inconsistent with ideas stated elsewhere. In particular, Husserl had also argued that, because of the embedding of consciousness itself in the temporal flux, the putatively undivided unity of the present "now"—in relation to which the expressive sign had previously been defined—is actually a compound of protentional and retentional "nows"—and therefore more analogous to the indicative sign.[65]

---

[63] See Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*, pp. 121–3, 139. It is precisely in relation to this point that the respective readings of negative theology by Derrida and by Jean-Luc Marion will eventually diverge, Derrida's position constituting a powerful rewriting of that philosopheme and Marion's a concealed return to essentially traditional metaphysics. See John D. Caputo, "Apostles of the Impossible. On God and the Gift in Derrida and Marion." In *God, the Gift and Postmodernism*, eds. J.D. Caputo and M.J. Scanlon, pp. 193–5.

[64] Derrida, *SP*, pp. 60–69. Cf. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas. General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W.R. Boyce Gibson (London: Allen and Unwin, 1931) I. §24, pp. 92–3; §43, pp. 135–7; §52, pp. 158–64; §78, pp. 219–23, §81, pp. 234–7 and *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, trans. J.S. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1964) §§ 10–11, pp. 48–52; §16–17, pp. 60–64; §19, pp. 68–70; §35–6, pp. 98–100; §42, pp. 115–17. With what follows one should also compare Jacques Derrida, *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry. An Introduction*, trans. J.P. Leavey, Jr. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), pp. 130–31, 153 where the Husserlian notion of geometric ideality is shown to be infected by the temporality of deferral and différance. This argument will have important repercussions when the results of this deconstruction are applied to negative theology. See Derrida, *HAS*, pp. 79–80, 82–7 on the interpretation of negation as deferral.

[65] The critique of Husserl underlies Derrida's subsequent elaborations on the theme of "Spectre." The latter names the situation whereby the notion of "living present" is disrupted by repetition, negativity, and disjointure of time. The result is something which is undecidably present and absent, visible and invisible, etc. On this "hauntology" which is superior to ontology see Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx. The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. P. Kamuf (New York-London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 10, 100–101, 172–3, 187, n. 7.

It is in the light of this deconstruction of Husserl's doctrine from these three viewpoints in the course of *La voix et le phénomène* that we should understand Derrida's various characterizations of the repetition forming the basis of ideality. These include its specification as that which is the same and different, as the being outside itself of time representing "spacing," as the being outside itself of time constituting reference, and as the comparison of a first now and a second now. Husserl's flux of internal time has been rewritten as the Derridean "remainder." But in saying even this caution is required since what we are dealing with possesses no name or meaning—not even those of same, different, spacing, reference, first now, second now employed above—but is rather productive of all such names and meanings.[66] In order to capture its essence best, we shall simply label it provisionally $\bar{a}_1\ \bar{a}_2$.

Our juxtaposition of Aristotle and Derrida naturally raises certain questions. The first of these is whether the Aristotelian "semiotic structure" can be applied to Derrida. This can be answered in the affirmative by citing references to the structure binding as "both . . . and" and releasing as "neither . . . nor" which is called *articulation* ("articulation") in "Parergon"[67]—where the discussion concerns the relation between understanding and reason in aesthetics—, called *double bande* ("double bind") in "Speculer—sur 'Freud'"[68]—where it concerns the circulation of energy within the psyche—, and called *chiasme* ("chiasmus") in *Positions*[69]—where the discussion concerns the relation between literary and philosophical mimetologisms. The explicit relation between a visual rectangular figure and the binding "both . . . and" structure and releasing "neither . . . nor" structure is shown in Derrida's interpretation of the Heideggerian *Riss* ("Rift"/

---

[66] See Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*, pp. 143–4. Cf. pp. 131–2, 139.

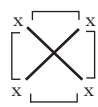
[67] See Jacques Derrida, "Parergon," in *The Truth in Painting*, trans. G. Bennington and I. McLoed (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 37–9.

[68] "To Speculate—On 'Freud,'" in Derrida, *PC*, p. 389ff.

[69] See Derrida, *Pos.*, p. 70 (referring to Derrida, *DS*, pp. 203–9, 253. A graphic presentation of these three structures might look like the following:

articulation

chiasmus



double bind

"Design") in "Passe-Partout,"[70] of Titus-Carmel's *The Pocket-Size Tlingit Coffin* in "Cartouches,"[71] and of the Platonic grapheme *khi* (χ) in *Khōra*.[72] A second question is whether the semiotic structure invoked by Derrida is "Aristotelian." This can also be answered in the affirmative by reflecting on a certain bias in the semantic realization of the structure for, although the four elements are equally balanced within the pairing of terms, one can contrast a positive side of the structure consisting of three pairs ($a_1\ \bar{a}_2$, $a_1\ a_2$, $\bar{a}_1\ a_2$) with a negative side containing one pair ($\bar{a}_1\ \bar{a}_2$). It is precisely this approach which seems to be shared by Aristotle and Derrida. With the former, we find a variety of changes involving opposition contrasted with that which is not involving an opposition and with the latter, a variety of terms in a certain mode contrasted with that which challenges that mode of opposition.[73]

However, one must also bear in mind certain fundamental differences. On the one hand, differences between the Aristotelian and Derridean approaches are centred upon the relation between meaning and our rectangular figure, since Aristotle applies the latter's combinatory mechanism to the organization of meaningful structures: movements between really and conceptually distinct terms within really and conceptually distinct categories. Derrida, however, is responding to the Husserlian doctrine of the unfulfilled intention. For him, the combinatory mechanism is equally applicable to elements functioning in the non-semantic sphere—the phonemes and morphemes—, to elements operating in the semantic sphere—the denotations and connotations—, and to the various processes serving to connect or disconnect these two spheres. This is why it is better henceforth to speak of an *(a)semiotic square*.[74] On the other hand,

---

[70] See Jacques Derrida, "Passe-Partout," in *TP*, pp. 5–8.

[71] See Jacques Derrida, "Cartouches," in *TP*, pp. 185–7, etc.

[72] See Derrida, *KH*, p. 99.

[73] The notions of articulation, double bind, and chiasmus (together with the rectilinear figures which they imply) are unfolded throughout Derrida's writings. Via the metonymy of *penser* → *panser* ("thinking" → "bandaging") they play an especially important role in *Glas*.

[74] See also the important discussions of the "unmotivated trace" which is a continuous process of becoming motivated in Derrida, *OG*, pp. 44–65 and of Plato's analogies between dialectic and the alphabet in Derrida, *Pharm.*, pp. 156–71. For a good example of the interrelation of procedures within and outside the semantic sphere (which is potentially analyzable in terms of the (a)semiotic square) one can turn to Derrida's discussion of *Khōra*. See below pp. 128–30. It is also interesting to note that Plato on at least one occasion—the discussion of the unknowability of

differences between the Aristotelian and Derridean approaches are centred upon the relation between time and our rectangular figure. Aristotle defines time as the number of change with respect to before and after and therefore, given that numbering is a type of conceptualization, associates time with the moment of ideality within the combinatory structure. Derrida, however, takes his departure from Husserl's theory of expressive and indicative signs. He therefore associates time rather with the moment of non-ideality within the combinatory structure, the nameless counterpart of the Husserlian flux, the moment of productive repetition.

It has been our contention that a certain hypothesis clarifies Derrida's interpretation of the phenomena associated with negative theology in terms of a formalization specifically vested in the semiotic square. This is the suggestion that conceptual structures first coming into prominence with Aristotle have, when fused with a deconstructive reading of the Husserlian account of the constitution of ideality, steered the project consciously or subconsciously in that direction. Our hypothesis does not represent a formalistic parody of deconstruction, since the semiotic square is not only an exhibition of formalism but also an exhibition of the relation between formalism and non-formalism—just as it is not only an exhibition of ideality but also an exhibition of the relation between ideality and non-ideality, and since deconstruction is precisely concerned with such a relation.[75]

Sidenote: Two further notions governing the entire argument of "Sauf le Nom" and closely connected with the (a)semiotic square should be mentioned:[76] The first notion is that of *voice*. Since negative theology is a complex variety of polysemous textuality—perhaps

---

alphabetic letters at *Theaetetus* 201e–203b—raises but cannot resolve the same issue. On the other hand, the Gnostic Marcus elaborates his theory that the primordial letters of the alphabet are the aeons emanating from *Sigē* with no such inhibitions. See Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* I. 14. 3.

[75] As we have already argued with respect to the semiotic square, $a_1\ \bar{a}_2$ indicates repeatability, $\bar{a}_1\ a_2$ difference, and $a_1\ a_2$ repetition or *ideality*. Therefore with respect, to the same square, $a_1\ \bar{a}_2$ indicates repeatability, $\bar{a}_1\ a_2$ difference, and $a_1\ a_2$ repetition or *formalism*.

[76] In addition to the detailed applications of the (a)semiotic square to be considered below (see pp. 56–7, 89–92, etc.), one should also note 1. application of two terms of the square ($a_1\ \bar{a}_2$, $a_1\ a_2$) to the two main sections of "Sauf le Nom;" 2. application of three terms of the square ($a_1\ \bar{a}_2$, $\bar{a}_1\ \bar{a}_2$, $a_1\ a_2$) to the three subsections of each section of "Sauf le Nom."

a necessary component of any polysemous textuality[77]—, and Derrida often speaks of the plurality of meanings in a text as a plurality of that text's voices, it is not surprising to find his essay referring to the different voices of negative theology. For example, in an important passage he notes that there are two voices in Silesius" aphorisms: one of the most radical critique and one of the most dogmatic assertion.[78] Now although Derrida does not specify the mechanism underlying any distinction of voices and possibly has strategic reasons for not specifying it, we can state clearly that a voice represents nothing other than a selection of privileged segments or paths within the application of an (a)semiotic square.[79] This brings us to a further notion: that of *doubling*. In a general sense, doubling is prior to voice. As something which has the closest possible relation to repetition—the latter requiring a minimal doubling in order to exist at all—it constitutes the beginning and end of textuality. The term "beginning" here must be qualified since its primary sense of unity has already been excluded through the critique of Husserlian self-presence. This means that doubling is a beginning which is a non-beginning.[80] Likewise, the term "end" must be qualified through the exclusion of its connotation of unity through the same critique of Husserlian self-presence. This means that doubling is itself always doubled.[81] Actually, doubling leads to the articulation, double-bind, and chiasmus which we have seen to represent different patterns within the application of the (a)semiotic square. In these more specific senses, doubling is posterior to voice.[82] That the notions of voice and doubling are closely related is indicated performatively in the text

---

[77] This idea clearly lies behind the strikingly decisive statement at *SLN*, p. 69 "I trust no text that is not in some way contaminated with negative theology."

[78] *SLN*, pp. 66–7. At *SLN*, p. 35 Derrida speaks of the critical or negative voice as the "voiceless voice": (*voix blanche*).

[79] One could add that the entire Heideggerian hermeneutic method depends upon the selection of privileged segments or paths within the application of a semiotic (and occasionally an asemiotic) square. This could be shown clearly through the analysis of Heidegger's use of the formal indication (initial emphasis on one term within a complex), tautology (suppression of opposite pairs of terms), contradiction (suppression of identical pairs of terms), and hermeneutic circle (successive emphasis on one term and then another within a complex).

[80] See Derrida, *SP*, pp. 88–9. Derrida makes the same point in criticizing the Platonic theory of Forms. See Derrida, *Pharm.*, p. 168, *DS*, p. 206.

[81] See Derrida, *Pharm.*, pp. 103–4, 108–10, 124–8. For the double which produces the square see Derrida, *Diss.*, pp. 352–3, 362–3.

[82] For an example of a doubling structure see p. 77, n. 175.

of Derrida's essay itself which is constructed in the form of a dialogue between two anonymous voices. The functions of the respective voices cannot (and should not) be determined univocally. However, Derrida seems to treat one voice as relatively assertive and one voice as relatively critical in character, the former tending to state dogmatic positions to which the latter responds by contradicting the positions, citing intertexts, or raising questions.[83] He employs a similar technique in several other works: for example, the essay "Restitutions of the Truth in Pointing" in *La Vérité en Peinture* which is described as a polylogue for n + 1 female voices.[84]

Negative Theology: Derrida's First Discussion

Derrida's first development of the theme of negative theology[85] begins with an exchange between the two voices of the dialogue which might be presented analytically as follows:

---

[83] The beginning of the text reveals an interesting application of the two voices. The critical voice introduces a correction although the assertive voice has said nothing. Since the critical voice's correction relates to the notion of a plurality of voices, the assertive voice's unexpressed position presumably refers to the notion of a unity of voice. Thus, the initial exchange illustrates the main thesis regarding doubling i.e. that there is no originary unity.

[84] See Derrida, "Restitutions of the Truth in Painting," in *TP*, pp. 255–382.

[85] In what follows we shall use "negative theology" not as a precise expression specifying the negative way of approaching the first cause which is contrasted with an affirmative way, but rather as a formal notation pointing to the entire discoursive context surrounding the negative and affirmative ways of reaching the supreme. This use of the expression "negative theology" tends to predominate in the less specialized literature and also—for better or worse—in Derrida's writings on the topic. For purposes of comparison with Derrida's discussion and our response to the latter, it is worth noting the salient features of "negative theology" as stated definitively by the Neoplatonists. 1. This mode of thinking is based on an ontological continuum. In Neoplatonism, reality is understood as a continuum between superior and inferior—with the Good as highest term—and between simple and multiple—with the One as highest term: since "the Good" and "the One" are alternate names for the First Principle, the two continua are virtually synonymous. The processes of negation and affirmation which are on one level intellectual, logical, psychological, or linguistic in nature constitute on another level processes of ascent and descent respectively or else processes of descent and ascent respectively in the ontological continua. (NB. It is because of the above that the Neoplatonists can speak of negation as causative or generative); 2. Negation is the more important of the two processes and embraces a variety of different senses. This variation is indicated by the (Greek) terminology: *a. apophasis* ("denial") represents negation in an unspecified sense as well as in the specific senses of marking higher, lower, or coordinate positions within the ontological continuum, *b. aphairesis* ("abstraction") is the specific term for the removal of predicates or properties which manifests ascent within the

(*SLN* 48a/*Sauf* 41a) The first interlocutor announces a repetition whereby the investigation of negative theology is begun anew starting

---

order of reality, *c. sterēsis* ("privation") is the specific term for the removal of predicates or properties manifesting descent within the order of being, *d. heterotēs* ("otherness") represents negation in the relatively undefined sense of alterity, *e. enantiotēs* ("opposition") constitutes negation in the more definite sense of contrariety. (NB 1. Negation in an unspecified sense is often indicated by alpha-privative terms which, although grammatically negative, can be semantically either negative or affirmative; NB 2 *Heterotēs* is sometimes replaced by *diaphora* ("difference"). The latter term signifies negation as the differentiation between species within a genus; NB 3. *Enantiotēs* sometimes becomes, as a result of combining the senses of contrariety and contradiction, a determinative negation); 3. Exploiting this terminology in a manner appropriate to context, philosophical writers establish three basic models for "negative theology." The predominance of these models seems to follow a chronological evolution from Middle Platonism, through the Plotinian system, to later Neoplatonism. *Model 1.* the "Sigetic Model." Here, Silence (functioning as an implicit negative moment) is elevated above Speech (treated as an implicit affirmative moment). This model occurs in two different versions depending upon whether Silence is identified with Thought and elevated above Speech—examples can be found in Clement of Alexandria and Origen—or whether Silence is elevated above Speech as identified with Thought—for numerous examples see Gregory of Nyssa. (NB 1. Silence is sometimes associated ontologically with what cannot be uttered and sometimes associated deontically with what should not be uttered; NB 2. This model of negative theology generally implies the conventionalist view of language). *Model 2*: the "Discoursive Model." Here, an unspecified "X" (functioning as an implicit negative moment) is elevated above the alternation of negation and affirmation indicating ascent and descent respectively in the ontological continuum or vice versa (functioning as an implicit affirmative moment). This model also occurs in two different versions depending upon whether the higher "X" is specified as a supra-propositional item where the alternation of negative and affirmative is understood as an alternation of propositions—several examples occur in Proclus—or whether the higher "X" is specified as a non-discoursive "striving" where the lower alternation of negative and affirmative is understood as an alternation of supra-propositional items—for numerous examples see ps.-Dionysius—, it being obviously possible to superimpose the second version upon the first in order to produce a more elaborate structure. (NB 1. The propositions mentioned in the first version are treated ambivalently as logical and psychological in character; NB 2. In the first version, the supra-propositional item implies suspension of the law of contradiction; NB 3. The non-discoursive striving mentioned in the second version is treated strictly as non-psychological in character; NB 4. This model of negative theology invariably maintains the naturalist view of language); *Model 3*: the "Sigetic-Discoursive Model." That the two previous models can be combined to form an extremely complex form of negative theology is indicated by several passages in Proclus. To this there is an interesting counter-example: Gregory of Nyssa's opposition of his own model 1 to his rival Eunomius' use of model 2; 4. Two further aspects of the "negative theology" practiced by Neoplatonists should be noted: *i.* The manner of selecting terms for negation. In Plotinus, these tend to arise in the course of thought-experiments whereas in Proclus and ps.-Dionysius, they are mostly derived from the exegesis of texts; *ii.* The interpretation of negation as aporia: a combination of Neoplatonism and scepticism coming to the fore in Damascius. For a good discussion of negative theology see Raoul Mortley, *From Word to Silence II. The Way of*

from the proposition: "What is called "negative theology" is a language."[86]

(48b/41b) The dialogic partner immediately corrects this statement by suggesting not only that negative theology is a language but also that negative theology is what exceeds and questions language—we shall call these the first and second definitions of negative theology. It is important to observe that in the course of this rejoinder, there are implicit shifts from the linguistic to the metalingual and from an affirmative to a negative definition of the phenomenon concerned.

(48c/41c) The original speaker restates his first definition of negative theology and accepts the second definition, in the process specifying that negative theology is being considered in its metalingual mode.

(48d/42a) The dialogic partner explicitly restates the definition of negative theology as what exceeds and questions language while adopting the metalingual specification of negative theology. At this point the nature of this metalanguage is made more precise. The latter is propositional—of the type "S is P"—and formalistic. Moreover, it has no determinable referent with respect to subject, predicate, or copula.

(48e/42b) the first interlocutor restates the definition of negative theology as a language while assuming the metalingual specification of negative theology. An aspect of temporal circularity is introduced when he adds that we both follow the knowledge of the definition and also pre-understand the definition.

(49a/43a) The dialogic partner now develops the argument simultaneously in several directions. Starting from the earlier specification of language as propositional and formalistic, he suggests that negative theology—which is henceforth mostly object-language rather than metalanguage—is a discursive formalization but an exhaustion of those discursive possibilities. The idea of temporality has clearly influenced these definitions of negative theology—we shall call them the third and fourth definitions of negative theology—which are like

---

Negation, Christian and Greek (Bonn: Hannstein, 1986). A less precise but still useful study is: Deirdre Carabine, *The Unknown God. Negative Theology in the Platonic Tradition: Plato to Eriugena* (Louvain: Peeters-Eerdmans, 1995).

[86] The axiom fully stated is "What is called 'negative theology,' in an idiom of Graeco-Latin filiation, is a language." The additional phrase raises the question of the translatability of negative theology which we reserve for discussion on p. 80ff.

the earlier pair somewhat affirmative and negative in character. The idea of temporality is also connected with the notion of something about negative theology which remains for us to think.

(49b/43b) The original speaker accepts the third and fourth definitions of negative theology, in the process adding that the exhaustion of discursive possibilities includes those of naming and reference. He further comments that an implicit separation has been made with regard to negative theology between the latter's ontological formalism and poetic metaphoricity and that this separation is something that not only deconstruction but also negative theology in its metalingual mode might question.

(49c/44a) The dialogic partner responds by returning to his first definition of negative theology as language and his second definition of negative theology as what exceeds and questions language. After mentioning once again the temporal circularity whereby we both follow the knowledge of the definition and also pre-understand the definitions, he now presents a revised first definition of negative theology as ontotheology and a revised second definition of negative theology as a critique of ontotheology.

(50a/45a) The first interlocutor concludes that negative theology represents an inexhaustible exhaustion. He paraphrases this by saying, with an oblique further reference to the remainder, that it says almost nothing.

(50b/45b) The dialogic partner now restates the definition of negative theology as a language and the characterization of negative theology as a discursive formalization with its possibilities almost exhausted, on this question extending the description to the metalingual specification of negative theology. However, the discussion quickly shifts to negative theology as object-language which is now described in a new way as a corpus of statements linked either by family resemblance or under a regular logico-discursive type in a manner tending to mechanization of thought.

(50c/46a) The original speaker provides an important explanation of this mechanistic formalization by interpreting it as the empty symbolic intending which—considering the question in terms of Husserlian phenomenology—destabilizes the full originary intuition. This negative aspect of the theology can be counteracted by the positive aspects of prayer and hymn. To be more precise, negative theology can be understood either in terms of the empty symbolic intending of its arguments or in terms of the relation between the empty symbolic

intending of its arguments and the full originary intuition of its prayers.

(51a/47a) The dialogic partner pulls together many strands of the discussion by pointing out that it is because negative theology can be characterized as a discursive formalization with its possibilities almost exhausted—even including those of naming and reference—and it is because negative theology can be further specified as an empty symbolic intending or the relation between an empty symbolic intending and a full originary intuition, that this theology can be considered a corpus.

(51b/48a) The first interlocutor now concludes that the corpus as defined from all these viewpoints is precisely what is iterable or translatable.

Perhaps the most immediately noticeable feature of this exchange between the two voices is the implicit distinction between negative theology and the discourse about negative theology. This metalanguage which has begun to assume so many features of negative theology that we might even call it "meta-negative theology" is indicated by Derrida's references to our pre-understanding of the definition of negative theology[87] and to an interpretation of that definition in the Graeco-Latin context.[88] It is important to note that the discourse about negative theology studies its object by treating it not as a species within some genus but as a term which is both exemplary and substitutable in respect of other members of a series.[89]

For Derrida, negative theology (and also ambivalently the discourse about negative theology) is to be understood from one viewpoint as formalization in the three senses of a proposition—for example, of the type "S is P" as represented by "What is called 'negative theology' is a language"[90]—, of an antithesis of affirmative and negative—for example, the statement that negative theology is a language and that it is a questioning of language[91] or that negative theology is ontotheology and that it is critique of ontotheology[92]—, and of a set of propositions—for example, arranged according to family

---

[87] *SLN*, pp. 48e, 49a–c, 50b.
[88] *SLN*, p. 48a.
[89] *SLN*, pp. 49a, 51a.
[90] *SLN*, p. 48d.
[91] *SLN*, pp. 48b, 49c.
[92] *SLN*, p. 49c.

resemblance.[93] Negative theology (again without complete separation from the discourse about negative theology) is also to be understood from another viewpoint as the exhaustion of formalization:[94] a notion which seems to indicate the situation where all the discursive possibilities have been realized including the possibilities of naming and reference as such.[95] In the course of his discussion, Derrida points out that exhaustive formalization is opposed to certain other kinds of discourse—for example, the languages of prayer and hymn[96]—in which metaphoricity is emphasized.[97] Although in its most basic interpretation, negative theology corresponds to the discourse which is exhaustively formalized, in a certain deeper sense it constitutes the relation between the discourse which is exhaustively formalized and the discourse which is extended metaphorically.[98]

Another important feature of the exchange between the two voices is the introduction of temporal elements into the characterization of negative theology. These include the notion of pre-understanding and knowing after the definition of this theology,[99] the process leading to the exhaustion of a formalization,[100] and the notion of what remains to be thought after the definition of this theology.[101] Obviously, such temporal elements are atypical of the ancient presentations of negative theology but consistent with this passage's modern intertext: Husserl.

As we have already suggested, the next phase of Derrida's first development of the theme of negative theology is introduced by references to the remainder and to *khōra*.

The importance of the remainder is indicated in the following passage:[102]

– However much one says, then, that beyond the theorem and constative description, the discourse of negative theology "consists" in exceeding essence and language, by testifying it *remains*

---

[93] *SLN*, p. 50b.
[94] *SLN*, pp. 49a–b, 50a–b.
[95] *SLN*, pp. 49b, 51a.
[96] *SLN*, p. 50c.
[97] *SLN*, p. 49b.
[98] *SLN*, p. 50c.
[99] See n. 87.
[100] *SLN*, pp. 49a–b, 50a–b
[101] *SLN*, pp. 49a, 50a.
[102] *SLN*, pp. 54c–55a/*Sauf* 54a–c.

– What does "remain" mean here? Is it a modality of "being"?
– I don't know. Perhaps this, precisely, that this theology would be nothing . . .

The significance of place is indicated a few paragraphs later:[103]

– You well know that, in nearly all its Greek, Christian, and Jewish networks, the *via negativa* conjugates reference to God, the name of God, with the experience of place. The desert is also a figure of pure place. But figuration in general results from this spatiality, from this locality of the word.
– Yes, Angelus Silesius writes this about the word (*das Wort*), that is to say, about the divine word as well, and some translate *Wort* here just simply by God

Der Ort ist das Wort

For a discursive analysis of the remainder and *khōra* in relation to negative theology the reader may here turn to our analysis of Derrida's *khōra* later in this volume. However, for a brief indication of the influence of these notions upon Derrida's account of negative theology one has only to examine the next few pages of text. Here, we find the attention of the two interlocutors shifting from a reading of negative theology to a reading of the interrelation of deconstruction and negative theology. The phases of this shift constitute the remainder which must be thought of negative theology and the place in which one must think negative theology.

We may follow the unfolding of Derrida's discussion first with respect to the deconstructive schema which it presupposes. Here, certain quasi-synonymous terms representing the overcoming of discourse such as "remainder," "place," "impossible," and "undecidable"[104] are found opposed to other quasi-synonymous terms representing the discourse itself such as "trace," "mark," and "wound."[105] Considering the situation in a primarily structural and

[103] *SLN*, pp. 56c–57a/*Sauf* 58b–c.
[104] For remainder see *SLN*, p. 58b; for place *SLN*, p. 58c, 59a; for the impossible *SLN*, pp. 58c, 59a; for the undecidable *SLN*, p. 58c.
[105] For trace see *SLN*, p. 61b; for mark *SLN*, p. 61c; for wound *SLN*, pp. 60a–b, 61b.

static manner the relation between the overcoming of discourse and the discourse itself can be called a signature which is both illegible and legible.[106] Approaching the matter from a simultaneously structural and genetic and therefore simultaneously static and dynamic viewpoint, the relation between the discourse and its overcoming may be called—using a class of terms poised between homonymy and synonymy which all have the general sense of relation to (an) other[107]—"ference," "reference," "difference," and "transference";[108] the relation between the discourse and its overcoming may also be called "passion":[109] a term which is exploited for both its active and its passive connotations. Roughly speaking, the "ference" class of terms relates more closely to the text which is being read or written and the term "passion" to the reader or writer of the text.

It is within this deconstructive schema which is familiar to us on the basis of other texts that Derrida places a further account of deconstruction and an account of negative theology. The deconstructive element is centred on the notion of an event which is both "in" (*dans*) and "on" (*sur*) language[110] or the notion of a reference which is both "on the edge of" (*au bord du*) language and "on the edge as" (*au bord comme*) language.[111] The negative-theological element is centred on a divine name's relation both to "the nameable beyond the name" (*le nommable au-delà du nom*) and to "the unnameable nameable" (*le nommable innomable*)[112] or a divine name's relation both to "an opening . . . openness" (*l'ouverture, l'apérité*) and to "a certain absolute secret" (*un certain secret absolu*).[113] The combination of the deconstructive and negative-theological aspects is achieved in various ways. In particular, Derrida's comments about the absence of a common measure between what is in and on language,[114] the undecidable question whether reference is or is not indispensable—which is explicitly stated to govern the history of negative theology[115]—,

---

[106] *SLN*, p. 60e, 61e. Cf. pp. 60b–c.
[107] For relation to other see *SLN*, p. 61a.
[108] *SLN*, pp. 58b, 60c.
[109] *SLN*, pp. 58c, 59a.
[110] *SLN*, pp. 58b–c. For event see further pp. 60e–61a.
[111] *SLN*, pp. 60d–e.
[112] *SLN*, p. 58b.
[113] *SLN*, p. 58c
[114] *SLN*, p. 58c. On the deconstructive notion of the asymmetry which inhabits opposition see pp. 65–6.
[115] *SLN*, p. 60c.

and the impossibility of manifesting the absolute secret[116] indicate the contamination of negative theology with deconstructive tendencies. The same can be said regarding the verbal manipulation of *sauf* which is prominent in these passages. For example the divine name's relation both to the nameable beyond the name and to the unnameable nameable is reflected in the double meaning of *sauf* as "save" (= preserve) and "save" (= except).[117]

But clearly something remains to be thought with respect to this shift from negative theology to the interrelation of deconstruction and negative theology. We shall confine ourselves to a few points.

The passage exploiting the intertext of Husserl is particularly important (50c). The beginning of this section explains how negative theology corresponds to the formalization implicit in the empty functioning of symbolic language, a point which reveals the extent to which Husserl's notion that an intention is never completely fulfilled by the corresponding intuitive content has been developed in opposite directions by Jean-Luc Marion—for whom the poor phenomenon represented by the intuitive content is raised to the level of a "saturated phenomenon"—and by Derrida—for whom the symbolic mechanism representing the intention is lowered to the level of an empty signifier—and the extent to which these two opposed developments of Husserlian phenomenology have led to two equally opposed interpretations of negative theology.[118] The end of the same passage deduces a further consequence of the Derridean reading: that negative theology both corresponds to one formalization implicit in the empty functioning of symbolic language and is subverted as the other formalization implicit in the transcendental aspect of phenomenology.

Another aspect of Derrida's first account of negative theology which remains for us to think is the relation between that account and the

---

[116] *SLN*, p. 58c. On the deconstructive notion of a secret which is no secret see chapter 4.3.

[117] The application of the homonymy of *sauf* to negative theology parallels the application of the homonymy of *il faut* in the same context. See pp. 95–6.

[118] See n. 10. For Marion's position compare Jean-Luc Marion, "In the Name: How to Avoid Speaking of 'Negative Theology,'" in *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, eds. J.D. Caputo and M. Scanlon, pp. 39–40, and *Being Given. Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness*, trans. J.L. Kosky (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 2002), p. 328, n. 2. For a summary of the differences between Marion and Derrida see John D. Caputo, "Apostles of the Impossible. On God and the Gift in Derrida and Marion," in *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, eds. J.D. Caputo and M. Scanlon, pp. 193–5.

(a)semiotic square.[119] If one recalls the first definition of negative theology as language and the second definition of negative theology as what exceeds language or questions language, and also the first revised definition of negative theology as ontotheology and the second revised definition of negative theology as the critique of ontotheology, one observes in either case an oppositional structure in which a positive term—language, ontotheology—is contrasted with a negative term—exceeding or questioning of language, exceeding or questioning of ontotheology—in order to produce an implicit combination—that which is simultaneously language, ontotheology, and the exceeding or questioning of language, ontotheology. The combined term which Derrida implies to be typical of Neoplatonic thought should be compared with the neutral term typical of deconstruction which is suggested elsewhere: the remainder to be thought subsequently to the exhaustion of negative theology's formalization. An (a)semiotic square can also be found to underlie the interrelation of deconstruction and negative theology elaborated in the latter part of Derrida's first account. Here, the situation is predictably more complex given that the quasi-synonymous terms representing the overcoming of discourse—remainder, impossible, undecidable—are items which are neither positive nor negative, while the quasi-synonymous terms representing discourse itself—trace, mark, wound—are items in transition between the negative and positive.[120] The further deconstructive elements to be added to this deconstructive framework include as a positive item that which is in language, as a negative item that which is on the edge of language, and as a combined item that which is on language and on the edge of language. Similarly the negative-theological elements to be added to the deconstructive framework include as a positive item the divine name's relation to an opening or openness, as a negative item the divine name's relation to an absolute secret, and as a combined item the divine name's relations to the nameable beyond the name and the divine name's relation to the unnameable nameable.

---

[119] See pp. 42–3. Of course, the application of the (a)semiotic square to what follows must be considered as falling in a range between the precise and the approximative (more precise in the case of negative theology and more approximative in that of deconstruction).

[120] On the quasi-synonymous term "place"—which must be handled differently—see chapter 4.1.

The (a)semiotic square obviously has an important relation to the passage exploiting the intertext of Husserl. We can now argue that the application of the square's combinatory mechanism equally to elements functioning in the non-semantic sphere such as phonemes and morphemes and to elements operating in the semantic sphere such as denotation and connotation explains how Derrida can suggest that negative theology simultaneously corresponds to the formalization implicit in the empty functioning of symbolic language—i.e. when interpreted as an application of the square to the non-semantic sphere—and is also subverted as the formalization implicit in the transcendental aspect of phenomenology—i.e. when interpreted as an application of the square to the semantic sphere. It is also because the square's combinatory mechanism applies to elements functioning in the non-semantic sphere that one can defend Derrida's practice of exploiting the practical and performative possibilities of negative theology throughout the text of "Sauf le Nom."[121]

The final issue raised by Derrida's first account of negative theology is perhaps that of "reference" (*référence*). Allowing for the predictable polysemy of this term or group of terms, it is necessary to distinguish a more typically deconstructive and non-ontotheological sense of reference which is stated explicitly: "relation to the other" (*rapport à l'autre*) and a more typically Neoplatonic and ontotheological sense which is used implicitly: "relation to an extra-linguistic other";[122] to distinguish further a more typically deconstructive and non-ontotheological sense of transcendence associated with the first kind of reference and a more typically Neoplatonic and ontotheological type of reference associated with the second kind of reference;[123] and to understand additionally the assumption that with reference the deconstructive and non-ontotheological sense predominates while with transcendence the Neoplatonic and ontotheological sense is privileged. It is precisely because of this polysemy of reference that Derrida is able to elaborate his subtle combination of deconstruction and negative theology which is founded on the one

---

[121] For a discussion of the practical and performative aspects of negative theology see our analysis of Derrida's "Secret" in chapter 4.3. For a definition of "performative" see chapter 1, n. 15.

[122] In other words, Derrida is contrasting a Heideggerian sense of reference (not detachable from meaning) with a Fregean sense (detachable from meaning).

[123] For our sense of "transcendence" here see p. 64ff.

hand on a deconstructive referential schema where the neutral term of the (a)semiotic square represents a non-ontotheological moment of referential transcendence and the other terms of the square the moment of reference to that transcendence, the moment of reference drawing the moment of transcendence into the *non-ontotheological* sphere; and founded on the other hand on a negative-theological referential schema where the neutral term of the (a)semiotic square represents an ontotheological moment of referential transcendence and the other terms of the square the moment of reference to that transcendence, the moment of transcendence drawing the moment of reference into the *ontotheological* sphere. It is also important to note that, since the deconstructive referential schema and the negative-theological schema so conceived are themselves juxtaposed in a relation of undecidability, a multiplication of squares is taking place.[124]

The importance of this entire section of text (roughly 48a–62b) is underlined by Derrida himself when he concludes that as a result of the various discussions which have been conducted the phrase "What is called 'negative theology' is a language" no longer has the intelligibility of a pure axiom.[125] The point might be paraphrased by saying that Derrida and his reader began with the stability of an axiom about negative theology and of an interpretation of that theology as axiomatic, that they subsequently shifted to what remains to be thought about negative theology and to the place where deconstruction and negative theology must both be thought—a move requiring a deeper reflection on the "language" mentioned in the original axiom—, and that they have ended by disrupting the axiom about negative theology and the interpretation of that theology's axiomatism.

---

[124] See pp. 42–3 and n. 51. The importance of the notion of reference for Derrida's interpretation of the relation between deconstruction and negative theology is underlined at *SLN*, p. 60c where he concludes that the entire history of negative theology plays itself out in the axiom that the referent either *is* or *is not* indispensable. Applying the argument outlined above, we might paraphrase by saying that the referent is indispensable in the Heideggerian sense but is not indispensable in the Fregean sense. The debate about negative theology between Marion and Derrida reported by John D. Caputo, "Apostles of the Impossible. On God and the Gift in Derrida and Marion," in *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, eds. J.D. Caputo and M. Scanlon, pp. 189–91 seemingly revolves around this question.

[125] At *SLN*, p. 61ff. Derrida adds, however, that we shall retain the proposition as a guiding-thread. At *SLN*, p. 62b the proposition is repeated for the last time in order to begin the next phase of the discussion.

Before turning to the latter part of Derrida's essay, it is necessary to consider some broader questions concerning the relation between Neoplatonism and deconstruction.

Interlude: Deconstruction and Neoplatonism

Although such things have only a provisional status in this field, it is useful to have some definitions to fall back upon in dealing with deconstruction.[126] One might therefore venture a definition: deconstruction is a method of explaining and modifying asymmetrical contradictories by associating them with quasi-general structures which are understood and enacted.[127] Among the elements of this definition, the references to explaining and modifying which are complemented by the references to understanding and enacting indicate that we are dealing with something of both a theoretical and a practical nature. Moreover, the reference to explaining should be placed alongside the reference to associating as implying in the former case a connection of a logical or ontological type and in the latter case various types of linguistic or semiotic connection. In referring to asymmetrical contradictories, the proposer of the definition indicates

---

[126] To begin with a definition of deconstruction would hardly be the approach of Derrida himself. However, since the present undertaking involves reading deconstruction in juxtaposition with Neoplatonism, and Derrida in *SLN* frequently emphasizes the *formalizing* aspects of the latter, it seems legitimate and even necessary to proceed from the background of although not with limits imposed by the definitional, the propositional, the syllogistic, etc. For a more recent "explicit" definition of deconstruction by Derrida see n. 185.

[127] The reference to quasi-general structures has a Heideggerian background. This textual relation becomes apparent when one compares—to cite one of the most important of such structures as an example—Derrida's "difference" (*différence*) with Heidegger's "dif-ference" (*Unter-schied*). It is worth noting that the Heideggerian difference between Being and beings—like any general structure of Derrida's—can be understood as a "condition of possibility" (see *What is Called Thinking?* II. 11, p. 243). Moreover, this difference is implicit in the structure of language (see *ibid.* II. 10, pp. 218–22, II. 11, pp. 241–2); it cannot appear otherwise than in some epochal manifestation as the Platonic participation, the Nietzschean Will to Power, etc. (see *ibid.* I. 7, p. 78, I. 8, pp. 83–4, I. 8, p. 86, I. 9, pp. 89–95, I. 9, p. 98, I. 10, pp. 100–104, II. 10, pp. 218–19, II. 10, pp. 226–8, II. 11, pp. 233–8); and it underlies the structure of a fourfold (see *ibid.* II. 10, p. 218, II. 11, pp. 240–42). Moreover, the Heideggerian difference between Being and beings—again like any general structure in Derrida—mutates into further structures such as "Rift" (*Riss*) which represents a more hermeneutically developed difference, and "Vibration" (*Schwingung*) representing a less hermeneutically developed difference. For a discussion of Difference, Rift, etc. see pp. 170–72.

that he is thinking of certain relations other than the specifically logical ones between contradictory propositions. In referring to quasi-general structures, the framer of the definition shows that it is certain relations other than the specifically logical one between generic and specific terms which are at issue.[128] Earlier exponents of deconstruction have advanced similar provisional definitions, although sometimes in a more context-specific relation to logic and ontology. For example, the excellent interpreter Gasché defines the purpose of the method as being to *account for* contradictions by *grounding* them in *infra*-structures.[129]

In following up the implications of this definition, we can perhaps proceed most effectively by dividing it into two components: first, the explanation and modification of asymmetrical contradictories and secondly, the association with quasi-general structures which are understood and enacted.

It will be useful to reinforce the first part of the definition by constructing a sort of conceptual model based on a combination of temporal and quasi-spatial figures.[130] More precisely, this will consist of what we shall call the "figure of (semi-) circularity" in which a positive term $a_1\ \bar{a}_2$ is first displaced by a negative term $\bar{a}_1\ a_2$ which is then displaced by a combined term $a_2\ a_1$. The figure of (semi-) circularity can be compounded with one or two partial figures which we shall call that of "transcendence" consisting of the displacement of the negative term $\bar{a}_1\ a_2$ by a neutral term $\bar{a}_2\ \bar{a}_1$; and that of "translation" consisting of the displacement of the negative term $\bar{a}_1\ a_2$ by a different realization of the combined term as $b_2\ b_1$.[131] It should be

---

[128] The definition does not take account of certain other characteristic features of the deconstructive approach. These include: first, the textual-historical environment in which the contradictories and structures are presented to deconstruction (see pp. 1–5) and the simultaneity of deconstruction's reflective relation to its chosen texts and self-reflective relation to its own method (see p. 79). Both these features have been discussed in relation to negative theology during the previous segment.

[129] The definition can be found in Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, pp. 127–8, 134–5, 142, 171.

[130] Emphasizing the temporal aspect, one might prefer to call these figures "rhythms."

[131] The configuration has been established in order to conceptualize the intersection of Neoplatonism and deconstruction and is nowhere presented in this manner in the writings of Derrida. For the outlines of Derrida's own presentation see especially *Pos.*, pp, 41–3, 71, 82 and *SEC*, pp. 329–30. Here, we find two structures: i. Passage from first moment of figure of (semi-) circularity to figure of translation. Thus, Derrida speaks of the "incision" where one enters into a text (*Pos.*,

noted in connection with the primary figure and the partial figures that we are dealing simultaneously with form (transcendent element) and content (translative element), that there is a more moderate displacement (primary figure) and a more extreme displacement (partial figures), and that there is both a threefold structure (primary figure alone) and a fourfold schema (primary figure and partial figures).

This configuration is, of course, decidedly abstract in character. In order to render it more concrete and to show its relation to the definition, it is necessary to specify the unit represented by the terms a_1, $\bar{a}_1$, a_2, $\bar{a}_2$. In the case of deconstruction, this unit is a duality of opposites where one term is accorded primacy of value over the other term, an example of this being the oppositional pair of atemporal and temporal with primacy of value assigned to the former according to traditional metaphysics.[132] The opposition or oppositions which deconstruction found within any philosophical text could be presented by such a discourse either vertically, where one might

---

p. 82. Cf. *OG*, p. 162) or the "extraction" of certain textual features followed by the "grafting" of these features into a new context (*Pos.*, p. 71); ii. Juxtaposition of figure of transcendence and figure of translation as the essential moments of deconstruction in contrast with second and third moments of figure of (semi-) circularity understood in the narrow sense. Here, Derrida refers either to the "overturning" of certain priorities or a "displacement" of complex systems (*Pos.*, pp. 41–3, *SEC*, pp. 329–30. Cf. *Pos.*, p. 82, *Spurs*, p. 81); or to the "grafting" onto a new concept or the "irruptive emergence" of a new concept or the "reinscription" of a concept (*Pos.*, pp. 41–3, *SEC*, pp. 329–30. Cf. *Spurs*, p. 95); or else to a "neutralization" or "constituting a third term" (*Pos.*, pp. 41–3, *SEC*, pp. 329–30. Cf. *DS*, p. 207, n. 24; *FRGE*, p. 274, *Spurs*, p. 63). According to the passages quoted, the moment of overturning is a particularly complex one in that there is a displacement not only of a conceptual order but of the non-conceptual order with which it is articulated—an idea connected with the Derridean theme of the "remainder" (*SEC*, pp. 329–30. Cf. *FRGE*, p. 274). For a good summary of the deconstructive method see Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, pp. 137–8, 167, 170–73. There is more material and other examples in Harvey, *Derrida and the Economy of Différance*, pp. 28–36, 71–3, 77 (where two of the moments, following Derrida's *Positions*, are styled "castration" and "mimesis"), and Christopher Norris, *Deconstruction. Theory and Practice* (London and New York: Methuen, 1982), pp. 31, 66–7, 100–101, 109–10. It is important to note that with respect to the configuration which we have outlined, Neoplatonism often concentrates on the three moments of the figure of (semi-) circularity whereas deconstruction specializes in the partial figures of transcendence and translation. However, it is quite clear that the entire system is presupposed by both approaches.

[132] For example, see Derrida *OG*, pp. 139, 215, *Pharm.*, pp. 137–8, *Pos.*, p. 41. Cf. *Limited Inc*, trans. S. Weber and J. Mehlman (Evanston: Northwestern U.P., 1988), p. 115ff.

speak of levels of the text, or horizontally, where one would speak of parts of the text, or in both respects.[133] An opposition could also be either verbal—for example, between two homonymous senses of polysemous word—, or semantic—for example, between sememes or connotations which are neither homonymous senses of words nor logically organized concepts—, or conceptual—for example, between two species of which a genus is synonymously predicable, the connection of terms within a verbal opposition or between such oppositions being iterative, that within a semantic opposition or between such oppositions being associative, and that within a conceptual opposition or between such oppositions being logical in nature.[134] Moreover, an opposition of theory and practice could be combined with the above—for example, a philosophical writer could define a term in a certain manner at the outset of his work but apply the term in a different way as he proceeds[135]—this opposition of theory and practice also being from other viewpoints perhaps an opposition of conscious and unconscious and from still other viewpoints perhaps an opposition of cognitive and emotive.[136] In addition to specifying the unit represented by the terms a_1, $\bar{a}_1$, a_2, $\bar{a}_2$ within our configuration, it is also important to note two aspects in the manner in which the terms a_1, $\bar{a}_1$, a_2, $\bar{a}_2$ establish the configuration in general. These are: asymmetry and chiasmus. The first aspect implies that the imbalance within an original opposition is retained throughout any subsequent manipulations of that opposition,[137] the second that the imbalance within the original opposition is balanced by an imbalance within the reversal of that opposition.[138]

The configuration above can be shown, when specified in terms of its basic unit, to underlie the discoursive procedures of almost any Derridean text. Everywhere in this writing one finds the figure of

---

[133] See *OG*, p. 39 (levels of text); see "Outwork, prefacing," in *DI*, p. 3ff., "Title (to be Specified)," trans. T. Conley, in *Sub-stance* 31 (1981), pp. 5–22 (parts of text). The question of levels of text is extensively discussed by Harvey, *Derrida and the Economy of Différance*, pp. 50–52, 68–73. Cf. pp. 29–31.

[134] For a summary statement of all these possibilities see "Qual Quelle. Valéry's Sources," in *MP*, pp. 293–4. For logical connections see *OG*, pp. 39–44; for semantic connections see *DS*, pp. 223, 250–58, 270, *Spurs*, p. 117; for verbal connections see *DS*, p. 282. See further *OG*, pp. 139–40, *SSP*, p. 279.

[135] See *OG*, pp. 215, 243–6, 295; *Pharm.*, p. 158.

[136] See *OG*, pp. 45, 237–8, 243–5; *Pharm.*, pp. 110–11; *Pos.*, p. 86.

[137] See *SEC*, p. 327.

[138] See *Pos.*, p. 70.

(semi-) circularity given that a positive term $a_1\ \bar{a}_2$ (a duality of opposites where one term is accorded primacy of value over another term) is first displaced by a negative term $\bar{a}_1\ a_2$ (the same duality of opposites but with the primacy of value transferred to the other term) which is then displaced by a combined term $a_2\ a_1$ (the original duality of opposites where one term was accorded primacy of value over another term together with the same duality of opposites but with the primacy of value transferred to another term).[139] Similarly ubiquitous in Derrida's writing are the combination of the figure of (semi-) circularity with the partial figures of transcendence and translation. In the former case, the negative term $\bar{a}_1\ a_2$ (the original duality of opposites but with the primacy of value transferred to the other term) can be displaced by either or both of a term indeterminately negative or affirmative in principle (a questioning of the meaning of the opposition itself) and a term indeterminately negative or affirmative in the context (a questioning of the meaning of the terms of the opposition).

Readers familiar with ancient philosophy will perhaps already have realized that the figure of (semi-) circularity and the partial figures of transcendence and translation which underlie the deconstructive method also underlie Neoplatonic ontology. As explained most fully in the writings of Proclus, when a positive term $a_1\ \bar{a}_2$ is present this implies that some metaphysical principle "remains," when the positive term is displaced by a negative term $\bar{a}_1\ a_2$, this indicates that the same principle "proceeds," and when the negative term is displaced by a combined term $a_2\ a_1$, this indicates that the same principle "reverts." Moreover, the displacement of the negative term $\bar{a}_1\ a_2$ by the neutral term $\bar{a}_2\ \bar{a}_1$ shows that the principle being discussed "reverts" in relation to something ontologically prior, and the displacement of the negative term $\bar{a}_1\ a_2$ by a different realization of the combined term as $b_2\ b_1$ shows that something ontologically posterior "remains" in conjunction with the principle being discussed.[140]

Thus far, we can clearly speak of a convergence between deconstruction and Neoplatonism. But matters become more complicated when we turn to the various divergent elements.

---

[139] For the necessary qualifications in respect of this summary see n. 76.

[140] For a more detailed discussion of remaining, procession, and reversion in Neoplatonism see pp. 139–51.

A reader familiar with ancient philosophy cannot fail to see that the specification of the unit represented by the terms a_1, $\bar{a}_1$, a_2, $\bar{a}_2$ is quite different in deconstruction and in Neoplatonism respectively. In the former case, the unit is a duality of opposites where one term is accorded primacy of value over the other term whereas in the latter case, the unit is ultimately unitary. It may form an opposition with another term and may possess a value greater than or less that that of another term. However such relations are external to the unit insofar as it is represented by the terms a_1, $\bar{a}_1$, a_2, $\bar{a}_2$. In the case of deconstruction, the unit (opposition) may be conceptual and enjoying logical connections with other concepts, or semantic with associative connections with other semes or verbal and enjoying iterative connections with other words. In the case of Neoplatonism, the unit (non-opposition) is explicitly described as conceptual and as connected logically with other concepts although implicitly viewed as semantic and as connected associatively with other semes. It is undoubtedly because of the non-dualistic and non-discoursive nature of its units that Neoplatonism not only departs from deconstruction but itself requires deconstruction. Thus, Neoplatonism invokes the opposition of theoretical and practical while assigning primacy to the theoretical, the opposition of cognitive and emotive with primacy assigned to the cognitive, and the opposition of conscious and unconscious with primacy assigned to the conscious.[141]

In continuing to follow up the implications of our definition or deconstruction, we may turn from the question of explaining and modifying asymmetrical contradictories to that of associating them with quasi-general structures which are understood and enacted.

Consideration of the second part of the definition should begin by recording the fact that Derrida does mention, as operative within the deconstructive method, certain "general structures" or "signifying structures."[142] According to arguments developed in certain earlier texts like the essays "Force et Signification," "'Genèse et Structure'

---

[141] It is perhaps obvious that one could move with respect to the figure of (semi-) circularity and the partial figures of combination, transcendence, and translation from considering the proximity of Neoplatonism and Derrida to considering that of Neoplatonism and Heidegger. Obviously this question is too complex to pursue here. However, see below pp. 170–71.

[142] Derrida, *OG*, p. 158, *Acts of Literature*, ed. D. Attridge (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 70–72. Cf. *SP*, p. 64.

et la Phénoménologie," and "La structure, le signe et le jeu" collected in *L'écriture et la différence*, the notion of structure must be transformed from something possessing general, formal, centering, and spatial features—a sense which is perhaps a necessary foundation of philosophical discourse as such[143]—into something like a condition of the possibility and impossibility of possessing such features.[144] Since Derrida has on occasion been prepared to adopt the Marxian term "infrastructure" to explain this new sense, his interpreter Gasché has elected to use the latter as a convenient general notation for what is at issue here.[145] Nevertheless, Derrida's practice is simply to name different examples of his general structures. These names are of two types: 1. Reflecting the negative moment of deconstruction whereby terms which are subordinated, marginal, or non-existent in the philosophical tradition are given prominence (*Writing, Trace, Supplement, Re-Mark*, etc.), and 2. Reflecting the affirmative moment of deconstruction whereby terms which are prominent in the philosophical tradition are given a transformed, parodic, or ironic sense (*Difference, Khōra*, etc.).[146]

Among the most striking features of the Derridean general structures are first, the inapplicability to them of any logical, epistemological, or ontological determination.[147] However, this negative characterization is inevitably combined with an affirmative one. Thus, the general structures both are and are not i. universal and individual—they are said to make the project of idealization possible although they are not themselves idealizable, and to operate differently on each occasion—;[148] ii. stable quasi-principles as form and dynamic quasi-principles as matter—in speaking of the general structures one may continue to borrow the terms *eidos*, essence, form, *Gestalt* although

---

[143] "'Genesis and Structure' and Phenomenology," in *WD*, p. 159. Cf. *Pos.*, p. 28.

[144] "Force and Signification," in *WD*, p. 4, n. 2, pp. 15–16, 26; *GS*, pp. 155, 162; *OG*, p. 167; *Pos.*, p. 24.

[145] *OG*, p. 164; *Pos.*, p. 90.

[146] Derrida describes the affirmative moment as "palaeonymy" (i.e. retention of an old name) at *Pos.*, p. 71.

[147] *Diff.*, pp. 21–2, *LI*, pp. 116, 148–9. The most frequent approach to the negative characterization of general structures is to speak of them as "undecidables." See for example *DS*, pp. 213–21, *Pos.*, pp. 42–3. Cf *EHOG*, p. 53. Since this characterization specifically applies to the relation between the general structures and propositions, and we are dealing here with both the non-propositional and the propositional, we shall reserve a discussion of undecidables for another occasion.

[148] *LI*, pp. 117–18, *Pos.*, pp. 81–2.

these are insufficient, and one may characterize them as a complex within which the play of presence and absence can be shaped or shifted—;[149] iii. spatial and temporal—they are described as non-spatial in the geometrical sense but as spacing in the sense of focal point of condensation or sites of passage and as temporalization where something new takes place.[150] Moreover, these Derridean general structures contrast with traditional structural models in being a. characterized by decentering—the absence of that center organizing and limiting the play of substitutions without which structure is unthinkable—;[151] b. presupposing a remainder—in order for structures to be repeatable, they must have a minimal remainder as well as a minimal idealization whereby the identity of the selfsame is repeatable in and through its alteration—;[152] c. characterized by internal infinity—the un-organization and non-limitation or the play of substitutions results not from the extent of the field but from the nature of that field.[153] A further affirmative character of general structures is what one might term their mutual reflexivity. Thus, each structure may have other structures as its components and may in its turn become a component of other structures. The nature of this mutual reflexivity will become clear when we turn to the consideration of particular structures by name.

There is an intersecting relation between the general structures of deconstruction and the hypostatic structures of Neoplatonism which is of the greatest subtlety. Gasché has perhaps caught a glimpse of the situation in that he at one point describes the collectivity of the general structures in terms recalling Plato's *Republic* as "a system beyond Being"[154] and—developing an approach which is particularly suggestive for the present undertaking although provoking strong criticism from other quarters—somewhat "Platonizes" the presentation of the general structures as a whole.[155] In order to explain the

---

[149] *FS*, p. 4, n. 2; *OG*, p. 167.
[150] *FS*, pp. 15–16, *Pos.*, p. 40.
[151] *SSP*, pp. 278–80, 286.
[152] *LI*, pp, 50–52, *SEC*, p. 318.
[153] *SSP*, p. 289.
[154] Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, p. 177ff. As this writer, pp. 161–2 notes, "Inscription" is for Derrida the primary structural name (if there is, indeed, such a primary) for the quasi-transcendent "X" constituted by the infrastructures. Cf. Derrida, *OG*, pp. 70–71.
[155] See Mark C. Taylor, *Tears* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990),

orientation of this intersecting relation it will be necessary to distinguish elements of convergence between Neoplatonism and deconstruction, elements of divergence, and elements combining these two tendencies. It will also be necessary to take into account not only the ontological approach specific to Neoplatonism but also what one might term the "stratification" of Being implied by the latter.

In Neoplatonism also, there are restrictions on the applicability of logical, epistemological, and ontological criteria. The first principle cannot be captured in propositional form or through conceptual thinking and,[156] although retaining the status of a principle or power, cannot really be described as One, Good, or Being.[157] Neoplatonism

---

pp. 87–91. This important discussion (originally published as a review of *The Tain of the Mirror*) accuses Gasché of a Hegelian rather than Platonizing reading of Derrida. However, these two approaches would amount to roughly the same thing in the present context. For Gasché's defence of his earlier position see *Inventions of Difference*, pp. 12–14.

[156] For the doctrine that the first principle is above conceptual thought see Plotinus, *Enn.* V. 1 [10] 9. 7–9, V. 1 [10] 11. 4–7, V. 6 [24] 5. 1–6. 35, V. 5 [32] 1. 6–2. 25. Regarding the doctrine that the first principle is above propositional thought see *Enn.* VI. 7 [38] 1. 29–43, VI. 7 [38] 38. 1–9, V. 3 [49] 10. 39–51. In interpreting such passages one must bear in mind that 1. Plotinus distinguishes two kinds of conceptual thought, i.e. a. intellection (intuitive-atemporal), and b. ratiocination (discursive-temporal) where Soul possesses a. and b., Intellect possesses a. only, the One/Good possesses neither; 2. The statement that the first principle cannot be captured by conceptual thought means both that we cannot capture it thus (although we also think conceptually) (see *Enn.* V. 6 [24] 6. 29–35) and also that it cannot capture itself thus (since it does not think conceptually at all) (see *Enn.* V.1 [10] 7. 5–7); 3. Conceptual thought can in a certain sense be applied to the first principle. However, this means that we can capture it indirectly through the subsequent principle (see *Enn.* V. 3 [49] 14. 1–8) or that it can capture itself indirectly through the subsequent principle (see *Enn.* III. 8 [30] 8. 30–38); 4. Plotinus makes no distinction between a. propositional form and b. discursive processes and therefore no distinction between a. implication and b. inference.

[157] For the First as "principle" (*arkhē*) see *Enn.* V. 4 [7] 1. 22–3, VI 9 [9] 3. 49–54; for the First as "power" (*dunamis*) see *Enn.* III. 8 [30] 10. 1–3, V. 5 [32] 10. 5–6, VI. 8 [39] 9. 42–8. The non-applicability of the term "One" is stated at *Enn.* V. 5 [32] 6. 26–37; the non-applicability of the term "Good" is stated at *Enn.* VI. 7 [38] 38. 1–9. For a nuanced answer to the question of applying the terms "One," "Good," and "Principle" to the First, such terms being applied as a kind of recollection of our indescribable union with the First see *Enn.* V. 5 [32] 10. 10–17. The question regarding "Being" (*ousia*) is particularly complicated. The following points should be noted: i. the First is not being (*ousia*) where being is equivalent to "form" (*eidos*) or a "this" (*tode ti*). See *Enn.* V. 5 [32] 6. 1–25, VI. 8 [39] 12. 20–22; ii. the First can be described as being in the sense of "cause of being." See *Enn.* VI. 8 [39] 12. 1–2 , VI. 8 [39] 19. 3–6; iii. one can say of the First that it is "quasi-being" (*hoion ousia*). See *Enn.* VI. 8 [39] 7. 50–54, VI. 8 [39] 13. 47–53. At *Enn.* V. 5 [32] 6. 1–25 and elsewhere, Plotinus is interpreting Plato's reference to the Good as "beyond being" (*epekeina tēs ousias*).

further converges and diverges in respect of deconstruction by combining a negative with an affirmative characterization of its domain. Thus, i. the One or Good is a quasi- particular while the subsequent principles of Intellect and Soul are universal and particular, with primacy accorded to universality over particularity in accordance with the principles' emanative hierarchical position;[158] ii. Composition from Form and Matter is a feature of the hypostases of Intellect and Soul, as also of the subsequent non-hypostatic term Body. The teaching is complex in that Matter is identified with a final non-hypostatic term, Form is denied in respect of the One, and Matter is divided into intelligible and sensible varieties;[159] iii. Primacy is accorded to non-spatiality over spatiality, to atemporality over temporality, and to temporality over spatiality in accordance with the emanative hierarchical position of Intellect and of the subsequent terms Soul and Body.[160] These Neoplatonic structural models diverge from deconstructive general structures in being a. characterized by centering—each hypostasis represents the center of a circle in relation

---

[158] Plotinus does not state the case regarding the One very clearly although at *Enn.* V. 5 [32] 6. 6–14 by denying that the One is either a form or a "this" he probably means to say that it stands outside the *logical opposition* of universal and particular. However, to the extent that it is one it is particular in a certain sense (hence our "quasi-particular"). For universal Intellect containing particular intellects see for example *Enn.* V. 9 [5] 8. 1–7, and for universal Soul containing particular souls see for example *Enn.* IV. 9 [8] 1. 7–13. Since both Intellect and Soul contain the world of Forms in different ways, while the world of Forms is articulated as a totality containing universality and particularity (see *Enn.* V. 9 [5] 12. 1–10 and V. 7 [18] 1. 7–26), the relations between Intellect and intellects and between Soul and souls themselves are paralleled by those between their respective contents.

[159] See *Enn.* III. 6 [26] 7. 1–44, III. 6 [26] 12. 1–14. 36 (Matter as final term); *Enn.*VI. 9 [9] 2. 29–31, V. 5 [32] 6. 1–11 (denial of Form to the One); *Enn.* II. 4 [12] 2. 1–5. 39 and II. 4 [12] 8. 1 ff. (intelligible versus sensible matter). The form-matter relation is ubiquitous in the *Enneads*.

[160] See *Enn.* V. 9 [5] 5. 1–48, V. 9 [5] 10. 9–10 (non-spatial and atemporal Intellect); *Enn.* IV. 1 [21] 1–22, III. 7 [45] 11. 15–62, III. 7 [45] 12. 20–22 (semi-spatial but temporal Soul); *Enn.* IV. 1 [21] 1–22, III. 7 [45] 11. 27–35, III. 7 [45] 12. 1–13. 69 (spatial and temporal Body). This arrangement—which is generally implicit in Plotinus but stated explicitly for the first time by Augustine—applies to "physical" space-time. In fact, Plotinus distinguishes from physical space a kind of conceptual space—see *Enn.* V. 6 [24] 6. 13–15 on the space within Intellect and I. 8 [51] 14. 28–34 for the space in which Soul and Evil relate to one another—and from physical time a kind of conceptual time called "eternity"—see *Enn.* III. 7 [45] 2. 1–4. 45. Plotinus' thought about space-time (and *quasi*-space-time) is also complicated by the assumption that the generation or emanation of the hypostases, in its highest or initial stages, represents a special kind of spatio-temporality. See for example *Enn.* V. 1 [10] 6. 1–53, V. 2 [11] 1–28.

to which the subsequent term represents the circumference—;[161] b. not presupposing a remainder—because of the high level of idealization it is not necessary to achieve the identity of the selfsame through repetition and alteration—; c. characterized by internal finitude—each hypostasis is constituted by the imposition of limit upon the infinity emanating from the preceding term.[162] On the other hand, mutual reflexivity constitutes an element of convergence between Neoplatonism and deconstruction. It is a fundamental tenet of Neoplatonic theory that the hypostasis of Intellect comprises a multiplicity of partial intellects each of which reflects the total Intellect from its own particular viewpoint.[163]

Our pursuit of the unfolding implications of a definition of deconstruction in the foregoing pages has helped to disengage a certain configuration and various structures.[164] However, we have not hitherto dealt fully with the question why Derrida applies not the single name "deconstruction" to the collectivity of these elements but rather a variety of names to elements of this collectivity. In order to answer this question, we must first list some of the most important "structural names" and attempt to sketch their meaning.[165]

Although there are sound conceptual reasons for not arranging these names in a fixed order, "Difference" might be considered first. As several interpreters of Derrida have been able to show,[166] Difference can be applied to each of the stages of the process whereby a positive term $a_1\ \bar{a}_2$ (a duality of opposites where one term is accorded primacy of value over another term) is first displaced by a negative term $\bar{a}_1\ a_2$ (the same duality of opposites but with the primacy of value transferred to the other term) which is then displaced by a

---

[161] See *Enn.* V. 1 [10] 11. 7–13, VI. 5 [23] 9. 1–13, V. 8 [31] 9. 1–14, etc.

[162] See *Enn.* V. 4 [7] 2. 7–8, V. 1 [10] 5, 6–19, V. 3 [49] 11. 4–8, etc.

[163] See *Enn.* V. 9 [5] 6. 1–24, V. 9 [5] 8. 1–8, V. 9 [5] 6. 1–15.

[164] In what follows, we shall discuss these structures in a relatively context-free manner, i.e. without reference to their specific textual origins. However, it is crucial to Derrida's thinking that e.g. "Trace" originates in Lévinas (see Derrida, *OG*, p. 70), "Re-Mark" in Mallarmé (see Derrida, *DS*, pp. 251–2), etc.

[165] The term "structural name" is non-Derridean. We have introduced it here temporarily in order to allow a conceptual distinction between the processes of the (a)semiotic square (= our "structures") and the Derridean general structures (our "structural names.")

[166] There is a particularly good discussion in Harvey, *Derrida and the Economy of Différance*, pp. 50–52, 71–3, 77. She does not, however, develop the schematic aspects to the extent that we do.

combined term $a_2\ a_1$ (the original duality of opposites where one term was accorded primacy of value over another term together with the same duality of opposites but with the primacy of value transferred to the other term). Difference corresponds not only to stages within the figure of (semi-) circularity but also to those between the figure of (semi-) circularity and the partial figures of transcendence and translation. Thus, Difference can be applied to the stage whereby the single negative term $\bar{a}_1\ a_2$ (the original duality of opposites but with the primacy of value transferred to the other term) can be displaced by either or both of a term indeterminately negative or positive in principle (a questioning of the meaning of the opposition itself) and a term indeterminately negative or positive in the context (a questioning of the meaning of the terms of the opposition). No doubt because of its philosophical history, Difference is applied primarily to logical contexts where, in terms of the relation between repetition and ideality, the latter aspect is predominant. Such logical contexts would include the Hegelian dialectical sublation and the Heideggerian ontological difference.[167]

Another important structural name is that of "Trace." Since this represents for Derrida the minimal relation to an other,[168] it corresponds to that moment within the figure of (semi-) circularity where the positive term = duality of opposites with accented term is displaced by the negative term, or alternatively to that moment within the same figure where the negative term = duality of opposites with transfer of accents is displaced by the combined and/or transcendent and/or translative term(s). However, Trace particularly represents the duality of opposites itself constituting the positive term or the negative term[169]—its non-unitary nature is constantly emphasized—and particularly represents the accentuation of one term over

---

[167] For a statement of the basic logical function see Derrida, *Pos.*, p. 9. On the relation to Hegel see *Pos.*, pp. 40–41, 44, 101, n. 13; on the relation to Heidegger "Ousia and Grammē. Note on a Note from Being and Time," in *MP*, p. 67. Since these passages emphasize how Derridean difference contrasts with the other relevant philosophemes and therefore how it circumvents their "logic," we are reminded that the logical operation of Difference is simultaneously with and against logic.

[168] The basic meaning of Trace (in close association with other structural names like Difference, Spacing, and Writing) is stated clearly in Derrida, *OG*, pp. 70–71. For further delineation of the conceptual ambit of the term see Derrida, *DS*, p. 241. For its textual origin in a suggestion of Heidegger's see *Ousia*, p. 66.

[169] See *OG*, p. 62.

another within that duality of opposites.[170] Perhaps to a greater extent than in the case of the previous term, Trace crosses the boundaries between the logical, the semantic, and the syntactic. In a manner more akin to that of "Re-Mark" to be discussed below, the term is utilized not only as a structure of generalized otherness (logical) but also as a structure of generalized reference (logical-semantic).[171] The performative aspects of the Derridean Trace are also extensively developed. In one instance, the anagrammic connection between *trace* (="mark" or "trail") and *écart* ("gap" or "deviation") reflects on the verbal level the conceptual association between necessary sequence and random deviation, the fact of such a reflection itself producing an instance of that conceptual association.[172] In another instance, *trace* enters into semantic association with *écriture* ("writing"), *inscription* ("inscription"), *signature* ("signature"), and *post-scriptum* ("postscript") in order to produce an extensive family of structural names which can be applied to parts of the (semi-) circular figure. When considered together, these cases reveal the special relation between the asemantic and semantic spheres.

Derrida lifts the term "Supplement" from the context of Rousseau.[173] This term is particularly important from the viewpoint of our configurative interpretation since it represents *simultaneously* the moment within the figure of (semi-) circularity where the positive term = duality of opposites with accented term is displaced by the negative term *and also* the moment where the negative term = duality of opposites with transfer or accent is displaced by the combined and/or transcendent and/or translative term(s).[174] By speaking of the

---

[170] See *FSW*, p. 230.

[171] This is clearly stated in *Diff.*, pp. 24–5.

[172] There is an excellent discussion of this question in Johnson, *System and Writing in the Philosophy of Jacques Derrida*, p. 111ff. It should be noted that the double verbal connection of *trace* → *écart* is extended to a triple verbal connection of *trace* → *écart* → *carré* ("square") by Derrida, *Diss.*, pp. 352–3, 363–4, etc. The implications of this last move for the current undertaking will be obvious.

[173] See Derrida, *OG*, pp. 141–64.

[174] For the first point see *OG*, p. 215 (where the presence and absence are also described in the quasi-mathematical terminology of plus and minus); for the second point, *OG*, p. 157, and for the third point, *Pharm.*, p. 167 (where the outside of presence and absence is described as the Platonic *epekeina tēs ousias*). At *OG*, p. 179 Derrida notes that this "logic of the supplement"—a phrase which clearly indicates the systematic and schematic function of this structural name—allows us to enunciate contraries at the same time without contradiction.

Supplement sometimes as the presence which replaces the absence, sometimes as the middle-point between presence and absence, and sometimes as that which remains outside the system of presence and absence, Derrida reveals clearly the unusually comprehensive range of function within the figure of (semi-) circularity and the partial figures of transcendence and translation.

Continuing to follow a sequence which can be only partially justified on conceptual grounds, we may consider "Différance" next: a point at which a certain variation of linguistic usage brings questions of spatiality and temporality to the forefront of Derrida's discussion. With emphasis upon the spelling différ*e*nce, the term signifies the spacing of a structure.[175] Thus, where difference corresponds either to the stages within the figure of (semi-) circularity or to those between the figure of (semi-) circularity and the partial figures of transcendence and translation, these stages may be characterized as elements of spacing. With emphasis upon the spelling différ*a*nce, however, the term signifies the temporalization of a structuring.[176] Given that difference represents either the stages within the figure of (semi-) circularity or those between the figure of (semi-) circularity and the partial figures of transcendence and translation, these stages may also be characterized as phases of temporalization. In a more precise sense, différ*e*nce ↔ différ*a*nce indicates the fundamental articulation whereby space and time are distinguished conceptually from one another in the first place.[177] No doubt because of its homonymic association, Différ*a*nce is applied primarily to logical contexts where, in terms of the relation between repetition and ideality, the former aspect is predominant. An example of such a logical context is the Husserlian notion of living presence.

Another important structural name is that of "Re-Mark." This again represents for Derrida the minimal relation to an other,[178] since it corresponds to that moment within the figure of (semi-) circularity where the positive term = duality of opposites with accented term

---

[175] See *Diff.*, pp. 7–8. As the reader will note, we are taking the liberty of dividing "Difference" into two general structures for purposes of analysis. This is in accordance with the general Derridean principle that difference must itself be already differentiated.

[176] See *Pos.*, pp. 8, 81–2, and p. 106, n. 42.

[177] See *OG*, pp. 70–71, *FSW*, p. 219.

[178] Excellent starting-points for discussion have been provided by Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror*, pp. 217–24 and Gasché, *Inventions of Difference*, pp. 140–44.

is displaced by the negative term, or alternatively to that moment within the same schema where the negative term = duality of opposites with transfer of accent is displaced by the combined and/or transcendent and/or translative terms. However, Re-Mark particularly represents the repetition of the positive and negative terms' displacements—often specified as addition, subtraction, or multiplication[179]—and particularly represents the asymmetry governing the series of terms arising from that repetition. Perhaps to a greater extent than in the case of the previous term Re-Mark crosses the boundaries between the logical, the semantic, and the syntactic. In a manner more akin to that of "Trace" mentioned earlier, the term is utilized not only as a structure of generalized otherness (logical) but also as a structure of generalized reference (logical-semantic).[180] The performative aspects of the Derridean Re-Mark are also extensively developed. Here, we see not only the practice of performativity—for example, where the proliferation of quasi-synonyms like *pli* ("fold") and *hymen* ("hymen") and of quasi-homonyms like *marche* ("step") and *marge* ("margin") reflects on the verbal level the infinite multiplication implied by the original term on the conceptual level[181]—but also the theory of performativity—for example, where a negative moment within the figure of (semi-) circularity identified with the asemantic interval between semantic terms is displaced by a positive moment within the same figure identified with the semantic terms surrounding the asemantic interval.[182]

Difference, Trace, Supplement, Differance, and *Re-Mark* therefore constitute a list of important structural names. The reason why Derrida in articulating the configuration and structure which we have described applies a variety of such names to elements in the collectivity rather than a single name to the collectivity as a whole is explained by considering the requirement of non-unity implicit in all the structural names but especially that of Trace. As we have seen, doubling is a fundamental feature of deconstruction as opposed to Neoplatonism.[183]

---

[179] See Derrida, *DS*, pp. 252, 258, 270. As these passages and those to be cited below indicate, the textual origin of Re-mark is Mallarmé.

[180] See Derrida, *DS*, p. 222.

[181] See Derrida, *DS*, pp. 258, 270.

[182] See Derrida, *DS*, pp. 222, 252, 257–9, 270.

[183] We reserve treatment of the structural name *Exemple* for later. See below, p. 88 ff.

Before leaving the topic of general structures in Derrida's work, it is worth adding some comments about the mutual reflexivity of the structures, about certain structural names corresponding to the entire system, and about certain structural names on the margin of the system. 1. *Mutual reflexivity of the structures.* As a result of our analysis of the structural names, it should be clear how each structural name reflects the other structural names—a situation revealed by Derrida's own references to "supplemental differences," "supplemental re-marks," "differential traces," etc.—although each structural name reflects from its own unique position. The reader is invited to perform a thought experiment by re-reading the segment from the discussion of Difference onwards but taking into account everything that was learned after reaching the discussion of Re-Mark: an experimental reading which will indicate that Difference represents the duality of opposites constituting the positive term or the repetition of the positive term's displacement, and so forth. 2. *Structural names corresponding to the entire system.* The most widely used in Derrida's earlier works is "Writing." Closely connected with this is "Dissemination"—a name emphasizing the partial figures of combination, transcendence, and translation—and "Economy."[184] Derrida's earlier works also refer frequently to "Spacing." This term, however, relates to the individual moments in the system rather than to the collectivity of those moments. It represents the more spatial counterpart of the more temporal duality of repetition-ideality. 3. *Structural names on the margin of the system.* Falling outside the system as we have described the latter are *a.* Some structural names of a relatively predicative character. These include "the Impossible" which represents the partial figure of transcendence from a kind of existential viewpoint and can be applied to all the other structural names with reference to their transcendent aspect—the structures can therefore be generally characterized as "conditions of possibility and impossibility."[185] They also

[184] For Derrida, the term "Economy" often possesses the unwelcome connotation of closure i.e. of a system lacking a transcendent moment. The latter is safeguarded by either *a.* stressing the disruption of the economy (see Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, trans. D. Wills (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 96–7) or *b.* stressing the distinction between a restricted and a general economy (see *FRGE*, pp. 270–73).

[185] On this sense of "Impossible" see Jacques Derrida, *Given Time I. Counterfeit Money*, trans. P. Kamuf (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 6, 9–12, 27, 29–30, etc. In recent years, Derrida has sometimes "defined"

include "the Undecidable" representing the partial figure of transcendence from the viewpoint of a kind of conceptual or propositional understanding and likewise applicable to all the other structural names with reference to this transcendent aspect—here the structures may be generally characterized as "undecidables."[186] Also falling outside the system as we have described the latter are *b*. Certain structural names of a relatively non-predicative character. Especially important among these is "Come!" (*Viens!*) which represents the partial figure of transcendence with special reference to the temporal. The imperative mood possesses the connotation of futurity. However, since the moment of transcendence is also implied, this future can never become present.[187]

Negative Theology: Derrida's Second Discussion

The next major section of text (62b ff.) is devoted to what one might term the "idiom" of negative theology and the "translation" of that idiom. In fact, given that the axiom on which the previous section of text was based actually reads "What is called 'negative theology,' in an idiom of Graeco-Latin filiation, is a language" when stated fully, it would not be unreasonable to say that the next section of text takes its starting-point from the qualifying phrase "in an idiom of Graeco-Latin filiation" which we have not studied so far.

Derrida's second development of the theme of negative theology[188]

---

deconstruction itself as the experience of the impossible. See Jacques Derrida, "Psyche. Inventions of the Other," trans. C. Porter, in *Reading de Man Reading*, eds. L. Waters and W. Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 60. Cf. *SLN*, pp. 43, 75.

[186] On this sense of "Undecidable" see *GS*, p. 162, *DS*, pp. 219–20, *Pos.*, pp. 42–3. Some important readers of Derrida habitually describe what we have termed general structures as Undecidables. See John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*, p. 139, Kevin Hart, *The Trespass of the Sign*, pp. 61, 84, 155.

[187] See Derrida, *Apoc.* pp. 164–7. Cf. *Archive Fever. A Freudian Impression*, trans. E. Prenowitz (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 73. There is an extensive discussion of this important Derridean theme in John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida*, pp. 95–101, 254–5, 269, 296, 298.

[188] On the loose sense of "negative theology" which recurs here see n. 85. Considering the matter in precise terms, we can say that Derrida hesitates between the two primary models of negative theology distinguished in the ancient tradition. For example, he uses the "sigetic" model at *SLN* 58b–c and the "discoursive model" at *SLN* 58c, 63b ff.

begins with the following exchange between the two voices of the dialogue. Once more, the discussion will be presented analytically.[189]

(*SLN* 63d/*Sauf* 71a) The dialogic partner takes up a suggestion that negative theology might be called a "paradoxical hyperbole." Given that the context of translating philosophemes from one idiom to another has already been established, he observes that the expression "paradoxical hyperbole" suggests the conceptual world of Greek philosophy.

(63e/71b) The first interlocutor is, however, more immediately concerned with unfolding the meaning of the phrase as a combination of affirmative and negative where one term also connotes excess. He therefore presents what we shall term the first *intertextual* sense of negative theology by contrasting its localization and transportation, its peculiar idiom and its universal translation, and its rooting and uprooting. The combination of affirmation and negation is announced as the feature which will form the basis of a brief demonstration or at least a working hypothesis regarding this theology.

(64a/71c) The dialogic partner asks whether the translation of this philosopheme is related to the notion of friendship mentioned a little earlier.

(64b/72a) The original speaker shifts briefly into the metalingual register by replying that he is uncertain about the nature of negative theology and is speaking tentatively on the subject. In the spirit of what is both a preliminary and a postscript, he merely wishes to introduce the notion of negative theology implied in Plato's *Republic* by means of the Greek philosophical terminology. On the basis of the famous passage of this work stating that the Good is *epekeina tēs ousias*, it is possible to distinguish a schema of two terms: an affirmative term such as "X is . . ." and a negative term which is also an excessive term such as "X is beyond Being," and a dynamic connection

[189] The second discussion of negative theology has perhaps a more Heideggerian tone. In particular, we should note *i.* the implicit reading of the Neoplatonic antithesis of affirmative and negative divine names in terms of Heidegger's duality of Being's unconcealment and concealment (for the latter see Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* II. 4, pp. 150–52, etc.); *ii.* the explicit reading of the Neoplatonists' hyperbolic divine names in terms of the Heideggerian transcendence of *Dasein* (see below, pp. 92–3). Also redolent of Heidegger is Derrida's strategy of treating negative theology first in a "Greek" manner and then in translative form. On the connections between Heidegger and Neoplatonism (many of which Derrida has noticed), see n. 24.

between the terms: the "movement of transcendence." We shall call this the second *ontological* sense of negative theology.

(An exchange follows[190] in which the two interlocutors discuss the Heideggerian intertext implied in the reading of Plato's dialogue. Thereupon,)

(65b/75a) The original speaker begins to unfold the polysemy of "paradoxical hyperbole" in earnest. First, the transcending movement corresponding to the dynamic relation between the terms is characterized affirmatively as an analogy and negatively as a fracture—this will emerge as one of the further intertextual senses of negative theology.

(66a/76a) The dialogic partner responds to a quotation of Silesius introduced in support of the previous point by drawing attention to the affirmative element represented by dogmatic assertion and the negative element represented by the radical critique in these aphorisms. We shall call this the *methodological* sense of negative theology.

(67a/77a) The first interlocutor continues to unfold the polysemy of "paradoxical hyperbole." He observes that the complementary moments of dogmatism and critique mentioned are not without relation to the double bind of rooting and uprooting discussed at the beginning of this exchange. Presumably, any one of the oppositions under discussion will exhibit such a chiastic structure.

(67b/78a) The dialogic partner inserts a brief reference to Husserlian phenomenology by noting the parallelism between the negative moments of critique and of *epokhë*.

(67c/78b) The original speaker now presents the most elaborate interpretation of negative theology anywhere in this text. Using the phrase "on the one hand" to introduce a listing of the more specifically negative moments within this theology, he immediately passes to the placing of a thesis in a parenthesis or in quotation-marks which represents the negative side of what we shall call the *ontological-asemantic* sense of negative theology. Next, he begins a process of interweaving statements of the methodological sense—negative theology contests the assumptions of a philosophical community—with statements of one of the intertextual senses—negative theology involves the rupture of a contract. These processes are said to have initiated a series of recurrent movements, in other words a repetitive structure, and

[190] For discussion of this passage see pp. 92–3.

a sequence of outbidding excesses.[191] Using the phrase "on the other hand" to introduce an inventory of the more specifically affirmative moments within the theology, the speaker quickly passes to the maintenance of the ontotheological viewpoint which represents what we shall call the *ontological-intertextual* sense of negative theology and to the remaining as a countersignature which represents another of what we earlier termed the intertextual senses of negative theology. There now follows a sequence of further statements on the affirmative side of negative theology in which this affirmative moment is stated either with or without reference to the negative moment. This begins with a combination of what we shall call the first intertextual sense—negative theology involves the necessity of a divine name—and what we shall call the *asemantic* sense—in negative theology employment of the phrase *il faut* means both that the divine name must be applied and that it must be removed. Next comes a statement of the first ontological sense of negative theology which has not been mentioned so far: even to say "God is not," or "God is neither this nor that," or "Being is not" is still to declare Being qua being. Finally, there is a statement of what we shall call the second intertextual sense—negative theology involves the referential transcendence of God—preceded and followed by comments about the relation to negative theology of certain other discourses like promising, testifying, and praying.

(68a/81a) The dialogic partner picks up the reference to these other discourses in order to initiate a shift, in understanding negative theology, from stating a contrast between negative and affirmative to stating their combination or possibly transcendence. Given his use of the other discourses, is Silesius really to be considered a negative theologian?

(68b/81b) The first interlocutor replies that Silesius both is and is not a negative theologian—a situation which is by no means unusual since negative theology always contains something of another discourse while other discourses always contain something of negative theology. This restatement of the first intertextual sense of negative theology leads via a syntactical connection the significance of which will soon be apparent to a combined restatement of the first ontological sense and all three *interpreted* senses. Thus, negative theology

[191] The sequence is said to include Plotinus, Heidegger, and Lévinas.

breaks with ontotheology—negative side of the third interpreted sense—while maintaining referential transcendence—affirmative side of the second interpreted sense. It states the Being of God beyond the idol or image that Being is—combination of affirmative and negative sides of the first ontological sense with assimilation of negative and excessive. It responds to the true name of God beyond the name by which we know him—combination of affirmative and negative sides of the first interpreted sense with assimilation of negative and excessive. In short, it desires to say what is proper of God.

(69a/82a) The dialogic partner picks up the reference to the proper in order to introduce the final phase of the exchange: a restatement of the first ontological sense of negative theology in which proper and giving are substituted for being.

(69b/83a) The original speaker points out that according to Silesius, if God has anything proper to himself, it is the property of having no properties and that according to Plotinus, if the Good gives of itself, it is the gift of what it does not possess. This restatement of the first ontological sense of negative theology is now syntactically connected with a statement of the implication between the third interpreted sense and the first intertextual sense of negative theology. As the speaker concludes, the process by which negative theology passes over the edge of itself in ontological productivity is also the process whereby it passes over the edge of itself in textual translatability. Clearly both the restatement and the statement deal with combinations of the affirmative and negative sides of negative theology with assimilation of the negative to the excessive.

The exchange between the two voices recalls certain features of the earlier exchange. The implicit distinction between negative theology and the discourse about negative theology is indicated in the references to the uncertain and provisional nature of the hypotheses to be formulated regarding this theology.[192] The emphasis upon the formalization of negative theology which was the main theme of the earlier discussion is also retained, the only difference being that of the three types of formalization mentioned earlier—the proposition, the antithesis of affirmative and negative, and the set of propositions—it is the second which now comes to the fore. The introduction of temporal elements into the characterization of negative theology

[192] *SLN*, pp. 63d, 64b.

is evidenced by the references to the preliminary and postscriptive nature of the discussion to be undertaken concerning this theology,[193] to the series of recurrent movements whereby different readings of negative theology have been proposed, and so forth.[194] However, the present exchange also extends the terms of reference of the earlier exchange considerably. In particular, the notion of translation[195] comes into prominence where we are asked to think no longer simply of the original idiom but also of many formal analogues of negative theology. This concept which appears briefly at the beginning and end of the segment is illustrated with a number of striking applications—we have already been drawing attention to this feature by distinguishing on the one hand the "ontological" senses of negative theology together with the interpretations of those ontological senses which here represent the original idiom and on the other hand the "intertextual" senses of negative theology which here represent the formal analogues. Explanation of the principles underlying the various applications of the concept is however reserved for a later exchange between the two speakers.

It is within the extended notion of translatable negative theology that we are to understand the various features suggested by the phrase "paradoxical hyperbole." This paradoxical element is clearly the combination of affirmative and negative within the divine name(s) which represents the combination of positive and negative moments within the figure of (semi-) circularity.[196] Given that the presence of paradox forces the interpreter to shift the meaning of one or both of the terms involved in order to achieve meaningful continuance—a situation similar to that obtaining with tautology—it is not surprising to find the revelation of a dynamically polysemous structure within the combination of affirmative and negative to be a theme of the present exchange.

For identificatory purposes, we have already assigned labels to the different senses which Derrida himself seems to assign to such combinations. These labels were:

---

[193] *SLN*, pp. 64b, 69b.

[194] *SLN*, p. 67c.

[195] In what follows, we shall see an application of what we have previously termed the "figure" of translation. See p. 64ff.

[196] See above p. 64ff. The hyperbolic element involves, among other things, the assimilation of negative to excessive. We shall reserve discussion of this question until the next segment.

1.1 *first ontological sense*: God has attribute *x*, God does not have attribute *x*.
1.2 *second ontological sense*: God is immanent in the created, God is transcendent of the created.
2.1 *first interpreted sense*: the divine name is necessary, the divine name is not necessary.
2.2 *second interpreted sense*: God is a transcendent referent, God is not a transcendent referent.[197]
2.3 *third interpreted sense*: acceptance of ontotheology, rejection of ontotheology.
3 *methodological sense*: dogmatic assertion, radical critique.
4.1 *first intertextual sense*: acceptance of tradition, rejection of tradition.
4.2 *second intertextual* sense: signing a contract, countersigning a contract.
4.3 *third intertextual* sense: obeying a contract, breaking a contract.
5 *ontological-intertextual sense*: not overflowing being as not transgressing tradition, overflowing being as transgressing tradition.
6 *the asemantic sense*: a meaning of a homonym, another meaning of a homonym.
7 *ontological-asemantic sense*: God has attribute *x*, God has attribute *x* in quotation marks.

The assignment of these labels follows what is seemingly the conceptual structure connecting these different senses of negative theology. 1 and 2 represent the two complementary sides of the Neoplatonic doctrine which originally gave rise to the formula: that the affirmation of a divine name corresponds to God's immanence and the negation of a divine name to God's transcendence. However, 2.1–3 constitute various explicit readings of the formula by Derrida himself. Thus, 2.1 interprets the ontology of the formula by assuming that God exists but that the name referring to him may or may not exist, 2.2 by assuming that the name exists but that the God referred to by the name may or may not exist, and 2.3 by juxtaposing the two previous assumptions. With 3 the application of the formula is shifted from ontology to methodology. The relation between the reading of the formulation in 2.1 and 4.1 reveals the application of the Derridean principle that the reading of the history of Being corresponds to the

[197] For discussion of transcendence and reference see above pp. 62–3.

reading of any text or intertext, Thus 4.1 contrasts the more constructive and the more deconstructive approach to reading a body of prior texts, 4.2 suggests the reciprocal aspects of the relation between reader and author, and 4.3 contrasts the more constructive and the more deconstructive approaches to reading a single prior text. With 5 the application of the formula seemingly combines the ontological and the intertextual approaches described above.[198] Finally, 6 expands the framework of discussion from the semantic sphere—including the reading of Being and the reading of the text—to the asemantic sphere, 7 representing the relation between the more limited and more expanded sphere themselves.

The next phase of Derrida's development of the theme of negative theology is introduced by references to the remainder and to *khōra* and concluded with references to *khōra*. We therefore find a discursive structure which is simultaneously a repetition and an inversion of the discursive structure used earlier.

The importance of both the remainder and place is indicated in the following passage:[199]

– Is this place created by God? Is it part of the play? Or else is it God himself? Or even what precedes, in order to make them possible, both God and his Play? In other words it remains to be known if this nonsensible (invisible and inaudible) place is opened by God, by the name of God (which would again be some other thing, perhaps), or if it is "older" than the time of creation, than time itself, than history, narrative, word, etc. It remains to be known (beyond knowing) if the place is opened by appeal (response, the event that calls for the response, revelation, history, etc.), or if it remains impassively foreign, like *Khōra*, to everything that takes its place and replaces itself and plays within this place, including what is named God. Let's call this the test of *Khōra* . . .
– Do we have any choice? Why choose between the two? Is it possible? But it is true that these two "places," these two experiences of place, these two ways are no doubt of an absolute heterogeneity. One place excludes the other, one (sur)passes the other, one does

[198] One says "seemingly" because this is apparently the function of the extremely general logical-semantic dichotomy of same-other at this point. However, elsewhere in Derrida's discussion the term "other" is introduced with more pronounced Lévinasian connotations.

[199] *SLN*, pp. 75b–76b/*Sauf* 94a–96a.

> without the other, one is, absolutely, *without* the other. But what still relates them to each other is this strange preposition, this strange with-without or without-with, *without*. The logic of this junction or of this joining (conjunction-disjunction) permits and forbids at once what could be called exemplarism. Each thing, each being, you, me, the other, each X, each name, and each name of God can become the example of other substitutable X's. A process of absolute formalization. Any other is totally other. A name of God, in a tongue, a phrase, a prayer, becomes an example of the name and of names of God, then of names in general. *It is necessary* to choose *the best* of the examples (and it is necessarily the absolute good, the *agathon*, which finds itself to be, then, *epekeina tēs ousias*), but it is the best *as example*: for what it is and for what it is not, for what it is and for what it represents, replaces, exemplifies. And the "it is necessary" (the best) is also an example of all the "it is necessary's" that there are and can be.
> – *Il faut* does not only mean it is necessary, but, in French, etymologically, "it lacks" or "is wanting." The lack or lapse is never far away.

As in the case of the earlier passage[200] the attention of the two interlocutors is now shifting from a reading of negative theology to a reading of the interrelation of negative theology and deconstruction, and as in the case of the earlier passage the phases of this shift constitute the remainder which must be thought of negative theology and the place in which one must think negative theology. However, although the general course of discussion is similar in the two cases, the distinction between the negative-theological and deconstructive elements themselves is henceforth more difficult to maintain.

Derrida's negative-theological and deconstructive discussion unfolds along a trajectory formed by the identification of one of the antithetical moments of negative theology with the "exemplary" (*exemplaire*) moment of deconstruction and of the other antithetical moment of negative theology with the "substitutive" (*substitutable*) moment of deconstruction.[201] Given the deliberate ambivalence of Neoplatonic texts as to whether it is the negative moment which represents excess in relation to the defect represented by the affirmative moment or

---

[200] See pp. 53–6.
[201] For exemplary see *SLN*, pp. 76a, 76c, 77b; for substitutive see *SLN*, p. 76a.

the other way around, Derrida was perhaps wise not to specify which antithetical moment of negative theology was to be identified with which moment of deconstruction in the present instance. Nevertheless, the identification of one or other of the two antithetical moments of negative theology with either the exemplary or the substitutive moment of deconstruction is shown by the presence of such features as the Platonic *epekeina tēs ousias* and the simultaneity of conjunction and disjunction in the same context.[202]

But we should make more precise what is meant by the exemplary and the substitutive. Clearly the exemplary is whatever term may be postulated as "the best" (*le meilleur*) with respect to the series of related terms of which it is a member.[203] It can be identified with the realm of the logically necessary and universal,[204] and with semanticism in general.[205] The substitutive is conversely whatever term may be postulated as "the indifferent" (*l'indifférent*) with respect to the series of related terms of which it is a member.[206] It must be identified with the sphere of the logically contingent and singular,[207] and with the interplay of the semantic and asemantic.[208] That the contrast between the exemplary and the substitutive can be stated in both exemplary and substitutable terms is indicated by what is termed the paradox of the example: i.e. the homonymy which exists in both French and English between "(good) example" (*bon exemple*) and "(any) example" (*exemple quelconque*).[209]

After situating and defining the philosophical problematic, a mechanism combining the exemplary and substitutive with the terms God and place can be activated. Here, we find that "God" is from one

---

On the notion of exemplarity in Derrida's works see Rodolphe Gasché, "God, For Example," in *Inventions of Difference* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1994), pp. 150–70 and Irene E. Harvey, *Labyrinths of Exemplarity. At the Limits of Deconstruction* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002).

[202] See *SLN*, pp. 76a, 76c.

[203] *SLN*, pp. 76a, 85a.

[204] For necessary see *SLN*, pp. 76a–b; for universal see the related arguments at *SLN*, pp. 71c, 80a, 80c.

[205] On semanticism and asemanticism see, n. 51.

[206] *SLN*, pp. 73b, 74a, 76c. Indifference is often expressed by the phrase "it doesn't matter" (*n'importe*).

[207] For contingent see the related arguments at *SLN*, pp. 81a–b, 85b; for singular see *SLN*, pp. 73b, 74a.

[208] This is illustrated by the homonymy of *il faut* at *SLN*, pp. 76a–b, etc.

[209] *SLN*, p. 83d cf. 73b. For best example see also *SLN*, p. 85a; for any example cf. also *SLN*, p. 77a.

viewpoint a kind of structural marker for the *exemplary* moment as such within the schema, from another viewpoint merely an item which enters into the schema, and from yet another viewpoint a structural name for the schema as a whole; and further that "Place" is from one viewpoint a structural marker for the *substitutive* moment as such within the schema, from another viewpoint merely an item which enters into the schema, and from yet another viewpoint a structural marker for the schema as a whole.[210] However, this is only the beginning of a process which continues by exploiting the substitutive relation between God and Name.[211] On the one hand, Name's function is analogous with God's function. Name is substitutable with God—in that Name can be exemplary when it is a proper name and substitutable when it is a common noun.[212] On the other hand, Name's function is not analogous with God's function—Name is not substitutable with God in that Name can indicate that reference is indispensable or that reference is dispensable.[213] At this point, a mech-

---

[210] *SLN*, pp. 75b–76e. Derrida describes the process which we shall analyze in this paragraph as "absolute formalization" (*formalization absolue*). For the relation between God, Name, Place see also the exchange at *SLN*, pp. 55d-h—a kind of tentative statement of the later argument—and the exchange at *SLN*, pp. 73b–75a—the introduction to our main quotation. There is also an important relation between God and Other worked out at *SLN*, pp. 73b–74a and 78e–79a which we must reserve for discussion elsewhere.

[211] *SLN*, p. 76a. The question of the relation between God and Name is here presented in a simplified manner, given that Derrida has applied much effort to exploring the discoursive context surrounding this relation. Here, we should note—in connection with *Name*—that the relation between the exemplary and the substitutive corresponds 1. to the relation between reference (in the Fregean sense) and reference (in the Heideggerian sense) (see Derrida, *OG*, p. 110), 2. to the relation between proper name and common noun (see Derrida, *OG*, pp. 108–12, *Glas*, trans. R. Rand and J.P., Leavey, Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press: 1986), pp. 86b, 207b); 3. to the relation between proper sense and metaphorical meaning (see Derrida, "White Mythology. Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," in *MP*, pp. 233–4); 4. to the relation between ontological presence and differential play (see Derrida, *PC*, pp. 356–60). For Derrida, *God* enters into the equation because his relation to his world corresponds to the proper name's relation to the common noun (see Derrida, "Edmond Jabès and the Question of the Book," in *WD*, pp. 181–2). For Derrida, the *author* enters into the picture because his relation to his text corresponds likewise to the proper name's relation to the common noun (See Derrida, *Signéponge/Signsponge*, trans. Richard Rand (New York: Columbia U.P., 1984), pp. 28–30, *PC*, p. 357). On these questions see Geoffrey Bennington, "Derridabase," in Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 104–114.

[212] This idea is stated earlier in the essay at *SLN*, p. 58c.

[213] This idea is also stated earlier in the essay at *SLN*, p. 60c. On the question of reference see further *SLN*, pp. 80a-c and our pp. 62–3.

anism combining the exemplary and the substitutive with the terms Name and Place can also be activated. Here, we find that "Name" is from one viewpoint a kind of structural marker for the *exemplary* moment as such within the schema, from another viewpoint merely an item which enters into the schema, and from yet another viewpoint a structural marker for the schema as a whole; and that "Place" is as before from one viewpoint a structural marker for the *substitutive* moment as such within the schema, from another viewpoint merely an item which enters into the schema, and from yet another viewpoint a structural name for the schema as a whole.[214]

In the final phase of Derrida's negative-theological and deconstructive discussion, he takes the identification of one of the antithetical moments of negative theology with the exemplary moment of deconstruction and of the other antithetical moment of negative theology with the substitutive moment of deconstruction in order to apply this set of criteria to the relation between negative theology and deconstruction themselves, to the relations between negative theology and other doctrines, and to the relation between deconstruction and other methods. Among the extensive possibilities opened up by such a process of translation,[215] the relation between negative theology and deconstruction is discussed implicitly in terms of the dichotomy of exemplary and substitutive in one section,[216] and the relation between Neoplatonic negative theology and Christian negative theology explicitly in terms of the same dichotomy on two separate occasions.[217] In the former case the argument means that negative theology may be postulated as the best with respect to the series of related doctrines of which it is the member, and that deconstruction may be treated as the best with respect to the series of related methods of which it is a member; it also means that negative theology may be postulated as the indifferent with respect to

---

[214] *SLN*, pp. 75b–76c. For the relation between Name and place see further *SLN*, p. 57a (where the linguistic connection between *Wort* ("word") and *Ort* ("place") is exploited) and *SLN*, p. 56b–c (where the phrase: "save the name" (*sauf son nom*) is applied to *khōra*). It is of course no accident that word-play occurs in both passages.

[215] On the question of translation see p. 84 See further *SLN*, pp. 77b, 80a, 81a.

[216] *SLN*, pp. 80a–81d.

[217] At *SLN*, pp. 71a–73a the relation between Neoplatonic negative theology and its Christian counterpart is discussed; at *SLN*, pp. 76c-78a and *SLN*, pp. 85a–b the discussion turns on the relation between Neoplatonic negative theology and the version of Silesius.

the series of related doctrines of which it is a member, and that deconstruction may be treated as indifferent with respect to the series of related methods of which it is a member.[218] The reader can work out for himself what obtains in the other cases.

But clearly something remains to be thought with respect to the shift from negative theology to the interrelation of deconstruction and negative theology. We may begin here with the question of an intertext.

In one passage (64c–65a) there is an important citation of Heidegger. Here, Derrida establishes a connection between the Neoplatonic notion of transcendence as applied to the status of God—the deity's transcendence being indicated by a negative divine name just as the deity's immanence is shown by an affirmative divine name—and the Heideggerian notion of transcendence as applied to the movement of *Dasein*.[219] Since this connection through the term "hyperbole" is verbal but not conceptual, we may postpone its discussion until another occasion. However, the suggestion of a further connection which is conceptually but not verbally hyperbolic requires a few comments here. This involves the structural identity and difference between the movement of the Heideggerian *Dasein* which is sometimes called transcendence and the movement of the Neoplatonic Soul which is usually called reversion rather than transcendence.[220] The identity

---

[218] At *SLN*, p. 73b the question of the similarity governing the relation between the exemplary and the substitutive in the case of negative theology and deconstruction is raised. The answer is apparently: articulation of the relation between exemplarity and substitutability as such.

[219] The connection is made via Plato's notion of *epekeina tēs ousias*.

[220] In general, Derrida seems to assume the sense of "transcendence" elaborated by Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit*. In the latter's introd. §7, 38 three meanings of transcendence are distinguished: 1. that of Being—which is beyond every being; 2. that of *Dasein*'s Being—the possibility of radical individuation; 3. that of *Dasein*'s disclosure of Being as transcendental knowledge together with the disclosedness of Being as phenomenological truth to *Dasein*. Later in the text Heidegger introduces the further senses of transcendence: 4. that of world (*Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962) §75, 389; §80, 419)—with which the question of "objectivity" is connected (*BT* §13, 60–61, §69, 350–51, 363–4) and which is founded on temporality (*BT* §69, 364, 366)—; and 5. that of the ecstatic horizonal unity of past, present, and future (*BT* §69, 360, 365). All these senses of transcendence are closely related and opposed—as an "ontological" mode (*BT* §32, 153)—to the traditional notion of transcendence (*BT* §43, 201, §65, 326). After a further attempt to define transcendence in terms of the "ontological difference" (see *EOG*, pp. 105–7, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. M. Heim (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana U.P.: 1984) §11–14, pp. 159–219), Heidegger maintains the basic concept of *Dasein* realizing itself by surpassing itself without the technical

between the two movements obviously resides in the feature of circularity. But this identity is balanced by a set of differences since for Heidegger, there is no subject-object dichotomy where *Dasein* returns from the possibilities which it projects whereas in Neoplatonism, subject and object are contrasted in that Soul returns to Intellect which produces it. In a general sense one might say that according to the Heideggerian approach transcendence is a hermeneutical matter whereas according to the Neoplatonic doctrine reversion is an ontological process.[221] Thus, for Heidegger the movement of *Dasein*'s transcendence involves the projection of various interpretative forestructures within which to disclose beings by surpassing them whereas in Neoplatonism the movement of Soul's reversion consists of passing through various levels of reality which are themselves principles capable of reversion. Moreover, for Heidegger, there is no atemporal-temporal dichotomy where *Dasein* projects the three ecstasies of temporality only in relation to one another whereas in Neoplatonism, atemporal and temporal are contrasted in that Soul constitutes the temporal flow by emanating from Intellect which precedes it.

Another aspect of Derrida's second account of negative theology which remains for us to think is the relation between that account, the (a)semiotic square, and the figure of (semi-) circularity.[222] If one considers the first ontological sense of negative theology where God is said to have attribute *x* and not have attribute *x*, one notices an antithetical structure in which a positive term—the possession of an attribute—is contrasted with a negative term—the non-possession of an attribute. The connection established by Derrida between the Neoplatonic and Heideggerian notions of transcendence requires a

---

term "transcendence" (see the discussion of the Nietzschean superman in *WCT* 1. 5, p. 48ff.) On Heidegger's general theory of transcendence see Joseph J. Kockelmans, "Ontological Difference, Hermeneutics, and Language," in *On Heidegger and Language*, ed. Joseph J. Kockelmans (Evanston: Northwestern U.P., 1972), pp. 207–9; on Heidegger's reading of the Platonic transcendence see Werner Beierwaltes, "Epekeina. Eine Anmerkung zu Heidegger's Platon-Rezeption," in *Transzendenz. Zu einem Grundwort der klassischen Metaphysik*, eds. Ludger Honnefelder and W. Schüssler (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1992), pp. 40–55. There are some useful comments on Heidegger's transcendence in comparison with medieval thought in Sonya Sikka, *Forms of Transcendence, Heidegger and Medieval Mystical Theology (*Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), pp. 43–107.

[221] "Ontological" is here to be understood in the Platonic rather than the Heideggerian sense.

[222] For the (a)semiotic square see pp. 42–3; for the figure of (semi-) circularity see pp. 64–7.

more complex analysis in which only the most prominent features can be noted. Here, the movement of the Neoplatonic Soul called reversion might be interpreted as a displacement of the negative term, through the mediation of the combined term, by *either* a neutral term *or* a second realization of the combined term. This would constitute a sequential process in which the figure of (semi-) circularity is completed by the partial figures of transcendence and translation viewed as alternatives. The movement of the Heideggerian *Dasein* called transcendence might be interpreted as a displacement of the negative term, without the mediation of the combined term, by *both* a neutral term *and* a second realization of the combined term. This would represent a sequential process in which the figure of (semi-) circularity is completed by the partial figures of transcendence and translation viewed as simultaneous.[223] If one considers the restatement of the first ontological sense of negative theology where God is said to have the property of not having any property, one detects an antithetical structure in which a positive term—the possession of a property—is contrasted with a negative term—the non-possession of properties—together with a reversal of this antithetical structure so that a positive term—the non-possession of a property—is contrasted with a negative term—the possession of properties.[224]

This latter analysis relates particularly to the main citation of Plotinus in Derrida's essay (69b), the importance accorded to the Neoplatonic philosopher's contribution to the argument being suggested by the unusual inclusion of a textual reference (*Enneads* VI. 7, 15–17) and a Greek quotation (*kai tou didomenou to didon epekeina ēn*). Among the ideas which Derrida finds in Plotinus' text, the notion that the Good gives what it does not have provides a crucial explanation of both the paradoxical and the hyperbolic element in negative theology by showing that the Good has simultaneously a negative aspect—non-possession of property *x* in the sense of inherence of *x* in itself—and an affirmative aspect—possession of property *x* in the

[223] Since the comparison between the two philosophemes itself is one between an *and . . . or* and a *both . . . and*, the argument of this entire paragraph represents a further instance of the multiplication of semiotic squares.

[224] Further relations between Derrida's second account of negative theology and the (a)semiotic square or schema of (semi-) circularity are possible. In particular, translation of the various senses of negative theology into one another or into analogous philosophemes can be understood as applications of the partial schema of translation.

sense of causal relation to property *x* in something else; and further that the simultaneity of negation and affirmation can be understood as a double assimilation to the idea of superiority whereby negation comes to mean superiority as difference-from and affirmation comes to mean superiority as maximalization-of.[225] This interpretation of the notion that the Good gives what it does not have is supported by some explicit statements later in Plotinus' treatise—that the Good is nothing among beings (*ouden tōn ontōn*) since beings are subsequent to it and the Good is all beings (*kai panta*) since beings are derived from it; and that there are three modes of speaking about the Good: namely, using analogies (*analogiai*), abstractions (*aphaireseis*), and knowings from its effects (*gnōseis tōn ex autou*)—and also by various implicit assumptions underlying Plotinus' thought—including the principle of superiority i.e. that causes are always superior to their effects, the principle of inversion i.e. that the application of a negative-affirmative opposition with respect to a higher term is complemented by a reversal of that application with respect to a lower term, and the principle of continuity i.e. that causes are in a sense present in their effects and vice versa. However, Derrida himself does not pursue these interpretative possibilities to any degree.[226]

Further questions concerning the relation between Derrida's second account of negative theology and the (a)semiotic square are possible.

---

[225] Derrida's apparent finding in Plotinus' text of the further notion that the Good gives without engendering—i.e. in a non-causal manner—would suggest what we have termed interpretative distance (see pp. 38–41). In fact, *Enn.* VI. 7 insistently maintains the causal relation between the Good and other things, for example by saying that one derives any utterance about the Good from its effects (*Enn.* VI. 7 [38] 36, 6–10), and that the Good is cause of being, life, and intellect (*Enn.* VI. 7 [38] 16, 27–9, VI. 7 [38] 17, 9–12, VI. 7 [38] 23, 19–22). Such references to causality further imply that the negative theology of this treatise at least remains within a predominantly ontotheological context.

[226] For the Good as simultaneously nothing and everything see *Enn.* VI. 7 [38] 32, 12–13; for the three methods of discourse about the Good see *Enn.* VI. 7 [38] 36, 6–8. Since Derrida cites *Enn.* VI. 7 as a test case for negative theology—and rightly so—it is also worth noting how this treatise does and does not illustrate the features of negative theology on which he focuses in *Sauf le Nom*. At *SLN*, p. 49b Derrida mentions a) the poetical metaphoricity and b) the onto-logical formalism of negative theology. Now it is clear that Plotinus employs (a) particularly when describing the relation between Intellect, the intelligibles, and the Good in terms of light and vision (see *Enn.* VI. 7 [38] 16, 24–31, VI. 7 [38] 22, 33–6). However, it is equally clear that Plotinus avoids (b) both in emphasizing the polysemy within a single divine name like "Good" (see *Enn.* VI. 7 [38] 18. 1ff.) and in excluding propositions of the firm "S is P" from discourse about the First (see *Enn.* VI. 7 [38] 38, 1–18).

In fact, the remainder begins to seem inexhaustible when one reflects on certain passages where the so-called "absolute formalization" is pursued. Here, the most viable method of analysis is to distinguish three models of applying the square in part, integrally, or in combination:[227] a first model according to which the exemplary moment of any philosopheme or discourse is applied to the positive term of the (a)semiotic square while the substitutive moment is applied to the negative term—in contrasting the best and the indifferent, the *exemple* as paradigm and as sample, and the *il faut* as necessity and as lack, Derrida is clearly renaming the structure which grounds the transfer of axiological priority from one opposite term to another typical of deconstructive method—;[228] a second model where the exemplary moment of any discourse is applied to the neutral term of the (a)semiotic square while the substitutive moment is applied to the threefold relational possibilities of the positive term, the negative term, and the combined term—Derrida refers to this structure in contrasting the place which remains impassively foreign with the place which is opened by appeal, and in speaking of one place as being "without" the other in the sense of surpassing or excluding the other—;[229] and a third model having a double structure where on one level the exemplary moment of any philosopheme or discourse is applied to the positive term of the (a)semiotic square while the substitutive moment is applied to the negative term—here the structure grounding the transfer of axiological priority from one opposed term to another typical of deconstructive readings is renamed as the contrast of "with-without" and "without-with"—, and where on another level the exemplary moment of any philosopheme is applied to the neutral term of the (a)semiotic square while the substitutive moment is applied to the threefold relational possibilities of

---

[227] For the first model see *SLN*, pp. 76a–c; for the second model see *SLN*, p. 75b; for the third model see *SLN*, pp. 76 a and c.

[228] See pp. 65–6.

[229] The notions "with" (*avec*) and "without" (*sans*) play an important role in Derrida's accounts of negative theology. Apparently following a usage derived from Augustine via Meister Eckhart, "without" signifies the negative = excessive moment of negative theology so that one can speak of "God without Being" etc. See *SLN*, pp. 35d, 40d, 64b. Therefore, the "with," "with-without," and "without-with" of *SLN*, p. 76a must represent the affirmative moment and various superimposed negative-affirmative moments of the same theology. Of course, Derrida's use of the formula "without" in connection with negative theology is quite different from Jean-Luc Marion's exploitation of the same phrase. See *SLN*, p. 62e.

the positive term, the negative term, and the combined term—here the threefold structure is described in appropriately convoluted manner as the logic of joining (conjunction-disjunction)—, and where there is a connection between the two levels through their respective realizations of the exemplary and substitutive terms indicated by the undecidability of the relation between the two places and the simultaneous permitting and forbidding of exemplarism.[230] In the passages examined, we find Derrida's discourse approaching such a degree of abstraction and obscurity that interpretations other than the one proposed here would certainly be tenable.

The final phase of Derrida's development of the theme of negative theology is concluded with reference to *khōra*:[231]

- To let passage to the other, to the totally other, is hospitality. A double hospitality: the one that has the form of Babel (the construction of the Tower, the appeal to universal translation, but also the violent imposition of the name, of the tongue, and of the idiom) *and* the one (another, the same) of the *deconstruction* of the Tower of Babel. The two designs are moved by a certain desire of universal community, beyond the desert of an arid formalization, that is beyond economy itself. But the two must deal with what they claim to avoid: the untreatable itself. The desire of God, God as the other name of desire, deals in the desert with radical atheism.
- In listening to you, one has more and more the feeling that *desert* is the other name, if not the proper place, of *desire*. And the at times oracular tone of apophasis, to which we alluded a few minutes ago, often resounds in a desert, which does not always come down to preaching in the desert.
- The movement toward the universal tongue oscillates between formalism, or the poorest, most arid, in effect most desertlike technoscientificity, and a sort of universal hive of inviolable secrets, of idioms that are never translated except as untranslatable seals. In this oscillation, "negative theology" is caught, comprised and comprehensive at once. But the Babelian narrative (construction and

---

[230] In the passages analyzed here, the three models are illustrated with the term "Place." It must be remembered that one can insert into this mechanism *a.* the terms "God" and "Name" here associated with Place; *b.* other Derridean general structures like *Difference, Trace*, and *Supplement*.

[231] *SLN*, p. 80a–c/*Sauf* 102b–103b.

> deconstruction at once) is still a history. Too full of sense. Here the invisible limit would pass less between the Babelian project and its deconstruction than between the Babelian place (event, *Ereignis*, history, revelation, eschato-teleology, messianism, address, destination, response and responsibility, construction and deconstruction) and "something" without thing, like an indestructible *Khōra*, the one that precedes itself in the test, as if there were two, the one and its double: the place that gives rise and place to Babel would be indeconstructible, not as a construction whose foundations would be sure, sheltered from every internal or external deconstruction, but as the very spacing of deconstruction. There is where that happens and where there are those "things" called, for example, negative theology and its analogues, deconstruction and its analogues, this colloquium here and its analogues.

In this passage, Derrida is discussing the opposition between language—expressed allegorically as the construction of the Tower of Babel by the Shemites—and deconstruction—allegorically expressed as the destruction of that tower by God—, and making the specific points that language consists of the project of universal translation and the imposition of the proper name and that the opposition between language and deconstruction is placed within *Khōra*.[232] Given that negative theology has been classified as a language throughout the argument of "Sauf le Nom," we have here an account of the interrelation between negative theology and deconstruction consistent with what has gone before. There is, however, a new element. That is Derrida's suggestion that language oscillates between formalism—"the most impoverished techno-specificity" (*la techno-specifité la plus pauvre*)—and non-formalism—"a universal hive of inviolable secrets . . . and intranslatable seals" (*ruche universelle de secrets inviolables . . . sceaux intraduisables*)—and that negative theology is caught in the oscillation. Although Derrida provides no explanation of what this collectivity of secrets is, he has undoubtedly introduced an aspect of negative theology which will demand a further reflection on our part.[233]

---

[232] See Jacques Derrida, "Des Tours de Babel," trans. J.F. Graham, in *Difference in Translation*, ed. and intro. J.F. Graham (Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1985), pp. 165–207. Cf. Jacques Derrida, etc., *The Ear of the Other. Otobiography, Transference, Translation*, eds. C. Lévesque and C.V. McDonald, trans. P. Kamuf (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), pp. 100–102.

[233] The discussion will continue especially in chapter 4.2.

CHAPTER THREE

MARGINS OF AUGUSTINE

The encounter between (Neo-) Platonism and Deconstruction has hardly been an explicit theme of recent literature. Nevertheless, it can be detected as a subtext of the deconstructive reading of Augustine's text presented in Jacques Derrida's *Circonfession* and—by way of a commentary thereon—in John Caputo's *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida*, despite the fact that neither of these modern authors would affirm any intention of expounding Neoplatonism, or of juxtaposing Neoplatonism and deconstruction, or of deconstructing Neoplatonism and might explicitly disclaim such an intention. An attempt at reading this subtext will form our next starting-point.

Derrida's *Circonfession* represents one part of the volume *Jacques Derrida* by Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida[1] in which the *Derridabase* written by Bennington about Derrida is juxtaposed with the *Circonfession* written by Derrida in response simultaneously to Augustine's *Confessions* and to Bennington's *Derridabase*. The purpose of these texts and of their juxtaposition—as explained by the volume's introductory page, by various comments made by Derrida himself on other occasions,[2] and by statements in the *Circonfession* itself—might be construed as follows: 1. (With regard to Augustine) To show Derrida's care and admiration for Augustine and yet to deconstruct certain axioms in the *Confessions*, this project being a serious play starting from certain analogies e.g. between the Algerian origins and the mothers of Augustine and Derrida respectively; 2. (With regard to Bennington) To surprise Bennington, who has in his *Derridabase* attempted to systematize Derrida's thought, in the manner of an interactive computer program, with material escaping that systematization; 3. (With regard to both Augustine and Derrida) In terms of an implied parallelism between Augustine-God and Derrida-Bennington together with its implied inversion, to reveal practically

---

[1] Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida*, trans. G. Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

[2] See *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, ed. John D. Caputo (New York: Fordham U.P., 1999), pp. 19–21.

rather than theoretically something about the situation where one confesses to somebody who already knows everything.[3]

Caputo's *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida*[4] represents a detailed commentary on Derrida's writing of the 1990s in which the *Circonfession* emerges as the central text. In commenting on *Circonfession* in particular, Caputo argues that the work amounts to a confession of Derrida's religion—a Judaism without God—and a testimony to a certain conversion. Although its deliberately disruptive relation to Bennington's text renders it elusive in respect of formal analysis, one can distinguish among its primary themes that of circumcision: a figure convertible with scission or incision in general but especially representing the cut from Truth. This relation to Truth, where the primacy of the interrogative is elicited from a reading of Augustine's question: "What do I love when I love my God?" and the primacy of the performative from a reading of Augustine's Iohannine notion of "making/doing the Truth," is a non-transcendent one.[5] It is convertible with the relation to the Other, the relation to God—specifically in the form of the name of God—, and the relation to Death. It is also convertible with the secret truth which is the secret severed from truth. This secret—that there is no secret truth, conscious or unconscious, concealed below the surface of the text—is literature.[6]

That the encounter between (Neo-) Platonism and Deconstruction can be detected as a subtext of Derrida's and Caputo's deconstructive reading of Augustine emerges from a consideration of the questions of reversion (or conversion), destination, temporality, performativity, and number (or rhythm). However, instead of examining Augustine's *Confessions* as read by Derrida and Caputo and paying special attention to such topics,[7] we shall turn to Augustine's *De Quantitate Animae* which neither author has read publicly and place the emphasis primarily on reversion. This approach will be juxta-

---

[3] For further discussion of the Derrida-Bennington book see Bruno Clément, *L'invention du commentaire. Augustin, Jacques Derrida* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2000).

[4] John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida. Religion Without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1997), pp. 281–307.

[5] See Derrida, *Circum.* 9, pp. 47–8 and 24, p. 122. For discussion of performativity see chapter 1, n. 15; chapter 2, pp. 64–5, 76, 78; and chapter 4.3.

[6] For a discussion of the secret see chapter 4.3.

[7] On these points see the following "marginal" notes: Destination: n. 14; Temporality: n. 19; Performativity: nn. 72, 74; Number: n. 76.

positional[8] in that the reading of this Augustinian text will intersect not only with the readings of Augustine's *Confessions*, Derrida's *Circonfession* and Caputo's *Prayers and Tears*, but also our readings elsewhere of pseudo-Dionysius' *De Divinis Nominibus* and Derrida's *Sauf le Nom*. Moreover, our approach will be both exemplary and substitutable[9] in that a reading of *De Quantitate Animae* with emphasis placed primarily on reversion will provide both an inherently better and a merely alternative account of the crucial issues than would a study of the *Confessions* paying equal attention to all the topics. As argued elsewhere, juxtaposition and the antithesis of exemplary and substitutive are primary features of the quasi-systematic approach to deconstructive method.

However, before embarking on the proposed reading, a few remarks are needed concerning the conceptual model within which reversion is the culminating moment.[10]

We have already seen how important the figure of (semi-) circularity and the partial figures of transcendence and of translation are for a systematic presentation of deconstruction and Neoplatonism. To recall the essentials briefly: we are envisaging a situation with respect to the text of philosophy where a positive term is displaced by a negative term, which is then displaced by a first realization of a combined term, and/or by a neutral term, and/or by a second realization of a combined term.[11] In deconstruction, the term to be manipulated affirmatively or negatively is a philosophical element to which is accorded axiological primacy. In Neoplatonism—where the

---

[8] For the notion of juxtaposition see chapter 1, pp. 24–8.

[9] For the notions of exemplarity and substitutability see chapter 2, pp. 89–91.

[10] "Reversion" for Augustine represents an evolving complex of notions which is simultaneously Neoplatonic and Pauline. At *DCD* X. 23ff. Augustine lengthily discusses Porphyry's *De Regressu Animae* (= "On the Return of the Soul"). If the opinion of most modern scholars that this work influenced Augustine already in his earlier years and perhaps at the time of his conversion is correct, then we can trace an evolution whereby the pagan philosophical doctrine concerning the soul's reversion, actualization, and formation, is gradually refined in terms of St. Paul's teaching about conformation to God and human renewal. Cf. Rom. 8.28 quoted at *DM* I. 11. 18. On these questions see Olivier du Roy, *L'intelligence de la foi en la Trinité selon saint Augustin, Genèse de sa théologie trinitaire jusqu'en 391* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1966), pp. 70–71, 233, 236, 257, 264–7, 328; Emilie Zum Brunn, *St. Augustine, Being and Nothingness*, transl. R. Namad (New York: Paragon House, 1988), p. 72; Marie-Anne Vannier, *Creatio, Conversio, Formatio chez S. Augustin*, 2nd ed. (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1997), pp. 2–43, 60–62, 73–82.

[11] See chapter 2, p. 64ff.

first three moments are specifically described as remaining, procession, and reversion—the term to be manipulated affirmatively or negatively is a metaphysical principle in the emanative hierarchy.[12]

Among the writers of antiquity, it is undoubtedly Augustine who employs the Neoplatonic version of this configuration in the most inventive, flexible, and variegated way. In both his earlier more philosophical and later more scriptural works, Augustine's application of this mode of thinking is characterized by an awareness of its differing conceptual implications with regard to different areas of speculation. We might classify the latter in a quasi-geometrical manner under the headings of: i. "Anthropological configuration" (ethical-epistemological). A bi-directional structure of descent and ascent culminating in a self-transcending term or else—with the first moment unexpressed—a uni-directional structure of ascent culminating in a self-transcending term. The stable element which occurs as a first term in the pagan Neoplatonic doctrine appears as a third term in the Augustinian reworking. This is described as remaining; ii. "Cosmological configuration" (ontological). A bi-directional structure of procession (or unity) and reversion (or equality) culminating in a mediating or synthesizing term. The stable element which occurs as a first term in the pagan Neoplatonic system again appears as a third term in Augustine's reworking. This is now described as order (or concord). Particularly in the Christian thinker's later writings, configurations i and ii can be combined to form an extremely complex structure of fall and redemption.[13]

---

[12] See chapter 2, p. 68.

[13] See further pp. 123–4. The relation between deconstruction and Augustinian Neoplatonism can be specified more precisely by recalling the hermeneutical field bounded by the oppositions of proximity and distance and of critique and imitation in which a particular selection of possibilities can be made. See chapter 2, pp. 38–41. Of the main strategies possible within this field—critique from a standpoint of proximity, critique and imitation from a standpoint of proximity, and critique and imitation from a standpoint of proximity and distance—it is clearly the second which is most relevant here. An application of this strategy would reveal the following facts: first, that we find in Augustine one or more versions of the figure of (semi-) circularity and of the partial figures of transcendence and translation—indicating that there is an imitative relation on the part of deconstruction towards Augustinian Neoplatonism—; secondly, that we find in Augustine disparities and contradictions between different versions of the figure of (semi-) circularity and of the partial figures of transcendence and translation—indicating that there is a critical relation on the part of deconstruction towards Augustinian Neoplatonism. Given that the imitative and critical relations themselves correspond to moments within

The Quantity of the Soul

Augustine's *De Quantitate Animae* has an argument divided into six parts corresponding to six questions about the soul. At the beginning of this dialogue, the interlocutor Evodius asks. 1. What is the source of the soul?, 2. What is the quality (*qualis*) of the soul?, 3. What is the quantity (*quanta*) of the soul?, 4. Why was the soul assigned to body?, 5. What is the quality of the soul when joined to body?, and 6. What is the quality of the soul when separated from body?[14] The first question is answered by saying that, if "source" means originating principle, the source is God or that, if "source" means constitutive principle or principles, the source is the soul's own "substance" (*substantia*).[15] The second question is answered by saying that the soul is similar to God.[16] The answer to the third question takes up most of the treatise and provides the latter's title (*quanta* → *de Quantitate*).

---

the figure of (semi-) circularity and the partial figures of transcendence and translation, then deconstruction itself governs the relation between deconstruction and Augustinian Neoplatonism.

[14] Augustine, *De Quantitate Animae, recensuit* Wolfgang Hörmann, CSEL 89 (Wien: Tempsky, 1986) 1. 1. The text of *De Quantitate Animae* can be divided into two parts in accordance with its allocutionary structure: part 1 (*DQA* 1. 2–32. 69) a dialogue in which Augustine and Evodius address one another (with God, the illuminator as third party) and part 2 (*DQA* 33. 70ff.) a dialogic monologue in which Augustine addresses himself (with God, the illuminator as further element). With respect to address and destination, certain parallels can be established between Augustine's text and i. the combination of the *Derridabase* and the *Circonfession* where the structure of the relation between Derrida, Augustine, and Bennington mirrors that between Evodius, Augustine, and God; and ii. the *Circonfession* itself where the ambiguity of the relation between Augustine and himself or God mirrors that between Derrida and himself, or you, or the Other, or God (the divergences being that in i. the leading role is shifted from the teacher (Augustine) in the first configuration to the deconstructor (Derrida) in the second, and that in ii. the addressee's ambiguity is increased by substitutability from the first configuration to the second (God → you, the Other, God). These parallels are important because they reveal to what extent the Augustinian movement of reversion which they embody overlaps with the Derridean movement of deconstruction. For the analogy between Bennington and God see Derrida, *Circum.* 3, pp. 16–18; 19, p. 97; 32, p. 166; 42, p. 222—in "Derrida's Response to Robert Dodaro," in *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, eds. J.D. Caputo and M. Scanlon, pp. 98–9, Derrida confirms that the initial "G" used in *Circonfession* applies both to G(eoffrey Bennington) and to G(od) (cf. *Circum.* 5, p. 26; 6, pp. 31, 33–4; 19, p. 97; 44, p. 233; 50, pp. 267–8)—and for the "theological" program of Bennington see *Circum.* 3, pp. 15–16; 5, p. 30; 9, p. 46; 14, p. 73; 28, p. 141; 58, p. 305. For the address to you, the Other, God see Derrida, *Circum.* 32, pp. 165–6; 41, pp. 216–17; 49, pp. 263–4; 59, pp. 311–12.

[15] *DQA* 1. 2.

[16] *DQA* 2. 3.

The fourth question is answered by saying that soul contributes to the ordered structure of reality by mediating between God and body, the fifth and sixth questions being virtually suspended.[17]

Discussion of the third question begins at *De Quant. Anim.* 3. 4, the definitive answer supplied at 13. 22–14. 24 being followed by the raising of certain supplementary issues. Augustine introduces the discussion of the third question by pointing out that "quantity" could mean either spatial extent—projection into 1, 2, or 3 dimensions—or extent of power (*quantum valeat*).[18] Although the fact that it is already held by faith that God is incorporeal and that the soul is similar to God would lead us immediately to such an interpretation of quantity, Augustine endeavors to reject the first and affirm the second interpretation of quantity by proving rationally a) that incorporeal things exist and b) that soul is such an incorporeal thing.

It is relatively easy to prove to Evodius that incorporeal things exist: in fact, it is suggested that he is *already* in possession of such knowledge. By means of a striking argument based on the implicit assumption that superiority of something implies that something's existence, Augustine proves that a tree is not nothing, that justice is superior to a tree, and that justice is therefore not nothing. But a tree is a corporeal thing in that, if one takes away from it the corporeal dimensions of length, width, and height, the tree is removed. On the other hand justice is something incorporeal in that, when one takes away the same corporeal dimensions of length, width, and height, justice remains. As a consequence of this reasoning, Evodius is prepared to admit that incorporeal things are superior to corporeal things and therefore exist but not yet that soul belongs to the class of incorporeal things that are superior to corporeal things and therefore exist.[19]

---

[17] *DQA* 36. 80–81.

[18] *DQA* 3. 4.

[19] *DQA* 4. 5. That Evodius is already in possession of the knowledge that incorporeal things exist follows from the atemporality of the transcendent truth which is accessible through reminiscence and/or illumination. Since the history of Augustine's endeavor to retain the transcendent object of knowledge while rejecting the preexistent subject which knows has been written on many occasions, we shall not rehearse the details here beyond noting that Augustine's allusion to the Platonic philosopheme of *anamnesis* typifies his adherence to the so-called "metaphysics of presence" (see pp. 2–4). For an interesting recent attempt to read this position deconstructively and temporally see Jean-Louis Chrétien *The Unforgettable and the Unhoped For*, trans. J. Bloechl (New York: Fordham U.P., 2002), pp. 1–39.

Augustine replies that this further demonstration will require a series of steps. As a first phase of this more circuitous process, Evodius is induced to hypothesize that the soul has three spatial dimensions in the same manner that the mind has three spatial dimensions or more precisely that the soul, by being simultaneously inside and outside the body, has a space co-extensive with the body's space. But there is the relation between soul and memory to consider: does this not imply some greater extendedness? Augustine here explains that the soul, in being able to recall distant places, has a space extending beyond the body's space and therefore does not have spatial tri-dimensionality in the same manner that mind has spatial tri-dimensionality. Clearly this represents an altogether better conception of the nature of soul.[20]

A more detailed investigation of length, width, and height is needed, however: an analysis in which the possibility of thinking length—which can also be called the "line"—apart from the other dimensions comes to the fore. Augustine reiterates the necessity of applying a roundabout method since we must not only attain knowledge but retain the knowledge—the superiority of retention is explicitly stated—and since we should not only follow someone's authority but trust our own reason. Evodius invokes "reason" (*ratio*) to be their guide. Augustine counters that this task must be left to "God" (*deus*).[21]

The second phase of the more circuitous process announced earlier consists of a geometrical exercise. In the course of a lively exchange between Augustine and Evodius, a series of geometrical figures is constructed and then arranged in a hierarchy of value. Among figures constructed by using three or four straight lines the equilateral triangle is described as superior to the isosceles or scalene triangle because it reveals a greater "equality" (*aequalitas*) in having all its angles and lines equal; quadrilateral figures are considered superior to triangular figures because of the formers' greater equality: the quadrilaterals have angles opposite angles whereas the triangles have angles opposite lines; the square is described as superior to the rhombus because it reveals a greater equality in having all its angles and lines equal; the figure constructed by extending a single line—the circle—is considered superior to the figures constructed

[20] *DQA* 4. 6–5. 9.
[21] *DQA* 6. 10–7. 12.

by using three of our straight lines because of the former's greater equality: no angle breaks the equality of the circle from whose center equal lines can be drawn to any part of the boundary.[22] This discussion in which superiority is represented by more equality is complemented by another argument in which superiority is represented by less divisibility and less dependence. In the continuation of the dialogue between Augustine and Evodius, it is now the basic elements of geometry which are arranged in a hierarchy of value: the solid is divisible in three directions and depends on the plane, the line, and the point; the plane is divisible in two directions and depends on the line and the point; the line is divisible in one direction and depends on the point, and the point is not divisible in any direction.[23]

Having led Evodius through such arguments, Augustine underlines the fact which is most relevant to the discussion of soul. That is: although it is obvious that the nature of body depends upon the simultaneous presence of length, width, and height, and that neither length, nor width, nor height can be present in body without the other two, the geometrical exercise has shown in practice that the cognitive part of the soul—the "intelligence" (*intellegentia*)—can perceive even the line separately. This in its turn proves that the dimensions of body are incorporeal and that the soul, since it perceives its object by being *similar* to the latter and judges its object by being *superior* to the latter, must be not only similar to but superior to the incorporeal dimensions.[24] Finally—and here the function of the reason, which is the soul's "more excellent and almost only sight" (*excellentior et paene solus aspectus*), in finding itself is stressed—this reinforces the conclusion accepted earlier that incorporeal things are superior to corporeal things and adds the further conclusion that soul belongs to the class of such incorporeal things.[25]

At this point, we should take a detour from the journey undertaken by Augustine and Evodius and consider what the initial dialogue of *De Quantitate Animae* is telling us about the soul's reversion. That the two interlocutors have been implicitly articulating the phases

---

[22] *DQA* 8. 13–11. 17.
[23] *DQA* 11. 17–12. 21.
[24] *DQA* 13. 22–14. 23.
[25] *DQA* 14. 24–15. 25. The discussion concludes with some comments on the value of geometry for turning the mind.

of a reversion is indicated by comparing the allusions to "reason" (*ratio*) and "intelligence" (*intellegentia*) in the passage just summarized and the description of the "power of reasoning and thinking" (*vis ratiocinandi et excogitandi*) which constitutes the third stage in the soul's ascent towards the end of the dialogue. Of the various possibilities already sketched in the abstract, it is the unidirectional and self-transcending model of the reversion which seems to be at issue between Augustine and Evodius.

This model can be illustrated with a number of other texts.[26] At least in the philosophical context, the reversion begins with doubt: for a conscious being the act of doubting is always accompanied by the certainty that one is doubting.[27] This initial truth guides what Augustine often describes as an ascent through stages: for example in *De Vera Religione* where our perception that perfect unity and perfect equality cannot be found in corporeal things forces us to acknowledge the existence of a realm beyond space and time—an aesthetic motivation for ascent—and again where our realization that the rational life is subject to the mutability of error compels us to postulate the existence of an immutable standard of truth[28]—an epistemological motivation for ascent—or in *Confessiones* where, having passed from an inquiry about the truth of judgments to the discovery of unchangeable Truth, the soul passes from the bodily to exterior sense, from exterior sense to interior sense, from interior sense to reasoning, from reasoning to intelligence, and from intelligence—"in the flash of a trembling glance" (*in ictu trepidantis aspectus*)—to Being itself.[29]

The model of the reversion presented in these passages implies a logical and metaphysical structure which is at the greatest importance for understanding Augustine's thought: namely, an arrangement of terms in an order of superiority and inferiority. This idea has already been a recurrent motif in *De Quantitate Animae*—one may recall the initial argument that incorporeality is superior to corporeality, the methodological comments that the non-3-dimensional definition of soul is better than the 3–dimensional one and that the retention of a truth achieved by argument is superior to the attainment

---

[26] Apart from the passage quoted below, for unidirectionality see *DBV* 1. 2–3, *DLA* I. 12. 24ff., for transcendence *DLA* III. 25. 76, *DVR* 39. 72; 43. 80.

[27] *DVR* 39. 73.

[28] *DVR* 30. 54–31. 57.

[29] *Conf.* VII. 17. Cf. *Conf.* X. 6–9, 20–27, 40. Cf. *Mus.* VI. 14. 43ff.

of that truth; one may also recall the assumptions of the geometrical demonstration that equality, indivisibility, and non-dependence are superior to their opposites, and the final arguments that soul is superior to the spatial dimensions and that reason is the more excellent part of soul. Such statements provide further evidence that the dialogue has been implicitly concerned with the reversion.

In other texts, the arrangement of superior and inferior terms—which we shall henceforth call the axiological structure—is specified from three viewpoints: 1. *Concerning the superior and inferior items*. Augustine most frequently speaks of God as superior to Soul and of Soul as superior to Body[30] ("God" being substitutable with "Truth," etc.) although sometimes he subdivides the Soul in order to speak of Reason as superior to Life and of Life as superior to sense;[31] 2. *Concerning the modes of superiority*. These are delineated either A. by associating selected superior and inferior terms with the items, for example, God has mutability neither in time nor space, Soul has mutability in time but not in space, and Body has mutability in time but not in space, and Body has mutability both in time and in space;[32] or B. by associating certain active and passive terms with any pair of superior-inferior items in the hierarchy: for example, making and made, judging and judged, ordering and ordered, and subjecting and subjected;[33] 3. *Concerning the supreme item*. Augustine naturally assigns this status to God ("God" again being substitutable with "Truth," etc.).[34]

The model of the reversion presented in these passages implies a further logical and metaphysical structure which must be taken into

---

[30] See *Mus.* VI. 4. 7, VI. 5. 13–14, *DVR* 12. 25.

[31] See *DLA* II. 12. 33–14. 38, *DVR* 29. 52–30. 55.

[32] See *DVR* 10. 18.

[33] See *Mus.* VI. 4. 6 (making); *Mus.* VI. 4. 5–6, VI. 6. 16, VI. 8. 21–9. 24, *DLA* II. 3. 7–6. 14, *DVR* 29. 53–36. 66 (judging); *Mus.* VI. 14. 46 (ordering); *DLA* I. 5. 11–6. 15; I. 8. 19–11. 21 (subjecting). It is important to note that some of these terms actually evaluate the hierarchical structure as a whole. See *DLA* I. 10. 20–11. 23, *DVR* 48. 93.

[34] See *DBV* 4. 30–34, *DLA* II. 6. 13–14, II. 17. 45–18. 47, III. 7. 21–8. 22. There are undoubtedly two sets of influences behind Augustine's theory: 1. For the notion of *degrees of Being*, Plotinus (and perhaps also Porphyry)—see Plotinus, *Enn.* VI. 9 [9] 9. 1–24, VI. 5 [23] 12. 16–36, VI. 6 [34] 1. 1ff., Porphyry, *Sententiae ad intelligibilia ducentes*, ed. E. Lamberz (Leipzig: Teubner, 1975) 40, 47. 9–52. 6; 2. For the notion of *God as maximal*, Stoicism (as presented by Cicero)—See Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* I. 26. 65—and Plotinus—see Plotinus, *Enn.* III. 8 [30] 10. 20–35, V. 3 [49] 15. 7–11. Of course, this theme will later be taken up by Anselm of Canterbury.

account: namely, an arrangement of terms as a set of negative and affirmative oppositions. Although this idea has not been presented systematically in *De Quantitate Animae*—such a system world involve a sequence of terms such that each item in some respect or respects has either a. a negative character in opposition to the previous item's affirmative or b. an affirmative character in opposition to the previous item's negative character—nevertheless there have already been certain tentative approaches to its formulation. For example, the initial argument that incorporeal things exist and the second phase of the more circuitous argument that soul is such an incorporeal thing both illustrate the abstractive process in showing that, despite the negation of one, two, or three spatial dimensions, certain things remain intact. On the other hand, the first phase of the more circuitous argument that soul is an incorporeal illustrates the refutative process in showing that the comparison of the soul to the mind in terms of tri-dimensionality must be denied.

In other texts, the arrangement of negative and affirmative terms—which we shall henceforth call the combinatory structure (although it would be more precise to call it the combinatory-axiological structure)[35]—is specified from two viewpoints: 1. *Concerning the application of negative and affirmative terms*. Augustine most frequently speaks of God ("God being substitutable with "Truth", etc.) using the negation of an inferior term and the affirmation of a superior term. He also frequently speaks of Soul, Body, or created things using the opposite of the term which he uses in speaking of God.[36] Only on rare occasions does Augustine refer to God using the negation of a superior term and the affirmation of an inferior term;[37] 2. *Concerning the modes of application of negation and affirmation*. These can be subdivided into: A. application of discrete and single terms. Here, either the negative *or* the affirmative form of *one term* is applied to one thing. For example, God is said to be incorporeal, incorruptible, immortal (negative) or Good, Truth, Beauty (affirmative);[38] B. application of discrete

[35] It is because of the importance of this structure in Augustine's thought generally (and not only in *De Quantitate Animae*) that Raoul Mortley's assertion that negative theology plays no significant role in Augustine is perhaps misleading. See Raoul Mortley, *From Word to Silence II. The Way of Negation. Christian and Greek* (Bonn: Hannstein, 1986), p. 192ff.

[36] See *Conf.* VII. 10.

[37] See *Ord.* II. 16. 44, Sol. 1. 13. 23.

[38] See *Conf.* VII. 20 (incorporeal), VII. 7, VII. 12 (incorruptible), Sol. I. 15. 29 (immortal).

and multiple terms. In this case, the negative *and* affirmative forms of *a group of terms* are applied to one thing. For example, God is said to be mutable (affirmative) in neither space (negative) nor time (negative);[39] c. application of indiscrete and multiple terms. Here, the negative *and* affirmative forms of *one term* are applied to one thing. For example, God is said to be absent (negative) and present (affirmative).[40]

Our second detour is into textuality. Given that the entire dialogue *De Quantitate Animae* represents an account of the reversion, and given that on the one hand the work's title and the first three questions of Evodius recall the notions of substance, quality, and quantity mentioned in Aristotle's *Categoriae* and that on the other hand the answer to Evodius' second question alludes to the book of *Genesis*' reference to God's creation of man in his own image, then the reversion is articulated within a textuality which is both philosophical and biblical.[41] The crucial role in establishing this intertextual framework in undoubtedly played by memory. This faculty performs a mediating function within the reversion by combining a lower phase directed towards sensible things with a higher phase directed towards the divine Truth;[42] it has the ability to combine its contents—including the teachings of the philosophers and sacred writers—in a variety of ways;[43] moreover the faculty performs its mediating function within the reversion by leading the alteration of remembering and forgetting typical of the lower phase towards the state of continuous vision characteristic of the higher phase.[44]

That the cyclic process of soul should be understood textually as well as metaphysically can be shown on the basis of works like *De*

---

[39] See *Mus.* VI. 14. 44, *DVR* 10. 18. For a similar argument applied to created things see *DLA* II. 18. 47, III. 5. 12–16,

[40] See *Sol.* I. 8. 15, *DLA* II. 13. 37–14. 38. For a similar argument applied to created things see *Conf.* VII. 11.

[41] For Augustine's use of the Aristotelian categories see *Conf.* IV. 16, cf. *Sol.* II. 12. 22–13. 24, II. 19. 33, DIA 2. 2; 5. 7; 6. 11; 10. 17. The set of three questions also perhaps recalls the rhetorical schema of three questions: *sitne, quid sit, quale sit* found in Cicero. Cf. Cicero: *Orator* 15. 45, *De Oratore* II. 24. 104; II. 30. 132, etc. For Augustine's use of the latter see Alfred Schindler, *Wort and Analogie in Augustins Trinitätslehre* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1965), pp. 56–60.

[42] See *Conf.* X. 8–9.

[43] For memory as combining its contents in general see *Mus.* VI. 8. 22, *Conf.* X. 19.

[44] See *Conf.* X. 11, X. 16, X. 18. Augustine makes great efforts to stress the nature of the higher phase. See *Sol.* II. 20. 35 together with *Retractationes* 4. 4 (citing *Trin.* XII. 15. 24).

Vera Religione where a series of ancient philosophical positions—identifying divinity with the world soul, the generative life, and the world body—is characterized as a gradual descent of their advocates' souls,[45] and *Confessiones* where Augustine's sequence of responses to Cicero's *Hortensius*, Aristotle's *Categoriae*, and the "books of the Platonists" (*Platonicorum libri*) is treated as the progressive ascent of his own soul.[46] This interpretation can be reinforced by recalling that the cyclic process of soul constitutes a dialectic of negation and affirmation and that the relation between philosophical positions also represents such a dialectic. The combination of negation and affirmation is sometimes understood as simultaneous: for example in *Contra Academicos* where the ancient Academy is said to have held the Platonic doctrine of forms in secret but to have advocated the skeptical method of philosophy in public;[47] and sometimes as successive: for instance in the *Confessiones* where Augustine is declared first to have held the Manichaean doctrine of corporealism but subsequently to have replaced it with the Platonic incorporealist viewpoint.[48]

Returning now to the text of *De Quantitate Animae*, we see that Evodius is convinced by the force of Augustine's demonstrations that incorporeal things exist and that the soul is incorporeal. However, he now accepts his mentor's invitation to pose further questions. These are: 1. How is it that, as the body grows with age, the soul also seems to grow?; 2. If the soul is extended spatially through the body, why does it not have quantity. But if soul is not so extended, how is it affected in sensation throughout the body? Augustine agrees to give an explanation which he has already prepared and which Evodius' reason most evaluate. This explanation is the best that he has been able to discover, unless God shall inspire him with something better as they proceed.[49]

Evodius' first question is answered briefly by underlining the distinction between "greater" (*maius*) and "better" (*melius*) and by showing

[45] *DVR* 37. 68. Cf. *DVR* 10. 18.
[46] *Conf.* III. 4, IV. 16, VII. 9–10.
[47] *CA*. II. 6. 14, II. 10. 24, III. 17. 37–8.
[48] *Conf.* III. 6–7, V. 14, VII. 1, VII. 9–10. Augustine also envisages such a dialectic within the philosophical context itself (Plato and Aristotle harmonizing at *CA* III. 19. 42) and within the Christian context itself (Catholic and heretical conflicting at *DVR* 8. 15).
[49] *DQA* 15. 26. For a similar point see *DQA* 31. 64.

that the soul increases with age only in the latter sense.[50] One detail of the argument is noteworthy: namely, the analogy established between the soul and a geometrical figure on the assumption that virtue is a kind of equality. As Augustine points out, just as the circle is better than the square because it possesses more equality through the absence of angles, so is one soul better than another through the agreement between life and reason.[51] It is important to note that this argument does not question the usual ontological priority of the object of analogy (the soul) and the source of analogy (the geometrical figure).[52]

Evodius' second question is answered at greater length by exploring the mechanism of visual perception and by showing that the soul can experience something even if not located where the experience takes place.[53] Much of the argument involves the evaluation of two possible definitions of sensation: namely 1. "a bodily experience of which the soul is not unaware," and 2. "a bodily experience of which the soul is not unaware directly."[54] Here, once again the question of equality comes to the fore. In conjunction with some remarks about the correct methods of definition, Augustine points out that definition 1. fails by containing too much (including something which is not sensation) while definition 2. fails by containing too little (not including something which is sensation).[55]

There is an interesting argument which might be considered as a kind of appendix to the solution of Evodius' second question.[56] Perhaps not completely satisfied with Augustine's explanation of the soul's experiencing even if not located where the experience takes place, the student cites the cutting of a centipede into two halves each of which retains its motor function as empirical evidence for the spatial rather than non-spatial nature of soul. Although confessing his

---

[50] *DQA* 16. 27–20. 34.

[51] *DQA* 16. 27.

[52] Augustine's semiotic theory is based on the principle that the "reality" (*res*)—that for the sake of which something exists—is superior to the "sign" (*signum*)—that which exists for the sake of something else. See *Mag.* 9. 25, *DDC* I. 2. 2, II. 1. 1ff.

[53] *DQA* 23. 43 and 30. 59.

[54] *DQA* 23. 41. Cf. 24. 45 (definition 1), 24. 46. Cf. 25. 48 (definition 2).

[55] *DQA* 24. 46 (criticism of definition 1), 28. 54, 29. 56 (criticism of definition 2). For the discussion of correct definition and the technique of inversion see 25. 47–8.

[56] *DQA* 31. 62–32. 68.

inability to provide the scientific explanation, Augustine introduces an analogy between the relation of soul to body in a person and the relation between meaning and sound in a word which may illuminate the question. According to this analogy, when the sound of the word *Sol* (= "Sun") is divided by separating the letters into the non-signifying components *s* + *o* + *l* or alternatively when the sound of the word *Lucifer* (= "Morning Star") is divided by separating the letters into the signifying components *luci* ("to the light") and *fer* ("carry!"), the fact that the conceptualized meaning[57] retains its integrity as much in the latter as in the former case proves that divisibility of the bodily component into self-sufficient units does not entail the spatiality of the psychic component.

Having provided something of an answer to Evodius' query, Augustine comments that the lengthy discourse should be brought to a conclusion and that his student needs training in further disciplines in order to understand the truth of what has been argued. He adds that in the meantime Evodius should receive from him or recollect through him "the quantity of the soul not in extent of space and time but in force and power" (*quanta sit anima non spatio loci ac temporis, sed vi ac potentia*). The question whether the notion of a number of souls—which Augustine interprets as referring to whether soul is one, one and many, or many—should be connected with the notion of a quantity of (the) soul is subtly evaded. Instead, the teacher urges Evodius to listen to something profitable which will perhaps be sufficiently *onerosum* ("weighty"/"difficult") to deter one or both of them from further inquiry into the matter.[58]

The famous discourse concluding *De Quantitate Animae* in which Augustine with suitable protestations of humility exhibits his own power in speaking of the power of the soul—we might say that he enacts the reversion of the soul by describing the reversion of the soul—begins with an observation said to be within the reach of everyone that the soul by its very presence unifies the mortal body: it produces and sustains the body's unity (*in unum . . . in uno*), it distributes the nourishment appropriate to each part of the body in an

---

[57] The adjective "conceptualized" is important here since Augustine's argument depends upon combining signification and thought (i.e. one must continue to think the meaning of a word while it is divided into phonemic or graphic units). At *Mag.* 9. 25ff. together with 10. 33ff. Augustine elaborates a more complex semantic theory where these are distinguished. Cf. also *Dial.* 5.

[58] *DQA* 32. 68–9.

equitable manner (*aequaliter*), and it produces the body's harmony and measure (*congruentia eius modusque*).[59] In this paragraph Augustine is clearly in a doubling process of describing from the degree of what will later be termed art the degree of what will later be termed animation. Moreover, this discursive process corresponds to that process where, earlier in the dialogue, Evodius' questions about the growth of the soul with age and the cutting of the centipede were answered.

Augustine now urges Evodius to ascend—note the use of the imperative rather than the indicative at this point—to the "second degree" (*alter gradus*[60]). This is the first use in the present passage of the term *gradus* which has among its primary meanings that of dynamic transition, the character of that transition as a more temporal "step," as a more spatial "level," and as a more indeterminately temporal or spatial "degree" being specified by the context. One could perhaps speculate whether the absence of the word at the beginning of the *onerosum* was for philosophical or rhetorical reasons.

What is this second degree? It is where the soul's more manifest life is understood (*intellegitur*): its power of locomotion, its power in the senses of sight, hearing, taste, and touch to distinguish their respective objects and to seek and shun objects suitable and unsuitable to its nature, its power of sometimes withdrawing from the senses and of connecting spatially and temporally separated things—specified as "power of habit" (*consuetudinis vis*)—which is called memory. The degree of soul described here again from the degree of art, will later be termed sense. Augustine's discussion of this degree of soul in general corresponds to the earlier discussion of Evodius' questions about the extension at the soul through the body as the basis of sensation.

Evodius is now urged to ascend to the third degree and to think (*cogitare*) of memory: a memory which is no longer based on habitual impressions but on "things preserved" (*retentae res*). The latter are said to correspond to the contents of linguistic arts like grammar and rhetoric and mathematical arts like music, and to be of innumerable varieties.[61] In this paragraph Augustine is clearly in a doubling process of describing from the degree of what will later be termed art the degree of art itself. Moreover, this discursive process

[59] *DQA* 33. 70.
[60] *DQA* 33. 71.
[61] *DQA* 33. 72.

corresponds to that process where, earlier in the dialogue, Evodius' original question about the quantity of the soul was answered by means of a geometrical discussion, and his further questions were explored successively by using dialectical, physiological, and grammatical methods.

From the fourth degree onwards there is clearly a change of tonality. Although the point is not made explicitly by Augustine, we seem to have before us an ascent from reduplication of the present discourse and of the earlier part of the dialogue to reduplication of the present discourse alone, and from a discussion of exclusively theoretical matters to a discussion of simultaneously theoretical and practical issues.[62] As the teacher explains at the beginning of the section, this is the point at which "goodness begins" (*bonitas incipit*) and—invoking pointedly the principle of superiority which has been a theme of the entire dialogue—where the soul dares to "rank itself above" (*se . . . praeponere*) the corporeal universe.

The fourth degree which will later be called virtue involves making the soul pure and having the eye of the soul clear. Augustine's account stresses the gradual development of the virtues of temperance, fortitude, and justice and the process of overcoming the fear of death.[63] His reference to having the eye of the soul clear recalls the first of the three levels of the soul's ascent described in the earlier *Soliloquia* by means of the analogy of sight, the second and third levels there being looking (corresponding to the soul's "reason" (*ratio*)) and vision (corresponding to the soul's "intellect" (*intellectus*)) respectively.[64]

The account of the fifth degree, later to be called tranquillity, is relatively brief. This degree involves not making the soul pure but keeping it pure—the emphasis now being on the superiority of retention over attainment—and not having the eye of the soul clear but protecting the clarity of the soul's eye. Something else of importance happens here: namely, the soul "grasps its quantity in every respect" (*omnifariam concipit quanta sit*).[65] How does this conception of the soul's

[62] It should be noted that the word "action" (*actio*) begins to be applied to each of the degrees. It should also be noted that the explicit imperatives are dropped after the fourth degree. Presumably Evodius is no longer following a process which becomes centered on Augustine's own performance. See *DQA* 34. 79.

[63] *DQA* 33. 73. This account (and the others to follow) is, of course, from the degree of art.

[64] *Sol.* I. 6. 12–13.

[65] *DQA* 33. 74.

quantity differ from that achieved before the commencement of the weighty and difficult discourse? Clearly in the sense that the earlier conception was that on the part of reason and the later that on the part of reason in combination with virtue. In any case, this phase would represent the discursive-conceptual limit of *De Quantitate Animae.*

The account of the sixth degree, later to be called approach, is also relatively brief. This degree involves directing the eye of the soul towards its object and is unusually perilous. Here, those who have not purified themselves in advance—the talk of the fourth degree—will "rebound from the light of truth" (*luce reverberantur veritatis*) to such an extent that they will think not only that there is no good there but even that there is much evil. For them the Psalmist prays: "Create a clean heart," etc.[66]

Augustine now describes his own or perhaps not even his own ascent to the seventh degree. The dynamic transition is from that intellection of the things that exist supremely which corresponds to the soul's supreme looking—this than which nothing is more perfect—to what should be called "no longer a step but a sort of remaining" (*neque iam gradus, sed quaedam mansio*) whither the previous steps have led.[67] The language here exploits subtle ambiguities in that *gradus* has shifted semantically from the more static sense of "degree" to the more dynamic sense of "step(ping)" and in that *mansio* has the double sense of "remaining" (verbal) and "a dwelling" (substantive).

What is this seventh degree, later to be called contemplation? Strictly speaking, it can only be described after one has descended from it—a further indication of the doubling tendency of the discourse—as is the case with those greatest souls whom we believe to have seen it and to see it now. For his part Augustine will simply declare that, if we hold to the course ordained by God, we shall come through God's power or wisdom to that supreme cause, author, principle or whatever name is suitable to "something so great" (*res tanta*). Having understood this, we shall recognize "how great a distance" (*quantum inter*) there is between vanity and truth. We shall

---

[66] *DQA* 33. 75. On the basis of comparison with other texts, it would seem that the failure of the pagan Neoplatonists is understood here. These have ascended to the intellective contemplation of the sixth degree but without passing through the combination of virtue and reason in the fourth and fifth degrees.

[67] *DQA* 33. 76–34. 77.

realize that the visible world and our previous knowledge are nothing "in comparison with" (*in comparatione*) the invisible things and the beliefs commanded by God. We shall also realize that death which was previously an object of fear can become an object of desire.

After inserting a brief summary of Christian teaching which is said to be scattered throughout the Church's writings and only clearly understandable from the fourth degree onwards, Augustine brings the weighty discourse to its conclusion. There are three very important final points. First, the degrees of which we have been speaking should rather be viewed as "actions" (*actus*). Secondly, to the sequence of seven actions Augustine assigns 3 × 7 names: given "so great an abundance of measures" (*tanta copia modorum*), it is possible to divide up and name the same things in innumerable ways. Third, the actions of which we have been speaking can be enacted "simultaneously" (*simul*).[68] Of these three points, the first justifies an interpretation of the process laying emphasis upon its practical aspects, and the third an interpretation of the process laying emphasis upon its doubling tendency.

The text of *De Quantitate Animae* itself ends shortly after the end of this discourse. In is final paragraphs, Augustine inserts merely the briefest remarks by way of answering Evodius' last three questions about the soul. There are some further comments regarding the beginning of the true religion in the third degree.[69] However, Augustine clearly felt that on rhetorical and aesthetic grounds at least any detailed discussion in the style of the first half of the dialogue would destroy the climatic effect.

In summary, what are the salient points of Augustine's final discourse?

First, there is what the discourse reveals about the axiological structure and the combinatory-axiological structure mentioned ear-

---

[68] *DQA* 34. 78–35. 79. the names are the following: 1. "animation" (*animatio*), 2. "sense" (*sensus*), 3. "art" (*ars*), 4. "virtue" (*virtus*), 5. "tranquillity" (*tranquillitas*), 6. "approach" (*ingressio*), 7. "contemplation" (*contemplatio*) or else 1. "of the body" (*de corpore*), 2. "through the body" (*per corpus*), 3. "about the body" (*circa corpus*), 4. "toward itself" (*ad seipsam*), 5. "in itself" (*in seipsa*), 6. "toward God" (*ad deum*), 7. "with God (*apud deum*), or else 1. "beautifully of another" (*pulchre de alio*), 2. "beautifully through another" (*pulchre per aliud*), 3. "beautifully about another" (*pulchre circa aliud*), 4. "beautifully toward a beautiful" (*pulchre ad pulchrum*), 5. "beautifully in a beautiful" (*pulchre in pulchro*), 6. "beautifully toward Beauty" (*pulchre ad pulchritudinem*), 7. "beautifully with Beauty" (*pulchre apud pulchritudinem*).

[69] *DQA* 36. 80.

lier. From the axiological viewpoint we find that there is a transcendence (dynamic) of sensation by memory from degree 1 to degree 2. The movement is relative to the subject. In the transition from step 2 to step 3, soul passes from memory formed by habituation to memory containing rational truths. Again, the movement concerns the subject. Level 4 represents the transcending of levels 1 to 3 where the combination of the theoretical and practical on the part of the subject surpasses the theoretical alone. The transcendence involves addition of certain components. Level 4 also represents the transcending of levels 1 to 3 where soul grasps its superiority to body. This movement is relative to the subject. In the transition from step 4 to step 5, soul passes from achieving purity to retaining purity. Again the movement concerns the subject. The combination of reason and virtue on the part of the subject surpasses reason alone in level 5: the transcendence (dynamic) is both with respect to level 3 of this discourse and the earlier dialogic argument. Addition of certain components is the factor involved. Degree 6 introduces the maximum of the existent truths. A transcendence (static) of the object is implied. There is a transcendence (dynamic) of stepping by remaining in level 7 with respect to levels 1 to 6. The movement is on the part of the subject. Degree 7 introduces the maximum of God as Goodness and Truth. A transcendence (static) of the object is implied. There is also a transcendence (dynamic) of non-simultaneous by simultaneous actions in level 7 with respect to levels 1 to 6. The movement is on the part of the subject. Finally, degree 7 introduces the quantity of the transcendence itself between the invisible and visible worlds. This transcendence is of object and subject and both static and dynamic. The combinatory-axiological structure can be indicated more briefly: In the transcendence (dynamic) of sensation by memory from degree 1 to degree 2, the movement implies negation of the inferior term "temporality" through memory's retention of images. Between level 2 and level 3 memory containing reasons surpasses memory formed by habituation. Here, it is the nature of the rational memory's contents which produces negation of the inferior term "temporality" and affirmation of the corresponding superior term. In the transcendence (dynamic) of attainment of purity by retention of purity from degree 4 to degree 5, the movement implies negation of the inferior term "temporality" through the fact of retention. Level 7 represents the transcending of levels 1 to 6. Negation of the inferior term "temporality" and affirmation of the

superior term "atemporality" is implied by the remaining. Level 7 also represents the transcending of levels 1 to 6 where negation of the inferior term "temporality" and affirmation of the superior term "atemporality" is implied by the simultaneity of actions. An additional point should be made regarding degrees 7 and 6. Degree 7 which introduces the quantity of the transcendence itself between the invisible and visible worlds exploits the mechanism of reversal of perspectives.[70] This means that the affirmation of the inferior and the negation of the superior term—vanity and truth respectively—is converted into negation of the inferior term and affirmation of the superior. Clearly the chiastic structure of degree 7—as an affirmative element—is intended to correct the reverberative structure of degree 6—as a negative element.[71]

Secondly, there is what the discourse reveals through its practical aspects and doubling tendency. In Augustine's weighty discourse the practical aspects[72] consisted of the statement in degree 7 that the degrees should be identified with actions—together with the assumption from degree 4 onwards that this identification is in effect—and the redefinition in degree 5 of the soul's quantity as a combination of reason and virtue; the doubling tendency[73] consisted of the description of animation in level 1, sensation in level 2, and art in level 3 from the viewpoint of art in level 3, the transition from reference to the earlier dialogue and reference to the present discourse between levels 3 and 4, the description of virtue in level 4, tranquility in level 5, and approach in level 6 from the viewpoint of virtue in level 4, and the descent subsequent to contemplation in level 7. In Augustine's discourse the practical aspects and the doubling together explain the presence of further elements seemingly introduced quite instinctively. These are *i.* the resort to the imperative form of utterance—obviously allied with the practical—in the instruction to ascend, and *ii.* the employment of the performative mode of utterance—clearly

[70] On this idea, which is generally considered to be characteristically Porphyrian see Pierre Hadot, *Porphyre et Victorinus* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1968), pp. 110–11, 116, 119, etc.

[71] Cf. Conf. VII. 17.

[72] In Derrida's *Circonfession* the practical is closely associated with the performative and used to deconstruct the Platonic notion of transcendent Truth. See the reading of Augustine's statement about "making/doing truth" (*veritatem facere*) at *Circum.* 9, pp. 47–9; 27, p. 137; 53, p. 284. Cf. *Circum.* 15, pp. 75–6; 21, p. 107.

[73] On the theme of doubling in deconstruction see chapter 2, pp. 50–52.

associated with the doubling—in the word-play based on the prepositions *de, per, ad*, the rhetorical contrast of monologic speech and dialogic exchange, the rhetorical devices of evasion, withholding, and suspension, and the word-play based on the ambiguity of *mansio*.[74]

At this point, we should take another detour from the contemplative exercise performed by Augustine and consider what the final discourse of *De Quantitate Animae* is telling us about the soul's reversion. That the contemplator has been articulating the phases of a reversion is indicated clearly by the references to ascent and to steps: it is hardly necessary to demonstrate this fact, as we did in connection with the dialogue between Augustine and Evodius, by establishing connections between the terminologies used in the two parts of the work. Of the various possibilities already sketched in the abstract, it is again the unidirectional and self-transcending model of the reversion which seems to be at issue with Augustine.

However, things are clearly not quite so simple. In the philosophy of Plotinus, the cyclic process of constituting beings occurs in two main forms: 1. a bi-directional cycle of remaining, procession, and reversion in which the third moment achieves a transcendence of the initial state (we may call this the bi-directional and self-transcending model)—the reversion can be considered separately (and called uni-directional and self-transcending) in this model but not in the next model: 2. a bi-directional cycle of remaining, procession, and reversion in which the third moment achieves a synthesizing or mediating position posterior to the initial state and anterior to a subsequent cycle of remaining, procession, and reversion (we may call this the bi-directional and synthesizing model). Plotinus often combines these two models in the context of his wide-ranging philosophical discussions although model 1 works more effectively in the epistemological and ethical contexts and model 2 applies more naturally to the cosmological sphere.

The situation is different with Augustine. In his thought, the cyclic

---

[74] One should compare (contrast) with this the performative element in Derrida's *Circonfession*. Among features of note are (i) the use of initials—for example, G for Geoffrey Bennington (*Circum.* 5, pp. 26, 30; 6, pp. 31, 33–4, etc.); (ii) word-play—for example, *escarre* for coat of arms and bedsores (*Circum.* 17, pp. 87–8; 18, pp. 91–3); (iii) the use of initials and word-play—for example, SA for Saint Augustin and *savoir absolu* (*Circum.* 19, p. 98; 20, p. 101, etc.). In addition to these features, the removal of periods from the ends of sentences throughout the text (in order to heighten the ambiguous and differential aspects of their syntax) is particularly noteworthy.

process of constituting beings occurs in a greater variety of forms and in a manner which resolves some of the inherent tensions in the Plotinian usage but produces others. The main forms (at least in writing's prior to ca. 401 C.E.) are 1. a bi-directional cycle of original state, fall, and return in which the third moment achieves a transcendence of the initial state. This corresponds to the bi-directional and self-transcending model of Plotinus as applied specifically by the latter to the level of soul. It is employed by Augustine strictly in the ethical and epistemological contexts; 2. a bi-directional cycle of procession, reversion, and order or—with an increased tendency to stabilize the cycle into a structure—a bi-directional cycle of unity, equality, and concord in which the third moment achieves a synthesizing or mediating position neither posterior to an initial state nor anterior to a subsequent cycle. This model, which corresponds to a bi-lateral and synthesizing model in Neopythagorean arithmetic although it also connects more loosely with the logos theory of Plotinus, can present a viable Trinitarian analogue. It is employed by Augustine mainly in the cosmological context.[75]

The dependence of the Augustinian approach as much upon Neopythagorean arithmetic as upon Neoplatonic metaphysics leads us back to the account of reversion in the final discourse of *De Quantitative Animae* because of the enormous importance of number in that process. In fact, Augustine's references to the numbering of the degrees are so emphatic that we must understand his intentions in the light of his doctrine stated in *De Ordine* that number and reason are the twin foundations of all human knowledge, and also in the light of his thesis argued in *De Musica* that there are six levels of number between the corporeal and the rational.[76] The suggestion

[75] There are two important points to be noted regarding these Augustinian cyclic processes: 1. The two bi-directional cycles are occasionally combined to produce an extremely complex situation. See *Mus.* VI. 17. 56 together with the analysis of du Roy, *L'intelligence de la Foi*, pp. 282–97; 2. In both bi-directional cycles there is a tendency to assign the moment of stability to the third term. See *DM* II. 6. 8, *Mus.* VI. 13. 40 together with du Roy's analysis, pp. 232–3, 236, 291.

[76] See *Ord.* II. 15. 43–16. 44; 18. 47–19. 49. Cf. *DLA* II. 9. 27; 11. 30–32; *Mus.* VI. 1. 1–12. 36. The numerical approach finds its reflection (or inversion) in Derrida's *Circonfession* where the course of life and/or writing is demarcated with the notions of series, selector, and number. Series is associated loosely with the sequence of events (Cf. *Circum.* 50, p. 266), with an ordering determined teleologically according to a moment where things turn around (*Circum.* 57, pp. 300–301)—otherwise, the Christian theological idea of the Logos in the beginning—, with a sequence occurring non-teleologically as one writes with no belief in survival (*Circum.* 53,

of some scholars that Varro's book *Hebdomades*, a numerological treatise on the properties of the number 7 mentioned by Aulus Gellius, was one of the inspirations behind the sevenfold structure seems quite possible.[77] Augustine was obviously much impressed by this type of

---

p. 284), and with a chain of texts connected through the *es gibt* (*Circum.* 26, pp. 135–6). The third point which relates deconstructively to the second refers to the Augustinian notion of making truth and recalls the Derridean general structure of iterability. Since the deconstructive series is a combination of the determined and the arbitrary, the question of principles of selection arises. Citing from his earlier notebooks, Derrida proposes as means for imposing thematic or formal organization upon material a "selector" e.g. (in *La Carte Postale* and *Glas*) the two columns, GL, the figure 7, or (in the projected *Book of Elie*) circumcision = the principle of selection itself. Both approaches are rejected because Derrida wishes to be guided not by the principle of selection is general (by what is of him, for him, or by him) but by the idiom which lets him write (the very thing, the other) (*Circum.* 52, pp. 276–7). Now *Circonfession* applies number to the series as a principle of selection quite extensively. There are 59 sections of the text which are called (among other things) 59 compulsions (*Circum.* 24, p. 125), 59 periods, each an Augustinian *cogito* = an "I am" deconstructed by an "I am dead" (*Circum.* 25, pp. 127–8), 59 years of Derrida's age (*Circum.* 39, p. 208), 59 counter-exemplarities of himself (*Circum.* 48, p. 255), 59 prayer-bands (*Circum.* 49, p. 260), 52 + 7 times of falling in love (*Circum.* 50, pp. 266–7), 59 conjurations, 7 days after a 52-week year (*Circum.* 51, pp. 272–3). The number 59 is connected with the number 4 (a key-number in deconstruction) as a determinant within one or more of the sections cf. references to the synchronization of 4 times within the same periphrasis (*Circum.* 21, p. 108) and to 59 4–stroke compulsions (*Circum.* 25, p. 127). There are 4 aspects of Jewish exegesis: 1. Pshat (literality), 2. R'Emez (allegory), 3. Drash (morality), 4. Sord (cabbalism) (*Circum.* 21, p. 110), 4 epochs displayed in El Greco's painting *The Burial of Count Orgaz* and presumably corresponding to the moments of the Heideggerian *es gibt* or *Ereignis* (*Circum.* 29, pp. 150–51). What is the status of these numbers applied to the series as a principle of selection? First, the numbers are not ideal numbers—as they are, in the last analysis, for Augustine—but numbers of repetition (cf. the repetition compulsion at *Circum.* 58, p. 305 + 24, p. 125, 25, p. 127). Secondly, they represent a combination of the arbitrary and the necessary just as language constitutes such a combination, a point illustrated by Derrida's description of the file-names (= the 59 periphrases) appearing on his computer-screen, of his attempting to sort out the aleatory in a rigorous order, and of the invisible connection lying behind the floating file-names (*Circum.* 53, pp. 282–3). As examples of the arbitrary and the necessary in respect of numbers, one may consider how the number 59 represents Derrida's age (arbitrary), while there are 52 weeks, each of which comprises 7 days, in a year (necessary), and yet 52 plus 7 making 59 *exceeds* the year (arbitrary and necessary) (*Circum.* 51, pp. 272–3); or how the number 4 represents the consonants in the word PaRDeS (= the orchard of El-Biar, Algeria) (arbitrary) and the initials of the modes of Jewish exegesis (necessary) (*Circum.* 21, pp. 108–10)—NB that the arbitrary predominates over the necessary is shown by Derrida's reference to the sieving of singular events that can dismantle Bennington's theologic program (*Circum.* 58, p. 305). Third, the numbers constitute readings of Augustinian numbers, the day with no evening to which Derrida refers (*Circum.* 53, pp. 281–2) recalling the cycle of 6 days of motion and 1 day of rest in *Genesis* which allegorizes the Augustinian reversion of the soul—the primary topic of our present essay.

[77] See du Roy, *L'intelligence de la Foi*, p. 257. Like Augustine, Derrida is also

conceptual organization since we find, albeit in a more Scriptural context, similar accounts of the ascent of the soul through seven degrees in other writings.[78]

How then can we characterize in detail the weighty discourse as a type of reversion? By saying that it has an enormously complex polyphonic structure in which, additionally to the doubling element discussed earlier, there are at least three levels of reversion operating simultaneously and with different phase-patterns. On one level, we have the Augustinian version of the uni-directional and self-transcending model of reversion. We have already discussed this most obvious level of the discourse at length in the preceding pages. On a second level, there reveals itself to deeper analysis a bi-directional cycle of procession, reversion, and concord in which the third moment achieves a synthesizing or mediating position. A parallel instance of such a cycle can be found in *De Musica* I–II where Augustine explains how the numbers 1 to 4 constitute a procession (*progressus, progredi*) from unity, the unitary character of each of the four numbers represents a reversion (*reditus, reverti*) to that unity, and the agreement between the mean(s) and the extremes within the sequence 1 to 3 produces a concord (*concordia*).[79] Using this parallel, we can say that the degrees 1 to 4 of the weighty discourse constitute a further cycle superimposed on the main system. On a third level, a careful reading discloses a bi-directional cycle of unity, equality, and concord in which the third term yet again achieves a synthesizing or mediating position. A parallel instance of such a structure can be found in *De Musica* VI—here, Augustine explains how every created thing by desiring unity (*unitas*), self-identity (*suique simile*), and order (*ordo*) reflects the unity, equality, and charity within its creator—while an entire sequence of such structures occurs in *De Vera Religione*.[80] Using this

attracted to notions of harmonicity (presumably containing numbers as interpreted in our previous note). See *Circum.* 34, p. 176; 39, pp. 208–9; 45, p. 237.

[78] For example, *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* where a connection is established with the seven days of creation (*DGM* I. 23. 35–25. 43). Cf. *DVR* 26. 48–28. 51, *DDC* II. 7. 9–11.

[79] *Mus.* I. 11. 18–13. 28. Cf. *Mus.* II. 4. 4–5, II. 7. 14. In some texts, Augustine applies the same cyclic structure to the Trinity and to the relation between the creature and the Trinity. See especially *DBV* 4. 33–6, *Mus.* VI. 13. 40.

[80] *Mus.* VI. 17. 56–7, *DVR.* 7. 13; 11. 21; 43. 81; 55. 112–3. For some examples of application of the same cyclic structure to the Trinity and to the relation between the creature and the Trinity see *Mus.* VI. 4. 7, *DLA* II. 16. 41–17. 46, *DVR* 36. 66; 43. 81–44. 82.

parallel, we can say that the analysis of the corporeal object in degree 1 of the weighty discourse constitutes yet another further cycle superimposed on the main structure.

It is not impossible to find more traces of superimposed reversions.[81] But instead of pursing this exercise here, it is perhaps better to conclude simply by recalling the geometrical discussion in the first part of the dialogue and by noting this further example of parallelism between the earlier and later parts of *De Quantitate Animae*. Although Augustine did not mention this fact to Evodius the beginner, the derivation of the geometrical solids from the point, the line, and the surface is a further instance of the bi-directional cycle of procession, reversion, and concord. This can be proven by comparing the brief note on the production of solids at *De Musica* VI. 17. 57.

[81] For example, the manipulations of prepositions in order to produce names for the seven degrees at *DQA* 35. 79 recalls Neopythagorean arithmetical nomenclature for procession and reversion. See *Mus.* I. 12. 21.

CHAPTER FOUR

. . . REMAINS TO BE THOUGHT

4.1 *Of the Abyss*

Although "Khōra" will eventually be combined with "Sauf le Nom" and "Passions" to form what Derrida terms "a sort of *Essay on the Name* in three chapters or three steps,"[1] consideration of the circumstances of its original composition as a separate item may best serve to orientate us as readers on the borderline between Deconstruction and Neoplatonism. Originally, Derrida had written "Khōra" as a "homage in the form of a question" to be included in the volume *Poikilia. Études offertes à Jean-Pierre Vernant.*[2] Vernant had in several publications explored the contrast between the logic of non-contradiction famously exploited by philosophers and a certain logic of ambiguity typical of myth, and this contrast assists Derrida in his project of approaching Plato's *Timaeus* by displacing the metaphysical interpretation centered on the Demiurge and the Forms with a deconstructive interpretation based on the Receptacle.[3] In fact, Vernant's emphasis upon the inversion of oppositions practiced by the mythologists can be seen retrospectively as providing the basis both for the replacement of the classical reading of Plato's dialogue with a deconstructive reading and for the initial phase of the deconstructive quasi-method itself.

To be more precise, Derrida's strategy in the essay "Khōra" can be stated in the following simple terms. It is to expound within the context of the Platonic *Timaeus* the transformation of a *khōra* which is a metaphysical principle simultaneously passive and impassive in relation to the plurality of Forms into a *khōra* which is a deconstructive

---

[1] See pp. 169–70, 183.

[2] Paris: Éditions de l'EHESS, 1987.

[3] In fact, a quotation from the chapter "Raisons du mythe," in Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Mythe et société en Grèce ancienne* (Paris: F. Malpero, 1974) dealing with this topic is reproduced on the fly-leaves of both the French edition and the English translation of Derrida's essay.

structure simultaneously passive and impassive with respect to a plurality of discourses. In the first phase of Derrida's reading, *khōra* becomes the speaker Socrates who distinguishes himself from philosophers and from sophists as a third term, this metonymic shift from the *khōra* distinguished by the speaker Timaeus from intelligible being and from sensible being as a third term being justified by the occurrence of the word "kind" in both contexts.[4] Subsequent phases in the Derridean reading—which depend on an association between the themes of *khōra* and of the *mise-en-abyme* which we shall discuss below—proceed in a similar manner. At one point, *khōra* becomes a series of seven embedded "fictions:" *F1* the discourse of the *Timaeus, F2* the discourse of the *Republic, F3* Socrates' summary of the discourse of the *Republic* at the beginning of the *Timaeus, F4* Critias' story of ancient Athens and Atlantis heard from his grandfather, *F5* the elder Critias' hearing of the same story from Solon, *F6* Solon's hearing of the same story from an Egyptian priest, and *F7* the story in ancient Egyptian texts.[5] At another point, *khōra* becomes kinds of ethnic differentiation, kinds of sexual differentiation, and even kinds of kinds.[6]

Derrida's strategy in the present essay is further to employ *khōra* in its expanded form as a device for circumventing the usual dichotomy between *muthos* and *logos* which has bedeviled traditional readings of the Platonic dialogue, the ambivalence in the notion of *muthos* itself being indicated in the course of a detour through a passage from Hegel where both a failure to accede to the "Concept" and an adumbration of the latter is attributed to myth.[7] Closely related to this is *khōra*'s ability to circumvent the equally rigid dichotomies of original versus translated concepts,[8] of literal versus metaphorical terminology—here an important note is appended regarding the assumption of such dualism in the older interpretation of the Platonic *khōra* itself

---

[4] "Khōra," in Jacques Derrida, *On the Name*, ed. T. Dutoit, trans. I. McLoed (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1995), pp. 106–11. On the metonymic function of "kind" see *KH*, pp. 91–2, 106–7.

[5] *KH*, p. 111ff. Cf. *KH*, pp. 121–2.

[6] For ethnic difference, see *KH*, pp. 91, 107–8; for sexual difference, see *KH*, pp. 91–2, 106, 124–5. For kinds of kinds, see *KH*, pp. 91–2.

[7] *KH*, pp. 100–104. Cf. *KH*, pp. 90–93, 111–13.

[8] *KH*, p. 93.

by A. Rivaud and the more recent one by L. Brisson[9]—, and of closer or more distant interpretations. In fact, *khōra* ultimately represents the processes of translation, metaphorization, and interpretation themselves.[10]

Although it would be valuable to explore the many convolutions of Derrida's interpretation of *khōra*, we shall confine ourselves here to making some remarks on the basic nature and function of this philosopheme.[11] It may be most useful to begin with a consideration of *khōra* as a general structure in a relatively abstract and context-free manner and then proceed to an analysis of the notion as a general structure in a more concrete and context-sensitive mode. A certain relation between *khōra* and negative theology has already been suggested in the discussion of "Sauf le Nom."[12] The following observations regarding *khōra* as a general structure will further clarify this relation.

---

[9] *KH*, p. 92. Derrida has apparently been consulting Albert Rivaud, *Le Problème de devenir et la notion de la matière dans la philosophie grecque depuis les origines jusqu'à Théophraste* (Paris: Alcan, 1906) and Luc Brisson, *Le même et l'autre dans la structure ontologique du Timée. Un commentaire systématique du Timée de Platon* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1974) (*KH*, p. 146, n. 1).

[10] *KH*, pp. 94, 99.

[11] We shall not pursue in detail the contrasts between Derrida's general structure of *khōra* and the nature of the Receptacle, Matter, and Evil in Neoplatonism. For a preliminary orientation see the passages labelled "Segment A" and "Segment D" in the chapter "Derrida reads (Neo-) Platonism" (pp. 9–10, 15–16). On the Neoplatonic doctrines themselves—which have involved many controversies—see Kevin Corrigan and Padraig O'Cleirigh, "The Course of Plotinian Scholarship from 1971 to 1986," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II. 36. 2 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1987), pp. 575–8. See also Samuel Sambursky, *The Concept of Place in Late Neoplatonism* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences, 1982), Richard Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion. Theories in Antiquity and their Sequel* (London: Duckworth, 1988), Jean-Marc Narbonne, *Plotin. Les deux matières (Ennéade II. 4 [12]). Introduction, texte grec, traduction et commentaire* (Paris: Vrin, 1993).

[12] Since the essay "Khōra" first appeared in 1993, several commentaries have attempted to situate *khōra*—sometimes with a detour through J.-L. Marion's position—more precisely with respect to negative theology. See John Caputo, "Khōra. Being Serious with Plato," in *Deconstruction in a Nutshell. A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, ed. J.D. Caputo (New York: Fordham U.P., 1997), pp. 92–6; *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida. Religion without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1997), pp. 35–8; and "Apostles of the Impossible. On God and the Gift in Derrida and Marion," in *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, eds. J.D. Caputo and M. Scanlon (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1999), pp. 215–19. The main ideas developed here concern i. the contrast between the logic of the *huper* (= "above") associated with the Good in Plato's *Republic* and the logic of the *hupo* (= "below") associated with the *khōra* of

It is clear that *khōra* is one of those general structures whose understanding and enactment represents an essential component of the deconstructive method, or more precisely that *khōra* is a name applied to certain elements within the collectivity of general structures which comprises deconstruction.[13] Given that these elements are actually dynamic components within the figure of (semi-) circularity and the partial figures of transcendence and translation,[14] and that these dynamic elements occur within the semantic sphere, outside the semantic sphere, and both within and outside the semantic sphere,[15] it is possible to interpret certain passages from the beginning of Derrida's essay as applying the term *khōra* to what is within the figure of (semi-) circularity simultaneously the moment where the positive term = duality of semantic and/or asemantic opposites with accented term is displaced by a corresponding negative term and also where the negative term = duality of semantic and/or asemantic opposites with transfer of accent is displaced by one or more combined, transcendent, or translative terms.

The first passage discusses the opposition of intelligible and sensible, and states that *khōra* cannot be identified with the displacement of the negative term by a combined term or by a transcendent term.[16] The structural name of *khōra* must therefore be identified with a non-displacing term in one semantic or asemantic category which underlies a displacing term in another semantic or asemantic category.

> The *khōra*, which is neither "sensible" nor "intelligible," belongs to a "third genus" (*triton genos*, 48a, 52a). One cannot say of it that it is *neither* this *nor* that or that it is *both* this *and* that. It is not enough to

---

the *Timaeus*; ii. The theme of naming the unnameable *khōra* (which parallels the divine names); and iii. The theme of *khōra's* giving by not giving (which parallels the divine donation). Although point i. depends largely on an intertextual reading, points ii. and iii. expand statements made in the present essay. For the problematic of naming see *KH*, p. 89 (the name, the above-the-name, and the other-than-name); p. 93 (non-translatability of *khōra*'s name); pp. 95–6 (substitution of names); pp. 96–7 (absence of article before *khōra*'s name); pp. 97–8 (*khōra*'s proper name); and pp. 97–8 (absence of referent for *khōra*'s name). For the theme of gift see *KH*, p. 96 (giving nothing in giving place/contrast with the Heideggerian *es gibt*); pp. 99–100 (giving place).

[13] See chapter 2, pp. 64–80.

[14] Chapter 2, pp. 64–7.

[15] Chapter 2, pp. 42–3 and n. 51.

[16] Displacement of the affirmative term by a negative term must also be at issue in this and the following passages.

> recall that *khōra* names neither this nor that, or, that *khōra* says this and that.[17]

Another passage deals with the opposition between *logos* and *muthos*. It argues first, that *khōra* cannot be identified with the displacement of the negative term by a combined term or by a transcendent term and secondly, that *khōra* can be identified with the displacement of the negative term by a combined term or by a transcendent term.[18] The dynamic tension between these two positions is described as a double oscillation.

> How is one to think the necessity of that which, while *giving place* to that opposition as to many others, seems sometimes to be itself no longer subject to the law of the very thing it *situates*? . . . The oscillation of which we have just spoken is not an oscillation among others, an oscillation between two poles. It oscillates between two types of oscillation: the double exclusion (*neither/nor*) and the participation (*both this and that*).[19]

A third passage discusses the oppositions of *muthos* and *logos* and of metaphorical and proper, and states that *khōra* cannot be identified with the displacement of the negative term by a combined term or by a transcendent term.[20] Again, the structural name of *khōra* must be identified with a non-displacing term in one semantic or asemantic category which underlies a displacing term in another semantic or asemantic category.

> With these two polarities, the thought of the *khōra* would trouble the very order of polarity, of polarity in general, whether dialectical or not. Giving place to oppositions, it would itself not submit to any reversal. And this, which is another consequence, would not be because it would intolerably be *itself* beyond its name but because in carrying beyond the polarity of sense (metaphorical or proper) it would no longer belong to the horizon of sense, nor to that of meaning as the meaning of being.[21]

It should be noted that in all three passages, the dependence of the dynamic components within the figure of (semi-) circularity and the partial figures of transcendence and translation upon the notions of

---

[17] *KH*, p. 89/Jacques Derrida, *Khōra* (Paris: Galilée, 1993), p. 16.
[18] See pp. 125–6.
[19] *KH*, pp. 90–91/*Khōra*, pp. 18–19.
[20] See n. 16.
[21] *KH*, pp. 92–3/*Khōra*, pp. 22–3.

repetition, of time, and of doubling becomes apparent.[22] The resulting association between *khōra* and repetition is elaborated elsewhere in Derrida's essay. For example, we read:

> And yet the discourse on *khōra* . . . is inaugurated by a new return . . . Backward steps give to the whole of the *Timaeus* its rhythm.[23]

The association between *khōra* and time is described as follows:

> The *khōra* is anachronistic; it "is" the anachrony within being, or better: the anachrony of being. It anachronizes being.[24]

And the association between *khōra* and doubling as follows:

> When they explicitly touch on myth, the propositions of the *Timaeus* all seem ordered by a *double motif*. In its very duplicity . . .[25]

If *khōra* is a general structure or structural name in the manner indicated, it must be substitutable with other items of a similar type. This conclusion can be verified at least in the case of "Writing:" the general structure with which we began the present account of deconstruction.[26] Concerning the relation between *khōra* and writing indicated in Derrida's essay we should note first, that the concept of writing is suggested by Plato's own texts: it is undoubtedly because the *Timaeus* itself states that the Receptacle is an "imprint-bearer" (*ekmageion*) and that "everything is written" (*panta gegrammena*) in ancient Egypt that Derrida was encouraged to transform a metaphysical into a metalinguistic discussion.[27] Secondly, the relation between *khōra* and

---

[22] For repetition and time see chapter 2, pp. 46–7; for doubling see chapter 2, pp. 50–2.

[23] *KH*, p. 125/*Khōra*, pp. 92–3.

[24] *KH*, p. 94/*Khōra*, p. 25. Cf. *KH*, pp. 93, 116, 124–5. The meaning of this achrony is clarified by some comments of Derrida in Richard Kearney, moderator "On the Gift. A Discussion between Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Marion," in *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, eds. J.D. Caputo and M. Scanlon, pp. 73 and 76–7. In addition to explaining that in the essay of that name *khōra* has been interpreted not "by Plato, but by myself against Plato," and that *khōra* is a structure, a condition of possibility, and an undecidable, Derrida notes that from the viewpoint of Heidegger's distinction between revelation and revealability *khōra* is an "event" which is *undecidably* outside and within history.

[25] *KH*, p. 112/*Khōra*, p. 65.

[26] See chapter 1, pp. 1–2.

[27] See *KH*, pp. 93, 113 (Receptacle as imprint-bearer); *KH*, pp. 114–15, 122 (ancient Egyptian writing). For the explicit connection between these two ideas see the argument at *KH*, p. 113. The motif of writing in Derrida's essay also picks up Socrates' reference to a painting (*graphē*) of the ideal state (see *KH*, pp. 117–18) and is subsequently scattered throughout the text (see *KH*, pp. 95, 98, 104, 106, etc.)

writing brings into focus the deconstruction of space by time and of time by space implicit in all the general structures.[28] Combining the Platonic descriptions of the Receptacle and of memory through their shared employment of the metaphor of wax, Derrida argues that the impressed medium remains intact together with or during the inscription of images.[29] Concerning the relation between *khōra* and writing indicated by the present essay we should note thirdly, that this association was already suggested in earlier Derridean works: for example, the comparisons of both the neuro-physiological process of *Bahnung* in "Freud and the Scene of Writing" and of the introduction of writing among the Nambikwara Indians in *Of Grammatology* to the imposition of form on matter or *hulē*.[30] In Derrida's work, the general structure of writing is also closely associated with the general structure of "inscription." This latter term implies an inauguration of writing through the reduction of infinite semantic and asemantic possibilities to a finite set which is however not unitary but repetitive, such inauguration corresponding to the transition between the neutral moment of the partial figure of transcendence and the positive moment of the figure of (semi-) circularity.[31] The relation between *khōra* and writing is stated explicitly in several passages of Derrida's essay.

At this point a question arises regarding the possible substitution of *khōra* with other general structures or structural names besides Writing. One must reply that, although the text includes some brief references to such structures as "Difference," "Secret," and "Gift"[32]—and these are presumably all substitutable with *khōra*—, it is the absence rather than the presence of the structures so prevalent in Derrida's earlier writings that is so striking.[33] A recent interpretation

---

[28] On the question of time see n. 24.

[29] See *KH*, p. 116. At *KH*, p. 106 a reduplicative idea—of "pre-inscription" (*pré-inscription*)—is added to the temporal.

[30] See Derrida, *FSW*, p. 214; and Derrida, *OG*, pp. 107–8.

[31] On inscription see further below. There is a useful discussion of inscription in Christopher Johnson, *System and Writing in the Philosophy of Jacques Derrida*, pp. 22–30, 40–42, 52–7.

[32] For difference see *KH*, pp. 104, 106; for secret, *KH*, p. 117; for gift, *KH*, pp. 95–6, 100. Regarding difference, it should be noted that the two references are specialized i.e. to Heidegger's "ontological difference" and to sexual difference respectively.

[33] At certain points, Derrida also attributes certain features of general structures as a whole to *khōra*. See *KH*, p. 91 for impossible possibility and *KH*, p. 98 for singularity.

of the essay has elaborated a substitution of difference for *khōra* and argued with some plausibility.[34] However, it seems to the present writer preferable to treat *khōra* not as a general structure in the normal register and substitutable with other such structures but as a general structure in a special category and provisionally "underlying" the substitutions of the other structures. Such an interpretation would be consistent with the statements *denying* as well as asserting the identity between *khōra* and the mechanisms of double exclusion (neither/nor) and double inclusion (both/and) at the beginning of Derrida's essay.[35] Of course, there is no inconsistency for the deconstructionist in attributing both a function in the normal register and a function in the special category to the general structure of *khōra.* Such a doubleness of function is characteristic of two other general structures which have figured extensively in the more recent Derridean texts: namely, "example" and "God."[36] Indeed, the essay on *khōra* itself draws one phase of the argument to a close with a telling reference to what has just been advocated "for example, for the sake of the example" (*par exemple, pour l'exemple*) on the subject of *khōra.*[37]

The interpretation of the general structure of *khōra* as something relatively abstract and context-free must now be displaced towards a consideration of the same general structure as a more concrete and context-sensitive element. However, this change of viewpoint does not imply that the context-free presentation was dispensable. On the contrary, that mode of presentation was required in order to permit comparison between the general structures of deconstruction and the hypostatic structures of Neoplatonism which are obviously more abstract in character. Nor does the change of viewpoint imply that *khōra* functions differently from the other general structures. In fact, the general structures of "Difference," "Trace," "Supplement," and so forth must all be considered both as context-free and as context-sensitive elements in the manner proposed here. But what precisely are the context-sensitive aspects of *khōra*? Undoubtedly, Plato's reference to the Receptacle as a "third kind" (*triton genos*) at *Tim.* 48a, 52a which Derrida elaborates into the description of a general structure escaping the duality of a positive and a negative term

[34] John D. Caputo, "Khōra. Being Serious with Plato," pp. 71–105.
[35] See pp. 128–9.
[36] For a discussion of example and God see chapter 2, pp. 89–91.
[37] *KH*, p. 95. Cf. *KH*, p. 98.

(father/son);[38] the attribution to the quasi-material principle of a variety of names like "place" (*khōra*), "receptacle" (*hupodkhē*), and "nurse" (*tithēnē*) from which Derrida extracts the notions of substitutability and femininity;[39] and Plato's reference to the Receptacle as something graspable by "a sort of illegitimate reasoning" (*logismos tis nothos*) at *Tim.* 52b which Derrida develops into an account of a general structure escaping the triplicity of a positive, a negative, and a combined term (father/mother/illegitimate offspring)[40] would all fit into this category.

But reference to the context-sensitive aspects of the general structure of *khōra* in particular implies a reading of the *Timaeus* which is based not on traversing the surface but on penetrating below the surface of that text. Therefore when Derrida contrasts the "violent reversion" (*réversion violente*) constituted by the traditional Platonic reading of the dialogue—where the "khoric" element is maintained in a subordinate position—with certain "forces inhibited" (*forces inhibées*) by that systematic metaphysical approach, he must be understood as recommending this strategy of penetration.[41] In what follows we shall perform the counter-movement against the traditional reading more generally *1.* by treating *khōra* both as a general structure to be found and as a means of finding general structures according to the double procedure applicable to all structural names,[42] but more specifically *2.* by distinguishing with respect to *khōra A.* a metaphysical and discoursive counter-movement: displacement of a positive term by a negative term and of the negative term by a combined term with respect to the duality of origin/non-origin and *B.* various discoursive components of the metaphysical and discoursive counter-movement which imitate the structure of the whole: for example, the quasi-paradigmatic distinction of signifier/signified and the quasi-syntagmatic distinction of beginning/middle.[43]

---

[38] *KH*, pp. 91–2, 106, 124–5.

[39] *KH*, pp. 91–3, 95–9, 103, 106, 113, 117, 124–6. For *hupodokhē* see *Tim.* 49a, 51a and for *tithēnē* 49a, 52d, 88d.

[40] *KH*, pp. 100, 113. On the gendered aspect of these Derridean interpretations see below.

[41] *KH*, pp. 119–21.

[42] See chapter 2, pp. 79–80.

[43] We shall focus on the counter-movements here labelled *A* and *B* because they are the most important with respect to the current project of reading Deconstruction and Neoplatonism. There are also simultaneously metaphysical and political and simultaneously metaphysical and gendered counter-movements which will not be considered here. On these see especially *KH*, pp. 104–11.

The metaphysical and discoursive counter-movement against the traditional reading of the *Timaeus* consists in the first place of a circumvention of ontological distinctions of both the Platonic and the Heideggerian kind. Derrida here explains how the *khōra*, which is now treated as a gap or abyss in the middle of the dialogue,[44] lies both between the oppositions of intelligible and sensible, of being and nothingness, and of greater and lesser being and beyond those oppositions.[45] Heidegger had already indicated this through an insightful reading in *Was heisst Denken?* where the verbal association between *khōrismos*—Plato's term for the distinction between intelligible and sensible—and *khōra* is exploited,[46] although Derrida hastens to point out that Heidegger had elsewhere mistakenly identified *khōra* with spatial extendedness and,[47] more importantly, failed to apply it to the "ontological difference" between Being and beings advocated by himself.[48] The metaphysical and discoursive counter-movement against the traditional reading of the *Timaeus* consists secondly of a deconstruction of *arkhē*: a term applicable not only to the Receptacle but also to the higher element in the Platonic dichotomies if not to the superior term in the corresponding Heideggerian structure. Given that *arkhē* in Greek means both a temporal and an ontological beginning, Plato can be understood at *Tim.* 48a–c as introducing the Receptacle with an exhortation to retrace our steps to the commencement of the narrative and also to the principles of being, i.e. to the opening of Timaeus' discourse and also to the Paradigm and Demiurge. But Derrida has shown on numerous occasions that an origin is always already related to a non-origin.[49] Therefore, Plato can be interpreted in the same text as also introducing the Receptacle by urging us to retrace our steps *beyond* the commencement of the

---

[44] On the various meanings of *khōra* including "gap" and "abyss" see p. 135ff.

[45] *KH*, pp. 103–4 and p. 148, n. 5.

[46] Martin Heidegger, *WCT*, p. 227.

[47] *KH*, p. 93 and p. 147, n. 2. See Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. R. Manheim (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1959), p. 55.

[48] *KH*, p. 104.

[49] On *arkhē* as non-*arkhē* or origin as non-origin see the important discussions of Rousseau at Derrida, *OG*, pp. 242–3 and of Condillac at Jacques Derrida, *The Archaeology of the Frivolous. Reading Condillac*, trans. J.P. Leavey, Jr. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1980)—of the two treatments the second deals more explicitly with ontology. The question of origin is closely involved with the Derridean general structure of "Inscription", since *arkhē* relates to ontology as inscription relates to Writing (= the deconstruction of ontology)—according to this analysis, the *arkhē*

discourse and also *beyond* the principles of being, i.e. to the embedded fictions and to the deconstruction of ontology.[50] For *khōra* the change is profound. On the first reading, she is the substratum for the imposition of Forms whereas on the second, she becomes the substratum for the imprinting of philosophies.

Within the discoursive aspect itself of the counter-movement, Derrida's essay can be understood as elaborating a basic structure of quasi-signifier and quasi-signified, an expansion of that structure according to the quasi-signified, and an expansion of that structure according to the quasi-signifier.[51]

The basic structure consists of a substitutive relation through the signifier—the initial χ—between the Greek terms *khōra* ("place") and *khaos* ("gap/abyss");[52] a relation of difference between the Greek word *khōra* and the French term *milieu*—a connection through the signified—; a substitutive relation through the signifier—the hyphenation—between the French terms *milieu* ("middle/environment") and

---

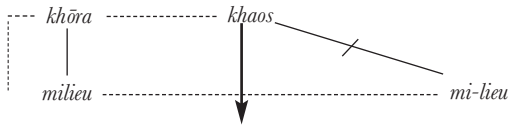
is inherently a unity prior to a system whereas inscription implies a syntax to which no unity is prior. See Derrida, *OG*, pp. 242–3 and *VM*, p. 115. The question of origin is also discussed in connection with the general structure of Trace at Derrida, *OG*, pp. 61–2. Since the Greek word *arkhē* also means "rule," the political ramifications of the deconstruction of origin emerge in passages like *FRGE*, p. 265 and *Diff.*, pp. 21–2. The ultimate source for Derrida's elaboration of the theme is clearly Heidegger who showed both the inherent contradictoriness and the inherent duality of the Leibnizian *principium reddendae rationis sufficientis* ("the principle of rendering a sufficient reason") (see Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, trans. R. Lilly (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana U.P., 1991)) and furthermore identified the Leibnizian "ground" with an "abyss" as Derrida equates the Platonic *khōra* with an abyss. With specific reference to this formulation see Jacques Derrida, "The Principle of Reason. The University in the Eyes of its Pupils," trans. C. Porter and E.P. Morris, in *Diacritics* 13 (1983), pp. 3–20.

[50] *KH*, pp. 125–6.

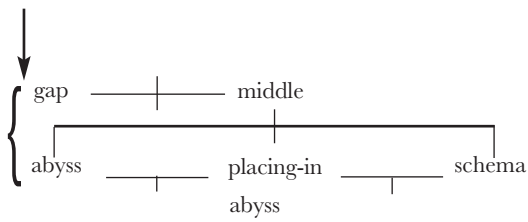
[51] These three structures mirror the synthetic ($a_2\ a_1$), affirmative ($a_1\ \bar{a}_2$), and negative ($\bar{a}_1\ a_2$) moments respectively of the deconstructive method—something further indicating that the fourfold structure is both a semiotic and an asemiotic square. On this point see chapter 2, pp. 42–3 and n. 51.

[52] See *KH*, pp. 103–4/*Khōra*, pp. 44–6, Cf. *KH*, p. 148, nn. 4–5. Derrida quotes from Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche* I (Pfullingen: Neske, 1959), p. 350 the interpretation of *khaos* as a splitting into two in Hesiod's cosmogony. Moreover, the relation between *khōra* and the Hesiodic *khaos* with respect to Gaia and Ouranos exactly parallels the relation between *khōra* and the Platonic *khōrismos* with respect to the sensible and the intelligible. Here, Derrida quotes further from Martin Heidegger, *Was heisst Denken?* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1954), pp. 174–5. The important link between *khōra* and Heidegger's "ontological difference" symbolizes the pronounced Heideggerian tone of the entire discussion analyzed here. On the link between *khōra* and Heidegger's ontological difference see also *KH*, p. 120.

mi-lieu ("half-place");[53] and a relation of opposition between the Greek word *khaos* and the French term *mi-lieu*—a connection through the signified. These relations might be diagrammed as follows:



The expansion of this basic structure according to the signified is connected with the basic structure through the two meanings of *khaos* ("gap/abyss"). In dependence upon the first meaning, "gap" in the sense of unmediated extremes can be opposed to "middle" in the sense of mediation of extremes, while in dependence upon the second meaning, "abyss" in the sense of indefinite spatial boundaries can be opposed to "schema" in the sense of definite spatial boundaries through the mediation of "placing in abyss" implying spatial boundaries which are both definite and indefinite. This may also be shown diagrammatically.

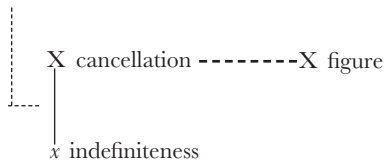


The expansion of this basic structure according to the signifier is connected with the basic structure through the replacement of the phonic meaning with a graphic meaning in the case of the initial χ of *khōra* and *khaos*. Here, X as the symbol of cancellation is differentiated on the one hand from X as the representation of a figure, and on the other hand from *x* as a symbol of indefiniteness.[54] Possibly, there is

[53] See *KH*, p. 116/*Khōra*, p. 74. It is unclear to me whether the hyphenation of *mi-lieu* in the French text represents Derrida's original intention or simply a printer's device. However, if the hyphenation resulted from the typographical justification of the line, it was no doubt a happy accident.

[54] The replacement of a phonic meaning with a graphic meaning may also be a factor in Derrida's spelling of the French phrase for "placing-in-abyss" in the archaic manner (*mise-en-abyme* rather than *mise-en-abîme*). The letter *y* (cf. the Greek letter Y) would therefore symbolize the "gap" sense of *khaos*.

an element of analogy between cancellation and gap, between figure and placing-in-abyss or schema, and between indefiniteness and abyss. These relations might be diagrammed as follows:



Derrida's use of the basic structure is illustrated by his reference to the disruption of Hegel's systematic reading of "Platonism" by *khōra*,[55] his use of the expansion through the signified by the conversion of *khōra* into the series of *mises-en-abyme* constituted by the fictions labelled *F1* to *F7*,[56] and his use of the expansion through the signifier by his reference to the inapplicability of determinate names to *khōra*.[57]

4.2 *From Ontology to Erasure*

One stage in the discussion of "What is Called 'Negative Theology?'" was the establishment of the figure of (semi-) circularity and of the partial figures of transcendence and translation as analytic principles applicable to Neoplatonism and Deconstruction alike. The figure of (semi-) circularity represented the process where a positive term is first displaced by a negative term which is then displaced by a combined term, the partial figure of transcendence the process where the negative term is displaced by a neutral term and the partial figure of translation the process where the negative term is displaced by a different realization of the combined term.[58] The specification of the terms was different in Neoplatonism and in Deconstruction. In the former case, the term to be displaced is a unitary element

---

[55] *KH*, pp. 100–104. In the present essay, Derrida explains the classic sense of "Platonism" in terms of Hegel's reading in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. Obviously, he could have explained this classic sense also in terms of Neoplatonism.

[56] See *KH*, pp. 104, 106ff., 121–4.

[57] *KH*, pp. 98–9.

[58] Chapter 2, pp. 65–7.

whereas in the latter, the term undergoing displacement is a duality of opposites. In the former case also, the term to be displaced must form part of a logically-structured conceptual network whereas in the latter, the term undergoing displacement can enter into any combination of conceptual, semantic, or verbal associations.[59] Neoplatonism understood the presence of the positive term as the "remaining" of a metaphysical principal, the initial displacement by the negative term as the "procession" of the principle, and the subsequent displacements by one realization of the combined term, by the neutral term, and by another realization of the combined term as different "reversions" of the principle.[60]

Another stage in the discussion of "What is Called 'Negative Theology?'" was our response to Derrida's interpretation of negative theology (and simultaneously the discourse about negative theology) as formalization in the three senses of a proposition—for example, of the type "S is P"—, of the antithesis of affirmative and negative—for example, negative theology as a language and as a questioning of language—, and of a set of propositions—for example, arranged according to family resemblance—although more precisely negative theology (together with the discourse about negative theology) should be understood as the exhaustion of this threefold formalization.[61] The interpretation of negative theology as formalization was shown to depend more precisely on the extent to which polysemy is also an issue. On the one hand, formalization as a polysemous term may represent not only the empty functioning of symbolic language but also the transcendental aspect of phenomenology. Here, negative theology should be conceived as occupying a position of mediation or synthesis between two types of formalization.[62] On the other hand, formalization as representing a monosemous situation may be opposed to the polysemous context associated with the secret or metaphor. Here, negative theology must rather be understood as occupying a position of mediation or synthesis between formalization and non-formalization.[63]

As remainder, we should now attempt to think further *1.* about the figure of (semi-) circularity and the partial figures of transcendence

---

[59] Chapter 2, pp. 67–8.
[60] Chapter 2, p. 68.
[61] Chapter 2, pp. 56–7.
[62] Chapter 2, pp. 56–7, 60.
[63] Chapter 2, pp. 56–7. Cf. pp. 89–91, 95–7.

and translation, *2.* about negative theology as between types of formalization and between formalization and non-formalization and *3.* about the relation of these two problematics to one another.[64] Through a happy accident of textual transmission, we have an excellent starting-point for these projects in the *Elements of Theology* by Proclus the Neoplatonist.

The Neoplatonic Figure of (Semi-) Circularity

We shall begin by citing a series of metaphysical propositions[65] according to their numbering in the original text but omitting the proofs:

4 All that is unified is other than the One itself.

–

7 Every productive cause is superior to that which it produces.
8 All that in any way participates in the Good is subordinate to the primal Good which is nothing else but good.
9 All that is self-sufficient either in its existence or in its activity is superior to what is not self-sufficient but dependent upon another existence which is the cause of its completeness.
10 All that is self-sufficient is inferior to the simply Good.
11 All that exists proceeds from a single first cause.

–

15 All that is capable of reverting upon itself is incorporeal.
16 All that is capable of reverting upon itself has an existence separable from all body.
17 Everything originally self-moving is capable of reversion upon itself.
18 Everything which by its existence bestows a character on others itself primarily possesses that character which it communicates to the recipients.

–

21 Every order has its beginning in a monad and proceeds to a multiplicity coordinate therewith; and the multiplicity in any order may be carried back to a single monad.

---

[64] The mechanism of the (a)semiotic square, of course, underlies both the figures and the formalization. See pp. 42–50.

[65] For a full discussion of the metaphysical principles underlying these propositions see Stephen Gersh, *Kinēsis Akinētos. A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973), pp. 27–102 and *From Iamblichus to Eriugena. An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978), pp. 27–121.

22 All that exists primarily and originally in each order is one and not two or more than two, but unique.
23 All that is unparticipated produces out of itself the participated; and all participated substances are linked by upward tension to existences not participated.
24 All that participates is inferior to the participated, and this latter to the unparticipated.

–

26 Every productive cause produces the next and all subsequent principles while itself remaining.
27 Every productive cause is productive of secondary existences because of its completeness and superfluity of potency.
28 Every productive cause brings into existence things like to itself before the unlike.
29 All procession is accomplished through a likeness of the secondary to the primary.
30 All that is immediately produced by any principle both remains in the producing cause and proceeds from it.
31 All that proceeds from any principle reverts in respect of its being upon that from which it proceeds.
32 All reversion is accomplished through a likeness of the reverting terms to the goal of reversion.
33 All that proceeds from any principle and reverts upon it has a cyclic activity.
34 Everything whose nature it is to revert reverts upon that from which it derived the procession of its own substance.
35 Every effect remains in its cause, proceeds from it, and reverts upon it.
36 In all that multiplies itself by procession, those terms which arise first are more perfect than the second, and these than the next order, and so throughout the series.
37 In all that is generated by reversion the first terms are less perfect than the second, and these than the next order; and the last are the most perfect.
38 All that proceeds from a plurality of causes passes through as many terms in its reversion as in its procession; and all reversion is through the same terms as the corresponding procession.
39 All that exists reverts either in respect of its existence only, or in respect of its life, or by the way of knowledge also.

40 All that proceeds from another cause is subordinate to principles which get their substance from themselves and have a self-constituted existence.
41 All that has its existence in another is produced entirely from another; but all that exists in itself is self-constituted.
42 All that is self-constituted is capable of reversion upon itself.
43 All that is capable of reversion upon itself is self-constituted.
44 All that is capable in its activity of reversion upon itself is also reverted upon itself in respect of its substance.

–

56 All that is produced by secondary beings is in a greater measure produced from those prior and more determinative principles from which the secondary were themselves derived.
57 Every cause both operates prior to its consequent and gives rise to a greater number of posterior terms.

–

61 Every power is greater if it be undivided, less if it be divided.
62 Every multiplicity which is nearer to the One has fewer members than those more remote, but is greater in power.
63 Every unparticipated term gives rise to two orders of participated terms, the one in contingent participants, the other in things which participate at all times and in virtue of their nature.
64 Every original monad gives rise to two series, one consisting of substances complete in themselves, and one of irradiations which have their substantiality in something other than themselves.
65 All that subsists in any fashion has its being either in its cause, as an originative potency; or as a substantial predicate; or by participation, after the manner of an image.

–

75 Every cause properly so called transcends its resultant.

–

81 All that is participated without loss of separateness is present to the participant through an inseparable potency which it implants.
82 Every incorporeal, if it be capable of reverting upon itself, when participated by other things is participated without loss of separateness.
83 All that is capable of self-knowledge is capable of every form of self-reversion.

–

92 The whole multitude of infinite potencies is dependent upon one principle, the first Infinity, which is not potency in the sense that it is participated or exists in things which are potent, but is Potency-in-itself, not the potency of an individual but the cause of all that is.

–

97 The originative cause of each series communicates its distinctive property to the entire series; and what the cause is primarily the series is by remission.

98 Every cause which is separate from its effects exists at once everywhere and nowhere.

99 Every unparticipated term arises *qua* unparticipated from no cause other than itself, but is itself the first principle and cause of all the participated terms; thus the first principle of each series is always without origin.

100 Every series of wholes is referable to an unparticipated first principle and cause; and all unparticipated terms are dependent from the First Principle of all things.

101 All things which participate in intelligence are preceded by the unparticipated Intelligence, those which participate in life by Life, and those which participate in being by Being; and of the three unparticipated principles Being is prior to Life and Life to Intelligence.

–

103 All things are in all things, but in each according to its proper nature: for in Being there is life and intelligence; in Life, being and intelligence; in Intelligence, being and life; but each of these exists upon one level intellectually, upon another vitally, and on a third existentially.

The *Elements of Theology*[66] set out the triad of remaining, procession, and reversion which we have been calling heretofore "the figure of (semi-) circularity" as a fundamental ontology. Given that Proclus envisages reality as a hierarchy of metaphysical principles each of which is effect of a previous and cause of a subsequent term, remaining, procession, and reversion represent three aspects of the relation

[66] See E.R. Dodds, *Proclus, The Elements of Theology. A Revised Text with Translation, Introduction, and Commentary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963). All the Proclean propositions (= "props.") in the present segment are cited from this edition.

between contiguous members of the ontological series. Our immediate concern will be with the juxtaposition of the first and second moments.[67]

Proposition 35 states the fundamental law that every effect remains in its cause, proceeds from it, and reverts to it. The proof which follows is based on excluding as impossible that an effect can remain without procession and reversion, proceed without remaining and reversion, or revert without remaining and procession, or that an effect can remain and proceed but not revert, or proceed and revert but not remain, or remain and revert but not proceed. Although this section satisfactorily demonstrates the three essential features of any causal relation, the precise meanings of remaining and procession are not explained. These must be determined by a careful study of earlier and later passages and of both propositions and proofs.

Remaining and procession obviously constitute a dynamic relation since Proclus speaks of the cyclic activity to which they contribute in prop. 33.[68] In addition, the proof goes on to make references to

---

[67] The propositions and proofs to be summarized below apply in the abstract sense to any cause-effect duality. However, in order to understand Proclus' doctrine fully it is necessary to supplement the general scheme applying to any cause-effect relation with specific details concerning the cause-effect relations between the One and the First Limit, between an intellect and another intellect, between a divine soul and a human soul, etc. The specific causal relation between the One and the immediately subsequent principle is explored in Proclus' *Commentarius in Parmenidem* VI. 1075. 16–33, VI. 1076. 30–32, VII. 1196. 23–40, VII. 64 (K.-L.) Moerbeke, VII. 68 (K.-L.) Moerbeke, the causal function of the One having been definitely stated by both Plato (*CParm.* VI. 1109. 10–14, VII. 1150. 26–8) and by the "theologians" (*CParm.* VI. 1120. 22–6). However, when speaking of the One, the term "cause" must be understood in a restricted manner. Thus, the One is not a cause in the sense of embodying a power and an activity (*CParm.* VII. 1150. 28–30, VII. 1167. 22–3) but is a cause in the sense of producing by its existence alone (*CParm.* VII. 1167. 36–41). We may also invoke the general principle that, although the One really surpasses the traditional oppositions of superior and inferior terms, it can nevertheless be named according to the superior term, and then apply this general principle to the specific case of the opposition of cause and effect (*CParm.* VI. 1123. 22–1124. 1). Moreover, the term "cause" when applied to the One signifies not what the latter is in itself but what it is in relation to subsequent things (*CParm.* VI. 1109. 12–14, VII. 1167. 28–32). It is worth noting that in certain passages Proclus associates the attribution of "causality" to the One *epistemologically* with the extent to which the latter is approachable with the knowledge which implies the determination of cause (see *CParm.* VII. 48 (K.-L.) Moerbeke), and *logically* with the extent to which it is comprehensible within a system of propositions and inferences therefrom (see *CParm.* VII. 72 (K.-L.) Moerbeke).

[68] The dynamic aspect is here the relation between procession and reversion. It contrasts with (but is also a variant of) that dynamic aspect of procession which is opposed to the static aspect of remaining. Cf. p. 144. An analogous situation obtains with contrasting aspects of otherness.

movements of various kinds. The nature of this relation is indicated in other passages by the substitution for remaining and procession sometimes of other opposite terms and sometimes of other opposite terms and a mediator.

The first moment is frequently associated with possession, and the second with non-possession i.e. of some property. For example, in prop. 18 causes are said to possess primarily a characteristic which they bestow on their effects, in prop. 65 triadic sequences of principles possess properties occurring in originative, substantial, and participatory modes, in prop. 97 causes are described as possessing primarily a characteristic which they transmit to series of terms derived from them, and in prop. 103 triadic sequences of principles possess combinations of properties which are permutated according to certain laws. Three observations should be made here. First, although these propositions refer mainly to the possession of some property by a cause, there is always by implication a non-possession of the said property by its effect.[69] Otherwise, transmission of properties is not possible. Secondly, the possession and non-possession of a property are inseparable (in circumvention of the law of contradiction)[70] according to a principle governing the relation of remaining and procession stated in prop. 30 (together with the proof). Thirdly, although the propositions refer the possession of a certain property to a cause and the non-possession to its effect, the two moments occur likewise within the cause and likewise within the effect. This is because of the fluidity with which relations turn into principles and vice versa.

The moments of remaining and procession are normally correlated with the static and the dynamic respectively. A clear example of this correlation occurs in a statement of a fundamental Proclean law of causality: that every productive cause produces the sequence of its effects while remaining in itself (prop. 26).[71]

---

[69] For the reversal of possession and non-possession see p. 146.

[70] That the law of contradiction should be flouted, in effect, within the overtly logical system of the *Elements of Theology* follows from the fact that a propositional structure is here articulated strictly as the image of a non-propositional structure. See below. For a definitive statement regarding the limits of any deductive system of theology see the remarks concluding the interpretation of the first hypothesis in Plato's *Parmenides* at Proclus, *CParm.* VII. 62–76 (K.-L.) Moerbeke.

[71] Rest and motion are negated with respect to the One according to the Proclean interpretation of the first hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides* (and are presumably affirmed with respect to principles subsequent to the One according to the corresponding

It is characteristic of Proclus' theory and of Neoplatonism in general that higher principles or causes transcend lower principles or effects. The actual term 'transcendent' occurs less frequently in Proclus' texts than in the writings of his later commentators. However, the notion is everywhere assumed to follow from his simultaneous assertions that higher principles or causes are superior to and separate from lower principles or effects. Study of the following passages indicates this.

i. *Superiority*. Prop. 7 states that everything productive of another is superior to the nature of the produced. The general rule is exemplified in the cases of the primal Good and things participating in the Good (prop. 8), the self-sufficient and the not self-sufficient (prop. 9), the simply Good and the self-sufficient (prop. 10), the unparticipated and the participated and the participated and the participating (prop. 24), the self-constituted and the not self-constituted (prop. 40), the undivided power and the divided power (prop. 61), and the unified and the multiplied (prop. 62). It should be noted in connection with superiority and inferiority, that a mediating term is often implied: namely, continuity. For example, the proof of prop. 21 speaks of a continuity linking the entire sequence of metaphysical principles from highest to lowest.[72]

That the first and second moments of the causal process can also be correlated with unity and multiplicity closely follows from what has been stated. Propositions and proofs dealing with these terms are too numerous to cite here. However, one should note prop. 11 stating that everything existing proceeds from the first cause, and prop. 21 that every order of principles proceeds from a monad to a coordinate multiplicity, etc.[73]

ii. *Separation*. Prop. 75 states that everything properly described as a cause is separated from what results from it. This general rule is exemplified in the cases of the self-constituted principles (prop. 41), and the self-completed principles (prop. 64). It should also be noted in connection with separation and non-separation that a mediating

---

Proclean reading of the second hypothesis), although they must still apply to the First Principle in some elevated and analogous sense. See Proclus, *CParm* VII. 1152. 15ff. It is interesting to observe that according to the order of discussion in the *Parmenides*, the negation of the duality rest-motion occurs before the negation of the duality same-other which is closely related, this order of discussion also being maintained in the *Elements of Theology*.

[72] Continuity is also associated with similarity at props. 28–9.

[73] See further props. 22, 36, 38, 61–2, 92.

term is often implied: namely, extension. This mediation is accomplished by means of a power which is both identical with cause and effect and comes between cause and effect, for example in prop. 81.[74]

The moments of remaining and procession are usually associated with the same and the other respectively. A good example of this association is provided in another statement of a fundamental Proclean law of causality: that no productive cause produces its effect unless there is both sameness and otherness between cause and effect (prop. 35, proof).[75]

The first moment is often associated with non-possession, and the second with possession i.e. of a certain property. For example, in prop. 23 principles which are unparticipated are placed in the order of reality before principles which are participated,[76] in prop. 65 the first members of triadic sequences possessing properties occurring in originative, substantial, and participatory modes lack the determination of the second members, and in prop. 101 the principles which are unparticipated are identified with the first members of triadic sequences. The doctrines stated here require some comments.[77] First, these propositions explicitly refer to both the non-possession of some property by a cause and the possession of the said property by its effect. Only thus can origination of properties be explained. Secondly, the non-possession and possession of a property are inseparable (in circumvention of the law of contradiction)[78] according to the principle governing the relation of remaining and procession.[79] Thirdly, these propositions associating non-possession of a property with the cause and possession of the said property with the effect obviously reverse the priorities stated in certain propositions discussed earlier. The tension between these two formulations is an essential feature of this system.

---

[74] Extension of power is elaborated further in props. 27, 56–7, 82, 98.

[75] Sameness and otherness are negated with respect to the One according to the Proclean interpretation of the first hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides* (and are presumably affirmed with respect to principles subsequent to the One according to the corresponding Proclean reading of the second hypothesis), although they must still apply to the First Principle in some elevated and analogous sense. See Proclus, *CParm.* VII. 1172. 31ff.

[76] Cf. props. 24, 63, 99–100.

[77] Cf. prop. 103.

[78] See n. 69.

[79] Prop. 30.

Remaining and procession finally represent a differentiating relation since Proclus states in prop. 4 that everything unified is other than the One, and that the unified can only arise by proceeding. This differentiating relation is manifested in all the substitutions for remaining and procession of opposite terms and opposite and mediating terms discussed above.

By this point, the presentation of the figure of (semi-) circularity in the *Elements of Theology* should be reasonably clear. We should now turn to Proclus' discussion of the partial figures of transcendence and translation.

Although the general tendency is to view the third member as comparable with the first and second members of the causal triad, the reversion does exhibit certain features which prevent it from being treated exactly in parallel with the remaining and procession. In particular, it enters into the causal process at a point where multiplicity and the concomitants of multiplicity have already been generated. This means that the third member of the triad should be examined both in the context of what one might term its basic or unitary presentation and also in the context of what we shall call its developed or unitary-multiple presentation. Moreover, the complexity of the second presentation is such that it will be necessary to consider an expanding and a contracting form of the development.

The basic or unitary presentation of reversion (*A*) consists in the first place of a conversion[80] of the procession. For example, proposition 31 states that everything which proceeds from something reverts according to its being upon that from which it proceeds. In other words, the causal process consists of a motion on the part of an effect or lower principle away from a cause or higher principle followed by a motion on the part of the effect or lower principle back towards the cause or higher principle. The same assumption underlies prop. 35—quoted earlier—stating that every effect remains in its cause, proceeds from it, and reverts upon it, and also props. 38 and 42 dealing with multiplicity and otherness respectively to be considered below. Given that procession relates to remaining as dynamic

[80] The term "conversion" has been carefully chosen to indicate a situation where whatever properties are lost in the processive stage are regained in the revertive stage (or vice versa). In Neoplatonism, these properties are most often treated as (pseudo-) spatial coordinates i.e. procession is a motion downwards or outwards and reversion a motion upwards or inwards. We therefore have a metaphoricity of place.

to static, as multiple to unitary, and as other to same, one would expect reversion to restore at least to a certain extent the static, unitary, and same in the face of their oppositions. That this is what occurs is indicated by the proof of prop. 33 which describes the continuity of the causal process in beginning from the remaining and ending with the remaining; by prop. 21 stating that in every order there is a procession of multiplicity from a monad and a return of that multiplicity to the monad; and by the proof of prop. 34 which describes the appetition which the effect has in relation to its cause on grounds of similarity.[81]

The basic presentation of reversion (*A*) also consists of a combination of remaining and procession. The evidence for this is clear although indirect being based on the circumstances that *i.* remaining and procession of an effect are dependent on the sameness and otherness respectively of that effect in relation to its cause, *ii.* reversion of an effect is dependent on the similarity of that effect in relation to its cause, and *iii.* similarity represents a combination of sameness and otherness. Various propositions convey point *ii.* For example, prop. 32 and the attached proof speak of the similarity between effect and cause, of the juncture between effect and cause, and of the communion between effect and cause associated with reversion.[82] Likewise the proof of prop. 34 describes the similarity between effect and cause, and the sympathy between effect and cause. The proof of prop. 35 speaks of the similarity between effect and cause, of the juncture between effect and cause, of the communion between effect and cause, and of the sympathy between effect and cause implied by the reversion. Finally, the proof of prop. 38 describes the similarity between effect and cause.[83]

---

[81] For this appetition see also prop. 31 pr. and prop. 42 pr.

[82] The technical terms in Greek are "similarity" (*homoiotēs*), "juncture" (*sundesis*), "communion" (*koinōnia*), and "sympathy" (*sumpatheia*).

[83] In Proclus' interpretation of Plato's *Parmenides*, the negations with respect to the One of similarity and dissimilarity parallel the negations with respect to the One of rest and motion and of sameness and otherness. See Proclus, *CParm* VII. 1191. 10ff. However, a more important function is assigned to the higher analogue of similarity—the "natural striving" (*autophuēs ephesis*) of things towards the One—than to the higher analogues of rest and sameness. See *CParm.* VII. 1199. 16–21, etc. It is worth noting that Proclus explicitly connects the negation with respect to the One of similarity and dissimilarity with the *Elements of Theology* discussion of similarity. See *CParm.* VII. 1200. 8–14.

The basic or unitary presentation of reversion (*A*) consists in the third place of a transposition[84] of the remaining. Thus, prop. 37 states that of all terms which are generated by reversion the first are less perfect than the second and the second less perfect than the subsequent, the last being the most perfect. The reference here to the generation of effects or lower principles by reversion is initially puzzling, since such things are normally said to arise by procession from a cause which remains undiminished.[85] However, the explanation is clearly that terms generated by reversion are also terms generated from remaining. This is because when effects or lower principles have reverted upon the higher, they themselves become causes which are intermediate between higher and lower and remain, while further effects or lower principles revert upon them in their turn. This ontologically *generative* model of reversion (*G*)—which we have provisionally been calling "the partial figure of translation"—might be imagined spatially as a spiral.[86]

That the basic presentation of reversion is threefold: as conversion of the procession, as combination of remaining and procession, and as transposition of the remaining is where the much-discussed parallel with Hegel really lies. The Proclean ontological triad and the Hegelian dialectical triad differ markedly, especially through the distinction between ideal and real moments peculiar to the latter. However, Hegel's *Aufhebung* cancels the previous moments, preserves the previous moments, and shifts the process to a new register in a triple cycle strongly reminiscent of its Neoplatonic antecedent.

The developed or unitary-multiple presentation of reversion[87] (*B*) consists in the first place of an expanding scheme (B^1). By this is meant that an effect or lower principle reverts not only upon a prior cause immediately but also upon one or more higher causes mediately. The situation is made clear by the proof attached to prop. 33 which argues that all things move from their causes and to their

---

[84] The term "transposition" has also been carefully chosen to indicate a situation where whatever properties are lost when moving away from the remaining stage are regained *in a new manner* when moving back to the remaining stage.

[85] This fundamental law is set out in prop. 26.

[86] On spatial depiction of the process see chapter 2, pp. 65–6.

[87] Strictly speaking, the developed scheme applies to procession as well as to reversion. However, a statistical sampling of Proclus' text indicates a more frequent association of the developed scheme—both in the expanding and contracting form—with the reversion.

causes again in greater and lesser circuits, there being reversions to immediately prior terms, reversion to higher terms, and even reversions to the first cause. Prop. 38 completes the symmetry of the scheme by stating that everything that proceeds from a multiplicity of causes reverts through as many terms as it proceeds, all reversion being through those very terms through which the procession takes place. Since the effect or lower principle here passes through its own mediate cause to others higher up the sequence, its reversion to the mediate cause must be complete. This ontologically *non-generative* model of reversion (*NG*)—which we have provisionally been calling "the partial figure of transcendence"—might be imagined spatially as a circle.[88]

This presentation of reversion (*B*) also consists of a contracting scheme (B^2). The latter implies that an effect or lower principle not only reverts upon its cause but also upon itself and occurs in three groups of propositions. In the first group, principles which revert upon themselves are identified with incorporeal principles (props. 15–16) to which should be added a further proposition categorizing the self-moving as self-reverting (prop. 17). In the second group, principles which revert upon themselves are identified with self-constitutive principles (props. 42–3) to which should be added a further proposition establishing the coincidence of self-reversion according to activity and self-reversion according to substance (prop. 44). The third group consists of a proposition stating that self-reverting principles[89] are participated by other things without loss of separateness (prop. 82), and a proposition stating that principles self-reverting in respect of knowledge are also self-reverting in respect of other characteristics (prop. 83).[90]

The two most difficult questions about the theory of reversion unfolded in the propositions of the *Elements of Theology* are perhaps those concerning the more general difference between the basic (*A*) and developed (*B*) presentations and the more specific difference between the generative (*G*) and non-generative (*N-G*) models. The difference between the two presentations is frequently reducible for Proclus, given that a notion of participatory modes is combined with the theory of reversion and that the various principles constituting

[88] It should be noted that the non-generative model of reversion is compatible with both the unitary and the multiple presentations.

[89] Shown to be incorporeal in props. 15–16.

[90] These other characteristics are vitality and being as specified in prop. 39.

the order of reality dynamically interpenetrate one another. Thus reversion to the self as cause, reversion through the immediately prior term to a higher cause, and reversion to the immediate cause may coalesce in the activity of the transcendent sphere. This metaphysical ambivalence underpins the hermeneutical flexibility employed by the Neoplatonists in their readings of traditional mythology. However, that the more general difference between the basic (*A*) and the developed (*B*) presentations is reducible does not of itself imply that the more specific difference between the generative (*G*) and non-generative (*N-G*) models can be similarly treated. In fact, the difference between the two models is sometimes irreducible in Proclus, given that the theory of reversion is combined with a notion of different levels of reality and that these different levels of reality enjoy individual modes of activity. For example, reversion according to being seems to imply the generative model exclusively but reversion according to intellect partly the generative and partly the non-generative model.[91]

---

[91] Although the doctrine of remaining, procession, and reversion is a relatively stable feature of Proclus' metaphysical system, there are certain variations in its application at different levels of his system. One such variation—whose epistemological ramifications are considerable—concerns the particular soul. According to Proclus, *ET*, prop. 211, when the particular or human soul descends there is not a part of it which remains above and a part which descends, the remaining function of the soul being apparently discharged by a demonic soul mediating between divine and human (see prop. 202, pr.). Obviously, this theory exploits possible differences between the basic and developed presentations. According to Proclus, *CParm.* IV. 948. 12–950. 34, the doctrine further implies *i.* that the particular or human soul can only know in an immediate sense and without higher assistance – i.e. by the theoretical activity of philosophy—the lowest level of the Forms (contained within the Proclean hypostasis of Intellect)—this point is made on the basis of Parmenides' statement about the unknowability of the Forms at Plato, *Parm.* 134b; *ii.* that the particular or human soul can know in a mediate sense and with higher assistance—i.e. by the practical activity of theurgy—the higher levels of Forms (contained within the Proclean hypostases of Being and Life)—this point being made on the basis of Socrates' reference to mystic rites, initiations, and visions at Plato, *Phaedrus* 249d ff. (Compare also Proclus, *Commentaria in Timaeum*, ed. E. Diehl (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–6) II. 241. 29ff., III. 333. 28–334. 3 on both these points). The doctrine of the particular or human soul's descent together with its epistemological consequences is explicitly directed against Plotinus' position stated in *Enn.* IV. 8 [6] 8. 1–6, V. 1 [10] 12. 1–21, III. 4 [15] 3. 21–7, VI. 5 [23] 7. 1–8, etc. On the disagreement between Plotinus and Proclus see E. R. Dodds, *Proclus, The Elements of Theology*, pp. xx, 299–300, 309–10; Carlos Steel, *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius, and Priscianus* (Brussel: Paleis der Academiën, 1978), pp. 37–8; H.-D. Saffrey, "La théurgie comme phénomène culturel chez les néoplatoniciens (IV^{e}–V^{e} siècles)," in *Recherches sur le Néoplatonisme après Plotin* (Paris: Vrin, 1990), pp. 51–61; and Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul. The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), p. 11ff.

The Elements of Ontotheology

In using Proclus' *Elements of Theology* as the textual basis for the theory of remaining, procession, and reversion we have continually cited the propositions, proofs, and corollaries into which the treatise is divided. Although the choice of such principles of organization by the original writer reflects a certain generalized dialectical intent, there seems little doubt that Proclus is here attempting more specifically to apply the Euclidean geometrical method to philosophy. In so doing, he places himself squarely within the Greek tradition of reflecting upon the methodological relations between mathematics and philosophy which is exemplified by Plato's discussion of the education of the guardians in the *Republic*[92] and Aristotle's account of the organization of the disciplines in the *Metaphysics*.[93] However, he also situates himself in a more idiosyncratic position within the Greek tradition in two respects. First, he treats mathematics as a discipline whose method is not only similar to that of philosophy but can actually be transferred to the latter. This is because of the ontological relation between image and paradigm which underlies the methodological relation between the two spheres. Secondly, he chooses geometry over arithmetic as the mathematical discipline most capable of adaptation to philosophical ends. This is because of the propositional method which had already been developed uniquely within this branch of mathematics.[94]

In fact, Proclus is himself the author of an important extant commentary on Euclid's *Elements of Geometry* and applies the method derived from that work in several areas. In the sphere of physics—the discipline which ranks below mathematics in the traditional Aristotelian tripartition of theoretical knowledge—the Neoplatonist applies geometrical method to the study of mobile and embodied forms. This application can be seen in the work entitled *Elements of Physics* where the general approach is first to set out a series of self-evident premises and then to construct logical demonstrations through

---

[92] Plato, *Rep.* VI. 509d–511e.

[93] Aristotle, *Metaphysics* E 1. 1025b 18ff.

[94] The argument developed in this paragraph and the next is broadly in agreement with Dominic O' Meara, *Pythagoras Revived. Mathematics and Philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). On Proclus' reasons for applying geometrical method to philosophy see pp. 166–75, 192–4. For the application of the method to physics see pp. 177–94; for the application of the method to theology see pp. 195–209.

the combination of these axioms. Because its procedure corresponds to the hypothetical method used to ascend to the Good in Plato's *Republic*, Euclid's approach is preferred to the syllogistic mode of reasoning practiced by Aristotle.[95] In the sphere of theology—the discipline ranking above mathematics in the same Aristotelian threefold division of theoretical knowledge—the Neoplatonist applies geometrical method to the study of immobile and disembodied forms. It is this application which can be seen in the *Elements of Theology* where, however, the general approach is to construct logical demonstrations through the combination of propositions without prefixing these with a group of self-evident axioms. Plato's approach is here preferred to the syllogistic mode of reasoning practiced by Aristotle because its procedure corresponds to the hypothetical method used to describe the One in Plato's *Parmenides*.[96]

Whatever the situation may be with respect to other metaphysical systems, the notion that one might express theological truths and thereby implicitly obtain access to the divinity through the employment of propositions is problematic for a Neoplatonist like Proclus. Subsequently to the clear teaching of Plotinus, the Neoplatonists held that there are at least three distinct levels of reality—the so-called hypostases of the One (or Good), Being-Intellect, and Soul—and that among the distinguishing features of these levels are their different relations to propositional structure. In fact, the One (or Good) is without propositional structure in the sense of transcending propositional

---

[95] For the connection between the Euclidean method and the hypothetical method of the *Republic* and implicitly also that of the *Parmenides* see Proclus, *Commentarii in primum Euclidis Elementorum librum*, ed. G. Friedlein (Leipzig: Teubner, 1873), 50. 10ff.

[96] For the superiority of the hypothetical method of the *Parmenides* (and implicitly also that of the *Republic*) over the Aristotelian syllogistic see Proclus, *CParm.* 1007. 10ff. It should be noted that Proclus, in adapting the Euclidean method either with or without the preliminary statement of axioms and in associating this procedure from different viewpoints with the hypothetical method of Plato's *Republic* and Plato's *Parmenides* respectively, does not explicitly deal with the figurative element of geometry. However, that figures as well as propositions are transferable between the realm of geometry and those of physics and theology is indicated by the extensive application in both the latter domains of circular shape—for example, the statement of the principle whereby the procession of a hypostasis or component of a hypostasis is always followed by a reversion—and of proportional mediation—for instance, the statement of the principle whereby the procession and reversion of a hypostasis or component of a hypostasis always takes place through mean terms. The projection of the figurative element into the domains of physics and theology also contributes to Proclus' philosophical agenda in making it possible for him to incorporate much traditional Pythagorean doctrine into the reading of Plato.

structure because it lacks all complexity. Being-Intellect is without propositional structure in the sense of transcending propositional structure because, although it exhibits complexity, the latter is not predicative. However, Soul possesses propositional structure in accordance with its function as the center of discursive, reasoning, or dianoetic activity in the Neoplatonic system.[97] Given the fundamental assumption of this metaphysical outlook that propositional structure invariably combines the senses of entailment—which is logical and atemporal—with inference—which is psychological and temporal—, and the further assumption that knowing is accomplished through the uniting of subject and object—with varying degrees of identity on the levels of Being-Intellect and of Soul respectively—, the range of epistemological possibilities is as follows:[98] 1. Soul (activating propositions) thinks Soul (structured propositionally), 2. Soul (activating propositions) thinks Intellect (structured non-propositionally), 3. Soul (activating propositions) thinks the One (not structured), 4. Intellect (active non-propositionally) thinks Intellect (structured non-propositionally), 5. Intellect (active non-propositionally) thinks the One (not structured).[99]

---

[97] In what follows, we shall treat "propositional structure (language)" and "predicative structure (language)" as virtual synonyms—there are differences between these which will, however, be unimportant with respect to our particular argument. Technically speaking, a *proposition* (i.e. a standard-form categorical proposition) *1.* consists of a schema: quantifier + subject term + copula + predicate term; *2.* is either true or false; *3.* affirms or denies relations between classes. A *predicate* is *a.* something affirmed or denied of a subject and therefore *b.* has a status relative to that of a proposition. In most ancient philosophy (and especially in Neoplatonism) there is a tendency to psychologize both propositions and predicates.

[98] We shall present this structure roughly as it occurs in the writings of Plotinus. In the post-Plotinian Neoplatonism exemplified by Proclus, the situation is actually more complicated in that the hypostasis of Intellect is subdivided into the hypostases of Being, Life, and Intellect

[99] One of the main purposes of the discussion to follow is, of course, to establish the exact parameters of formalization in Neoplatonism. These in their term will provide the structural framework within which negative theology might be understood. In accordance with the criteria to be outlined, it will be possible to relate the discoursive complex of negative theology to the Neoplatonic theory of the hypostases in a precise manner. Thus, i. negative (and affirmative) theology could be applied to the One by Soul. Its linguistic expression would be "the One is x," "the One is not-x," "the One is x and not-x," the subject-predicate relation and the law of contradiction being maintained in such discourse; ii. negative (and affirmative) theology could be applied to the One by Soul undergoing transition to Intellect. Its linguistic expression would be "the One x," "the One not-x," "x the One," "not-x the One," "x not-x," "not-x x," the subject-predicate relation and the law of contradiction no longer being maintained by the discourse. The important point is that the discoursive complex of negative theology turns out to be somewhat

Although the ideas just summarized underlie almost their entire philosophical doctrine, we find relatively few texts in which the Neoplatonists deal with them directly and overtly. The clearest statements regarding the relation between thinking and propositions occur within the following five passages of Plotinus' *Enneads*:[100]

Plotinus concludes the discussion in *Enneads* I. 3 (= "On Dialectic") by describing what he calls the most precious part of philosophy in terms of a contrast.[101] On one side, there is a dialectic in the sense of Soul's thinking activity as Soul where Aristotelian logical method is applied. This determines the truth about the nature of things and the relations between them, here specified as Being and the Good.[102] Because we are discussing Soul's activity as Soul with respect to cognitive objects like Being-Intellect and the Good, it is possible to describe this activity as consisting of "premises and conclusions" (*protaseis kai sullogismoi*) regarding such objects,[103] although these are really propositions "in the sense of words" (*kai gar grammata*).[104] In contrast with all this, there is a dialectic in the sense of Soul's thinking activity when undergoing transition into Intellect where Platonic logical method is involved. This inhabits the so-called Meadow of Truth, where it makes division among Being itself, the Forms and Kinds,

---

different in each case. In fact, the difference confirms Jacques Derrida's intuition that negative theology is caught in the oscillation between formalization and the secret (see Derrida, *SLN*, p. 80a–c).

[100] There is no comparable discussion in Proclus. However, the latter's explanation of the unexpected conclusion of the first hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides* where after completing the series of negations the text runs: "Is it possible that all this holds true of the One?" "I should say not" (Plato, *Parm.* 142a) provides some useful suggestions. Although our difficulties of interpretation are here compounded by the fact that we must now rely on a Latin translation which breaks off suddenly and contains numerous lacunae, it is possible to discern among the solutions to the aporia of this text attributed to Proclus' teacher Syrianus certain arguments directed towards the overcoming of propositional form as such. At *CParm.* VII. 70–74 (K.-L.) Moerbeke the argument seems to include the following points: *i.* Ultimately nothing is true of the One because truth depends upon propositions, any proposition says that "this" belongs to "that," and nothing can belong to the One; *ii.* If we allow the use of propositions and therefore also apply the law of non-contradiction, we can say that contradictory propositions are for the inexpressible both false (although we cannot say that they are both true); *iii.* In ascending to the One, the Soul no longer practices deliberation—making inquiry about what is and what is not—and the Intellect no longer intuits what is subsequent to the One. On non-propositional thought in Proclus see further n. 123.

[101] Plotinus, *Enn.* I. 3 [20] 4. 1–5. 23.

[102] *Enn.* I. 3 [20] 4. 2–9.

[103] *Enn.* I. 3 [20] 4. 18–19.

[104] *Enn.* I. 3 [20] 5. 18.

and the First Principle.[105] Given that it is Soul's activity with respect to cognitive objects like Being-Intellect and the Good when undergoing transition into Intellect which is at issue here, Plotinus describes this activity as "giving to another science" (*allēi technēi dousa*) the premisses and conclusions, but as retaining "useful" (*khrēsima*) and discarding "superfluous" (*peritta*) elements within such logic,[106] and as concerning itself only with "that truth which they call a proposition" (*to alēthes . . . ho kalousi protasin*) and with "the motions of the soul" (*ta kinēmata tēs psuchēs*).[107]

The next two passages—which are extracted from two parts of a single treatise—ostensibly describe Intellect's thinking activity as Intellect. However, since any description must be discursive and propositional in character, we are actually faced with a more complex situation. This would be (Soul's thinking of) Intellect's thinking activity as Intellect.

The treatise "On the Intellectual Beauty" (*Enneads* V. 8) completes its descriptive ascent through the levels of beauty in chapter 4. Here, we read Plotinus' account of the beauty of Intellect—and Intellect perhaps already undergoing transition into the One—whose main features are a structure whereby all the properties of the hypostasis are present although one property is dominant in each component, this circumvention of the usual spatial configuration of whole and parts being applied especially to Being, Life, Wisdom, and the "Greatest Kinds."[108] But what precisely is this Wisdom? This is described with great care as "not built-up of reasonings but complete from the beginning" (*ou poristheisa logismois, hoti aei ēn pasa*)[109] and a little later as not "theorems and an accumulation of propositions" (*theorēmata kai sumphorēsis protaseōn*).[110] The next two chapters add further precisions. In chapter 5 the Wisdom on the level of Being-Intellect is "no longer built up of theorems but a single totality, and a multiple structure not coordinated towards a unity but rather resolved

---

[105] *Enn.* I. 3 [20] 4. 9–18.
[106] *Enn.* I. 3 [20] 4. 20–24.
[107] *Enn.* I. 3 [20] 5. 18–20. Plotinus is here trying to describe something of a psycho-intellectual kind which lies behind that psycho-linguistic phenomenon which is commonly called a "proposition" and represents a higher and more originary form of the latter.
[108] *Enn.* V. 8 [31] 4. 1–6. 19.
[109] *Enn.* V. 8 [31] 4. 35–7.
[110] *Enn.* V. 8 [31] 4. 48–9.

from unity into multiplicity" (*ouketi suntetheisa ek theorēmatōn, all'holē hen ti, ou hē sungkeimenē ek pollōn eis hen, alla mallon analuomenē eis plēthos ex henos*).[111] Further precisions are made in the context of an analogy where the higher Wisdom is compared with lower reasoning in terms of immediacy as hieroglyphic script is compared with alphabetic writing. Here, the Wisdom on the level of Being-Intellect is characterized by "non-discursiveness" (*hē ou diexodos*), "is neither discursive reasoning nor deliberation" (*ou dianoēsis oude bouleusis*), does not "state its truth and the reasons why things are as they are in discourse" (*legon auto en diexodōi kai tas aitias, di'has houtō*), and subsists "before inquiry and reasoning" (*pro dzētēseos kai pro logismou*).[112]

In *Enneads* V. 5 ("That the Intelligibles are not Outside the Intellect and On the Good") the argument is more epistemological in character. Starting from the premiss that Intellect cannot be in error—from which it is concluded, among other conclusions immediately drawn, that it does not perform "demonstration" (*apodeixis*)—Plotinus considers three possible explanations of this infallibility. The first hypothesis which will be rejected is that Intellect and the intelligibles are separate, the second also to be rejected is that Intellect and the intelligibles are conjoined, and the third which will be accepted is that Intellect and the intelligibles are not separate.[113] It is in the course of rejecting the second hypothesis and affirming the third that Plotinus raises questions about the status of discursive reasoning with respect to Being-Intellect. Thus, the conjoining of Intellect and the intelligibles would imply either that the intelligibles have no intelligence or that they have intelligence, and in the former case neither the interpretation of these non-intelligent realities on the one hand as "premisses, axioms, and expressions" (*protaseis . . . axiōmata . . . lekta*)—for example, where beauty might be predicated of the just—nor the interpretation of them on the other hand as "simple utterances" (*hapla phēsousi*)—for example, where one might utter the word for justice or beauty separately—would make any sense.[114] The non-separation of Intellect and the intelligibles would however imply that Intellect "has no need of demonstration or belief" (*oud'apodeixeōs dei oude pisteōs*). Such self-presence further implies that Intellect knows "what is prior

[111] *Enn.* V. 8 [31] 5. 5–8.
[112] *Enn.* V. 8 [31] 6. 7–11 and 17–18.
[113] *Enn.* V. 5 [32] 1. 1–2. 24.
[114] *Enn.* V. 5 [32] 1. 37–42.

to itself by recognizing its source and what is subsequent to that prior by recognizing its own self-identity" (*ei ti pro autou, hoti ex autou, kai ei ti met'ekeino, hoti autos*), that "its utterance is its existence" (*ho legei, kai esti*).[115] The non-separation of intellect and the intelligibles would finally imply that "any refutation borne against what was said earlier is borne into unity with what was originally said" (*ho pheromenos elenchos tōi proeiponti . . . pheretai eis ton exarchēs eiponta kai hen estin*).[116] That these paragraphs contain such an elaborate demonstration regarding the non-demonstrative nature of Intellect shows that we are implicitly approaching Intellect from the level of Soul.

The next two passages—which are extracted from two separate treatises of the *Enneads*—supplement the theory of predication with examples. Both texts deal with our approach to the One (or Good). They argue that since predication contains an element of duality, and duality is incompatible with the One, predication is incompatible with the latter.

The two passages, however, produce a complication. They contrast our approach to the One with our approach to Intellect, arguing that although predication and duality are incompatible with the One, predication and duality are compatible with Intellect. Ostensibly this argument would conflict, as regards the relation between Being-Intellect and predication, with the arguments of the passages considered earlier. However, Plotinus could easily maintain that all predication implies duality without also holding that all duality implies predication. Therefore the passages probably contrast our approach to the One with our approach to Intellect by arguing that although predication and duality are incompatible with the One, predication but not duality is incompatible with Intellect. In the case of a philosopher who maintains as his usual assumptions *1.* that the logical structure of a proposition is not distinct from its psychological articulation and *2.* that Intellect's thinking of Intellect is actually (Soul's thinking of) Intellect's thinking of Intellect, the expression of this central idea in the manner chosen is possible and perhaps inevitable.

In *Enneads* VI. 7 ("How the Multiplicity of the Forms came into Being and On the Good") Plotinus sets out to demonstrate that the multiplicity of Forms is produced and sustained by intellective activity

[115] *Enn.* V. 5 [32] 2. 13–20.
[116] *Enn.* V. 5 [32] 2. 20–24.

and that, since the first principle is absolute unity, this formal multiplicity and intellective activity must be a secondary principle. The essay concludes with a refutation of Aristotle's doctrine of the Unmoved Mover where, in a brief but important passage, the main argument that the Good transcends intellection appears in the form of an argument that the Good transcends the psycho-linguistic expression of that intellection.[117] This linguistic discussion is based on the analysis of two possible statements about the Good by successfully bracketing the three components in each statement. Thus, in the case of the complete statement "he is (the) Good," the expression "he is" (*estin*) does not apply to the first principle because the latter transcends being, while the expression "he is good" (*agathos esti*) does not apply because it transcends the predicative relation. Regarding the expression "good" (*agathon*) Plotinus is circumspect. Possibly this is more applicable to the first principle, although without the addition of the article (*to → tagathon*)—which presumably introduces an inapplicable element of thingness—it conveys little meaning.[118] Plotinus now shifts from a statement in the third person to a statement in the first. Here, in the case of the complete statement "I am (the) Good," the expression "I am" (*ego eimi*) does not apply to the first principle again because the latter transcends being, while the expression "I am the Good" (*agathon eimi*) does not apply because it transcends the predicative relation. The expression "good" (*agathon*) again requires a different treatment. Its application to the first principle gives rise to the difficulty that someone thinking this will either be forced to think the complete expression "I am (the) Good" (*ego eimi to agathon*) or else to think something not present to him as a thinker—leading to various further absurd consequences.[119]

The treatise "The Knowing Hypostases and the Beyond" (*Enneads* V. 3) describes the transition between Intellect and the One in chapters 10 and 11 and the One itself from chapter 12 onwards.[120] When speaking of Intellect near the beginning of this section, Plotinus notes

---

[117] *Enn.* VI. 7 [38] 38. 1–25.

[118] *Enn.* VI. 7 [38] 38. 1–10. The interpretation of this difficult passage proposed here is clearly not the only possible one. However, the main point of importance for our argument—that the Good transcends the predicative and propositional discourse associated with Soul's thinking of Intellect (or alternatively: the predicative and propositional discourse associated with Intellect's psycho-linguistic expression)—is not affected by these ambiguities.

[119] *Enn.* VI. 7 [38] 11ff.

[120] *Enn.* V. 3 [49] 10. 1–16. 42.

that this hypostasis implies duality in the sense of a combination of sameness and otherness between its subject and object and between the objects themselves. A few lines further on, he seems to correlate these two possibilities with two modes of Intellect's psycho-linguistic expression. Whenever one says "I am this" (*eimi tode*), if the "this" asserts something other than the subject it implies falsity whereas if the "this" asserts something included in the subject it implies multiplicity.[121] When turning to the One near the end of this section, Plotinus makes two important points: first, that the One is "not sayable" (*arrhēton*), because when we speak we must "say something" (*ti eipein*), while the One is "not something" (*oute ti*); secondly, that the One cannot have said of it "I am that being" (*on eimi*), because in speaking thus one says a "multiple" (*polu*), while the One is "simple" (*haploun*).[122] This seems to deny the psycho-linguistic expression of Intellect's dualities in relation to the combination of sameness and otherness between the different objects and between its subject and object respectively which are affirmed in his earlier paragraph.

Although the extent to which one may or may not express theological truths in propositional form is understood quite clearly by the Neoplatonists, the fact that relatively few of their texts address this question explicitly has given rise to something of a controversy during the last twenty years.[123] It is important that we should briefly review and respond to some of the main arguments in play here.

---

[121] *Enn.* V. 3 [49] 10. 23–37.

[122] *Enn.* V. 3 [49] 13. 1–31.

[123] The only substantial text of Proclus parallel to the Plotinian passages summarized above is perhaps *CParm* III. 807. 29–810. 22 where Parmenides is questioning Socrates about the existence of the Forms of Justice, Beauty, and Goodness. Here, Proclus contrasts the One which precedes thought with Intellect which thinks all the Forms together and simultaneously and with Soul which thinks all the Forms separately and successively. The contrast between the relatively unifying character of Intellect and the relatively dividing character of Soul is clarified in two further ways by the present passage: *i.* The relation between external and internal speech is analogous to that between discursive and intellective thought, and *ii.* The relation between discursive and intellective thought is expressed mythically as that between the preserved heart and dismembered body of Dionysus. With the argument of this passage one may compare Proclus, *CTim.* II. 145. 4–146. 1, *Commentaria in Cratylum*, ed. G. Pasquali (Leipzig: Teubner, 1908), 182. 109. 16–21, *Hymni*, ed. E. Vogt (Wiesbaden, 1957), VII. 11–15. In certain passages, Proclus suggests that the ascent above the intuitive level must be achieved by the practical activity of theurgy rather than by the theoretical activity of philosophy, this also applying perhaps to ascent above the discursive level in general. See Proclus, *CTim.* I. 302. 17–25, *CParm.* V. 1025. 30–37.

The controversy began with a short essay addressing what it calls the enigmatic character of non-discursive thought in ancient philosophy.[124] Of the two varieties of non-discursive thinking: the non-inferential and the non-propositional, it is the latter which is singled out for discussion. This is further specified as involving *a.* no transition from concept to concept, *b.* the thinking of everything at once, *c.* no distinction between subject and object, *d.* restriction to immaterial form, and *e.* independence from sensible imagery. The author naturally finds this non-discursive thinking exemplified in the Plotinian texts which we have already discussed and traces its historical origins back to Aristotle. However, the most interesting aspect of his essay is its attempt at a philosophical explanation of this non-discursivity. It is suggested that this mode of thinking means that a concept like "beauty" can exist or occur in independence of any actually-existing proposition like "beauty is truth," for example where we begin to think the proposition but are interrupted before we can complete it.[125]

This account of what is basically a traditional interpretation of Neoplatonism was sufficiently able and creative to have stimulated a critical response.[126] The critic attacks the reading of Plotinus. Mainly on the basis of *Enneads* V. 3. 10, he argues that Plotinus' account of the non-discursive and especially his account of the non-propositional applies not to Intellect but to "the higher level of union with the One."[127] The critic also attacks the reading of Aristotle. Using a more extensive selection of texts, he argues that Aristotle's doctrine cannot be seen as furnishing any precedent for a *non-propositional* type of thinking although it admits the possibility of a *non-discursive* mode of thought. The earlier essay's attempt at a philosophical explanation of the non-propositional is attacked on two fronts. First, Aristotle at least could not have been envisaging interrupted thinking of the kind proposed given his general assumption that thinking is the most perfect activity for either man or God—interruptive thinking could

[124] A.C. Lloyd, "Non-discursive Thought—An Enigma of Greek Philosophy," in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 70 (1969–70), pp. 261–74.

[125] Lloyd, p. 270.

[126] Richard Sorabji, "Myths about Non-propositional Thought," in *Language and Logos. Studies in Ancient Greek Philosophy Presented to G.E.L. Owen*, eds. M. Schofield and M.C. Nussbaum (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1982), pp. 295–314. Revised version in Richard Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum. Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (London: Duckworth, 1983), pp. 137–56.

[127] Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, pp. 137, 152. The Plotinus passage is discussed on pp. 154–5.

hardly be perfect. Secondly, Aristotle at least could not have been envisaging a thinking isolative in the manner suggested given his further statements that the acquisition of truth is possible with this activity—truth could only arise through combination.[128] But what precisely is the non-discursive but propositional thinking which Aristotle and also Plotinus have in mind? The answer is not very clear. It is said to consist of "contemplating the definitions of incomposite subjects" and "contemplating these definitions arranged into a unified network." Such thinking is said to be propositional because it tells us "that such-and-such an essence belongs to such-and-such a subject" or "that so-and-so is so-and-so."[129]

The author of the original essay decided to reply.[130] His reply begins by explicitly quoting the Plotinian passages which unambiguously attribute non-propositional thinking to Intellect. Having mustered the primary sources, it continues by rendering explicit the distinction upon which his opponent's thesis implicitly turns—that between transition of temporal moments and transition as logical copula—and by showing that the idea of denying both processes to Intellect is a plausible one. In fact, the complexity and dynamism of the hypostasis can be explained in terms of a form of consciousness which *would have* been subject to a predicate if realized in discursive thinking, and also in terms of a relation between the intentional and extensional aspects of logical structure.[131]

This controversy is valuable in bringing into the open certain questions which are usually hidden in discussions of the Neoplatonists but on which the coherence or incoherence of their philosophical programme ultimately depends. By way of response to this debate, we should say something about the textual basis, address the specific points raised by the critic of the traditional view, and advance some new proposals.

It is perhaps worth reiterating that the text of Plotinus' *Enneads* states quite clearly that the cognitive activity of Being-Intellect is non-discursive *and* non-propositional. In stating this negatively-transcendent aspect of the hypostasis concerned, treatise I. 3 refers to premisses

---

[128] Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, p. 140.

[129] Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum*, pp. 141, 153.

[130] A.C. Lloyd, "Non-propositional Thought in Plotinus," in *Phronesis* 31 (1986), pp. 258–65. Lloyd replies explicitly to the later version of Sorabji's essay (p. 259, n. 3).

[131] Lloyd, pp. 258, 263.

and conclusions and treatise V. 8 to theorems. In treatise V. 5 there is an important reference to suspension of the law of contradiction with respect to Intellect. Treatise VI. 7 and treatise V. 3 furnish examples of verbal utterances which are then analyzed. In all these cases, it is clear that propositions are involved. Even if one argued that the discussion in treatise I. 3 referred not to Intellect but to Soul only, or that the discussion in treatise VI. 7 and treatise V. 3 referred not to Intellect but to the One alone, the application of the statements in treatise V. 8 and in treatise V. 5 to Intellect is beyond dispute.[132]

Turning to the specific arguments raised by the critic of the traditional interpretation, we should note that a reading of treatise VI. 7 and of treatise V. 3 in which propositional structure is understood to be denied of the One but affirmed of Intellect cannot be justified. Such a reading is superficial in failing to take into account Plotinus' clear teachings that one approaches the first principle through Intellect—albeit through a higher phase of Intellect—and that propositions are psycho-linguistic expressions of Intellect—not the latter's intellectual contents.[133] Therefore, denial of propositional structure with respect to the One does not necessarily mean affirmation of propositional structure with respect to Intellect. The critic of the traditional view relies for much of his argument upon a distinction between transition of temporality and transition as copula.[134] Whatever the merits of such a distinction may be in the abstract, all the evidence shows that for Plotinus there is no separation between the logical and temporal structure of a proposition and consequently also no separation between the structures of a proposition and of an inference. This situation results from the psycho-linguistic character of the fully-realized proposition in Plotinus' thought. The critic of the traditional view also hopes to replace the complex of non-propositional elements in the case of Intellect with a system of universal propositions.[135] Again the proposal is not without value in the philosophical

---

[132] In our view, Lloyd, "Non-propositional Thought and Plotinus," p. 260, n. 5 who takes such a restrictive view of *Enneads* I. 3 [20] 4–5 has missed a crucial interpretative opportunity.

[133] On the first point see *Enn.* VI. 7 [38] 34.1–36. 27—this passage immediately precedes the one quoted in connection with the utterance of propositions—on the second see *Enn.* IV. 3 [27] 18. 1–25.

[134] This is perhaps clearer in Lloyd's summary of Sorabji (see Lloyd, "Non-propositional Thought in Plotinus," pp. 258–9) than in Sorabji himself.

[135] See n. 133.

sense, although there is little evidence that Plotinus held a doctrine which seems to have more affinities with the Wittgensteinian theory of "elementary propositions" or Russell's idea of "atomic propositions" formulated in the early twentieth century.

But the question remains: what is the cognitive activity of Being-Intellect really like? The answer perhaps lies in the suggestion of treatise I. 3 concerning those truths which the many call "propositions" and which are really motions of the soul, for Plotinus is clearly establishing in principle that propositions are lower manifestations of something higher in the order of being. This something higher is not the temporal interruption of a proposition's enunciation nor is it captured by the relation between intention and extension. Rather, we would suggest that it is something ultimately inexpressible which can however be provisionally indicated by an analogy: namely, just as a metaphor is an elliptical version of a simile, so is this something an elliptical version of a proposition.[136] Plotinus could not himself have clearly articulated such a conception because the status of both an elliptical simile and an elliptical proposition is discoursive rather than conceptual, while the Neoplatonism which he represents is committed to the priority of the theoretical over practical, the ontological over the conceptual, and the pre-linguistic over the linguistic. Nevertheless, there are unmistakable signs that he is beginning to move in this direction.[137]

Having established that the expression of theological truths by means of propositions plays for the Neoplatonists an important yet circumscribed role in obtaining access to the divine, we may return to Proclus' *Elements of Theology* in order to determine precisely how the quasi-geometrical organization unfolds in the course of that work. Although there are undoubtedly various ways in which this extensive collection of statements and arguments could be interpreted and

---

[136] A professional logician would perhaps object here on the grounds that our notion of an "elliptical proposition" makes no sense within the strictly logical sphere. He is of course correct. However, we are discussing the situation of natural language—an altogether superior phenomenon—where declarative, imperative, and expressive functions overlap.

[137] See particularly *Enn.* V. 8 [31] 6.1–13 where the analogy of hieroglyphic writing is introduced. To a large extent, the force of this analogy depends upon and association between non-discursivity and metaphoricity via the pictorial. There are some interesting suggestions about metaphorical language and the hypostasis of Intellect in Sara Rappe, *Reading Neoplatonism. Non-discursive Thinking in the Texts of Plotinus, Proclus and Damascius* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2000).

indeed has been interpreted thematically, the most useful analytical approach is perhaps to understand it as responding to four questions: *1*. What is the first principle from which the other arguments derive?; *2*. What is the structure of the text as a whole?; *3*. What further principles are introduced into the argument as it develops?; and *4*. What is the structure of each segment of the text?[138]

It would be reasonable to assume that the first principle from which the other arguments derive is proposition 1: "every multiplicity in some way participates in unity." However, this statement introduces the opposite terms unity and multiplicity together with the relatively complicated notion of participation, whereas a little later the opposed terms unity and multiplicity occur in combination with the more simple notion of otherness. Consequently, it might be better to hold that the first principle from which the other arguments derive is prop. 4: "All that is unified is other than the One itself." Either way, the first group of six propositions as a whole clearly recalls the first hypothesis of Plato's *Parmenides* which Proclus sees as the foundation of all theology: "If it is (there is a) one, the one will not be many."[139]

The structure of the text as a whole seems to be tripartite in that props. 1–6 deal with the One, props. 7–112 with various aspects of the relation between the One and other hypostases, and props. 113 ff. with the other hypostases—henads, intellects, souls, etc.—themselves. Within this sequence, each proposition is ostensibly derived either from one or more previous propositions or from another proposition or propositions assumed to be self-evident. An element of circularity is present in the text given that the first group of propositions corresponds to the remaining of the One and the second and third groups of propositions to two realizations of the processive-revertive motion of the One. A further element of circularity arises in the circumstance that the foundational and subsequent propositions may be hypothetical when initially stated but become unhypothetical as a result of late arguments.[140]

---

[138] Proclus does not himself raise these questions.

[139] For the notion that prop. 4 is the foundation of the work (and for the connection with Plato's *Parmenides*) see D.J. O'Meara, *Pythagoras Revived*, pp. 201–3.

[140] Many important references to this question can be found in the medieval commentary of Berthold of Moosburg—see *Berthold of Moosburg, Expositio super Elementationem Theologicam Procli: Prologus, Propositiones 1–13*, eds. M.R. Pagnoni-Sturlese and L. Sturlese (Hamburg: Meiner, 1984)—and in the analogous modern commentary

That further principles are introduced into the argument as it develops will be apparent to anybody who analyzes the deductive structure of the argument with sufficient care. Here one might simply mention the gradual introduction of propositions associating unity and causality: for example, after props. 1–6 have established the opposition of unity and multiplicity, prop. 7 brings in the thesis that "Every productive cause is superior to that which it produces" while props. 56–62 explore the nature of the relation between unitary causes and multiplied effects. There is also a gradual introduction of propositions concerning levels of reality: for example, props. 113ff. deal with the different hypostases, and props. 23–4, 97–100, and 65 with the structures within each hypostasis of participant, participated, and unparticipated, of monad and series, and of properties possessed causally, substantially, and participatedly.[141]

The structure of each segment of the text consists of a proposition followed by a proof—where the main variation occurs—and sometimes also a corollary. The proofs are designed most often to recommend the proposition by venturing the denial of that proposition in stating the contradictory of the proposition or one or more different related propositions and then showing the impossible consequences of such a denial. We might call this the dual or hypothetical mode of proof. The proofs are sometimes designed to recommend the proposition by constructing syllogisms in which the major and minor premisses are furnished by propositions stated elsewhere in the text and the conclusion represents the propositions

---

of Dodds—see E.R. Dodds, *Proclus, The Elements of Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963). J.M.P. Lowry, *The Logical Principles of Proclus' Stoicheiōsis Theologikē as Systematic Ground of the Cosmos* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1980) is a study devoted entirely to such general structural problems. However, although this work reveals numerous insights into detail, the general premiss on which it is based—that Proclus' *Elements of Theology* represents a final systematic resolution of all the unsystematic doctrines of earlier Neoplatonists (Lowry pp. 9–26)—misunderstands the historical background and Proclus' own programme. In fact, the relation between "unsystematic" and "systematic" modes of thinking depends upon levels of being and levels of discourse and not upon chronological developments in doctrine.

[141] Lowry raises some good points here. He is quite right in saying i. that the notion of the impossibility of infinite regress is the most basic principle of the *Elements* (Lowry *The Logical Principles*, pp. 45–6)—the point is important not only because it represents a crucial aspect of Proclus' reading of Plato's *Parmenides* but also because it constitutes the ineradicable distinction between Neoplatonism and Deconstruction—; ii. that the more "Platonic" principles are introduced earlier than are the more "Aristotelian" into the text (Lowry, *The Logical Principles*, p. 64).

currently being examined. This might be termed the triple or syllogistic mode of proof.[142]

Beyond Formalism

The position which we have now reached in the argument might be summarized as follows. In the discussion of "What is Called 'Negative Theology'" one stage was the establishment of the figure of (semi-) circularity and the partial figures of transcendence and translation as analytic principles applicable to Neoplatonism and Deconstruction alike, another stage the interpretation of negative theology (and simultaneously the discourse about negative theology) as formalization in the possible senses of a proposition, of the antithesis of affirmative and negative, and of a set of propositions. In the "Remainder" with respect to that discussion the purpose of the first section was to analyze in the context of Neoplatonism the ontological structure of remaining, procession, and reversion. The noteworthy features of this structure were its formalized and propositional expressions and—given that formalization through propositions could be included within the activity of reversion—its inescapably doubling nature. The purpose of the second section was to examine in the context of Neoplatonism the formalized and propositional expression of reality as such, a discussion in which it was noted that of the three levels of reality the One (or Good) is without propositional structure in the sense of transcending propositional structure because it lacks all complexity, Being-Intellect is without propositional structure in the sense of transcending propositional structure because, although it exhibits complexity, the latter is not predicative, but Soul possesses propositional structure in accordance with its function as the center of discursive, reasoning, or dianoetic activity in the Neoplatonic system. Several possible tasks now remain. First, we could attempt to understand how the formalized and propositional expression of remaining, procession, and reversion together with the necessarily doubling nature of the third moment can be viewed as an activity of Soul

---

[142] In a sense, both these methods are Aristotelian. Regarding the first see Aristotle, *Metaph.* Γ 3, 1005a18–1009a5 where it is argued that the law of contradiction is the most important of all the "axioms" (*axiōmata*) which philosophy must study. Then comes the relevant point. Although one cannot prove this—since it is itself the foundation—one can recommend it by showing: 1. that those who deny it are necessarily using it, 2. that the reasons advanced for denying it are insufficient.

thinking Soul, of Soul thinking Intellect, and of Soul thinking the One. Secondly, we could pass to the consideration of how the formalized and propositional expression of remaining, procession, and reversion together with the necessarily doubling nature of the third moment can be viewed as an activity of Intellect thinking Intellect, and of Intellect thinking the One, this formalized and propositional expression being rather what surpasses the formalized and propositional expression. In actual fact, the first project would yield results which are too obvious.[143] We shall therefore turn our attention immediately to the second.

If the reader is willing to recall our discussion of the controversy about the non-propositional thought attributed to the hypostasis of Intellect by Plotinus, s/he will understand what follows as a sequence of linguistic prescriptions corresponding not to the temporal interruption of a proposition's enunciation but to certain formulae which have a relation to propositions analogous with the relation to similes which metaphors have.[144] For the ancient Neoplatonists themselves this *elliptical* relation constitutes a psycho-linguistic expression of Intellect's thinking of Intellect and Intellect's thinking of the One. It therefore remains an ontological matter. For a modern reader of Neoplatonism this elliptical relation represents a deconstructive interpretation of Intellect's thinking of Intellect and Intellect's thinking of the One. The ontological aspect is therefore "under erasure."[145] The implications of the contrast between the ancient and modern approaches are considerable, since within the context of the establishment of ontology the elliptical proposition disrupts logico-syntactic connectors with respect to an *atemporal* sphere, producing the metaphysical idea of the "all-together,"[146] whereas within the context of the deconstruction of ontology the same elliptical proposition disrupts logico-syntactic connectors with respect to the *temporal* domain, producing the non-metaphysical notion of parataxis-juxtaposition.[147]

The precise trajectory of our proposed discussion of the elliptical proposition—and especially concerning the relation to non-propositional and non-predicative language in general which it implies—is

---

[143] Part of this task was also accomplished (implicitly) in chapter 3.
[144] For the elliptical formulae see pp. 163–4 and nn. 135–6.
[145] For the psycholinguistic aspect see p. 154 and n. 98, p. 160.
[146] See Plotinus, *Enn.* V. 8 [31] 9. 1–47 for an eloquent description of this.
[147] Here, parataxis relates to smaller and juxtaposition to larger discoursive units.

perhaps unparalleled in both ancient and modern sources.[148] However, some points of orientation can be found in the writings of Heidegger and Derrida. We shall therefore begin by examining certain passages in which a theory of calling is associated with a practice of textual juxtaposition albeit in an unexplained manner. Regarding the former component, we should note that the complex of linguistic usages surrounding "calling" crosses the boundaries of the imperative, performative (in the Austinian sense), and declarative spheres. Given that a standard-form categorical proposition has as its schema: a quantifier + a subject term + a copula + a predicate term,[149] then "calling"—of which the primary meanings are imperative ("Come! . . ."), performative ("I name this ship . . ."), and declarative ("my friend is called . . .")—is as much a non-predicative as a predicative utterance.[150]

In a manner which seems premeditated, Derrida has associated a non-predicative sense of calling—this meaning being indicated by the proximity of demanding (= imperative) and promising (= performative) in the text[151]—with a paratactic combination of texts. The writer's intention is revealed by a careful reading of the *Prière d'insérer* ("Please insert") and the *Avertissement* ("Notice"): short items added to the separate French editions of the three essays studied in the

---

[148] The statement is true with respect to philosophical rather than poetic materials. In fact, the notion of "ideogram" advocated by Ezra Pound—of which the theory is discussed in *Gaudier-Brzeska* and *Guide to Kulchur* and the practice displayed in the *Cantos*—approximates to our concept. Regarding the theoretical side, we can say *1*. that Pound describes a non-metaphysical notion of parataxis-juxtaposition (see *Guide to Kulchur* (New York: New Directions, 1970), p. 167), at one point illustrating this with a combination of paragraphs from Gaudier, Leibniz, and Eriugena (*ibid.*, p. 75)—such structures are compared to Chinese characters (see *ibid.*, pp. 20–21 for the character which signifies "extravagant conduct" by depicting a dog trying to lick the king's ear), to metaphors (identified with nodes, clusters, and vortices at *Gaudier-Brzeska. A Memoir* (New York: New Directions, 1970), pp. 90–92), and to sculptural forms (see *ibid.*, p. 28 for sculpture as a dynamic arrangement of lines, planes, and solids)—; *2*. that Pound evokes the metaphysical notion of the all-together (see *ibid.*, pp. 29–30), in one passage documenting this with material from Plato, Iamblichus, and Gemistus (*Guide to Kulchur*, pp. 222–6); and *3*. that Pound attempts to fuse *1* and *2* in a single doctrine of "ideas in action" called *paideuma* (*ibid.*, pp. 57–9, 188–9). It is because of Confucius' advocacy of this fusion that Pound prefers him to Plato (*ibid.*, pp. 31–2).

[149] On proposition and predicate see n. 97.

[150] Calling" can also have an expressive meaning ("Help! . . ."). On the Derridean general structure "Viens!" see p. 80.

[151] Derrida, *ON*, p. xiv. In referring to the essay "Sauf le Nom," Derrida adds the notion of salutation (as hail and as farewell) to the notion of calling and thereby strengthens the non-predicative sense of the latter. See *ON*, p. xv.

present volume. In the Insert he explains that the essays "Passion," "Sauf le Nom," and "Khōra" originated as independent works although, because of common thematic elements, they are being published together as a certain *Essai sur le Nom* in three chapters or steps.[152] In the Notice he adds that, despite all the features separating the essays "Passions," "Sauf le Nom," and "Khōra" among themselves, they nevertheless respond to one another and illuminate one another within a single configuration.[153] In relation to the space constituted by the three essays and the mobile syntax of the three titles, Derrida emphasizes the notion of calling.[154] "Passions," "Sauf le Nom," and "Khōra" also represent three fictions in which the dramatic personages engage in a silent mutual calling and in which the figure of *Khōra* silently calls the name by which she is called.[155] The notion of calling is connected with the notion of naming. Thus, the question of the name resounds throughout "Passions," "Sauf le Nom," and "Khōra" but hesitates on the edge of the call.[156]

The non-predicative sense of calling is also a prominent feature of an important essay in which Heidegger attempts to explore the nature of language by means of Trakl's poem "Der Winterabend."[157] According to this reading, it is language itself rather than the poet

---

[152] Derrida, *ON*, pp. xiv–xvi It is important to note the opposition of conjunction and disjunction constituting the parataxis here.

[153] *ON*, p. xvi. See the previous note.

[154] Spacing is especially associated with *Khōra* although Derrida denies—see *ON*, p. xv—that the essay of that title provides the matrix for the other essays. On mobile syntax see *ON*, p. xvi.

[155] *ON*, p. xiv. Again there is an opposition of conjunction and disjunction constituting the parataxis.

[156] *ON*, p. xiv. The *Prière d'insérer* and *Avertissement*—in which Plotinus' teaching concerning the Good is the only non-Derridean philosopheme cited—also reveal much about naming. For example, regarding the giving of names in general Derrida notes that the one who gives a name does not possess what is given, and that the one who receives a supplemental name may not have possessed an original name; and concerning the giving of specific names he argues that among names given the supplemental name is the most important, and that any given name can be transformed by anonymity, metonymy, cryptonymy, and the like. On Derrida's view of naming see pp. 89–91 and chapter 2, n. 211 below.

[157] "Language," in Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language*, Thought, trans. A. Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 189–210. In what follows, we shall not study the notion of "calling" in Heidegger's earlier works—or example, the call of conscience in *Being and Time*—, nor draw out the distinction between Heideggerian and Derridean calling, nor consider the relation—prominent in Derrida's work—between calling and ethical responsibility. On these questions see the valuable discussions in John D. Caputo, *Demythologizing Heidegger* (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1993), pp. 75–100.

which introduces such items as snow, bell, window, falling, ringing not by applying terms to them but by calling them into the word. And since language can be understood in its turn as "Dif-ference" (*Unter-schied*), we can describe the complete poetic utterance—distinguishing three phases which Heidegger roughly associates with the poem's three stanzas—as first where Dif-ference "calls" (*ruft, heisst*) thing and world to itself from Dif-ference, and calls things and world into a presence sheltered in absence (for convenience, we shall label the caller which is not yet semantically unfolded simply "difference"); secondly, where Dif-ference "appropriates" (*enteignet, ereignet*) thing and world to one another, the world being disclosed as the fourfold of earth, heaven, mortals, divinities (this difference which is now semantically unfolded as "stillness" (*Stille*) might be labelled "difference +"); and thirdly, where Dif-ference "gathers" (*sammelt, versammelt*) the thing and world appropriated to one another by Dif-ference to itself from Dif-ference, and gathers thing and world into the middle of their difference (again for convenience, we shall label the gatherer which is now semantically unfolded as "middle, intimacy, rift" (*Mittel, Innigkeit, Riss*) "difference ++").[158] Heidegger explains the relation between thing and world—our second phase associated with the poem's second stanza—in language more typical of philosophical discourse. He notes that Dif-ference prevails in the relation, that it is not a generic concept but something unique, that it is not a mediator added to two terms already existing, that it is not an abstracted concept but something disclosing, that it is not a distinction or relation in the categorial sense, but especially that Dif-ference is dynamic.[159]

In attempting to think with Heidegger and perhaps also the unthought of Heidegger concerning the non-predicative calling, we should combine the brief explanation in the essay "Language"—

---

[158] We are here paraphrasing the summary in Heidegger's commentary following his presentation of the third stanza (*Lang.*, pp. 206–7), adding certain details from the earlier and more general discussion of all three stanzas (*Lang.*, pp. 200–5).

[159] These notes are based on the remarks in Heidegger's commentary following his presentation of the second stanza (*Lang.*, pp. 202–3). It seems clear that when Heidegger envisages language as uttering the command "come!," the situation is different from that which obtains when the Bible depicts God as saying "Let there be light." In the former case, there is actually no subject and the imperative which is foundational cannot be re-written into a predicative form as "Language says: 'come!'" . . . In the latter case, there is an actual subject and the imperative by being able to be rewritten in the predicative form as "God said: 'Let there be light'" is secondary.

thereby doubling and differentiating—with the extensive treatment in the lecture-series *What is Called Thinking?* Since Heidegger himself states that the difference between poesy and thinking is an abyssal one, and that poesy and thinking are both consummated in saying, then it seems reasonable to associate the three phases of utterance in the commentary on Trakl's poem with three similar phases in the lectures on Nietzsche and Parmenides.[160]

By no means unpredictably, we are now confronted by a double lecture-series in which the lectures are connected by transitions which are not really transitions between separate units. Here, something described simply as what is to be thought calls not the successive images of a poem but the philosophemes of Graeco-German culture. In the context of Heidegger's specific reading of the history of philosophy, what is to be thought is a differential structure depending on the impersonal and non-predicative verb *khrē*. Moreover, this differential structure can be associated with three phases of utterance: first, where the Being of what is—treated on the basis of the verbal and substantival components of the archaic participle *eon* as a duality-in-unity of transcending and transcended term in which the division of the terms precedes any transition between them and is not rendered dynamic in questioning—calls *legein* and *noein* to itself; secondly, where the differential structure develops the relation between *legein* and *noein* by semantically expanding their meanings from "saying" and "thinking" to "letting-lie-before-us" and "taking-to-heart"; and thirdly, where the Being of what is—treated on the basis of the verbal and substantival elements in the Greek participle *eon* now as a duality-in-unity of transcending and transcended terms in which the division of the terms does not precede the transition between them and is rendered dynamic by questioning—calls *legein* and *noein* to itself in their developed form.[161]

This singular reading of the history of western thought is not yet complete, since Heidegger can be understood as now expanding the textual basis from the one-line fragment of Parmenides which provides the key-terms *khrē, eon, legein*, and *noein* to the Greek textual tradition

---

[160] For the abyssal relation between poesy and thinking see Martin Heidegger, *WCT* II. 2–3, p. 134.

[161] *WCT* I. 9, pp. 88–97, II. 10, pp. 216–26, II. 10–11, pp. 226–8. An interpretation of the archaic infinitive verb *emmenai* is also operative in Heidegger's discussion. However, this infinitive is used to duplicate the verbal component of the participle *eon*.

as a whole extending from Parmenides to Plato (in the second lecture-series) and to the German textual tradition as a whole extending from Schelling to Nietzsche (in the first lecture series). An interpretation of the differential structure subsequent to the first phase of utterance indicates the point where Plato treats the Being of what is as the world of Forms and the division or transition between transcending and transcended terms as "separation" (*khōrismos*).[162] An interpretation of the differential structure prior to the third phase of utterance indicates the point where Nietzsche treats the Being of what is as the Will to Power and the division or transition between transcending and transcended terms as the "over-man" (*Übermensch*).[163] It is important to note that the reading of the difference between Being and beings where this relation becomes dynamic as non-predicative questioning is something which occurs neither in Plato nor in Nietzsche but only in that thinking to which we are being called.

Many of Heidegger's usual ideas about the history of philosophy are incorporated into the interpretation of the three phases of utterance. The contrast between everything that has been thought before the last phase and what we should attempt to think in the last phase is revealed in a contrast between the association of Being and what is with Presence and what is present where the relation between Being and Time implied in this association has not become questionable and the association of Being and what is with Presence and what is present where the relation between Being and Time implied in that association has become questionable.[164] With regard to the specifically Greek contribution to what has been thought before the final phase, we are reminded of the "Difference" (*Unterschied*) between concealed and unconcealed implied in that between Presence and the present, of the rising of the present from unconcealment to unconcealment—a movement indicated by the prefixes *para-* (implying coming) and *apo-* (implying going) attached to the verb *einai* ("to be")—and the interpretation of the rising of the present as shining.[165]

The structures of calling exploited in Heidegger's accounts of poesy and thinking are important for providing us not only with a model of non-predicative discourse but also with a model of non-linear

[162] *WCT* I. 9, pp. 88–97, II. 10, pp. 216–26.
[163] *WCT* I. 7, pp. 74–5, I. 8–9, pp. 85–7, I. 9, pp. 88–97.
[164] *WCT* I. 10, pp. 100–110.
[165] *WCT* II. 11, pp. 229–44.

spacing commensurate with that discourse. Our most instructive passage occurs in *What is Called Thinking?* where Parmenides' response to the call of what is to be thought with the words *khrē to legein te noein t'eon emmenai* begins to be discussed in earnest, given that Heidegger proposes to write this statement by dividing it into four units separated by colons and by placing each unit on a separate line, the resulting provisional translation "Needful: the saying also thinking too: being: to be" exhibiting the paratactic character of the utterance.[166]

Khrē:
to legein te noein t':
eon:
emmenai:

In introducing here the embarrassingly technical term "parataxis," he argues that Parmenides' statement should be understood not as though speaking through words which follow one another in a specific sequence and subordinative relation but as though speaking where there are no words or in the field between the words. Heidegger's explanation at this point is rather subtle since, by combining the negation of predicative discourse implicit in sequence and subordination with the affirmation of non-linear spacing implicit in the division of words, he clearly shows the fundamental analogy between discourse and spacing which concerns us, although he is somewhat reticent about the import of this analogy and the nature of the spacing involved.[167]

---

[166] *WCT* II. 7, pp. 182–6.

[167] It is noticeable that Heidegger applies the mechanism of the (a) semiotic square to the interpretation of the relation between *legein* and *noein* at *WCT*. II. 11, p. 241. This suggests a possible application of the figure to the entire Parmenidean fragment, an application which would be polysemous in accordance with varying emphases of the constituent terms. Obvious applications would be *i. khrē* to the neutral term $\bar{a}_1$, $\bar{a}_2$, *eon and emmenai* to the combined term a_1, a_2, *legein* to the positive term a_1, $\bar{a}_2$, and *noein* to the negative term $\bar{a}_1$, a_2; *ii.* (with *khrē* assigned to the entire square) *eon* and *emmenai* to the neutral term, and *legein* and *noein* to the positive, combined, and negative terms. The graphic expression of Parmenides' fragment was obviously important to Heidegger since he *a.* (explicitly) distributed the fragment into four spatial units, *b.* (implicitly) understood the initial of *khrē*—the Greek letter *khi* (χ)—as the figure X. Further connections are possible with the Christian notion of Logos—the Greek letters *khi* (χ) and *rhō* (ρ) begin both *khrē* and *Khristos*—and the Derridean interpretation of Plato's *Khōra*. For Heidegger's early interest in the Cross as a structural principle see Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and* Time, pp. 209–10. For Derrida's *Khōra* see chapter 4. 1.

Our viewpoint on Heidegger's concept of spacing—the latter perhaps demanding paraphrase with the convoluted but accurate expression "(quasi-) spatial temporality"—might perhaps be explained as follows.[168] The reader should imagine a vast semantic network where the connections are based upon predication and inference and where, since logic is privileged over semantics, monosemy and inhibition of connotations is the rule. Heidegger would have recognized this as a remnant of what he calls the *Ge-stell* ("Enframing"). The reader should next imagine the isolation of certain semantic areas through the disruption of the predicative and inferential connections: a process leading to the liberation of polysemy and connotations, the semiotic now gaining ascendancy over the logical. Heidegger would have seen this as an anticipation of what he calls the *Er-eignis* ("Event/Appropriation"). The crucial transition from the first model to the second may be traced by examining his analysis of the principles of identity and of sufficient reason, and the nature of the second model by considering his discussion of the *es gibt* formula.

---

[168] Among Heidegger's other works the essay "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," in *PLT*, pp. 145–61 provides a rather full account of the general phenomenon which we have called "spacing." This account deals with three interlinked questions: the relation of man to the fourfold, the notions of location, space, and site, and the relation of man to location. *i.* Man's relation to the fourfold is defined by two terms which coincide: building and dwelling. In building (*bauen*), man produces things as locations, making spaces and a site, and thereby bringing the fourfold into things (*BDT*, pp. 149, 153–5), and in dwelling (*wohnen*) he stays with things, preserving the relation between himself and space, and preserving the essence of the fourfold (*BDT*, pp. 145–6, 152); *ii.* The interpretation of the notions of location, space, and site is of some complexity. In the first place, there is a question of the triple relation between these terms themselves since location (*Ort*) is a thing which can make space for a site, site (*Stätte*) a space correlative to the activities of building and dwelling, and space (*Raum*) that which is gathered by virtue of a location. (That Heidegger is here dealing with what we shall term a semantic notion of space emerges from his observation that things are locations which provide a site for the fourfold—whose character is essentially semantic (*BDT*, pp. 149–51)). In the second place, there is a question of the degrees of abstraction which occur in shifting thought from *a* space (i.e. particular space) where earth, heaven, divinities, and mortals are admitted, to a set of positions with measurable distance between them, to a set of dimensions abstractable as height, breadth, and depth, to *space* (i.e. universal space) in the sense of analytic-algebraic relations. (That Heidegger is again dealing with a semantic space in our sense of the term is shown by his comment that the space of mathematical relations cannot be the ground of a space containing the fourfold (*BDT*, pp. 149–51)); *iii.* Man's relation to location is also defined by the coincidence of building and dwelling. If space is considered in the manner suggested, it is not something opposite to man either in the sense of an external object or in that of an inner experience. On the contrary, mortals *are* to the extent that they persist through spaces by virtue of their stay among things as locations (*BDT*, pp. 151–2). This is the true meaning of dwelling for Heidegger.

In the lecture entitled "Der Satz der Identität" which was later published as the first part of *Identität und Differenz*,[169] Heidegger begins by examining the philosophical implications of the formula "A = A" traditionally used to express the principle of identity. Having quickly concluded that the formula only manages to express equality: that every *A* is itself the same, Heidegger replaces it with the statement "A is A" which further signifies identity: that every *A* is the same as itself.[170] Two further interpretations of the principle of identity will be proposed in the course of the lecture: the first, which we reach by listening to it harmonically as "A *is* A," amounts to the statement that "to every being as such belongs identity;"[171] the second is where we pass from a principle as a statement to a principle as a "leap" and from thinking Being as ground of beings to thinking the Abyss.[172] Heidegger's discussion of a tautology in this text has revealed some important aspects of his semantic space. In particular, it has focused on a type of statement from which the possibility of inference is reduced and also, via the notions of leap and abyss, introduced a kind of utterance which is non-predicative in character,

The argument of Heidegger's *Der Satz vom Grund* follows the pattern of the lecture on the principle of identity in beginning with a proposition, re-reading and re-phrasing the proposition in various ways, and ending by converting the proposition into a non-propositional form—although the scale is vastly expanded.[173] Initially, the "principle of reason" is stated in propositional form: "Nothing is without reason/ground."[174] The main development in the text then consists of five readings corresponding to historical phases in the withdrawal of Being: 1. based on the wording *nihil est sine ratione*, the incubation period before Leibniz; 2. formulation of the complete *principium reddendae rationis sufficientis* by Leibniz—at this point the notion of logical proof comes to the fore; 3. the period of historical dominance of the principle; 4–5 (these phases are both a unity and a duality presumably because Heidegger is himself calling the principle of reason

---

[169] Martin Heidegger, "The Principle of Identity," in *Identity and Difference*, trans. J. Stambaugh (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), pp. 23–41. The original lecture was given in 1957.

[170] *PI*, p. 24.

[171] *PI*, p. 26.

[172] *PI*, p. 39.

[173] Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, trans. R. Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana U.P., 1991).

[174] *PR*, 3, pp. 17–18, 22–3.

from and to Difference) formulation of the principle as either *nihil est sine ratione*—meaning that beings have grounds—or else as *nihil est sine ratione*—meaning that Being is ground or Being is Abyss—through a textual confrontation of Leibniz with Angelus Silesius.[175] Finally, the "principle of reason" is stated in non-propositional form: "Being and ground/reason: the same" or "Being: the Abyss."[176]

In the lecture entitled "Zeit und Sein" later published in the volume *Zur Sache des Denkens*[177] the issue is that of thinking Being and Time and Heidegger explains that, since each of these is a matter, in the sense of what is decisively at stake in that something inevitable is contained within it, rather than a thing, we should perhaps say not "Being is" or "Time is" but—exploiting the peculiarity of the German idiom *es gibt*—"there is/it gives Being" or "there is/it gives Time."[178] During the next few pages, he interprets this "it gives" as what lies behind the epochal transformation of Being and Time, asking as he goes regarding the "it" contained in the phrase. He answers that when we resort to this linguistic form, we are not affirming a logical predicate of its subject but attempting to think the "it" in terms of the giving which belongs to it, and that the use of this linguistic form ultimately points towards the "Appropriation" of which one can only say "Appropriation appropriates."[179] Heidegger's discussion of the *es gibt* in this text has again documented important aspects of his semantic space. In particular, it has introduced two types of non-predicative utterance: the *es gibt* phrase in which the subject vanishes into the predicate and the iterative verbal form in which the predicate vanishes into the subject.[180]

---

[175] These five stages are summarized at *PR*, 7, pp. 50–58.

[176] *PR*, 7, pp. 51–2. It is important to note the graphic expression of the non-propositional utterance representing the final form of the principle. In particular, Heidegger's employment of cola here should be compared with his similar strategy with respect to Parmenides' fragment. See pp. 173–4.

[177] Martin Heidegger, *On Time and Being*, trans. J. Stambaugh (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), pp. 1–24.

[178] *TB*, pp. 2–5.

[179] *TB*, pp. 17–24.

[180] Verbal formulae of this kind occur throughout the Heideggerian corpus from *Sein und Zeit* until the last works, and include such famous examples as "World worlds," "Thing things," "Temporality temporalizes." For a good survey of such usages see Erasmus Schöfer, "Heidegger's Language. Metalogical Forms of Thought and Grammatical Specialties," in *On Heidegger and Language*, ed. J.J. Kockelmans, pp. 288–9 and 291–4. Although they are related to tautologies, these utterances are linguistically more compact. Among the purposes of such verbal formulae suggested by Schöfer we should note as especially relevant to our present purposes

In all these texts, Heidegger has proposed a departure from the normal modes of discourse by making certain linguistic prescriptions amounting to a reduction of logic. These linguistic prescriptions were somewhat analogous with those advanced by the Neoplatonists when discussing the hypostasis of Intellect. As we shall see, Derrida will propose a departure from the normal mode of discourse by making certain linguistic prescriptions amounting to a reduction of logic and a reduction of syntax. These linguistic prescriptions will be roughly analogous with those which the Neoplatonists advance when discussing the hypostasis of the One or Good.[181] But before examining these later developments, we should remind ourselves of the more specific goal established at the beginning of this segment which has brought us in due course to a discussion of Heidegger's thought.[182] That was: consideration of how in Neoplatonism certain elliptical propositions about remaining, procession, and reversion could be understood as psycho-linguistic expressions of Intellect thinking Intellect or Intellect thinking the One. We had argued that the Neoplatonists

i. that of achieving independence of the phenomena from external logical connections, *ii.* that of abolishing the subject in the predicate and vice versa, and *iii.* that of making the unity of the phenomenon visible in the linguistic form. Since Heidegger's intention is to subvert the standard logical structures, the famous attack launched against the "Nothing nothings" ("What is Metaphysics?," trans. D.F. Krell, in *Pathm.*, pp. 90–91) by Carnap on grounds of its illogicality somewhat misses the point. See his "The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language," in *Logical Positivism*, ed. A.J. Ayer (Glencoe: Free Press, 1959), pp. 60–81.

[181] We have by this point completed our statement of the analogy between the disruption of logico-syntactic connectors with respect to the *atemporal* sphere by the elliptical proposition (and non-predicative language in general)—producing the metaphysical idea of the "all-together" in the hypostasis of Intellect—and the disruption of logico-syntactic connectors with respect to the *temporal* sphere by the elliptical proposition (and non-predicative language in general)—producing the non-metaphysical notion of parataxis-juxtaposition in the text of philosophy. How does this analysis stand when we shift from Intellect to the One? This question is too complicated to answer adequately here. We shall simply note *i.* that parataxis is macrocosmic as well as microcosmic in extent, *ii.* that its precise analysis will depend on the individual case, and *iii.* that parataxis can be of a more logical or of a more syntactic nature.

[182] It is worth noting that the interpretation proposed above—where Heidegger's linguistic prescriptions are correlated with those of the Neoplatonists in relation to the hypostasis of *Intellect*—differs from the interpretation of other modern scholars—where Heidegger's linguistic prescriptions are correlated with those of the Neoplatonists in relation to the hypostasis of the *One*. Good examples of the latter approach are: Reiner Schürmann, "L'hénologie comme dépassement de la métaphysique," in *Les Études Philosophiques* (1982), pp. 331–50 and—responding to an English version of Schürmann's essay—John Sallis, *Platonic Legacies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), pp. 61–78.

themselves did not pursue very far the relation between the elliptical proposition and non-propositional or non-predicative language in general.[183] Although this conclusion is true with respect to strictly philosophical texts, we should probably modify it in the light of certain philosophical-literary materials.

Among the extant works of Proclus are seven *Hymns*: I. "to Helios," II. "to Aphrodite," III. "to the Muses," IV. "to the gods, in common," V. "to the Lycian Aphrodite," VI. "to Hecate and Janus, in common," VII. "to Athene of many devices."[184] Although the writer himself does not explicitly state the linguistic theory underlying his hymns, it is relatively simple to reconstruct it by comparing Plato's twofold characterization of a hymn as on the one hand praise and on the other hand prayer with Proclus' habit of including in each hymn a longer middle section praising the deity and a briefer final section praying to that deity.[185] That the content of praise and prayer is more crucial to the definition of a hymn than its expression in metrical or musical terms is indicated by the striking fact that Critias' narration of Atlantis in the *Timaeus* and both the first and the second hypotheses of the *Parmenides* are described as "hymns" by Proclus himself.[186] Now considering the Proclean notion of hymn in the context of our argument elaborated above, we may conclude that since prayer is to a large degree a non-predicative utterance or consists of non-predicative utterances expressed in the imperative, subjunctive, or optative rather than the indicative mood, and since praise is to a large degree a non-predicative utterance or plurality of non-predicative utterances in which the enumeration of predicates seems more important than the attribution of predicate to subject, the hymn

---

[183] See pp. 168–9.

[184] These hymns can now be found in a modern edition with good commentary" R.M. van den Berg, *Proclus' Hymns. Essays, Translations, Commentary*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001).

[185] On Plato's characterization see van den Berg. *Proclus' Hymns*, pp. 13–14.

[186] Regarding the *Timaeus* see Proclus, *CTim.* I. 85. 16–19 and I. 197. 3–10; regarding the *Parmenides* see Proclus, *CParm.* VII. 1191. 32–5, *Theologia Platonis*, ed. H.-D. Saffrey and L.G. Westerink (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1968–96) I. 7, 31. 25–7 and III. 23, 83. 22ff. An application of hymning to metaphysical principles is often suggested in Proclus' works. For example, at *CParm.* VII. 1157. 29, Proclus speaks of the hymning of Intellect, at *CParm.* VII. 1171. 4–6 of the hymning of the intellectual calm, the mystical haven, and the paternal silence (these being names conferred by the "theologians" on different levels within the triad Being-Life-Intellect), and at *CParm.* VII. 1216. 6–7 of the hymning of Eternity. In some of these texts Proclus attaches a special epithet "much-hymned" (*poluhumnētos*) to the principles concerned.

is the discoursive form best adapted to the psycho-linguistic expression of Intellect thinking Intellect or Intellect thinking the One.[187] Proclus himself seems to argue explicitly along these lines in his treatise *On the Hieratic Art* where the turning of the lotus towards the Sun is described as a "natural hymn," on the apparent grounds that both the performance of a hymn and the physical motion represent varieties of metaphysical reversion.[188] There is a striking albeit accidental correspondence through the centuries of philosophical speculation given that the motion of the lotus is perhaps for Proclus what the rose "without why?" was clearly for Angelus Silesius: the most powerful image of the non-propositional.[189]

Sidenote: the combination of the non-predicative language of praise and the non-predicative language of prayer in the Proclean hymn furnishes something of a parallel to that pragmatic discourse of prayer which Jean-Luc Marion in several important studies has identified with both ps.-Dionysian mystical theology and the Thomistic third way. Marion argues that this pragmatic discourse of prayer involves a "denomination" which does not assign a name to a nameable object but rather refers the user to an interlocutor beyond name, this denominative utterance avoiding the predicative structure of language and the dichotomy of true and false.[190] Now Marion is perceptive in finding this pragmatic discourse in a Neoplatonic text, although one must take issue with his interpretation of ps.-Dionysius' references to *aitia* (= "cause"—implying predicative language) by extracting a sense of *aiteo* (= "request"—implying non-predicative

---

[187] In discussing prayer in this way, we are obviously suggesting not that texts based on prayer and praise contain no statements or propositions but that the prayer and praise elements in such texts do not depend on propositional form in order to have meaning. For example, the so-called "aretology"—the praising of some god or goddess through enumeration of his or her virtues—is actually a rhythmic tabulation of terms. It is probably because of this fact that the first and second hypotheses of the *Parmenides* are described as "hymns" to the One and the other gods or henads by Proclus.

[188] Proclus, *De Sacrificio et Magia*, in *Catalogue des manuscrits alchimiques grec*, vol. 6, ed. J. Bidez (Bruxelles: Lamartin, 1928) 148. 10ff. and 149. 12ff. On the hymn as reversion see Proclus, *Commentarii in Rem Publicam*, ed. W. Kroll (Leipzig: Teubner, 1899–1909) II. 250. 21–251. 18 together with the discussion of van den Berg, *Proclus' Hymns*, pp. 19–22 cf. pp. 83–7.

[189] The parallel would apply at least according to Heidegger's reading of Silesius. See Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, p. 35ff. See above pp. 176–7.

[190] Jean-Luc Marion, "In the Name. How to Avoid Speaking of 'Negative Theology'," in *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*, eds. J.D. Caputo and M. Scanlon, pp. 24–30.

language) which is absent from the passages cited.[191] He is also perceptive in associating the pragmatic discourse with a "saturated phenomenon," although this phenomenological concept so central to his work has more in common with the Neoplatonists' ontologically diffusive "Intellect as satiety" (*koros . . . nous*) than it does with their God.[192]

We have suggested that certain Heideggerian linguistic prescriptions involve a reduction of logic whereas some of Derrida's linguistic prescriptions involve a reduction of both logic and syntax.[193] By way of a conclusion, this difference can now be illustrated by considering Derrida's interpretation of the Mallarméan intermediates between the asemantic and semantic spheres called "spacing" and "hymen."[194]

In the brief essay "Mallarmé" originally written for the *Tableau de la litterature française*, Derrida comments on the poet's preoccupation with the *blancs* (= "spaces," "blanks," or "whites") in his texts.[195] Focusing primarily on the first of these senses, he notes that spacing can represent the articulation of significations—including that between the semes "white" and "black"—, the articulation of rhythm—exemplified by the repetition of the seme "white"—, but most importantly the absence of determinate meaning.[196] In the last case, spacing particularly implies the reduction in importance of the word understood as a centralized cluster of meanings, the suspension of naming as a process having a direct relation to a thing, and the reduction

---

[191] Jean-Luc Marion, *The Idol and Distance. Five Studies*, trans. T.A. Carlson (New York,: Fordham U.P., 2001), pp. 151–62.

[192] Jean-Luc Marion, "In the Name. How to Avoid Speaking of 'Negative Theology'," p. 39ff. On this description of the hypostasis of Intellect (in which the etymology of the name Kronos is also exploited) see Plotinus, *Enn.* V. 9 [5] 8, 8; VI 7 [38] 35, 26, etc.

[193] The contrast between Heidegger and Derrida suggested here is not an extreme one, since Derrida does follow the Heideggerian critique of the predicative utterance in many texts. See for example Jacques Derrida, "The Supplement of Copula. Philosophy before Linguistics," in *MP*, pp. 198–205 where the issues raised include *i.* the presence in all natural languages of at least some analogue of the mark of predication, and *ii.* the rise of the third person singular to pre-eminent rank in all languages. On the association between predicative structure and the metaphysical tradition see Derrida, *ON*, pp. 49–50, 54. On the overcoming of predicative structure see Derrida, *OG*, p. 44ff., *FRGE*, p. 272.

[194] This interpretation corresponds to the Derridean "Secret" to be discussed in chapter 4. 3.

[195] Jacques Derrida, "Mallarmé," in *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 110–26.

[196] *Mall.*, p. 115.

in importance of metaphorical or metonymic applications of the word understood as a centralized cluster of meanings. In practice, this sense of spacing represents the ambiguity whereby a word can be undecidably a noun or a conjunction—for example *or* as "gold" or as "well (then)"—, a noun or a verb—for example *le lit* as "the bed" and "(he) reads it" —, and one or two words—for example *son or/sonore* as "his gold" or "sounding."[197] Concerning the reduction in importance of the word understood as a centralized cluster of meanings, it is possible that Derrida is particularly correcting the Heideggerian understanding of a word. Thus, Mallarmé's handling of spacing can be seen as undermining the "gathering" of meaning in a single word and the orientation of polysemy towards a fixed "horizon."[198]

In the second half of "La double séance," a longer essay on Mallarmé published in *La dissémination*, the Mallarméan term *hymen* is interpreted as a typical Derridean general structure substitutable with "pharmakon," "supplement," "différance," and the like.[199] Here, we learn that "hymen" represents spacing not only in the general sense of opposition and mediation of continuity-discontinuity, inside-outside, identity-difference but also spacing in the more particular sense of opposition and mediation of composition-decomposition with respect to syntax and logic. In dealing with syntax, Derrida notes that the hymen's primary meaning of "between" has as one of its subordinate meanings "syncategorem"—for example, the preposition

[197] *Mall.*, pp. 114–16, 118–19, 122–3, 125.

[198] *Mall.*, p. 115—the terms "gathering" and "horizon" particularly recall Heidegger. Derrida's criticism of Heidegger's preoccupation with the word as an isolable unit is closely connected—via the notion of metaphor (which depends on the isolation and hence substitution of such units)—with his criticism of Heidegger's excessive recourse to spatial imagery. See Jacques Derrida, "The Ends of Man," in *MP*, pp. 128–34 and especially n. 34 criticizing the domination of a metaphorics of proximity in works like the "Letter on Humanism" which describes how Being is further from man than all beings yet closer to man than every being, how man's proper essence is his ek-static inherence in Being, and how Being is the nearness occurring in language ("Letter on Humanism," trans. F.A. Capuzzi, in *Pathm.*, pp. 253–9); and like *On Time and Being* which describes how true Time is four-dimensional: an original extending or nearing nearness bringing future, past, and present near to one another by distancing them from one another (*TB*, p. 15). Derrida admits that the thinking of the near and far in passages such as these is not an ontic but an ontological proximity. He concludes nevertheless that Heidegger, in attempting to think this nearness and distance, is being forced to metaphorize the very language of presence which he has formerly deconstructed.

[199] Jacques Derrida, *DS*, pp. 219–22.

or the conjunction—and that this "between" can even represent the overcoming of syntax where the syncategorem of the medieval semanticists can become quasi-categorematic.[200] In dealing with logic, he notes that the primary meaning "between" of hymen has as one of its subordinate meanings "logical function"—for example, conjunction or disjunction—and that this "between" can further represent the overcoming of logic where an undecidable proposition in Gödel's sense is neither true nor false with respect to a set of axioms.[201] If syntax and logic themselves represent different kinds of spacing, then the syncategorematic term and the undecidable proposition when understood in the manner suggested by Derrida represent areas neither strictly isolable nor strictly non-isolable within the syntactic and logical space respectively. It is on this basis also that the conventional theory of metaphor—which depends in turn upon a certain concept of "nominalization"—lays itself open to deconstructive critique.[202]

4.3 *Of the Secret*

Although "Passions" will eventually be combined with "Sauf le Nom (Post-Scriptum)" and "Khōra" to form what Derrida terms "a sort of *Essay on the Name* in three chapters or three steps," consideration of the circumstances of its original composition as a separate item may best serve to orientate us as readers on the borderline between Deconstruction and Neoplatonism. Originally, Derrida had been invited to contribute to a collection of essays about his work entitled *Derrida: a Critical Reader* and edited by David Wood. Since the invitation referred to a stimulus towards a certain passion, suggested as a title "An Oblique Offering" and listed precisely twelve contributors,

---

[200] *DS*, pp. 221–2. Derrida describes this process as a "remarking of the semantic void" consisting of three phases: 1. the syncategorematic term functions as spacing and articulation but does not signify the latter; 2. the syncategorem becomes a categorem; 3. the syncategorematic term no longer functions as spacing and articulation but now signifies the latter

[201] *DS*, pp. 219–20. Derrida here fully states the thesis of Gödel: namely, that an undecidable proposition is a proposition which, given a system of axioms governing a multiplicity, is neither an analytical nor deductive consequence of those axioms, nor in contradiction with them, and neither true nor false with respect to those axioms.

[202] For a detailed discussion of this point see Jacques Derrida, *WM*, pp. 233–41 (and especially p. 234, n. 39).

Derrida suspected that the project was being conceived consciously or subconsciously as a parody of the Christian ritual of the Eucharist. He decides to accept the invitation by writing in such a manner that he can sustain and subvert the parody at the same time. Therefore, against the background of a general reflection on the question of responding or not responding to appeals, Derrida unfolds an elaborate counterpoint between the passion of eucharistic sacrifice and the passion of deconstructive undecidability, this counterpoint being reflected in his choice of the plural term "Passions" as final title of his contribution.[203]

But this contextualization only points to a superficial reading of the text. A more incisive reading shows that "Passions" is structured around three descriptions and/or enactments: 1. of a *ceremony*, which is described in section I by contrasting the position of someone who analyzes a ritual and someone who participates in a ritual, and which is enacted in section III; 2. of the *dilemma* of *responding or not responding to a call*. This is described in section II where it is expanded into a discussion of ethical responsibility in a general sense; and 3. of a *secret* which is described in the litany of six denials followed by one affirmation and also enacted through that litany, description and enactment being fused.[204] The three descriptions and/or enactments are further connected either directly or indirectly among themselves.

---

[203] In the opinion of the present writer, Derrida parodies not only the eucharist and the crucifixion but also the hexaemeron in this essay. See below n. 220.

[204] As we shall see, the enactment of the secret in Derrida has affinities with the enactment called "theurgy" in (post-Plotinian) Neoplatonism. Since the relevant sources of information are rather sparse or fragmentary, there is some controversy over the precise nature of *theourgia* (which means literally "god-working"). However, the latter seems to represent a human action in relation to the gods, or a divine action in relation to humans, or an action through which the human becomes divine. On a lower level, this action may take a ritualistic form, although a higher type of theurgy perhaps no longer requires the ritual. On the lower level, this operation can result in the production of miraculous external events. This contrasts with the production, on the higher level, of a miraculous internal event—the progressive divinization of the human soul as it reverts first to the level of certain intermediate gods and secondly to the supreme god or the One. On the lower level also, the action may take a verbal form, whereas the higher type of theurgy no longer requires this verbalization. For our current purposes, the most important points to note are *i.* that theurgy is held to represent practical action where philosophy is viewed as implying theoretical contemplation—here, theurgy is similar to the enactment of the Derridean secret to be discussed below—; *ii.* that the ritual or verbal mode of operation is distinct from, lower than, and separable from a non-ritual and non-verbal mode—here, theurgy is dissimilar to the enactment of the Derridean secret. Good discussions of theurgy may be found in Andrew Smith,

Thus, it is obvious that all ceremonies revolve around some secret.[205] Less obviously, ceremony is linked with response: for example, the ritualized response in the sphere of polite friendship which involves responsibility towards another's feelings.[206] Likewise, response is linked with secret: for example, the absolute non-response in the sphere of literary fiction which implies no responsibility towards external facts.[207]

Among the many interesting questions raised by Derrida's polysemous text, it is the relation between the performative—an idea which emerges from the question of ceremony—and negative theology—an idea emerging from the question of secret—which will be our theme.[208] The role assigned to performativity in "Passions" is very extensive.[209] Among those non-predicative utterances which one might term the Austinian performatives,[210] "I invite" governs the description of response, "I name" at one point serves to illustrate the transition from non-predicative to predicative usage,[211] and "I testify" dominates

---

Porphyry's Place in the Neoplatonic Tradition. A Study in Post-Plotinian Neoplatonism (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1974), p. 81ff.; Hans Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy*, nouvelle édition par M. Tardieu (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1978), pp. 177–257; Anne Sheppard, "Proclus' Attitude to Theurgy," in *Classical Quarterly* 32 (1982), pp. 211–24; Henri-Dominique Saffrey, "La théurgie comme pénétration d'élements extra-rationnels dans la philosophie grecque tardive," in *Wissenschaftliche und ausserwssenschaftliche Rationalität. Referate und Texte des 4. Internationalen Humanistischen Symposiums 1978* (Athens 1981), pp. 153–69, repr. in *Recherches sur le Néoplatonisme après Plotin* (Paris, 1990), pp. 33–49 and "La théurgie comme phénomène culturel chez les néoplatoniciens (IV^{e}–V^{e} siècles)," in *Koinōnia* 8 (1984), pp. 161–71, repr. in *Recherches sur le Néoplatonisme*, pp. 51–61; Ruth Majercik, *The Chaldaean Oracles, Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 1989); Henry J. Blumenthal, "From Ku-ru-su-wo-ko to Theourgos. Word and Ritual," in *Tria Lustra. Essays and Notes presented to John Pinsent* (Liverpool, 1993), pp. 1–7, repr. in *Soul and Intellect. Studies in Plotinus and Later Neoplatonism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1993); Gregory Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul. The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995); and Robert M. van den Berg, *Proclus' Hymns*, pp. 64–107.

[205] See Jacques Derrida, "Passions," in *On the Name*, ed. T. Dutoit, trans. D. Wood (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1995), p. 7.

[206] *PA*, pp. 8–9.

[207] *PA*, pp. 28–9.

[208] We shall also include a final comment on the Derridean secret itself.

[209] Since the essence of performativity—as we shall see below—is a certain relation between enactment and description, the entire structure of "Passions"—as a combination of enactment and description—is based on the performative.

[210] For a classification of performatives and an account of the Austinian type see pp. 189–91.

[211] See *PA*, pp. 12–13. The argument seems to be a component of Derrida's illustration of the "infinite paradoxes of narcissism." He envisages a situation where *i.* X gives a name to Y, and *ii.* Y refuses the name and takes another. Clearly, there is implied in case *i.* a performative utterance "I name you N," but in case *ii* a

the enactment of the ceremony. The role assigned in "Passions" to negative theology is more restricted.[212] Its function is to reinforce the enactment of the ceremony in a quasi-logical manner. In what follows, we shall discuss the relation between the performative and negative theology by summarizing the litany of denials and affirmations, quoting the important passage which introduces the litany, and extracting a theory of performativity and negative theology from the litany and its introduction.

It is in section III of Derrida's essay that the issues selected for discussion appear in their most concentrated form. The argument begins with a rapid transition from the aporia of response and non-response in the sphere of ethics: that is, the topic of the previous section, the transition being effected by the comment that the writer's language continues to function despite the moral dilemma.[213] The next stage of the argument—prefixed by a kind of testamentary formula: "we testify to . . . therefore, let us say" (*nous témoignons de . . . disons donc*)—is the description-enactment of the secret through the ceremony. This consists of six denials of what the secret is, each time introduced by the phrase "there is something secret there" (*il y a là du secret*).

The six negations are:[214]

First negation: the secret is not something lying behind the technique of a gifted artist like the imagination which Kant associates with the transcendental schematism.

Second negation: the secret is not a representation dissimulated by a conscious subject nor the content of an unconscious representation. It is not the subjectivity which Kierkegaard opposed to the Hegelian Concept and called "existence."

---

constative utterance "he refuses N_1 in favour of N_2". There is also in case *i.* no separation between the description and the enactment, but in case *ii.* a separation produced by the refusal and substitution. Therefore case *i.* is a non-predicative, and case *ii.* a predicative utterance.

[212] We shall use the term "negative theology" as a shorthand notation for "the entire discoursive context surrounding the negative and affirmative ways of approaching the supreme" (see chapter 2, n. 85).

[213] The relation between ethics and language has become increasingly an issue with Derrida as his interpretation of Lévinas has matured. For a good summary of the issues involved see the interpretation of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac in Derrida, *GD*, pp. 66–9.

[214] *PA*, pp. 24–7.

Third negation: the secret is not something private which could, under certain conditions, be revealed publicly. This category would include professional, military, state, confessional secrets and the like.

Fourth negation: the secret is not something which revealed religion or esoteric philosophy discloses, nor the state of learned ignorance advocated by the exponents of negative theology.

Fifth negation: the secret is not something associated with truth in its various modes of adequation, memory, givenness, promise, or undecidability. It exceeds the play of concealment and revelation and/or forgetting and recalling. It has no relation—even negatively—to phenomenality. It is not even "made" in the Augustinian sense.

Sixth negation: The secret is neither in speech nor outside speech and both in speech and outside speech. In the ethical sense, it does not answer either to itself or anyone else.[215]

Typographically separated from the rest of the text, a statement that "there is no longer either time or place there" (*là il n'y a plus le temps, ni la place*) divides the six denials from the one affirmation.[216]

The one affirmation now follows:[217]

This establishes *i.* an association between the secret and literature where *a.* the secret is something about literature, literature itself being something in place of the secret, *b.* there is no secret behind the surface of the text, or alternatively: the secret is that there is no secret, *c.* the secret is a possibility which exceeds the simulacrum of literature, the simulacrum itself testifying to this possibility.[218] It also establishes *ii.* some connection between the secret and the typical Derridean general structures where *a.* passion and secret are interdependent, *b.* the non-objectifiable aspect of the secret represents the structure of the trace, *c.* the secret calls us back to the other although

---

[215] Although the passage is ostensibly constructed from six denials of what the secret is, it also includes several affirmations regarding the nature of the secret. Thus—within the fourth negation—the secret is what makes the disclosures of revealed religion or esoteric philosophy and the learned ignorance of the negative theologian possible;—within the fifth negation—the secret is homonymy, not in the sense of a hidden resource, but in that of a functional possibility of homonymy. Moreover, it is the functional possibility of mimesis; and—within the sixth negation—the secret is impassive like the *Khōra*.

[216] However, the next section of text contains some further denials e.g. with reference to Husserl's and Heidegger's position that the secret is neither of consciousness nor of subject, nor of *Dasein*, nor of authentic *Dasein*.

[217] *PA*, p. 27ff.

[218] On these points see further pp. 194–6.

it is itself the other, *d.* solitude and secret are synonymous, and *e.* the excessive aspect of the secret constitutes the structure of the remainder.[219]

The enactment of the ceremony or description-enactment of the secret displays a number of interesting features. In particular, the reference to the use of the verb "I testify:" introduces the notion of performativity, while the sequence of six denials and one affirmation suggests the context of negative theology. The presence of a Heideggerian intertext is also detectable, since the impersonal verb *il y a* ("There is") in French could be a translation of the impersonal verb *es gibt* ("There is/it gives") in German favored by Heidegger, the combination of the earlier performative verb and the present impersonal verb bringing the non-predicative element shared by the two verbs to the forefront, and since the sequential denial of the secret recalls in some manner the epochal withdrawal of Being in Heidegger's thought.[220] However, although this enactment of the ceremony or description-enactment of the secret introduces the notions of performativity and negative theology, it does not explain the nature of either. For this explanation we must turn to the passage which immediately precedes the description-enactment proper.

It runs as follows:[221]

> Let us say that there is a secret here. Let us testify: *There is something secret.* We will leave the matter here for today but not without an exercise on the essence and existence of such a secret, an exercise that will have an apophatic aspect. The apophatic is not here necessarily dependent on negative theology, even if it makes it possible, too. And what we are attempting to put to the test is the possibility, in truth the impossibility, for any testimony to guarantee itself by expressing itself in the following form and grammar: "Let us testify that . . ." We

---

[219] It is not difficult to see, especially on the basis of its identifications with the other and remainder, that the secret is closely connected with the neutral term in the (a)semiotic square ($\bar{a}_1$ $\bar{a}_2$). But it is peculiar to the secret, at least in the treatment of "Passions," that this neutral term is strictly *relative to performativity.*

[220] On Derrida's use of the Heideggerian *es gibt* in the companion essay "Sauf le Nom" see p. 32. The suggestion of a Heideggerian intertext is reinforced at the end of the six denials. Here, the combination of the "There is . . ." phrase and time/space recalls Heidegger's combination of the *es gibt* formula with Being and time/space—see Martin Heidegger, *TB*, p. 16ff. There is also a further suggestion of a biblical intertext. This is the famous account in the book of *Genesis* of the six days of creation which begins with an imperative "Let there be light" and continues with a sixfold repetitive formula "And God said", etc.

[221] *PA*, pp. 23–4/*Passions* (Paris: Galilée, 1993), p. 56.

> testify to a secret that is without content, without a content separable from its performative experience, from its performative tracing. (We shall not say from its performative *enunciation* or from its *propositional argumentation*; and we keep in reserve a number of questions about performativity in general.) Let us say therefore: *There is something secret*

In order to begin a reading of this passage, we should recall some points discussed earlier in connection with "Sauf le Nom." At that point, the outline of a general theory of performativity was prepared by showing how the combinatory mechanism of the (a)semiotic square by being equally applicable to elements functioning in the non-semantic sphere—the phonemes and morphemes—, to elements operating in the semantic sphere—the denotations and connotations—, and to the various processes serving to connect or disconnect these two spheres,[222] underlies the possibility of exchange between signifier and signified. At that point also, we inserted some comments on specific applications of performativity: for example, the structures of the Trace whereby the anagrammic connection between *trace* (= "mark" or "trail") and *écart* (= "gap" or "deviation") reflects on the level of the signifier the association between necessary sequence and random deviation on that of the signified,[223] and the structure of the Re-Mark whereby the proliferation of quasi-homonyms like *marche* (= "step") and *marge* (= "margin") and quasi-synonyms like *pli* (= "fold") and *hymen* (= "hymen") reflects on the level of the signifier the infinite multiplication implied by the original term on that of the signified.[224]

Now the quoted passage is important because it gives us some further details regarding the nature of the performative implied in the description-enactment of the secret:[225] namely, that there is a performative "experience" (*expérience*) which must be prior to both performative "utterance" (*énonciation*) and propositional argumentation,[226] given that the secret has a content inseparable from performative experience but not inseparable from performative utterance

---

[222] For the combinatory mechanism of the (a)semiotic square see chapter 2, pp. 42–3, 49–50 and n. 51.

[223] See chapter 2, pp. 75–6.

[224] See chapter 2, pp. 77–8.

[225] In the present volume, we have simply employed the terms "performative"—meaning discourse which attempts to state certain truths while embodying those truths in the mode of utterance—and "Austinian performative" in separate contexts. It is now necessary to consider more precisely the relation between these different kinds of performative.

[226] Derrida identifies performative *experience* with performative *tracing*. See above.

and propositional argumentation. What these different kinds of performativity represent is not specified.[227] However, we may perhaps elucidate or expand Derrida's meaning first, by considering the distinction—within that general definition of performative language as language implying some intensified relation between description and enactment—between *1.* performatives where description is actually *identical* with enactment (or in semiotic terms, where signifier is identical with signified)—examples of such usages would be the verbal expressions "I promise" and "I bequeath," these representing utterances which are neither true nor false and which occur in one grammatical form (first person, present tense, of verb);[228] and *2.* performatives where description is merely *parallel* with enactment (or in semiotic terms, where signifier is parallel with signified)—examples of such usages would be the general structures of Trace and Remark, these representing utterances which are neither true nor false to the extent that they are enactments and which occur in a variety of grammatical (and also syntactic) forms.[229] We may further elucidate and expand Derrida's meaning secondly, by identifying as the performative *experience*—the "arche-" performative—a certain hypothetical dual-unitary basis of all non-predicative and polysemous linguistic

---

[227] One is tempted to speculate on the nature of the performative in the context of Neoplatonic theurgy (see above, n. 204). According to Proclus, *CRemp.* II. 64. 5ff. phonetic aspects of language are exploited in theurgic ritual, and according to Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, ed. E. Des Places (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1966) 3. 13, 129. 14ff. graphic aspects are similarly employed. Presumably, these usages are performative in the sense of establishing parallelism between the description and enactment. See Franz Dornseiff, *Das Alphabet in Mystik und Magie.* 2. Aufl. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1925), Stephen Gersh, *From Iamblichus to Eriugena*, Excursus, pp. 289–304, and Maurus Hirschle, *Sprachphilosophie und Namenmagie im Neuplatonismus mit einem Exkurs zu "Demokrit" B 142* (Meisenheim am Glan: Hain, 1979).

[228] This type of performative is here called the "Austinian" performative in honour of the philosopher who first drew attention to it. Among further important aspects of these performatives are *i.* the distinction between performative (not capable of being true or false) and "constative" utterances (capable of being true and false); *ii.* the notion that performatives, although not capable of being true or false, may be more or less successful depending on the circumstances. See John L. Austin, "Other Minds," in *Philosophical Papers*, eds. J.O. Urmson and G.J. Warnock (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), pp. 44–84 and *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1962).

[229] On this type of performative see our discussion in chapter 2, pp. 75–6, 77–8. It should be noted that in reading "Passions" we must lay emphasis particularly upon the *performative* aspect of the Derridean general structures. Naturally, these structures also have a *constative* function.

applications and also of all predicative and monosemous applications;[230] by further identifying as the performative *utterance*—the "normal" performative—the verbal expressions mentioned above as representing non-predicative and monosemous applications of the dual-unitary basis and the general structures mentioned above as representing non-predicative and polysemous applications of the dual-unitary basis; and finally by identifying as the propositional argumentation various logical structures which would constitute predicative and monosemous applications of the dual-unitary basis.[231]

That the present passage explains the nature of the performative by assuming a structure of this type[232] seems to be confirmed by various statements in the course of the enactment-description of the secret. Thus, the distinction between the hypothetical basis and the applications of the basis is indicated by the contrasts between what is about literature and what is literature and between what exceeds the simulacrum of literature and what is the simulacrum of literature stated in the affirmative description of the secret.[233] The dual-unitary character of the hypothetical basis itself is indicated by the references to such implicit doublings as the functional possibility of homonymy and the functional possibility of mimesis among the affirmations introduced into the negative description of the secret.[234] Without the distinction between the hypothetical basis and the applications of the basis and without the characterization of the

---

[230] The basis is "hypothetical" in the sense that no extra-linguistic referent is assumed. The basis is "dual-unitary" in being *differential* and *referential*.

[231] On polysemy see chapter 2, pp. 42–3 and n. 51; on the relation between polysemy and the general structures see chapter 2, pp. 75–6, 77–8.

[232] Our interpretation of the distinction between performative experience and performative utterance seems sufficient to explain the text under discussion. However, it is likely that the distinction is ultimately one of degree rather than kind and that certain linguistic or textual usages will have an ambiguous status. Here, we shall simply note that performative *utterance* will be represented by all individual instances of Austinian performatives (e.g. the spoken act of promising and the written act of signing a will) and all individual instances of the Derridean general structures (e.g. a supplementary structure in a spoken communication or a trace structure in a written text); performative *experience* will be represented by the properties which may be instantiated or the possibilities which may be realized in the individual utterances (e.g. the intensified relation of description and enactment, the combination of the grammatical properties of first person and singular and present tense, the configuration based on the (a)semiotic square, etc.) as well as the hypothetical duality-unity underlying all such properties).

[233] See pp. 187–8.

[234] See n. 215.

hypothetical basis as dual-unitary, we would not be able to argue with Derrida that all performatives necessarily imply those possibilities of repetition and citation which are actualized when we rewrite an expression like "I call" in the form "*Khōra* calls us" and which retain the non-predicative connotation unmodified within that grammatical change.[235]

The passage quoted is also important because it gives us some information concerning the relation between the performative and negative theology implied in the description-enactment of the secret: namely, that there is an "apophatic aspect" (*allure apophatique*) not identifiable with negative theology and a negative theology dependent on the apophatic aspect.[236] Now although it seems obvious that the performative experience coincides with the apophatic aspect not identifiable with negative theology while the performative utterance coincides with the negative theology dependent on the apophatic aspect, several questions remain including *1*. Is the performative utterance that coincides with negative theology in the enactment-description a performative utterance in the sense of a verbal expression or verbal expressions or a performative utterance in the sense of a general structure or general structures?; and *2*. Does the performative utterance coincide with negative theology in the description-enactment *a*. because the enactment is performative and the description is of negative theology or *b*. because both the enactment and the description are of negative theology?

These questions can perhaps be answered by reflecting on the course of the description-enactment of the secret itself. Here, we

---

[235] On performatives as iterable and citational see Jacques Derrida, *LI*. Derrida has discussed the entire Austinian performative theory in two essays and also responded to the critique leveled against him by Austin's follower Searle. The earlier essay by Derrida is "Signature, Event, Context," in *MP*, pp. 307–30. The anti-Derridean critique is John R. Searle, "Reiterating the Differences. A Reply to Derrida," in *Glyph* 1 (1977), pp. 198–208—where it follows a reprint of Derrida's essay. Derrida's later essay is "Limited Inc.: abc," in *LI*. The materials of the entire debate are conveniently assembled in *LI*.

[236] One is tempted to speculate further on the relation between the performative and negative theology in the context of Neoplatonic theurgy (see above, n. 204). Since according to the doctrine of the Athenian School of Neoplatonism one can only revert above the level of the intermediate gods by using theurgy—see chapter 4. 2, n. 91—, the activity of enunciating affirmations and negations around the One which represents the natural "travail" (*ōdis*) of the soul with respect to the One at the end of the dialectical process must be performative in character. See Proclus, *CParm*. VII. 1191, 5–9, VII. 70 (K.-L.) Moerbeke, Damascius, *Dubitationes et Solutiones*, ed. L.G. Westerink and J. Combès (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1986–91) I. 9. 1–2, II. 22. 19–20, II. 68. 18–21, etc.

must take account of a statement if not of negative theology itself at least of something analogous to negative theology in the manner of a *repetition* where Derrida reiterates his statement that the secret "is not . . ." But since negative theology when treated deconstructively—and given a more overtly temporal reading —is itself a repetition, we have a situation where enactment parallels description and also signifier parallels signified. Therefore, Repetition as a performative utterance in the sense of an individual instance of a general structure here coincides with negative theology in that both the enactment and the description are of negative theology itself. Having duly reminded ourselves of the earlier arguments relative to this case in which negative theology was shown to depend on the mechanism of the (a)semiotic square[237] and the mechanism of the (a)semiotic square was shown to depend on repeatability, ideality, and repetition,[238] we can turn to a further instance. Here, we are presented with a statement not simply of something analogous to negative theology but of negative theology itself in the manner of a *deferral* where Derrida postpones his statement that negative theology "is . . ." And since negative theology when handled deconstructively—and given a more explicitly temporal reading—is itself a deferral, we again have a situation where enactment parallels description and also signifier parallels signified. Thus, deferral as a performative utterance in the sense of an individual instance of a general structure here coincides with negative theology in that both the enactment and the description are of negative theology itself.[239]

Of course, Derrida emphasizes the distinction between performative experience and performative utterance and consequently the distinction between "apophaticism" (*l'apophatisme*) and negative theology.[240] This position would be a reasonable one to maintain if what is called "negative theology" were confined to the sphere of propositional

---

[237] See chapter 2, pp. 62, 93–4.

[238] See chapter 2, pp. 46–7.

[239] For the interpretation of negative theology summarized here see Derrida, *HAS*, pp. 83, 86, etc.

[240] Two final points are worth making in connection with the performative interpretation of negative theology: *i.* Since repetition and deferral constitute general structures in the Derridean sense, one could presumably introduce further enactments of negative theology using other general structures: for example, Trace, Supplement, or Re-Mark; *ii.* the performative interpretation of negative theology seems to go beyond even the pseudo-Dionysian system where, despite the emphasis on the negative handling of divine names, *liturgical* practice is based entirely on affirmative methods.

argumentation which he associates with performative utterance. The position is however less defensible if the discoursive context of negative theology by combining the non-predicative and the predicative crosses the boundary between performative experience and performative utterance. But the latter account is the truer one. Nevertheless, we shall follow Derrida's line of thought to its conclusion with some remarks about the "secret."

The Derridean Secret

In our interpretation of "Passions" we have suggested that the secret which is enacted and described amounts to "a certain hypothetical dual-unitary basis of all non-predicative and polysemous linguistic applications and also of all predicative and monosemous applications," the Austinian performatives representing non-predicative and monosemous applications of the dual-unitary basis and the Derridean general structures representing non-predicative and polysemous applications of the dual-unitary basis.[241] When Derrida himself describes the secret as something about literature or something exceeding literature we can understand this statement as applying specifically to the dual-unitary basis itself of the non-predicative and monosemous and non-predicative and polysemous linguistic applications, and when he similarly describes the secret as the absence of a secret behind the text his statement can be understood as applying specifically to the non-predicative and monosemous and to the non-predicative and polysemous linguistic applications themselves of that basis.[242]

This conclusion is a reasonable stopping point for reading the text of "Passions." However, Derrida has attached a very copious endnote to his essay which requires some brief comments.[243]

This note establishes an important connection between the secret and exemplarity. Having introduced the topic with a reference to the "*exemplary* secret" (*secret* exemplaire) of literature—a phrase which could mean in accordance with the Derridean principle of exemplarity

---

[241] See p. 191.

[242] See pp. 188–9. When Derrida speaks of the absence of a secret behind the text, what he means is that—insofar as the text establishes non-predicative and monosemous or non-predicative and polysemous utterances—there is no *extra-linguistic* referent. On this understanding of the textual secret see Derrida *GT*, p. 150ff.

[243] *PA*, p. 142, n. 14.

that literature is undecidably the paradigm of the class of secrets or only a member of the class of secrets—Derrida goes on to demonstrate that the antithesis of exemplary and substitutive implies not only *i.* the antithesis of singular and common terms but also *ii.* the antithesis of performative and non-performative utterances.[244] The first demonstration is made directly near the beginning of the note. Derrida explains that if "I" write about myself, I can claim to be writing simultaneously about "I" as an individual, about any other "I," and about the "I" in general—an explanation that utilizes the relation between the exemplary "I" and the substitutive "I."[245] The second demonstration emerges indirectly in the course of the note, and consists of a series of suggestions regarding performativity. The main suggestions are *a.* the notion that I cannot be contradicted in making my claim about the "I"—thus, the dichotomy of true and false is suspended; *ii.* the statement that if I write about "I," then I am also writing about the process of writing about "I."—this indicates that the action and the referent are not distinct; *iii.* the statement that if I write about "I," then I am engaging in an act of testimony—this identifies the action with one of the standard performatives.[246] In ascribing these features to an exemplary action, Derrida is clearly not enumerating performative *utterances* but rather—by alluding to properties of performativity as such—signalizing performative *expression*. For this reason, he can argue that what is being discussed "does not require utterance" (*n'attend pas la parole*), and that the difference involved is "pragmatic and not properly linguistic" (*pragmative et non proprement linguistique*). Moreover in elaborating this description of an exemplary action, Derrida is clearly establishing the performative expression as the basis of general structures. This

[244] The main text of "Passions" does include references to exemplarity which, however, do not take us in the direction marked by the endnote Thus, Derrida applies the notion of example to ceremony (see *PA*, pp. 8–9 on a rule which is recurrent and general as well as singular and exemplary; *PA*, p. 23 on the example of the ceremonial discourse); to response and non-response (see *PA*, p. 9 on politeness as an example of all normative concepts; *PA*, p. 13 on the exemplary equivocity of the "as" in the structure of responsibility); and to secret (see *PA*, p. 7 on the use of an example of a secret to judge the secret in general; *PA*, p. 29 on the exemplary secret manifested in literature).

[245] *PA*, p. 143.

[246] *PA*, pp. 143–4, n. 14. One should also note that Derrida's emphasis on the first person singular of the present tense throughout the passage recalls the grammatical structure of the Austinian performative.

is why he refers in the same context to the interplay of "marks and non-marks" (*marques et non-marques*), to every occasion on which there is a trace, and indeed to every occasion on which "there is" (*il y a* (*es gibt*)) at all.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ancient Sources

Apuleius

Peri Hermeneias. In *The Logic of Apuleius. Including a Complete Latin Text and English Translation of the Peri Hermeneias of Apuleius of Madaura*. By David Londey and Carmen Johanson. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987.

Aristotle

Opera. Edited by Immanuel Bekker. Revised Edition by Olof Gigon. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1960.

Categ. *Categories* and *De Interpretatione*. Translated with Notes by John L. Ackrill. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Metaph. *Metaphysics*. Edited by W. David Ross. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924.
Metaphysics. Books Γ, Δ, E. Translated with Notes by Christopher Kirwan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Phys. *Physics*. Edited by W. David Ross. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936.
Physics. Books I and II. Translated with Introduction and Notes by William Charlton. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Augustine

CA *Contra Academicos*. Edited by William M. Green. *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 29. Turnhout: Brepols, 1970.
Answer to Sceptics. Translated by Denis J. Kavanagh. *The Fathers of the Church* 5. New York: CIMA Publishing, 1948.

Conf. *Confessiones*. Edited by Martin Skutella. Leipzig: Teubner, 1934.
Confessions. Translated by Henry Chadwick. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

DBV *De Beata Vita*. Edited by William M. Green. *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 29. Turnhout: Brepols, 1970.
The Happy Life. Translated by Ludwig Schopp. New York: CIMA Publishing, 1948.

DCD *De Civitate Dei*. Edited by Bernhard Dombart and Alfons Kalb. *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 47–48. Turnhout: Brepols, 1955.
The City of God Against the Pagans. Translated by George E. McCracken, William M. Green, David S. Wiesen, Philip Levine, Eva M. Sanford, William C. Greene. *Loeb Classical Library* 411–416. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1957–60.

DDC *De Doctrina Christiana*. Edited by Joseph Martin. *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 32. Turnhout: Brepols, 1962.

DDQ *De Diversis Quaestionibus LXXXIII*, qu. 46. Edited by A. Mutzenbecher. *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 44A. Turnhout: Brepols, 1975.
Eighty-Three Different Questions. Translated by David L. Mosher. *The Fathers of the Church* 70. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1982.

DGM *De Genesi Contra Manichaeos*. Edited by Dorothea Weber. *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 91. Wien: *Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1998.

Two Books on Genesis Against the Manichaeans. Translated by Roland J. Teske. *The Fathers of the Church* 84. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1990.

DIA *De Immortalitate Animi*. Edited by Wolfgang Hörmann. *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorm* 89. Wien: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1986.
The Immortality of the Soul. Translated by Ludwig Schopp. *The Fathers of the Church* 4. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1947.

Dial. *De Dialectica*. Edited by Jan Pinborg. Translated by B. Darrell Jackson. Dordrecht: Reidel, 1975.

DLA *De Libero Arbitrio*. Edited by William M. Green. *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 29. Turnhout: Brepols, 1970.
On Free Will. Translated by John H.S. Burleigh. *The Library of Christian Classics*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953.

DM *De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae et De Moribus Manichaeorum*. Edited by Johannes B. Bauer. *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 90. Wien: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1992.
The Catholic and Manichaean Ways of Life. Translated by Donald A, Gallagher and Idella J. Gallagher. *The Fathers of the Church* 56. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1966.

DQA *De Quantitate Animae*. Edited by Wolfgang Hörmann. *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 89. Wien: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1986.
The Magnitude of the Soul. Translated by John J. McMahon. *The Fathers of the Church* 4. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1947.

DVR *De Vera Religione*. Edited by Klaus D. Daur. *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 32. Turnhout: Brepols, 1962.
On True Religion Translated by John H.S. Burleigh. *The Library of Christian Classics*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953.

Mag. *De Magistro*. Edited by William M. Green. *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 29. Turnhout: Brepols, 1970.
The Teacher. Translated by John H.S. Burleigh. *The Library of Christian Classics*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953.

Mus. *De Musica*. *Patrologia Latina* 32. Paris, 1841.
On Music. Translated by Robert Catesby Taliaferro. *The Fathers of the Church* 4. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1947.

Ord. *De Ordine*. Edited by William M. Green. *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 29. Turnhout: Brepols, 1970.
Divine Providence and the Problem of Evil. Translated by Robert P. Russell. *The Fathers of the Church* 5. New York: CIMA Publishing, 1948.

Retr. *Retractationes*. Edited by Pius Knöll. *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 36. Wien-Leipzig, 1902.
The Retractations. Translated by Mary Inez Bogan. *The Fathers of the Church* 60. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1968.

Sol. *Soliloquia*. Edited by Wolfgang Hörmann. *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 89. Wien: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1986.
Soliloquies. Translated by Thomas Gilligan. *The Fathers of the Church* 5. New York: CIMA Publishing, 1948.

Trin. *De Trinitate*. Edited by William J. Mountain and François Glorie. *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 50–50A. Turnhout: Brepols, 1968.
The Trinity. Translated by Stephen McKenna. *The Fathers of the Church* 45. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1963.

Berthold of Moosburg

Exp. *Expositio super Elementationem Theologicam Procli: Prologus, Propositiones 1–13*. Edited by Maria Rita Pagnoni-Sturlese and Loris Sturlese. Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1984.

CICERO

DO *De Oratore*. In *M. Tullii Ciceronis Rhetorica*. Edited by A.S. Wilkins. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902.
De Oratore, etc. Translated by Edward W. Sutton and Harris Rackham. *Loeb Classical Library* 348–9. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Orat. *Orator*. In *M. Tullii Ciceronis Rhetorica*. Edited by A.S. Wilkins. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902.
Brutus and Orator. Translated by George L. Hendrickson and Harry M. Hubbell. *Loeb Classical Library* 342. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1952.

TD *Tusculanae Disputationes*. Edited by Max Pohlenz. Leipzig: Teubner, 1912.
Tusculan Disputations. Translated by James E. King. *Loeb Classical Library* 141. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1971.

DAMASCIUS

DS *Dubitationes et Solutiones de Primis Principiis. Traité des premiers principes*. Edited by Leendert G. Westerink and Joseph Combès. 3 vols. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1986–91.

PS.-DIONYSIUS.

DN *De Divinis Nominibus*. In *Corpus Dionysiacum I*. Edited by Beata Regina Suchla. Berlin-New York: De Gruyter, 1990.

Epist. *Epistulae*. In *Corpus Dionysiacum II*. Edited by Gunter Heil and Adolf M. Ritter. Berlin-New York: De Gruyter, 1991.

MT *De Mystica Theologia*. In *Corpus Dionysiacum II*. Edited by Gunter Heil and Adolf M. Ritter Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991.
Pseudo-Dionysius. The Complete Works. Translated by Colm Luibheid. New York and Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1987.

IAMBLICHUS

Myst. *De Mysteriis Aegyptorum. Les mystères d'Égypte*. Edited by Édouard des Places. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1966.

IRENAEUS

AH *Adversus Haereses. Contre les hérésies, Livre I*. Édition critique par Adelin Rousseau et Louis Doutreleau. Paris: Cerf, 1979.

MACROBIUS

Sat. *Saturnalia*. Edited by James Willis. Leipzig: Teubner, 1963. *The Saturnalia*. Translated by Percival Vaughan Davies. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969.

PLATO

Platonis Opera. Edited by John Burnet. 5 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899–1907.

Phaedr. *Phaedrus*. In *Platonis Opera*. Vol. 2. Edited by John Burnet. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901.
Translated by R. Hackforth. In *Plato. The Collected Dialogues*. Edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns. New York: Random House, 1961.

Rep. *Res Publica*. In *Platonis Opera*. Vol. 4. Edited by John Burnet. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902.
Translated by Paul Shorey. In *Plato. The Collected Dialogues*. Edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns. New York: Random House, 1961.

Theaet. *Theaetetus*. In *Platonis Opera*. Vol. 1. Edited by John Burnet. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900.

Tim. *Timaeus*. In *Platonis Opera*. Vol. 4. Edited by John Burnet. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1902.
Translated by Francis MacDonald Cornford in *Plato's Cosmology. The Timaeus of Plato Translated with a Running Commentary*. London: Kegan Paul, 1937.

PLOTINUS

Enn. *Enneades*. In *Plotini Opera*. Edited by Paul Henry and Hans-Rudolph Schwyzer. Bruxelles: Édition Universelle, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1951–73.

PORPHYRY

Sententiae ad intelligibilia ducentes. Edited by Erich Lamberz. Leipzig: Teubner, 1975.

PROCLUS

CCrat. *In Platonis Cratylum Commentaria*. Edited by Georgius Pasquali. Leipzig: Teubner, 1908.

CEucl. *In primum Euclidis Elementorum librum Commentarii*. Edited by Gottfried Friedlein. Leipzig: Teubner, 1873.
A Commentary on the First Book of Euclid's Elements. Translated by Glenn R. Morrow. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.

CParm. *Commentarius in Parmenidem*. Edited by Victor Cousin. Paris, 1864. Reprinted Hildesheim: Olms, 1961.
Plato Latinus III. Parmenides usque ad Wnem primae hypothesis necnon Procli Commentarium in Parmenidem pars ultima adhuc inedita interprete Guillelmo de Moerbeka. Edited by Raymond Klibansky and Charlotte Labowsky. London: Warburg Institute, 1953.
Commentaire sur le Parménide de Platon. Traduction de Guillaume de Moerbeke. Édition critique par Carlos Steel. Tomes I–II. Leuven: University of Leuven Press and Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982–5.
Commentary on Plato's Parmenides. Translated by Glenn R. Morrow and John Dillon. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

CRemp. *In Platonis Rem Publicam Commentarii*. Edited by Wilhelm Kroll. 2 vols. Leipzig: Teubner, 1899–1901.

CTim. *In Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*. Edited by Ernst Diehl. 3 vols. Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–6.

ET *The Elements of Theology. A Revised Text with Translation, Introduction, and Commentary*. Edited by Eric R. Dodds. 2nd Edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963.

Hymn. *Hymni*. Edited by Ernst Vogt. Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1957.
Translated by R.M. van den Berg. In *Proclus' Hymns. Essays, Translations, Commentary*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001.

PT *Theologia Platonis. Théologie platonicienne*. Edited by Henri-Dominique Saffrey and Leendert G. Westerink. 6 vols. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1968–1996.

SM *De Sacrificio et Magia*. In *Catalogue des manuscrits alchimiques grecs*. Vol. 6. Edited by Joseph Bidez. Bruxelles: Lamartin, 1928.

Derrida

AF *Archive Fever. A Freudian Impression.* Translated by Eric Prenowitz. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

AL *Acts of Literature.* Edited by Derek Attridge. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.

AOF *The Archeology of the Frivolous. Reading Condillac*. Translated by John P. Leavey, Jr. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1980.

Apoc. "On a Newly Arisen Apocalyptic Tone in Philosophy." Translated by John P. Leavey, Jr. In *Raising the Tone of Philosophy. Late Essays by Immanuel Kant. Transformative Critique by Jacques Derrida.* Edited by Peter Fenves. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993. Pp. 117–71.

Apor. *Aporias*. Translated by Thomas Dutoit. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.

Cart. "Cartouches." In *The Truth in Painting.* Translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod. Chicago and London: University of Chicago of Press, 1987. Pp. 183–254.

CI *Circonfession. Cinquante-neuf périodes et périphrases.* In Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida.* Paris: Seuil, 1991. Engl. Trans. Circum.

Circum. *Circumfession. Fifty-Nine Periods and Periphrases.* In Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida, *Jacques Derrida.* Translated by Geoffrey Bennington. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

CP *La carte postale de Socrate à Freud et au-delà.* Paris: Flammarion, 1980. Engl. Trans. PC.

DI *Dissemination.* Translated by Barbara Johnson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Diff. "Différance." In *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Pp. 1–27.

Diss. "Dissemination." In *Dissemination.* Translated by Barbara Johnson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981. Pp. 287–366.

Dissém. *La Dissémination*. Paris: Seuil, 1972. Engl. Trans. DI.

DM "Donner la mort." In *L'éthique du don. Jacques Derrida et la penseé du don.* Paris: Métailié-Transition, 1992. Engl. Trans. GD.

DS "The Double Session." In *Dissemination.* Translated by Barbara Johnson Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981. Pp. 173–286.

DT *Donner le temps I. La fausse monnaie*. Paris: Galilée, 1991. Engl. Trans. GT.

ED *Écriture et la différence*. Paris: Seuil, 1967. Engl. Trans. WD

EHOG *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry. An Introduction.* Translated by John. P. Leavey, Jr. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1978.

EJ "Edmond Jabès and the Question of the Book." In *Writing and Difference.* Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pp. 64–78.

Ell. "Ellipsis." In *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pp. 294–300.

Env. "Envois." In *The Post Card. From Socrates to Freud and Beyond.* Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987. Pp. 1–256.

EO *The Ear of the Other. Otobiography, Transference, Translation. Texts and Discussions with Jacques Derrida.* Edited by Claude Lévesque and Christie Vance McDonald. Translated by Peggy Kamuf. 2nd Edition. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988.

EOM "The Ends of Man." In *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Pp. 109–36.

Éper. *Éperons. Les styles de Nietzsche*. Paris: Flammarion, 1978. Engl. Transl. Spurs.

Espr. *De l'esprit. Heidegger et la question*. Paris: Galilée, 1987. Engl. Transl. OS

Fors "*Fors*. The Anglish Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok." Translated by Barbara Johnson. In *The Wolf Man's Magic Word. A Cryptonymy*. By Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok. Translated by Nicholas Rand. Foreword by Jacques Derrida. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

FRGE "From Restricted to General Economy. A Hegelianism Without Reserve." In *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pp. 251–77.

FS "Force and Signification." In *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pp. 3–30.

FSW "Freud and the Scene of Writing." In *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pp. 196–231.

GD *The Gift of Death*. Translated by David Wills. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Gesch1 "Geschlecht: Sexual Difference and Ontological Difference." Translated by Ruben Bevezdivin. In *A Derrida Reader. Between the Blinds*. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Peggy Kamuf. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991. Pp. 380–402.

Gesch2 "Geschlecht II. Heidegger's Hand." Translated by John P. Leavey, Jr. In *Deconstruction and Philosophy. The Texts of Jacques Derrida*. Edited by John Sallis. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. Pp. 161–96.

GL *Glas*. Translated by John P. Leavey, Jr. and Richard Rand. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986.

Glas *Glas*. Paris: Galilée, 1974. Repr. Denoël/Gonthier, 1981.

Gramm. *De la Grammatologie*. Paris: Minuit, 1967. Engl. Trans. OG.

GS "'Genesis and Structure' and Phenomenology." In *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pp. 154–168.

GT *Given Time I. Counterfeit Money*. Translated by Peggy Kamuf. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

HAS "How to Avoid Speaking. Denials." Translated by Ken Frieden. In *Derrida and Negative Theology* Edited by Harold Coward and Toby Foshay. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992. Pp. 73–142.

KH "Khòra." In *On the Name*. Edited by Thomas Dutoit Translated by Ian McLoed. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995. Pp. 87–127.

Khōra *Khōra*. Paris: Galilée, 1993. Engl. Trans. ON, pp. 87–127.

LI *Limited Inc.*Translated by Samuel Weber and Jeffrey Mehlman. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988.

Lim. "Limited Inc.: a b c." In *Limited Inc*. Translated by Samuel Weber and Jeffrey Mehlman. Evanson: Northwestern University Press, 1988. Pp. 29–110.

LJF "Letter to a Japanese Friend." Translated by David Wood and Andrew Benjamin. In *A Derrida Reader. Between the Blinds*. Edited by Peggy Kamuf. London and New York: Harvester, 1991. Pp. 270–76.

Mall. "Mallarmé." In *Acts of Literature*. Edited by Derek Attridge. New York: Routledge, 1992. Pp. 110–26.

Marges *Marges de la philosophie*. Paris: Minuit, 1972. Engl. Trans. MP.

MP *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

OG *Of Grammatology*. Translated by Gayatri C. Spivak. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974.

ON *On the Name* Edited by Thomas Dutoit. Translated by David Wood, John P. Leavey, Jr. and Ian McLoed. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.

ORH "On Reading Heidegger." *Research in Phenomenology* 17 (1987): 171–88.
OS *Of Spirit. Heidegger and the Question*. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989.
Ousia "Ousia and Grammē. Note on a Note from *Being and Time*." In *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Pp. 29–67.
Outw. "Outwork, prefacing." In *Dissemination*. Translated by Barbara Johnson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981. Pp. 1–59.
PA "Passions." In *On the Name*. Edited by Thomas Dutoit. Translated by David Wood. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995. Pp. 1–31.
PAP "The Pit and the Pyramid. Introduction to Hegel's Semiology." In *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Pp. 69–108.
Parages *Parages*. Paris: Galilée, 1986.
Parerg. "Parergon." In *The Truth in Painting*. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod. Chicago and London: University of Chicago of Press, 1987. Pp. 15–147.
Pas "Pas." In *Parages*. Paris: Galilée, 1986. Pp. 19–116.
Passions *Passions*. Paris: Galilée, 1993. Engl. Trans. ON, pp. 1–31.
PC *The Post Card. From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
Pharm. "Plato's Pharmacy." In *Dissemination*. Translated by Barbara Johnson. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981. Pp. 61–171.
PIO "Psyche. Inventions of the Other." Translated by Catherine Porter. In *Reading De Man Reading*. Edited by Lindsay Waters and Wlad Godzich. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989. Pp. 25–65.
Pos. *Positions*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
PP "Passe-Partout." In *The Truth in Painting*. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod. Chicago and London: University of Chicago of Press, 1987. Pp. 1–13.
PR "The Principle of Reason. The University in the Eyes of its Pupils." Translated by Catherine Porter and Edward P. Morris. *Diacritics* 13 (1983): 3–20.
PS "La parole soufflée." In *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pp. 169–95.
Psy. *Psychē. Inventions de l'Autre*. Paris: Galilée 1987.
QQ "Qual Quelle. Valéry's Sources." In *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Pp. 297–306.
Rest. "Restitutions of the Truth in Painting." In *The Truth in Painting*. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod. Chicago and London: University of Chicago of Press, 1987. Pp. 255–382.
RM "The Retrait of Metaphor." In *The Derrida Reader: Writing Performances*. Edited by Julian Wolfreys. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998. Pp. 102–29.
RTP *Raising the Tone of Philosophy. Late Essays by Immanuel Kant. Transformative Critique by Jacques Derrida*. Edited by Peter Fenves. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.
Sauf *Sauf le nom*. Paris: Galilée, 1993.
SC "The Supplement of Copula. Philosophy before Linguistics." In *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Pp. 175–205.
SEC "Signature, Event, Context." In *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Pp. 307–30.

SICL "This Strange Institution Called Literature: An Interview with Jacques Derrida." In *Acts of Literature*. Edited by Derek Attridge. New York and London: Routledge, 1992. Pp. 33–75.

Sign. *Signéponge/Signsponge*. Translated by Richard Rand. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984.

SLN "Sauf le nom (Post-Scriptum)." In *On the Name*. Edited by Thomas Dutoit. Translated by John P. Leavey, Jr. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995. Pp. 33–85.

SOM *Specters of Marx. The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. Translated by Peggy Kamuf. New York-London: Routledge, 1994.

SP *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*. Translated by David B. Allison. Preface by Newton Garver. Evanston.: Northwestern University Press, 1973.

Spectr. *Spectres de Marx. État de la dette, le travail du deuil, et la nouvelle internationale*. Paris: Galilée, 1993. Engl. Trans. SOM.

Spurs *Spurs. Nietzsche's Styles*. Translated by Barbara Harlow. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

SSP "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences." In *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pp. 278–93.

TDB "Des Tours de Babel." Translated by Joseph F. Graham. In *Difference in Translation*. Edited with an Introduction by Joseph F. Graham. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985. Pp. 165–207.

Telep. "Telepathy." Translated by Nicholas Royle. *Oxford Literary Review* 10 (1988): 3–41.

Title "Title (to be specified)." Translated by Tom Conley. *Sub-stance* 31 (1981): 5–22.

Tours "Des Tours de Babel." In *Difference in Translation*. Edited with and Introduction by Joseph F. Graham. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985. Pp. 209–48. Engl. Trans. TDB.

TP *The Truth in Painting*. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod. Chicago: University of Chicago of Press, 1987.

TSOF "To Speculate—On 'Freud.'" In *The Postcard. From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987. Pp. 257–409.

Tymp. "Tympan." In *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Pp. ix–xxix.

VM "Violence and Metaphysics. An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel. Lévinas" In *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. Pp. 79–153.

Voix *La voix et le phénomène*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France. Engl. Trans. SP.

VP *La Vérité en Peinture*. Paris: Flammarion, 1978. Engl. Trans. TP.

WD *Writing and Difference*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.

WM "White Mythology. Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy." In *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982. Pp. 207–71.

WT *Word Traces. Readings of Paul Celan*. Edited by Aris Fioretos. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

Heidegger

Aleth. "Aletheia (Heraclitus, Fragment B 16." In *Early Greek Thinking*. Translated by David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi. New York: Harper and Row 1975. Pp. 102–23.

AS "Anaximander's Saying." Translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes. In *Off the Beaten Track*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Pp. 242–81.

BDT "Building. Dwelling. Thinking." In *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper and Row, 1971. Pp. 145–61.

BP *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*. GA 65. 2. Auflage. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1994. Engl. Transl. CP

BPP *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1982.

BT *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. Oxford: Blackwell, 1962.

BWD "Bauen. Wohnen. Denken." In *Vorträge und Aufsätze*. Pfullingen: Neske, 1954. Engl. Trans. BDT

CP *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*. Translated by Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999.

EG "On the Essence of Ground." Translated by William McNeill. In *Pathmarks*. Edited by William McNeill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Pp. 97–135.

EGT *Early Greek Thinking*. Translated by David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi. New York: Harper and Row, 1975.

EM *Einführung in die Metaphysik*. GA 40. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1983. Engl. Trans. IM.

EOP *The End of Philosophy*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper and Row, 1973.

ET *The Essence of Truth. On Plato's Cave Allegory and Theaetetus*. Translated by Ted Sadler. London and New York: Continuum, 2002.

FS *Frühe Schriften*. GA 1. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1978.

GP *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*. GA 24. 2. Auflage. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1989. Engl. Transl. BPP.

Holzw. *Holzwege*. GA 5. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1977. Engl. Trans. OBT.

ID *Identity and Difference*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper and Row, 1969.

IM *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Translated by Ralph Manheim. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.

IWM "Introduction to 'What is Metaphysics?'." Translated by Walter Kaufmann. In *Pathmarks*. Edited by William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Pp. 277–90.

Lang. "Language." In *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper and Row, 1971. Pp. 187–210.

LH "Letter on Humanism." Translated by Frank A. Capuzzi. In *Pathmarks*. Edited by William McNeill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Pp. 239–276.

MAL *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz*. GA 26, 2. Auflage. Frankfurt: Klostermann 1990. Engl. Trans. MFL

MFL *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*. Translated by Michael Heim. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1984.

NI *Nietzsche*. Vol. 4: *Nihilism*. Translated by Frank A. Capuzzi. Edited with Notes and an Analysis by David Farrell Krell. New York: Harper and Row, 1982.

Nietz. *Nietzsche*. 2 volumes. Pfullingen: Neske, 1961.
OBT *Off the Beaten Track*. Translated by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
OCM "The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics." In *Identity and Difference*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper and Row, 1969. Pp. 42–74.
OWL *On the Way to Language*. Translated by Peter D. Hertz and Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.
Pathm. *Pathmarks*. Edited by William McNeill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
PI "The Principle of Identity." In *Identity and Difference*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper and Row, 1969. Pp. 23–41.
PIA *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles. Einführung in die Phänomenologische Forschung*. GA 61. 2. Auflage. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1994.
PLT *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.
PR *The Principle of Reason*. Translated by Reginald Lilly. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991.
PRL *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*. GA 60. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1995.
QB "On the Question of Being." Translated by William McNeill. In *Pathmarks*. Edited by William McNeill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Pp. 291–322.
QCT *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Translated by William Lovitt. New York: Garland, 1977.
SD *Zur Sache des Denkens*. Tübingen: Niemayer, 1976.
SG *Der Satz vom Grund*. Pfullingen: Neske, 1957. Engl. Trans. PR.
SZ *Sein und Zeit*. GA 2. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1977. Engl. Trans. BT.
TB *On Time and Being*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.
TK *Die Technik und die Kehre*. Pfullingen: Neske, 1962. Engl. Trans. QCT.
US *Unterwegs zur Sprache*. Pfullingen: Neske, 1959. Engl. Trans. OWL.
VA *Vorträge und Aufsätze*. 4. Auflage. Pfullingen: Neske, 1978.
VWW *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit. Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet*. GA 34. 2. Auflage. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1997. Engl. Trans. ET.
WCT *What is Called Thinking*. Translated by J. Glenn Gray. New York: Harper and Row, 1968.
Wegm. *Wegmarken*. GA 9. 2. Auflage. Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1979. Engl. Trans. Pathm.
WHD *Was Heisst Denken?* Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1954. Engl. Trans. WCT.
WM "What is Metaphysics?" Translated by David Farrell Krell. In *Pathmarks*. Edited by William McNeill. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Pp. 82–96.

Other Authors

Aubenque, Pierre. "Plotin et le dépassement de l'ontologie grecque classique." In *Le Néoplatonisme (Royaumont, 9–13 juin 1969)*. Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche ScientiWque, 1971. Pp. 101–9.
Austin, John L. "Other Minds." In *Philosophical Papers*. Edited by J.O. Urmson and G.J. Warnock. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961. Pp. 44–84.
—— *How to Do Things with Words*. Oxford: Oxford Univesity Press, 1962.
Ayer, Alfred J., *Logical Positivism*. Glencoe: Free Press, 1959.

Beierwaltes, Werner. "Epekeina. Eine Anmerkung zu Heidegger's Platon-Rezeption." In *Transzendenz. Zu einem Grundwort der klassischen Metaphysik*. Eds. Ludger Honnefelder and W. Schüssler. Paderborn: Schöningh, 1992. Pp. 39–55.

—— *Identität und Differenz*. Frankfurt a. M.: Klostermann, 1980.

—— *Proklos. Grundzüge seiner Metaphysik*. 2. Aufl. Frankfurt a. M.: Klostermann, 1979.

Berg, R.M. van den. *Proclus' Hymns. Essays, Translations, Commentary*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001.

Bernauer, James. "The Prisons of Man. An Introduction to Foucault's Negative Theology." *International Philosophical Quarterly* 27 (1987): 365–80.

Blanchot, Maurice. *The Step Not Beyond*. Translated by Lycette Nelson. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.

Blumenthal, Henry J. "From Ku-ru-su-wo-ko to Theourgos. Word and Ritual." In *Tria Lustra. Essays and Notes presented to John Pinsent*. Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 1993. Pp. 1–7. Reprinted in *Soul and Intellect*.

—— *Soul and Intellect. Studies in Plotinus and Later Neoplatonism*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1993.

Boulnois, Olivier. "Heidegger, l'ontothéologie et les structures médiévales de la métaphysique." In *Heidegger e i medievali. Atti del Colloquio Internationale Cassino 10–13 maggio 2000 = Quaestio* 1. Turnhout: Brepols, 2001. Pp. 379–406.

—— "Quand commence l'ontothéologie? Aristote, Thomas d'Aquin et Duns Scot." *Revue Thomiste* 95 (1995): 85–108.

Brisson, Luc, *Le même et l'autre dans la structure ontologique du Timée. Un commentaire systématique du Timée de Platon*. 2nd ed. Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 1994.

Bruns, Gerald L. *Heidegger's Estrangements. Language, Truth, and Poetry in the Later Writings*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989.

Caputo, John D., "Apostles of the Impossible. On God and the Gift in Derrida and Marion." In *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*. Edited by John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999. Pp. 185–222.

—— *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*. Edited with a Commentary. New York: Fordham University Press, 1997.

—— *Demythologizing Heidegger*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993.

—— *Heidegger and Aquinas. An Essay in Overcoming Metaphysics*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1982.

—— "Khōra. Being Serious with Plato." In *Deconstruction in a Nutshell. A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*. Edited by John D. Caputo. New York: Fordham University Press, 1997. Pp. 71–105.

—— *The Mystical Element in Heidegger's* Thought. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1978.

—— *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida. Religion Without Religion*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997.

—— *Radical Hermeneutics. Repetition, Deconstruction and the Hermeneutic Project*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Caputo, John D., and Scanlon, Michael J., eds. *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999.

Carabine, Deirdre. *The Unknown God. Negative Theology in the Platonic Tradition. Plato to Eriugena*. Louvain: Peeters-Eerdmans, 1995.

Carlson, Thomas A., *Indiscretion. Finitude and the Naming of God*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Carnap, Rudolph. "The Elimination of Metaphysics through Logical Analysis of Language." In *Logical Positivism*. Edited by Alfred J. Ayer. Glencoe: Free Press, 1959. Pp. 60–81.

Chrétien, Jean-Louis. *The Unforgettable and the Unhoped For*. Translated by Jeffrey Bloechl. New York: Fordham University Press, 2002.

Clément, Bruno. *L'invention du commentaire. Augustin, Jacques Derrida*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2000.

Colleony, Jacques. "Déconstruction, théologie négative et arche-éthique (Derrida, Lévinas et Heidegger)." In *Le passage des frontières: autour du travail de Jacques Derrida (Colloque de Cerisy)*. Edited by Marie-Louise Mallet. Paris: Galilée, 1994. Pp. 249–61.

Corrigan, Kevin and O'Cleirigh, Padraig. "The Course of Plotinian Scholarship from 1971–1986." In *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II. 36. 1. Edited by W. Haase and H. Temporini. Berlin-New York: De Gruyter, 1987. Pp. 571–623.

Courtine, Jean-François. "Heidegger et Thomas d'Aquin." In *Heidegger e i medievali. Atti del Colloquio Internationale Cassino 10–13 maggio 2000 = Quaestio* 1. Turnhout: Brepols, 2001. Pp. 213–33.

—— "Métaphysique et Onto-théologie." *La Métaphysique. Son histoire, sa critique, ses enjeux*. Edited by Jean-Marc Narbonne and Luc Langlois. Paris: Vrin and Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 1999. Pp. 137–57.

Coward, Harold and Foshay, Toby, eds. *Derrida and Negative Theology*. With a Conclusion by Jacques Derrida. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.

Dornseiff, Franz. *Das Alphabet in Mystik und Magie*. 2. Auflage. Leipzig: Teubner, 1925.

Dostal, Robert J. "Beyond Being. Heidegger's Plato." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 23 (1985): 71–98.

Esposito, Costantino and Porro, Pasquale. *Heidegger e i medievali. Atti del Colloquio Internationale Cassino 10–13 maggio 2000 = Quaestio 1*.

Fløistad, Guttorm, ed. *Contemporary Philosophy. A New Survey*. Vol. 4. *Philosophy of Mind*. The Hague: Nijhoff, 1983.

Foshay, Toby. "Resentment and Apophasis. The Trace of the Other in Lévinas, Derrida, and Gans." In *Shadow of Spirit. Postmodernism and Religion*. Edited by Philippa Berry and Andrew Wernick. London and New York: Routledge, 1992. Pp. 81–92.

Foti, Véronique. "Representation and the Image. Between Heidegger, Derrida, and Plato." *Man and World* 18 (1985): 65–78.

Gasché, Rodolphe. "God, For Example." In *Inventions of Difference*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1994. Pp. 150–70.

—— *Inventions of Difference. On Jacques Derrida*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1994.

—— *The Tain of the Mirror. Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Gersh, Stephen, *Concord in Discourse. Harmonics and Semiotics in Late Classical and Early Medieval Platonism*. Berlin-New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996.

—— "Cratylus Mediaevalis. Ontology and Polysemy in Medieval Platonism (to ca. 1200)." In *Poetry and Philosophy in the Middle Ages. A Festschrift for Peter Dronke*. Edited by John Marenbon. Leiden: Brill, 2001. Pp. 79–98. Reprinted in *Reading Plato, Tracing Plato*.

—— *From Iamblichus to Eriugena. An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978.

—— *Kinēsis Akinētos. A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973.

—— "Introduction." In *Reading Plato, Tracing Plato. From Ancient Commentary to Medieval Reception*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005. Pp. xi–xix.

—— "The Medieval Legacy from Ancient Platonism." In *The Platonic Tradition in the Middle Ages, A Doxographic Approach*. Edited by Stephen Gersh and Maarten J.F.M. Hoenen. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002. Pp. 3–30. Reprinted in *Reading Plato, Tracing Plato*.

—— *Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism. The Latin Tradition*, volumes 1 and 2. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986.
—— *Reading Plato. Tracing Plato. From Ancient Commentary to Medieval Reception.* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.
—— "The Structure of the Return in Eriugena's *Periphyseon*." In *Begriff und Metapher. Sprachform des Denkens bei Eriugena. Vorträge des VII. Internationalen Eriugena-Colloquiums. Werner-Reimers-Stiftung. Bad Homberg 26–29 Juli 1989*. Edited by Werner Beierwaltes. Heidelberg: Winter, 1990. Pp. 108–25. Reprinted in *Reading Plato, Tracing Plato*.
—— "Structure, Sign and Ontology. From Iohannes Scottus Eriugena to Anselm of Canterbury." In *Reading Plato, Tracing Plato. From Ancient Commentary to Medieval Reception*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005. Pp. 124–49.
Gersh, Stephen, and Hoenen, Maarten J.F.M., eds. *The Platonic Tradition in the Middle Ages, A Doxographic Approach*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002.
Gonzalez, Francesco J. "Dialectic as 'Philosophical Embarrassment.' Heidegger's Critique of Plato's Method." *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 40 (2002): 361–89.
Hadot, Pierre. "Heidegger et Plotin." *Critique* 145 (1959): 539–56.
—— *Porphyre et Victorinus*. Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1968.
Hankey, Wayne. *Cent ans de Néoplatonisme en France. Une brève histoire philosophique* (Published together with Jean-Marc Narbonne. *Lévinas et l'héritage grec*). Paris: Vrin and Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2004.
—— "The Postmodern Retrieval of Neoplatonism in Jean-Luc Marion and John Milbank and the Origins of Western Subjectivity in Augustine and Eriugena." *Hermathena* 165 (1998): 9–70.
—— "Self-Knowledge and God as Other in Augustine. Problems for a Postmodern Retrieval." *Bochumer Philosophisches Jahrbuch für Antike und Mittelalter* 4 (1999): 83–127.
—— "Why Heidegger's 'History' of Metaphysics is Dead." *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 78 (2004): 425–43.
Hart, Kevin, *The Trespass of the Sign. Deconstruction, Theology, and Philosophy*. 2nd ed. New York: Fordham University Press, 2000.
Harvey, Irene E., *Derrida and the Economy of Différance*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986.
—— *Labyrinths of Exemplarity. At the Limits of Deconstruction*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002.
Hirschle, Maurus. *Sprachphilosophie und Namenmagie im Neuplatonismus mit einem Exkurs zu "Demokrit" B 142*. Meisenheim am Glan: Hain, 1979.
Honnefelder, Ludger and Schüssler, W., eds. *Transzendenz. Zu einem Grundwort der klassischen Metaphysik*. Paderborn: Schöningh, 1992.
Horner, Robyn. *Rethinking God as Gift. Marion, Derrida and the Limits of Phenomenology*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2001.
Husserl, Edmund, *Ideas. General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. Translated by William R. Boyce Gibson. London: Allen and Unwin, 1931.
—— *Logical Investigations*. Translated by John N. Findlay. London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970.
—— *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*. Translated by James S. Churchill. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964.
Imbach, Ruedi: "Heidegger et la philosophie médiévale. À propos d'un nouvel annuaire philosophique." *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 49 (2002): 426–35.
Janicaud, Dominique. *Heidegger en France*. 2 volumes. Paris: Albin Michel, 2001.
Johnson, Christopher. *System and Writing in the Philosophy of Jacques Derrida*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
Kamuf, Peggy, ed. *A Derrida Reader. Between the Blinds*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.
Kates, Carol A. "Heidegger and the Myth of the Cave." *The Personalist* 50 (1969): 532–48.

Kearney, Richard, moderator. "On the Gift. A Discussion between Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Marion." In *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*. Edited by John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon. Pp. 54–78.

Kisiel, Theodore. *The Genesis of Heidegger's 'Being and Time.'* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993.

Klemm, David E. "Open Secrets: Derrida and Negative Theology." In *Negation and Theology*. Edited by Robert P. Scharlemann. Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1992. Pp. 8–24.

Kockelmans, Joseph J., ed. *On Heidegger and Language*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972.

—— "Ontological Difference, Hermeneutics, and Language." In *On Heidegger and Language*. Edited by Joseph J. Kockelmans. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972. Pp. 195–234.

Kremer, Klaus. "Zur ontologischen Differenz. Plotin und Heidegger." *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 43 (1989): 673–94.

Leonard, Philip. "Divine Horizons. Lévinas, Derrida, Transcendence." In *Trajectories of Mysticism in Theory and Literature*. Edited by Philip Leonard. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000. Pp. 219–38.

—— ed. *Trajectories of Mysticism in Theory and Literature*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000.

Lewy, Hans. *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy. Mysticism, Magic, and Platonism in the Later Roman Empire*. Nouvelle édition par Michel Tardieu. Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1978.

Libera, Alain de. "Genèse et structure des métaphysiques médiévales." In *La Métaphysique Son histoire, sa critique, ses enjeux*. Edited by Jean-Marc Narbonne and Luc Langlois. Paris: Vrin and Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1999. Pp. 159–81.

"La sémiotique d'Aristote." In Frédéric Nef, ed. *Structures élémentaires de la signification*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1976. Pp. 28–48.

Lloyd, A.C. "Non-discursive Thought—An Enigma of Greek Philosophy." *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 70 (1969–70): 261–74.

—— "Non-propositional Thought in Plotinus." *Phronesis* 31 (1986): 258–65.

Lowry, J.M.P., *The Logical Principles of Proclus' Stoicheiōsis Theologikē as Systematic Ground of the Cosmos*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1980.

Majercik, Ruth. *The Chaldaean Oracles. Text, Translation and Commentary*. Leiden: Brill, 1989.

Mallet, Marie-Louise, ed. *Le passage des frontières: autour du travail de Jacques Derrida (Colloque de Cerisy)*. Paris: Galilée, 1994.

Marenbon, John, ed. *Poetry and Philosophy in the Middle Ages. A Festschrift for Peter Dronke*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001.

Marion, Jean-Luc. *Being Given. Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness*. Translated by Jeffrey L. Kosky. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002.

—— *God Without Being. Hors-Texte*. Translated by Thomas A. Carlson. Foreword by David Tracy. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

—— *The Idol and Distance. Five Studies*. Translated with an Introduction by Thomas A. Carlson. New York: Fordham University Press, 2001.

—— "In the Name: How to Avoid Speaking of 'Negative Theology.'" In *God, the Gift, and Postmodernism*. Edited by John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999. Pp. 20–53.

—— "Saint Thomas d'Aquin et l'onto-théo-logie." *Revue Thomiste* 95 (1995): 31–61.

McGaughey, Douglas R. "Husserl and Heidegger on Plato's Cave Allegory. A Study of Philosophical Influence." *International Philosophical Quarterly* 16 (1976): 331–48.

Milbank, John. *Theology and Social Theory. Beyond Secular Reason*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.

Mortley, Raoul. *From Word to Silence. I. The Rise and Fall of Logos. II. The Way of Negation. Christian and Greek*. Bonn: Hannstein, 1986.

Narbonne, Jean-Marc. "Henōsis et 'Ereignis.' Remarques sur une interprétation heideggérienne de l'Un plotinien." *Les études philosophiques* (1999): 105–21.

—— "Heidegger et le néoplatonisme." *Heidegger e i medievali. Atti del Colloquio Internationale Cassino 10–13 maggio 2000 = Quaestio* 1. Eds. Costantino Esposito and Pasquale Porro. Turnhout: Brepols, 2001. Pp. 55–82.

Hénologie, ontologie et Ereignis. Plotin, Proclus, Heidegger. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2001.

—— *Lévinas et l'héritage grec* (Published together with Wayne Hankey, *Cent ans de Néoplatonisme en France. Une brève histoire philosophique*). Paris: Vrin and Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2004.

—— *Plotin. Les deux matières. (Énnéade II. 4 [12])*. Introduction, texte grec, traduction et commentaire. Paris: Vrin, 1993.

Narbonne, Jean-Marc and Langlois, Luc, eds. *La métaphysique. Son histoire, sa critique, ses enjeux*. Paris: Vrin and Québec: Les Presses de l''Université Laval, 1999.

—— *La métaphysique. Son histoire, sa critique, ses enjeux. Actes du XXVII^e Congrès de l'Association des Sociétés de Philosophie de Langue Française*. Paris: Vrin and Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2000.

Nault, François. *Derrida et la théologie. Dire Dieu après la Déconstruction*. Montréal: Médiaspaul and Paris: Cerf, 2000.

Neel, Jasper P. *Plato, Derrida, and Writing*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988.

Nef, Frédéric, ed. *Structures élémentaires de la signification*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1976.

Norris, Christopher. *Deconstruction. Theory and Practice*. London and New York: Methuen, 1982.

O' Meara, Dominic. *Pythagoras Revived. Mathematics and Philosophy in Late Antiquity*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.

Perl, Eric. "Signifying Nothing. Being as Sign in Neoplatonism and Derrida." In *Neoplatonism and Contemporary Thought*. Part II. Edited by R. Baine Harris. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002. Pp. 125–51.

Pickstock, Catherine. *After Writing. On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.

Pöggeler, Otto. "Heidegger's Topology of Being." In *On Heidegger and Language*. Edited by Joseph J. Kockelmans. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972. Pp. 107–46.

Poikilia. Études offertes à Jean-Pierre Vernant. Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1987.

Pound, Ezra. *Gaudier-Brzeska. A Memoir*. New York: New Directions, 1970.

—— *Guide to Kulchur*. New York: New Directions, 1970.

Rapaport, Herman. *Heidegger and Derrida. Reflections on Time and Language*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1989.

Rappe, Sara. *Reading Neoplatonism. Non-discursive Thinking in the Texts of Plotinus, Proclus and Damascius*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Richardson, William J. "Heidegger and Plato." *Heythrop Journal* 4 (1963): 273–9.

Rivaud, Albert. *Le Problème de devenir et la notion de la matière dans la philosophie grecque depuis les origines jusqu'à Théophraste*. Paris: Alcan, 1906.

Rorty, Richard. *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

—— *Philosophical Papers*. Vol. 2: *Essays on Heidegger and Others*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Rosemann, Philipp W. "Penser l'Autre. Théologie négative et postmodernité." *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 91 (1993): 296–310.

Rosen, Stanley. "Heidegger's Interpretation of Plato." *Journal of Existentialism* 7 (1967): 477–504.

—— *The Question of Being. A Reversal of Heidegger*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.

Roy, Olivier du. *L'intelligence de la foi en la Trinité selon saint Augustin, Genèse de sa théologie trinitaire jusqu'en 391*. Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1966.

Saffrey, Henri-Dominique. *Recherches sur le Néoplatonisme après Plotin*. Paris: Vrin, 1990.

—— "La théurgie comme pénétration d'élements extra-rationnels dans la philosophie grecque tardive." In *Wissenschaftliche und ausserwissenschaftliche Rationalität. Referate und Texte des 4. Internationalen Humanistischen Symposiums 1978*. Athens, 1981. Pp. 153–69. Reprinted in *Recherches sur le Néoplatonisme*. Pp. 33–49

—— "La théurgie comme phénomène culturel chez les néoplatoniciens (IV^{e}–V^{e} siècles)." *Koinōnia* 8 (1984): 161–71. Reprinted in *Recherches sur le Néoplatonisme*. Pp. 51–61.

Sallis, John, ed. *Deconstruction and Philosophy. The Texts of Jacques Derrida*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

—— *Platonic Legacies*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004.

Sambursky, Samuel. *The Concept of Place in Late Neoplatonism. Texts with Translation, Introduction and Notes*. Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences, 1982.

Scharlemann, Robert P., ed. *Negation and Theology*. Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1992.

Schindler, Alfred, *Wort and Analogie in Augustins Trinitätslehre*. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1965.

Schöfer, Erasmus. "Heidegger's Language. Metalogical Forms of Thought and Grammatical Specialties." In Joseph J. Kockelmans, ed. *On Heidegger and Language*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972. Pp. 281–301.

Schofield, Malcolm and Nussbaum, Martha C., eds. *Language and Logos. Studies in Ancient Greek Philosophy Presented to G.E.L. Owen*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Schürmann, Reiner. "L'hénologie comme dépassement de la métaphysique." *Les Études philosophiques* (1982): 331–50.

—— "Neoplatonic Henology as an Overcoming of Metaphysics." *Research in Phenomenology* 13 (1983): 25–41.

—— *Broken Hegemonies*. Translated by Reginald Lilly. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003.

Searle, John R. "Reiterating the Differences. A Reply to Derrida." *Glyph* 1 (1977). Pp. 198–208. Summarized in Derrida, *Limited Inc*.

Sells, Michael A. *Mystical Languages of Unsaying*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Shaw, Gregory. *Theurgy and the Soul. The Neoplatonism of Iamblichus*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995.

Sheehan, Thomas, "Heidegger's 'Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion.' 1920–21." *The Personalist* 55 (1979–80): 312–24

—— "Heidegger's Philosophy of Mind." In *Contemporary Philosophy. A New Survey*. Edited by Guttorm Fløistad. Vol. 4. *Philosophy of Mind*. The Hague: Nijhoff, 1983. Pp. 287–318.

Sheppard, Anne. "Proclus' Attitude to Theurgy." *Classical Quarterly* 32 (1982): 211–24.

Sikka, Sonya, *Forms of Transcendence. Heidegger and Medieval Mystical Theology*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997.

Siorvanes, Lucas. *Proclus. Neo-Platonic Philosophy and Science*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996.

Smith, Andrew. *Porphyry's Place in the Neoplatonic Tradition. A Study in Post-Plotinian Neoplatonism*. The Hague: Nijhoff, 1974.

Sorabji, Richard. *Matter, Space and Motion. Theories in Antiquity and Their Sequel*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988.

—— "Myths about Non-propositional Thought." In *Language and Logos. Studies in Ancient Greek Philosophy Presented to G.E.L. Owen*. Edited by Malcolm Schofield and Martha C. Nussbaum. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982. Pp. 295–314. Revised version in *Time, Creation and the Continuum*.

—— *Time, Creation and the Continuum. Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*. London: Duckworth, 1983.

Steel, Carlos. *The Changing Self. A Study on the Soul in Later Neoplatonism: Iamblichus, Damascius, and Priscianus*. Brussel: Paleis der Academiën, 1978.

Taylor, Mark C. *Tears*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.

Tracy, David. "Fragments. The Spiritual Situation of Our Times." In *God, the Gift and Postmodernism*. Edited by John D. Caputo and Michael Scanlon. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999. Pp. 170–84.

Trouillard, Jean. *L'un et l'âme selon Proclos*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1972.

Van Buren, John. *The Young Heidegger. Rumor of the Hidden King*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Vannier, Marie-Anne. *Creatio, Conversio, Formatio chez S. Augustin*. 2nd ed. Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1997.

Vattimo, Gianni. *The Adventure of Difference. Philosophy after Nietzsche and Heidegger*. Translated by. Cyprian Blamires. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

Vernant, Jean-Pierre. *Mythe et société en Grèce ancienne*. Paris: F. Maspero, 1974.

Vetter, Helmuth, ed. *Heidegger und das Mittelalter. Wiener Tagungen zur Phänomenologie* 1997. Frankfurt a. M.: Lang, 1999.

Waters, Lindsay, and Godzich, Wlad, eds. *Reading de Man Reading*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

Westphal, Merold. *Overcoming Onto-Theology. Toward a Postmodern Christian Faith*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2001.

—— *Transcendence and Self-Transcendence. On God and the Soul*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004.

Wood, David. *Thinking after Heidegger*. Cambridge: Polity, 2002.

Yannaras, Christos. *De l'absence et de l'inconnaissance de Dieu d'après les écrits aréopagitiques et Martin Heidegger*. Paris: Cerf, 1971.

Zuckert, Catherine H. *Postmodern Platos. Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, Strauss, Derrida*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Zum Brunn, Emilie. *St. Augustine, Being and Nothingness*. Translated by R. Namad. New York: Paragon House, 1988.

DERRIDEAN CONCORDANCE

English and French Texts of Derrida's *Passions, Sauf le Nom*, and *Khōra*

Prière d'Inséter

E	*F*
xiv	1
xv	2
	3
xvi	4

Passions

PA → *Passions*

2	11
	12
4	13
	14
5	15
	16
	17
6	18
	19
7	20
	21
8	22
	23
9	24
	25
10	26
	27
11	28
	29
12	30
	31
13	32
	33
14	34
	35
15	36
	37
16	38
	39
	40
17	41
	42
18	43
	44
19	45
	46
20	47
	48
21	49
	50
22	51
	52
	53
23	54
	55
24	56
	57
25	58
	59
26	60
	61
27	62
	63
28	64
	65
29	66
	67
30	68
	69
31	70
	71
	72
131	73
132	74
	75
133	76
134	77
	78
135	79
136	80
137	81
138	82
139	83
	84
140	85
	86
141	87
142	88
143	89
	90
144	91

Sauf le Nom

SLN → *Sauf*

34	11
	12
	13
	14
35	15
36	16
	17
37	18
	19
	20
38	21
	22
39	23
	24
40	25
	26
41	27
	28
42	29
	30
43	31
	32
44	33
	34
45	35
	36
46	37
	38
47	39
	40
48	41
	42
49	43
	44
50	45
	46
51	47
	48
52	49
53	51
54	52
	53
55	54
	55
56	56
	57
57	58
	59
58	60
	61
59	62
	63
60	64
61	65
	66
62	67
	68
63	69
	70
64	71
	72
65	73
	74
66	75
	76
67	77
	78
68	79
	80
69	81
	82
70	83
	84
71	85
	86
72	87
	88
73	89
	90
74	91
	92
75	93
	94
76	95
	96
77	97
78	98
	99
79	100
	101

INDEX OF NAMES

INDEX OF TERMS AND CONCEPTS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Kinēsis Akinētos. A Study of Spiritual Motion in the Philosophy of Proclus (*Philosophia Antiqua* 26). Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973.

From Iamblichus to Eriugena. An Investigation of the Prehistory and Evolution of the Pseudo-Dionysian Tradition (*Studien zur Problemgeschichte der antiken und mittelalterlichen Philosophie* 8). Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978.

Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism. The Latin Tradition (*University of Notre Dame Publications in Medieval Studies* 23/1–2). Two volumes. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986.

Concord in Discourse. Harmonics and Semiotics in Late Classical and Early Medieval Platonism (*Approaches to Semiotics* 125). Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996.

Reading Plato, Tracing Plato. From Ancient Commentary to Medieval Reception (*Variorum Collected Studies Series*). Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005.

Edited Volumes

Platonism in Late Antiquity, co-edited with Charles Kannengiesser. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992.

The Platonic Tradition in the Middle Ages. A Doxographic Approach, co-edited with Maarten J.F.M. Hoenen. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2002.

Medieval and Renaissance Humanism. Rhetoric, Representation and Reform, co-edited with Bert Roest. Leiden and Boston: E.J. Brill, 2003.

Eriugena, Berkeley and the Idealist Tradition, co-edited with Dermot Moran. Notre Dame, Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 2006.

STUDIES IN PLATONISM, NEOPLATONISM, AND THE PLATONIC TRADITION

Editors

ROBERT M. BERCHMAN
JOHN F. FINAMORE

ISSN 1871-188X

1. Berchman, R.M., *Porphyry Against the Christians*. 2005.
ISBN 90 04 14811 6
2. Manchester, P., *The Syntax of Time*. The Phenomenology of Time in Greek Physics and Speculative Logic from Iamblichus to Anaximander. 2005. ISBN 90 04 14712 8
3. Gersh, S., *Neoplatonism after Derrida*. Parallelograms. 2006.
ISBN 10: 90 04 15155 9, ISBN 13: 978 90 04 15155 0