

**THE CONCLAMATION TO LIFE:
A READING OF JACQUES DERRIDA'S LIFE-PHILOSOPHY**

By

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A Thesis Submitted
In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

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ABBREVIATIONS

WORKS BY JACQUES DERRIDA

C	<i>Cinders/Feu la Cendre</i>
Ci	"Circumfession"
D	<i>Dissemination</i>
DO	"Deconstruction and the Other"
E	<i>Eperons: les styles de Nietzsche/Spurs: Nietzsche's styles</i>
IOG	<i>Edmund Husserl's "Origin of geometry": an introduction</i>
LI	<i>Limited Inc.</i>
LO	"Living On"
MB	<i>Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins</i>
NATP	"On a Newly Arisen Apocalyptic Tone in Philosophy"
P	<i>Positions</i>
Po	<i>Points...</i>
PC	<i>The Post Card. From Socrates to Freud and Beyond</i>
SM	<i>Specters of Marx. The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International</i>
SOR	"Sending: On Representation"

- SP *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*
- TEO *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation*
- TSP "The Spatial Arts: An Interview with Jacques Derrida"
- WD *Writing and Difference*

WORKS BY WILHELM DILTHEY

- RH "The Rise of Hermeneutics"
- UOP "Understanding Other Persons and Their Life-Expressions"

WORKS BY HANS-GEORG GADAMER

- PH *Philosophical Hermeneutics*
- TM *Truth and Method*

WORKS BY FRIEDRICH SCHLEIERMACHER

- GH "General Hermeneutics"

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROPER LANGUAGE OF (A) LIFE

...now if I do not invent a new language (through simplicity rediscovered) another fluid, a new SENTENCE, I will have failed in this book, which does not mean that that's the place to start, on the contrary, you have to drag on in the old syntax, train oneself with you, dear reader, toward an idiom which in the end would be untranslatable in return into the language of the beginnings, learn an unknown language, Elie,...[Ci, 115-116]

Responding to a question in *Points...* Derrida says what interests him, "precisely and everywhere," is: "the proper language of a life, even if it is never pure" (Po, 118). Put differently, Derrida ceaselessly pursues a language that corresponds to the singularity of a life: an idiomatic voice that, as well as being his alone, enables him to approach others in a manner that preserves their singularity rather than conflating it into a synecdochic concentration where the intermittent quality of the

aleatory may be suppressed.

Derrida's interest in a matrix of life and language is analogous to that articulated in both Friedrich Schleiermacher's hermeneutic theory and Wilhelm Dilthey's *Lebensphilosophie*. Proximity, however, is not equivalent to coincidence.¹ "[L]anguage...is never pure" says Derrida. It is already corrupted, fissured and inhabited by something "alien" which Dilthey's and Schleiermacher's hermeneutic theory cannot purify and restore to presence -- cannot find a home for, to use a Gadamerian idiom (cf. TM, 14). As we shall see, following Derrida, the "pure" language employed by modern hermeneutics to recover life in its plenitude is already on fire, burning within purity, burning purity itself. And it is this something other than language burning within language -- itself almost burning pure -- which for Derrida kindles the question of "life" in general. Focusing upon the motifs of speech and intentionality, I will in this chapter examine this matrix of life and language through brief readings of Schleiermacher's *General Hermeneutics* and Dilthey's *The Rise of Hermeneutics*. While Derrida does not explicitly address the work of Dilthey or Schleiermacher to any great extent in his *oeuvre*, their work is nevertheless important to this thesis.² By articulating this matrix of life and language they provide the philosophical antecedent to Husserl's own notion of life which Derrida explicitly addresses. Thus, I hope my analysis of this matrix in this chapter serves as an historical introduction to Derrida's life-philosophy.

Everything I want to address -- life, language, speech and intentionality -- can be articulated through the first sentence of *General Hermeneutics*:

At present there is no general hermeneutics as the art of understanding but only a variety of specialized hermeneutics. (GH, 73)

Schleiermacher begins by constructing a boundary separating the disparate interpretive practices of special hermeneutics from a general method capable of procuring an objective understanding of texts and utterances of any kind. Or rather, from the outset this boundary is already in place and Schleiermacher proceeds only to refine it, to elucidate the differences that distinguish special and general hermeneutics. He both issues the call for a general hermeneutics, a tacit summation to emancipate hermeneutics from its status as an auxiliary science to other disciplines, and proceeds to answer the call; or at least to carve out the general parameters for the arrival of a general hermeneutics, and to provide hermeneutics with, in Dilthey's words, a "definitive foundation" in the act of understanding (RH, 110).

In this process of both calling for and answering the call for, a general hermeneutics, Schleiermacher constructs numerous boundaries. Most significant for his construction of a general hermeneutics is the centrality of language. Indeed, it is

language that determines general hermeneutics' domain.³ In the words of the *Aphorisms of 1805*:

Language provides hermeneutics with all its assumptions and presumptions, and all one's objective or subjective assumptions are to be tested against language.⁴

Language is the womb of modern hermeneutics, and it is due to the fact that special hermeneutics fails to consider language as a *womb* that it comes under criticism from Schleiermacher.

Womb: enclosure and medium of development. On both accounts, the understanding of language in special hermeneutics does not coincide with Schleiermacher's. First, in terms of an enclosure, what bounds special hermeneutics is not language but rather the subject matter, a "delimited framework" (cf. GH, 82) Schleiermacher says. Special hermeneutics assumes that a common or universal language exists and unequivocally mediates the author's thoughts on the subject. Given this unequivocal mediation, understanding supposedly "occurs as a matter of course" (GH, 81). According to Schleiermacher special hermeneutics does not see language as an enclosure precisely because it overlooks the connectivity between "life" and language. Language is not seen to form a matrix with life.⁵ In special hermeneutics the words of the text are approached in their syntactical context as arbitrary symbols for the exchange of thoughts, so that the author's individuality is

lost or dissimulated. In Schleiermacher's theory, however, the author's language is said to reveal his or her "life." As Schleiermacher says in his first *Academy Address*:

[T]he living expression...stimulate[s] us...to understand a series of thoughts as a moment of life which is breaking forth, as one moment set in the context of many others. And this dimension of understanding is often slighted, in fact, almost completely neglected, in interpreting authors.⁶

In *General Hermeneutics* language functions as a womb, not only by surrounding hermeneutics and determining its boundaries, but also by serving as the internal structure upon which consciousness and individuality grow and are formed:

An act of speaking cannot even be understood as a moment in a person's development unless it is also understood in relation to the language. This is because the linguistic heritage [*Angeborenheit der Sprache*] modifies our mind. (GH, 75)

The words of a text, rather than the abstract universals of special hermeneutics, are, for Schleiermacher, the words of the unique individual which are related to both the totality of language and the totality of that individual's thoughts. And since a common or universal language does not exist to unequivocally mediate the author's thoughts, as special hermeneutics assumed, understanding is no longer a matter of

course: before one even comes to a text there are linguistic, cultural, historical and stylistic barriers which thwart an immediate understanding of discourse. Misunderstanding follows naturally unless it is artificially curbed by method, specifically the method of transposition and reconstruction (cf. GH, 82).

What Schleiermacher suggests in his critique of the study of language in special hermeneutics is that an objective understanding of texts arises only when the hermeneuticist is grounded in the principles of immediacy and familiarity.⁷ That is, misunderstanding is overcome when the interpreter reconstructs the life which originally created the text, thereby enabling access to the individuality of the subject matter as the thought of a particular person, expressed in a particular way at a particular time. The hermeneuticist must attain knowledge of the uniqueness of a particular person's expressions -- the expressed life of the author, the proper language of *a* life -- as deposited in the text. Thus, Schleiermacher goes to the text to uncover a life that exists prior to it. For Schleiermacher, accessing life passes through the central feature of his hermeneutic theory -- *intentionality*. It is the author's intentions which both precede the text and determine its meaning. The relevant hermeneutic question, as Schleiermacher sees it, is: How does one arrive at a correct understanding of a particular person's expression and intentions?⁸

The call then at the beginning of *General Hermeneutics* for a general method is a call to see language in terms of a womb in which "life" develops. It is a call to see life and language as forming a matrix, itself accessed through intentionality. I will

now examine this matrix more fully, focusing especially on Schleiermacher's conception of language as it is articulated in his method for recovering an individual's proper language from the universal sphere of its words.

As we have seen, with this matrix of life and language Schleiermacher is attempting to reestablish a lost presence -- a life present in and of itself, referring only to itself. The hermeneuticist is separated from the author's intentions, and hence from understanding the text, until, under the guidance of Schleiermacher's own methodology, the author's proper language is recovered in its genesis. When this is achieved a certain familiarity and immediacy is established, an experiential consanguinity of the author and the interpreter of the text, upon which understanding is based. For Schleiermacher, reaching this goal involves the application of two types of interpretative methods: the grammatical and psychological.

Grammatical interpretation confines itself to the "formal" and "material" elements of language. The interpreter endeavours to reproduce the "sphere of language" shared by the author and the original audience since this is always the basis upon which a precise determination of what the author intended is decided (cf. GH, 86). With this in mind, the interpreter proceeds to place each word, sentence, section, and work into the broader linguistic context to which it belongs. Adhering to a

comparative method which isolates the particularities of the text from its background, the hermeneuticist is able to move beyond the larger context of the text's cultural and linguistic period and towards establishing the boundaries of the author's mind. But, for Schleiermacher, since understanding is of other people -- their unique subjectivity -- and not simply of meanings or concepts, grammatical interpretation is only preliminary to an understanding which requires the hermeneuticist to return through the utterance to the "life" which originally produced it. In other words, reason alone is unable to grasp the author's intention.⁹ Schleiermacher claims that the general sphere of meaning always eludes thinking, and can be grasped and sensed only in its various applications by "feeling" or sensitivity (cf. GH, 96 and 83). There is something intuitive and "divinatory" about the process of understanding which is broached through the psychological method.

In this psychological interpretation the author's command of language comes to the fore as the text is studied in its relationship to the author's mental processes. The task is described by Schleiermacher as "the complete understanding of [the] style" of a work (GH, 95). To understand a discourse just as well and even better than its creator, to reconnect or re-establish immediacy, the interpreter must not only understand the author's language use but also inhabit -- immediately, without mediation, as in a moment of psychic identity -- the self-understanding, the inner space, of the one who writes (cf. GH, 96). This is accomplished by remaining within a given horizon of language, avoiding everything that can be learned about an author's

"distinctive manner of writing" from sources other than his language itself (cf. GH, 95). Thus, while preliminary, the grammatical method is nevertheless necessary: the hermeneuticist can only intuit an immediate apprehension of the author as an individual based upon the particularities of the text that the grammatical interpretation has discovered through its extensive approach to language. Nonetheless it remains preliminary to the psychological method with its dependence upon a certain talent to know language intensively: the ability to feel language as a living reality and to penetrate into the core of language in its relation to thought.¹⁰

As their employment of language probably suggests, the relationship between these two methods cannot be predetermined "by means of rules which may be applied with self-evident certainty" (GH, 76).

Each side is itself an art. For each side constructs something finite and definite from something infinite and indefinite. (GH, 76)

There is a certain interpenetration of the two methods, a dual and reciprocal relation (cf. GH, 75) where each method entails the other. This leads to Schleiermacher's description of understanding as a circle: "Complete knowledge always involves an apparent circle, that each part can be understood only out of the whole to which it belongs, and vice versa" (GH, 84). Interpretation is at base a referential procedure: to put oneself in the position of an author entails an interminable circling about the

author's particular statements and life as a whole (cf. GH, 84).

With the circle, I might reintroduce Derrida. Like Schleiermacher, Derrida engages the circle. However, in Derrida's analysis the circle in fact "zigzags" and begins to show signs of dysfunction: the economy of understanding circulates elliptically, asymmetrically. As Derrida says: "Something is missing that would make the circle perfect" (WD, 296). In Derrida's work an unclosable gap or ellipsis comes to mark the language's boundary or enclosure, making it impossible for the womb, the matrix, to be pure, that is, to be a regulative horizon of totalization. Instead, an accident is always on the horizon: a spark -- "a trace of life..."¹¹ -- igniting the aleatory, setting it on its way, blazing through the text without return. I will develop this matter further in this thesis.

For the moment, though, I note that Schleiermacher prefers purity over fiery remains; and in fact his dual hermeneutical method strives to recover that which remains obscure, to fill in the gap which thwarts understanding, to enclose language's domain by reconstructing the charred text into a living voice. This is not to say that Schleiermacher's hermeneutics is a bid to consider language in general as a univocal and diaphanous medium. Rather, it is a bid to *retrieve* a proper language of *a* life as a univocal and diaphonous medium where the author's intentions become manifest. And this is accomplished when Schleiermacher recovers the author's speech.

I would adopt Derrida's terminology, then, and refer to *General Hermeneutics* as a phonocentric text. Phonocentrism implies the privileging of speech, which is

considered to have a direct and natural relationship with meaning. Phonocentrism treats writing as secondary, merely as a representation of speech. I use this term to describe *General Hermeneutics* since Schleiermacher considers the spoken word -- the *phonè* or voice -- to enjoy a closer proximity to the inner "truth" of the subject's consciousness, intuition and presence to her/himself.

The inner make-up of a person, as well as the way in which external objects affect him can only be understood from his speaking. (GH, 76)

As a relatively permanent transcription, writing, for Schleiermacher, serves the useful function of granting the hermeneuticist time to work through the text to produce a much more accurate interpretation. But as we have already seen with regard to Schleiermacher's overall method, the goal is to work through the material aspect of language in order to transcend it in unmediated knowledge. Thus, written language represents an artificial and external appendage or supplement to the "natural" implication of *phonè*; it is an auxiliary technology obviously employed by human reason but never essential to reason itself. In contrast to this, speech is seen to be essentially related to the author's "life" or unique subjectivity from which the author's intentions can be determined.¹²

This phonocentrism is most evident in Schleiermacher's conception of understanding. Indeed, for him, the art of speaking, and not writing, stands in relation

to the art of understanding (GH, 74). The two sides of Schleiermacher's general methodology correspond to two aspects of the act of understanding: speech is to be understood, first, as something carved out of language and, second, as a fact about a thinking subject.

Accordingly, each person represents one locus where a given language takes shape in a particular way, and his speech can be understood only in the context of the totality of the language. But then too he is a person who is a constantly developing spirit, and his speaking can be understood as only one moment in this development in relation to all others....An act of speaking cannot even be understood as a moment in a person's development unless it is also understood in relation to the language....[I]t is also understood as a moment in the development of the person. (GH, 75)

Again, even more explicitly: "Hermeneutics and rhetoric are intimately related in that every act of understanding is the reverse side of an act of speaking..." (GH, 74).

The logic operative here is conveyed nicely in the French phrase *s'entendre-parler*. "Entendre" means both "to hear" and "to understand." Thus, *s'entendre-parler* can be translated as "hearing oneself speak and immediately grasping the sense of one's own expression," implying that hearing is in some way a privileged or uniquely authentic form of understanding. Indeed, the moment something "comes between the internal speaking and its communication" (GH, 75) a hermeneutic

procedure is enacted to restore speech to its self-enclosed status. For Schleiermacher, speech is an hermetic vessel through which an author's intentions and subjectivity are transmitted and stored -- the outer reflection of a given individual's unique interiority: "Speaking being only the outer side of thinking" (GH, 74).

For Schleiermacher, it is only in the case of speech that there occurs the apparent ideal coincidence of meaning and present intent. While writing consists of physical marks that are divorced from the thought that may have produced them, when we speak there is a sense of some peculiarly intimate relation between the words that we utter and the meaning that animates those words. Consequently, grasping the train of thought (which the matrix is constructed to do) does not require one to inquire behind language for a thought somewhere at the basis for what is said. On the contrary, Schleiermacher is convinced that thinking and speaking must be identical:

Speaking is the medium for the communality of thought...Indeed, a person thinks by means of speaking. Thinking matures by means of internal speech, and to that extent speaking is only developed thought.
(GH, 74)

As we have seen, in Schleiermacher's approach, texts cease to be mere documents and become active and current expressions of life. This is accomplished

as Schleiermacher's phonocentrism expresses itself in an appeal to a natural order of reason where a unique master-word serves as a ground for speculation -- what Derrida calls logocentrism.¹³ For Schleiermacher the "unique" master-word is the logos or word itself with the authority it maintains; indeed, what is important is not the interpretation of individual passages but the comprehension of the word, and its source, in the individual life of its author. For the purposes of this thesis, what I want to highlight from Schleiermacher's identification of truth with presence or logos is the hegemony that intentionality holds over the communicative event in *General Hermeneutics* -- itself reflected in the postulate of the unity of the word, which Schleiermacher presents as follows:

The basic task, even for dictionaries designed specifically for interpreters, is to identify the true and complete unity of a given word. Of course, the occurrence of a word in a given passage involves an infinite, indeterminate multiplicity. The only way to grasp the unity of a word within such a multiplicity of usages is to consider the multiplicity as a clearly circumscribed grouping with a unity of its own. Such a unity in turn must break up into distinctions. But a word is never isolated, even when it occurs by itself, for its determination is not derived from itself, but from its context. We need only to relate this contextual use to this original unity in order to discover the correct meaning in each case. (GH, 89)

What is the "true and complete unity" of an author's language? This is the question.

Unity cannot be broached apart from purity -- the two are modalities of one another. At least that seems to be the case according to Schleiermacher: the proper language of *a* life is intrinsically connected to speech purified of all the common linguistic conventions of the time adhering to it. Unity and purity also coalesce in the work of Dilthey. But whereas with Schleiermacher the field of cohesion is the word in relation to intentionality, Dilthey expands the field to include every expression in relation to what he calls the "inner life":

From stones and marble, musical notes, gestures, words and letters, from actions, economic decrees and constitutions, the same human spirit addresses us and demands interpretation. Indeed, the process of understanding...must everywhere present the same characteristic. It is thus unified in its essential features. (RH, 102)¹⁴

For Dilthey, the call for the interpretation of expressions is a call to understand the individual life in terms of a "single homogenous and unified process" (RH, 102); it is a call for "*scientific* knowledge" (RH, 101) of historical experience, a knowledge

purified of "romantic caprice and sceptical subjectivity" (RH, 114). Indeed historical life is an organic, intrinsically intelligible text. However, according to Dilthey, history alone is not a sufficient ground for certainty. He suggests that hermeneutics needs to be:

Seen in the context of the theory of knowledge, of logic, and the methodology of the human studies, the theory of interpretation becomes an essential connecting link between philosophy and the historical disciplines, an essential component in the foundation of the human studies themselves. (RH, 114)

With this "unified process" of interpretation Dilthey inaugurates a transition in hermeneutic theory towards a scientific study of life which Husserl, as we will see in the chapters to follow, modifies with his phenomenology.¹⁵ No longer will the process of understanding begin with the interpreter's inner experience. Instead it begins with the interpretations of objectifications of psychic life. Put differently, consciousness cannot go directly "behind" life in pure reflection or introspection but must proceed by way of the manifestations and expressions of life that flow out of lived experience. Our knowledge of the "existence of other people," Dilthey notes, comes "only from the outside, in sensory events, gestures, words, and actions" (RH, 102). Thus, by proceeding from an individual's historical experience -- understood in terms of itself and not by reference to some extrinsic standard -- Dilthey is trying

to access the unique, unrepeatable experience of historical life from within the frame of a "science" of history.¹⁶

While Dilthey marks a transition in hermeneutic theory, the centrality of language is sustained. Like Schleiermacher, whose method of reconstruction presumes that life itself can be circumscribed by language -- notably the original living conversation -- Dilthey also posits the locus of life's meaning within speech:

[F]or only in speech does the inner life of man find its fullest and most exhaustive, most objectively comprehensible expression. (RH, 103)

Of all the expressions of lived experience, speech is the purest. Yet, for Dilthey, within this "most objectively comprehensible expression" there is an enclave for a language which "can never be anything but the true expression of" an individual's "spiritual life" (RH, 103): interior to speech there is a proper language of life. Corresponding to a "community delivered from falsehood," this language is "ever true and unlike every other type of expression registered in signs; it is susceptible of complete and objective interpretation..." (RH, 103). The question of the "true and complete unity" of an author's language is answered here by Dilthey: interior to singularity, at the heart of the idiomatic language of *a* life, is an objective and pure language in general.

"*Pur est le mot*" Derrida says in *Cinders* (C, 37). This is a statement both Schleiermacher and Dilthey concur with since the matrix they articulate relies upon a certain purity of language, a purity in which language and "life" are never inflamed. They never burn, at least not completely: a remnant persists, a pure unity, from which a reconstruction can begin. However, for Derrida, the proper language of a life is never pure because of the incineration that is called for by the word, and which the word itself undergoes. Returning to *Cinders*: "Pure is the word. It calls for fire" (C, 37). Something other than language contaminates language, igniting it amongst all of its divisibility. Indeed because of its catachrestic (non-identical) deviation, "pure" calls "fire": pure; *pur*; πυρ; *pyr*. A holocaust comes which betokens the fragility, deterioration and what Derrida, in his study of Husserl's *The Origin of Geometry*, calls "a degradation within language" (IOG, 92), leaving only cinders -- something persists and yet is missing -- for which any attempt to recover an original sense or signified necessarily remains undecidable.

Cinder remains, cinder there is, which we can translate: the cinder is not, is not what is. It remains *from* what is not, in order to recall at the delicate, charred bottom of itself only non-being or non-presence. Being without presence has not been and will no longer be there where there is cinder and where this other memory would speak. There,

where cinder means the difference between what remains and what is,
will she ever reach it, there? (C, 39)¹⁷

According to Derrida, since language is not an event in which understanding and intention unite, this incineration is, as it were, a law. Intention has its place in Derrida's work, but "from that place it will no longer be able to govern the entire sense and system of utterance" (LI, 20). Being unavoidably iterable and susceptible to catachrestic repetition, language will, at times, resist or wander from the speaker's determinate meaning; interstices will appear in its hold. Furthermore, the unity of any trait of language constitutes itself by virtue of "its being repeated in the absence of a determined signified or of the intention of actual signification..." (LI, 10). Derrida continues with a broad statement that applies equally as well to Dilthey as to Schleiermacher, and is integral to his reading of Husserl as well as his overall life-philosophy:

This structural possibility of being weaned from the referent or from the signified...seems to me to make every mark, including those which are oral, a grapheme in general; which is to say...the nonpresent *remainder* [*restance*] of a differential mark cut off from its putative "production" or origin. And I shall even extend this law to all "experience" in general if it is conceded that there is no experience consisting of *pure* presence but only of chains of differential marks.
(LI, 10)

In this thesis I shall assume the (impossible) task of following the trail of language's degradation, its persistent instability and uncontainable divisibility, wrought by this fire in order to establish that in every experience, in every putative pure presence, there is an incineration.¹⁸ For according to Derrida, as we shall see in his reading of Husserl, the way to life leads into this degradation where presence burns into the absence of ash and cinders. Thus, Derrida, like Dilthey and Schleiermacher, valorises language, not merely as a play of diacritical marks, but as the site from which something analogous to the annunciation or "arrival" of life itself is made. But for Derrida, however, and contrary to prevalent belief, language is the site of the totally *other* from which the hermeneutical concern with life can be broached.¹⁹ Far from speaking of imprisonment in language Derrida "is," as he notes in an interview, "in fact saying the exact opposite" (DO, 123). He searches "for the 'other' and for that in language that is the 'other' of language":

The other, which is beyond language and which summons language, is perhaps not a "referent" in the normal sense...But to distance oneself thus from the habitual structure of reference...does not amount to saying that there is *nothing* beyond language. (DO, 123-4)

Thus, in this thesis, it is with a meditation upon language that our best hope

of engaging the hermeneutical concern of life lies. But, as we shall see, the possibility of language belongs to an order or non-order of what cannot be envisaged, and establishes a relation to life that expires prior to the demarcation of phenomenal areas. Language's call to life is conceived outside of the intentional conveyance of meaning. Rather than "at," language goes towards, its other:

the dative or vocative dimension which opens the original direction of language cannot lend itself to inclusion in and modification by the accusative or attributive dimension of the object without violence. Language, therefore, cannot make its own possibility a totality and *include* within itself its own origin and its own end. (WD, 95)

As we will have to demonstrate more thoroughly, there is no speculative middle ground upon which the struggle of meaning can be resolved. Instead, there are only fragments of language, phrases as Lyotard would say, in the plural and without a unifying One.²⁰ Again, quoting Derrida at length:

the nature of the field -- that is, language and a finite language -- excludes totalization. This field is in effect that of *play*, that is to say, a field of infinite substitutions only because it is finite, that is to say, because instead of being an inexhaustible field, as in the classical hypothesis, instead of being too large, there is something missing from it: a center which arrests and grounds the play of substitutions. (WD,

289)²¹

While language may not have a center, it has a boundary, and by staying on this line in this thesis I hope to broach Derrida's life-philosophy, for it is at the boundary where language's other is encountered.

NOTES

1. Derrida's life-philosophy is not a *Lebensphilosophie*. As we will see in this thesis, Derrida does not uphold *Lebensphilosophie's* basic edict that life in its immediacy grasps itself from itself. "Immediacy is derived" Derrida says (OG, 157). By grounding itself in the motifs of purity, immediacy, presence, interiority, anteriority, identity, continuity, etc., *Lebensphilosophie* precludes the (non-)ground of play, contamination, difference, discontinuity, etc., that "direct" Derrida's work.
2. In order to frame his reading of Husserl, Derrida mentions Dilthey in a number of texts (IOG, 57, 63, 109; and WD, 157, 160) but does not proceed to provide a reading of Dilthey's work itself. To my knowledge, Derrida refers to Schleiermacher only once (E, 126/127).
3. The boundary is constructed to counter special hermeneutics' study of language and genre which, according to Schleiermacher, is "only an aggregate of observations and does not meet the requirements to [sic] science" (GH, 73).
4. Friedrich Schleiermacher, "The Aphorisms on Hermeneutics from 1805 and 1809/10" in *The Hermeneutic Tradition: From Ast to Ricoeur*, ed. Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), p. 66.
5. I am not saying anything different here, for according to its etymology a matrix is a womb. I use this word "matrix" since it denotes a relationship between life and language that is more entwined than a casual or causal connection. Like each point of a grid, defined in terms of a coordinate system by the functions on the frame enclosing it, life is approached through that which bounds it -- language.

6. Friedrich Schleiermacher, "Academy Addresses" (1829), in *Hermeneutical Inquiry Vol. I: The Interpretation of Texts*, ed. David E. Klemm, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), p. 67.
7. One must try to become the immediate reader of a text. As Schleiermacher says: "A more precise determination of any point in a given text must be decided on the basis of the use of language common to the author and his original public" (GH, 86).
8. Schleiermacher does not merely enlarge the domain of hermeneutics; he alters its task as well. The object of understanding is no longer the given content; it is now the process of movement from the internality of thought to language. In other words, hermeneutics aims not so much at understanding something as at understanding how something is an empirical modification of an ideal reality. This reorientation of hermeneutics is not wholly without precedent. It is reflective of the problem of understanding which flows below the surface of the Enlightenment and breaks forth in the romantic era. One should not be surprised to learn that Friedrich Schlegel adumbrated a number of the ideas encountered in Schleiermacher's hermeneutics. Nonetheless, it was Schleiermacher, and not Schlegel, who envisioned and elaborated a general theory of the art of understanding.
9. While the hermeneuticist seeks objective, confirmable, knowledge achieved through a rigorous methodology rather than mere opinion, hermeneutics is also of the nature of an art where "only an artistically sound understanding can follow what is being said and written" (GH, 73).
10. While this talent may not have been distributed equally throughout humanity, according to Schleiermacher everyone "has a receptivity to the uniqueness of every other person" as "each person contains a minimum of everyone else" (GH, 96). With this move, Schleiermacher replaces the common language situation of special hermeneutics with the sensitivity that each person has for one another, thereby universalizing hermeneutics in the process.

11. *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language*, (New York: Portland House, 1989), s.v. "spark."
12. Schleiermacher is not satisfied to set speech and writing on the same level as objects of hermeneutical study. As he says in his 1829 Academy Address:

To be specific,...I would strongly recommend diligence in interpreting significant conversations. The immediate presence of the speaker, the living expression that proclaims that his whole being is involved, the way the thoughts in a conversation develop from our shared life, such factors stimulate us, far more than some solitary observation of an isolated text, to understand a series of thoughts as a moment of life which is breaking forth (*ein hervorbrechender Lebensmoment*), as one moment set in the context of many others. (p. 67)

The valorization of the *phonè* appears to be irreducibly linked to the exteriority, alterity, discontinuity, and delaying effect of writing which does not easily permit the intuitive understanding that arises from hearing oneself speak. To quote Derrida: "What writing itself, in its nonphonetic moment, betrays, is life"..."the life of the spirit" (OG, 25-6).

13. In summary form, "logocentrism is," Derrida says, "an attempt which can only ever fail, an attempt to trace the sense of being to the logos, to discourse or reason (*legein* is to collect or assemble in a discourse) and which considers writing or technique to be secondary to logos." Derrida, "Jacques Derrida," interview by Raoul Mortley, *French Philosophers in Conversation*, ed. Raoul Mortley, (London: Routledge Press, 1991), p. 104.

14. Like Schleiermacher, Dilthey sees hermeneutics as the methodology of the understanding of recorded expressions, but he is critical of Schleiermacher for limiting hermeneutics to the analysis of "understanding as a reexperiencing or reconstruction in its vital relation to the process of literary production itself" (RH, 110).
15. At the beginning of *General Hermeneutics* Schleiermacher himself speaks of assigning general hermeneutics its "proper place among the sciences" (GH, 73). However, his scientific construction has a somewhat duplicitous relation with science itself: hermeneutics is to be precise, methodological and verifiable while simultaneously being based firmly in romantic idealism. In the end, accessing "life" objectively is, if not disparaged, then at least considered somewhat contingent.
16. Within this purified process of interpretation life interprets itself and this is due to the fact that, from the outset, that which is being interpreted -- experience -- is the experience of meaning and connection. As experience is coherent, the foundation of historical science will have been laid in the concreteness of life. This foundation -- life itself -- is not a sensory appearance, an outer reality which we become conscious of through reflection and perceive to a greater extent through the construction of abstract systems as one would do with objects of natural science. Life is an "inner reality" which, as a "coherence" experienced directly from within, cannot be subdivided into more elementary units whose synthesis would then require explanation -- it can only be understood (cf. RH, 101-102). Indeed, life itself is said to be hermeneutical in nature: "understanding and interpretation are...instinct and active in life itself" (RH, 111).
17. In French:

Reste la cendre. Il y a là cendre, traduis, la cendre n'est pas, elle n'est pas ce qui est. Elle reste de ce qui n'est pas, pour ne rappeler au fond friable d'elle que non-être ou imprésence. L'être sans présence n'a pas été et ne sera pas

*plus là où il y a la cendre et parlerait cette autre mémoire.
Là, où cendre veut dire la différence entre ce qui reste et ce
qui est, y arrive-t-elle, là? (C, 39)*

18. Derrida says this incineration amongst the interior of experience is what he means when he writes *il y a là cendre* [there are cinders there] (Po, 209).
19. Cf. Erazim Kohák, *The Embers and the Stars: A Philosophical Inquiry into the Moral Sense of Nature*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984), pp, 50 and 222.
20. But not fragments in the romantic sense which is itself dependent on the possibility of apprehending totality and system in a pointlike and immediate intuition (cf. P, 3-4)
21. Compare this with what Ricoeur writes in *The Rule of Metaphor*:

Speculative discourse is possible, because language possesses the *reflective* capacity to place itself at a distance and to consider itself, as such and in its entirety, as related to the totality of what is. Language designates itself and its other.

The Rule of Metaphor, tr., Robert Czerny (with Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello, SJ), (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), p. 304.

CHAPTER TWO

CALLING LIFE -- THE TRANSCENDENTAL CONSTITUTION OF THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL VOICE: HUSSERL 1

[T]o clarify the *distance* which must separate a phenomenological psychology from a transcendental phenomenology, one would have to examine the *nothing* which prevents them from coming together, the parallelism which liberates the space of a transcendental question. [WD, 164]

How does one call upon life? To this point in the thesis, this question has not been addressed explicitly. The previous chapter investigated the manner in which Schleiermacher and Dilthey constructed a bounded language to facilitate the differentiation of life from nonlife (writing, text, etc.), and in so doing, claimed to isolate life, freeing it to come forth and immediately present itself. At least implicitly, this partitioning of either written texts or the phonic voice, this construction of a liminal field, is a summation -- a gathering of life to itself. Or, to use the language

of chapter one, it is the establishment of a pure and unified presence. However, following Derrida, we have seen that there is a certain difficulty involved in investigating such "life," a difficulty which is inextricably tied up with calling: life is perhaps neither a thing nor that which can be summoned, at least not according to the schematic developed by Schleiermacher and Dilthey.

Derrida is not the only one, nor the first, to recognize this difficulty. Husserl, as well, acknowledges that an inherent dilemma exists in summoning life. Husserl's phenomenology is the investigation of life itself, its summation of life, then, must present life as it is in its original nudity prior to being clothed in speculative interpretation.¹ In order for such an investigation to occur, phenomenology must succeed where its methodological predecessors failed. It must overcome the dilemma arising in the act of calling, an act which presumes that life is an object existing independent of ourselves in the external world. As such an entity, life would facilitate an objectivistic or naturalistic interpretation that ultimately conceals the sought for "life." Placed in this situation where a separation between life and one's experience of it tends to produce objectivistic results that are extrinsic to "life," Husserl's question, as well as our own, becomes: How is one to attend to life itself as it is immediately envisaged, as it shows itself in its intuitive presence, without introducing something foreign or extraneous? How does one call upon life?

Husserl overcomes this dilemma by summoning life from what, in his later works, he calls the life-world: the transcendental field of consciousness, the "object"

of immediate experience. The life-world is the pre-scientific and pre-conceptual world in which we live where the immediacy of experience and self-givenness² has not yet been mediated by ideal identities which act as a "garb of ideas"³ obfuscating the immediately intuited world, the world to which Husserl says, life belongs.⁴ Thus, in order for Husserl to attend to life itself as it is immediately envisaged, life cannot be considered an object; if that were the case, life would be accessed only via intentionality where the object in question is posited outside the ego and never given in an unadumbrated or absolute fashion. Instead, "life," for Husserl, corresponds to intentional life itself: the pure life of consciousness, the transcendental subjectivity which is immediately present in transcendental experience. For Husserl, to be in the presence of *experience as experience* requires a transcendental reduction which permits the phenomenological investigator to be carried back from the naively accepted world of objects to the transcendental subjectivity which constitutes them and, for our purposes, from which the call to life must originate.⁵ With this transcendental reduction, Husserl constitutes the phenomenological voice: the voice which, stripped of its worldly entanglements, is the only medium in proximity to life.

As "life," for Husserl, is not an object, his call to life will not be a call to disengage life from its complex weave and to have it stand before us to be grasped through an act of reification. Instead, as we shall see, Husserl approaches "life" through a series of concentric interiorizations within a stratified field, proceeding

through this field towards an original point or stratum. Through this process of reduction or bracketing, that which, for Husserl, spuriously adheres to life is delimited and put out of consideration. Consequently, what is irreducibly life is isolated and, for Husserl, is seen to present itself without contamination or delay in the phenomenological voice. In *Speech and Phenomena* Derrida contests the Husserlian privilege imparted to the phenomenological voice. Thus, his answer to the question "How does one call upon life?" diverges significantly from Husserl's with regards to the type of medium employed and, even more significantly, the "life" being called. For the moment, we can say that in Derrida's reading this nodal point is a false origin which Husserl imposes on the liminal field. As Derrida says elsewhere:

In the beginning, at the origin, there was ruin. At the origin comes ruin; ruin comes to the origin, it is what first comes and happens to the origin in the beginning. With no promise of restoration. (MB, 65)

Husserl's "life" is "deferred *ad infinitum*" (SP, 99) and therefore escapes phenomenological perception (cf. SP, 104). No degree of interiorization will be able to isolate life, a matter that will be examined in the next chapter.

At issue in both this chapter and the next is the boundary life/death and a certain liminal field Husserl's phenomenology employs to preserve this boundary.⁶ In the present chapter I will explicate Derrida's reading (in SP) of Husserl's

construction of this liminal field through the transcendental reduction which itself opens up Husserl's understanding of life and which is the condition for the possibility of the phenomenological voice. I do not intend to evaluate Derrida's engagement with Husserlian phenomenology. Such a task requires an independent study of its own. However, by explicating Derrida's reading of Husserl's construction of the phenomenological voice we will be better able to perceive, in the next chapter, Derrida's "phase of reversal" (D, 6; cf. P, 42) where Husserl's call to life through the phenomenological voice will in fact be shown to be an artificial construct imposed upon the liminal field.

I begin with the introduction to *Speech and Phenomena*, where Derrida himself begins by taking up Husserl's enigmatic liminal field concentrating on an essential component of what Derrida designates as Husserl's "philosophy of life" (SP, 10). I am speaking of the remarkable parallelism between phenomenological psychology and transcendental phenomenology, a parallelism whose strict maintenance is essential to phenomenology since it is the condition of possibility for a whole spectrum of parallel concepts upon which phenomenology is built: indication and expression, intersubjectivity and subjectivity, etc. As Husserl notes in his article for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the transcendental reduction opens up a "new kind of

'inner' experience" -- a "limitless transcendental field of being" -- parallel to the psychological field.⁷ That is: "To each eidetic or empirical determination on the one side there must correspond a parallel feature on the other."⁸ Thus, through the bracketing of the world with its natural standpoint, a transcendental standpoint arises, a standpoint from which to reflect upon the very same features as that of psychological experience. By commencing with a subtle discussion of one of phenomenology's most notorious claims, Derrida may seem to be far afield, diverting from the question of life to the intricacies of phenomenology. However, it is from out of this discussion of parallelism that Derrida frames his analysis of Husserl's calling of life, since the self-colloquy that Husserl upholds as the pure expression expressed in the self-presence of consciousness corresponds with the transcendental ego and not its worldly parallel, the psychological ego.

The peculiarity of the Husserlian liminology arises, Derrida notes, because there is a "perfect *incorporation*" of the transcendental and psychological egos in which a "radical difference" nevertheless exists (SP, 11). That is, in this parallelism, my transcendental ego, the realm of transcendental phenomenological self-experience, is by no means a second ego separated from my mundane, natural psychological ego. But while we can speak of a perfect incorporation between these two domains, Husserl does not dispense of his terminology and amalgamate the two, which would be to succumb, Derrida says, to "the most tempting, the most subtle, but also the most obscuring of confusions: *transcendental psychologism*" (SP, 13). Instead, a

precarious and fragile distance between the parallels must be maintained. A radical difference -- a boundary, in other words -- between the purely mental and transcendental consciousness is said to exist and to make it juridically impossible, Husserl insists, to contaminate these two domains and their corresponding concepts. Thus, while there is a parallelism between these two egos, the unspecified boundary foils any tendency towards a fusion brought about by the very transcendental psychologism that, Derrida says, he ceaselessly directs his questions towards (cf. SP, 13). Thus, while it has already been suggested that Derrida reads "against" Husserl, it is evident that his reading does not proceed from some point outside the Husserlian system: Derrida does not break with Husserl's transcendental phenomenology -- he insists upon the "distance between the parallels" (SP, 13); instead, he brings transcendental phenomenology under scrutiny precisely around this line which he does not erase but attempts, as Caputo says, "to get it right."⁹

Now this is no mere line. It is a life-line, a boundary drawn within life itself. On one side Husserl situates empirical life and everything that is associated with self-alienation: space, distance, discontinuity, mediation, etc. On the other side, transcendental life can be found: the life of self-consciousness and self-presence which corresponds to proximity, continuity and immediacy, the very things Husserl privileges in his phenomenology. But what kind of boundary fulfils this paradoxical incorporation where a non-permeable barrier permits each domain to inhabit the other, as it were, implicitly? What is the difference that this boundary marks?

Nothing. In Derrida's words:

a radical difference remains, one having nothing in common with any other difference, a difference in fact distinguishing nothing, a difference separating no state, no experience, no determined signification -- but a difference which, without altering anything, changes all the signs, and in which alone the possibility of a transcendental question is contained. (SP, 11)

Derrida may appear to be elliptical and exorbitantly nebulous here, but if we are to be attentive to Husserl's renewal of the notion of 'transcendental' we must, Derrida says, "refrain from attributing any reality to this distance, substantializing this nonconsistency or making it be, even merely analogically, some thing or some moment of the world" (SP, 13). This difference which distinguishes nothing, this nothing which distinguishes the parallels, is nothing other than the transcendental reduction which arises when the world becomes bracketed (cf. SP, 12). The perfect incorporation of these parallels is possible, then, only on the condition that the transcendental reduction installs a boundary that demarcates the parallels without creating an independent abode for itself. The boundary and the distance it creates amongst the parallels remains nothing. It is this line which has no phenomenality to proclaim, which in itself is nothing, a non-phenomenon, this nothing that Derrida will reinscribe as *trace* (which becomes an operative term in his overall project),

challenging the idea that "exteriority" is merely an accident (which can be bracketed away) befalling the interiority of consciousness, expression, sense or the voice from which life is called, rather than being their constitutive moment.

While the transcendental reduction is a life-line, a line bracketing empirical/psychical life in order to arrive at transcendental life, upon Derrida's analysis, since the boundary and the distance it creates amongst the parallels remains nothing, the perfect incorporation between the two parallels suggests a common ground, a unity, upon which they are based. This unity is life:

[T]he strange unity of these two parallels, that which refers the one to the other, does not allow itself to be sundered by them and, by dividing itself, finally joins the transcendental to its other; this unity is *life*. (SP, 14)

Husserl uses the term "life," Derrida says, to describe both the empirical and transcendental realm, as it -- "life" -- "precedes the reduction and finally escapes all the divisions which the latter gives rise to" (SP, 14-15).¹⁰ As a result of both preceding and transcending the distinction produced by the reduction, Husserl operates, Derrida says, with a general concept of life in his very attempt to be faithful to life's primordially and immediacy which the transcendental reduction is to reveal in the "living present" or "transcendental subjectivity." These are Derrida's words:

The unity of living, the focus of *Lebendigkeit* which diffracts its light in all the fundamental concepts of phenomenology (*Leben, Erlebnis, lebendige Gegenwart, Geistigkeit, etc.*), escapes the transcendental reduction and, as unity of worldly life, even opens up the way for it. When the empirical life, or even the region of the purely psychic, is bracketed, it is still a transcendental *life* or, in the final instance, the transcendental of a *living* present that Husserl uncovers. And yet he thematizes the concept of *life* without as much as raising the question of its unity.¹¹ (SP, 10)

And again, commenting on the metaphorical relation between the radically heterogenous concepts of transcendental life and empirical life, Derrida says: "The common root that makes all these metaphors possible still seems to us to be the concept of *life*" (SP, 10-11; cf. SP, 15). The "unity" of the living, that which "holds" life together is not questioned. Life as "self-relationship" (SP, 14), the auto-affective dimension of experience that defines the living present, is this "strange unity of these two parallels" which, Derrida notes:

[R]efers the one to the other, does not allow itself to be sundered by them and, by dividing itself, finally joins the transcendental to its other. (SP, 14)

Thus, while the transcendental reduction cuts between life creating transcendental and empirical life, "life" as presence will not be divided by the parallels. In other words, life as presence is established through this very self-division. Indeed, Derrida says, by dividing itself "life" unites the transcendental to the psychical/physical in presence.

By claiming that Husserl has overlooked the fact that his phenomenology operates with a concept of life, mirrored in the very parallelism we have been discussing, Derrida, from the very beginning of *Speech and Phenomena* is suggesting that Husserl's project is in contradiction with its intention: the call to life must not be a call to a concept of life. In a rather paradoxical manner *Speech and Phenomena* can be regarded as a phenomenological correction, as Derrida will try to indicate that "life" as presence is in fact a concept that has come to obfuscate a more (non)primordial life that phenomenology is unable to describe. Against phenomenology's own desire Derrida will show that the pure reduction of an exterior in order to assure the integrity of an interior is not possible. Every reduction leaves as a residue an unassimilable outside. In the course of several acute analyses Derrida will demonstrate that the prohibition against the blurring of Husserl's essential distinctions is transgressed by the internal logic of the law which institutes and maintains them. In other words, a certain "nonlife, a nonpresence or nonself-belonging of the living present, an ineradicable nonprimordially" will be brought to light in the monadic transcendental ego (SP, 7): "life" cannot be constituted without recourse to nonlife.¹² Therefore, Derrida's strategy is not to demonstrate complicity

between interiority and exteriority, not to eliminate the reduction but to show that posterior to the full bracketing of all exteriority, the pure interiority that remains is still haunted by an outside. The very possibility of phenomenology is threatened around this line, in the place of this *difference*, which, Derrida says, "cannot reside in the world" (SP, 14). Rather, it resides only in language, "in the transcendental disquietude of language" (SP, 14) from which the entirety of Derrida's reading proceeds.¹³

In *Speech and Phenomena* exteriority -- that which has neither been interiorized or digested -- is intended by the several uses of "outside," "the world," "death," and "space." It is exteriority that Husserl must reduce to a parallel interiority in order to establish self-presence which enables him to call upon life as it is immediately envisaged. A self-relation must be found that preserves self-presence -- the transcendental ego Husserl associates with life. But an outside to exteriority is not posited. In phenomenology's attempt to extricate thinking from the natural attitude, the transcendental reduction does not extricate the phenomenologist to another world or even beyond the world. The line instead puts the world out of consideration and isolates a tamed space interior to this general exteriority. This bracketing procedure is therefore a vital component of the summation of life and is

not completed until phenomenological interiority is achieved.

As we have already seen in the work of Schleiermacher and Dilthey, preludes to Husserl's phenomenology, the name of the medium employed to summon life is the voice. Whereas writing so often conceals its object in abstractions the voice gives way instantly to the things themselves, as if there were no voice at all. For Husserl, the voice is without difference and completely distinct from writing. Thus, Derrida is suggesting that, for Husserl, speech remains in proximity to the speaker, implying that interiority can be shielded from exteriority.¹⁴ The voice is privileged because it "preserves the *presence of the object* before intuition and *self-presence*, the absolute proximity of the acts to themselves" (SP, 76). In speech my words seem to be "alive," Derrida says, "because they seem not to leave me: not to fall outside me, outside my breath, at a visible distance" (SP, 76). The phenomenon of speech "*gives itself out* in this manner" (SP, 76). In relation to every other signifying medium the voice appears transcendent:

[T]he phenomenological "body" of the signifier seems to fade away at the very moment it is produced; it seems to already belong to the element of ideality. (SP, 77)

A description of the physical voice suggests, however, that exteriority and delay are vital components of both the production and utterance of sound. In the

experience of speech sounds must be made with the body, vibrating through the throat and occasionally hesitating there or becoming garbled by the tongue. But as Derrida indicates, Husserl is not advancing the bio-physio-logical voice, the sonorous substance, or even the voice of an other; instead, Husserl privileges the phenomenological, transcendental, aphonic voice of auto-noesis, which continues to speak and to be present to itself in the absence of the world. This silent voice is a kind of pure and diaphanous medium unaffected by the aleatory and spatial contagion of the world. Here, the body is reduced, enabling the inner voice to efface its own presence and to induce the illusion of a thought operating in a pure medium (cf. SP, 79). Thus, hearing oneself speak in inner soliloquy becomes an ideal form of self-representation. According to Derrida's commentary on Husserl, the possibility of hermetically sealed audiophony constitutes the subjective. And that is why Derrida says that the operation of "hearing oneself speak" is not only an auto-affection, but an auto-affection of an absolutely unique kind (cf. SP, 78), since it does not literally have to take place as sound and the reception of sound.

What determines the reduction as the ideal form of hearing oneself speak is the privilege accorded to *presence*. Presence means self-presence, being present to the self, giving oneself a presence through a diaphanous medium: it is the awakening to the life of transcendental consciousness. Indeed auto-affection as "presence" and "life" are practically synonymous:

Auto-affection is the condition of an experience in general. This possibility -- another name for "life" -- is a general structure articulated by the history of life, and leading to complex and hierarchical relations. (OG, 165)¹⁵

Life will be found at the heart of auto-affection: by dividing itself "life" joins the transcendental to its other. This means that the reduction of exteriority proceeds until the space of self-present consciousness is attained through the phenomenological voice. Again, following Derrida's commentary:

[N]o consciousness is possible without the voice. The voice is the being which is present to itself in the form of universality, as consciousness; the voice *is* consciousness. (SP, 79-80)

The Husserlian privilege here of pure auto-affection experienced as a reduction of "space in general," of "any exteriority" (SP, 79-80), in fact without any recourse to mundane exteriority in the least, is not accomplished through a single sudden reduction. In Derrida's analysis the phenomenological voice, this voice that keeps silent, can only be "reconstituted" by a "double reduction: that of the relation to the other in indicative communication, and that of expression as a stratum that is subsequent to, above, and external to sense" (SP, 70). The call to life (which we are coming to see for Husserl is not a call at all in the sense that calling must traverse

both distance and space, but rather forms an intimate connection with life -- one which Derrida says in fact constitutes Husserl's concept of "life") cannot be separated from these two reductions which we denote as the cocooned space of consciousness and sense. Both of these reductions deal with language and especially expression (*Bedeutung*). The question of the calling of life then is a question that concerns language and its status. I proceed, here, to explicate only the first reduction (the relation to the other in indicative communication), leaving our discussion of the second reduction to the next chapter since I will begin my reading of Derrida's "phase of reversal" around Husserl's constitution of sense.

In the voice, Derrida says:

The living act...does not risk death in the body of a signifier that is given over to the world and the visibility of space.... The system of *Zeigen* [is] interiorized (SP, 77-78).¹⁶

While this citation is derived from a context which deals with the complicity between voice and ideality (which we ourselves will broach in the subsequent chapter on the interiorization of sense), it also speaks clearly to the complex space of consciousness

within which the voice resounds. The complexity revolves around language and the line that passes "not between language and the nonlinguistic, but, within language in general" (SP, 36) dividing indication from expression. Upon Derrida's analysis Husserl's parallelism is again evident in the form of a relation between these two modes of signification (SP, 30), and it is on the basis of this relation or distinction that we can see Husserl's tamed consciousness.¹⁷ In short, Husserl argues that expression -- pure univocal language -- is isolatable from indication -- imprecise, polyvocal signification. Expressions are inherently meaningful signs. Indications, on the other hand, are empirical pointers that refer from the sign to the signified without bearing an intrinsic meaning in themselves. In other words, indication is the process of death at work in signs (cf. SP, 40). Calling life via indicative signs will not succeed. But the difficulty presented to Husserl is, as he recognizes, that the totality of speech does not coincide with expression; rather, it "is caught up in an indicative web" (SP, 31): in communicative speech expression or logical meaning (*bedeuten*) is always interwoven with an indicative relation (cf. SP, 20-21). Thus the need for interiorization arises.

Derrida says that the first step towards constituting the phenomenological voice comprises a reduction of the relation to the other in indicative communication (cf. SP, 70). This reduction is needed because in communicative language expressions acquire an indicative function. Meaning is not simply expressed but also exteriorized into the world, given either a graphic or phonic material body. In

communication the empirical world is joined to meaning in the service of indicating meaning: the ego shares its mental life with another by means of the worldly instruments of signs which do not belong, according to Husserl, to the reduced essence of linguistic expression. And thus, any sign that appears in the world imperils the animating regard with spatiality.

Derrida's move from the analysis of the Husserlian sign system to that of consciousness passes through intersubjectivity and the other in general as he asserts that the distinction between indication and expression that Husserl argues in the *Logical Investigations* prefigures the distinction Husserl makes in the fifth part of his *Cartesian Meditations* between the sphere of ownness and the sphere of the other who is grasped only appresentatively (cf. SP, 39). Because the animation of a signifier by a ray of intentionality of consciousness is not held free of worldly contact but takes an indicative detour which taints the purity of its intended sense, I can only know the other's thought through analogous appresentation. As Husserl makes very clear in the Fifth Meditation, my experience of other people is not directly accessible to me:

Experience is original consciousness; and in fact we generally say, in the case of experiencing a man: the other is himself there before us "in person". On the other hand, this being there in person does not keep us from admitting forthwith that, *properly speaking*, neither the other Ego himself, nor his subjective processes, nor his appearances themselves,

nor anything else belonging to his own essence, becomes given in our experience originally.¹⁸

Even if I may have a primordial intuition, an immediate apperception of what is exposed of the other in the world, the subjective side of his experience, his consciousness, in particular the acts by which he gives sense to his signs, are not immediately and primordially present to me as they are for him. "An irreducible line is drawn here" (SP, 39). I do not see the life of the other, and to claim that one does is, for Husserl, to remain caught within the natural attitude hypostatizing the other and denying that the inner life and lived experience correspond to transcendental consciousness, the waking life of what is my own.

If lived experience is to communicate life in its primordially then, Husserl insists, its expression must be opposed to every empty signifier -- those empirical pointers that refer from the sign to the signified without bearing an intrinsic meaning in themselves -- in which lived experience is externalized in the mediacy and self-alienation of the world. The purity of expression occurs within the immediacy of a self-present consciousness at a pre-linguistic level -- what Husserl calls the sphere of ownness¹⁹ -- whereas in communication, expression ventures out into the world where it is threatened with the loss of meaning and forgetfulness. This does not mean that expressions of other's lived experiences are ineffectual in accessing life. But it does mean that in order for these expressions to be rendered useful, the transcendental

reduction to the sphere of ownness is necessary.²⁰ As Husserl indicates in the Fifth Meditation, upon completing this reduction the other becomes a transcendental ego posited not *outside* of my own experience but rather brought *into* it.²¹ Thus, regardless whether one commences with one's own lived experience or the lived experience of another ego, Husserl's transcendental phenomenology proceeds to access life through the interiority of the transcendental ego that is said to be mine.

Consequently, with the bracketing of the world (where a call to life would take bodily effort) Husserl finds in the self-presence of consciousness the phenomenological voice where the purity of expression arises. Pure expression appears, however, only when communication is suspended (SP, 38). In communication expression ventures out into the world where it is threatened with the loss of meaning and death. Thus, as Derrida indicates, Husserl must maintain that in the interior monologue one does not really communicate anything to oneself and therefore indicative signs have no purpose in the inner sphere of transcendental consciousness. The process of death that is attributed to signs is said to remain on the exterior while interior, in the space of consciousness where the voice resounds, the purity of expression expresses itself. In the privacy of one's own mind, a monologue can occur in which imagined signs are animated by an intention which never leaves the sphere of what is one's own. There is no communication, no tactile sign, only pure expression. Once the line has been drawn "lived experience...does not need to be indicated because it is immediately certain and present to itself" (SP, 43).

Consciousness, which is defined by immanence, by its own self-presence to itself, is always already there the moment a mental act takes place. There is no need for the act to be represented to itself by means of a sign, no need for transcendence in the sphere of immanence, no need to communicate one's own lived experience to oneself, since consciousness is already there at that very moment (cf. SP, 48). Nothing divides this interiorized space, the pure medium of consciousness, from itself. Not the blink of an eye intervenes between the act and our consciousness of it (cf. SP, 59).

In our reading of Derrida's reading of Husserl's liminal field where life is separated from death, pure expression from indication, self from other, interiority from exteriority, it is the transcendental reduction that calls, and that would be called, life. For it is the transcendental reduction, this life-line, that constitutes the liminal field and consequently, as Husserl claims, brings life to presence, separating life from nonlife and from anything that would corrupt its immanence to consciousness. Thus, when the phenomenological voice has been transcendently constituted, life is not so much called as seen, already, to be present.

NOTES

1. Cf. Theodore Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger's Being and Time*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), p. 17.
2. Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 127.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 50-51.
4. Although much time could be spent here discussing the life-world and the immediate evidence of our lived experiences (i.e., experiences in which the things and events themselves immediately present themselves as such and therefore serve as the foundation upon which all our concepts, ideal entities, theories and speculations are built) I am simply invoking it to demonstrate Husserl's adherence to the overall direction of *Lebensphilosophie*. Admittedly, Husserl was never a proponent of the *Lebensphilosophie* movement, as he disproved of its irrational tendencies and anti-scientific stance. Although Husserl asserts that the sciences distort their relationship to the life-world by both forgetting their foundation in the subjective, intuitive world of life and promoting their abstract world as the real world, this should not be seen as a repudiation of science and its ideals. On the contrary, Husserl is simply attempting to dispose of the objectivistic tendency, and to this end he must expose the objectivistic notion of science as one-sided or reductive in order to open up a way to a true notion of science -- transcendental phenomenology. While not an advocate of the anti-scientific sentiments of *Lebensphilosophie* Husserl, nevertheless, uses the life-world to "explode" the objectivistic prejudice of the sciences with their network of ideal constructs and theoretico-logical superstructures revealing that the framework of objectivism actually obscures the phenomena as they are truly given prior to idealization. Indeed, idealization presupposes that there is something (the life-world)

that can be given directly and which can then be idealized. Thus, the life-world is not only that something which is inherently prior to the constructivism of philosophy it also serves as a pathway to subjectivity -- both of which *Lebensphilosophie* is seeking.

5. According to Husserl, without the reduction and without the operation of transcendental constitution which it uncovers, philosophy is cut off from achieving radical science. Philosophy would be, in Husserl's view, confined to the empirical-psychological level, which deals with the real experience of real people in the world, with what Husserl calls "mundane subjectivity."
6. Irrespective of the object under consideration phenomenology establishes boundaries enabling one to attend exclusively to the showing that proceeds from the object itself in distinction from all showing that comes from the other of the object. Cf. John Sallis, "The Identities of the Things Themselves" in *Delimitations: Phenomenology and the End of Metaphysics*, 2nd, expanded edition, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 201.
7. Husserl, "Phenomenology" in *Hermeneutical Inquiry. Volume II: The Interpretation of Existence*, ed. David E. Klemm, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), p. 76.
8. Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson, (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1962), p. 9.
9. John Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction and the Hermeneutic Project*, p. 121. Elsewhere, Derrida says, he wants to "interrogate that which precedes the transcendental reduction," to question "the possibility of the transcendental reduction" and therefore to enter a domain which, being prior to transcendental life, represents a kind of death (cf. WD, 167).

10. Derrida is not lifting out original insights here. Commenting on Husserl in *Truth and Method* Gadamer writes: "'Life' is not just the unreflective living characteristic of the natural attitude. 'Life' is also, and no less, the transcendently reduced subjectivity that is the source of all objectifications." (TM, 248) Gadamer goes on to recognize that Husserl is operating with a speculative concept of life resembling that held by German Idealism. However, since Husserl (as well as Dilthey) fail to develop the "speculative import of the concept of life" (TM, 250-251) Gadamer turns to Yorck to find a metaphysical connection between life and self-consciousness, "a bridge between speculative idealism and this century's new experimental standpoint" (TM, 251). This bridge is the analysis or structure of being alive or life as self-assertion which in Gadamer's words "asserts itself as a unity in division and articulation" (TM, 251). With this bridge Gadamer claims that Yorck is able to move from the results of thinking which have become detached from life back to the very life which both Dilthey and Husserl were striving to reach. Life, as Yorck understands it, comprehends both biological life and the life of self-consciousness, for both consist in *Urteilung*, the structure of life. *Urteilung* is self assertion, the Darwinian struggle for survival; it is a division, then, but also productive of the one common life achieved in adaption. As a form of life, self-consciousness has the same structure as biological life. In the life of consciousness, the *Urteilung* or division is between what is self and what is other that is produced from self-conscious judgement. But judgement is based upon "the play and interplay of the factors that constitute it" (TM, 251); that is, a unity forms a ground from which judgement proceeds. In this respect, Yorck confirms one of Hegel's fundamental insights in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and one that is central to *Truth and Method* as well. "[L]ife and self-consciousness really are analogous. Life is defined by the fact that what is alive differentiates itself from the world in which it lives and with which it remains connected, and preserves itself in this differentiation. What is alive preserves itself by drawing into itself everything that is outside it. Everything that is alive nourishes itself on what is alien to it. The fundamental fact of being alive is assimilation. Differentiation, then, is at the same time non-differentiation. The alien is appropriated." (TM, 252) All of life, according to Gadamer, Yorck and Hegel, lives only insofar as it embodies the circular structure

of forage and assimilation, excursion and reunion, alienation and appropriation, self-differentiation and self-integration. Gadamer's conclusion: "Hegel quite rightly derives self-consciousness dialectically from life. What is alive can never be really known by objective consciousness, by the effort of understanding which seeks to penetrate the law of appearance. What is alive is not such that a person could ever grasp it from outside, in its living quality. The only way to grasp life is, rather, to become inwardly aware of it...Life is experienced only in the awareness of oneself, the inner consciousness of one's own living." (TM, 253) However, Derrida's analysis of inner consciousness (here in this reading of the phenomenological voice) indicates that an unity cannot be posited to ground self-consciousness. It is this unity established through life's own self-division and the priority given to presence that Derrida calls into question. Instead of Gadamer's play that attempts to transcend differentiation and existential fragmentation (...we sublimate the discontinuity and atomism of isolated experiences in the continuity of our own existence (TM, 97)) in order to restore the (ideal) meaning and sense of human existence in the transcendental ideality and presence of the *Gebilde*, Derrida's play marks a certain moment of disruption and does not designate the presence of Being or of ground. Derrida's play is the disruption of presence (cf. WD, 292); or, as we shall see in his reading of Husserl, through the auto-affective movement of consciousness, Derrida's play constitutes presence via the abyss or non-ground of difference, delay and alterity. Derrida's critique of Husserl's "life" therefore applies to Gadamer as well.

11. In the end, "life" -- the focus of *Lebendigkeit* -- escapes the transcendental reduction: the line does not pass through "life." It appears that Derrida is suggesting that the transcendental reduction should be applied to "life." But since "life" is a necessary precursor to the transcendental reduction, as Derrida himself says, such a demand would itself seem impossible to fulfil. It is on the basis of Derrida's concept of trace that this has to be resolved. For the "trace" or "*différance*" represent something like a transcendental critique of Husserl's transcendental analysis without itself being inside or outside of transcendental phenomenology. "A thought of the trace can no more break with a transcendental phenomenology than be reduced to it" (OG, p.62). For

a very helpful exposition of Derrida's relation to the transcendental see Geoffrey Bennington's "Derridabase" in *Jacques Derrida*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 267-283.

12. Perhaps that is why Derrida later described *Speech and Phenomena* as the work he valued most (cf. P, 4).
13. "In determining the "living" in this way, we come to designate the origin of the insecurity of discourse, precisely the point where it can *no longer assure its possibility and rigor within the nuance*" (SP, 15).
14. This seeming self-presence of speech, its instantaneous reception as soon as it is spoken, is carried nicely by the French expression "*je m'entende*," "I understand/hear myself." Hearing oneself speak appears to effect the reduction of everything worldly, the removal of every worldly danger, in a medium of absolute self-proximity. Derrida notes the objection that the phenomenological sense of all signifiers, not just the sense of the phenomenological voice, is that of interiority.

The objection will perhaps be raised that this interiority belongs to the phenomenological and ideal aspect of every signifier. The ideal form of a written signifier, for example, is not in the world, and the distinction between the grapheme and the empirical body of the corresponding graphic sign separates an inside from an outside, phenomenological consciousness from the world. (SP, 76)

Was not our description of the transcendental reduction the move toward absolute subjectivity, the flux that establishes the living present, where each reduction or bracketing is an exclusion, producing an inside and an outside? Would not a transcendental reduction applied to the nonphonetic signifier constitute an interior-exterior bipole that could then be used to access the life of consciousness? Derrida

replies to this objection saying that the voice is unique in its immanence because, in contrast, the nonphonetic signifier gives off a "spatial reference in its very 'phenomenon,' in the phenomenological (nonworldly) sphere of experience in which it is given. The sense of being 'outside,' 'in the world,' is an essential component of its phenomenon" (SP, 76).

15. While this citation has been extracted from Derrida's engagement with Jean-Jacques Rousseau it is nevertheless germane to our discussion of Husserl. Furthermore, the separation of *Speech and Phenomena* and *Of Grammatology* is somewhat arbitrary, as Derrida says in *Positions*: "I could have bound [*Speech and Phenomena*] as a long note to [either *Of Grammatology* or *Writing and Difference*]" (P, 4).
16. With his phenomenological critique of Derrida's discussion of voice and consciousness in *Speech and Phenomena* Dallas Willard claims that Derrida's reading shows "phenomenological flaws." He contests Derrida's reading that there is no consciousness without the voice on the basis that a phenomenological description of the empirical voice indicates that "spoken words do not become 'diaphanous.'" This, however, misconstrues Derrida's reading by failing to recognize that Derrida's discussion of voice and consciousness proceeds via the phenomenological voice. Dallas Willard, "Predication as Originary Violence: A Phenomenological Critique of Derrida's View of Intentionality" in *Working Through Derrida*, ed. Gary B. Madison, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993), pp. 134-136.
17. By suggesting that the concept of parallelism manifests itself in two modes of signification Derrida acknowledges that he is departing from commentary and proceeding with his interpretation (cf. SP, 30-31).
18. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorion Cairns, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), pp. 108-109.

19. This sphere of ownness is that stratum of experience -- immediate experience -- prior to our experience of the other which underlies and founds our experience with the other.

20. We can here speak to the relationship between Dilthey and Husserl. According to Husserl, the consequence of simply adhering to the hermeneutic tradition and the human sciences without reuniting our understanding of life to our experience is to remain caught up in objectivism and, in the end, guided by a concept of life which predetermines our perceptions and descriptions. A call to a concept of life will for Husserl always be a denial of life. Now this critique applies to Dilthey's work as well, despite his emphasis on the need to understand life from out of the experience of life itself, a desire which is fulfilled through that unique expression called lived experience. Because of the significant affinities between Husserl's theory of the life-world and Dilthey's *Lebensphilosophie* a brief comparison will serve well to accent Husserl's distinctive topos from out of which the calling of life will both originate and proceed. On this point the difference between the two is not centred upon diverging conceptions of lived experience. Indeed, Husserl would probably have few qualms saying with Dilthey that "a particular relation exists between [lived experience], the life from which it sprang, and the understanding to which it gives rise" (UOP, 153). Similarly Husserl and Dilthey would coincide with regard to the intimate relation that exists between lived experience and expression. What is at issue, instead, is the manner by which these experiences are accessed and even more importantly, upon which the methodological consideration is itself based; that is, the space, the "who" that is accessed to which these lived experiences correspond.

For Dilthey, expressions communicate life in its fullness bringing lived experience to a more determinate focus than is available to reflection. In Dilthey's words:

expressions can contain more of the psychological context than any introspection can discover. They lift it from depths which consciousness does not illuminate. (UOP, 153)

In his hermeneutic writings Dilthey relies on a contextual conception of life as objectified human spirit where life is seen in terms of a nexus or matrix of more encompassing sociohistorical contexts within which subjects are woven. Here, life becomes a text whose parts are the lived experiences of the psychological subject who communicates life in its fullness through his or her expressions. According to Husserl, since consciousness does not play the dominant role in Dilthey's hermeneutics, expressions of lived experience are not accessed in their purity from amongst a stratum of consciousness or inner life which precedes empirical attachments to the world. The call to life in Dilthey is instead situated within the expressive discourse that is effectively uttered in the world. In effect, we are in the realm of biography as the call to life is the call to the inner life of another concrete sociohistorical person which we access through our understanding of their expressions of lived experiences. For Husserl, however, this conception of expression that departs from the self loses its intimate and immanent connection with life, bringing about mundane interference and opacity to lived experience as it becomes contaminated with the empirical entanglements and exteriority of the world. For a more elaborate comparison see Rudolf A. Makkreel's "Husserl, Dilthey and the Relation of the Life-World to History" in *Research in Phenomenology*, Vol. XII, 1982:39-58. I have yet to encounter an essay that maintains the affinity between Dilthey and Husserl as much as this one. This is not to say that Makkreel conflates Dilthey's life-nexus with Husserl's life-world; far from it, essential differences are noted and explored. However, for Makkreel these differences appear to arrive at a much later point than I would situate them. Perhaps this is simply a matter of emphasis. More likely, however, is the fact that Makkreel to some extent cuts short his reading of Husserl by restricting his consideration of the life-world to a sedimentation in consciousness that affects it noetically at the expense of the life-world as a constituted noema, or as J.N. Mohanty says, "a stratum within the universal *a priori* of transcendental subjectivity." [Mohanty, "'Life-World' and 'A Priori' in Husserl's Later Thought," in *Analecta Husserliana*, vol. III, 1974, p. 63.] Indeed, Makkreel claims that the life-world "is not merely pre-given as an *a priori* structure but it is also pre-given passively in the stream of consciousness in a way that must be studied by a phenomenological

psychology." *Ibid*, p. 39-40. Through this restriction Makkreel is able to stay within phenomenological psychology which is methodologically closer to Dilthey's *Geisteswissenschaften* than its parallel -- transcendental phenomenology. While such a move may be justifiable, a justification is nevertheless necessary since so much work in Husserlian scholarship diverges one from another at this very point concerning the relationship between phenomenological psychology and transcendental phenomenology. As we have already seen, in Derrida's reading the distinction between the transcendental and psychical realms are essential.

21. Cf. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, pp, 90-99.

CHAPTER THREE

CALLING LIFE

THE CONCLAMATION AT THE INTERIOR OF THE SELF: HUSSERL 2

Language is spoken, it speaks to itself, which is to say, *from/of blindness*. It always speaks to us *from/of the blindness* that constitutes it. [MB, 4]

"Come" cannot come from a voice or at least not from a tone signifying "I" or "self," a so-and-so (male or female) in my "determination," my *Bestimmung*: vocation to the destination *myself*. [NATP, 166]

In chapter two we were able to ascertain that the call to life from within phenomenology will not be a call via the other but rather a call that stays within the self. To use some different terms, we are not, within Husserl's phenomenology, in the realm of biography but rather in that of autobiography. This is a realm characterized by self-presence and does not signify, as is the convention, writing *about* the self.

Instead, autobiography here means: writing *to* the self in an internal vocative mode. It is the self-colloquy of the self telling its life to itself. In their different ways both Derrida and Husserl adhere to such autobiographical self-telling. Echoing Nietzsche's announcement, "and so I tell my life to myself," Derrida has said that the autobiographer "tells *himself* this life and he is the narration's first, if not its only, addressee and destination -- within the text" (TEO, 13). For Husserl, as we have seen, the self-colloquy of the self telling its life to itself does not mean communicating with the self. It is not a "talking to oneself about oneself" (SP, 74), but rather the wanting-to-tell-itself proper of meaning within consciousness which reflects the pre-expressive stratum of sense (cf. SP, 74). Now the space of consciousness, for Husserl, is the level of the voice, which after having bracketed indication simply mirrors sense. As we shall examine more thoroughly in this chapter, Husserl claims to reduce all language, on the basis of the presence of the signifier and the signified in the voice, in favour of the "originality of sense" (SP, 80) which is the *Lebendigkeit*. As Derrida says:

[Phenomenology, the metaphysics of presence in the form of ideality] is a philosophy of life, not only because at its center death is recognized as but an empirical and extrinsic signification, a worldly accident, but because the source of sense in general is always determined as the act of *living*, as the act of a living being, as *Lebendigkeit*. (SP, 10)

Before turning to Derrida's reading of the inadequacy of the phenomenological voice to remain in immediate proximity to life as presence, I shall examine the following fecund section of *Speech and Phenomena* where Husserl's interiorization of sense is commented upon most succinctly. Indeed, for Husserl, sense has always already been present in the pure interiority of consciousness. As Derrida says: "Expression is exteriorization. It imparts to a certain outside a sense which is first found in a certain inside" (SP, 32). To be more precise:

The meaning (*bedeuten*) intends an outside which is that of an ideal object. This outside is then ex-pressed and goes forth beyond itself into another outside, which is always "in" consciousness. For, as we shall see, the expressive discourse, as such and in essence, has no need of being effectively uttered in the world. Expressions as meaningful signs are a twofold going-forth beyond itself of the sense (*Sinn*) in itself, existing in consciousness, in the with-oneself or before-oneself which Husserl first determined as "solitary mental life." (SP, 32-33)

As ex-pressed, expression is a "twofold going forth" of sense where the first going-forth is that of act to sense, the constituting of an ideal objectivity, *Sinn*, which for Husserl "remains in itself...only...in the 'phenomenological' voice" (SP, 33). This is a movement into the cocooned space of sense. The second going forth is the movement from *Sinn* into *Bedeutung*, the expression of sense in meaning. Through this double movement the ideality of the object is constituted within a space interior

to that of expression. Ideality -- understood as both the objectivity of the object and the presence of the present -- is then constituted as a movement of difference from exteriority into the interiorized space of consciousness where language is always a supplement, a non-productive addition to prelinguistic sense whose sole function is to mirror the underlying stratum and give its "expressiveness."

As Derrida notes, commenting on Husserl:

In expression the intention is absolutely explicit because it animates a voice which may remain entirely internal and because the expressed is a meaning (*Bedeutung*), that is an ideality 'existing' nowhere in the world. (SP, 33)

The expressivity of discourse is paradoxically not simply the inner idea of the speaking subject, but the exteriorization of that idea. "This outside is then expressed"; the outside is pushed further outside. Where? Into "another outside, which is always 'in' consciousness," that is, into the cocooned space of consciousness that we were discussing in chapter two. This occurs, however, only when that which is expressed is interiorized into an ideal object, that is, when expression is reduced to the level of pure sense. Through this process,

transcendental phenomenological idealism answers to the necessity of describing the *objectivity* of the object (*Gegenstand*) and the *presence* of the present (*Gegenwart*) -- and objectivity in presence -- from the standpoint of "interiority," or rather from a self-proximity, an *ownness* (*Eigenheit*), which is not a simple *inside* but rather the intimate

possibility of a relation to a beyond and to an outside in general. (SP, 22)

By focusing on the space of consciousness where an expression (*Bedeutung*) is ex-pressed (*aus-gedrückt*), Husserl hopes to show that indication would fall outside of it. By delimiting indication from expression and situating pure expression in the sphere of ownness of consciousness, Husserl has gone a long way towards securing the privilege granted to the phenomenological voice in accessing life. This final reduction where expression is idealized or reduced to sense, where sense comes to constitute expression and the signifier, appears to guarantee the transcendence of the voice in its immediate presence to "life," since Husserl appears to have established a stratum of silent experience where language is superfluous:

The "apparent transcendence" of the voice thus results from the fact that the signified, which is always ideal by essence, the "expressed" *Bedeutung*, is immediately present in the act of expression. This immediate presence results from the fact that the phenomenological "body" of the signifier seems to belong to the element of ideality. It phenomenologically reduces itself, transforming the worldly opacity of its body into pure diaphaneity. (SP, 77)

As the phenomenological voice "speaks" ideal meaning which is based upon a stratum of silent lived experience -- self-present sense -- where language is dispensable, it

appears that the call to life must necessarily be through this voice. But despite the fact that there is complicity between the voice and ideality where the signifier (and the life-giving act, the *Lebendigkeit*, which animates the body of the signifier and transforms it into a meaningful expression) seems not to separate itself from its own self-presence (SP, 77), Derrida says the transcendence of the voice is only apparent. Indeed, it is from the ego's occasional contact with ideality that Derrida will contaminate the transcendental ego with non-primordially. It is to this "phase of reversal" where a certain logic of writing will be shown to inhabit the phenomenological voice, thereby foiling its apparent proximity to "life," that I now turn.

In his *Introduction to The Origin of Geometry* Derrida shows that the necessity of inscription for the constitution of sense arises because objectivity is dependent upon indefinite repetition. Here, Derrida brings to light the back and forth or "zigzag" movement between the genetic and structural projects of *The Origin of Geometry* where Husserl attempts to "question back" (*rückfragen*) to the subjective genesis of geometric knowledge as well as to describe the very condition for the possibility of their reactivation -- the structure of history or tradition.¹ With this movement Husserl attempts to answer how the subjective egological evidence of sense becomes objective

and intersubjective (cf. IOG, 63). How, in other words, can a subjective egological evidence of sense give rise to an ideal and true object that has omnitemporal validity and intelligibility for everyone? Husserl's answer: language or "literature in the broadest sense" (IOG, 66). Despite the fact that it threatens ideality with exteriority, it is writing that Husserl calls upon. For Husserl, then, writing has the ambiguous value of being both the cause of the loss of an original sense as well as the very condition of its fecundity.

Husserl's appeal to language, and writing in general, may appear surprising because geometric objects (the example in question in his text) are entirely free idealities (cf. IOG, 72), while language is bound. Since linguistic units in their phonetic and graphic forms as well as in their intentional content are repeatable (cf. IOG, 67), they possess a degree of ideality. However, they cannot be understood without referring to historical linguistic systems and to real sensible things in this world (cf. IOG, 70). A geometric object, however, such as a triangle is intelligible, entirely noetic and, thus, not bound to the real and contingent world. Geometrical ideality seems to lie beyond all language and sense content as such (cf. IOG, 75).

However, Husserl relies on language as the essential condition for absolute objectivity, for without language geometrical idealities would remain imprisoned in the inventor's head, in his/her psychological subjectivity (cf. IOG, 77). Ideal objectivity does not become "for everyone" until someone writes it down (cf. IOG, 87).² Through its ability to be repeated or copied, writing liberates an original insight

or sense from any existing subjectivity or intersubjective community.³ Thus writing generates an anonymous and "autonomous transcendental field" (IOG, 88); it is a "subjectless transcendental field," and is "one of the 'conditions' of transcendental subjectivity" (IOG, 88).

But if writing is a condition of transcendental subjectivity in its contemplation of itself, the self must differentiate itself from itself through a backward glance which also makes possible a forward glance:

Now a primordial consciousness of delay can only have the pure form of anticipation...without which (once again) discourse and history [and Geometry as the possibility of history] would not be possible. (IOG, 153)

With these notions of self-differentiation and postponement, Husserl seems to be introducing the idea of *différance* that we will soon examine, a *différance* which, Derrida indicates in *Speech and Phenomena*, is also operative throughout Husserl's liminal field. While writing threatens the self's ability to remain in the simple nowness of the living present -- to remain, in other words, in the immediate proximity of life as presence -- Husserl reduces writing to the phenomenological voice where the intention is transparent. For Husserl, the horizon of language remains univocal. Therefore, while there is a certain differentiation operative within the living present --

the "double envelopment of the living present" as Derrida calls it (IOG, 137) -- this is seen by Husserl as a confirmation of the privilege granted to life as presence.

In addition to finding repetition necessary for the constitution of sense, Derrida also finds, in his *Introduction to the Origin of Geometry*, that repetition is interior to the subject:

Before the "same" is recognized and communicated among several individuals, it is recognized and communicated within the individual consciousness. (IOG, 85)

Interior repetition is the re-call of sense across a space dividing the self from itself. This recall is across a space that can only be bridged by something analogous to indication. Although we anticipate the discussion of *différance* and the trace here, the following lines are crucial:

[A]fter quick and transitory evidence, after a finite and passive retention vanishes, its sense can be re-produced as the "same" in the act of recollection; its sense has not returned to nothingness. In this *coincidence of identity ideality* is announced as such and in general in an egological subject...Thus, before being the ideality of an identical object for other subjects, sense is the ideality for the *other* moments of the same subject. (IOG, 85-86)

Sense moves within the alterity and intersubjectivity that encompasses the subject. Sense is divided from itself. This does not necessarily imply that the living present is structured by absence and exteriority, for if sense pre-existed the voyage into this space, if (to use the language of *Speech and Phenomena*) sense is a prelinguistic stratum, then another line could be drawn to protect the purity of interiority. But this is not the case: sense only comes to be sense in this dangerous passage of which Derrida writes "...the *Absolute is Passage*":

Traditionality is what circulates from one to the other, illuminating one by the other in a movement wherein consciousness discovers its path in an indefinite reduction, always already begun, and wherein every adventure is a change of direction [*conversion*] and every return to the origin an audacious move toward the horizon. This movement is also *Danger(ous)* as the *Absolute* [*l'Absolu d'un Danger*]. For if the light of sense is only through Passage, that is because the light can also be lost on the way. Like speech, light can be lost only in the inauthenticity of a *language* and by the abdication of a speaking being. (IOG, 149)

We find here a certain invisibility or blocking of phenomenological perception. Being divided from itself or, in other words, becoming ideal through a movement of difference associated with linguistic iteration, sense implies the impossibility of resting in the simple "nowness" of a Living Present, "because the *Absolute is present*

only in being *deferred-delayed* [*différant*] without respite, this impotence and this impossibility are given in a primordial and pure consciousness of Difference" (IOG, 153).

In *Speech and Phenomena* Derrida makes a similar argument concerning the constitution of sense. Briefly, Derrida refutes the possibility of prelinguistic sense from the basis of Husserl's own argument. Through the voice, Husserl wants to preserve the purity of self-presence to consciousness as well as the ideality of meaning. But these two desires are in an internecine conflict. For in order for Husserl to save the ideality of meaning "a structure of repetition" must come into play whose "basic element can only be representative" (SP, 50). In effect a structure similar to that of the sign is introduced into the interiority of consciousness which blurs the distinction between presence and non-presence (cf. SP, 45ff). Because expression must operate within the repetitive and reproductive framework of ideality, it cannot, even in the sphere of ownness, give its object purely. Inasmuch as expression implies ideality it contains within itself an ineradicable non-self which functions indicatively. The sign, this obstacle to a pure act of self-affection, cannot be evicted from the living presence of the self-affecting voice. Once a structure of repetition is introduced into self-consciousness, the difference between first time and repetition is also blurred. A gap is opened up between ideality and sense. Ultimately, the argument may be reduced to this: because sense has a temporal correlate, as indeed Husserl leads us to believe in *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-*

Consciousness, then it too must function through auto-affection. And auto-affection, as we are about to see, is an effect of *différance* and the presence it produces.

The movement of difference within consciousness that Derrida notes in his *Introduction to the Origin of Geometry* is the same movement referred to throughout *Speech and Phenomena* as that which produces Husserl's liminal field. Our exposition of this field indicated, however, that Husserl controls and subjugates difference to the exterior through the establishment of a pure interior. Presence, or the giving oneself a presence, is a consequence of mastering all exteriority in pure interiority, through sublation, assimilation, idealization and repression. In short, the dream of immediacy and an intimate state of undivided self-presence arises through the suppression of difference. The interiority of auto-affection always excludes all possible openings toward the other, any move away from the self-contained system of pure interiority and original presence. What remains, then, is either the mere repetition of the same within the confines of the self's self-sufficient interiority and presence, or the static dwelling in the presence and simultaneity of a locus of authenticity without exteriority whatsoever. In both cases there is no differential movement -- no vibration of the voice or quivering of senescent hands -- only an infinite inaudible inertness. Through the movement from exteriority to interiority which creates and characterizes his liminal field, Husserl is trying to access a life without *différance*, delay, differentiation or mediation.

Husserl presumes that his movement of difference, this movement from the

exterior to the interior, has produced this life as absolute presence in opposition to a life of absolute non-presence. For Derrida, however, these two "lives" are indistinguishable insofar as this ultimate presence of consciousness to itself as its own "object" is death itself. That is, absolute presence is indistinguishable from absolute non-presence insofar as both are static states where movement, delay and anticipation cannot be found. In Derrida's words, this "life" is "at once absolutely alive and absolutely dead" (SP, 102).⁴

For Derrida, the productive movement of difference (operative within Husserl's liminal field) "is the most general structure of economy" (P, 8). It is what Derrida calls *différance*, that which eludes interiorization.⁵ *Différance* is the ability to let past and future moments be absent and simultaneously to make these absences coexist in the present. It produces a structure infinitely iterable beyond my finite existence. Since this structure exceeds my force, it is always just beyond my reach. The grasping of it, then, must be deferred to another person; the structure, as opposed to Husserl's conclusions, must be externalized. As the general structure of economy, *différance* is an infinite movement which is finite (cf. SP, 102), a movement whose essence excludes a priori that it become either infinite or an intangible presence (cf. OG, 131). That is, *différance* -- the movement within Husserl's liminal field -- cannot

produce an absolute presence. A life in which *différance* is operative within is finite and, contrary to Husserl's claims, is always in relation to exteriority -- its own death.

In Derrida's words:

The appearing of the infinite *différance* is itself finite. Consequently, *différance*, which does not occur outside this relation [to my own death], becomes the finitude of life as an essential relation with oneself and one's death. (SP, 102).

Life and exteriority are beginning to merge.⁶ As we are about to see, the movement of *différance* operative in Husserl's liminal field, this movement that constitutes the difference of interiority and exteriority, is itself operative within the transcendental ego.

Although, as our exposition of this liminal field has indicated, difference is controlled and subjugated to the exterior through the establishment of a pure interior, Husserl's liminal field nevertheless is unable, structurally, to ensure that the borders it constructs are not to some degree porous: difference inhabits the interior. The transcendental ego's own interior logic becomes self-destructive when Husserl conflates auto-affection (which is the overarching characteristic of the interiorized spaces of sense, expression and consciousness produced by his liminology) with that of originality or presence. Remember: Husserl's summation, our summation, is the call to life as it shows itself in its intuitive presence. What is supposed to designate

pure presence and identity, namely the transcendental ego's interior homogeneity, ultimately comes to be suspended over an abyss of non-presence and difference. The interiority of the self is witnessing the return from the outside of the other which the interiority of self-presence and auto-affection are thought to have effectively excluded. The very interpretation Husserl made of his liminal field is reversed by Derrida when he says:

As soon as it is admitted that auto-affection is the condition for self-presence, no pure transcendental reduction is possible. (SP, 82)

This impossibility results from the fact that in order for there to be an interiority set off from exteriority, an interiority in which self-presence through auto-affection is achieved, interiority must necessarily incorporate a minimal degree of exteriority. If one is to achieve self-presence exclusively through referring to oneself, auto-affection implies a condition of self-division. A line is necessary to fold oneself upon oneself. A line again which is nothing creates a minimal division of the same in order for this same to constitute itself as itself. The interval or difference of self-division yields the line at which it is necessary to fold oneself upon oneself: utterly irreducible hetero-affection intrinsically inhabits the most hermetic auto-affection.

This is the interval, the line (our life-line), that always separates the *one* from the *other*; it is the difference, Derrida says, which Husserl repressed by assigning to

the exteriority of the signifiers and yet recognized at work at the origin of sense and presence (cf. SP, 82).

An interval must separate it [the present] from what it is not; but the interval that constitutes it in the present must also, and by the same token, divide the present in itself, thus dividing, along with the present, everything that can be conceived on its basis, that is, every being... (SP, 143)

In this supposedly pure difference is rooted the possibility of everything we think we can exclude from auto-affection: space, the outside, the world, the body, writing, etc. (SP, 82). But it is only on the (non)basis of this difference that the self can *appear* as an origin of presence and identity. The transcendental reduction, this line employed by Husserl in the task of making life "its own division and its own opposition to its other" (SP, 15), is reinterpreted by Derrida as generating the necessary space that the self needs to be "affected" by its other. Indeed what Derrida calls the trace is "defined" as: "the opening of the first exteriority in general, the enigmatic relationship of the living to its other and of an inside to an outside" (OG, 70). Rather than establishing the cocooned space of consciousness and sense, an hermetic interiority, the transcendental reduction opens up a space and relation to exteriority in general as the self-*constituting* movement of auto-affection, a movement which is itself possible only to the extent that there "is" a minimal split in the

interiority of the self. The affective movement of the self back to itself in auto-affection is always interrupted by "a minimal division of the same."⁷ Yet it is precisely this division within the self and within the origin itself which the phenomenological voice and Husserl's phenomenology as a whole tends to forget and suppress.

This forgotten division, this trace which Derrida says has been reduced to "the full presence summed up in the logos...as life without difference" (OG, 71), is more originary than the presence of the origin and the self, while at the same time always remaining invisible itself, unrepresentable (and like the phenomenological voice, inaudible (SP, 133)) in its own originary movement of presentation. This movement of difference, (what Derrida calls *différance*), this deferral by the difference and delay operative in the very inside of the self, "is not something that happens to a transcendental subject," Derrida says. Rather, "it produces a subject" (SP, 82). It is an *effect* of difference, thus no longer resting purely and simply in the identity of its self as the originally given. This movement of *différance* is the structure of every liminal field.

As a movement of *différance*, auto-affection is not a dialectic process. Unlike the dialectical notion of mediation, *différance* is a mode of mediation which is irreducibly inadequate to itself. "[T]he very structure of the mark (for example, the minimum of iterability it requires [or, we could say, the minimum of space of difference it requires]) excludes the hypothesis of idealization, that is, the adequation

of a meaning to itself, of a saying to itself, of understanding to a sentence" (LI, 61). Remember in the *Introduction* the passage of difference (which is Derrida's early formulation of *différance*) is said to be "*Danger(ous)*" (IOG, 149).⁸ In Derrida's words:

What we should ultimately like to draw attention to is that the for-itself of self-presence (*für-sich*) -- traditionally determined in its dative dimension as phenomenological self-giving, whether reflexive or pre-reflective -- arises in the role of supplement as primordial substitution, in the form "in the place of" (*für etwas*), that is, ... in the very operation of signification in general. The *for-itself* would be an *in-the-place-of-itself*: put for itself, instead of itself. (SP, 88-89)

This difference implies that the possibility of a simple self-identity within the living present is destroyed. And yet while no pure transcendental reduction is possible, Derrida says, it was nevertheless integral to move about this line:

[I]n order to grasp this difference in what is closest to it -- which cannot mean grasping it in its identity, its purity, or its origin, for it has none. (SP, 82)

From Husserl's liminal field the transcendental reduction or life-line reveals another line and another life in the movement of difference, in the unbridgeable gap

between ideality and sense, at the heart of the self. This line is the possibility of difference (SP, 149). "This *nothing*," which is not an entity, "exceeds the question *What is?* and contingently makes it possible" (OG, 75). This is what Derrida calls: trace -- the *différance* that opens appearance, sense, temporality and signification while effacing itself.⁹ The trace presents itself as something that has always just escaped our grasp; it is the limit of vision ("the look' cannot 'abide'" (SP, 104)), the "invisible" aspect of language which can never come into presence as it erases itself in its own production (cf. SP, 152). It is not the remains of something that was once present and might be rendered present once again: rather it is that which prevents any present and any experience of presence, from being completely itself, from ever coinciding with itself.¹⁰ In the final analysis, then, there are always and only traces of traces. And it is this trace of alterity constituting identity that Derrida finds at the interior of the transcendental subject:

But this pure difference, which constitutes the self-presence of the living present, introduces into self-presence from the beginning all the impurity putatively excluded from it. The living present springs forth out of its nonidentity with itself and from the possibility of a retentional trace. It is always already a trace. This trace cannot be thought out on the basis of a simple present whose life would be within itself; the self of the living present is primordially a trace. The trace is not an attribute; we cannot say that the self of the living present "primordially is" it. Being-primordial must be thought on the basis of the trace, and

not the reverse. (SP, 85)

Thus, instead of subverting the line in advance, in terms of the transcendental reduction, by a teleology of presence and fulfilment, the line is regarded by Derrida as a trace where interiority and exteriority are conjugated hymenally.¹¹ The living present which we believe we know as the most familiar thing in the world, as familiarity itself, would not appear without *différance* and the trace, without the nonpresence of the other inscribed within the sense of the present, without the relationship with death as the concrete structure of the living present. Consequently, life, (which we have tried to show is intimately connected with the line and the difference it creates in a manner that calls into question Husserl's conclusions), "must be thought of as a trace before Being may be determined as presence. This is the only condition upon which we can say that life is death" (WD, 203). Life will not stand face to face with death, with the thanatological or the thanatographical (TEO, 6): the interior cannot exclude exteriority. This more (non)primordial and yet unrecoverable life is what Husserl tried to shield himself from with his concept of "life" as presence.

Life is death because it is not first and foremost a presence: it is always already, trace -- where "a configuration of traces...can no longer be represented except by the structure and functioning of writing" (WD, 200). Life passes through a proxy -- writing: the courier of death; and not only because when I see myself write self-presence is broken (cf. SP, 80). As "protowriting" (SP, 85) the trace is not writing in

the conventional sense, for example, the writing the proto-geometer needed to have at his command before he could create geometry. In other words, "protowriting" is not phonetic writing which fixes an already prepared utterance (SP, 80-81);¹² rather, the trace, this protowriting, is without a present origin or *arche*:

each element that is said to be "present"...is related to something other than itself but retains the mark of a past element and already lets itself be hollowed out by the mark of its relation to a future element. (SP, 142)

Vertigo. And yet there is no crisis language being employed here.¹³ No attempt to rescue life or the self from this protowriting.¹⁴ Essentially, this would be to follow Husserl's strategy of interiorizations and reductions to attain the self-presence manifested in the phenomenological voice.

Is the call to life futile? Is the question precluded in Derrida's work? No. However, the call to life, is a call to a life which in no way can be separated from nonpresence, neither through objectifying extraction or phenomenological interiorization -- the liminology remains entwined. The call must be a call to the other that is based on a logic of writing, that is of repetition and difference, of traces and remains without remainder. This does not mean that the voice is of no value, for Derrida's argument is that speech and the experience of self-presence are themselves

only possible on the basis of the trace and *différance*; it simply requires a rethinking of the voice in terms of the structure of writing as trace (cf. OG, 8). Like experience, speech is in ruins, but since full presence is but a dream this is what needs to be acknowledged in order for us to call upon life. Consequently the call must be a prosopopoeia or conclamation of sorts.

I use the word conclamation here instead of summation which we have already invoked in terms of presence and which also possesses the signification of totality. Derived from the latin *conclamatio* -- the act of calling three times in a loud voice the name of the person presumed dead to ensure that the recently deceased has not been buried alive -- conclamation instead of being a call to presence is more closely related to nonpresence.¹⁵ It is a voice from the dead or perhaps a call to that which is neither "life" nor death -- a call to the other that belongs to no present. A call to the other: polyvocal, unstable,¹⁶ both underivable from the identity of a determination and unable to address itself to an identity determinable in advance. An event that is not a full presence, designating distance, differentiation, delay and anticipation: "Come."

Addressing the other...I say "come," but I mean an event that is not to be confused with the word "come" as it is said in language. It is something that can be replaced by a sign, by an "Ah," by a cry, that means "come." It is not itself a full presence; it is differential... (TSP, 21)

"Come."

NOTES

1. In order to distinguish this movement, which Derrida says is the "major find" of his text (IOG, 33), from linearity Derrida calls it a spiral. Instead of following Derrida's description, I am calling this movement a zigzag, because a spiral can be confused with an incomplete circle which does not coincide with the flickering back and forth between the genetic and structural projects that Derrida is highlighting.
2. Indeed, writing becomes more necessary as ideality becomes more ideal. This is evident in mathematics (whose objects are the most ideal), otherwise there would be no progress, as each generation of researchers would be forced to find the same results over again.
3. Oddly enough this liberation is the result of a certain confinement. When someone inscribes a geometrical truth, its absolutely free ideality resides in a less free ideality, in a real event composed of "vague morphological types" such as letters and sensible matter; it resides, as Derrida stresses, in a book (IOG, 90-1, 89n92). And yet, while the inscriptive event binds the ideality of sense to a factual sign, it also frees the sign from its nonrepeatable character. Writing not only "localizes and temporalizes" ideal objectivity, but also "unlocalizes and untemporalizes" it (IOG, 89).
4. In full:

Since absolute self-presence in con-sciousness is the infinite *vocation* of full presence, the achievement of absolute knowledge is the end of the infinite, which could only be the unity of the concept, logos and consciousness in a voice without *differance*. *The history of metaphysics therefore can*

be expressed as the unfolding of the structure or schema of an absolute will-to-hear-oneself-speak. This history is closed when this infinite absolute appears to itself as its own death. A voice without difference, a voice without writing, is absolutely alive and absolutely dead. (SP, 102)

5. *Différance* is a neologism of Derrida's that expresses two seemingly quite distinct significations inscribed in and derived from the French *différer* and the Latin *differre*: to differ and defer.
6. Indeed, since the presence of the ideal self-presence of the transcendental ego (and of the ideal object) in the present depend, through their very ideality, on the possibility of repetition, this repetition necessarily involves the possibility of my death, and therefore of finitude.
7. Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 232.
8. It is this notion of dialectic that distinguishes Derrida's *différance* from Ricoeur's notion of distantiation (both of which derive from Husserl's theory of intentionality). Now Ricoeur's hermeneutics proceeds on the basis of a dialectic between event and meaning. *Différance*, however, gets caught up in the aleatory and therefore can only function in terms of a zigzag movement; a movement that is not based upon circularity, linearity or a regulative horizon of totalization. On the other hand, for Ricoeur, distantiation attempts to articulate a mode of mediation in terms of its origin and end; that is, where the immediate, the present, identity, and continuity are prior to mediation, absence, difference, and discontinuity. For an excellent comparison of distantiation and *différance* see Leonard Lawlor, "Dialectic and Iterability: The Confrontation Between Paul Ricoeur and Jacques Derrida" in *Philosophy Today* Vol. 32/3 (1988): 181-194.

9. Contrary to Habermas' claim, the trace is not a mystical "deeper foundation" or "Dionysian motif of the god making his promised presence all the more palpable...by means of his poignant absence," but an originary absence that opens the possibility of signification. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick G. Lawrence, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1987), p. 181.
10. "The trace is not a presence but is rather the simulacrum of a presence that dislocates, displaces, and refers beyond itself" (SP, 156).
11. Cf. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*, p. 121.
12. Nor for that matter is it alphabetic writing (cf. OG, 3ff., 299ff).
13. For an excellent study of the important theme of crisis in Husserl's work see R. Phillip Buckley's, *Husserl, Heidegger and the Crisis of Philosophical Responsibility*, (Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992).
14. For Gadamer, there is a speculative unity between language and its topic, in which Being presents itself in language and language simply serves to present Being, so that the distinction between Being and self-presentation is not a distinction after all: "*Being is language -- ie. self-presentation*" (PH, 63). Every dialogical exchange and every manifestation in language brings about the actualization of the ideal of language. Any concrete instance of interpretation always returns into the totality of language, thus completing the speculative movement that sublates the multiple into the ideality and unity of the One (TM, 458). Since Gadamer emphasizes the presence of language and its truth in situations of spoken communication and immediate dialogic exchange, he cannot but dismiss writing as derivative with regard to the emergence of Being in the spoken word. Hence, with regard to writing, the hermeneutic task is defined as one of extracting the purity of sense from the impurity of the written word. Understanding has to overcome the self-alienation of language in writing and to facilitate the return to the pure self of language as the transcendental locus where

Being resides (TM 394). As a result, Gadamer's hermeneutics turns into a rescue operation for a self that has been lost in the contingency of the written mark and now asks to be retrieved and restored into its full and unconditioned presence.

15. Cf. Robert Smith, *Derrida and Autobiography*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 130.

16. Boundaries and lines in general are unstable, and Derrida asks us to stay there. Leaving a text on the boundary implies recognizing that texts are disjunctive and delay a resolution of their content. Many of Derrida's texts demonstrate this state of disjuncture through the very form in which they are presented. In his essay "Sending: On Representation," Derrida's doubts and challenges to the hermeneutic conception of representation which suggests that a letter, sending or communication must necessarily have an inviolable origin and destination as well as the perpetual capacity to overcome distance, delay and deviation, requisite for its arrival, are performatively practised in the very form in which this address is given. Before one has even reached the introduction Derrida's address is delayed and disjointed, left on a "limen," and this is not an accidental occurrence. Seven other times in the essay Derrida delays pursuing a question or point, asking us to wait until he again returns to these paths which he has initially opened (SOR, 107, 108, 109, 111, 115, 116, 119, and 125). When he returns, these paths are not followed to their end. Derrida continues to defer their arrival at a destination by returning to them while asking questions which do not presuppose a single answer, and as such do not as yet gather themselves to themselves but rather are left open to arrive at many indeterminate positions. I shall provide a more extensive reading of this essay in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

AWAITING (AT) THE ARRIVAL: DERRIDA READING HEIDEGGER ON REPRESENTATION

Calling brings closer what it calls. However this bringing closer does not fetch what is called only in order to set it down in closest proximity to what is present, to find a place for it there. The call does indeed call. Thus it brings the presence of what was previously uncalled into a nearness. But the call, in calling it here, has already called out to what it calls. Where to? Into the distance in which what is called remains, still absent. [Language, 147]

"Come." The letter has been sent. Life has been called. All that remains is to await its arrival. But what arrives? Not life as presence, for with Derrida's discovery of the play of trace and *différance* at the interior of life what had been credited as immediacy is actually a self-disarticulating distance. Life, for Derrida, does not exist as pure immediacy. Thus, we do not await a moment of simultaneity

or some instantaneous access to life; instead, we await a representation, a representation of life that does not itself fall under the hold of presence.

To a certain extent we have been addressing the question of representation throughout the thesis. When we mentioned in chapter one that Derrida seeks language's other by following the trail of its degradation, instability and uncontainable divisibility we were tacitly articulating an understanding of representation that runs counter to what, Derrida says, the word *representation* has always meant: the "simple -- repetitive or reflexive -- reduplication that *befalls* a simple presence..." (SP, 57, n.6).¹ And in Derrida's engagement with Husserl it is this understanding of representation that he calls into question when he argues that pure interior "representation" in solitary mental life is actually constituted by the catachrestic nature of signs, that is writing or *différance*. So far our study of representation has been indirect, coming to light only when its signifying function is being discussed. In the present chapter we shall focus upon representation in general.

By providing a reading of Derrida's essay "Sending" I will attempt to explicate Derrida's representation of representation. In so doing I hope to show that by circumventing an understanding of representation subordinate to presence Derrida's representation of representation opens the way to an understanding of life that avoids both the sterility and inertness of objectification as well as the hermetic interiority of transcendental phenomenology. If this chapter were an autonomous work a number of other texts could have been studied here in place of "Sending." Being a constituent

part of the thesis, a thesis that is following a trajectory commencing with Schleiermacher, I turn to "Sending" because it is a reading of Heidegger's understanding of representation.

It is Heidegger who has most influenced Derrida's reading of Husserl. Indeed, for Heidegger, life is not simply a given intuitable object which is immediately evident, but a self-concealing movement. Life does not simply lie about (*vorhanden*), ready for inspection. It is elusive and on the move, forever withdrawing, removing itself from view because, for Heidegger, life eludes the transcendental reduction: that is, life is in the world "essentially accessible only in *Dasein*."² My intent with this chapter is not to investigate Heidegger's complicated and diverse engagement with the study of life.³ Instead, I will examine Derrida's reading in the essay, "Sending", of Heidegger's understanding of representation in order to "arrive" at an understanding of life as unrepresentable.

"*Nous sommes en représentation*" (SOR, 107).⁴ Derrida begins his inaugural address to the French philosophical congress dedicated to the theme of representation by situating the word "representation" in the idiom "*nous sommes en représentation*" thereby problematizing our ability to translate the idiom into another without loss or remainder (cf. SOR, 107). In other words, from the commencement of "Sending,"

Derrida problematizes our ability to represent representation. The idiom performs Derrida's point that representing representation is an impossible task since our conceptual frameworks are "marked by the structure and closure of representation" (SOR, 114). Thus, of concern for Derrida is not how does one represent representation, but rather, how do we violate the closure that we are placed, or rather, "caught" (SOR, 113) within. How, in other words, do we not represent representation as a presence?

When Derrida says that representation is caught in a closure, he is suggesting that "our" language and concepts are complicit with a metaphysics of presence that is operative in all texts and hermeneutic practices. Included within the closure is the very attempt to access or draw near to life, as we have seen with Husserl's attempt to call upon life ("life" as self-consciousness is pure presence). The closure of representation entails a system of presence and absence where a precise boundary between the two is delimited, testified to by the fact that absence is defined in terms of presence as its negation.⁵ It is a system where presence is presupposed but withdrawn to a beyond. Within this closure the function of representation is to access this beyond, the other side of the boundary where presence and the metaphysical concepts which are associated with it (viz. life, living speech, nature, etc.) are supposedly located. Representation, then, is the bridge that takes us to the other side. It is a messenger service or postal system that connects, or reconnects, with presence and transports it back (as an absent presence albeit, but a presence nonetheless) to the

near side of the boundary. Thus, while life may not be in proximity to the self as phenomenology suggests, within the closure representation retrieves life from its absence and reinstates it as a presence.

As a postal system, representation would be the passageway from one presence to another, or, as Derrida says in "Sending," representation is understood in terms of a repetitive structure that "substitutes a presentation for another *in absentia*" (SOR, 113). Thus, while representation is not simply there before us like a presence, we desire it to be fully and unequivocally present, or at least to serve as a medium through which to access presence. In Derrida's words, representation is the desire that,

language would represent something, a sense, an object, a referent, indeed even another representation in whatever sense, which would be anterior and exterior to it. (SOR, 113)

It is the desire for a pure beyond or before -- an exterior -- not infected with the vertigo of language which representation presumes exists as it takes for granted the referential status of words, images, meanings and symbols assuming that each constitutes a fixed system of meaning that everyone understands more or less the same way. Representation, then, presupposes the identity of some object, including itself. And consequently, life must be a stable, singular representation, perhaps even

a *gegenstand*: an object, as Derrida says, "brought before man, fixed, stopped, available for the human subject who would possess a representation of it" (SOR, 115).

What Derrida is describing in the initial pages of the "Sending" essay is not so much the boundary between presence and absence as the manner in which representation uses that boundary only in order to dissimulate it in favour of presence. The exterior, the beyond, presence itself, is no longer conceived as exterior. The "closure of representation" comes to designate the interpretation that frames representation, and thereby controls it, in the name of that which is beyond -- presence. Derrida writes:

What is represented by this representation (meaning, a thing, and so on) would be a presence and not a representation. (SOR, 113)

And although it may appear that there are no boundaries in play since representation is taken to be a presence, this representation of representation, which is not a representation, only occurs if firm boundaries are imposed to regulate the movement of representation in terms of presence (cf. SOR, 110). This is the reason for Derrida's description of the system of representation as a closure: it is hermetically sealed. A boundary is imposed that restricts representation to a mimetic repetition where its meaning remains fundamentally continuous, homogeneous and self-identical through all its representations. No parasitical alteration or irrevocable deflecting of the

content or intention occurs. Any representation, then, where the semantic kernel of the content of that which is represented does not remain identical, is not a representation and therefore must be excised from the closure.⁶ As Derrida notes, in order to think what the concept "representation" means in itself -- in order to represent representation -- its various meanings through history (re-presentation, presentation, performance, delegation, resemblance, replication, repetition, substitution, duplication, etc.) in its various modes of uses -- politics, aesthetics, theatre, etc. -- and translations (*représentation, repräsentation, repraesentatio, vorstellung*, etc.) have to be conceived as a unity. In order to represent representation, there must be a simple movement or passage of translation among these terms, a first point from which a sequence or series is plotted where each "representation" leads to the other forming a trajectory as if there would be, in Derrida's words, "no irremediable misunderstanding as to the content and the destination of the message or the sending named 'representation'" (SOR, 111). Representation is addressed and signed, directed and destined in a movement that rivets "destination" to identity. Therefore, no question concerning representation can be broached for which the answer is not already implied -- destined. As representation is addressed and destined, that which it is representing -- life -- must also be relatively stable with a predetermined address of its own. According to this logic, a representation of life is already presumed to be possible, presumed to be a presence.

Having described the closure of representation as a totality of presence where

boundaries are dissimulated, Derrida suggests to this congress that to determine representation as a presence, to represent representation, is in fact to lose representation in the very gesture that tries to grasp it.⁷ The message or letter that says "represent representation" fails to arrive. The question remains: How does one represent representation? How does one represent representation in a manner that will not conform to the system that operates within this closure of representation that reduces representation to presence? How, in other words, do we broach the unrepresentable -- the beyond, the other side of the boundary -- without conflating it with the closure? How do we represent life?

By exposing what the closure of the system of representation excludes, what is unrepresentable -- representation -- Derrida moves us from the focal point of the system of representation -- presence -- to its boundaries. But one does not leave this closure, according to Derrida, by rejecting representation and boundary lines. His hermeneutics aims neither to annul nor to dismantle representation in a sceptical fashion, as he says: the "worst regressions put themselves at the service of the antirepresentative prejudice" (SOR, 119). Rather, for Derrida the problem of closure describes the threshold situation of modernity out of which his hermeneutic practises arise. It is the dual refusal both of remaining within the boundary of the metaphysical tradition and, as we shall see, of the possibility of absolutely breaching that boundary. In order to demonstrate Derrida's complex relation with the boundary I now turn to Derrida's double reading of Martin Heidegger's attempt to think otherwise than from

the interiority of this closure of representation, an endeavour that is itself based upon breaching the boundary.

Being well aware of the dominance the metaphysics of presence has within what he calls "the epoch of representation,"⁸ Heidegger claims in his later work to take a step back from the epoch of representation and the metaphysics of presence by conceiving, as we shall see, this epoch as a dispatch from Being in which Being dissimulates itself. I begin Derrida's reading of Heidegger's attempt to take a step back or beyond the closure, the epoch, the boundary, by considering what is for Derrida a relatively crucial manoeuvre on the part of Heidegger: the unity of *Vorstellen* and *repraesentatio* whose essence, Heidegger will say, is not a representation. I quote Derrida's citational translation of Heidegger's "The Epoch of World-Views" concerning the meaning of *Stellen* and *Vorstellen*:

It is something entirely different that, in contrast to Greek understanding, signifies [*meint*] modern representation [*das neuzeitliche Vorstellen*], whose signification [*Bedeutung*] reaches its best expression [*Ausdruck*] in the word *repraesentatio*. *Vorstellen bedeutet hier*, representation signifies here: *das Vorhandene als ein Entgegenstehendes vor*

sich bringen, auf sich, den Vorstellenden zu, beziehen und in diesen zu sich als das massegebenden Bereich zurückzwingen, to make the existent (which is already before one: *Vorhandene*) come before one as a standing-over-against, to relate it to the self who represents it and in this way to force it back to the self as a determining force. (SOR, 116)

According to Heidegger, *repraesentatio* adequately translates *Vorstellen*: representation of every sort is a matter of a subject's setting-before (*vor-stellen*) himself or herself an object conceived as standing-over-against this same subject.⁹ The modern world dominated by representation (understood in terms of *Vorstellen*), Heidegger says, differs entirely from the Greek world prior to Plato (cf. SOR, 119-20). A line is drawn establishing a before and after. Before the line, before Plato's determination of the being-what-is of what-is as *eidos*, before *repraesentatio* or the *Vorstellung*, is *Anwesenheit*. Neither a presence, nor a *praesentatio*, *Anwesenheit*, Derrida notes, "announced" for Heidegger "a coming to disclosure, to appearance, to patency, to phenomenality rather than the prepositionality of an objective being-before" (SOR, 124). Commencing from at least Plato the being-what-is of what is as *eidos* initiates and determines an After constituted as an history of metaphysics unified around its central carrier, the logic of representation. It describes an entire history of metaphysics that finds its unity in the concept of *Vorstellen*. This is an epochal history in which each "epoch" is an epoché, a holding back of Being --

replacing Being's presencing with a presence according to a representation, a *Vorstellen*. Heidegger, however, is only able to constitute this schema of Before/After because the After -- the history of the representation of Being -- constitutes a unity based upon representation functioning only according to a mimetic role of presenting again. Indeed, from *repraesentatio* to *Vorstellen* a fundamental difference does not exist.

In this After, Being no longer gives itself as *Anwesenheit*. Being is in oblivion, displaced by the metaphysical terms that dominate that epoch: *idea*, *energeia*, *actualitas*, will, representation. These metaphysical terms, however, are actually, according to Heidegger, words of Being and therefore call for a different reading which is not organized towards the reduction of presencing to presence, that is, representation. Instead of simply seeing the history of metaphysics as the eradication of the presencing of Being in favour of various modes of representation, Heidegger sees this history (*Geschichte*) as sent by Being itself.¹⁰ He attempts to think nonmetaphysically by viewing these epochs as dispatches from Being, where it is Being that conceals itself. Thus the epochs belong to the history, or rather, the destiny (*Geshick*) of Being itself. In Derrida's paraphrasing of Heidegger, the reign of the epoch of representation will necessarily have been:

fated, predestined, *geschickte*, that is to say, literally sent, dispensed, assigned by a fate as a summary of a history

(*Geschick, Geschichte*). The advent of representation must have been prepared, prescribed, announced from far off, emitted, I will say signalled at a distance [*télésigné*] in a world, the Greek world, where however representation, the *Vorstellung* or the *Vorgestelltheit des Seienden* had no dominion. (SOR, 119)

According to Heidegger Being initially sent itself to the early Greeks in a primordial way as *anwesenheit* (*which is not a representation*) and now Being has only left behind traces of itself in a series of later dispatches to which the epoch of representation belongs. The essential thing for Heidegger is that since these epochs are gathered together in a *Geschichte*, which originated with a non-representational sending of Being, the *Geschichte* itself, the epochs, the sendings of Being are not a representative process. In Derrida's words:

The *Geschick*, the *Schicken*, and the *Geschichte* of which Heidegger speaks are not sendings of the representative type. The historicity they constitute is not a representative or representable process, and in order to think it we need a history of being, of the sending of being on its way, no longer regulated or centered on representation. (SOR, 120)

These sendings do not belong to a representational structure, for if they did they would have to represent the original sending of Being found in the language of the early Greeks, which according to Heidegger, does not represent beings but lets

them emerge into presence, lets them be in their Being. Language, according to Heidegger, is not man's representation of Being. Rather, language is Being's own way of coming to words in human speech. In George Trakl's poem "A Winter Evening," Heidegger finds an instance of "pure" speech.¹¹ The poem speaks of a snowy evening in which travellers come upon a warmly lit house at vespers time, finding a table invitingly set for the evening meal. But the poet's words -- vesper bells, snow, window, etc. -- according to Heidegger, do not represent objects: "No. This naming does not hand out titles; it does not apply terms, but it calls into the word. The naming calls. Calling brings closer what it calls."¹² Naming is, not the labelling of things, but the summoning up of their presence, an invoking which brings them near. Calling calls up presence: "The call does indeed call. Thus, it brings the presence of what was previously uncalled into a nearness."¹³ It calls to the realm of the absent, summoning it into presence. What is called does not become present in the same sense that objects in a room are present at hand. What is called does not come to present itself as a *Gegenstand*.¹⁴ With this understanding of language in mind, we see that, for Heidegger, the giving of presence, in the epoch of representation, is a "sending" which obscures the non-representative original sending of Being through the very act of reducing presencing to presence. To represent the original "sending" of Being is, tautologically, not to represent it.

As we see with this description of Heidegger's understanding of the history of Being, Heidegger emphasizes a hermeneutics that is not based upon an interpretation

of the writer's understanding of Being but one, rather, that is focused upon an uninterpretive transmission of the destiny (*Geschick*) of Being. The message that Heidegger's Hermes delivers is always one of destiny.¹⁵ The task of thinking -- nonmetaphysically -- is to dismantle the accumulated structure of self-concealments, to think the sending, the destiny and not be taken in by what is sent, not to objectify the sending. It is this giving process, the sending, the destiny which grants to each age its apportioned sense of Being, that can no longer be translated into the language of metaphysics. The task of thinking is to think the essence of representation as unrepresentable:

The essence of representation is not a representation it is not representable, there is no representation of representation.
Vorgestelltheit is not just *Vorstellung*. (SOR, 121)

To think the unrepresented or the unrepresentable, means to think the limit -- the boundary -- of representation.

What is required is thinking not the gift of representation given by Being but rather the sending process itself and for Heidegger this implies breaking with the closure of representation -- stepping beyond the boundary into the original sending of Being as *anwesenheit*. Coupling both Heidegger and Hegel at this point, Derrida remarks:

Both of them think of thought, that of which representation is afraid (according to the remark of Heidegger who wonders simply if we are not afraid of thinking) as something that crosses the boundary or takes a step beyond or to the hither side of representation. (SOR, 134)

By not being taken in, bluffed, by the epochal dispensations of Being, one is able to take a step back in order to find the original giving which gives presence, the original sending which sends Being as presence and which is not a representation. The step back must be a step outside of the boundary of representation, for how would one otherwise gain an overarching position that both locates the original sending of Being and see its history as a destiny? In order for Heidegger to think the boundary of representation, its limit, he presumes that he has to think beyond representation.

In Derrida's reading, Heidegger's step back or outside is possible only if each epoch which is "sent" nevertheless belongs to a more powerful and original sending of Being: that of the unity of a history of metaphysics as *Anwesenheit* (cf. SOR, 130). The original non-representable sending of Being, which is not a presence, organizes the entire history of Being so that for Heidegger, the essence of representation cannot be represented (cf. SOR, 121). But the metaphysical closure of representation that

Derrida describes in the initial pages of "Sending" around the image of a postal system is still in effect here with Heidegger. For what characterizes the postal system, among other things, is its hermetic circularity, and this is what Derrida claims occurs to Heidegger:

[A]n original *envoi* of being as *Anwesenheit*, which translates as presence and then as representation according to translations which are so many mutations in the same, in the being-together of the same *envoi*, then the being-together of the original *envoi* arrives reflexively in a way at itself, the most closely to itself, in *Anwesenheit*. (SOR, 130)

Vorstellen, *repraesentatio*, *idea*, will, and the other metaphysical terms which epochs are constituted around are all, in the end, the same -- a camouflaging of Being's original dispatch as *Anwesenheit*. Heidegger is always able to recognize and find *anwesenheit* in representation, almost as if representation represents or re-presents *anwesenheit*, almost as if this history of destining was necessary or governed by an immanent teleology.

While Derrida recognizes that Heidegger denies that his history of Being is teleological (cf. SOR, 115), Heidegger nonetheless claims that what is appropriate shows itself in the belonging together of epochs which overlap each other in their sequence so that the original sending of Being as *Anwesenheit* is more and more obscured in different ways. But this entails that the destining is the *re-presenting*, in

different and ever more obscure ways, of the original withdrawal of Being; and hence that the logic of representation, which is the central carrier of the metaphysics of presence, governs the very destiny and destining that is to reveal its displacement. According to Derrida then, Heidegger's epochal interpretation of the age of representation as derivative from the era of *Anwesenheit* -- however nonteleological this derivation may be -- is itself dependent upon some unanalyzed model of representation. Even if one grants that Heidegger thinks representation in a manner apart from a representational structure, his step outside of the closure is actually a step within -- albeit perhaps a step never quite taken before. By terminating the re- of re-presentation, re-iteration and infinite re-gress and instead substituting the unity of *repraesentatio* and *Vorstellen*, seen in the unity of the *Ge-schicht* with an original and unified sending as *Anwesenheit* (cf. SOR, 121), Heidegger remains caught within the closure of representation. Derrida writes:

[I]f it had not been the grouping of this *envoi*, the *Geschick* of being, if this *Geschick* had not announced itself from the start as the *Anwesenheit* of being, no interpretation of the epoch of representation would come to order it in the unity of a history of metaphysics...This grouping is the condition, the being-together of what offers itself to thought in order for an epochal figure -- here representation -- to detach itself in its contour and order itself in its rhythm in the unity of a destination, or rather of a "destinality," of being. (SOR, 130)

In the end, for Derrida, Heidegger's emphasis upon an original *envoi* of being as *Anwesenheit* that positions representation as a self-concealed modality of presence still tries to control and enclose representation by the very declaration that the essence of representation is not a representation. Within this history of Being can we, in any way, be assured that a letter, a message, even of destiny, is actually being sent? How is it possible that an original sending of Being, an original plenum of sense in a message, can be obliterated and yet both organize an entire history and be recovered, by Heidegger, with its pristine message intact? Does Heidegger have a special knowledge of representation? Has he already arrived at the arrival before that which is to come? Does Heidegger alone hear life's arrival?

While Derrida reads Heidegger to be in complicity with the very "metaphysics of presence" which he tries to avoid, Derrida's reading does not end at this point. His reading is double. With his other hand, Derrida reads Heidegger "against" Heidegger: the peripheral, the discontinuous elements of chance that fail to be gathered into a destinal history, are read as conditioning Heidegger's epochal history and representation in general. As I have tried to indicate, this exit from the closure does not consist in breaching the boundary of representation, it does not imply a step beyond: the "*pas au'dela*," the "step beyond," is "*pas au'dela*," "no beyond."¹⁶

Rather than stepping outside, breaking the law by breaking the line, one must interfere with the very sense of boundary produced by the text by affirming a differentiated non-linear, non-circular boundary. In a typical manoeuvre, Derrida locates the sources, resources, or re-resources of this enterprise within the same epochal history he used to reinscribe Heidegger back into the closure of representation: *Anwesenheit* and *Geschick*.

Derrida is able to reinscribe Heidegger's epochal history back into the closure of representation because Heidegger proceeds on the basis of a unified *anwesenheit* which organizes an entire message sending system. This procedure, however, is not necessary. As Derrida points out, Heidegger himself recognizes that there is "dissension [*Zwiespalt*]" (SOR, 130) in the great Greek epoch in which Being was primordially sent. We have seen that according to a certain reading of Heidegger, this dissension does not have the last word: the *Geschick* reunifies the dissension in a gathered origin. However, upon Derrida's "second" reading of Heidegger, it is *anwesenheit* which is "already divided and differentiated," marking the "place of a cut, of a division, of a dissension [*Zwiespalt*]" (SOR, 124). It does not mark an origin, at least not in the sense of a starting line that is continuous or unified, to which everything that follows must be related. Rather, it marks a cut of division and discontinuity that fails to be reunited with the imposition of a *Geschick*. Whereas, for Heidegger, *anwesenheit* constitutes a unified origin that articulates an entire postal system where the self-same letter is dispatched, for Derrida, *anwesenheit* is but one

effect of a *Geschick* heard not with the emphasis on the gathering of its prefix but rather with the accent on the dissemination and dehiscence of a sending without address. The *Geschick* itself must be seen as divided, or disseminated.¹⁷

If the *Geschick* is disseminated, then everything begins by referring back to a previous sending, a *renvoi*, which is not terminated with an original sending as *anwesenheit*. With the declaration that the essence of representation is not a representation, Heidegger asserts that a boundary divides representation in its unity from the unity of its truth in the beyond of an original *envoi* as *anwesenheit*. The infinite re-presentation is terminated at the boundary; from there, there is only one more *renvoi* -- sending back, or reference. However, Derrida's emphasis upon the dissension or dissemination within *anwesenheit* means that this referring back is interminable:

[F]rom the very start, at every *renvoi*, there is not a single *renvoi* but from then on, always, a multiplicity of *renvois*, so many different traces referring back to other traces and to traces of others. (SOR, 136)

There are, Derrida says, "always already" *renvois* which are incapable of being gathered together or represented as a unitary epoch possessing a sender, an address, and a destination (cf. SOR, 136).¹⁸ There is no simple outside to the closure of

representation. This does not mean, however, that representation is always a *Vorstellen*, as Heidegger would have it. The *renvois* which refer back to traces of traces means that, for Derrida, representation is ineluctably re-representation -- not as the mere reappearance of an originary presence, but as a generative act of repetition that "precedes" presence itself thereby acknowledging the random, aleatory effects of language that hermeneutics has traditionally sought to repress. Or in Derrida's words:

If there has been representation, it is perhaps...just because the *envoi* of being was originally menaced in its being-together, in its *Geschick*, by divisibility or dissension (what I would call dissemination). (SOR, 131)

Representation is the function of the dissemination of a sending with no address, which itself cannot be represented since the *renvois* fail to be gathered into a trajectory where their referrals begin to form the simple outline of order or implicit unity: returning to an original sender is impossible. The boundary itself is disseminated and therefore cannot be stabilized upon a singular representation. As a result, life never achieves full presence and stability, it never arrives, at least not fully. For inscribed within the structure of every sending, of every coming, is the possibility of non-arrival. The non-arrival is the possibility of every arrival.

Representation understood in terms of *renvois* which refer back to traces of traces, from the start, defers life from presenting itself except as that which has just escaped my grasp. In Derrida's words: "The coming is always to come" (NATP, 153).

Derrida's hermeneutics is unique in the way in which the boundary or limit of any system is exposed. Unlike Heidegger, or at least a certain reading of Heidegger, Derrida does not describe the boundary in terms of an oppositional cut that engenders a Before and After. To do so, Derrida argues, is to reinstate the traditional dichotomies that he wishes not only to avoid but also to laterally displace. It should be obvious that Derrida does not describe the boundary merely as the system's own self-limitation, so that the system can perpetuate itself as a whole. As we have seen, the purpose of "Sending" is to find an exit to the closure of representation. Derrida's hermeneutics can be positioned neither within a closed system of representation nor outside of this system in a beyond that is unrepresentable. His work takes (its) place neither from some pure Before nor from a determined After. Rather, Derrida stays on the boundary, which is neither within the closure of representation nor outside of it. The boundary is not "inside" because Derrida displaces the privileged centres which a representational "closed" structure utilizes. Nor is it "outside," because as Derrida has indicated with his reading of Heidegger, every gesture that attempts to step over the boundary reinscribes itself within the closure. Neither inside nor outside, the boundary, from which Derrida's hermeneutics takes place, is both inside and outside: that is, Derrida's hermeneutics operates on the near side of the boundary

marker in the realm of the representable, but by reading the boundary line as disseminative the system of representation is seen to house a plethora of references that do not have a representative structure which implies a beyond to this system and closure, a beyond Derrida neither attempts to step into nor conceptualize, but rather gives to be felt and affirmed. By disseminating the boundary between representation and the unrepresentable, Derrida has, in effect, opened up all our representational systems to the unrepresentable.

NOTES

1. This is the meaning of representation Derrida says is operative in the phenomenological voice Husserl employs to call life. For, as we have already seen, by applying the transcendental reduction, Husserl brackets exteriority -- understood here as writing -- from the interiority of inner speech, where a certain modality of representation -- *Vorstellung*, the medium of presence -- has uncontested dominion (cf. SP, 49-52). Within this enclosed region, indication and hence signs are excluded from expression as *Vorstellung* independently confers ideality. Thus, Husserl claims to have established the ideal expressive discourse of the silent inner voice that achieves an unmediated and apodictically self-evident presence to itself.
2. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1962), p. 75.
3. For such a study see David Farrell Krell's *Daimon Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992).
4. The translators of this text render "nous sommes en représentation" as "one might say that we represent something" (SOR, 107).
5. This boundary between presence and absence serves as an archetypal oppositional pair that establishes the framework for all subsequent metaphysical discourses based upon concepts derived from oppositional thinking: intelligible/sensible, speech/writing, literal/figurative, etc. These oppositional structures do not coexist on equal grounds; rather, with each binary opposition the side associated with presence is privileged.
6. Ultimately, the closure of representation is a form of logocentrism as representation is repressed and expelled to the "outside" in favour of presence.

7. A shift to Saussure's semiotic dyad of signifier/signified does not significantly change the situation as the concept of the sign itself is based, like representation, on a distinction between the sensible and the intelligible; the signifier exists to give access to the signified and thus seems to be subordinated to the concept or meaning that it communicates. Moreover, in order to differentiate one sign from another, in order to tell when material variations are significant, the linguist must assume the possibility of grasping the signified, making them his or her point of departure.
8. Derrida uses the term "closure of representation" while Heidegger speaks of the epoch of representation -- the two are not synonymous. For Heidegger the epoch of representation describes the modern period where what-is becomes what-is only in representation (understood best as *repraesentatio* or, even better, as *vorstellen*). In contrast, Derrida's term "closure of representation" is not restricted to any historical time period or philosophical conception of Being: representation refers to any act of referral in speech or writing and hence the closure that Derrida describes is an ubiquitous condition.
9. This may be due to the fact that Heidegger sees *repraesentatio* grounded in *reflexio*. Cf. Martin Heidegger, "Overcoming Metaphysics" in *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Richard Wolin, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993), p. 78.
10. *Geschichte* originally meant "providence" or "that which happens" and therefore "a happening." Heidegger, however, wants to go beyond this meaning to its apparent source in the past participle *geschickt*, "sent", from *schicken*, "to send", from which *Geschick*, "destiny", and *Schicksal*, "fate", also derive. As a participial noun *Geschichte* thus means "the sent". *Ge-* is a collectivizing prefix in German, and Heidegger identifies the *Ge-* prefix in *Geschichte* as collectivizing and thus understands history as the collection of what has been sent and delivered into the present: the epochs of Being. These epochs are sendings, a gift of Being, in which the source of the sending withdraws behind the gift.

11. Martin Heidegger, "Language" in *Hermeneutical Inquiry. Volume 1: The Interpretation of Texts*, trans. David E. Klemm, (Georgia: Scholars Press, 1986), p. 144.
12. *Ibid.* p. 147.
13. *Ibid.* p. 147.
14. Heidegger insists that the poem neither describes a winter evening that is already there, nor does it "attempt to produce the semblance, leave the impression of a winter evening's presence when there is no such winter evening." *Ibid.* p. 146.
15. In Heidegger's explanation of the term hermeneutics he emphasizes the bearing of message and tidings that precedes the interpretive process which is, for Heidegger, the original sense of *hermēneuein*. He writes:

Inq. The expression "hermeneutic" derives from the Greek verb *hermeneuein*. The verb is related to the noun *hermeneus*, which is referable to the name of the god Hermes by a playful thinking that is more compelling than the rigor of science. Hermes is the divine messenger. He brings the message of destiny; *hermeneuein* is that exposition which brings tidings because it can listen to a message.

Heidegger no longer conceives the term hermeneutics in terms of interpretive fore-structures or horizons which render Being manifest; hermeneutics is now thought in terms of the destining of Being where the function of hermeneutics is to listen to what is sent our way in the words of the great metaphysicians. Cf. Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz, (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 29.

16. This particular "not-beyond" is perhaps more effectively beyond Heideggerian discourse than any possible beyond.
17. Dissemination functions as a technical term and is used to affirm that every unity is always already divided. Dissemination, the process by which certain plants conceive, emblemized not in the serene unfolding of a singular germ or seed, but rather in the explosion of the pod and the plural scattering of seed, is offered by Derrida as an analogy for the process of writing and as a theory of the text. The emphasis is upon the differential movement of the seminal and not the semantic. For Derrida, the seed, far from being the origin of a system, becomes the principle of dispersal and random combination. Derrida says: "There is no first insemination. The semen is already swarming. The 'primal' insemination is dissemination" (D, 304). Dissemination then has no predetermined pathway, its telos is indeterminate. It should be noted that dissemination should not be confused with polysemy which is a multiplicity of meaning, a kind of ambiguity, which nevertheless belongs to the field of sense, meaning, semantics, and which is determined within the horizon of a gathering together of the *legein*. Dissemination, on the other hand, no longer belongs to the realm of meaning; it exceeds both the semantic and the thematic field.
18. This "always already" is a common occurrence in Derrida's work and serves as a condensation of this multiple project. What is always already at work in texts is a desire for presence and a frustration of the possibility of its gratification. Language promises to make present its subject or object:

In the beginning was the Word [Logos], and the Word
was with God, and the Word was God...And the Word
became flesh, and dwelt among us. (John 1:1, 14)

Rather than controlling meaning, defining it, making it present, words either mean not enough or are inundated by signification and mean too much. There is always an excess (and therefore a loss) of signifying potential that cannot be boxed into even the

linguistic or semiotic model of the sign. This arises because of distance and iteration, as Derrida says when he both recalls and rewrites John's words in *The Post Card*:

In the beginning the post, John will say, or Shaun or Tristan, and it begins with a destination without address, the direction cannot be situated in the end. There is no destination...within every sign already, every mark or trait, there is distancing, the post, what there has to be so that it is legible for another,...The condition for it to arrive is that it ends up and even that it begins by not arriving. (PC, 29)

The point Derrida is making is the impossibility of conveying presence through a medium or post. To do so would be to make the address or destination and legibility of a message unique, that is, illegible.

EPILOGUE

An exhaustive and comprehensive reading of Derrida's life-philosophy would span across the fields of psychoanalysis, literature, aesthetics, ancient and modern philosophy, and virtually all of Derrida's texts. This thesis, then, is a necessarily restricted treatment of the topic. In the thesis, I have attempted to provide a reading of Derrida's life-philosophy that focuses in a particular field, that of hermeneutics, and in questions that are of concern to hermeneutics. Some of these questions, which I broach chapter by chapter, are: intentionality, phonocentrism, logocentrism, immediacy, interiority, liminal fields, representation and the unrepresentable. By means of these questions, I move, with Derrida, both thematically and chronologically, through selected figures and texts of the hermeneutic tradition.

As "hermeneutics" and "life-philosophy" are closely related in Derrida's work, the centrality that hermeneutics holds for this thesis did not arise arbitrarily. For one thing, this relation stems from Derrida's suggestion that a certain philosophy of life evolves historically out of the hermeneutic tradition. I attempt to begin to examine this emerging life-philosophy by analysing the construction by Schleiermacher and Dilthey of a "matrix of life and language" around the themes of intentionality, phonocentrism and logocentrism. What I have attempted to demonstrate in the early

pages of the thesis is that a principle question in modern hermeneutics is the question of life, and that we have to read Derrida's work on intentionality and phonocentrism "back" into the texts of Schleiermacher and Dilthey. Where the life-philosophy of hermeneutics receives its fullest expression, however, and at the same time where Derrida's life-philosophy is most explicitly worked out, is in his sustained and concentrated reading of Husserl's understanding of life as presence. I take up Derrida's reading of Husserl in the central part of this thesis, and as central to the thesis. I suggest here that Husserl's understanding of life acts as a foil to that of Derrida. In the fourth chapter of the thesis, I turn to Derrida's reading of Heidegger, or more specifically, of Heidegger's understanding of representation which, I argue, bears importantly on the topic of life-philosophy.

Just how these preceding four chapters relate, and what main points they establish as to the nature of Derrida's life-philosophy, are matters I hope to clarify and bring to some tentative conclusion in these final pages of the thesis. I will concentrate on five traits that characterize Derrida's life-philosophy, beginning with the relationship between life and language.

Throughout the thesis, indeed in every chapter, this relationship has been broached. We have seen that for Derrida, as for Schleiermacher and Dilthey, life forms a matrix with language. Language is the site from which the annunciation or "arrival" of life itself is made. However, the role language plays in Derrida's matrix is different from that of Schleiermacher's or Dilthey's. For them it is the medium that

provides entrance to an author's unique intentionality from which his or her "life" can be accessed. This is the case, as we have seen, because language, in the form of speech, is regarded to be in proximity to the inner "truth" of the subject's consciousness. As an author's intentions and subjectivity are transmitted and stored in the spoken word, by recovering an author's speech the hermeneuticist is in proximity to the author's "life." Thus, for Schleiermacher and Dilthey, language is seen as a vessel containing and preserving an individual's "life."

For Derrida, however, the passage through language is dangerous. As both material and ideal, language, the sign in general, is irreducibly subject to both catastrophes and equivocations, it is catachrestic. It cannot not imply discontinuity and as a result does not preserve intentionality. As Derrida says in *Limited Inc.*:

In order to function, that is, to be readable, [language] must have a repeatable, iterable, imitable form; it must be able to be detached from the present and singular intention of its production. (LI, 20)

Thus, for Derrida, contra Schleiermacher and Dilthey, one does not go to the text to find a life that exists prior to it: Derrida does not analyze an author's speech to access his or her unique subjectivity. Instead of seeing language as an hermetic vessel, language for Derrida is open. It is open to the totally other through its very catachrestic and alterity-producing nature that thwarts intentionality from governing

the sense of any utterance. Thus, for Derrida, life is accessed through the totally other which, in its catachrestic nature, language goes toward.

From Derrida's concern with language we can turn to the problem of accessing life in its immediacy. This is the second important trait of Derrida's life-philosophy. One of the significant points in Derrida's reading of Husserl is his reinterpretation of the transcendental reduction Husserl employs to be in the presence of experience as experience. As we have said, for Husserl, the transcendental reduction inscribes a line between empirical life and everything associated with self-alienation and transcendental life -- the life of self-consciousness and self-presence. Husserl draws this line in order to isolate the living present, the life of consciousness where immediacy resides. This is a basic point of Husserlian phenomenology in Derrida's reading. His reading, however, does not stop at analysis of this point, it is but his starting point. Upon Derrida's "phenomenological" analysis in *Speech and Phenomena* this boundary which separates the empirical from the transcendental also unites them through the auto-affective dimension of experience about presence. Thus, for Derrida, undergirding Husserl's concept of life is the unity of presence. Life divides itself between the transcendental and empirical, but at the same time, through the construction of a liminal field based upon interiorization and auto-affection, by dividing itself "life" unites the transcendental to the psychical and physical in presence. The entirety of Derrida's reading of Husserl rests upon the claim that the transcendental reduction has been inadequately interpreted as a differentiation that is

at the same time a non-differentiation.

For Derrida the movement of difference that Husserl articulates at the heart of life, the auto-affective dimension of experience and presence, is irreducibly inadequate to itself. The living present for Derrida is not the consciousness of immediacy but, rather, the consciousness of difference. Consequently, life is not analogous to self-consciousness. As our reading of *Speech and Phenomena* disclosed, the liminal fields Husserl employs to constitute this unity in the form of an hermetic interiority are in fact structured, like auto-affection, by a logic of *différance* where interiority incorporates a minimal degree of exteriority. No pure transcendental reduction is possible: "life" incorporates "non-life." Upon Derrida's reading, the transcendental reduction (interpreted as trace -- "the enigmatic relationship of the living to its other and of an inside to an outside" (OG, 70)) rather than providing the passage to the interiority of life as presence and immediacy shows us that no such passage exists. This point has ramifications for Derrida's entire life-philosophy.

Since life as presence does not exist, life cannot be opposed to death: this is a third important point. A clear-cut opposition distinguishing life and death cannot be found in Derrida's life-philosophy. Instead of opposition, life and death are, according to Derrida, integrally related. We saw that life has an essential link, not to speech (understood as the container of presence), but rather to the carrier of death, the putatively secondary, inauthentic proxy called writing. This is because writing disrupts self-presence. Thus, the call to life, our attempt to access life, is not an

attempt to arrive at a full presence. It is a conclamation, an attempt to think life in its non-oppositionality to death. With this conclamation the oppositionality of the words "life" and "death" are subverted as life becomes inscribed within the general problematic of writing.

With life placed within the general problematic of writing, any attempt to access life, to get a hold of it, to represent it, is to lose it. This is the fourth trait I want to highlight. Being structured by trace and *différance*, Derrida's understanding of life precludes a static, stable monolith. But this is what happens in representation as the disseminative effects of writing, its aleatory catachresis, become harnessed. Life then is unrepresentable, it can only be "felt" through our attentiveness to language's dissemination. As we have said previously this does not imply that life, for Derrida, fails to be coextensive with representation. On the contrary, life and representation are irreducible, provided that representation is understood apart from its subservience to presence. In other words, coextension arises when the dative or vocative dimension of language stands up against language's deterministic, attributive, speculative, descriptive or accusative dimension. The call says "Come!" That's all. It is a demand to be attentive to a certain dissymmetry or movement of self-dislocation operative in language, a dissymmetry that is the condition of possibility for a response to the call of an other. This leads to the fifth point.

Although this final point can be derived from the work we have already done in this thesis I have not as of yet made it explicit: life, for Derrida, is an ethical

relation. To fully develop this point one would have to devote an entire study, since, as with his engagement with "life," Derrida addresses ethics in virtually all of his texts.¹ All that I want to highlight here is that the theme of ethics in Derrida's work manifests itself in his life-philosophy, a point that may not be immediately evident if one thinks of ethics in its traditional determination. Indeed, if life is unrepresentable, how can a law, principle or moral rule be derived from it? But Derrida does not understand ethics in terms of a universal prescriptive claim upon human activity. Instead, ethics is understood in terms of respect for alterity.

In the end, whether discussing the impurity of language or how the ideality of meaning always bears the trace of an exteriority that cannot be reduced, it is alterity that plays an organizing function in Derrida's life-philosophy. This organizing function becomes explicit in *Specters of Marx*, one of Derrida's more recent texts, as the question of life becomes a question of ethics. Derrida begins with a question he says is "ethics itself" (SM, xviii): How does one learn to live (cf. SM, xvii)? His response could be used as a concluding statement to this thesis: one learns to live

only from the other and by death. In any case from the other at the edge of life. At the internal border or the external border, it is a heterodidactics between life and death. (SM, xviii)

Instead of concentrating upon understanding life through the interiority of one's self-

consciousness and presence, Derrida stresses life as a relation to the other where the other's alterity is not compromised. One learns to live, one approaches life, he says, not from the "inside" of life at its interiority but from an edge, a line, where as we have already mentioned the other is encountered. For at the line the other can neither be reduced to a pure interiority or cast off to a pure exteriority. Rather, left on the line the other calls "Come." Indeed, our conclamation to life, "Come," is multiple. It comes from the other, who has always been there already. "Come" calls for a response that is itself responsible, a response where one gives oneself over to the effects of alterity, giving a "chance" to the other by leaving it on the line.

Derrida's understanding of life upholds this ethical relation. For, as we have seen, the interruption of presence depends in some sense on the other to which we say "Come." Thus being structured by alterity, life, for Derrida, responds to the call of the other. Why else does language bear an opening, a non-closure, that can interrupt itself and point to a language beyond language bidding us to "Come," if not that language is a response to the other where the other precedes and perhaps "transcends" language? The call to life, "Come," is both a call to the other and a call from the other. It is an interminable call for which our response must, necessarily, never fully arrive.² In Derrida words:

And you are, my love unique [] the proof, the living proof precisely, that a letter can always not arrive at its destination, and that therefore

it never arrives. And this is really how it is, it is not a misfortune, that's life, living life, beaten down, tragedy, by the still surviving life. For this, for life I must lose you, for life, and make myself illegible for you. *J'accepte*. [PC, 33-34]

This phenomenon is to be celebrated and accepted. *J'accepte* (I accept) Derrida writes and, at the same time, performs. For "*J'accepte*" is a signature of Derrida's as "*J'accepte*" can be heard as "*Jacques sept*" (Jacques seven).³ To quote Ulmer: "Derrida renders himself unreadable...precisely in order to affirm life."⁴

While I have not consciously attempted to leave this thesis open to the other through a decomposition of my signature I have, nevertheless, tried to respond to the call of the other. Indeed, the writing of this thesis has been for me a practice in ethics. I have tried to approach the texts under discussion in such a manner that results would not be predetermined. I find this to be an extremely difficult task, one that always commences with a tremendous sense of agony and loss as I thoroughly struggle to gently do the violence which is mine of "breaking" into a text. In the writing of this thesis I have come to see that this difficulty is not dissimilar to the problem of investigating life. The success or failure of this enterprise is not for me to decide. It is up to others, persons presently alive and those who are yet to come, to determine if my wanderings have been faithful to a manner of writing that proceeds as if it is lost. Yes, I wander. Wander *je suis*.

NOTES

1. In his book *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas*, Simon Critchley interprets Derrida's work as installing an ethical demand.
2. As Clark says: "One cannot *approach* the other as other except, paradoxically, by affirming its alterity in terms of an approach that would be an intensification of our distance from any approach." Timothy Clark, *Derrida, Heidegger, Blanchot: Sources of Derrida's Notion and Practice of Literature*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 136.
3. Both Derrida's surname and given name consist of seven letters.
4. Gregory L. Ulmer, *Applied Grammatology: Post(e)-Pedagogy from Jacques Derrida to Joseph Beuys*, (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1985), pp. 143-4.

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