

# Justice of the Pieces Deconstruction as a Social Psychology

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*Intra muros/extra muros*—the foreign versus domestic value of deconstruction. Beyond anecdotes, some recent numbers. Given over helpfully to a survey of contemporary perspectives on “The Great Questions of Philosophy,” is a sweepingly packed special issue of *Le Nouvel observateur*.<sup>(1)</sup> Profiled are dozens of high personages—there are photos, summaries of positions, drawings inspired by their work, bibliographies, etc. An odd experience is the leafing through it, though, for the American professional enthusiast, disquieting (hopefully!) to specialists in matters French, for proving to be in the shortest supply are familiar names. A few are recognizable—Ricoeur, Baudrillard—but not so are the vast majority of those found to be of most intense current interest. And hopeless is the search for the mention of “perhaps the world’s most famous philosopher—if not the only famous philosopher,”<sup>(2)</sup> who scores not so much as the lonely bibliographical reference in the entire overview of almost one hundred double-columned pages.

But where are there *not* compensations to be found? Derrida springs to impish life in a cab in Argentina: “The taxi driver in Buenos Aires will raise his eyes to the heavens and say, “Ah France, Derrida. . . .,” reports the same magazine that ostentatiously knew less of him than did an uneducated South American a few months earlier.<sup>(3)</sup> Maybe not that much France in France, but, sometimes to comical extent, France outside of France. “Translate Jacques Derrida and the D.L.L. will help you,” we are puzzled to read in the issue of *Lire* that arrived shortly after the systematic snub. Acronymed is the “Direction du livre et de la lecture,” a state agency busy with encouraging the translation of French materials that should be of potential interest outside the country. With its budget of some seven million francs it encourages the translation of, annually, about five hundred books. Typically between fifteen and sixty percent of costs are assumed. Between 1988 and 1997 the largest number of grants awarded for the translation of a given author was won by Derrida (thirty six). (The distant second was Le Clezio, at eighteen.) In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been contributing annually ten million francs for

the diffusion of French texts abroad, three million going directly to foreign publishers to cover costs of producing favored books. In the period between 1990 and 1997 the author most frequently supported was Camus, who tallied forty awards. With his thirty-three, and with no one at his heels, Derrida was the strong second. “[L]’auteur de *La Dissémination* s’impose en effet comme le grand champion de l’assistance à auteur exporté,” chuckles *Lire* .<sup>(4)</sup>

“Politics and political economy, to be sure, are implicated in every discourse. . . .”<sup>(5)</sup> Neither the exclusion nor the ubiquity have been unmeditated. But what material functions can these actions be described as not innocent of? How do the snickers communicate with the silence? Why is deconstruction considered to be a nationally unhoused virtuosity? What is there in it that is more planetary than French? Why is it the case that “This squandering of signs is American?”<sup>(6)</sup> How do the taste and distaste interact and in some way work together to constitute a system? And what might be the productivity of this double action of neglect and support?

The specific issue of the Frenchness of the use and/or nonuse must be addressed if we are to begin to understand how generative anthropology runs with deconstruction, how the latter reinforces insights of generative anthropology’s objectality that have arisen out of the inadequacies of Girardian intersubjectivity, and why, if generative anthropology can efficiently know deconstruction, deconstruction will be reluctant to know it.

## 2

To answer our questions focus must there be upon Derrida’s techniques of compact-group avoidance that can be most economically summarized through reference to his notion of “remaining”: “Bewilderment, then, faced with this institution or type of object which allows one to say everything. What is it? What ‘remains’ when desire has just inscribed something which ‘remains’ there, like an object at the disposal of others, one that can be repeated? What does ‘remaining’ mean?”<sup>(7)</sup> It means deferral for generative anthropology, that shares with deconstruction its location of the life force of individuation not in the absolute difference of the Other, but in something that is unabsorbed between us. “Here it is the object of desire rather than the mediator that is exposed as central to what had appeared to be a one-on-one relationship of behavioral imitation.”<sup>(8)</sup> “So near and yet so far,” Gans adds in recognition.<sup>(9)</sup> Understanding the working together of the two systems’ proximity and distance will be my project.

The relation of different groups to deconstruction is settled by its relation to groups. An American enthusiast—one who has had a role in the development of our affection for Derrida—notices that the motivational chains are phobically driven by concerns

with social scale. Richard Rorty: “He wants to figure out how to break with the temptation to identify himself with something big. . . .”<sup>(10)</sup> And: “So I take Derrida’s importance to lie in his having had the courage to give up the attempt to unite the private and the public, to stop trying to bring together a quest for private autonomy and an attempt at public resonance and utility. He privatizes the sublime, having learned from the fate of his predecessors that the public can never be more than beautiful.”<sup>(11)</sup> Notice is made here of what is indeed the telling feature. Levinas is praised, for example, for his alarm when “the social will [is] sought in an ideal of fusion. . . the subject losing himself in a collective representation, in a common ideal. . . . It is the collectivity which says ‘us,’ and which, turned toward the intelligible sun, toward the truth, experience, the other at his side and not face to face with him. . . .”<sup>(12)</sup>

“The death of the festival”<sup>(13)</sup>—Derrida’s term—is the name for great swaths of French writing since the 1920s. Nostalgic and non-nostalgic depictions of great throngs, here feckless and immobilized, there ecstatic in real or imagined recovery from charismatic loss, communities separated from themselves because they are too much themselves, or effervescently restored to self-love through contact with exotic bonding alternatives, teem through this body of literature. The twentieth-century Jacobin line includes the future-pregnant communities of Malraux, the restorative fantasies of submission to a hypnotic spectacle of Artaud, the focus upon the spent traditions and the conditions of regeneration in young Bataille and Caillois, both the regressive and redeemed groups of Girard, the cold majorities described by Céline, the young Sartre, the Situationists and Baudrillard. The frustrated collectivism comes to its impossibly opposite conclusions in the depiction of the acephalic swarm of the “group in fusion” in the Sartre of the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, and the redeemed Christian empathies of Girard’s *summa*. Surviving unconvincingly albeit gamely is this spirit in Pierre Bourdieu’s recent bitter words for “neoliberalism’s” dissolving impact on collectivities.

Focus on the qualities of the adversity to what is menacingly termed “the assembled people” throughout *Grammatology*<sup>(14)</sup> proves the most efficient of routes to an understanding of both the role of deconstruction in French intellectual history as well as its relation to the insights of generative anthropology, some of which will be shared, we shall notice, some of which must be fled. But beyond this simple recognition of the unmissable fusion discomfort is the unmet challenge of providing an account of the integrated functioning of the features of the complaint, its solution and the conditions of perceived success. What is at stake will always vary according to the naming of the national anxieties involved.

Before deconstruction was itself born from this same anxiety, critical theory had announced its allergy—the acuteness of which is matched and then bested in

Derrida—to the social grandiosity produced by the dangerous luster attached to a certain misuse of language. Adorno noted of dictators that “the famous spell they exercise over their followers seems largely to depend on their orality: language itself, devoid of its rational significance, functions in a magical way and furthers those archaic regressions which reduce individuals to members of crowds.”<sup>(15)</sup> Distrust can be legitimately roused by the most seemingly benign of versions. Praise from Derrida: “Maurice Blanchot speaks of his disagreement with this preeminence of oral discourse, which resembles ‘the tranquil humanist and Socratic speech which brings us close to the speaker.’”<sup>(16)</sup> Quoted with approval is Bataille’s criticism of the desire “to want to be a God for the crowd.”<sup>(17)</sup> Generating the most urgently expressed levels of unease is that final form of social inauthenticity, the group that bulges towards its outlandish focus—“the crowd subjected to a demagogic harangue.”<sup>(18)</sup> It is this figure who “binds the good society to itself,”<sup>(19)</sup> realizing the ideal of “the image of a community immediately present to itself without difference, a community of speech where all the members are within earshot.”<sup>(20)</sup> The tellingly titled *D’un ton apocalyptique* contains passages that are particularly excited:

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These people situate themselves outside the ordinary, but they have in common this: they describe themselves as having an immediate and intuitive relation with mystery. And they want to attract, to seduce, and lead others to the mystery, through mystery. This *agogic* function of the leader of men, of the *duce*, of the *Führer*, of the *leader*, places him above the crowd that he manipulates with the aid of a small numbers of adepts joined together in a sect with a secret language, a clique or a small party with its ritualized practices. The mystifiers pretend to have exclusive access to the privilege of a secret mystery. . . . The revelation or the unveiling of the secret is something that they jealously reserve for themselves. Jealousy is here a major characteristic.<sup>(21)</sup>

Clear then would be the task if the author comes, as he does, to the conclusion that jealousy is the issue in crowd formation, and if he at once accepts Nietzsche’s view that the overcoming of revenge is “the bridge to the highest hope.” Starving the heteronomous group through the development of a blocking mechanism becomes deconstruction’s reason for being. The repertory of its themes and techniques—the apersonal, the critique of all manner of inside/outside, proper/improper oppositions (frames, the boundaries of genre and discipline, gender polarity, the voice, etc.), focus upon the abject, remains, pieces unattached to the whole, an often unserious

tone, etc.–is mobilized in the service of a dethroning, of a scattering of previously, threateningly focused, carnificial identifications. The group is to be deprived of the integral narcissism that is the dream fuel of its unanimity. Sought through the promotion of an unsealed and insignificant objectality will be the minimal unit of detachment, of difference–the quantum unit of distance. Stealthily avoiding a frontal attack upon the group, its metastasis will be frustrated through the deployment of a narcissism that is voiceless and therefore sterile, a narcissism that starves the group by not simply extinguishing, but minimizing the indifference available to it.

Derrida's answer, when recently asked to define deconstruction: "It is impossible to respond. I can only do something which will leave me unsatisfied."<sup>(22)</sup> But a respectful formulation is nonetheless possible: it is the minimizing of the social solubility of forms for the purpose of minimizing the social transivities of narcissism. Always about the production of homeopathic effects, deconstruction will focus on scale–what Derrida complains of will be contested, in antagonistic complicity, with the required assistance of the atomized version of what excites the greatest dread.

There may be only narcissism, but it does not follow then that the experience is then indivisible:

There is not narcissism and non-narcissism; there are narcissisms that are more or less comprehensive, generous, open, extended. What is called non-narcissism is in general but the economy of a much more welcoming, hospitable narcissism, one that is much more open to the experience of the other as other. I believe that without a movement of narcissistic reappropriation, the relation to the other would be absolutely destroyed, it would be destroyed in advance. The relation to the other–even if it remains asymmetrical, open, without reappropriation–must trace a movement of reappropriation in the image of oneself for love to be possible, for example. Love is narcissistic. Beyond that, there are little narcissisms, there are big narcissisms. . . .<sup>(23)</sup>

Size counts–there can only be the struggle of the large against the small, and vice versa, a narcissism of infinite good posed against a zero-sum version–and the matter of scale is determined by the character of the production of the auto-affection that makes possible a given narcissism.

The path to these conclusions begins with deconstruction's starting point in the process of auto-affection, that entry into Derrida without grasp of which his thought

is quite incomprehensible. Confidently reporting is Rudolph Gasché, one of the most trusted of Derridean exegetes: “Now, what Derrida’s deconstruction has in view is precisely the undoing of the idea of self-affection and, consequently, of all forms of self-reflexivity.”<sup>(24)</sup> But on the manifest absurdity of this Derrida could not be more clear, more sweeping:

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Auto-affection is a universal structure of experience. All living things are capable of auto-affection. And only a being capable of symbolizing, that is to say of auto- affecting, may let itself be affected by the other in general. Auto-affection is the condition of an experience in general. This possibility—another name for ‘life’—is a general structure articulated by this history of life, and leading to complex and hierarchical operations. Auto-affection, the as-for-itself or for-itself-subjectivity— gains in power and in its mastery of the other to the extent that its power of repetition *idealizes itself*. Here idealization is the movement by which sensory exteriority, that which affects me or serves me as signifier, submits itself to my power of repetition, to what thenceforward appears to me as my spontaneity and escapes me less and less.<sup>(25)</sup>

Self-consciousness appears only in its relation to an object, whose presence it can keep and repeat. Unavoidable is the moment of self-division, it is argued, as Derrida mirrors positions from Hegel to Husserl, Freud and Bataille. The presence one gives oneself in auto-affection is available on condition that there is a prior privation—auto-affection necessarily “admits the world as a third party:”<sup>(26)</sup>

Every . . . form of auto-affection must either pass through what is outside the sphere of ‘ownness’ or forego any claim to universality. When I see myself, either because I gaze upon a limited region of my body or because it is reflected in a mirror, what is outside the sphere of ‘my own’ has already entered the field of this auto-affection, with the result that it is no longer pure. In the experience of touching and being touched, the same thing happens.<sup>(27)</sup>

“Utterly irreducible hetero-affection inhabits—intrinsically—the most hermetic auto-affection.”<sup>(28)</sup> A difference must emerge between me and me, and all will hang on the character of that relay exteriority upon which the self-relation is dependent. Distinctions are to be made according to whether the auto-affection—hetero-

affection–auto-affection circuit is or is not a blood sport, this hinging upon the cause of the damage done to the mediations involved in the detour. The movement always entails a violence, a liberating disappearance of the strength we earn through attachment to the mediation, a power not separable from a depression because what strength the outside element supplies points to a personal sense of inadequacy that had produced the drive to identify in the first place. Whenever I love “a law *engages* me to the death of the other,” we are told.<sup>(29)</sup> “It is in poetry that the work of mourning, transforming hetero-affection into auto-affection, produces the maximum of disinterested pleasure.”<sup>(30)</sup> And in another text Derrida asks: “How to love anything other than the possibility of ruin?”<sup>(31)</sup> Like the Bataille, upon whom is in this matter dependent, Derrida sees sacrifice as a differently sized version of this same thing: “[T]he sacrifice recaptures with one hand what it gives with the other, and its account must be kept on a double register.”<sup>(32)</sup> Crucial, we shall see, is the timing and agency of the releasing violence, whether it is visited upon the form from without, whether it “submits to my power of repetition,” or is always already contained within its structure.

Only if it can establish that “A work is *at once* order and its ruin”<sup>(33)</sup> (my italics) can deconstruction undo the social enormity with which it engages in sleepless struggle.

As it is the drive to seek presence that defines the human, the “Jarndyce versus Jarndyce” of the fetish is what deconstruction requires that philosophy must become, if it is to be that redeeming thing that writing is, “the process of the dispersion of the people.”<sup>(34)</sup> If it is to achieve “the death of the festival,” writing must be sleeplessly “the fetishism trial.”<sup>(35)</sup> If there is only auto-affection, and there are differently valued varieties of narcissism, then decisive will be the features of the worldly tools of self-reflection. If narcissism must be sawed in two, then of the utmost significance will be “the question of fetishism,”<sup>(36)</sup> “the problematic of fetishism,”<sup>(37)</sup> it is floggingly noted. “We should attach the problem of narcissism to that of fetishism and redo everything, *from the beginning*.”<sup>(38)</sup>

## 5

If there are narcissisms and narcissisms, it then follows that there must be fetishes and fetishes. And to distinguish between them is to split identification into sociologically transitive and intransitive closures, those that *remain*, and those that do not. The two fetishes are about differently contagious identifications—one involves a predatory relation, the other—the privileged—involves a passive rapport, making possible *a taking on of weakness*, so that an entire field of group weakening will be produced, a field of barely communicable, insoluble narcissisms. One narcissism can be broken from another by distinguishing between the extent to which it can be metabolized, produce excitement to the assimilation of the other to



the self, create or extinguish groups that permit or deny anything to exist outside of themselves, according to the degree to which it is fusible, makes possible an idealization, a process of vaporization, an exclusivization, and finally, a pestilentially focused crowd effect. Required is “a concept of fetish that no longer lets itself be contained in the space of truth,”<sup>(39)</sup> one that does not cause cognition to deteriorate into tautology, that produces a differentiation that is not rivalrous, that makes possible the sense of one’s own agency as not derived, that produces and is allowed to live in a space that remains open between two subjects, rather than imagined to exist within a provocatively sequestering subject.

“Deconstruction is justice”<sup>(40)</sup> if it anonymously offers the object as “out-of-body” experience. It is through promiscuous delivery of the take-it or leave-it that theory imagines fusional drives to be most effectively frustrated. If consciousness is modeled on an object, then the chance to not hoard-to block the process of idealization-is necessary for the subject to remain unabsorbed. Adorno: “The more autocratically the I rises above the entity, the greater its imperceptible objectification and ironic retraction of its constitutive role.”<sup>(41)</sup> How would this nonexclusivizing singularization be achieved? Via a justice of the unconvertible pieces: “You can TAKE THEM OR LEAVE THEM”<sup>(42)</sup> -pieces that are not gatherable into a greatness, not those of a charismatically mediated social enormity. “Isn’t there always an element excluded from the system that assures the system’s space of possibility?”<sup>(43)</sup> Derrida enthusiastically quotes Genet to establish that the always already excluded impedes the excluding machine: “I was sure that this puny and most humble object would hold its own against them; by its mere presence it would be able to exasperate all the police in the world.”<sup>(44)</sup> (This logic mirrors that of Adorno: “The slightest remnant of nonidentity sufficed to deny an identity conceived as total.”<sup>(45)</sup> ) Deconstruction may well be the death of the festival, but it strives with an equal measure of energy to not be the death of uninstrumentalizable, inalienably privatized fun.

Esthetic modernism found the meaningful whole exhibited in the traditional synthesis involved in the great works of “bourgeois art” to be a finally inauthentic and fictitious unit that, in spite of its role in the history of secularization, appeared to constitute a nostalgic reference to a divinely created order. Critical theory is mostly about the discovery of something violent in the unity of the traditional work, as in the unity of the “bourgeois subject,” namely a type of coherence that is only possible at the price of suppressing and excluding what is disparate or cannot be integrated, that which remains unarticulated and repressed. This would be replaced, in what has come to be called the postmodern, with more flexible and open forms of esthetic synthesis that could, through the expansion of the work of art and of esthetic experience, gather the diffuse, the non-identical and the split-off together into its minimally controlling “constellation.” (Adorno’s term)



At the core of that body of literature called “theory,” discussion will usually center upon the double character of the fetish—while one is denounced as the stimulant to the formation of pestilential wholes (the figural illumination, the revelation of which is the first step in the sacrificial process), the other is called upon to break the equation of subjectivization and reification. Here is Adorno’s version of murderous and apotropaic differences, so easily transposable into the split authority of Derrida’s pair:

There is truly no identity without something nonidentical—while in [Hegel’s] writings identity, as totality, takes ontological precedence, assisted by the promotion of the indirectness of the nonidentical to the rank of its absolute conceptual Being. Theory, instead of bringing the indissoluble into its own concepts, swallows it by subsumption under its general concept, that of indissolubility. <sup>(46)</sup>

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“The subject’s nonidentity without sacrifice would be utopian,” <sup>(47)</sup> but it is nonetheless possible for “the rigidly dichotomical structure disintegrates by virtue of either pole’s definition as a moment of its own opposite.” <sup>(48)</sup> That Derrida’s position is an orthodox one is again clear from Blanchot’s view of the fragment: “It doesn’t come together with other fragments to form a thought that is more complete, making possible a knowledge of the whole. The fragmentary does not precede the whole, but declares itself to be outside of it, beyond it.” <sup>(49)</sup> Baudrillard is clear about the political position routinely implied:

Fragmentary writing is, ultimately, democratic writing. Each fragment enjoys an equal distinction. The most banal one finds its exceptional reader. Each, in its turn, has its hour of glory. Of course, each fragment could become a book. But the point is that it will not do so, for the ellipse is superior to the straight line. <sup>(50)</sup>

Only if there is this thing is it imagined that esthetic modernism can be recouped for social theory. Derrida’s versions of the point are of particular educational value because of the great rigor of the relation he establishes with social psychology, the clarity with which he blurs ethics and esthetics. He enables us to see that the breaking of the authority of one fetish from another both allegorizes and mediates the differentiation of society, the multiplication and autonomization of desires and fields. His distinctions contribute to enabling us to free ourselves from a certain

impossibly crude logic of the left, that of Bourdieu, for example, who writes with a sweeping naiveté that is apparently still possible: "The world of art, a sacred island, ostentatiously opposed to the profane, everyday activity in a universe given over to money and self-interest, offers, like theology in a past epoch, an imaginary anthropology obtained by denial of all the negations brought about by the economy."<sup>(51)</sup>

The police turn out to be indeed the issue. The cop-wise sensibility of deconstruction is at its clearest if we do not ignore Derrida's own insistence that Melanie Klein—translated into French by the philosopher's psychoanalyst wife—is a major reference for his work. Readers have been fervently invited to understand his views in terms proposed by Freud's critic: "Melanie Klein's entire thematic, her analysis of the constitution of good and bad objects, her genealogy of morals could doubtless begin to illuminate, if followed prudently, the entire problem of the archi-trace, not in its essence (it does not have one), but in terms of valuation and devaluation."<sup>(52)</sup> To follow prudently, we shall see, will involve the tireless insistence upon a decisive caveat.

Brushing aside Freud's gendering of envy and the attached description of its late emergence in the experience of a child, Klein suggests instead that the emotion is known by an infant, regardless of sex, from the very beginning of life. The child fantasizes itself to be sustained by the arbitrarily distributed infinite resources in the exclusive capture of the impossible entity labeled "the self-feeding breast." This form is imagined to contain what are termed "partial objects," translatable as the objects of anobjectality, or narcissistic objects, that is to say the mediations of the absence of mediation. In an effort to control this unique source of its strength, the child dreams of usurping its place, to be itself this thing that is sufficient to itself in order to have exclusive access to the objects of unmediation supposed to be unshared therein.

There is a recoil in the tendency, for woe if the child were to succeed! Generative anthropology knows the story: ambition to move to residence at the center, with exclusive access to the previously hoarded forms that had been jerked free, is renounced in horror when the child realizes that if it were to forcibly rezone happiness, it would in turn be targeted by the inevitably invidious who would seek the identical goal of undivided access to unmediated relations. This flinching grasp that suffering will be the price installs the agency Klein terms "the envious superego." Gans: "What terrifies us is that resentment—our own resentment—has succeeded."<sup>(53)</sup> "Man enters into the ethical world not through love but through fear."<sup>(54)</sup> Bataille is quoted by Derrida: "In sacrifice, the sacrificer identifies with the animal struck by death. Thus he dies while watching himself die, and even, after a fashion, dies of his own volition, as one with the sacrificial arm."<sup>(55)</sup> One corrects

oneself in the correction, as Adorno more clearly understood, describing a backward step in modern music: "In Stravinsky's case, subjectivity assumes the character of sacrifice, but—and this is where he sneers at the tradition of humanistic art—the music does not identify with the victim, but rather with the destructive element. Through the liquidation of the victim it rids itself of all intentions—that is, of its own subjectivity."<sup>(56)</sup> Sacrifice would thus be a collectivist reiteration of the cautionary revelation, the ritualized exemplary spectacle of a relocation of exclusive access to the mediations of unmediation. If the return of desire to the self is made possible through a rage against the intermediary through which one strikes oneself, the movement to the center will be blocked. The goal of theory—to make possible the return of desire that would be unburdened by this undynamic knowledge. Undynamic, for, as Max Weber recognized, pure charisma is opposed to all systematic economic activities, in fact, it is the strongest anti-economic force. The moral plausibility of markets requires that patterns of wealth be perpetually destabilized. "The social system needs enough turbulence for social distinctions to be blurred as soon as they are formed."<sup>(57)</sup> If it is the charismatic that is the problem it is because of the manner in which it necessarily metonymizes itself, it is because of what the charismatic is imagined to be edifyingly subject to. Edifyingly subject to the horror involved in the experience of difference, a word so suggestive of leveling sacrifice that it must be replaced, for "Among other confusions, such a word would suggest some organic unity, some primordial and homogeneous unity, that would eventually come to be divided up and take on difference as an event."<sup>(58)</sup>

## 7

It may be that "Melanie Klein . . . opens the way,"<sup>(59)</sup> by giving a name to the mediations of unmediation. But there is frustration attached to her name, for she at once seems to describe the inevitability of an appalling lesson of "difference as an event," as well as the tools for the unlearning of it. As her story of imagined insubordination ends unacceptably, a Kleinian revision is urgently required. *Klein aber mein*. Deleuze notes:

We have . . . encountered this problem of the indifference of psychoanalysis to the use of the indefinite article or pronoun among children; as early as Freud, but more especially in Melanie Klein (the children she analyzes, in particular, Little Richard, speak in terms of 'a,' 'one,' 'people,' but Klein exerts incredible pressure to turn them into personal and possessive family locutions).<sup>(60)</sup>

For Derrida, Klein has a role in the gallery of thinkers—Husserl, Lévi-Strauss,

Foucault—who don't keep faith with the disorderly possibilities of their initial instincts, who, rather than simply making available an uncontested access to the mediations of unmediation, release forms from the grip of an oppressing coding tradition only to follow that liberating first step with a deadening fall forward into a newly constituted closed system. This pattern has the look of the dreaded sequence that involves the bloody *transfer* of the objects of unmediation from one contrastively experienced housing to another. For the good Nietzschean, Klein is finally impossible. The vision is pantragic (Gans: "[W]hat is specific to tragedy is that the protagonist's suffering is experienced as the price of worldly centrality."<sup>(61)</sup> ) Avoided must be the stultifying spectacle of the exemplary shift in the location of happiness.

How to avoid the zipper job, the staring daggers at the figure stuffed with bait, daggers that are then turned against one's own drive to be at the center of the attentions of the community? Partial objects, yes, but the possibility of the hoarding of them, and their bloody transfer, i.e. the inevitability of the dominance of the crushing envious superego, no. Thus: "There is something secret. But it does not conceal itself."<sup>(62)</sup> If thought is to fulfill its destiny of mirroring the successes of the market, the zero-sum objectality that results in the envious superego trade-off must be succeeded by a system of infinite good, the non-violent togetherness of the manifold, a (non)system in which the particular is not sacrificed to the universal and the Other to the autocratic subject.

How, rather than drilling into the whole to wrest from it the exclusive ownership of the object, to create a breast with no interior? Cross-purposed identifications must cease to be recognizable as such. The sequence involved in the movement from impotence to omnipotence experienced over time in sacrifice must be replaced by a collapse into indistinguishability of the moments of the sequence. The Kleinean revisionism that is "critical theory" must contribute to a demobbing of difference via a ritually obstructionist, stealth narcissism. Exemplary process can be frustrated by establishing that unmediations are always already out of the box, that the figural illumination "never already" exists, that access is due not to a needy searching but rather to the unmotivated finding that does not exclusivize whatever poor success may be aleatorically achieved.

There are two forms of auto-affection in Derrida, made possible respectively by differently structured fetish objects: those that excite jealousy, invite a dissolving action, or the nonrecomposing ones that do not.

Of the remain(s). . . there are, always, overlapping each other, two functions. The first assures, guards, assimilates, interiorizes, idealizes,

relieves the fall into the monument. Thus the fall maintains, embalms, and mummifies itself, monumentalizes and names itself-falls (to the tomb(stone)). Therefore, but as a fall, it erects itself there. The other-lets the remain(s) fall. [. . . ] The remain(s) is indescribable, or almost so.. . .

[\(63\)](#)

The fetish brings desire home, and decisive, as we have noted, is whether this homecoming is imagined to be due to a release from a spell undone because of a resentfully motivated violence-actual or imagined-emerging from without, or undone by forces immanent to the object, forces unrelated to any energies that might derive from any painfully experienced inadequacies provoked in a witness. In one fetish, desire, undisciplined in its homecoming, returns unburdened, but in the other, desire, now become heavy with the envious superego, has returned to the self on restricted, restricting terms.

8

The two fetishes contrast again in Derrida's essay on the artist Adami: "The fetishism generalized by Adami turns to derision the classical logics of fetishism, the opposition of the fetishized bit and the thing itself, and God, and the original referent, and the transcendental phallus."[\(64\)](#) Made possible with the aid of this redemptive particular is an unassimilating objectality that allows for a parallel achievement of realized desire here spied in the language of philosophy by Adorno: "Cognition of the non-identical is also dialectical in that it itself *identifies*, both *beyond* and *differently* from identifying thought. It wishes to say what something *is*, whereas, identifying thought says what it falls under."[\(65\)](#) Rescue from fusion has this look: "It is an irreducible heterogeneity which cannot be eaten either sensibly or ideally and which-this is the tautology-by never letting itself be swallowed must therefore *cause itself to be vomited*."[\(66\)](#) The process of dissolving is opposed by what cannot be dissolved, because this last is always already marked by dissolution. Narrative incompetence characterizes the inalienable possession, as blocked *out of indifference* is "the effort to take things unlike the subject and make them like the subject."[\(67\)](#) Derrida's readers will be allowed neither paste nor scissors-for deconstruction is about "letting things drop"[\(68\)](#)

Immediately clear is the relation of the split authority of the fetish forms to most key issues in Derrida. For example, the famous distinction:

I have attempted to distinguish *différance* (whose *a* marks, among other things, its productive and conflictual characteristics) from Hegelian difference, and have done so precisely at the point at which Hegel, in the

greater *Logic*, determines difference as contradiction only in order to resolve it, to interiorize it, to lift it up . . . into the self-presence of an onto-theological or onto-teleological synthesis.<sup>(69)</sup>

The two-part system finds what is perhaps the most familiar of the philosopher's passages:

There are thus two interpretations of interpretations, of structure, of sign, of play. The one seeks to decipher, dreams of deciphering a truth or an origin which escapes a play and the order of the sign, and which lives the necessity of interpretation as an exile. The other, which is no longer turned toward the origin, affirms play and tries to pass beyond man and humanism, the name of man being the name of that being who, throughout the history of metaphysics or of ontotheology—in other words, throughout his entire history—has dreamed of full presence, the reassuring foundation, the origin and the end of play.<sup>(70)</sup>

Thus the very possibility of Derridian reading is dependent upon the existence of this *insignificantly* insubordinate fetish.<sup>(71)</sup>

What produces the process of hunting and killing? the sequence of discovery, punishment, and violent incorporation, the making the thing invisible, i.e. bad interpretation? What issues the invitation to the trouble on which the group feeds? The pattern requires the presence of—Derrida calls this “the supplement”—an imagined double of that which imagines itself to be the completion of indifference. The dream of total self-reflection in auto-affection is dependent on a difference, around which the dream of the annihilation of difference can be fantasized—the would-be death to desire demands, *for your intimidating edification*, a provocatively contrastive image of the death to desire. Strategic alienation of affection involves an allowing oneself to be seduced by what is then destroyed for the sake of establishing that what appeared outside was but an illusion of an outside appeal. Confirmed in the return of desire is the sense that the self is what the outside was imagined to be. To be warned against thus is the Jean Rousset who imagines forms made to pay with their lives, when he saw the work as an “independent, absolute organism that is self-sufficient,” and argued that “The work is a totality and always gains from being experienced as such.”<sup>(72)</sup> Terror there is in the estheticizing happy talk, as lurking behind it is Kant’s flower, death-worthy, ripe for assimilation by what “pleasurably consumes an absolutely close presence.”<sup>(73)</sup>

The beautiful *this* is thus beautiful for itself: it does without everything, it does without you (insofar as you exist), it does without its class. Envy, jealousy, mortification are at work within our affect, which would thus stem from this sort of quasi-narcissistic independence of the beautiful *this*. . . which refers to nothing other than to itself. . . .<sup>(74)</sup>

## 9

The beautiful is always imagined to be instructively dead, Derrida here agrees with Klein, its death-worthiness qualifying it as the meat of the envious superego. Absolutely *coupable* is the flower, he says, taking full advantage of the fact that the word means guilty as well as cuttable, and thus candidate to be “a member in which the infinite whole is integrally regrouped, remembered.”<sup>(75)</sup> Required for the occasion of the group’s assertion of the omnipotence of its own coercion, making possible “self-equality in infinite reconciliation” is “the whole. . . as morsel”<sup>(76)</sup>—something like our flower.

The predatory relation with these forms, an addiction to insult, is scarily ingrained. The expulsion of a certain other is said to be humanism’s characteristic self-defining gesture: “Man calls himself man only by drawing limits excluding his other from the play of supplementarity: the purity of nature, of animality, primitivism, childhood, madness, divinity. The approach to these limits is at once feared as a threat of death, and desired as access to a life without difference.”<sup>(77)</sup> “The whole. . . as morsel” presents a problem for it is not only “metaphysics. . . which is jealous.”<sup>(78)</sup> That what Adorno labeled “identity theory” is a mythological form of thought is clarified when the social stakes are described in this way:

The city’s body *proper* thus reconstitutes its unity, closes around the security of its inner courts, gives back to itself the word that links it with itself within the confines of the agora, by violently excluding from its territory the representative of an external threat or aggression. That representative represents the others of the evil that comes to affect or infect the inside by unpredictably breaking into it. Yet the representative of the outside is nonetheless *constituted*, regularly granted its place by the community, chosen, kept, fed, etc., in the very heart of the inside. These parasites were as a matter of course domesticated by the living organism that housed them at its expense. ‘The Athenians regularly maintained a number of degraded and useless beings at the public expense; and when any calamity, such as plague, drought, or famine, befell the city, they sacrificed two of these outcasts as scapegoats.’



[Frazer is quoted]

The ceremony of the *pharmakos* is thus played out on the boundary line between inside and outside, which it has as its function ceaselessly to trace and retrace. *Intra muros/extra muros*. The origin and division, the *pharmakos* represents evil both introjected and projected. Beneficial insofar as he cures—and for that, venerated and cared for—harmful insofar as he incarnates the power of evil—and for that, feared and treated with caution. Alarming and calming. Sacred and accursed. The conjunction, the *coincidentia oppositorum*, ceaselessly undoes itself in the passage to decision or crisis. <sup>(79)</sup>

“The Western metaphysics of presence” appears in terms that permit the recognition, at the core of its depiction, of a complaint concerning the verticalization that is the philosophical realization and abstract sublimation of this sacrificial mechanism. Plato, Rousseau, Husserl and Saussure appear to exclude writing from the fields of philosophy and linguistics. Writing is described as “the hunted beast,” chased into an outer darkness and subjected to “magical capture and murder”<sup>(80)</sup> by the paranoid and would-be self-present voice. “Self-proclaimed language,” he writes in *Of Grammatology*, “but actually speech deluded into believing itself completely alive, and violent, for it is not ‘capable of protect[ing] or defend[ing] [itself]’. . . except through expelling the other, and especially its own other, throwing it outside and below, under the name of writing.”<sup>(81)</sup> Speech must chase down this other and theatricalize the exclusion of what troubles its always anxiously achieved equanimity if it is to pretend to exist in the full sense of its deluded dreams: “That experience [of the voice] lives and proclaims itself as the exclusion of writing, that is to say of the invoking of an ‘exterior,’ ‘sensible,’ ‘spatial’ signifier interrupting self-presence.”<sup>(82)</sup>

“The operation of ‘hearing oneself speak’ is an auto-affection of an absolutely unique kind.”<sup>(83)</sup> As it is the charismatic form of auto-affection, the dissolving action that occurs in our experience of the desperate efficiency of the voice has a social psychological aspect that is at the center of Derrida’s interests.

The voice is *heard*. . . closest to the self as the absolute effacement of the signifier: pure auto-affection that necessarily has the form of time and which does not borrow from outside itself, in the world or in ‘reality,’ any accessory signifier, any substance of expression foreign to its own spontaneity. It is the unique experience of the signified producing itself spontaneously, from within the self, and nevertheless, as signified

concept, in the element of ideality or universality. The unworldly character of this substance of expression is constitutive of this ideality.<sup>(84)</sup>

10

And what is the signifier that the voice seeks to cause to disappear? It is imagined to be what the flower so vulnerable to cutting is supposed to be. The unworldly character of voice is made possible by an exclusion, by the consuming of signs.

This dissolving pattern assumes sublimated forms. "Philosophy in its entirety" is a monstrous example of a sublimation of sacrifice, for it "[gives us] knowledge of the universe as a unique organic totality in itself which develops 'from its own concept . . . Without losing anything of what makes it a whole 'which returns to itself,' this 'sole world of truth' is contained, retained, and gathered together in itself."<sup>(85)</sup> Direct reference to the ghost of sacrificial process is found in a report on Kant's account of what occurs in the relation with the sublime:

The imagination turns this violence against itself, it mutilates itself, ties itself, binds itself, sacrifices itself and conceals itself, gashes itself and robs itself. This is the place where the notion of sacrifice operates thematically inside the third *Critique*—and we've been constantly on its tracks. But this mutilating and sacrificial violence organizes the expropriation within a calculation, and the exchange which ensues is precisely the law of the sublime as much as the sublimity of the law. The imagination gains by what it loses. It gains by losing. The imagination organizes the theft of its own freedom, it lets itself be commanded by a law other than that of the empirical use which determines it with a view to an end. But by this violent renunciation, it gains in extension. . . and in power. . . This potency is greater than what it sacrifices, and although the foundation remains hidden from it, the imagination has the feeling of sacrifice and theft at the same time as that of that of the cause. . . to which it submits.<sup>(86)</sup>

Related would be the causing-there-to-be-nothing-left in theology: "[T]he spirituality of the Christian Last Supper consum(mat)es its signs, does not let them fall outside, loves without remain(s). The assimilation without leftover [*sans relief*] also satisfies itself."<sup>(87)</sup> And: "The teleological horizon of the 'true' and unique religion' is the disappearance of the fetish."<sup>(88)</sup>

But the intimidating dissolving process proves undone by what is always already

undone. The success of deconstruction will turn upon the availability of this degeneralizing fetish that does not compose with greatness, the demonstration that there is finally nothing but it. Benjamin, an author upon whom Derrida has written a number of times: "The rag picker prefigures the. . . modern hero, . . . [in] his interest in the trash of the great city."<sup>(89)</sup> Derrida plunges into the garbage of the *Critique of Judgment* to salvage apotropaic waste that will be the instrument of the rag picker's undoing of the crowd. Against the target-rich field of Kant's main text, his flower, his sublime, and that social horror which it at once stands for and obscures, is posed a form of which Kant was not unaware, but one he banished to a note. But banished to afterthought it could not remain for long, such became the awareness of its powers as a miracle of distribution and multiplication, that is, as a talisman guarantee against sacrifice. It is in a forward-channeling moment of the *Critique* that it makes a shy appearance—in the form of a stone with a hole in the center, unearthed in the course of an archaeological excavation. If Kant's path into the natural sublime appears a regression into the anthropological unaware of itself as such, the route into the trash proves to be the *via salutis* of philosophy.

[T]here are things in which we see a form suggesting adaptation to an end, without any end being cognized in them—as, for example, the stone implements frequently obtained from sepulchral tumuli and supplied with a hole, as if for [inserting] a handle; and although these by their shape manifestly indicate a finality, the end of which is unknown, they are not on that account described as beautiful. But the very fact of their being regarded as art-products involves an immediate recognition that their shape is attributed to some purpose or other and to a definite end. For this reason there is no immediate delight whatever in their contemplation. A flower, on the other hand, such as a tulip, is regarded as beautiful, because we meet with a certain finality in its perception, which, in our estimate of it, is not referred to any end whatever.<sup>(90)</sup>

## 11

The empty socket is a memory hole, and there dwells the ghost of the curse of labor, come and gone, immortalizing alloy of failure. Unqualifying it as beautiful for Kant, the opening suggests a handle's absence, specter of a past and present embarrassment—a relation to need. Not unborn to instrumentality but lagging piteously behind it, falling below rather than transcending production, the form has, invisibly to us, under the pressure of impersonal forces, *decayed* into an indifference rather than being disciplined and spoliated out of it. Reference to an exigency in the socket is feebly present, but plays out at the moment of its appearing. Inability rather than refusal to make, dying out of service, knowing of its

suffering, but now finding itself below this suffering because of the injured withdrawal of its humble worldly claims, the broken tool is indeed workless, but only in a mode of inadequacy. Beyond, because beneath the seriousness of getting results, the object's strength is exhausted rather than held in needless reserve; the rock would like to contribute but no longer can.

But it is not simply the opposite of what Hegel said beauty was—an absence of reaching that suggests desire overcome—for there was a uselessness to draw us in. There was reaching and not reaching, as the “*marteau sans maître*” stalled between production and its opposite, thus the marbling of trap with release. Its demotion from one condition remaining visible in the promotion to another, it weakens into a narcissism it had never known the sadness of having had to renounce, falls into an afflicted narcissism, one arrived at through a failure to be the opposite of narcissism. Not aloof from work, rather poorly past it, no longer up to it, residually enduring it, there is here a lack of binary decisiveness. In this celibate machine—a tool without extension—there is not the living up to and away from that now collapse in simultaneity—it is an embarrasser, is embarrassed. A liberating alienation has occurred—the witness is out of work, out of the work of death, as stolen from him is the work of humiliation that has already been accomplished. The suffering is not at the hands of the reader/spectator, but of already effective immanent forces. Before the would-be but now preyless disfiguring eye, the form is prediscarded (because of work's latency), compromised into rather than out of invulnerability—failure is indwelling, it is not an edifying event. As it cannot be reduced either to the curse of labor congealed in it, or the lack thereof, we respond to it as simultaneously rescued from and returned to servitude.

What the form is not is this: “The coin that has been exhumed at an arena, displays, heads, a serene face, tails, the brutality of a universal number.” (Mallarmé)<sup>(91)</sup> In the rock and the coin the same constitutive features interact at different speeds. The coin—the site of a visible unfolding—is a decelerated rock; the rock the imbroglio of the component moments of the coin. Its spin removing it from the precinct of the Roman circus, the rock would be the coin, if the pitiless alternatives of its head/tail difference had not been rushed into near indistinguishability, its tensions unmaddened through the speeding of an oscillation that can have no moral result. While the inner migration of punishment offers refuge from social enormity, sheltering the narcissism of the rock—Freud's ego ideal that has lost its (group) shadow—the coin is not protected from its warring features—revenge follows it into the grave and beyond. Gasché: “Auto-affection has been characterized by its exclusion of difference. This exclusion is essential for auto-affection to be auto-affection, for it to achieve an immediate and spontaneous identity in self-presence.”<sup>(92)</sup> True—but all hangs upon the location of responsibility, upon how and when the violence comes about, whether or not there is resentful agency involved.

"Restitutions" is an essay that contains the clearest of examples of Derrida's privileging of the flawed and therefore minimally provocative uselessness required for unmolested and unmolestable happiness. With comic dudgeon he breaks into a debate between Heidegger and the art historian Meyer Shapiro on the matter of what finally appears in Van Gogh's famous pictures of old shoes. Pickily responding to Heidegger's casual mention that the shoes appeared to be those of a peasant, Shapiro argued that they had rather the look of the footwear of an urban worker.

Insufficiently trifling are the triflers. Presumptuousness is noticed on both sides, a craving for incorporation and persecution: "This is an investigation that smells of the police."<sup>(93)</sup> Assignments of ownership lack basis, and even outlandish is the assumption that the two shoes constitute a pair. The Derridian requirement is that they be preserved as useless and unowned: "Their detachment is obvious. Unlaced, abandoned, detached from the subject (wearer, holder or owner, or even author-signatory) and detached/untied in themselves (the laces are untied)."<sup>(94)</sup> Called for is the release of the forms from "identifying" thought and its correlate, the autocratic ego: "As soon as these abandoned shoes no longer have any strict relationship with a subject borne or bearing/wearing, they become the anonymous, lightened, voided support (but so much the heavier for being abandoned to its opaque inertia) of an absent subject. . . ."<sup>(95)</sup> As there can be no legitimate claim: "I leave them. They are, moreover, abandoned, unlaced, take them or leave them."<sup>(96)</sup> With the aid of the shoe as escape vehicle, the preferred tool because it is not much of a tool, "The center is not the center."<sup>(97)</sup>

12

Communicating explicitly with this essay is another in *The Truth in Painting*, "Cartouches," dealing with a series of sculptures and drawings of small coffins by the artist Titus Carmel. The works here delighting Derrida had their origin in a passage in Genet who describes a match box that resembles a coffin. The scale and the deformations imposed upon the boxes cause them to be both related to but absent from service—the object "was" a match box; what is labeled a coffin is clearly not functional as such. "And yet I must not attempt to appropriate this series of cenotaphs,"<sup>(98)</sup> he writes, having learned the lesson of the shoes.

"Do not incite words to serve a politics of the masses," writes Char.<sup>(99)</sup> There is the opposition we have come to expect: "There is a good and a bad writing: the good and natural is the divine inscription in the heart and the soul; the perverse and artful is technique, exiled in the exteriority of the body."<sup>(100)</sup> If there is not the word to match the shoe, the mobbing of difference that is product of the voice will flood unobstructedly through all of experience—the group will be a destiny, and revenge will not be overcome. If the voice is about a fear-inspiring evaporation in the

sociological sublime (“Within the voice, the presence of the objects. . . disappears.”<sup>(101)</sup>), then good writing is what “ remains. . . a morsel. . . insofar as it cannot, naturally, bind (band) itself.”<sup>(102)</sup>

A child shows the way, the way to catachresis: “Catachresis. . . . Trope wherein a word is divested from its proper sense and is taken up in common language to designate another thing with some analogy to the object initially expressed.”<sup>(103)</sup> In a long and affectionate footnote, Derrida quotes from an essay by Klein that had been translated by the author’s wife, a passage in which the word takes the now familiar form of the useless tool:

For Fritz, when he was writing, the lines meant roads and the letters ride on motor- bicycles-on the pen-upon them. For instance, ‘i’ and ‘e’ ride together on a motor-bicycle that is usually driven by the ‘i’ and they love one another with a tenderness quite unknown in the real world.”

The ‘i’s are skillful, distinguished and clever, have many pointed weapons, and live in caves, between which, however, there are also mountains, gardens and harbors. [. . . ] On the other hand, the ‘l’s are represented as stupid, clumsy, lazy and dirty. They live in caves under the earth. In ‘L’-town dirt and paper gather in the streets, in the little ‘filthy’ houses they mix with water a dyestuff bought in ‘l’-land and drink and sell this as wine. They cannot walk properly and cannot dig because they hold the spade upside down, etc..<sup>(104)</sup>

Language is a tool, and one that can be held upside down: “Writing would thus have the exteriority that one attributes to utensils; to what is even an imperfect tool and a dangerous, almost maleficent technique.”<sup>(105)</sup> The supplement is said to have a task, but it is “unequal to the task, it lacks something.”<sup>(106)</sup> Language’s availability for happy misuse is owed to the fact that all signifiers have their uncontrollable non-expressive components.<sup>(107)</sup> “Everything in my speech which is destined to manifest an experience to another must pass by the mediation of its physical side.”<sup>(108)</sup> Words contain features that lose themselves in the opacity of a material body that undo the dreams of proximity-producing transparency. The play of differences that inhabit writing, and by extension all speech, the syntheses and references that constitute the sign, establish that *simples* (Kant’s flowers), referring only to themselves, do not exist-there are only remainders. The signifier is never contemporary-there is always present in it the trace of another element. The sign is always already inhabited by the trace of other signs. “The idea of a book is the idea of a totality,”<sup>(109)</sup> but there is no such thing as “a signifier that does not fall into the

world.”<sup>(110)</sup> Not consumable are the graphic elements, for example—they cannot belong to the voice; the voice cannot dissolve them: “As soon as, in a second, the first stroke of a letter divides itself, and must indeed support partition in order to identify itself, there are nothing but . . . anonymous morsels without fixed domicile, without legitimate addressee. . . .”<sup>(111)</sup> This is the unbounded trace, the obstinacy of difference, “the openness upon exteriority in general, upon the sphere of what is not ‘one’s own,’”<sup>(112)</sup> the deference to which rescues philosophy from the animality of the voice that says: “My words are ‘alive’ because they seem not to leave me: not to fall outside me, outside my breath, at a visible distance; not to cease to belong to me, to be at my disposition. . . .”<sup>(113)</sup>

### 13

“The property of the *representamen* is not to be *proper*, that is to say absolutely proximate to itself.”<sup>(114)</sup> It may not be proximate to itself, but because it falls into the world it mediates local narcissisms that cannot be massed, i.e. moralized, and thus signifies “the death of the festival.” The breast has no interior, there being no such thing as “a signifier that does not fall into the world,”<sup>(115)</sup> that is not available as a fetish of the saving sort. The written word, especially, is always Kant’s rock and not the flower because there is use, as there is representation, but the uncontrolled features of language “cease. . . to be of any use within ‘civil life’. . . .” “The perfection of convention here touches its opposite extreme, it is . . . the perfect alienation of the instrument of civil order.”<sup>(116)</sup> Because writing is use and its absence, it is the synchronization of identification and the release from it, and is hence the unobstructedly available condition of social inauthenticity: “A feared writing must be canceled because it erases the presence of the self-same within speech.”<sup>(117)</sup>

Writing—its constituent features are properly understood—is without the power to unleash sacrificial process. Because it is the supplement it is a candidate for expulsion by “the assembled people,” as the voice will expel what appears to be its atomized double. But a true idol, which writing is not, cannot break the thrust of sacrificial mechanisms, because it is enjoyment, self-presence, realized auto-affection. Because it is the shoe, it is the rock, “Writing *represents*. . . enjoyment. It plays enjoyment, renders it present and absent,”<sup>(118)</sup> and thus it is unreasonable for it to provoke expulsion. It is always involved in a pre-emptive self-demystification, itself continually devastating the sufficiency that “the assembled people” gather to destroy. (“What a strategy, don’t you admire it? I neutralize all the risks in advance.”<sup>(119)</sup>) Because the written word does not lose itself in the exclusivizing self-repetitions of speech, it is an unmediation that is infinitely available to build an unexcluded, unexcluding narcissism.



The happiness of writing is additionally due to the scale of the experience. Miniaturization is the threat of death in that it opens the possibility of a realization at a local level, thus the possibility of the seduction that is not the self-seduction that "binds the good society to itself." Writing is the mark of "the seductive influence of individual wills." It cannot simply be the opposite of self-presence, as there are only mediations of auto-affection. If writing is the impossibility of self-presence on one scale, it offers simultaneously the experience of the *miniaturization* of auto-affection, of its realization in atomized and secret forms. It is associated with asocial forms of closure—"seduced narcissistically," "it was difficult to separate writing from onanism."<sup>(120)</sup> "Writing reduces the dimension of presence in its sign. The miniature is not reserved to illuminated capitals; it is, understood in its derivative sense, the very form of writing. The history of writing would then follow the continuous and linear progress of the techniques of abbreviation."<sup>(121)</sup> Derrida quotes Ponge approvingly: "If I prefer La Fontaine—the slightest fable—to Schopenhauer or Hegel, I certainly know why. It seems to me: 1. less tiring, more fun; 2. more proper, less disgusting; (. . .) The trick, then, would be to make only 'small writings' or '*Sapates*,' but ones that hold, satisfy, and at the same time relax, cleanse after reading the grrrand metaphysicolicians."<sup>(122)</sup> (sic)

Focus on the small, as opposed to the shrinking process, the *becoming small*, is as important to Derrida as it is to all recognizably modern thinkers. Its power is assignable to the fact that mediations of reduced scale are understood to make possible a sealing of the self from the would-be self-sealing group. The voice is associated with the large for it destroys distinctions: "Right at first the sound touches us, interests us, impassions us all the more because it penetrates us. It is the element of interiority because its essence, its own energy, implies that its reception is obligatory."<sup>(123)</sup> But before the written word, the small, "I can close my eyes, I can avoid being touched by that which I see and that which is perceptible at a distance."<sup>(124)</sup> With writing "man has thus put out his eyes, he blinds himself."<sup>(125)</sup> Derrida adds: "One can *more naturally* close one's eyes or distract his glance than avoid listening. Let us not forget that this natural situation is primarily that of the child at the breast."<sup>(126)</sup>

## 14

The confirmation in Freud, in the essay on jokes, where it is reported that when a child is asked to describe something, "it may be wagered that he will open his eyes wide when he describes something large and squeeze them shut when he comes to something small."<sup>(127)</sup> These closed eyes are those of "an infant at the breast when it is satisfied and satiated and lets go of the breast as it falls asleep."<sup>(128)</sup> If the spoken word is the breast of the group, the written word—putting the reader out of the work of death because in it we meet with what is already small—is the breast of

the individual. The small at once relocates indifference—I do not experience it as humiliatingly contrastive, for I am now the indifference myself— and causes it to be invulnerable. With the small, I now look out at the world from the perspective of indifference, not resentfully at that which is indifferent to me. “Imperfect necessity” is the legal term for this unpunishable crime.

If strength is invulnerability, then writing is strong because it is weak:

Strong writing is not the invitation to a wasting, as it “resists. . . degradation,” because “it is proper to nothing and to no one, reappropriable by nothing and no one not even by the presumed bearer.. It is this singular impropriety that permits it to resist degradation. . . . Enigmatic kinship between waste. . . and the masterpiece.”<sup>(129)</sup>

Writing is strong, as in Mallarmé, when the signifier has the structure of the found object:

Uprooted, anonymous, unattached to any house or country, this almost insignificant signifier is at everyone’s disposal, can be picked up by both the competent and the incompetent, by those who understand and know what to do with it. . . , and by those who are completely unconcerned with it, and who, knowing nothing about it, can inflict all manner of impertinence upon it. At the disposal of each and of all, available on the sidewalks, isn’t writing thus essentially democratic?<sup>(130)</sup>

On this condition, “Writing is the very process of the dispersal of peoples unified as bodies.”<sup>(131)</sup>

“Do not seal, that is to say don’t close, but also, do not sign.”<sup>(132)</sup> A bloodless transfer of the mediations of unmediation would be the goal, the absence of a requirement that they be intimidatingly ripped from one nonporous zone into another: “Happiness . . . gives us the inside of objects as something removed from the objects.”<sup>(133)</sup> Always already removed, it would be crucial to add. If it is required that one fetish be split from the other, then there must be the form that does not belong to me, while being always accessible to each and all, simultaneously. If something or somebody need not disappear for this access to be possible, then the idea of the frame becomes an issue. Supporting the characteristic objectality of the postmodern, fellow Kleinean revisionists Deleuze and Guattari write:

But the picture is also traversed by a deframing power that opens it onto a plane of composition or an infinite field of forces. These processes may be very diverse, even at the level of the external frame: irregular forms, sides that do not meet, Seurat's painted or stippled frames, and Mondrian's squares standing on a corner, all of which give the picture the power to leave the canvas. The painter's action never stays within the frame; it leaves the frame and does not begin with it. <sup>(134)</sup>

A classical esthetic is also about the hostility to frames. But while here they are offered as invitations to be busted into, Derrida must be "less interested in breaking through certain limits than in putting in doubt the right to posit such limits in the first place." <sup>(135)</sup> If there is the frame, then there is not the unclassical fetish: "overflowing of the whole by the part which explodes the frame . . . is not produced inside a framing or framed element. . . ." <sup>(136)</sup>

Abundant are passages such as the following:

Our purpose is not to prove that "The Purloined Letter" functions within a frame. . . but to prove that the structure of the effects of framing is such that no totalization of the border is even possible. Frames are always framed: therefore, framed by a piece of their content. Pieces without a whole, 'divisions' without totality. <sup>(137)</sup>

15

From *Glas*:

Just imagine the havoc of a theft that would deprive you of frames and of every possibility of reframing your valuables or your art objects. And what if mimesis so arranged it that language's internal system did not exist, or that it is never used, or at least it is used only by contaminating it, and that the contamination is inevitable, hence regular and 'normal,' make up a part of the system and its functioning. <sup>(138)</sup>

And far from unaware of the social stakes is our author: "[We must] not break the circle violently (it would avenge itself). . . ." <sup>(139)</sup>

The insistence that the text always outruns the limits assigned to it ("In nothing

does writing reside.”<sup>(140)</sup>) is also about unknowing revenge in that it is a guarantee of a nonconflictual because passively realized desire. In his own attack on the authority of the frame, Adorno notes that it makes possible a redeeming passivity: “[A] cognition that is to bear fruit will throw itself to the objects à fond perdu.”<sup>(141)</sup> The avoided pestilential predatory sufficiency is achieved through the relation with an object that is mastered, proximate: “Lived experience is immediately self-present in this mode of certitude.”<sup>(142)</sup> And: “We know that the act of meaning, the act that confers *Bedeutung*. . . is always the aim of a relation with an object.”<sup>(143)</sup> The voice is defeated, or at least demystified, by what remains uncircumscribed. The hope would be that expressed by Adorno: “If the thought really yielded to the object, if its attention were on the object, not on its category, the very objects would start talking under the lingering eye.”<sup>(144)</sup> If the object is free, then so is the subject. Adorno again: “The spell cast by the subject becomes equally a spell cast over the subject. Both spells are driven by the Hegelian fury of disappearance. The subject is spent and impoverished in its categorical performance.”<sup>(145)</sup> To preserve the possibility of a masochistically achieved kind of realized desire is to continue to generate banalized levels of seductive power that are now harmless—i.e., unemployable by the group—because so diminished. The mobility sustaining rivalless atomization of happiness is the product of an imagery of desire realized through failure.

“Deconstruction must neither reframe nor dream of the pure and simple absence of the frame.”<sup>(146)</sup> There is always the frame, but the frame is never much of a frame: “There is no natural frame. *There is* frame, but the frame does not exist.”<sup>(147)</sup> Always already undone from within, it has the structure of a ruin as described by Simmel—arrogance is not to be wrung from it, the form having been damaged by immanent pressures. Flinching before the threat of the correction from without is a routine feature: “It is because deconstruction interferes with solid structures, ‘material’ institutions, and not only with discourses or signifying representations, that it is always distinct from any analysis or a ‘critique.’”<sup>(148)</sup> But the particular interference insisted upon consists, not in a besting, but rather in a rigorous demonstration of the universality of the structure of the ruin. There is nothing but it: “The ruin is not in front of us; it is neither a spectacle nor a love object. It is experience itself; neither the abandoned yet still monumental fragment of a totality, nor, as Benjamin thought, simply a theme of baroque culture. It is precisely not a theme, for it ruins the theme, the position, the presentation or representation of anything and everything.”<sup>(149)</sup> Writing of a 1915 self-portrait by Helene Schjerfbeck:

The ruin does not supervene like an accident upon a monument that was intact only yesterday. In the beginning there is ruin. Ruin is that which happens to the image from the moment of the first gaze. Ruin is the self-

portrait, this face looked at in the face as the memory of itself, what remains or returns as a specter from the moment one first looks at oneself and a figuration is eclipsed.<sup>(150)</sup>

The humility of a sponge described by Ponge is the preserving violence that has always already occurred: “Ignoble as it may be, and lacking in natural nobility; poor in its genealogical extraction, and unable to choose between the proper and the improper, the economy of the sponge is nonetheless better able to resist the oppressor—its *ignoble labor enfranchises it*. ”<sup>(151)</sup>

Another *différance* that blocks a *difference*, the theme of circumcision is related, but here the protective impotence is inseparable from an omnipotence:

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By first incising his glans, he defends himself in advance against the infinite threat, castrates in his turn the enemy, elaborates a kind of apotropaic without measure. He exhibits his castration as an erection that defies the other. The logical paradox of the apotropaic: castrating oneself already, always already, in order to be able to castrate and repress the threat of castration, renouncing life and mastery in order to secure them.<sup>(152)</sup>

This appears within the context of the analysis of the Genet, who, freed through disgrace, is here quoted: “Within his shame, in his own drool, he envelops himself, he weaves a silk which is his pride. [. . . ] The culprit has woven it to protect himself, woven it purple to embellish himself.”<sup>(153)</sup> An apotropaic inadequacy that is indistinguishable from an omnipotence.

In a “rattle of scrap-iron” the “miracle. . . blazed forth,”<sup>(154)</sup> Derrida quotes from *Our Lady of the Flowers*. And what miracle would this be? The remainder that is deconstruction’s version of the deferral of generative anthropology, the unproblematic Other, a redesigned Kleinean body, free with its unmediating mediations. Derrida on a protagonist from Genet: “When Leila lets all those objects out from under her skirt in the ‘Mother’s house,’ lamp, lamp shade, ‘bits of broken glass. . . or fragments. . . pieces of glass. . . debris. . . splinters. . . .’ ”<sup>(155)</sup> The object stands in for a subject. Clément Rosset on the askesis: “Without doubt, in order to deceive its hunger, desire can attach itself, accommodate itself to the undesirable, that is to say forget about its undesirable character. In doing so it becomes as derisive as the object that is coveted, just as fragile, just as uninteresting.”<sup>(156)</sup> The

remainder produces the miracle of the end of the group's pageantry of burying and digging up, fractures it into a market, and sends it bustling off into its countless directions. The cost of distributing power is always more manageable than the price to be paid for worshipping it.

Attention to the successes of the remainder sharpens understanding of Derrida's toughness with the seemingly safe figure of Levinas. *Totality and Infinity's* author argued that post-Hellenic philosophy's drive to decisively answer epistemological questions led to an obliviousness to what made possible the ethical: The Other, whose right to exist in a realm that is distinct from our own knowledge-constitutive interests demands the suspension of all preexistent categories. As it is remainderless, the ethics of radical heterogeneity, based upon a raw insistence upon otherness,<sup>(157)</sup> is burdened by the ghost of Dionysian/Apollonian interdependency, for present here is the last residue of "the solidity and *rondeur* of inviolate form."<sup>(158)</sup> The possibility of an intersubjective appeal is blocked by the sealed surface: "The other as alter ego signifies the other as other, irreducible to my ego, precisely because it is an ego, because it has the form of an ego. The egoity of the other permits him to say 'ego' as I do. . . ."<sup>(159)</sup> This "dream of a purely heterological thought, a pure thought of pure difference" ends in exciting philosophy's characteristic gestures of incorporation and/or exclusion. But there is nothing but the ruin, the remainder: "We say the dream because it must vanish at daybreak, as soon as language reawakens."<sup>(160)</sup> Language as writing, that is, "an orphan," "weakened speech," "the living dead."<sup>(161)</sup>

Although both deconstruction and Levinas are about not knowing difference to save it, weakening it in order to save it (I am thinking of Levinas' emphatic mention of the vulnerability of the Other), Derrida feels that the buffer object carries the protection project a step further, eliminating as it does some of the dialectic-sparking features that are felt to remain in *Totality and Infinity*. However weakened its dialectical intensity in his writings, Levinas knows only the *difference* that is always associated with the resentfully inspired *event*, always in the grip of the sequence, when only the synchronization of *différance* offers the way out. It is instructive to relate the reservations concerning the subject in Levinas with those passages in the book on Ponge that can only be described as a Levinas parody:

Thus the thing would be the other, the other-thing which gives me an order or addresses an impossible, intransigent, insatiable demand to me, without an exchange and without a transaction, without a possible contract. Without a word, without speaking to me, it addresses itself to me, to me alone in my irreplaceable singularity, in my solitude as well. I owe to the thing an absolute respect which no general law would mediate:

the law of the thing is singularity and difference as well. An infinite debt ties me to it, a duty without funds or foundation. I shall never acquit myself of it. Thus the thing is not an object; it cannot become one. <sup>(162)</sup>

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Replaced here is the Other of Levinas with an object, but not one resembling the world-cleaving flower of Kant. All respect is due the sponge that is “the worthless, or the no-thing or the such-a-little-thing, the no-matter-what of low prices, the nameless or nearly so in the mob of small things. Keep the throwaway. . .” <sup>(163)</sup> “It has no price, it is priceless because it is so particular, so insignificant, so singular and so reproducible.” <sup>(164)</sup> There is the narcissism in it—Derrida describes it as being “without me,” as having “no relation to me, whence the dissymmetry.” <sup>(165)</sup> But there is no division of labor in the proper/improper meltdown—here the object is “executioner and victim at one and the same time.” <sup>(166)</sup> A poem of Ponge is praised in these terms: “What comes back to cut the tree, and then to put it to death, is thus a part of the tree, a branch, a son, a handle, a piece detached from the tree which writes. . . .” <sup>(167)</sup>

Parody of Jewish thought may be described as a constitutive feature in Derrida. Derrida quotes Hegel on the Jews and comments:

Their ownness, their property remains foreign to them, their secret: separate, cut, infinitely distant, terrifying. ‘The secret proper was itself something wholly alien (*Das Geheimnis selbst war etwas durchaus Fremdes*) something into which a man could not be initiated; he could only be dependent on it. And the concealment (*Verborgenheit*) of God in the Holy of Holies had a significance quite different from the secret (*Geheimnis*) of the Eleusinian gods. From the pictures feelings, enthusiasm, and devotion of Eleusis, from these revelations of gods, no one was excluded; but they might not be spoken of since words would have desecrated them. But of their objects and actions, of the laws of their service, the Israelites might well chatter (Deuteronomy XXX, 11), for in these there is nothing holy. The holy was always outside them, unseen and unfelt (*ungesehen und ungefühlt*).

How could one have a secret?

Absolute expropriation makes the secret of the sacred accessible to that



very one holding its privilege. In this absolute alienation, the holder of the inaccessible can just as well peacefully manage its effects or phenomena, can chatter about them, manipulate them. The invisible remains invisible, out of reach; the visible is one the visible. Simultaneously the most familiar, secret, proper, near, the *Heimlich* of the *Geheimnis* presents itself as the most foreign, the most disquieting (*Unheimlich*).<sup>(168)</sup>

Derrida is placed here between two impossibilities. Unavailable is the theological solution to the challenge posed by the idolatrous group, for “God is . . . the proper name of that which deprives us of our own nature, of our own birth; consequently he will always have spoken before us, on the sly. He is the difference which insinuates itself between myself and myself as my death.”<sup>(169)</sup> But “How can mediacy and immediacy be transgressed simultaneously?”<sup>(170)</sup> (In Levinas there is too much of each.) There is solution only in a parody of Judaism—through a pre-degraded absolute difference, proximate and far, there is the falling below the group temptation, rather than the rising above it. The dominance of a “metaphorics of proximity”<sup>(171)</sup> (involving ideas of “shelter,” “guard,” “service”) is blocked by just junk. The distant object that is at our feet does indeed solicit us, but it is at once renounced out of what *approaches* indifference: “Believing that one can pass to the other side, so as to reach the other, one will attempt to appropriate the other to oneself, while leaving it as it is, and to let it sign for itself while signing in its place. . . .”<sup>(172)</sup> The banality that is “separate,” “cut,” “infinitely distant,” suspends the object between positions, and as it does so, minimized is the exchange of the now smudged absence-presence energies said by Freud and Bataille to create the group.

Banal mystery results in “a disarmed desire.”<sup>(173)</sup> Disarmed and disarming because unprovocatively atomized:

Thus the thing would be the other, the other-thing which gives me an order or addresses an impossible, intransigent, insatiable demand to me, without an exchange and without a transaction, without a possible contract. Without a word, without speaking to me, it addresses itself to me, to me alone in my irreplaceable singularity, in my solitude as well.<sup>(174)</sup>

Levinas would be part of a larger problem. Unsleping vigilance is required, as the most seemingly innocuous remainderless thought continuously threatens to bind the hunter and the hunted.

[A notion of subjectivity] reigns over the majority of discourses, which today and for a long time to come, state their opposition to racism, to totalitarianism, to nazism, to fascism, etc., and do this in the name of the spirit, in the name of an axiomatic—for example that of democracy or human rights—which directly or not, comes back to this metaphysics of *subjectivity*. All the pitfalls of the strategy of establishing demarcations belong to this program, whatever place one occupies in it. <sup>(175)</sup>

The subject sweeps us back into sacrifice—it is a flower, an insufficient caution, *coupable*. The positions not knowing the remainder will be doomed to discipline their group-exciting features with crude techniques of repression that will always fold one back into the problem. In Kant, for example, there is no escape: “We know that the sacrifice and the sacrificial offering are at the heart of Kantian morality.” <sup>(176)</sup>

The subject would be a form of the precarious *proper*. Raw assertion of alterity cannot finalize sacrificial immunity achievable only, for Derrida, in the proper/improper collapse, the perfection of the oscillation of impotence and omnipotence shown to occur within each figure, and not distributed over different, and thus dialectically combustible entities. The remainder’s absence has as its consequence the appearance of the experiences of lack and adequacy over different, spaced individuals and the hungry chase can be the only result.

In an essay written on Barthes on the occasion of the critic’s death: “I sought, like him, as him, . . . a certain kind of mimicry that is at the same time one’s duty (to take him into myself, to identify with him so as to allow his word to be itself, to make it present and to represent it faithfully) and the worst of all temptations, the most indecent, the most murderous. The gift and the withholding of the gift—the choice is impossible.” <sup>(177)</sup> It is with the mediation of the remains that the goal of the perfection of the oscillation is approached, for example, in the case of Mallarmé:

We are faced then with mimicry imitating nothing. . . . There is no simple reference. It is in this that the mime’s operation does allude, but alludes to nothing. . . . Mallarmé thus preserves the differential structure of mimicry or mimesis, but without its Platonic or metaphysical interpretation, which implies that somewhere the being of something that *is*, is being imitated. <sup>(178)</sup>

Gans writes that “The time of separation between the Apollonian and the Dionysian, between form and its dissolution, is the time of deferral of violence—the time of culture itself.” <sup>(179)</sup> Derrida might be described as seeking to bring to a conclusion an

oppositely achieved version of deferral.

The process concluding in the *destorying* of difference (i.e. in *différance*), the final collapse into a single moment of what had been the distinguishable episodes of the onset of identification with an impressive other and its conclusion exfoliating in time, was set in motion by the birth of the neoclassical, “the result of the integration of Christian ethical values into the classical esthetic.”<sup>(180)</sup> Approximately aware of his role in this tradition is Derrida: “Are we Jews? Are we Greeks? [. . . ] We live in and of the difference, that is in *hypocrisy*. . . .”<sup>(181)</sup> A constitutive allergy to charismatically focused resentment tipping into sacrifice has its issue in the neoclassical project of the development of oppositely divaricating strategies of tension mitigation, in two-directioned flight from the solution of the compact group. The neoclassical is the name of a double loss of tension. If “the notion of sacrifice is indeed a category of thought of yesterday,”<sup>(182)</sup> this is due to the use of polarized depersonalizing effects of scale. By supersizing and downsizing that with which identification is encouraged, the neoclassical works towards Aristotle avoidance, the unlearning of the lesson of the dead or the imagined dead.

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As Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* is the first integral expression of this position, it merits Derrida’s particular attention. Flinching before the interpersonal struggle that was the exclusive focus of the poetics of an Aristotle, Kant rehabilitated the natural world, finding the beautiful in flowers and birds on the one hand, and the sublime in a species-sized empathy mediated by inhumanly vast landscapes on the other. Tension mitigation was achieved through a two-directioned move outside the social, through a straining from within the esthetic as cultural production to at once rise above and fall below it, through a hollowing out of a place of respite from the *agon*, between beautiful and the sublime, that now-evacuated space within which had been learned the lessons of tragic discipline.

“The esthetic of market society thrives on its hostility to market exchange,”<sup>(183)</sup> it has been noted. To be added is that the market requires reflexes that are contradictory in their expression of hostility to envious superego overdevelopment. In order to protect itself from itself, from the various forces that might emerge to variously calm the turbulence that is its vitality, the market invites down upon itself friendly fire summoned from two directions. Required are two tension mitigations, two kinds of relief from the pressure to adore, and each warning as well of the dangers posed by its oppositely pressing Other. Welcomed on the one hand are the insults and eccentricities, the stimulating, self-limitingly lawlessnesses that constitute permissions to always changing, always controlled percentages of the population to undauntedly release insubordinate thoughts and deeds into the

system that turns the irritants to account; for needful it is of ever greater levels of differentiation, of deritualized, i.e. unpredictably emerging, atomized renewals. On the other hand, imbalances in wealth and levels of recognition hasten the market to proactively calm dysfunctionalizing struggles and block thus the perhaps even more dysfunctionalizing solutions to them by dosing itself with a variety of empathic moralities. (Sartre: "I suffer in all bodies.") The promotion of irreducible difference cannot go unaccompanied. The one autocritique requires the other, as each sentinel is charged with warning of the consequences of the other's unlimited success.

Contrast mitigation that results in the drive to equate the beautiful with the entirety of experience characteristic of both Kant's downsizing and supersizing can urge towards pantheist enthusiasms. Zizek: "And it seems as if today we love in an age of new Spinozism: the ideology of late capitalism is, at least in some of its fundamental features, 'Spinozist.'" <sup>(184)</sup> For, although the charismatic features present in the Judeo-Christian tradition can be argued to function ironically, that is deployed against themselves, the neoclassical is sensitive to the danger that the irony can be missed, that these religions can fold too easily back into the sacrificial.

"Art produces the effect of making the market disappear" <sup>(185)</sup> (Bourdieu). Putting the matter with more precision, the market protects itself by causing itself to disappear in two directions simultaneously. In infinite autocritique it takes flight from itself, both towards the forms of identification associated with the remainder, and towards the empathic, both of which patterns are "not meant for the market" (Gans), both of which involve a flight from the esthetic because of its residual relations with sacrifice and the market. In his distance between the beautiful and the sublime, Kant establishes the model that will not cease to be ever more rigorously submitted to a spreading that is a trumping from within its assumptions.

With a rigor always impressive, Derrida finds in Kant a Gothic author. Careful listening—there were the moans of the victims emanating from beneath the floorboards—resulted in the terrible conclusion that *The Critique of Judgment* was a haunted house. The ghost of the invitation to tragedy made a deceitfully decorous appearance in the beautiful, as we have seen, and Derrida was able to track the attempt to camouflage in the sublime the murderous sequential organization of the ritual process. Derrida wants out, and he turns to the talisman guarantee negligently made available by Kant to those lucid enough to sense the horror that the text had sought to protect from full view. The attachment to the remainder rock casts light backwards, clarifying that developments since Kant constitute a twofold besting of his efforts at charismatic mitigation, to push ever further in the directions of each of his two flights, flights from the sanguinary gravity of the center to which the author of the third *Critique* was perceived to remain still too closely, albeit invisibly tethered. Adorno on the options that must be transcended: "Spellbound,

the living have a choice between involuntary ataraxy—an esthetic life due to weakness—and the bestiality of involvement.”<sup>(186)</sup> The lesson of Derrida is that the alternatives are not opposites, as in either option adoring has not come to an end. The contrastively posed buttresses, exerting opposing tensions, are effective only as they are ever more spaced from one another and distinguishable from what it is they have been invented to support.

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The ambiguous figure of the modern democratic subject—master of himself but disincarnated element of a national totality—has its specific French history. A richly overdetermined allergy to the market has resulted in an ingrained skepticism regarding the possibility that a system of exchange can offer a source of ethical truth. As Voltaire already knew in his “Letter on Commerce,” France was and would be a reluctant participant. More richly developed here than elsewhere were the grounds for our double, uncompromising critique. What specifically appeared to block French economic development to Voltaire was what sociologist Michel Crozier terms “a culture of prowess,” an ideal of lonely, useless defiance associated with the values of the ancient *noblesse d’épée*, involving an unproductive form of prestige, a focus upon an atomized sense of its honor, often hostile to centralizing projects of royal authority. At once contrasting and improbably blending with this were the Jacobin tradition of universalism and the related phenomenon Crozier terms “*l’horreur du face-à-face*.”<sup>(187)</sup> Causing the extremes to appear relatively unchecked except by one another is the fact of the domination of France’s modern history by a middle class far more institutional than entrepreneurial in its orientation. The lack of affection for the market characterizing this national middle class caused it to be less than likely to exert any moderating pressure upon the double Kant-topping temptations of critique.

French thought thus often came to establish unbuffered residence at the extreme destinations of neoclassical flight and to know there its only comfort. Maddened, on two sides, are the tensions between market and what is not the market. And it is just for this reason it becomes a particularly attractive import. Integrally neoclassical was the Sartre who praised at once the headless mob that was his “group-in-fusion” and the subversions of a Genet, laughably unemployable by any mass movement. Artaud and Bataille provide the clearest of examples, as does Foucault, whose attentions were so often focused upon the lonely, hopefully invulnerable difference, and who also praised the mobs of Tehran of 1980. Thinkers who fly in but one of Kant’s directions can drop from our comfort zone. Girard describes an “apocalypse of peace” (Gans), but the downsizing move is clearly absent from his books. (Hence the fading of the powers of his model when it meets with the classics of the school of Derrida’s “remainder.”) While Girard’s system has

its relation to Kant's sublime, Derrida might be described as adopting the anti-sacrificial strategy located on the beauty side of Kant's continuum that has its end point in the rock. Thus, as I have sought to show, Derrida—because of the distrust of fusion—is closer to the Frankfurt School than he is to some other French thinkers. And this is what must be sensed in France where he is often thought of as more of an international than a specifically French figure.

Promiscuous production of unmolestable difference involves collateral damage—the undoing of the collective that one can find Derrida, more recently, seeking to correct. From the book on Marx, where he speaks of the present “[as] a time when a new world disorder attempts to install its neocapitalism and neoliberalism.”<sup>(188)</sup> What is the meaning of neoliberalism for Derrida? It is a system that has as its goal “the questioning of all collective structures capable of placing obstacles in the path of the logic of the pure market.”<sup>(189)</sup> Has Derrida infused the group with a volatility he is not completely prepared to accept? Perhaps the emergence in France, especially since 1980, of a variety of decomposing factors, such as very high unemployment, debates over immigration and nationality, ruptures between social classes and parties (what has been called the desociologization of politics), the decline of the ideological Left and the rise of the National Front, anxieties about penetrations of American values, and so on, has contributed to leading Derrida to make appearances also at the empathic pole of critique.

What at once distances and brings together the deferrals of deconstruction and generative anthropology can be clarified with reference to a debate that Alexandre Kojève had with himself over the look of the future. With what consequences have now become famously clear, Kojève distinguished between two objectalities: while animal desire was for things, human desire desired other desires. In the language of the Hegel he described himself as glossing, the human goal was to be “recognized,” that is to say, imagined by surrounding others to have a relation with the world that was not mediated. Through the eyes of desiring others, one impossibly hoped to see oneself as no longer desiring. The dialectic would come to an end, Kojève first suggested, with the conclusion of the struggle for recognition, when material conditions permitted an entire society to return to the asocial desiring of the animal. This situation had been achieved in the United States, it was argued.

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But a 1959 visit to the East suggested that this tawdry verdict was to be replaced by another. The future, instead of being shaped by the sated Americans, would know only the pattern encountered in contemporary Japan.<sup>(190)</sup> There continued here the search for recognition that had seemed to conclude in our animal utopia, but the extreme estheticization of culture in this Japan had led to the replacement of



the negations with historical effects by cautious, barely perceptible, barely one-upping displays of difference, expressed through attachments to insignificant objects. The negation of the real as risk of life had been replaced by the negation of the real as a discrete snobbery, historically if not economically insignificant. The utopia of no socially significant object had been replaced by the utopia of the almost socially insignificant object.

“Remainder” objectality, an attempt to achieve, in Kojève’s terms, a human desire that was as close to the animal version as possible, is an objectal anobjectality. “The text excludes dialectics,”<sup>(191)</sup> Derrida writes at one point. On the apotropaic dimension of circumcision, he says: “This . . . is not dialectical, but plays with the dialectical. The feint consists in pretending to lose, to castrate oneself, to kill oneself in order to cut death off.”<sup>(192)</sup> Benjamin: “Happiness of the collector. . . . the lonely happiness of being in a *tête-à-tête* with things. [. . . ] We are then alone with things as they silently order themselves about us, and even the humans who emerge, complicitous, adapt themselves to the confident silence of things. The collector thus ‘appeases’ his destiny.”<sup>(193)</sup> Not knowing whether the hapless difference that is the remainder simply stopped the dialectic or kept it minimally alive, Derrida could make use of Benjamin’s expression “dialectics at a standstill.”

As there is naught but that movement from auto-affection to hetero-affection and back of which Derrida speaks, the deferral of the market and that of the remainder (that is not the market) can differ only in the relative degrees to which an externally generated violence is or is not encouraged by each to have a role in the process of the movement from identification to its end. Although one deferral is about market participation and the other its avoidance, each is about the dialectic tightening that frustrates the charismatically-focused group (Žižek on the fear: “The more the logic of Capital becomes universal, the more its opposite will assume features of ‘irrational fundamentalism.’”<sup>(194)</sup> ) The two degrees of mitigation are about a division of labor supporting the global task of allowing numberless specificities. While the remainder is about the infinite availability of difference, about not allowing difference a chance to die violently, the market is about putting this difference to work in the form of the *new* itself, the antisocial that is always already extinguished as such. The extreme points of shrinkage are achieved when the life force of individuation is located not in the absolute difference of the Other, but in something that remains between us, unabsorbed, that which serves “appropriation better in that it is proper to no one”<sup>(195)</sup> Then “the noncenter [is experienced] otherwise than as loss of the center.”<sup>(196)</sup> The justice of each involves seeking a tightening of the dialectic by establishing a center of gravity that is outside the self, in what we each have access to. In its embrace of the market, generative anthropology stands between the two neoclassical lines of flight; it may not be what they are, but it is what causes them to be. Posed between the two fleeing movements that would be



blurred in the impossible figure of the Nietzschean empath is the generative anthropology that it is difficult for this moral oxymoron to sympathetically know. The market can feel comfort in neither anesthetic position, yet requires their sleepless haunting. While one deferral is the market, the other, while not being *not* the market, is the duty of its self-contempt. Despite the mutual aversion there is the shared knowledge of the impossibility of the center as well as the complicity in the shared, elated question: "And where are *not* the compensations to be found?"

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### Notes

1. Hors-série No. 32 (February 1998).[\(back\)](#)
2. According to journalist Dinitia Smith, in "Philosopher Gamely in Defence of his Ideas," *The New York Times* of May 30, 1998, p. A 13.[\(back\)](#)
3. At least great European, if not a major philosopher. On April 30, the magazine published a list of "les 101 Champions de l'Europe." His place is explained in revealingly unFrench terms: "'Le chauffeur de taxi à Buenos Aires, lève les yeux au ciel: 'Ah la France! Derrida. . . .' Les philosophes modernes français s'exportent bien, et parmi eux Jacques Derrida, 68 ans occupe une place à part: depuis le début des années 70, notre déconstructionniste national partage son temps entre la France et les Etats-Unis où il est une véritable star. Il a enseigné à Johns Hopkins, Yale, Irvine, et a obtenu un diplôme honoraire de Cambridge University en 1992. . . évidemment très controversé!" (*Le Nouvel observateur*, No. 1747, April 30-May 6, 1998; p. 10).[\(back\)](#)
4. "A Qui vont les aides à la traduction?" *Lire*, No. 265 (May 1998), p. 45. The anonymous author sports with the language attached to the French "good Samaritan law." "Nonassistance à personne en danger" is the crime of neglecting an endangered person.[\(back\)](#)
5. Derrida, "Economimesis," trans. Richard Klein, *Diacritics*, 11 (1981), p. 3.[\(back\)](#)
6. *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 284.[\(back\)](#)
7. "This Strange Institution Called Literature," trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby, in *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 36-37.[\(back\)](#)
8. *Signs of Paradox; Irony, Resentment and Other Mimetic Structures* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 22.[\(back\)](#)
9. *Signs of Paradox*, p. 148.[\(back\)](#)
10. *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 122.[\(back\)](#)
11. *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, p. 125.[\(back\)](#)
12. Quoted in "Violence and Metaphysics," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan

- Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 90.[\(back\)](#)
13. *Of Grammatology*, p. 306.[\(back\)](#)
  14. p. 292, for example.[\(back\)](#)
  15. *Negative Dialectics*, p. 222.[\(back\)](#)
  16. Quoted in "Violence and Metaphysics," *Writing and Difference*, p. 102.[\(back\)](#)
  17. "From Restricted to General Economy," in *Writing and Difference*, p. 266.[\(back\)](#)
  18. *Of Grammatology*, p. 137.[\(back\)](#)
  19. *Of Grammatology*, p. 113.[\(back\)](#)
  20. *Of Grammatology*, p. 136.[\(back\)](#)
  21. *D'un ton apocalyptique adopté naguère en philosophie* (Paris: Galilée, 1983), pp. 27-28.[\(back\)](#)
  22. *The New York Times*, May 30, 1998, p. A 15.[\(back\)](#)
  23. "There is No One Narcissism," *Points. . . ; Interviews, 1974-1994*, trans. Peggy Kamuf et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 199.[\(back\)](#)
  24. *Inventions of Difference. On Jacques Derrida* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 35.[\(back\)](#)
  25. *Of Grammatology*, p. 165-166.[\(back\)](#)
  26. *Of Grammatology*, p. 165.[\(back\)](#)
  27. *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), pp. 78-79.[\(back\)](#)
  28. *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 56.[\(back\)](#)
  29. "Aphorism Countertime," trans. Nicholas Royle, in *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 420.[\(back\)](#)
  30. "Economimesis," trans. R. Klein, *Diacritics*, 11, no. 2 (Summer 1981), p. 18.[\(back\)](#)
  31. *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and other Ruins*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 68.[\(back\)](#)
  32. *Glas*, trans. John P. Leavey, Jr. and Richard Rand (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), p. 259. [\(back\)](#)
  33. *Memoirs of the Blind*, p. 122.[\(back\)](#)
  34. *Of Grammatology*, p. 222.[\(back\)](#)
  35. *The Truth in Painting*, p. 327.[\(back\)](#)
  36. *The Truth in Painting*, p. 267.[\(back\)](#)
  37. "White Mythology," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 216.[\(back\)](#)
  38. *The Truth in Painting*, p. 380. (translation modified)[\(back\)](#)
  39. *Glas*, p. 209.[\(back\)](#)
  40. "The Force of Law," in *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, ed. D.

- Cornell et al. (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 15.[\(back\)](#)
41. *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: The Seabury Press, 1973), p. 177.[\(back\)](#)
  42. *The Truth in Painting*, p. 242.[\(back\)](#)
  43. *Glas*, p. 162.[\(back\)](#)
  44. *Glas*, p. 160.[\(back\)](#)
  45. *Negative Dialectics*, p. 22.[\(back\)](#)
  46. *Negative Dialectics*, p. 120.[\(back\)](#)
  47. *Negative Dialectics*, p. 281.[\(back\)](#)
  48. *Negative Dialectics*, p. 139.[\(back\)](#)
  49. *L'Entretien infini* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), p. 229.[\(back\)](#)
  50. *Fragments. Cool Memories III, 1990-1995*, trans. Emily Agar (New York: Verso, 1997), p. 9.[\(back\)](#)
  51. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 197. [\(back\)](#)
  52. "Freud and the Scene of Writing," in *Writing and Difference*, p. 231.[\(back\)](#)
  53. *Originary Thinking: Elements of Generative Anthropology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 140. [\(back\)](#)
  54. Ricoeur, in *The Symbolism of Evil*, trans. Emerson Buchanan (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 30.[\(back\)](#)
  55. "Hegel, la mort et le sacrifice," quoted in "From Restricted to General Economy," in *Writing and Difference*, p. 257.[\(back\)](#)
  56. *Philosophy of Modern Music*, trans. Anne G. Mitchell and Wesley V. Blomster (New York: Seabury Press, 1974), p. 143.[\(back\)](#)
  57. Mary Douglas and Aaron Wildavsky, *Risk and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982) p. 179. [\(back\)](#)
  58. "Différance," in *Speech and Phenomena*, p. 143.[\(back\)](#)
  59. "Freud and the Scene of Writing," in *Writing and Difference*, p. 230.[\(back\)](#)
  60. *The Deleuze Reader*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 264. Klein is also complained of when he writes: "We have remarked. . . the extent to which children use the indefinite not as something indeterminate but, on the contrary, as an individuating function within a collectivity. That is why we are dumbfounded by the efforts of psychoanalysis, which desperately wants there to be something definite hidden behind the indefinite, a possessive, a person. When the child says 'a belly, 'a horse,' the psychoanalyst hears 'my belly. . . ." p. 58. And: "The psychoanalyst wants there to be, at all costs, a definite, a possessive, a personal, hidden behind the indefinite. When M. Klein's children say 'a tummy' or ask 'How do people grow up?' MK hears 'my mummy's tummy' or 'Will I be big like my daddy?'" p. 106.[\(back\)](#)
  61. *Originary Thinking*, p. 137.[\(back\)](#)
  62. "Passions: 'An Oblique Offering,'" trans. David Wood, in *Derrida: A Critical*

Reader, ed. David Wood (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1992), p. 21.[\(back\)](#)

63. *Glas*, pp.1-2.[\(back\)](#)

64. *The Truth in Painting*, p. 179.[\(back\)](#)

65. *Negative Dialectics*, p. 152.[\(back\)](#)

66. "Economimesis," p. 21.[\(back\)](#)

67. *Negative Dialectics*, p. 244.[\(back\)](#)

68. *The Truth in Painting*, p. 328.[\(back\)](#)

69. *Positions*, p. 44.[\(back\)](#)

70. "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Writing and Difference*, p. 292.[\(back\)](#)

71. That each fetish has the potential to function contrastively is noticed in Derrida's view of metaphor: Metaphor, therefore, is determined by philosophy as a provisional loss of meaning, an economy of the proper without irreparable damage, a certainly inevitable detour, but also a history with its sights set on, and within the horizon of, the circular reappropriation of literal, proper meaning. This is why the philosophical evaluation of metaphor always has been ambiguous: metaphor is dangerous and foreign as concerns *intuition* (vision or contact), concept (the grasping or proper presence of the signified), and consciousness (proximity or self-presence); but it is in complicity with what it endangers, is necessary to it to the extent to which the de-tour is a re-turn guided by the function of resemblance (*mimesis* or *homoiosis*), under the law of the same. "White Mythology," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 270. Metaphor can be the classical fetish or the unclassical, "the wandering of the semantic," making possible "a nonmasterable dissemination." "White Mythology," pp. 241, 248.[\(back\)](#)

72. *Writing and Difference*, p. 13.[\(back\)](#)

73. "From Restricted to General Economy," in *Writing and Difference*, p. 273.[\(back\)](#)

74. *The Truth in Painting*, p. 94.[\(back\)](#)

75. *Glas*, p. 72.[\(back\)](#)

76. *Glas*, p. 72.[\(back\)](#)

77. *Of Grammatology*, p. 243.[\(back\)](#)

78. *Glas*, p. 134.[\(back\)](#)

79. "Plato's Pharmacy," *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 132.[\(back\)](#)

80. *Of Grammatology*, p. 292.[\(back\)](#)

81. *Of Grammatology*, p. 39.[\(back\)](#)

82. *Of Grammatology*, p. ?[\(back\)](#)

83. *Speech and Phenomena*, p. 78.[\(back\)](#)

84. *Of Grammatology*, p. 20.[\(back\)](#)

85. *The Truth in Painting*, p. 28.[\(back\)](#)
86. *The Truth in Painting*, pp. 130-31.[\(back\)](#)
87. *Glas*, p. 71.[\(back\)](#)
88. *Glas*, p. 207.[\(back\)](#)
89. *Paris, capitale du XIXe siècle*, trans. Jean Lacoste (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1997), p. 385.[\(back\)](#)
90. *The Critique of Judgment*, trans. James Creed Meredith (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952). p. 80.[\(back\)](#)
91. *Oeuvres*, ed. Y.-A. Favre (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 1992), p. 349. The French: "La pièce de monnaie, exhumée aux arènes, présente, face, une figure sereine et, pile, le chiffre brutal universel."[\(back\)](#)
92. *The Tain of the Mirror; Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 232.[\(back\)](#)
93. *The Truth in Painting*, p. 363.[\(back\)](#)
94. *The Truth in Painting*, p. 260.[\(back\)](#)
95. *The Truth in Painting*, p. 265.[\(back\)](#)
96. *The Truth in Painting*, p. 31.[\(back\)](#)
97. "Structure, Sign, and Play," p. 279.[\(back\)](#)
98. *The Truth in Painting*, p. 190.[\(back\)](#)
99. René Char, *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), p. 579. (N'incitez pas les mots à faire une politique de masse.")[\(back\)](#)
100. *Of Grammatology*, p. 17.[\(back\)](#)
101. *Of Grammatology*, p. 240.[\(back\)](#)
102. *Glas*, p. 118.[\(back\)](#)
103. *Glas*, p. 2.[\(back\)](#)
104. Quoted in *Of Grammatology*, p. 333. The anti-Fritz is Rousseau: According to Rousseau, the child is the name of that which should not relate in any way to a separated signifier, loved in some way for itself, like a fetish. This perverse use of the signifier is in a certain way at once forbidden and tolerated by the structure of imitation. As soon as a signifier is no longer imitative, undoubtedly the threat of perversion becomes acute. But already within imitation, the gap between the thing and its double, that is to say between the sense and its image, assures a lodging for falsehood, falsification and vice. *Of Grammatology*, p. 204-5. [\(back\)](#)
105. *Of Grammatology*, p. 34.[\(back\)](#)
106. *Of Grammatology*, p. 226.[\(back\)](#)
107. The "trans-sense" features of language was famously insisted upon by the Russian Formalists, praised by Derrida in *Positions*.[\(back\)](#)
108. *Voice and Phenomena*, p. 38.[\(back\)](#)
109. *G*, p. 18.[\(back\)](#)
110. *Positions*, p. 22.[\(back\)](#)
111. *The Post Card; From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago:

- University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 53.[\(back\)](#)
112. *Speech and Phenomena*, p. 86.[\(back\)](#)
  113. *Speech and Phenomena*, p. 76.[\(back\)](#)
  114. *Of Grammatology*, p. 50.[\(back\)](#)
  115. *Positions*, p. 22.[\(back\)](#)
  116. *Of Grammatology*, p. ?[\(back\)](#)
  117. *Of Grammatology*, p. 270.[\(back\)](#)
  118. *Of Grammatology*, p. 312.[\(back\)](#)
  119. "Telepathy," trans. Nicholas Royle, *Oxford Literary Review*, 10 (1988), p. 23.[\(back\)](#)
  120. *Of Grammatology*, p. 165.[\(back\)](#)
  121. *Of Grammatology*, p. 281.[\(back\)](#)
  122. *Signé/Ponge*, trans. Richard Rand (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 32.[\(back\)](#)
  123. *Of Grammatology*, p. 39.[\(back\)](#)
  124. *Of Grammatology*, p. 240.[\(back\)](#)
  125. *Of Grammatology*, p. 148.[\(back\)](#)
  126. *Of Grammatology*, p. 235-36.[\(back\)](#)
  127. *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1963), p. 193.[\(back\)](#)
  128. *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, p. 146.[\(back\)](#)
  129. "Biodegradables," trans. Peggy Kamuf, *Critical Inquiry*, 15:4 (1989), p. 845.[\(back\)](#)
  130. "Plato's Pharmacy," in *Dissemination*, p. 144.[\(back\)](#)
  131. *Grammatology*, p. 170.[\(back\)](#)
  132. *D'un ton apocalyptique adopté naguère en philosophie*, p. 98. ("Ne scelle pas, c'est-à-dire ne ferme pas mais aussi ne signe pas.")[\(back\)](#)
  133. *Negative Dialectics*, p. 374.[\(back\)](#)
  134. *What is Philosophy?* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 188.[\(back\)](#)
  135. "Plato's Pharmacy," p. 144.[\(back\)](#)
  136. *The Truth in Painting*, p. 344.[\(back\)](#)
  137. "The Purveyor of Truth," p. 99[\(back\)](#)
  138. *Glas*, p. 94. The importance of this passage to Derrida is clear in *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), on p. 18. where he quotes himself. There are many such formulations, e.g. from "The Law of Genre": "What if there were, lodged within the heart of the law [of genre] itself, a law of impurity or a principle of contamination? And suppose the condition for the possibility of the law were the a priori of a counter-law, an axiom of impossibility that would confound its sense, order and reason?" p.22.[\(back\)](#)
  139. *The Truth in Painting*, p. 33.[\(back\)](#)



140. "Plato's Pharmacy," p. 124.[\(back\)](#)
141. *Negative Dialectics*, p. 33.[\(back\)](#)
142. *Grammatology*, p. 222.[\(back\)](#)
143. *Grammatology*, p. 59.[\(back\)](#)
144. *Negative Dialectics*, pp. 27-28. Another example from this text: "[I]n philosophy we. . . seek to immerse ourselves in things that are heterogeneous to it, without placing those things in prefabricated categories. We want to adhere as closely to the heterogeneous as the programs of phenomenology and of Simmel tried in vain to do; our aim is total self-relinquishment" (p. 13).[\(back\)](#)
145. *Negative Dialectics*, p. 139.[\(back\)](#)
146. *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 73.[\(back\)](#)
147. *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 81.[\(back\)](#)
148. *Truth in Painting*, p. 19.[\(back\)](#)
149. *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and other Ruins*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 69.[\(back\)](#)
150. *Memoirs of the Blind*, p. 68.[\(back\)](#)
151. *SignéPonge*, p. 66.[\(back\)](#)
152. *Glas*, p. 46.[\(back\)](#)
153. *Glas*, p. 67. The protecting power of a violence that has already occurred is also a theme of De Man. In his analysis of Shelley's "The Triumph of Life," De Man refers to the illustrations and figures on the blank pages that follow the unfinished manuscript: The poem is sheltered from the performance of disfiguration by the power of its negative knowledge. But this knowledge is powerless to prevent what now functions as the decisive textual articulation: its reduction to the status of a fragment brought about by the actual death and subsequent disfigurement of Shelley's body, burned after his boat capsized and he drowned off the coast of Lerici. This defaced body is present in the margin of the last manuscript page and has become an inseparable part of the poem. At this point, figuration and cognition are actually interrupted by an event which shapes the text but which is not present in its represented or articulated meaning. It may seem a freak of chance to have a text thus molded by an actual occurrence, yet the reading of "The Triumph of Life" establishes that this mutilated textual model exposes the wound of a fracture that lies hidden in all texts.
- In "Shelley Disfigured," in *Deconstruction and Criticism*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Continuum, 1979), pp. 66-67.[\(back\)](#)
154. *Glas*, p. 138.[\(back\)](#)
155. *Glas*, p. 121.[\(back\)](#)



156. *L'Objet singulier* (Paris: Minuit, 1979), p. 97.[\(back\)](#)
157. "Raising bafflement to a high point of moral principle," very aptly reports Christopher Norris, in "Textuality, Difference, and Cultural Otherness: Deconstruction versus Postmodernism," *Common Knowledge* Vol. 3, No. 3 (Winter 1994), p. 50.[\(back\)](#)
158. *Originary Thinking: Elements of Generative Anthropology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 141. [\(back\)](#)
159. "Violence and Metaphysics," p. 125.[\(back\)](#)
160. "Violence and Metaphysics," p. 151. The use of the expression "heterological thought" involves reference to Bataille, for whom the heterological produced the sacrificial.[\(back\)](#)
161. "Plato's Pharmacy," p. 143.[\(back\)](#)
162. *Signé/Ponge*, p. 14.[\(back\)](#)
163. *Signé/Ponge*, p. 88.[\(back\)](#)
164. *Signé/Ponge*, p. 88.[\(back\)](#)
165. *Signé/Ponge*, p. 136.[\(back\)](#)
166. *Signé/Ponge*, p. 60.[\(back\)](#)
167. *Signé/Ponge*, p. 60.[\(back\)](#)
168. *Glas*, p. 51.[\(back\)](#)
169. "La Parole soufflée," in *Writing and Difference*, p. 181.[\(back\)](#)
170. "From Restricted to General Economy," in *Writing and Difference*, p. 273.[\(back\)](#)
171. *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 130.[\(back\)](#)
172. *Signé/Ponge*, p. 138.[\(back\)](#)
173. "The Time of a Thesis: Punctuations," in *Philosophy in France Today*, ed. Alan Montefiore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 50.[\(back\)](#)
174. *Signé/Ponge*, p. 14.[\(back\)](#)
175. *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 39.[\(back\)](#)
176. *Passions* (Paris: Galilée, 1993), pp. 39-40.[\(back\)](#)
177. "Les Morts de Roland Barthes," in *Psyché; Inventions de l'autre* (Paris: Galilée, 1987), p. 277.[\(back\)](#)
178. "The Double Session," in *Dissemination*, p. 206.[\(back\)](#)
179. *Originary Thinking*, p. 141.[\(back\)](#)
180. *Originary Thinking*, p. 150.[\(back\)](#)
181. "Violence and Metaphysics," p. 153.[\(back\)](#)
182. Marcel Detienne, "Culinary Practices and the Spirit of Sacrifice," in Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, eds., *The Cuisine of Sacrifice Among the Greeks*, trans. Paula Wissing (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 20.[\(back\)](#)
183. *Originary Thinking*, p. 165.[\(back\)](#)

184. *Tarrying with the Negative*, p. 218. Zizek is no enthusiast: "Where, then are we to look for the way out of this vicious circle of late-capitalist Spinozism?" p. 219.[\(back\)](#)
185. *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 81.[\(back\)](#)
186. *Negative Dialectics*, p. 364.[\(back\)](#)
187. For a summary of Crozier's invaluable analyses of French social patterns, see Stanley Hoffmann, *Decline or Renewal? France since the 1930s* (New York: Viking, 1974).[\(back\)](#)
188. *Specters of Marx*, trans. P. Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 37.[\(back\)](#)
189. "L'essence du néolibéralisme," *Le Monde diplomatique* (March 1998), p. 3.[\(back\)](#)
190. *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968 [1947]), p. 437.[\(back\)](#)
191. "Plato's Pharmacy," p. 122.[\(back\)](#)
192. *Glas*, p. 210.[\(back\)](#)
193. *Paris, capitale du XIXe siècle*, trans. from the German by Jean Lacoste (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1997), p. 861.[\(back\)](#)
194. *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 220.[\(back\)](#)
195. *The Post Card; From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 358.[\(back\)](#)
196. *Writing and Difference*, p. 292.[\(back\)](#)