The Infinite Subject:
The Transcendence of Subjectivity from Descartes to Derrida

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to describe how the concept of the subject and subjectivity, in its necessary relation to the concept of infinity, is envisaged in the work of Jaques Derrida. His idea of deconstruction has challenged accepted notions of the subject, giving rise to new ways of describing the production of knowledge and meaning. Thus his interpretations of the subject, in its various forms, have been used to construct a representation of the subject which cannot be reduced to its traditional conceptualisation.

The thesis consists of a series of "deconstructive" readings based on Derrida's earlier, more theoretical essays on the interpretation of the subject and subjectivity. This set of readings is meant both to describe the logical possibilities of thinking the concept of the subject offered by deconstruction, and to trace the movement of thought that Derrida's early writings instigate.

The thesis consists of an introduction which outlines the theoretical problems and approaches to thinking the concept of the subject and subjectivity. The main body comprises four sections, the first being a short conceptual history of the subject from Descartes, Kant and Hegel. The second describes the possibility of establishing a relation of the subject to an objective world, and centres on Husserl's concept of the phenomenological subject. The third describes the possibility of establishing an objective sense in relation to subjective thought, and deals with Foucault's socio-historical account of the Cartesian Cogito. The fourth describes the possibility of providing a true description of the subject's meaning in a reading of Lacan. The thesis concludes with a description of the necessary relation of the concept of the subject to the concept of a transcendent infinity, and how this relation makes possible, and is more "original" than, traditional conceptions of the subject.
## Contents

**Introduction** .................................................. 5

- Knowing What Someone Means .................................. 5
- Reading the Concept of Subjectivity .......................... 7
- The *Diffréance* and Trace of the Subject .................... 13
- The Concept of the Subject ..................................... 23
- A Rough Guide to the Thesis .................................. 27

**Section I: The Subject’s Collapse: Descartes, Kant and Hegel** .... 33

1. Descartes’ Path ............................................... 33

   - Reason’s Demand on The Cogito .............................. 33
   - The Cogito’s Flight, and The Fiction of Truth ............ 37

2. Kant: The Transcendental and The Transcendent ............... 43

   - Cogito, Knowledge and Belief ............................... 44

3. Hegel: The Profit of Phenomenology ............................. 52

   - Hegel’s Understanding of Kant .............................. 53
   - The Master and the Slave .................................... 58
   - The Economy of Truth ....................................... 67

4. The Aporias of the Subject .................................... 70

   - The Question of Method: “Deconstruction” ................ 74
Section II: The Transcendence of the Subject’s Exteriority

Part I: A Spatial Shadow of the Transcendental Subject ........................................ 80

5. What Husserl omits ............................................................................................. 84

6. The Meaning of Being ....................................................................................... 89

Displacing the Cartesian Subject .......................................................................... 91

7. The Practical Nature of Consciousness ......................................................... 92

The Breakdown of Theoria and Praxis ................................................................. 96

8. Space, Time, and Consciousness ..................................................................... 100

Dasein’s De-severance ....................................................................................... 101

Dasein’s Directionality ....................................................................................... 108

9. The Destructuring of Consciousness ............................................................... 111

Part II: Husserl’s Phenomenological Subject ..................................................... 114

10. Derrida’s Critique ............................................................................................ 114

11. Husserl’s Project ............................................................................................. 127

Phenomenological Speculation ........................................................................ 129

12. Transcendental Reduction and Objectivity .................................................. 133

The Suspension of Judgement ........................................................................... 135

The Apodicticity of the Reduction .................................................................... 137

13. Transcendence in the Phenomenological Subject ......................................... 140

14. The Cogito’s Expression ................................................................................ 146
Section IV: The Truth of the Subject's Transcendence

Part I: Freud's Truth ......................................... 214

26. The Compulsion to Repeat .................................. 215
   The Play of Life and Death .................................. 217

27. The Abyss of the Unconscious ............................. 221
   The Platonic Determination of Mimesis .................... 224

Part II: The Subject of Confrontation ........................ 232


29. The Confrontation ......................................... 237
   The Fiction Of the Psychoanalytic Frame ................. 238
   The Reductive Effect of the Frame ....................... 239
   The Truth of the Frame .................................... 244

30. The Subject under Analysis ................................ 249

31. Summary of Section IV .................................... 252

32 Conclusion .................................................. 254

Bibliography .................................................... 272
Introduction
Knowing What Someone Means

One of the underlying motivations for writing a thesis on the subject and subjectivity is the difficulty which many people, including myself, have in knowing or understanding what someone else means, or even what I myself mean. This problem is never simply a theoretical one, for it affects most areas of our day-to-day living. There are, for example, the practical difficulties of getting on with someone when you don’t speak their language or share their customs and practices. Or, the commonplace misunderstandings which arise from misread letters, misinterpreted gestures or misheard tones of voice. There are also the more formal questions about whether and what we can know or understand in general, and upon what basis this knowledge is founded.

In the Western tradition of modern philosophical thought this problem is approached through the concept of the subject. This concept was first formulated by Descartes in terms of the judging subject of the ego cogito ergo sum. One of the major reworkings of the concept of the subject was undertaken by Kant in terms of the ideal transcendental subject. The thought of Spirit in Hegel represents a translation of the transcendental subject, and, in this century, it is taken up by Husserl in terms of the phenomenological transcendental subject. These major transformations of the concept of the subject probably mark out the scope of Western understanding in general. For, on a lesser scale, the concept of the subject forms an almost unquestioned basis for most theories of knowledge, communication, and understanding, for example, in Habermas’s theory of ideal communicative
situations, or Searle’s theory of speech acts. The knowledge acquired by the positive Sciences can be said to rely to a great extent on the general division between subject and object, for, in the absence of such a division, we could hardly conceive of a scientific object.

Over the last hundred years both the relevance and the dominance of this concept have been intensely challenged by different thinkers, not least Nietzsche and Heidegger. Structuralists such as Barthes and Foucault have attacked the subject as being nothing more than an effect of underlying structures of language or discursive practices. Such so-called post-modern thought has often defined itself in terms of its attack upon and disdain for modernity’s conception of the sovereign subject. Has not the reign of the subject, in all its various forms, finally been dashed to the ground in the critical wave of post-modern thought? Has not the edifice of Metaphysics, which supported these structures, finally collapsed, leaving the philosopher new tasks and new ways of thought to explore? Is the concept of the subject still useful?

However, such hypotheses on the collapse of the concept of the subject present certain problems in their internal logic. If all knowledge is essentially metaphysical, as certain self-proclaimed “metaphysical” systems of thought hold, such as Kant’s, Hegel’s, or, more recently, Husserl’s, then this relation must be problematic. This would then mean that there is necessarily a difficulty in “knowing” of this “collapse,” or of knowing anything at all.

To think that one knows of such a “collapse,” whether of the “subject,” the “author,” or of “metaphysics,” is not the same as the thought

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1 Cf. Habermas, J., The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity.
of such a collapse, nor as actually knowing of such a collapse. Thought, represented in the subject as the Cogito, is not necessarily the same as knowledge, and both are traditionally differentiated from thinking that one knows, in other words, belief. Until we have thought through the relation between these formations, we are, as Heidegger said, nowhere near to thinking the end of either "metaphysics" or the "subject." It is certain that, unless we understand knowledge in a radically different light, we cannot speak here of knowing such a relation. This thesis is an attempt to approach and, if possible, to describe, the "subject" of such a "knowing," in the relation between the Cogito and its reflection in traditional modes of knowledge.

Reading the Concept of Subjectivity

Given this general problem of conceiving knowledge in terms of the concept of the subject we are immediately faced not simply with a problem of method, but with a problem of thought itself. How are we to think, and to describe the subject? In what ways does this concept offer itself to a reading which does not merely repeat the traditional ways of conceptualising it?

In Being and Time, Heidegger articulates this problem by reminding us that the Greek understanding of human existence as Zoon logon echon, which Heidegger translates as "that living thing whose being is essentially determined by the potentiality for discourse" [BT p.47], has, together with the guiding thought of the logos, dominated Western thought since Plato and Aristotle. Almost every subsequent attempt at understanding the nature of human existence translates this thought, without placing it fundamentally in

3 Heidegger, M., Being and Time. Referred to as BT.
question. Heidegger takes the example of both Descartes and Kant, and their formulation of the subject as the essence of human thought, as the ground of rationality. He holds that both take over the definition of man as animale rationale, without ever questioning the nature of the being designated by such a term.

For Heidegger the thought and question of Being is forgotten by modern Western philosophy. Thus, in Being and Time, he urges a return to this forgotten question, arguing that, without an understanding of what the word “Being” means, especially in the form of the third person “is,” we cannot hope to understand what we mean to say when we state that we know what something “is.” Asking the question of Being is the work of metaphysics, and the metaphysics characterised by the Cartesian concept of the subject must forget to ask what the being of the subject is.

However, it can be plausibly argued that the trajectory of Heidegger’s reading of metaphysics also takes us away from the question of the subject, eclipsing it in the more general question of Being. If we wish to stick to this question of the subject then it is more profitable to turn to other contemporary readings of the subject and subjectivity, which have attempted to describe the conditions and relations of the subject without reducing it to either the substantial or the ideal subject of the tradition.

One of these interpretations is provided by Emmanuel Levinas. In Totality and Infinity, Levinas launches an attack on Western philosophy’s concern for Being, whether in the mode of a forgetting of the essence of Being, or of a remembering of this forgotten essence. This, he argues, provokes a war of competing interpretations, all striving in the name of the

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4 Levinas, E., Totality and Infinity. Referred to as TI.
“true” meaning of Being to establish a totality, which is how Being is always interpreted in the West. For Levinas the concept of Being, understood as totality, is always envisaged or represented in terms of war. He thus holds that Western philosophy can only understand the world in terms of war, a war which it perpetuates:

War does not manifest exteriority and the other as other; it destroys the identity of the same. The visage of being that shows itself in war is fixed in the concept of totality, which dominates Western philosophy. Individuals are reduced to being bearers of forces that command them unbeknown to themselves. The meaning of individuals (invisible outside of this totality) is derived from the totality. The unicity of each present is incessantly sacrificed to a future appealed to to bring forth its objective meaning. For the ultimate meaning alone counts; the last act alone changes beings into themselves. [TI p.21-22]

He launches this attack upon Western philosophy through a radical defence of subjectivity, attempting to formulate a thought which would be other to that of the war fought in the name of a totality of Being. This defence of subjectivity is based upon a reading of the Cartesian subject in its necessary relation to a transcendent infinity which both precedes and exceeds all predicative determination. In other words, the relation of the subject to a non-constituted idea of infinity forms the condition of the subject’s power of judgement, its ability to ask, and try to answer, the general question “what is?”, but without itself ever being legitimately subject to this question. For Levinas, the relation to a transcendent infinite, expressed in the subject’s idea of the infinite, is prior to, and exceeds, the question of Being. It is upon this basis that he builds his defence of subjectivity against the search for an objective totality of Being, positing this relation to infinity as a more radical relation to Being:

The harsh law of war breaks up not against an impotent
subjectivism cut off from being, but against the infinite, more objective than objectivity. [TI p.25-26]

If we return to Descartes, we see that his idea of infinity was nothing other than the idea of God. This idea has, as Heidegger teaches us, committed Western thought to a Christian theological grounding, in which the thought of Being is inescapably bound up with the thought of God, stamping the Western thought of Being - metaphysics - with the character of what Heidegger terms onto-theology. In this light, how could a defence of the subject take one beyond Western metaphysics? Surely it stays strictly within this domain, and even reinforces it?

However, in his essay on Levinas, "Violence and Metaphysics," Derrida offers wholehearted support to Levinas's reading of Descartes' subject in its irreducible relation to infinity. This is perhaps even more remarkable than Levinas's attempt to dislodge the thought of Being from the perspective of the subject, because, elsewhere, Derrida deconstructs what he perceives as traditional theories of the subject, for example, in Husserl, or in Lacan. In both cases he argues for the more or less Nietzschean view that the subject is a fiction.

On the other hand, in his reading of Foucault's Madness and Civilisation, he supports the traditional interpretation of the Cartesian Cogito, that its meaning both exceeds and precedes all possibility for error, which means that it is, in itself, infinite, and transcends all predicative determination. Derrida, like Descartes, Kant, and Husserl, argues that the meaning of the ego cogito is prior to all historical determination.

This, however, appears incoherent. Either the subject is constituted in

6 Foucault, M., Madness and Civilization. Referred to as MC.
relation to a possible transcendent infinite, or it is itself, in its thought, transcendent and infinite. Both perspectives, however, are arrived at within the grounding of an objective knowledge; they are the necessary conditions of Reason's *epistemē*. This means that Reason itself was, in its very foundation, rent between two unassimilable summits of transcendence.

This is what Derrida's strategy of deconstruction is designed to trace. It differs from Levinas's point of attack in that it performs a constant dialogue with and within Reason itself. From within the structure of this abyss the strategy of deconstruction can, from a certain perspective, be said to be the attempt to allow the language of Reason, its syntax, to resound with tones other than that of the voice of Reason's authority and totality. This differs from Levinas's attempt, in so far as Levinas opposes to "the objectivism of war a subjectivity born from eschatological vision." [TI p.25].

Levinas appears, at least in terms of tone or style, to want to replace the authority of Reason with the authority of a radical alterity which would necessarily disrupt this totality and this authority. Although it would be right to say that one can never be so certain with Levinas whether this is really so, one can read explicitly in Derrida that for him it is not.

Derrida's strategy is guided by two insights. The first is that Reason itself cannot be simply reduced to a totality, and that not all of its concepts are exhausted by such a reading. This means that the disruption and dissemination of totality is a necessary conjunction already at work within the language of Reason (the *logos*), and is promoted by certain concepts which always exceed systematic totalitarian matrices such as Being as a whole, or Presence. This is why, for example, he promotes the re-reading of ancient texts, not simply because the mimetic and dissembling play of Reason is more evident in these texts, but also because the repression of this play is also more
evident.

The second insight is his conception of the nature of the sign. This revolves around the possibility of conceiving language in general. Derrida's understanding of language revolves, on the one hand, around the relation between conceptuality in general, and the concept of language in particular. On the other hand, but simultaneously, it orientates itself around the relation between the concept of language and what this concept is able to designate or mean, and what it cannot designate.

Although this appears paradoxical, it is necessitated by the logic of the concept of language in general. For Derrida, the language of reason has always interpreted the meaning of Being in general as Presence. If this is so then there "is" meaning within this language only insofar as meaning is present, or presentable. The concept or idea of something is thus the (presented) meaning of that thing, i.e. the presentation of what it "is." Any concept must designate both a unity and a totality, for it must conform to the law of non-contradiction. According to this view something cannot have a meaning if it is simultaneously present and not-present, for then it would mean both something, and nothing. Meaning is thus always present both as a unity, and as a totality. Thus the concept of language, with respect to its conceptuality, must designate language in terms of a meaning which is both unified and total. Amongst all other concepts, however, that of language presents a unique case. For, no matter what else is designated by the concept of language, it has always been traditionally understood as the medium in which meaning is articulated and communicated. This means that the concept of language necessarily limits or modifies conceptuality in general, because language is conceived as that within which the meaning of every concept, and the meaning of conceptuality itself, is articulated. Derrida, in Of
Grammatology, puts it so:

However the topic is considered, the problem of language has never simply been one problem among others. But never as much as at present has it invaded as such, the global horizon of the most diverse researches and the most heterogeneous discourses, diverse and heterogeneous in their intention, method and ideology. ... This inflation of the sign “language” is the inflation of the sign itself, absolute inflation, inflation itself. Yet, by one of its aspects or shadows, it is itself still a sign: this crisis is still a symptom. It indicates ... that a historico-metaphysical epoch must finally determine as language the totality of its problematic horizon. It must do so not only because all that desire had wished to wrest from the play of language finds itself recaptured within that play but also because, for the same reason, language itself is menaced in its very life, helpless, adrift in the threat of limitlessness, brought back to its own finitude at the very moment when its limits seem to disappear, when it ceases to be self-assured, contained, and guaranteed by the infinite signified which seemed to exceed it. [OG p.6]

The Différence and Trace of the Subject

This understanding of language in relation to conceptuality provides us with a lever with which we can pry open a reading of the subject without simply either negating or ontologising it. Derrida’s grasp of language forms the basis of his interpretation and use of Heidegger’s (but also Freud’s) idea of the trace [die Spur]. If the relation between language and conceptuality is such that the traditional conception of meaning (as the infinite and transcendent signified) reveals itself as inadequate in its application, then neither this inadequacy, nor the system of conceptuality in which it is situated, can be revealed in terms of this order of conceptuality.

7 Derrida, J., Of Grammatology. Referred to as OG.

Derrida argues that because conceptuality is the order of knowledge in general, then neither its structure, nor its inadequacy in fulfilling what it sets out to achieve, can be objects of knowledge. This non-adequation, and the system of conceptuality which it simultaneously indicates and eradicates, are not signalled within the order of either sensibility, or of intelligibility. This does not mean, however, that this economy of indication and eradication is illegible. The non-adequation of the system of conceptualisation indicates this system precisely through its eradication or crossing out. This movement and structure contained within the relation between language and conceptuality is what Derrida understands by the arché-trace, which he describes with the help of his neologism différance. Before seeing how Derrida can help with a reading of the subject we should take a brief look at this word.

Différance is, above all, not a "real" word which already exists in a given language. It is made up, and therefore belongs to the realm of the imaginary or the possible. One can, as Derrida does, explore the possible meanings of this "word" through its imagined relations with similar words. In this way he describes how a given material sign can take on meaning in the first place. He therefore constructs a semantic analysis in which different meanings gather around différance, in order to trace the conditions of possibility of meaning in general.

The first important similarity is with the French word différence. This similarity is acoustic, in that there is no difference in the pronunciation of the two words. Here Derrida quickly shows that there are certain necessary differences in language whose meaning exceeds all forms of sensible presentation, whether auditory or visual. Derrida holds that these differences can only be indicated, or traced, in non-phonetic writing, the structure of which exceeds its simple presentation. Thus, the difference between these
two words, an “e”, or an “a”, cannot be heard. If one resorts to a phonetic writing in order to articulate this difference, then one will fail. This difference can neither be seen nor presented, because it cannot be pronounced.

This means that, contrary to a whole tradition in which writing was always understood as both secondary to speech and representative of phonetic utterances in which meaning first became present, non-phonetic, non-meaningful marks play a constitutive role in the presentation of meaning. If a “meaningful” difference is to be found between différence and différence (and, from the point of view of writing, there is obviously a difference) then this difference can only be signalled non-phonetically through the difference between the “e” and the “a”. More generally, language is made up in part from marks which in themselves have no meaning, and only take up meaning in relation to other differentiated marks. For example, the mark “-” in itself strongly resists the identification of a meaning, although in a chain of differentiated signifiers one or more meanings may well be possible.

Derrida thus attempts to set différence within such a chain of signifiers, an attempt which he playfully terms a semiotic analysis. Since there is no acoustic difference between différence and différence, he begins with the Latin root of the verb form of différence - differre, from which the verb différer is derived. In French this verb has two distinct meanings, which, in English, have separated out into two words - to differ and to defer.

These two meanings themselves refer to at least three other meanings. To differ can either mean that two objects differ from one another, or that one differs in opinion. In French this is expressed in the difference between les différents (different things) or les différends (different opinions), both of which sound exactly alike. Both indicate distance between two elements. To defer, on the other hand, has the temporal sense of putting something off until
later.

The point is that the French word *différence* cannot refer to either the polemical or the temporal sense of *différer*, whilst *différence* can, because the "a" corresponds to the present participle *différant*. This active form, however, cannot itself refer to *différence*. The ending of *différence* performs a neutralisation of the active form, without rendering the word simply passive. The "ance" in French denotes a suspension between active and passive forms, creating, as it were, a middle voice between *différer* and *différence*. What, however, does this highly speculative and tendentious analysis show us? And, how can it help with our analysis of the subject?

It is within the context of conceptuality and truth that *différance* takes up its play, and delimits the possibility and impossibility of the classical notions of truth and conceptuality in general. As we have pointed out, Derrida puts forward the thesis that the matrix in which truth, conceptuality and meaning function is presence. He holds that our conceptions of truth and conceptuality always refer to and use this term in order to maintain their general validity as determinative ways of thought. Presence is referred to firstly in the sense of a making present in the clear presentation (expression and demonstration) of the original meaning of something. This gives rise to the idea of truth as the indubitable demonstration of the meaning of something in-itself - what it essentially "is." Secondly, presence is referred to in the sense of coming into, or nearing, the presence of this meaning, in which truth is understood as the adequation of a representation to the concept or idea which it is meant to represent. This means, in terms of judgement, that something is true only when its meaning is made present, or transparent, and that the expression of this meaning is adequate to its concept.

Derrida's point is that this assumes that we already know what
presence itself means, that its meaning is, in itself, present to us. Drawing heavily on Heidegger, Derrida argues that the meaning of this term always refers to other terms which are never present. For example, in Heidegger’s analyses of the presence in terms of a temporal modality he shows that we cannot understand the meaning of the present without a prior conception of the future. The meaning of the future, however, is such that it is never present, it is always “yet to come.”

This suggests, however, that conceptuality in general, *insofar as it relies upon the meaning and value of presence*, cannot offer accurate descriptions of what our world means for us. If truth is always understood in terms of the presentation of meaning, and yet the meaning of this presentation can never be presented, then the conception *cannot* be true. Derrida thus argues that maintaining that conceptuality can offer us a true picture of our world and ourselves amounts to an act of repression in which a structurally necessary undecidability is forcefully kept from view. This amounts to maintaining that a false picture of the world is true, and that its meaning, and ours, is wholly and transparently, in some way or other, presentable.

Derrida thus proposes the term *différance* in order to describe this movement of repression and the decidability of meaning, but without repeating the violence of this repression. He does not offer us an alternative conception of the structure or meaning of the world or ourselves with this term. However, the structure of *différance* is such that it simultaneously exceeds a presentation of its assignable meaning or meanings. This movement of excess, which he terms writing under erasure, simultaneously describes or traces the difference between the notions of spatial difference, differences of opinion, and temporal deferral, all of which are necessary if we are to describe anything at all. Without the idea of spatial difference, in other words,
the relation or referentiality between two points, we could not describe the world in terms of a realm of distinguishable things “outside” of us. Without the idea of differences of opinion we could not describe people in terms of different points of view. And without a notion of temporal deferral we could not describe anything in terms of duration or “passing away” for we could not describe an “interval” of time.

The movement of différance traces all of these meanings, and does so more adequately than the traditional concepts of identity and difference, which can only refer to discrete present identities, that is, to one present meaning at a time. This is because all of these conceptions are simultaneously necessary to a description, all are at work in every description, and yet the meaning of each concept can never be fully presented, because each refers to the others. The economy of différance is such that its meaning is dependent upon elements which can never be present. This demonstrates that there is necessarily a non-appropriable surplus to the value of presence. In terms of the traditional notions of causality this surplus would be an effect of presence which actually causes or produces presence as an effect itself. Since, however, the very language of causality begins to break down, Derrida prefers to think of this effect as a trace of that which cannot be reduced to presence, but is necessary to its articulation.

This suggests that insofar as we can understand and conceive this “breakdown” of truth and conceptuality, we are forced to admit that these values are undergoing a transformation. It goes without saying that this transformation lies beyond our present ways of categorisation and description, and well beyond the scope of this thesis. But we can go some way to understanding the nature of this transformation, following the footsteps of Derrida. For, what his various readings of Western thought
suggest is that whilst certain values and concepts, such as presence, are losing their hold, there always have been certain values and concepts within this tradition which resist this dominance, and throw it into question.

It would be impossible here to trace all these conceptual resistances, or even all of those which Derrida has himself thematised. What this thesis will provide is rather a set of localised readings of the idea of the subject and subjectivity. The aim of these readings will be to describe or trace certain repressional effects and conceptual resistances which organise themselves around the representations of subjectivity. In order to do so these readings are based upon and orientated around certain of Derrida’s interpretations of the concept of the subject.

It is Derrida’s earlier, more “theoretical,” work which is concentrated upon in this thesis and forms the background for its thought. There are two reasons for this.

The first is in order to investigate the logical or philosophical possibilities of thinking the concept of the subject. In part, Derrida’s initial work consists in exhausting, and thus disseminating, the conceptual scope of traditional philosophical logic, whilst remaining within this scope. In other words, in his earlier writings, he takes the logical language of philosophy to the limits of its sense, where it can no longer support its intended meaning.

In so doing he also provides “theoretical” descriptions of how and why this is possible. These descriptions “show,” or, more precisely, stage, how relations of meaning in language either necessarily exceed their logical characterisation, i.e. presentation, or how logical characterisation depends upon elements which cannot be presented in its terms.

Thus, through following Derrida’s earlier descriptions of the concept of the subject and subjectivity we should be able to trace its logical limits and
possibilities.

The second reason concerns the specific texts chosen. These are "Speech and Phenomena: Introduction to the Problem of Signs in Husserl's Phenomenology,"9 "Cogito and the History of Madness,"10 and "Le facteur de la vérité."11 On the one hand these texts are thematically linked. They orientate the description of the subject offered in the thesis in that they cover the three relations necessary to the conception of the subject and subjectivity. They deal respectively with the necessary relation to a transcendent exteriority within the self identity of the subject; the necessary transcendence of the thought of the subject to judgement; and the relation of the subject and subjectivity to truth.

On the other hand, the concept of the subject described through our readings of these texts serves as a matrix through which we can trace at least one of the movements of the thinking of the subject in Derrida's writing. These three texts cover a time span from his first major publication in 1967 ("Speech and Phenomena"), to The Postcard, published in 1980.

Within this time the beginnings of a transformation in Derrida's analytical language may be witnessed. Within the scope of these three texts we can witness a move from a more or less philosophical language, which remains within the logical strictures of the Western tradition, towards a language which, whilst not strictly psychoanalytical, utilises certain "concepts" and a certain movement of thought at work within Freudian

9 Derrida, J., "Speech and Phenomena" in Speech and Phenomena And Other Essays on Husserl's theory of Signs. Referred to as SP.

10 Derrida, J., "Cogito and the History of Madness," in: Writing and Difference. Referred to as CHM.

11 Derrida, J., "Le facteur de la vérité," in The Postcard From Socrates to Freud and Beyond. Referred to as PSF.
psychoanalysis. Thus the themes running through Derrida’s later work, such as his idea of a logic of the spectre,\textsuperscript{12} the idea of memorial debt,\textsuperscript{13} and what one might term a phenomenology of personification and autobiography,\textsuperscript{14} although made possible, and organised by the thought of \textit{différence}, can be seen to owe much of their discourse to the more speculative moments of Freud. In his earlier work, Derrida states that “logocentric repression permits an understanding of how an original and individual repression became possible within the horizon of a culture and a historical structure of belonging.”\textsuperscript{15} Yet it seems impossible to articulate this general state of repression without Freud’s prior formulation of this concept. On the other hand, Derrida shows that this formulation remains indebted to the philosophical tradition, and indeed springs from it.

This move is not a change of direction in Derrida’s thought, for the earlier texts provide the theoretical background which necessitates this transformation. It is not that Derrida adopts a psychoanalytic discourse in order to replace philosophical discourse and its concepts. In other words, he does not engage in a psychoanalysis of the philosophical tradition in order to overcome this tradition. It is rather that he is concerned with the problem of writing in a language which is other, or goes beyond, the strictures of classical logic, without repeating and reinforcing these.

Derrida shows that the practical application of psychoanalytic theory

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{12} Cf. Derrida, J., \textit{Spectres of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning, & the New International.}
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Cf. Derrida, J., \textit{Of Spirit: Heidegger and The Question.}
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Cf. Derrida, J., \textit{The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation.}
  \item \textsuperscript{15} Derrida, J., “Freud and the Scene of Writing,” in \textit{Writing and Difference}, p.197. Referred to as FSW.
\end{itemize}
is itself guilty of uncritically taking up traditional conceptuality and repeating the violence he finds evident within it. He makes it clear that its concepts "without exception, belong to the history of metaphysics, that is, to the system of logocentric repression .... ".[FSW p.197]

However, in his readings of Freud, Derrida also emphasises the fact that certain elements in psychoanalysis resist reduction to this history of metaphysics, despite their collusion with it. He shows that Freud explicitly, although not always successfully, tried to distance his discourse from the philosophical tradition, and intended psychoanalysis to be a discourse "other" to that of philosophy. This double reading effectively demonstrates that psychoanalytic discourse represents a continuation of the traditional philosophical discourse, but marks a point at which this discourse begins to exhaust itself. Here rational discourse is forced to refer to a movement of thought which exceeds its classical formulation. This occurs through the undermining of the status of its terms so that the explanatory truth of its concepts is called into question, and are opened to "new" interpretation, and to "other" ways of articulating thought.

The thesis attempts to trace this movement of thought, within Derrida's writing, through the way in which he conceives the subject. It does this by assembling a series of readings orientated around the three essays by Derrida. These readings have a double function. Firstly they serve to background and deepen Derrida's portrayal of the subject within his writing. Secondly, through imitating Derrida's style of deconstructive reading, and by concentrating upon certain themes implicit within these readings, they serve to indicate the necessary movement of the thought of the subject in deconstruction.

Thus the analytical language of the thesis follows and condenses the
change in Derrida’s language. At the same time it traces the necessary “historical” development of this language. It progresses from the philosophical understanding and articulation of the subject in the first sections to the psychoanalytic understanding and articulation of the subject in terms of structures of repression in the last section.

In effect we see how the psychoanalytic concept of repression, and its surrounding discourse, develops from the philosophical discourse in which the concept of the subject is embedded. We further see that, understood from the perspective of deconstruction, certain movements within psychoanalytic discourse resist their reduction to the history of metaphysics and can then be used to provide a re-reading of the concept of the subject.

The Concept of the Subject.
Let us return to the original question, which was how to know what someone means. How do I know that my representations aren’t simply illusions? Whilst I might accept that my representations are real for me, I have no reference point from which I could validate this reality. Thus I might remember meeting a friend yesterday. It is indubitable that, in the instant I have this thought, that I feel as if I remember meeting a friend yesterday. What is not ascertainable is whether this memory itself is true. I could only validate this reflective judgement on the assumption that my memory is based upon the existence of a real external world. Since, from this perspective, the reality of my thought - the certainty or truth of its existence for me - transcends the reality or existence of the world, I cannot prove the existence of an external world.

On the other hand, if I accept the existence of an external world, then I must also accept that its meaning transcends my thought - it exists outside
and beyond my subjective judgement. One might argue that this cannot be proved and we should therefore resign ourselves to the madness of Solipsism. However, there are good reasons for positing such a transcendent meaning beyond subjective thought. 1. If there were no reference to an external transcendence, then we could have absolutely no conception either of memory, or of error. I could never even posit a continuity between myself as someone who really thought that then, or who thinks now, in this instant. I could not even posit a distinction between myself as judging subject, and the "world," or representations, which form the content, or object, of my judgement. And, if all my representations were true for me, I could have no conception of an error of judgement. 2. As Descartes convincingly argues, since we conceive of ourselves and our thought in terms of error, and yet have an idea of perfection, the source of this idea cannot be the subject itself. I must make reference to an "outside," the meaning of which transcends my judgement. What this transcendence "is," remains, of course, beyond the scope of my reflective judgement.

As we have said, these two moments of transcendence within the thought of the subject present a seemingly impassable paradox. The concept of the subject must envelop and explain both of these moments together if it is to present its structure and meaning in truth. The philosophical tradition has attempted to tackle this logical conundrum from two angles, the first which we can term Cartesian realism, in which the reality of the objective world is assured by a transcendent God, the second is Kantian idealism, and its various forms. Idealism denies the objective reality of the world, holding that its meaning is solely derived from the subject. The true meaning of an objective world can only be presented in terms of its subjective transcendental conditions of possibility.
The first, however, relies upon the theological assumption of the existence of a benevolent divine being. As we have said, Descartes convincingly demonstrates that cognition must refer to a point or horizon "outside" the subject’s scope of judgment if the subject is to be able to even think that it can determine or distinguish itself from an objective world. The meaning of this horizon is, however, transcendent to the subject’s determinative or reflective cognition. This means that the subject cannot say what this horizon "is." Yet Descartes argues that the possibility of an infinite being proves its existence, and that, as infinite, it must be good in relation to the subject’s finite judgement, the truth of which it thus assures. This is an assumption which, obviously, can never be proved. The belief in the truth of my judgements upon this "objective" world remains simply a belief.

The second relies upon the assumption that the transcendental conditions the subject’s judgement are known to be fulfilled. This assumption can likewise never be proved. If one attempts to do so one runs into an infinite regress, because the condition of the subject’s identity and faculties of judgement constitutes knowledge i.e. the conditions of demonstration and validation of meaning, in general. Kant argues that this condition is the transcendental schema in which a concept can be applied to an empirical intuition. Such schemata must be present both in the pure intuition of the categories and in empirical intuition. The pure intuition of time is the general condition for both the categories of judgement and empirical intuition in general. The schematism must, however, be differentiated from both the categories, and the images of empirical intuition in order that it perform this mediation. If it were not then we could not term time a pure intuition, for we could neither differentiate it from a category, applied to objects, nor an appearance in empirical intuition. However, by what means can we
differentiate it from either a category or an empirical intuition? We can neither know, nor represent time "in itself" and yet it must be present in both intellectual and empirical intuition. Can there be such a thing as a pure intuition of time, and if not, what secures the transcendental deduction, and the application of the categories to objects? In Nietzsche's words:

> it is high time to replace the Kantian question 'how are synthetic judgements *a priori* possible?' with another question: 'why is belief in such judgements necessary? That is to say, it is time to grasp that, for the purpose of preserving beings such as ourselves, such judgements must be believed to be true; although they might of course still be *false* judgements!'

This is the situation which Derrida means to indicate when he says that the infinite signified no longer serves as a guarantee for the language which seeks to express it, namely the language of metaphysics. Descartes might have been able to believe in the infinite meaning of God to secure and assure the subject's judgement. Kant might have believed in the subject's infinite meaning over the world, in order to assure the meaning of its judgement. For Derrida, however, the language of metaphysics, in which this belief is couched, can no longer support the presupposition of an infinite signified. The coherence of the belief in such an infinite signified has begun to break up, and together with it, the coherence of the belief in truth. The economy of *différance* traces the breakdown or dissemination of this belief in an infinite signified by interrupting the self-identity of presence, reminding it, as it were, of its debt to an unassignable, non-appropriable, non original source, which would be neither present nor absent, but nonetheless necessary.

We can witness this breakdown in the subject in terms of its relation to an infinite meaning, either in terms of the meaning of its thought as

ultimately transcendent to all other meaning in the world, or in relation to the meaning of a transcendent externality, whether it be God, the world, or the empirical object. If we trace such a breakdown we should also be able to indicate what is at stake in the belief in the idea of the subject, in terms both of what it promotes and what it represses. Derrida’s exemplary readings of the meaning and role of the subject and subjectivity in different areas of the human sciences, coupled with his use of such “concepts” as the trace, writing and *différance*, can help enormously in understanding the nature of this “breakdown.”

**A Rough Guide to the Thesis**

The analyses above have indicated the constellations of the meaning of the subject we need to explore in order to explicate its relation to the breakdown of the concept of the infinite signified. These are: the referentiality, history, and truth of the subject; in relation to the interiority and exteriority, sense and non-sense, and proper and improper embodiment of subjectivity respectively. I have thus chosen to analyse Derrida’s three texts: “Speech and Phenomena: Introduction to the Problem of Signs in Husserl’s Phenomenology,” “Cogito and the History of Madness,” and “Le facteur de la vérité,” which are organised around these themes.

These readings, however, need to be placed within a historical and theoretical background. This will be provided in the first section of the thesis, which will consist of close readings of Descartes, Kant, and Hegel. These will be orientated around the paradoxical relationship the subject is obliged to maintain to what Derrida has termed the infinite signified. I have renamed this concept the transcendent infinite, in order to emphasise its theological connotations in Descartes, its paradoxical role in Kant, and Hegel, whilst maintaining the connotation of an absolute meaning indicated by the infinite
signified. The purpose of these readings is to indicate that the “breakdown” of the transcendent infinite is not restricted to contemporary thought concerning the subject and subjectivity, but is rather inherent in the working of the language of Reason itself, over and above historical categorisation.

From these readings I will draw out a theoretical matrix within which the readings of Derrida can be understood. Thus, in the reading of Descartes’ *Meditations*¹⁷ I will try to show that there are two necessary relations between the concept of the subject and the idea of the transcendent infinite. The first is in the necessary transcendence of the subject’s Cogito itself, the second in the necessary relation of reflective judgement to a transcendent infinite. I will argue that the idea of the transcendent infinite must exceed reflective judgement since its meaning can never be presented, and yet forms the condition of possibility of reflective judgement. I will then argue that such a conception cannot be distinguished from a belief or fiction.

The interpretation of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*¹⁸ will put forward the hypothesis that the enigma or aporia created by the two moments of transcendence within the concept of the subject is repeated by Kant’s conceptions of time and space as pure intuitions. I will argue that the pure intuition of time, understood as the condition of possibility of the application of the categories to empirical intuition, presents an impossible condition to fulfill. I will argue that to know of its fulfilment would be a transcendent insight because we cannot demonstrate the possibility of a “pure” intuition of time separately from a “pure” intuition of space. Without this demonstration we cannot show that time is a condition of possibility of space in general, and

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¹⁷ Descartes, R. *Meditations*, in *Discourse on the Method and The Meditations*. Referred to as MFP.

¹⁸ Kant, I., *The Critique of Pure Reason*. Referred to as CPR.
thus the condition of the application of the categories to empirical intuition. I will thus argue that the distinction between the ideal temporal and spatial manifolds also amounts to a belief or fiction.

In the reading of Hegel I will concentrate upon the Lordship and Bondage section of the Phenomenology of Spirit¹⁹ in order to demonstrate the movement of truth in the Hegelian conception of the subject and its history. I will argue that the two moments of the transcendent infinite within the subject are taken up by Hegel in terms of the subject’s formal identity and its substance. I will argue that these two moments cannot be reconciled in Hegel’s historical conception of the phenomenological “we,” the establishment of which means the attainment of Absolute Knowledge for the subject. This is because the phenomenological “we” must be able to determine the movement of consciousness as an illusion which it appropriates and overcomes. I will argue, however, that the concept of death, as represented by the moment of Lordship, exceeds any determinate meaning, and thus cannot be an illusion of consciousness. I will thus suggest that the writing of a substantial history of the concept of the subject itself amounts to a process of belief or fabrication.

The final chapter of this section will then highlight the structural aporias met in the preceding descriptions of the concept of the subject. The logic of these aporias will be used to suggest that the “concept” of the subject cannot itself be legitimately reduced to a determinate structure. This first section should therefore serve to undermine the idea that we are presenting a singular true narrative of the concept of the subject in the following sections.

¹⁹ Hegel, G., Phenomenology of Spirit. Referred to as POS.
The remaining sections of the thesis will then consist of the readings of the three Derrida essays. These texts respectively concern themselves with Husserl’s understanding of the phenomenological subject in relation to language, where we will be concentrating upon his *Cartesian Meditations*; the social-historical account of the subject and reason offered by Foucault in *Madness and Civilisation*; and the practical application of the theoretical apparatus of the subject to fiction in psychoanalysis as described by Lacan in his analysis of Poe’s *The Purloined Letter*. My readings of these texts attempt to condense part of the play of the meanings of the subject within Derrida’s work up to 1980, in order to show how the subject is transformed in its “deconstruction.”

I will attempt to show that Husserl’s concept of a world is dependant upon a prior reference to an indeterminate, transcendent horizon. I will argue that Husserl unsuccessfully attempts to reduce this point of indeterminacy in meaning to the intentional structures of the phenomenological subject. I will attempt to show that the reduction of this reference to determinative horizons or concepts of time and space represents a repression of this referentiality.

In the second interpretation of Derrida and Foucault I will attempt to show that it is impossible to reduce the transcendence of the subject’s thought - the Cogito - to an external historical structure or narrative. Such a structure would secure the sense of the subject’s judgement, just as Descartes uses the idea of God to secure this sense. I will argue that the positing of the truth of such a narrative cannot be legitimated, i.e. is a belief or fiction, and amounts

20 Husserl, E., *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*. Referred to as CM.

to a repression of the Cogito's necessary transcendence.

In the final essay, on Derrida's critique of Lacan, I will attempt to demonstrate the role that the value of truth plays in the repression of the transcendent infinite through the determination of those moments of indeterminacy within the concept of the subject as moments of fiction.

In addition to this I will situate these readings within a series of interpretations which both draw upon (or even imitate) the conclusions of Derrida's arguments, but also indicate the immediate wider theoretical background within which his texts are written.

Derrida's reading of the vocative subject in Husserl will thus be backgrounded by a radicalised interpretation of the role of Dasein's primordial spatiality in Heidegger's *Being and Time*. This is in order to deepen the understanding of Derrida's notion of spacing. I will try to show how Heidegger's notion of spatiality interrupts the idea of the presentation of meaning in Dasein's world, in the movement of temporalisation. I will then try to show that reference to an open or indeterminate horizon forms the condition of determinate forms or ideas of both space and time.

Derrida's analysis and criticism of a historical reduction and totalisation of the Cogito by Foucault will be preceded by an interpretation of Heidegger's reading of subjectivity in Nietzsche.²² It will be shown how Heidegger demonstrates that the concept of the subject and subjectivity makes a necessary reference to a prior but indeterminate concept of justice, against which reflective judgement can be shown to be illegitimate. It will be suggested that this is why the relation of reflective judgment to the infinite can be termed repressive. It will then be argued that he similarly reduces

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²² The reading will be of Heidegger's "The Word of Nietzsche: God is Dead," in: *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Referred to as TWN.
Nietzsche’s madman, or, more precisely, madness of thought, to the epochal history of Being, in just such a manner. This is to deepen the understanding of Derrida’s notion of an ahistoricality within the subject’s Cogito.

The reading of Derrida and Lacan will be preceded by an interpretation of Freud’s *Beyond The Pleasure Principle* in order to show the collapse of the strict divisions between the theoretical and the practical, truth and fiction, fact and fantasy, which the emergence of the “concept” of the unconscious entails. This is in order to background Derrida’s critique of Lacan’s division between the real, the symbolic and the imaginary, and to enable a reading of the subject in terms of the “concept” of repression.

The conclusion to the thesis remains part of the last section. This is due to the speculative nature of the thesis, in which the conclusion directs the reader back to a re-reading of the subject in terms of the structures of repression, without reducing the subject to these structures. The final thoughts on the concept of repression will attempt to indicate how this concept can be used to refer to “new” movements of thought.

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23 Freud, S., “Beyond The Pleasure Principle” in: *On Metapsychology*. Referred to as OM.
Section I: The Subject’s Collapse: Descartes, Kant and Hegel

1. Descartes’ Path

Descartes formulated the subject in the form *ego cogito ergo sum*, in the *Meditations*. This is proposed as a response to the problem of finite human knowledge in relation to a transcendent infinity.

Descartes, however, had already formulated the demand in his *Discourse on the Method*. Here he describes how he wanted to have a set of rules which could guide him with assurance through life:

> I always had an extreme desire to learn to distinguish true from false in order to see clearly into my own actions and to walk safely in this life ... But, after spending several years studying thus in the book of the world and seeking to gain experience, I resolved one day to study also myself and to use all my powers of mind to choose the paths which I should follow. [DTM pp.33-34]

We would do well to follow him a little way down these paths. Descartes perceived the problem of the subject’s objective judgement as the problem of negotiating infinity. He expressed this problem in terms both of overcoming the stoic doubt found in Montaigne’s *Essais*, and of a necessary relation between the subject and a transcendent infinity.

**Reason’s Demand on The Cogito**

Perhaps Descartes’ major insight was to posit the infinite, the transcendent, in relation to a finite human capacity for knowledge. Perhaps, as most traditional readings of Descartes assert, it was the perception that deception is a problem which lies at the heart of all knowledge. From this point of view one must overcome the universal doubt which follows from this possibility

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24 Descartes, R. *Discourse On The Method*, in *Discourse on the Method and The Meditations*. Referred to as DTM.
of being deceived, before one can be assured of the truth of one’s knowledge. What is often neglected, however, is the role that Descartes’ love of fictionalising plays in his philosophical theses.

The question Descartes poses in the Discourse is: by what method can he choose the right path in life, and be assured of its truth? If he follows someone else, a teacher or mentor, he cannot be certain in himself because he has not yet reached a choice for himself:

Having considered how a given man, with his given mind, being brought up from childhood among the French or Germans becomes different from what he would be if he had always lived among the Chinese or among cannibals; how, down to our very fashions in dress, what pleased us ten years ago, and will perhaps please us again before another ten years are out, now seems to us extravagant and laughable, I was convinced that our beliefs are based much more on custom and example than on any certain knowledge ... . Thus I could not choose anyone whose opinions it seemed to me I ought to prefer to those of others, and I found myself constrained, as it were, to undertake my own guidance. [DTM p.39]

In order to arrive at a decision Descartes is forced to become his own guide. If the subject is to be free of all prejudice then it must be alone in its judgement. He must secure his judgement in his own right, as his own, and as true.

This is what is forced on the subject in the face of the possibility of an all-pervading sensory and intellectual deception. A subject’s judgement cannot be fully justified before it has undergone this trial. On the other hand, the necessity of undergoing this trial, which takes Descartes to the very summit of thought with the statement ego cogito ergo sum, does not come out of the blue. He is constrained by the possibility of being deceived by the world. Not only that, for he must, at some stage, return from his summit, into this world. This is because his decisions and judgement can only make sense
insofar as they negotiate this possibility.

However, if he has been coerced, that is, compromised by a force, to be alone in his decision, as the basis of a just decision, then this choice can never be entirely free, it can never come entirely from Descartes himself. This decision as to what is right can never answer the demands which set it in motion, but can only repress or hide this demand and will thus always be unjust, no matter how rigorous its course is.

If Descartes wants to reach a justified decision about the course of action he should take, then we see that he is subjected to two simultaneous, but incommensurable, demands. On the one hand, he must demonstrate that his thought transcends any possible deception. In other words, he must show that the Cogito is infinite. The ego cogito ergo sum is the expression of this infinite transcendence. The problem arises when thought must make judgements upon the world.

That is, thought must re-enter the world in order to make judgement upon it. Even though the Cogito asserts its own indubitability in the face of the possibility of absolute deception, this says nothing about the world, or the objects within it. If the subject realizes that it can be deceived in its reflective judgement about the world, then it must submit itself to a transcendence external to its judgement. The subject can only have the idea of being deceived if it already has the idea of a perfect state from which it is deceived, and this idea, as Descartes says, cannot come from a being whose state is finite, i.e. subject to error. This positing of the possibility of transcendence interrupts the transcendence of the Cogito. The sovereignty of the subject’s judgement and decision in the face of this transcendence can no longer be maintained.

In both cases, in that of the demands made upon the Cogito itself, and
the demands made upon the Cogito in relation to the world, the subject must stand in a relation to the transcendent infinite. And yet, neither case can be logically related to the other. Either the Cogito is transcendent to the world, the subject’s representations of which are then simply a mode of thought, or, the world is transcendent to the Cogito’s judgement, in which case this judgement is questionable. The subject’s decision - Descartes’ decision - is impossible.

This path, however, is a strange one:

I consider myself very fortunate to have found myself, from my early youth, on certain paths which led me to considerations and maxims out of which I have constructed a method ... . I shall be very happy to reveal in this discourse the paths I have taken, and to present my life as in a picture, so that each may judge it. ... So my intention is not to teach here the method which everyone must follow, if he is to conduct his reason correctly, but only to demonstrate how I have tried to conduct my own ... . But, putting forward this essay as nothing more than an historical account, or, if you prefer, a fable in which, among certain examples one may follow, one will also find many others which it would be right not to copy. [DTM p.28-29, my italics]

Thus the Discourse on the Method offers us a thought which would remain both true to the demand for a rightfully directed reason - a reason which would remain just - and beyond that of the Kantian criticism of knowledge. It would remain just in that it would refuse to accord itself a prescriptive right over others. It would not proffer a judgement about the righteousness of its own truth for others. The knowledge that would be offered would be of the order of fiction, not truth. In Descartes, this demand for justice - for the incalculable, the transcendent infinite - almost overrides the attempt to justify human judgement and knowledge.

I say almost overrides, because, of course, the Meditations represents just such an attempt. However, we can detect a certain hesitation when he
comes face to face with the transcendent infinite within the structure of the 
*ego cogito*. Thus we can read this fact of the possibility and impossibility of 
the subject's decision or judgement not only in the *Discourse on the Method*. 
We can also read it in the more rigorous, ostensibly more philosophical, 
*Meditations*.

**The Cogito’s Flight, and The Fiction of Truth**

The argument of the *Meditations* is so well known that it probably does not 
strike us with the radicality of its thought. However, we can still learn much 
from it, especially when the subject is posited in terms of the relation of the 
Cogito to infinity. In the *Meditations*, this relation to the infinite is expressed 
*twice*: first as the relation to the fiction of the evil demon, and secondly as the 
relation to the infinite being *par excellence*, namely God. For the Descartes 
of the *Meditations* these two moments must remain separate. The deceiving 
demon is evil because deception is both morally bad, and finite. It cannot, for 
instance, deceive me in my existence. God, however, as infinite, is also 
ininitely good, and, therefore, *would not* deceive us, and thus secures the 
truth of our carefully founded judgements.

These two moments, however, can be seen to be one and the same. If 
we follow the text closely, it is the idea of God which first appears in the role 
of a possible deceiver, within the scope of his infinite power. Descartes has 
already shown that judgements about the corporeal world can be thrown into 
doubt, through his example of dreaming. He then goes on to ask about the 
certainty of intellectual judgements "which deal with simple and general 
things, without bothering about their existence or non-existence." [MFP p.98] 
These also come into question when he asserts that:

I have for a long time had in mind the belief that there is a God
who is all-powerful and by whom I was created and made as I am. And who can give me the assurance that this God has not arranged that there should be no earth, no heaven, no extended body, no figure, no magnitude, or place, and that nevertheless I should have the perception of all these things, and the persuasion that they do not exist other than I see them? ... It is possible that God has wished that I should be deceived every time I add two and three or count the sides of a square, or form some judgement even simpler, if anything simpler than that can be imagined. [MFP p.98]

The fiction of God as deceiver first gives rise to the fiction of the evil demon as deceiver. Descartes then suspends this thought of a deceiving God by saying “allow that all I have said about God is a fiction” [MFP p.64]. He cannot, at this stage, be certain, and there are obvious reasons for not asserting in public that God is a deceiver.

Instead of taking this risk, Descartes replaces this thought of a deceiving God with the malign demon. However, this substitution is only possible within the opening created by the possibility of deception. This possibility of being deceived rests upon a fiction which describes this possibility. The scope of such a possibility is infinite. When the subject demonstrates its existence in the face of this infinite possibility its meaning effectively transcends any finite determination:

There is therefore no doubt that I exist if he deceives me; and let him deceive me as much as he likes, he can never cause me to be nothing, so long as I think I am something. ... I am, I exist, is necessarily true, every time I express it or conceive of it in my mind. [MFP p.103]

At this absolute summit of thought, “I am, I exist,” the meanings of the subject’s Cogito exist in terms of a possibility, that of the transcendent infinite.

This is why it is not possible to distinguish between the idea of God
and the fiction of the evil demon in Descartes. Both exist in terms of a possibility which is only possible itself in relation to the idea of infinity. The ideas of infinity give the sense of possibility in general. This is because possibility in general represents that which is not determined, and in order to conceive this it is necessary to have an idea which exceeds the determination of its meaning by judgement in general. This idea is infinity. Since both the idea of God and the idea of the evil demon are posited within the locus of the infinite, in relation to the Cogito, neither can be either true or false, good or bad. In other words, they are both fictions, and the Cogito will still have a meaning, or meanings, no matter what this fiction is, so long as it thinks.

Descartes' differentiation of the demon and God thus rests upon the idea that one is malign, whilst the other is good. It is the goodness of God which in the end secures our judgement about the world, and it is this security that is rendered fictional.

It is only within this fiction that one can put forward the hypothesis that there is a deceiving God (or demon), that deception is morally degenerate, that God, as perfect, is necessarily good, and therefore would not deceive us. But, these steps in Descartes argument are only hypothetical - one cannot know whether they are true.

The fiction of the malign deceiver is therefore a fiction within a fiction. This is because the self-exceeding idea of a transcendent infinite forms the irreducible condition of both fictionality and truth. This possibility of fictionalisation - the transcendent infinite - is therefore the condition of possibility of all moral characterisation and judgement, including those which are applied directly to it. In itself, however, it stands beyond such judgements.

However, even if the subject's Cogito has meaning within the
transcendent infinite, and even if we can show that the fiction of God and the fiction of the demon are one and the same, this is only half of the story. It is one thing to assert "I am, I exist," whilst I am thinking this - this is, after all, something of a tautology. It is another thing to assert that this has meaning outside of my thought. If the subject's Cogito is infinitely transcendent, as we have argued, if its meaning lies beyond every finite determination, then how can the subject even conceive that there is a world outside of it, that it is not entirely alone, that it even exists for longer than the blink of the eye of its thought?

With such questions we arrive at the chasm of the subject's relation to the transcendent infinite. We do not have the resources to chart this chasm: the meaning of the relation is indeterminate. We can only leap over it, to see it, as it were, from the side of the transcendent infinite, in which the transcendence of the world is posited.

In the third Meditation Descartes tries to prove God's existence. What concerns him is the validity of his judgements about the sensory world, which he thinks a perfect being, such as God, would always guarantee. He must therefore, as it were, fall back into the world. For whilst the subject's Cogito is indubitable, its meaning, or meanings, being infinitely transcendent, Descartes remembers that other judgments, pertaining to the sensory world, are not. The transcendence of the Cogito cannot explain this fallibility of judgement. It is, after all, infinitely valid:

If I were to consider the ideas [of things outside me] alone as certain modes or fashions of my thought, without wishing to relate them to anything else, they could scarcely give rise to any error on my part. [MFP p.116]

If this is true then the paradox raised is that if I am in error about the world, then how can I be sure that it exists, that there is something outside of me?
Descartes once again returns to a fiction, that is, to a possibility, within which the subject is inscribed, but this time as secondary.

He must show that there is meaning beyond the subject’s Cogito. In order to achieve this he must think of something which the subject can conceive of, but which cannot originate in the subject. In other words he must demonstrate that the ego cogito can never be entirely alone. He must show that it cannot be without a possible external content, a relation to a transcendent externality which guarantees that the ego thinks something:

Suppose some one of my ideas has so high a degree of representative reality that I am sure the perfection so represented does not inhere in myself, either in its own proper form or in some higher form; and that therefore I myself cannot be the cause of that idea: From this, I must conclude, it necessarily follows that I am not alone in the world; there is something else - the cause of the idea in question. [MFP p.82-83]

This idea is the idea of the infinite, of infinite perfection, of God. This excess, the infinite, is the mark of an externality necessary to every decision, to every judgement, every assertion, which the ego can make. The recognition of the finitude of the subject’s reflective judgement means that this idea cannot originate in the subject. Its content exceeds its form. This means that there must be a meaning transcending that of the Cogito. As such it renders an absolutely true and objective judgement impossible, because it transcends the scope of such a judgement. This transcendent infinite, which amounts to the infinite possibility of (the fiction of) a world, thwarts the sovereignty of the subject’s judgement because it exceeds all finite determination.

Any judgement about such a transcendence will thus be of the form “I think” rather than “I know,” and would thus escape possible verification. Both truth and error belong to the order of the transcendent infinite, as does
the point of thought itself, the Cogito, since it can only be established within this possibility which exceeds all definable order.

The transcendent infinite only "occurs" in the mode of possibility, never of actuality. Statements in this mode are thus never "real," or the true expression of a reality. Rather they are of the order of the possible or probable - we cannot know whether they are real or irreal, true or fictional. The problem here is that such statements form the basis in which the concepts of truth, reality, knowledge and, eventually, existence, can be expressed or even thought. This means that, from the perspective of these concepts themselves, an irreducible moment of fictionality must be present in all these concepts, even though what they represent cannot admit to this moment.

However, the fiction of a malign deceiver, and a good non-deceiver, is absolutely necessary to Descartes’ project of establishing a ground for legitimate judgement. Only if this fiction is true can he decide with certainty that his judgement is justified. Yet, because it is a fiction, the truth of which is demanded by the structure of such a decision, it renders this decision impossible. Simultaneously, the possibility of this fiction of the truth - the transcendent infinite - demands of the Cogito itself that it be reckoned with.

This necessity of the transcendent infinite in relation to the Cogito means that the calculable horizon of the Cogito’s judgement is necessarily interrupted by the thought of the infinite. The subject, as we have seen, is always experienced in terms of a radical schism between the transcendent infinity of the Cogito itself, and the transcendent infinity of the thought of the world beyond it. And yet without this thought, this demand posed by the transcendent infinite, the ego could not think!

Thus, the surface of Descartes’ texts is not as uniform as could be believed. The establishment of the Cogito (or Cogitos) in the face of the
transcendent infinite is a thought which disrupts a uniform reading of the Cartesian subject.

2. Kant: The Transcendental and The Transcendent
Kant criticised Descartes for supposing one could be certain only of the existence of the “I.” Knowledge of objects in Descartes rested upon the belief in a material world, the reality of which could not be ascertained. This belief in a material world could not, from the perspective of the subject, be justified. This is because of the structure of thought and judgement itself. Both “I can know what “x” means,” and: “I can’t know what “x” means” require an additional determination, in the form of “I think.”

This is a fact, as Kant points out, which applies to all statements, and forms the ground of all subject rooted epistemology. It presents a problem because while “I know” presupposes “I think,” the reverse is not true. Thus it would appear from a formal perspective that knowledge of the Cogito is from the outset impossible, while this point, impossible to know, forms the condition of knowledge itself. This is what Kant says about this problem:

Certainly, the representation ‘I am,’ which expresses the consciousness that can accompany all thought, immediately includes in itself the existence of a subject; but it does not so include any knowledge of that subject, and therefore also no empirical knowledge, that is, no experience of it. [CPR p.246]

And later:

This proposition [“I think”], however, is not itself an experience, but the form of apperception which belongs to and precedes every experience; and as such it must always be taken only in relation to some possible knowledge, as a merely subjective condition of that knowledge. We have no right to transform it into a condition of the possibility of a knowledge of objects, that is, into a concept of thinking being in general. [CPR p.336-337]
Kant’s solution to this problem has influenced all subject orientated epistemologies since. However, the subject understood in the form of the Cartesian Cogito - the “I think” - still presents major problems to his system of thought. These problems remain despite his innovative understanding of the transcendental subject as the condition of possibility of objective knowledge.

This is because he cannot simply negate this point of the subject - the “I think” - as a formal unity without and before content, because it forms no object which can be subject to objective knowledge. This point can never be experienced, and, according to Kant, there is no objective knowledge without experience. Without this experience, the unity of subject and object in judgement, i.e. the application of the categories to empirical intuition according to the pure forms of intuition in the synthetic unity of apperception, is a hypothesis for which we can have no evidence. At the same time it is a necessary condition of knowledge. This condition rests upon the presupposition that there are objects the appearance of which it is possible to know, and that there is a synthesis of subject and object in judgement. But how can Kant demonstrate that this condition is fulfilled? How can he show, a priori, that objects of our knowledge are appearances synthesised by the subject’s faculties of judgement? Surely the demonstration of this fulfilment lies beyond the scope of the cognitive faculties of the subject, and thus represents a transcendental illusion, or matter of belief?

Cogito, Knowledge and Belief
We can explain this fall into transcendental illusion as follows. For Kant we are able to objectively know phenomenal appearances. These conform to the structures of our understanding. These structures thus form the transcendental
conditions of the subject’s cognition of an object in experience. The transcendental principles, or rules of knowledge, represent the only apodictically true knowledge the human subject can have.

Transcendental principles only legitimately apply to possible objects of sensible experience, and form the a priori conditions of possibility for true judgements about these objects. The logical form of these principles is always "if p then q" where q is always presupposed as the necessary logical condition of p, but not necessarily vice versa. This is of interest within the Kantian problematic when “p” represents a synthetic judgement, and “q” is thus the necessary condition of this synthetic judgement. A synthetic judgement is where two or more heterogeneous elements are unified within a predicative statement of the form “x is y.”

This is, for Kant, the only possible way in which a material extension of knowledge can occur.\(^{25}\) It is through this extension that we can express something true without this expression simply being a tautology (which Kant terms an analytic judgement). The judgement “the table is round” is therefore a synthetic judgement because the scope of both concepts is not necessarily the same. The predicative statement thus represents a material extension of both concepts.

Within the locus of this materiality the question is raised how such a judgement can really be true or false? What is therefore needed is an absolutely necessary (a priori) synthetic judgement, which describes the possibility of the synthesis of sensation with thought itself:

Obviously there must be some third thing, which is homogeneous on the one hand with the category, and on the

\(^{25}\) Cf. Allison, H. E., Kant's Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense, p. 76 for an extended explanation of material extension in relation to synthetic judgements.
other hand with the appearance, and which thus makes the application of the former to the latter possible. This mediating representation must be pure, that is, void of all empirical content, and yet at the same time, while it must in one respect be intellectual, it must in another be sensible. Such a representation is the transcendental schema. [CPR p.181]

The schematism represents one of the most enigmatic and obscure points of the Critique of Pure Reason, but it also plays the central foundational role. This is the hinge upon which all the distinctions which are at work in the book are hung. It is also the point at which we experience the difficulty of establishing the difference between thought and knowledge of the subject, without them falling into a transcendent belief which can be neither true nor false.

Kant holds that this hinge is articulated in the pure intuition of time as the general condition of the synthetic unity of apperception. This possibility of unification forms the a priori ground of all possible objective judgements. Kant argues that without it there could be no objective knowledge at all, which, for Kant, amounts to no meaning at all.²⁶ It simultaneously forms the condition of both inner (purely subjective) sense and outer (objective) sense in the unifying structure of the copula "is," without which no predicative statement could be expressed, and no judgement arrived at.

The problem arises, however, in the cognition and legitimation of the structure of time, understood as the condition of the synthetic unity of apperception. The problem occurs both in the positing of time as the condition of the unity of the manifold in the apperception of "objective" appearance, and in the relation of this unity to the "I think."

²⁶ For Kant the categories have a meaning beyond their sensible application, but this has no relation to an object. The meaning of the pure concepts of understanding is thus "purely logical, signifying only the bare unity of the representations." [CPR pp.186-187]
The condition of possibility of the apperception of the appearance of an outer world, and the objects within it, is the pure a priori intuition of space. Kant holds that we cannot conceive of an appearance in general without the prior intuition of space, but since one can think of space as free of all appearances, this intuition is not dependent upon them. It is rather the pure subjective form of all sensible "outer" intuition, which must be present in every appearance. Since this form must contain an infinite number of appearances or representations Kant argues that it cannot be a concept:

Space is represented as an infinite given magnitude. Now every concept must be thought as a representation which is contained in an infinite number of different possible representations (as their common character), and which therefore contains these under itself; but no concept, as such, can be thought as containing an infinite number of representations within itself. It is in this latter way, however, that space is thought; for all the parts of space coexist ad infinitum. Consequently, the original representation of space is an a priori intuition, not a concept. [CPR. pp. 69-70]

The subject's a priori intuition of space is how Kant tackles the Cartesian problem of the subject knowing an "exterior" material world. In Descartes this problem is resolved by the reference to a transcendent infinite, which is then determined in the belief of a benevolent God who would not deceive us in our perception. In Kant it is our pure intuition of space which brings this reference of the subject to infinity into appearance. However, thinking the spatiality of the subject thus presents something of a problem. Although the thought of space as the reference of a point to infinity no doubt forms the condition of all determined appearance, and all forms of geometry,27 it is

27 Kant is wrong in his belief that space can only be described a priori in terms of Euclidean geometry, which is a determinate description of space. However, his initial idea that there must be a reference to infinity in our idea of space actually serves to explain the (continued...)
difficult to see how this intuition can be a representation present in appearance. As Kant indicates above, it exceeds conceptual determination, so how can Kant say that its representation "is" a pure intuition, which accompanies all appearance? How can space, as the pure form of outer intuition, be determined in appearance, as it must be if the subject is to conceive of an object?

Kant's answer to this is that the representation of space alone could not determine anything. The condition of possibility of its representation, and of appearance in general is time. The manifold of time is the condition of the "inner" sense of the subject, the unity of the manifold of consciousness. Thus Kant posits that the representation of time must accompany every intuition in order that intuition, whether sensible or intellectual, be brought into the unity of apperception, in the subject's judgement: "x is y." The representation of time is homogeneous with both the intellectual and the sensory faculties, yet it is neither a concept nor an empirical intuition. The different determinations of time, in accordance with their ordering of space mediate the categories in a sensible form.

Thus time, and its determinations, form the schemata of the pure concepts of understanding through which the concepts can be mediated or applied to empirical intuition - i.e. determinate forms of space. In order that this be demonstrated, however, it must be differentiated from the two. That Kant thinks this is possible is clear:

27(...continued)

condition of possibility of other geometries. The mathematical description of a Gaussian surface, for example, relies upon the relation between a zero point and infinity, in which geometric relations are described in terms of a tending either towards zero or towards infinity.
The schema is, properly, only the *phenomenon*, or sensible concept of an object in agreement with the category. [CPR p.186 my italics]

In the Transcendental Aesthetic, however, Kant describes the difficulty of perceiving such a phenomenon. The original representation of time is necessarily infinite since it relates to the possibility of an infinite succession. This means that time, like space, must exceed its conceptualisation. Every determinate or conceptual form of time would then represent an illegitimate judgement upon the form of time. Such a determination could only be possible on the basis of the *prior* condition of outer appearance, but as Kant says about time:

It cannot be a determination of outer appearances; it has to do with neither shape nor position, but with the relation of representations in our inner state. And just because this inner intuition yields no shape, we endeavour to make up for this want by analogies. We represent the time-sequence by a line progressing to infinity, in which the manifold constitutes a series of one dimension only; and we reason from the properties of this line to all the properties of time, with this one exception, that while the parts of the line are simultaneous the parts of time are always successive. [CPR p.77]

Thus, we must resort to a spatial metaphor in order to describe the form of its temporal intuition. More importantly, in every determination of time, without which there would be no schemata, and no application of the categories to objects, we must resort to its modification in space. We cannot differentiate the schema of time, or even its pure intuition, without determining it, and this can only take place on the condition of an "outside" already being present. The pure intuition of time is thus already "spatialised," just as space is already "temporalised" when we represent it as pure intuition. In other words: there is no pure intuition of space or time. We could never know of such an intuition, and neither can we justify the differentiation of the two forms of
This fact disturbs the hierarchy of distinctions set up in Kant's epistemology. This is because, for Kant, objective knowledge only arises through the proper application of the categories to sensible intuition. Sensible intuition is always the reference of a judgement to an external, empirical, in other words, spatial, realm of objects outside of the inner intellectual sense and horizon of the subject. If the spatiality of the subject is determined by the subject's inner realm i.e. time; then it cannot in turn to determine the anterior constitutive condition. In other words, the distinction between an outer and inner sense is already dependent upon a spatial determination. The subject's synthesis of its spatiality cannot then be dependent upon its synthesis of its temporality, represented as the synthetic unity of apperception.

Thus, the synthetic unity of apperception is a principle which would force us to transgress the limits of the proper application of Reason, to make statements about what is essentially unknowable, the noumenal, as an expression of a necessary relation to the transcendent within the Cogito. Doing this is necessary, however, if Kant's edifice is to be founded upon a transcendental basis, rooted in experience, as he intended it to be. It thus rests upon a truth which, for the truth of the system, could never be anything other than an illusion.

This would obviously have catastrophic results for his system of objective knowledge, because at its heart would lie an illusion. This illusion

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28 Cf. Transcendental Dialectic: "we are concerned only with transcendental illusion, which exerts its influence on principles that are in no wise intended for use in experience, in which case we should at least have had a criterion of their correctness. ... I mean actual principles which incite us to tear down all those boundary-fences and to seize possession of an entirely new domain which recognises no limits of demarcation. ... A principle which ... takes away these limits, or even commands us actually to transgress them is called transcendent." [CPR pp.298-299].
would be the constituted unity of the subject, the synthetic unity of apperception. This necessarily transgresses its attempted appropriation by the epistemological system.

It thus appears that the very heart of knowledge, its innermost centre, the most subjective point of the subject, lies outside the scope of possible knowledge of objects. This outside, traced by the non-appearance of the unity of apperception, cannot be described simply as a negative pole of experience or a determinable non-experience. It rather subsists or desists within the distinction between experience and non-experience, as its non-verifiable but nonetheless necessary condition. In other words, it both subsists between the horizons of intellectual intuition (the temporal horizon belonging to the inner subjective sense of the subject), and sensible intuition (the spatial horizon belonging to the outer objective sense of the subject), and, simultaneously, exceeds any determination by these horizons.

This also suggests, however, that Kant’s epistemological system represents precisely an attempt to appropriate and repress this illusory and excessive force and condition of the Cogito. It does so as the enforcement of the distinction between knowledge and belief on the one hand, but through the belief in the validity of this distinction. On the other hand, this belief,

29 Lacoue-Labarthe uses the term desistance (désistement) to describe this ineluctable condition of the subjectivity of the subject. It forms the condition of a theoretical subject, a theory of the subject, of its determination, and is thus insisted upon by this determination, but simultaneously resists and deconstitutes or disperses this determination through its excessive insistence. This infinite play of the ineluctable within the “subject” is described by Lacoue-Labarthe as an irreducible rhythm according to which the subject is (de)constructed in its theorization, in the fiction of its theorization. Although I cannot follow this up within this thesis, his reading of the subject through its necessary relation to an irreducible, undeterminable rhythm - a subject understood as the subject of a certain style of writing - resonates with, and, to a great extent, shapes my reading of the “subject.” Cf. For example, “Typography,” p.116 and “The Echo of the Subject,” p. 141 and pp. 174-175, in Lacoue Labarthe, P., Typography: Mimesis; Philosophy: Politics.
lying at the heart of Kant's epistemology, a project which tries to eliminate belief from its program, would undermine the objective validity of this distinction.

3. Hegel: The Profit of Phenomenology
Hegel recognised the split inherent in the subject. His attempt to overcome this breach differed from both Descartes and Kant in that it entailed a historical dimension. Within this history of Reason the subject would be destined to overcome its duality, finally arriving at the unity of absolute knowledge. History is thus a key element in Hegel's understanding of the subject and Reason. Like Kant before him, he realizes that if conceptuality in general is to be understood, then our conception of time must be made transparent. For Hegel, however, this means gaining an understanding of the history of conceptuality in particular, and time and history in general.

Hegel does not simply offer us a history of philosophy, in which the subject represents the final form of this history. He also puts forward a philosophy of history, which will affect history just as much as history will move philosophy. It is when these two moments coincide that the subject will overcome its duality. Its formal unity will coincide with its substantial unity at the point of absolute knowledge. This is not to be understood in the banal sense of knowing everything there is to know. It is rather that once these two moments of the knowing subject coincide, knowledge and Reason can develop no further. This is because development, rationality's telos itself, has been overcome, any development in knowledge has already been understood and accounted for, before it can historically take place.

Our reading will focus upon a moment in the development of the Phenomenology of Spirit in order to demonstrate that this moment cannot be
overcome, and will always return to disrupt the supposed unity of the subject. Thus we will focus our attention upon the formal moment of the phenomenological foundation of the subjectivity of the subject in the so-called master-slave dialectic. This moment is the necessary risk of the sovereign consciousness of the master in the face of death. Before doing so, we should recall Hegel’s criticism of Kant, and his understanding of the transcendental subject.

Hegel’s Understanding of Kant

For Hegel, Kant’s conception of the essence of the subject as the transcendental unity of apperception, is in principle correct, but severely limited in its application. This conception of the self is merely the minimal formal expression of the self’s identity in relation to its object. The true meaning of the self for Hegel can only be realised insofar as it is recognised in the face of another self. This is expressed by Hegel in the relation between the sovereign consciousness of the Master and the slavish consciousness of the bondsman.

Hegel’s critique of Kant’s conception is that Kant does not take the transcendental subject to its full conclusion. Kant’s basic premise is that we can only know \textit{a priori} what we ourselves invest in the objects of our judgement. Hegel’s argument is that if this is so, then the limitations to the subject’s knowledge which Kant envisages, namely the thing-in-itself, i.e. the noumenon, cannot in reality be limitations. If the subject only knows what it itself puts into things, and it knows that the thing-in-itself is there, even as a supposed limitation, then this cannot be something which the subject does not know, for it must have constituted this limitation itself. It must therefore implicitly know what the thing-in-itself is, because the thing-in-itself is
constituted by the subject’s knowledge.

For Hegel, the supposed duality or limitation of the subject, witnessed in both Descartes and Kant, is an illusion caused by the historical failure of thought to understand the transcendental nature of the subject properly. This unity is implicit within every stage of Reason’s development, each stage appropriating the preceding conceptual formation, making its particular illusion of duality explicit for thought precisely through this appropriation.

Thus Kant’s positing of a limitation to the subject’s knowledge in the form of the unknowable thing-in-itself is an illusion for Hegel. Nonetheless, historically it is a moment which the development of the subject has passed through, and must therefore be accounted for as a necessary moment of the subject. This moment is essential because if the very concept of history and historical development is constituted by the subject, then every moment within this development must have a constituted meaning for the subject. What Hegel must show is that the constituted meaning of each of these moments is a fiction.

It is precisely this formal moment of establishing the subject’s identity and the overcoming of the duality contained therein which Hegel accounts for in the master-slave dialectic, albeit in a highly allegoric manner. In the section entitled “The Truth of Self-Certainty” Hegel describes the formal phenomenological conditions of possibility for the historical formation and sublation of the Kantian subject. He says:

The notion of self-consciousness is only completed in these three moments: (a) the pure undifferentiated ‘I’ is its first immediate object. (b) But this immediacy is itself an absolute mediation, it is only as a supersession of the independent object, in other words it is Desire. The satisfaction of Desire is, it is true, the reflection of self-consciousness into itself, or the certainty that has become truth. But the truth of this certainty is
really a double reflection, the duplication of self-consciousness. Consciousness has for its object one which, of its own self, posits its otherness or difference as a nothingness, and in so doing is independent. ... A self-consciousness exists for a self-consciousness. Only so is it in fact self-consciousness; for only in this way does the unity of itself in its otherness become explicit for it. [POS p.110]

What Hegel is here describing is Kant’s Copernican turn, and its inherent sublation. In the first moment Hegel describes the object of consciousness as the undifferentiated ‘I’ because Kant holds that we can only know a priori and immediately what we ourselves put into objects. This idealist position supersedes the material dualism of Descartes, and the empiricism of Locke and Berkeley, in that the independence of the known object is negated. The object in-itself does not appear to the transcendental subject, only its appearance as constituted by the subject.

In Descartes the only thing that was absolutely certain for the consciousness of the subject was its own identity. In transcendental idealism Hegel holds that one quickly perceives that self-consciousness is the only object that consciousness can possibly have. This means that the articulation of an independent object is in fact the articulation of the desire of self-consciousness.

Since transcendental idealism has shown that the notion of an object independent of self-consciousness is an illusion, the articulation of such an object is the articulation of self-consciousness’s desire for objective independence. If this independence is to be “objective” then it must be affirmed by something other than that particular self-consciousness. The self-affirmation of the independence of self-consciousness can only ever be “subjective,” the subject of pure whimsy. And yet the only object which self-consciousness can have is self-consciousness. Hegel concludes that this
articulation is therefore the expression of the desire to be independently affirmed or recognised by another self-consciousness. We thus arrive at the necessity of the master-slave dialectic.

The independence of self-consciousness is expressed in terms of its pure subjectivity, the Kantian unity of apperception, 'I=I.' It is the independence expressed in this unity that self-consciousness desires to be recognised by an other self-consciousness. In principle this means that self-consciousness must recognise another self-consciousness as itself fully independent, and vice versa.

This "other" self-consciousness, the double of the first, since self-consciousness can only have itself as an independent object, is committed to doing exactly the same. For Hegel the self-consciousness of the subject is, at this stage, split through and through. This play between "two" self-consciousnesses is simultaneously two moments of a single but utterly divided consciousness, which seeks to overcome its own otherness, whilst seeing its independence in this otherness:

this action of the one [self-consciousness] has itself the double significance of being both its own action and the action of the other as well. For the other is equally independent and self-contained, and there is nothing in it of which it is not itself the origin. ... Thus the movement is simply the double movement of the two self-consciousnesses. Each sees the other do the same as it does; each does itself what it demands of the other, and therefore also does what it does only in so far as the other does the same. [POS 112]

This split in the transcendental subject forms an intersubjective foundation of the self-consciousness of the subject. Since a transcendental intentional consciousness, which is essentially what the Kantian subject is, can only intend meaning insofar as it constitutes meaning itself, the meaning of any form of "otherness" must originate in the subject itself. Hegel therefore
effectively locates this split in the historical development of the concept of self-consciousness itself. Only so can he coherently argue that self-consciousness is both singular and double.

Historically, the Kantian concept of the subject was such that an externality or otherness independent of the subject was posited. This meant that the idea of two independent self-consciousnesses was believed to make sense. From Hegel’s standpoint, however, at the point of absolute knowledge in which the subject is understood as the concept of Spirit, this belief is an illusion.

This means that the actual split in self-consciousness, dividing it into two, arises because the concept of the subject has not yet been coherently reconciled with itself. The phenomenological ‘we’ of Hegel’s narrative already knows where self-consciousness will arrive, in the unity of this ‘we.’ Thus, from this perspective, before the movement of the dialectic has taken place, Hegel says of the “two” self-consciousnesses:

Each is for the other the middle term, through which each mediates itself with itself and unites with itself; and each is for itself, and for the other an immediate being on its own account, which at the same time is such only through this mediation. They recognise themselves as mutually recognising one another. [POS p.112]

This is the essence of the Hegelian conception of self-consciousness in the subject. Hegel realizes the condition of the meaning of a self in the mutual recognition between “two” separate self-consciousnesses, which will later show themselves to belong to the same concept, to be two instances of the same concept. Each understands itself as an autonomous being-for-self through the mutual acknowledgement of the other.

In formal terms this means that each self-consciousness functions as a total mediation of the other, and each sees itself as totally reflected in the
other. Since the other is nothing other than self-consciousness, then self-consciousness is the pure medium of itself, to itself. In this total mediation there would be no "other" as an independent, external object, alien to the subject's intentional sphere, but rather a transcendent self mediated between two of its moments. These two moments will eventually be subject, in the form of a pure subjectivity expressed as I=I, and the substance of that subject, expressed in the community of the transcendental "we."

The master-slave dialectic is thus the formal phenomenological account of the split in the unity of the essence of self-consciousness, namely into subject and substance. This split must be passed through in order that the phenomenological "we" of Hegel's narrative - the "we" which knows - can celebrate "the Bacchanalian revel in which no member is not drunk" [POS p.26]. This phenomenological "we" therefore profits from every one of the previous shapes of consciousness. However, if we now turn our attention to the "sovereign" moment of consciousness we may be able to see that the phenomenological "we" has not yet invested its time that it may legitimately draw its profit.

The Master and the Slave

Before achieving the mediated recognition of itself in its other, self-consciousness must prove that its subjectivity stands above all other concerns in the face of the other self-consciousness. Thus ensues the struggle for life and death in which the master-slave dialectic begins. Both self-consciousnesses act in the same way, and both are compelled to assert the absolute truth of self-certainty in the face of the other. In other words, both are brought together in a confrontation, in which both seek the annihilation, or negation, of the other. It is a literal fight to the death. In order to
understand this we should bear in mind that Hegel understands intentional cognition as an act of negation, in which its object is appropriated as belonging to the intentional sphere of the subject, whilst its being-for-self, its autonomy, is destroyed. This is effectively the expression of self-consciousness as Desire, a Desire which appropriates everything other unto itself. When an individual self-consciousness faces another, in the bid for self recognition, the recognition of the autonomy of the “I=I” above all else, then self-consciousness will, in accordance with its Desire, attempt to negate what is other to it. In this case it is the other self-consciousness:

The presentation of ... self-consciousness consists in showing itself as the pure negation of its objective mode, or in showing that it is not attached to any specific existence as such. This presentation is a twofold action: action on the part of the other, and action on its own part. In so far as it is the action of the other, each seeks the death of the other. But in so doing, the second kind of action, action on its own part, is also involved; for the former involves the staking of its own life. [POS p.113]

This life and death struggle cannot end in death if self-consciousness is to go on. Capitulation from one side must ensue, for if the singular moment of pure subjectivity were to destroy its other, then its sovereign autonomy could not be recognised. Self-consciousness must risk death, but cannot fall into its hands. Without this risk, self-consciousness would not, on the one hand, learn “that life is as essential to it as pure self-consciousness.”[POS p.115] Thus, in the face of death, self-consciousness, the so-called consciousness of the bondsman, capitulates. On the other hand, self-consciousness must experience and learn the fallacy of pure being-for-self, expressed in the sovereign consciousness of Lordship. This self-consciousness, so Hegel argues, has risked death above all else, and shown himself superior to the bondsman, whom he now rules:
In immediate self-consciousness the simple 'I' is absolute mediation, and has as its essential moment lasting independence. The dissolution of that simple unity is the result of the first experience; through this there is posited a pure self-consciousness, and a consciousness which is not for itself but for another, i.e. is a merely immediate consciousness, or consciousness in the form of thinghood. Both moments are essential ... ; one is the independent consciousness whose essential nature is to be for itself, the other is the dependent consciousness whose essential nature is simply to live or to be for another. The former is lord, the other is bondsman. [POS p.115]

The slavish consciousness is therefore only there to recognise the whims of the dominant consciousness, to do its bidding, to carry out its wishes as work. The consciousness of the Lord, however, does not recognise this slavish consciousness, it is merely a tool to do his bidding. The recognition is therefore asymmetrical, and, in terms of the principle of recognition, must be false. The work of the slave forms, for Hegel, the condition of history itself. The dominant consciousness does not simply represent the consciousness of a ruling class, which literally builds a civilisation as a monument to its memory through the work of its slaves. It also represents the Platonic forms, and their formal relation to a corporeal world in which one acts in accordance with these forms. The essence of this form of consciousness is, for Hegel's phenomenological "we," necessarily historical. Without the monuments, and scripts, created in the memory of this consciousness, we would know nothing of it. The essence of this memory is, however, not the dominant consciousness which ordered it, but the slavish consciousness which built it.

As for the slavish consciousness itself, it recognises the need for life above its own autonomous self-consciousness. It thus concedes its autonomy to the victorious self-consciousness. The slavish consciousness is defined by its dependence upon life, its fixation with the worldly realm of things. It
cannot overcome the necessity of life, since to do so would mean facing death by risking its life in battle.\textsuperscript{30} The slavish consciousness is unable to completely negate, and thus conceptually appropriate, life. The consciousness of the slave is established as derivative and secondary to that of its master. His identity is dependent in every sense upon that of his master. However, insofar as he is dependent upon the master, this dependency becomes transformed into a relation to what Hegel terms thinghood. In other words, the slave must work in order to stay alive. He is dependent upon his ability to shape the things around in accord with the wishes of his master.

Thus, since the slave has to do the work of the master he has to partially negate the world in order to create the artifacts of the master's desire. Through this submissive activity, the activities of obedience, learning, and creating, work is realised as the actualisation of the ideas of the master in the objective world of things. Thus, it is through the deferral of Desire, the desire of the slave, that the idea takes on reality, and is realised as an objective thing in the world. The Slavish consciousness, however, also recognises its own autonomy in its power to negate the world, and to create

\textsuperscript{30} Hannah Arendt reminds us what was necessary to be considered a free man in the Greek Polis: “Whoever entered the political realm had first to be ready to risk his life, and too great a love for life obstructed freedom, was a sure sign of slavishness. Courage therefore became the political virtue par excellence, and only those men who possessed it could be admitted to a fellowship that was political in content and purpose and thereby transcended the mere togetherness imposed on all - slaves, barbarians, and Greeks alike - through the urgencies of life.” And then in a footnote: “philopsychia (“love of life”) and cowardice became identified with slavishness. Thus, Plato could believe that he had demonstrated the natural slavishness of slaves by the fact that they had not preferred death to enslavement (Republic 386A). ... To understand the ancient attitude toward slavery, it is not immaterial to remember that the majority of slaves were defeated enemies and that generally only a small percentage were born slaves. ... Greek slaves usually were of the same nationality as their masters; they had proved their slavish nature by not committing suicide, and since courage was the political virtue par excellence, they had thereby shown their “natural” unworthiness, their unfitness to be citizens.” Arendt, H., \textit{The Human Condition}, p.36 & fn.30.
in accordance with its Desire through its work:

Through work, however, the bondsman becomes conscious of what he truly is. In the moment which corresponds to desire in the lord’s consciousness, it did seem that the aspect of unessential relation to the thing fell to the lot of the bondsman, since in that relation the thing retained its independence. Desire has reserved to itself the pure negating of the object and thereby its unalloyed feeling of self. But that is the reason why this satisfaction is only a fleeting one, for it lacks the side of objectivity and permanence. Work, on the other hand, is desire held in check, fleetingness staved off; in other words, work forms and shapes the thing. [POS p.118]

The slave thus comes to recognise his autonomy in his work. For the worker must shape precisely what he feared in his confrontation with the sovereign consciousness of the lord. What he actually feared was negating the object before him, appropriating it and making it his own. In other words, the slavish self-consciousness’s fear of death prevented it from negating the independent being-for-self of the master, and making itself independent. This moment of absolute fear, however, which instills the need for obedience and service, teaches self-consciousness how to appropriate independence. This is in a way which will not destroy the “other” self-consciousness, that is, the other moment of self-consciousness, in which case true recognition could not take place:

For, in fashioning the thing, the bondsman’s own negativity, his being-for-self, becomes an object for him only through his setting at nought the existing shape confronting him. But this objective negative moment is none other than the alien being before which it has trembled. Now, however, he destroys this alien negative moment, posits himself as a negative in the permanent order of things, and thereby becomes for himself, someone existing on his own account. ... [I]n fashioning the thing, he becomes aware that being-for-self belongs to him, that he himself exists essentially in his own right. [POS p.118]
The asymmetrical recognition of the master and slave cannot satisfy desire, because the master is never recognised by an equal. True recognition can only occur through the mediation of work, in which the object is negated. This negation leaves behind it a permanent mark in the form of the monument - the worked upon, or negated, object. This permanence is nothing other than the mark of self-consciousness in history. It reminds self-consciousness, or presents it with the evidence of what it is: the substantial negativity of the pure being-for-self of the subject. In other words, the slavish consciousness sees itself as established, as having its essence in external reality. This is nothing other than the permanent or eternal mode of the existence of the object. The self of the slave thus realises itself in terms of the historical mediation of itself in its own work. Its essence is historical, and eventually history, its concept and its development, will bring self-consciousness to the absolute knowledge of the phenomenological “we.”

This, at least, is the story as Hegel tells it. But what about the moment of pure immediate being-for-self of the master? Surely it was that moment in consciousness which undertook the necessary risk of a life and death struggle which wedged the absolute fear of death into the heart of the slavish consciousness and drove it to work? What exactly is its meaning in consciousness? Hegel simply internalises the split between the independent and dependent consciousness, determining it as an illusion for the phenomenological consciousness, but is this really so simple to do? Perhaps there never was an illusionary sovereign consciousness of the master which had faced the risk of death? This, of course, would have heavy repercussions for the journey of the phenomenological “we” through Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit. Without this moment of risk, and the subsequent moment of work, there is, in terms of Hegel’s logic, no true history, and there is no “we.”
The importance of the master in this dialectic is that its moment of self-consciousness serves as a formal pivot, around which the true form of self-consciousness establishes itself. Once this has been achieved the self-consciousness of the lord is revealed as illusory and inessential, and is appropriated as such. This is because, as has been said, this aspect of self-consciousness never achieves the full recognition necessary to the establishment of the substantial form of its being-for-self. It is recognised only by the slavish consciousness, which mediates its truth. This means that the dependent inessential consciousness of the slave is actually the articulation of the truth of the lord, because it is this consciousness which affirms the essence of his identity. Because his pure being-for-self is not recognised by an independent self-consciousness, but a dependent one, he cannot be certain of his own objective independence. It is itself still purely subjective, and therefore inessential:

The latter's [the lord's] essential nature is to exist only for himself; he is the sheer negative power for whom the thing is nothing. Thus he is the pure, essential action in this relationship, while the action of the bondsman is impure and unessential. But for recognition proper the moment is lacking, that what the lord does to the other he also does to himself, and what the bondsman does to himself he should also do to the other. The outcome is a recognition that is one-sided and unequal. In this recognition the unessential consciousness is for the lord the object, which constitutes the truth of his certainty of himself. ... What now really confronts him is not an independent consciousness, but a dependent one. He is, therefore, not certain of being-for-self as the truth of himself. On the contrary, his truth is in reality the unessential consciousness and its unessential action. [POS p.116-115]

As such the meaning of the self-consciousness of the lord is revealed to self-consciousness in general, to the phenomenological “we,” as a false consciousness, an illusory moment of consciousness. Nonetheless, in order
to reach the stage of the phenomenological "we," self-consciousness had to endure and experience both the risk of death, and the absolute fear of death. If the lord did not truly risk his life against the slave, then the object of the slave - the pure being-for-self of the master - would no longer have proved its independence. This independence could no longer be the truth of the slave. Equally, if the slavish moment of consciousness did not recoil in absolute angst in the face of death, represented in the master, then it could not grasp that its work was done in the name of absolute negativity, of pure being-for-self, and could not appropriate the work of negativity for itself. Work does not simply defer desire, it defers the specific desire for death, and in this way overcomes or appropriates the negativity of death as its own. In Hegel the work of self-consciousness is also a work of mourning. Thus Hegel says of self-consciousness and fear:

it [the self-consciousness of the slave] has experienced this its own essential nature. For this consciousness has been fearful, not of this or that particular thing or just at odd moments, but its whole being has been seized with dread; for it has experienced the fear of death, the absolute Lord. ... If it has not experienced absolute fear but only some lesser dread, the negative being has remained for it something external, its substance has not been infected by it through and through. Since the entire contents of its natural consciousness have not been jeopardised, determinate being still in principle attaches to it; having a 'mind of one's own' is self-will, a freedom still enmeshed in servitude. ... [I]t is a skill which is a master over some things, but not over the universal power and the whole of objective being. [POS pp.117-119]

Thus self-consciousness, if it is to overcome its fundamental split into subject and substance, must undertake a real risk, and experience an absolute fear of death. But if the Phenomenology of Spirit is to fulfill its aim, the phenomenological "we" which necessarily passes through these historical
shapes of consciousness must also re-experience this moment of risk and
dread if it is to understand its formation and arrive at absolute knowledge.
Unless it brings this memory back to life, the phenomenological “we” cannot
understand what it itself means, because it cannot phenomenologically
experience what it has already passed through.

The question is whether this is possible. The phenomenological “we,”
which is Hegel’s own historical perspective, has already passed through this
historical shape of consciousness. Although it has not yet relived this
moment, it already knows this moment, and its outcome in principle. It
knows that there can be no actual life or death struggle, no risk of destruction
and therefore no fear of death for self-consciousness. Is death ever faced in
the Phenomenology of Spirit, does otherness ever really come into question
in the development of the concept of Spirit? If so, then not from our, or
Hegel’s perspective, which is the perspective of the unified subject, the ‘I’
unified in the communal ‘we.’ But if not, then this phenomenological ‘we’
cannot understand its own historical passage, and without this passage and
understanding, then there is no absolute knowledge, there is no communal
‘we.’

And how could we experience the point of pure being-for-self, the
point of the master? Meaning, always the meaning of the self-consciousness
of the subject, only occurs with the opening of work and history - specifically
the work of memory. But the moment of mastery in self-consciousness - the
infinite transcendence of the ‘I=I’- arrives before history has began, before
the slave has begun to work. The moment of mastery occurs in the risk of
battle, and this risk comes before the opening of history, the work of the slave
for the master. The meaning of self-consciousness is, however, according to
Hegel, historical, and this risk of the master is not. The phenomenological
‘we’ cannot, therefore remember or relive this necessary moment of self-consciousness, precisely because it occurred for another. This other has no meaning in Hegel, or rather, its meaning is forgotten in the historical movement of spirit.

This is likewise true of the fear of death which spurs the slave onto work. It may or may not be true that self-consciousness experiences this absolute fear of death, but it is impossible to relive it from the perspective of the phenomenological “we.” From this perspective we already know that self-consciousness cannot die. If either moment is destroyed in death then self-consciousness could not have arrived at the perspective of the phenomenological “we.” It is from this perspective that we know in advance what the principle of recognition is. Since recognition forms the foundation of spirit, and the overcoming of the duality of subject and substance in which the phenomenological “we” is situated, then we already know that recognition has taken place, and that neither the master nor the slave died either in battle or in servitude. There is no need to fear death - historically there was never any death of self-consciousness, not even the chance of it - the phenomenological “we” cannot experience that which, for it, can never happen.

The Economy of Truth

What then is the status of the absolute knowledge possessed by the phenomenological “we,” at the end of its historical journey, in which it remembers and relives the former shapes of self-consciousness? Can it really be that subject is reunited with substance at the end of time? Is it really true that the subject now exists in-itself as pure being-for-self, and as being-for-self, in-itself? Is the unity of apperception, the “I=I” now substantially
reflected and mediated in the communal “we,” and vice versa?

If we examine the structure of the experience that the phenomenological “we” has in the master-slave dialectic, we will see that the answer to these questions evades us. We will find we cannot answer these questions because this experience threatens the very structure of these questions themselves with an undeterminable non-meaning. It decentres the subject and its meaning as the locus of thought. This unsettles the whole of Hegel’s system, which itself centres around the transcendental subject.

Specifically, the phenomenological consciousness of the communal “we” of absolute knowledge - Spirit - is utterly unable to re-experience the moment of pure being-for-self of consciousness - articulated as the master’s risk of life and death. It is also utterly unable to re-experience the moment of absolute fear of the slavish consciousness in the face of death. Both these moments are absolutely necessary to the formation of spirit proper.

The point is that these moments of consciousness are a necessary experience to the Hegelian system, and yet the consciousness which this system produces cannot experience them. The phenomenological “we” is a fully historical consciousness. This means that its meaning only obtains insofar as it is substantially historical, i.e. permanent, eternal and remembered. The experience of risk and absolute fear, however, can never be, especially in the Hegelian sense, a moment of memory. Memory is, for Hegel, internalisation and appropriation - this is the essence of the dialectical development of Spirit. True memory is the property of the phenomenological “we” which sees through the illusions of its preceding forms. Once the reason for the risk and the fear is known, i.e. remembered, there is no possibility of remembering such an experience. As such both risk and fear of death are moments which precede, and exceed, historical consciousness, as its
condition of possibility. These moments of consciousness are the pure transcendence of self-consciousness’s pure being-for-self - the “I=I,” in other words, the Cogito.

The truth of the phenomenological “we” is thus a lie. It speculates upon an experience which it cannot remember or determine. Only the other can “have” this experience, except it cannot remember it. However, Hegel’s historical subject conveniently forgets to remind itself that it cannot remember having that particular experience. This forgetfulness is extremely beneficial. The profit on the speculation of the phenomenological “we” is nothing other than absolute knowledge - that it does not actually properly belong to spirit, but to the other, is something worth forgetting. The lie consists in acting as if the phenomenological consciousness has actually had that experience, and can determine its meaning as being illusory. If Hegel’s historical subject is to attain absolute knowledge in the form of the phenomenological “we” then it cannot ascribe the possibility of the experience of death to what amounts to the totally other of the system, that which it fails to appropriate, but must repress if it is to reach its aim. It is not so much a matter of simply letting the moment of pure being-for-self embodied in the lord fall to the ground, it is rather that the phenomenological consciousness can never know whether the lord actually had this experience (let alone what it meant). This means that the master-slave dialectic is itself also a fabrication on the part of the phenomenological “we,” in that it ascribes a determinate meaning to this experience of the essentially other, when such an experience must exceed all such determination.

And what does this mean for the phenomenological “we”? Hegel has already outlined the consequence:

determinate being still in principle attaches to it; having a ‘mind
of one’s own’ is self-will, a freedom still enmeshed in servitude. Just as little as the pure form can become essential being for it, just as little is that form, regarded as extended to the particular, a universal formative activity, an absolute Notion; rather it is a skill which is a master over some things, but not over the universal power and the whole of objective being. [POS p.119]

The subject in Hegel, like that in Descartes and Kant, remains breached in its essence, between its formal identity and its substance, expressed by Hegel as history. They represent two moments of infinite transcendence in relation to one another, corresponding to the moments of the Cogito and God in Descartes, and the unity of apperception and space in Kant. All have posited the subject in terms of a reconciliation of these two moments. If this reconciliation is not possible, however, it is Hegel who has already pointed to what the subject as the form of consciousness amounts to: a power of fabrication. Thus the subject can at least take a profit from its fabrication, but only at the expense of what is other to the subject’s cognition, for only through its repression does the subject have something to say.

4. The Aporias of the Subject

This brings us back to my original question, how to know what someone means? In the foregoing analyses, my original question has undergone a certain transformation. Drawing the threads of this transformation together is perhaps now possible.

Firstly, however, we should examine the filaments teased out from this question “How to know what someone means?” in these cursory analyses of the subject. We can, under the general heading of the transcendent infinite, and in strict relation to it, detect three aporias. These are as follows:

1. The necessity, and simultaneous impossibility, of the reflective subject knowing what the transcendent infinite objectively is in relation to the Cogito,
if the objectivity of the subject’s judgement is to be justified. We have implicitly followed this aporia in our reading of Descartes. Here we saw the necessity of Descartes’ positing of an infinite transcendence stretching beyond the scope of the subject’s judgement. The concept of the subject must refer to this transcendent infinite if its judgement is to have a “subjective” or representational content. From this we can provisionally conclude that the concept of the subject includes a necessary referentiality in the direction of the transcendent infinite. However, we also saw that if the subject is to be assured of the truth of its representations or judgements then it must be able to determine the meaning of this transcendent infinite. Descartes attempts to achieve this through a determinate notion of a non-deceiving God. We have seen that such a determination is illegitimate, and amounts to a belief or fiction. Such a fiction represents the repression of all reference to a transcendent infinity. Descartes’ belief in a subject rooted objective knowledge is thus based in this repressional fiction.

2. Again, the necessity, and the simultaneous impossibility, of the subject reaching an objective decision, or judgement, within the Cogito itself, as to whether the subject’s judgement is justified, in the face of the transcendent infinite. We have witnessed this in our reading of Kant. Here we saw how it is necessary to account for a condition within the subject, on the basis of which the truth of my representations or judgements can be justified. This condition is the pure intuition of time, which is the subjective condition that determines the possibility of judgement of an empirical object which appears “outside” the subject. This is because it determines the possibility of this “outside,” i.e. space, in general. We have seen, however, that space is necessarily represented as infinite, as is time.

This means that neither condition can be legitimately subject to a
determination. Time and space, however, can only appear or be represented, insofar as their respective forms are determined in the apperception of an object in judgement. Such an appearance or representation of either time or space thus once again represents a repression of the subject’s necessary referentiality to a transcendent infinite. The positing of the conditions of a pure intuition of time, and a pure intuition of space is in no way verifiable, and therefore represents a belief or fiction. Kant’s belief in a subject rooted transcendental knowledge is thus also based upon a repressional belief or fiction.

3. Finally, the necessity and simultaneous impossibility, of the subject knowing, when it thinks it has arrived at such a decision, whether its assertion is true. We have seen this in our reading of Hegel. Here we saw how Hegel takes over the Kantian representation of the subject in terms of transcendental idealism, thinking that, in principle, such a system articulates the true form of the subject. He must, however, account for the reconciliation of the formal identity of the subject - the Cogito - with its true and proper substance, the representational content of the subject’s judgement, which

31 The difficulty of defining the “structure” of these aporias in such a fashion is almost immediately apparent, as is the dislocative force of the thought of aportia as such. The demand for a justification of the assertion of the “structure” of such aporias actually insists upon such a set of distinctions, and simultaneously renders these distinctions, insofar as they express, or present themselves, insofar as they are true, invalid and illegitimate. These distinctions are both necessary and impossible - they collapse in upon themselves precisely because, legitimately, they remain indistinct - the interwoven threads of a textual fabric. The condition of this textual fabrication (which includes “meaning”) is described by Derrida as the movement of différance. This movement describes the possibility and impossibility of a fundamental a differentiation of meaning which is, according to these aporias, simultaneously both a) temporal and spatial (both temporal and nontemporal); b) meaningful and meaningless (a meaning which entertains the possibility of being both justified, sensible, rational, and illegitimate, senseless, irrational); c) true and fictional (a meaning which entertains the possibility of being both truly fictional and fictionally true). Meaning as such could not presented, could not be expressed or said. We can therefore never express the determinate meaning of these aporias. Cf. Derrida’s essay “Différance.”
Hegel interprets as History. Both these moments are infinite in relation to one another, and thus Hegel must demonstrate how the concept of the subject unites and transcends these two moments of infinity in absolute knowledge. In order to do so he must show that the history of the subject offered in absolute knowledge is the true and proper substantial form of the subject. He must, in other words, show that the memory of the phenomenological "we" in relation to infinity is true. However, we have seen that this is impossible because the subject's "experience" of infinity is always indeterminable, and, as such, cannot be determined in its recollection. Hegel's determination of the subject's "experience" of the infinite as a fiction or illusion of consciousness (in this case the subject's experience of its mortality, represented by the moment of Lordship and Bondage in consciousness), is itself illegitimate, and amounts to a belief or fiction. Hegel's narration of a true history of the subject's relation to the transcendent infinite thus represents a repressional fiction.

If we are to do justice to the concept of the subject, all three of these (impossible) conditions must be met and accounted for. The first thing that all these aporias demand is that we do justice to the concept of the subject and its subjectivity, in its necessary relation to the transcendent infinite, without repeating the repressions in which the concept of the subject is bound. In order, in the first instance, to assume that one exists as subject, one is already answering, is already subsisting in, this demand of the transcendent infinite.

This, of course, does not mean that this demand cannot be ignored, hidden away, repressed - these are all ways of answering this demand, but are only possible in the face of it. In fact, when one adheres to the traditional concepts of being, truth, and knowledge, which fall under, and are
conditioned by, a general matrix of *presence*, it appears impossible to avoid this repression of the revolutionary, irruptive, force of the transcendent infinite’s demand upon thought.

This almost unavoidable repression of the demand of the transcendent infinite is, however, traceable, through its necessary illegitimacy, in which this repression is *enforced*. Although we cannot recognize a system in itself, it is nonetheless possible to read a more or less systematic *attempt* or *wish* to enforce the laws and edicts of such a system. We can read this wish through the fact that the *enforceability* of its laws is illegitimate, according to the logic and order of these very laws. The irruption of the transcendent infinite, its dislocation of the determinable horizon of the subject, can therefore be read through the more or less systematic attempt to enforce its repression through the attempt at controlling the excessive force of these three aporias within a system of regulated distinctions.

**The Question of Method: “Deconstruction”**

This raises the question of a critical method. How are we to demonstrate, to communicate, to thematise and order, the repressional violence and mechanisms of this order in which the concept of the subject is set - the order of Reason, which is, in effect, order *in general* - without repeating these very structures, and their violence? How are we to write *legitimately* on the concept of the subject? How are we to avoid the structures of repression inherent in perhaps the most dominant discourse in the “West,” a discourse which obtains its rule, a rule which structures our perception, our reality, through the violent denial of the possibility of any other discourse having a sense other than its own?

This question is by no means new, and has troubled many
contemporary thinkers. It could be said that its form has, in one way or another, structured much of this century’s thought. It forms, however, one of the central preoccupations of the writings of Jacques Derrida. His strategy of writing, which has been named (perhaps too hastily) deconstruction, is perhaps one of the most consistent and enduring attempts to engage with this question today, consisting as it does of over twenty five years of response to this problem.

The problem is that we cannot legitimately write in the name of this transcendent infinite. This would mean determining its meaning and regulating a disruption of the so-called traditional structures of Reason from the vantage point of this name. However, the belief in the existence of such structures already belongs to the order of Reason itself, as does their denouncement.

This means that we are not in a position to decide whether a violence carried out in the name of the transcendent infinite is any more or less legitimate than the violence of the order it would disrupt. It is perhaps this undecidability - its vertiginous play - which forms the condition of the need to answer this incessant call for legitimacy inscribed within the relation between the subject’s Cogito and the transcendent infinite.

In his essay “The Afterword” Derrida describes this space of and play of undecidability as follows:

The third [meaning of jeu] remains heterogeneous both to the dialectic and the calculable [the orders of sensibility]. In accordance with what is only ostensibly a paradox, this particular undecidable opens the field of decision or of decideability. It calls for decision in the order of ethical-political responsibility. It is even its necessary condition.

32 Derrida, J. “The Afterword”, Limited Inc, referred to as LI.
A decision can only come into being in a space that exceeds the
calculable program that would destroy all responsibility by
transforming it into a programmable effect of determinate
causes. There can be no moral or ethical responsibility without
this trial and passage by way of the undecidable. Even if a
decision seems only to take a second and not to be preceded by
any deliberation, it is structured by this experience and
experiment of the undecidable. [LI p. 116]

The obvious question which arises here is: if undecidability in general
constitutes the positive possibility of a decision in general, then how is one
to decide what constitutes this particular space of undecidability?

This is precisely the paradox which Derrida refers to in the above
citation. It has further implications with regard to “this particular
undecidable.” For if this particular undecidable “calls for a decision in the
order of ethical-political responsibility,” it itself remains structurally vague
or ambiguous. Whilst it enables, for the above cited reasons, a decision
entailing an ethical-political responsibility, it also limits what might be termed
the full realisation of such a decision.

For Derrida, any discourse which makes a truth claim relies upon an
implicit understanding and appropriation of its historical context, as a context
which has produced the conventions which underlie the discursive formations
in which a truth claim can be posited. These conventions themselves have
been produced by a ‘primordial’ decision of thought.33 It is thought of as
primordial principally because it has decided (or defined) the discursive order
through which we are able to conceive of history as a context upon which
basis discourse is able to make truth claims:

33 In Derrida the thought of this decision is further complicated since the thought of such
‘primordiality’ of decision as producing a history of meaning is rigorously called into
question by his discourse. Cf. for example, Positions, pp. 49-50. Referred to as PS.
What is called "objectivity," scientific for instance (in which I firmly believe, in a given situation), imposes itself only within a context which is extremely vast, old, powerfully established, stabilised or rooted in a network of conventions (for instance, those of language) and yet still remains a context. And the emergence of the value of objectivity (and hence of so many others) also belongs to a context. We can call "context" the entire "real-history-of-the-world," if you like, in which this value of objectivity and, even more broadly, that of truth (etc.) have taken on meaning and imposed themselves. [LI p.136]

Within the historical constellation which we have here specified as the subject, within which the modern understanding of "objectivity" and "truth" is organised, the relation of the subject's thought to the transcendent infinite can be understood as the relation of its meaning to its (essentially non-presentable) context. This irreducible relation to a context means that it is always possible to transcribe or reiterate the traditional meaning and truth of the subject within a new context. This possibility, which is the condition of meaning and truth in general, belies the claims of these concepts (and conceptuality in general) to an absolute authoritative position. For, in a new context, this truth and meaning of the subject will be necessarily transformed. This transformation - a necessary violence, without which there would be no signification - in effect undermines this truth and meaning by what amounts to its parody through the imitation of its logic.

It is thus that Derrida, whilst holding that meaning can only be "written within the grammar and lexicon of metaphysics," in other words, the order of Reason, attempts to write a discourse "meaning-to-say-nothing" [PS p.14]. In order to answer the demand of the undecidable - the relation to the transcendent infinite - and not to repeat the repressive violence inherent in

34 Margins of Philosophy p. 63.
Reason, he suspends judgement in writing.

He does this in general by transcribing "the grammar and lexicon of metaphysics" into registers and contexts other than its own. He then follows the logic prescribed by this lexicon within this new context in order to demonstrate, analyse and undermine the repressional violence exercised in the name of this order. The contexts in which this lexicon is transcribed are chosen by him as those which the order of reason has already claimed to determine, and yet which, \textit{a priori}, must resist or exceed this determination. Thus, by performatively demonstrating this excessive force of both context \textit{in general}, and of the particular contexts which Reason always tries to appropriate as its own, into its own categories, Derrida both undermines the truth of this determination, and dissipates the effective force of its institution. This is thus the work of the dissemination of the order of reason inherent in his strategy of writing, and comprises a strategy of double reading.

In the course of his work he has in several places analysed or "deconstructed" the subject, not only in its representation in philosophical discourse, but also in its representations in social-historical and psychoanalytic discourses. However, remembering my guiding question of how to do justice to what someone means, and, taking Derrida's strategy of writing into account, reading these analyses can never simply be a question of recounting what he means by the subject, and what the subject means after his analyses. How is one to \textit{intervene}, in a writing which ostensibly means nothing according to the traditional categories of truth and meaning? This is the demand made upon us if we wish to take the relation of the Cogito to the transcendent infinite (in Derrida's terms: the relation of the meaning of a text to its formative but non-assimilatable context) into account, which we must do if we are to do justice to the meaning of the subject.
This is a question of strategy. It is clear from the nature of Derrida’s writing that we cannot simply adopt or take over his strategy of analyses. We could never repeat, for example, the unique temporal context in which these analyses were written, the historical demands made at the time in question. It is, however, always both possible and necessary to recontextualise and reorganise these texts in accordance with the demands made by the analysis of the Cogito in relation to the transcendent infinite. This would be in order to both produce and to dissimulate “new” meaning or meanings of the subject within Derrida’s texts. In so doing it should be possible to demonstrate, or to perform the production of the subject’s meaning in its necessary relation to the transcendent infinite without reducing either Derrida’s text, or this relation, to a determinate horizon of meaning. The truth of the subject, as we have already begun to glimpse, could always be a fiction. But this fiction is by no means meaningless. It is with these facts in mind that we can begin to explore Derrida’s reading of the subject and subjectivity.
Section II: The Transcendence of the Subject’s Exteriority

Part I: A Spatial Shadow of the Transcendental Subject

These deaf-mutes have learned only a gesture-language, but each of them talks to himself inwardly in a vocal language.” - Now, don’t you understand that? But how do I know whether I understand it?! - What can I do with this information (if it is such)? The whole idea of understanding smells fishy here. I do not know whether I am to say I understand it or don’t understand it. I might answer “It’s an English sentence; apparently quite in order - that is, until one wants to do something with it; it has a connection with other sentences which makes it difficult for us to say that nobody really knows what it tells us; but everyone who has not been calloused by philosophy notices that there is something wrong here.

A picture is conjured up which seems to fix the sense unambiguously, ... the form of expression we use seems to have been designed for a god, who knows what we cannot know; he sees the whole of each of those infinite series and he sees into human consciousness. For us, of course, these forms of expression are like pontificals which we may put on, but cannot do much with, since we lack the effective power that would give these vestments meaning and purpose.

In the actual use of expressions we make detours, we go by side-roads. We see the straight highway before us, but of course we cannot use it, because it is permanently closed.

(35)

In the early part of the twentieth century the Cartesian thought ego cogito ergo sum supposedly underwent a radical revitalisation in the form of Edmund Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology. Transcendental phenomenology is, for Husserl, the reinvention of philosophy according to the radicalisation of certain Cartesian motifs, which he considers to constitute the core of thought itself.

For Husserl, statements about the world of which we are conscious can only be true insofar as they are based upon a priori apodictic evidence. This

evidence arises specifically from the rigorous phenomenological descriptions of the all-embracing transcendental laws which govern the transcendental subject in its intentional constitution of objects of consciousness. This new science, grounded in the indisputable truth of Descartes’ famous maxim, and true to the spirit of Descartes’ radical venture, promised to secure the foundations for a new kind of knowledge which would be absolutely certain.

In his essay “Speech and Phenomena” Derrida attempts to demonstrate that Husserl’s enterprise is not only false but impossible. He holds that, although phenomenology is one of the most rigorously critical discourses in the Western philosophical tradition, the powerful critical tool of phenomenological description misses, or even avoids, the dismantling of certain concepts which are uncritically taken over from this tradition.

For Derrida, the problem is not just that these concepts are simply taken over, and remain uncriticised, and thus form an unjustified space within phenomenological discourse. It is that they form the very condition of a philosophical project in general, and that their criticism would threaten Husserl’s project in its entirety.

Thus, if certain grounding concepts in Husserl’s enterprise remain internally uncriticised then this means that his project is, in one way or another, unjustified, and thus cannot realize its intention. This illegitimacy of Husserl’s project is absolutely necessary to its articulation. The concepts which Derrida holds that Husserl uncritically takes over are organised under a general matrix in which being in general is always interpreted as simple undivided presence. Being in general is, for Husserl, always that which falls into the realm of intentional conscious life, and conscious life is always what is present to the intentional subject. Thus, this interpretational matrix, which Derrida believes to have dominated the philosophical tradition since at least
Plato,\textsuperscript{36} imposes itself through the determination of the conditions under which the subject can be objectively articulated. This determination means that being in general is always articulated as the present intentional consciousness of the subject. In other words, Derrida holds that Husserl’s analyses of the structures of the intentional consciousness belonging to the transcendental subject operate with, and are founded upon, an uncritical conception of the language in which the subject is articulated and articulates itself - the language in which the subject has meaning. This language, holds Derrida, is the language of presence.

Derrida’s contention is that Husserl’s uncritical conception of language reduces meaning, in general, to presence, and the meaning of the subject, in particular, to what it can immediately and transparently express to itself, in what it says in its vocative enunciation. Within the operation of this

\textsuperscript{36} This can be understood in terms of Derrida’s deep set interpretation of the “genesis” of the conceptual network termed metaphysics from Ancient Greek philosophy right up until contemporary philosophy. The Greek word for Being - \textit{on} - has always been thought in relation to its determination in truth (\textit{aletheia} - translated as unveiling) as \textit{ousia} and \textit{parousia}, translated as presence, a conceptual constellation within which Being can only be understood within its own inherent \textit{telos}. As soon as Being, which as Heidegger says, \textit{“is the transcendens pure and simple”} \cite{BT} and as such undefinable, is determined within this network, Being’s revelation in truth can never yet be present but is always promised as something yet to be presented, as something yet to come. This temporal structure of the \textit{telos} maintains its dominance in its historical translation and sedimentation through this (impossible) promise. This promise of an original restitution - a presentation - of the meaning of Being - is an onto-theological determination of Being which effectively closes off any and every reference which would extend outside of this constellation by denying meaning to every mark which would transgress its self-constituted boundaries, defined in terms of the revelation or presentation of Being as Presence. Such a mark, however, includes Being understood as \textit{transcendens}. In effect this constellation constitutes, in Freudian terms, an unsuccessful repression of its own proper origin, which, in the terms of this constellation, can neither be original, nor proper. Derrida attempts, in his work of deconstruction, to disturb the enforcement of this repression by emphasising both the necessity of the transgression of these self-imposed boundaries to the formation of this conceptual constellation, and the impossibility for this constellation to acknowledge this necessary transgression.
reduction, a certain spatialisation or spacing inherent within language itself, which Derrida will show to be necessary to the constitution of meaning, is repressed. This repression occurs when meaning is understood as the presence contained in the living speech of the subject.

Before we analyse Derrida's reading of Husserl, we should look at what such a spatialisation within the language and meaning of the subject can in fact signify. Surely meaning, especially when considered in relation to the intentional subject, can only be understood as an ideality? Spatiality can, as such, only be understood insofar as it is ideal, and its structure can only be presented within the ideal temporal horizon of presence, of what "is." How, then, can we, and how does Derrida, conceive of such a spacing or spatiality, and what role can it play in the ideality of the subject’s meaning, if, in its conception, it is always reduced to this ideality?

One of Derrida's acknowledged influences is Martin Heidegger, who also criticised Husserl's conception of the transcendental subject and intentionality. In Being and Time, Heidegger displaces the traditional conceptions of time in philosophy as the "now," or the simple present, by drawing upon Husserl's phenomenological analyses of the horizontal structures of intentional temporality. Heidegger departs from Husserl's analyses, even if not from phenomenology itself, in several decisive ways. One of the most important moves away from Husserl is the displacement of what Husserl considers to be the purely intentional sphere of meaning by Heidegger's "concept" of Dasein or being-there.

Briefly stated, Dasein is neither subject nor object, but rather the space or context in which meaning in general can signify. Dasein is the existential-ontological condition which enables the signification of being to be questioned. Heidegger effectively uses this concept to decentralize and
destabilise the traditional idea that meaning is located within the present(able) interiority of the subject’s intentional sphere. Meaning, for Heidegger, can only signify within a context for which meaning is there, that is, already out there, in an already existent world. For example, the meaning of a door, this door which stands before me, is such that it is there before my subjective judgement. Its “spatial” existence means that its being has a meaning beyond my subjective determination of its meaning. Its “spatiality” means that it is always possible that this door has another meaning, other than that which it has for me, for example, that it can be seen and used by someone else.

The spatiality of Dasein thus plays a decisive role in Heidegger’s existential analyses of the meaning of Being. In order to come closer to what Derrida can mean by such a spacing within the meaning of the subject, and meaning in general, we will closely read and interpret Heidegger’s account of the relation of spatiality to meaning in general. To do this we must read the meaning of Dasein’s spatiality, as analysed in Being and Time.

Firstly, we should take a brief look at Husserl’s notion of transcendental subjectivity in order to outline the general problematic inherent in his project of phenomenology. In this short analysis we will attempt to sketch the relation between the subject’s other and its spatial horizon, understood as the horizon which makes intentional appearance possible, in order to contextualise our reading of Heidegger.

5. What Husserl omits

The problem can be formally expressed as the solipsism of the transcendental subject in phenomenology. This is the inability of the Husserlian transcendental subject to experience and articulate something which is other than itself.
Husserl rejects this particular objection of solipsism by arguing that all meaning is constituted within the intentional transcendental subject, and signifies only insofar as it belongs to this constitutive sphere. For Husserl there is, in the end, no meaning other than that which is constituted within this intentional sphere, by the subject, for the subject. This constitutive sphere thus forms the basis of objective determination of what is other than my ego:

Restricting ourselves to the ultimate transcendental ego and the universe of what is constituted in him, we can say that a division of his whole transcendental field of experience belongs to him immediately, namely the division into the sphere of his ownness (an experience in which everything "other" is "screened off") - and the sphere of what is "other." Yet every consciousness of what is other, every mode of appearance of it, belongs in the former sphere. ... Within and by means of this ownness the transcendental ego constitutes, however, the "Objective" world, as a universe of being that is other than himself - and constitutes, at the first level, the other in the mode: alter ego.

Insofar as there is an other, somebody, or something else, the meaning of this other is always constituted on the basis of the Same. This meaning is constituted within the sphere of the transcendental subject to which it is ultimately reducible, and by which it is ultimately regulated. Yet there still remains the problem of how this universal synthesis of the transcendental subject can constitute something which is truly other to it. How could this be possible without the subject risking, or rather factually instituting, the rupture of the universality of its sphere of ownness or Sameness?

This same problem is admitted by Husserl, but is articulated at another site in the intentional analysis, as the problem of infinite regression which occurs in the conception of internal time consciousness:

The fundamental form of this universal synthesis, the form that makes all other syntheses of consciousness possible, is the all
embracing *consciousness of internal time.* ... The distinction between (internal) time itself and the consciousness of (internal) time can be expressed also as that between the subjective process in internal time, or the temporal form of this process, and the *modes of its temporal appearances,* as the corresponding “multiplicities.” As these modes of appearances which make up the consciousness of internal time, are themselves “intensive components of conscious life” ["*intentionale Erlebnisse*"] and must in turn be given in reflection as temporalities, we encounter here a paradoxical fundamental property of conscious life, which seems to be infected with an infinite regress. [CM p.43]

This infinite regression occurs at the very heart of Husserl’s phenomenology itself, the subject’s reflection of itself, the subject’s identification of its own identificatory synthesis. The infinite regress occurs because, as soon as the subject has identified this temporal synthesis in the necessary passing by of appearances, then this identification itself passes by as an ideal appearance, which is simultaneously identified, i.e. idealised, in the consciousness of the subject’s internal time flow, *ad infinitum.*

Thus, the constitutive idealisation, which is essentially the transcendental epoché, essential to establishing the apodictic certainty of the transcendental subject, cannot be essentially differentiated from a phenomenal appearance. However, the securing of phenomenology as a first science, rests in establishing this division, in apodictically verifying an original constitutive horizon which does not fade as soon as it appears.

This is, in fact, a restatement of the problem of the identification of the other within the thought of phenomenology. Husserl, for his part, contends that the charge of solipsism is misdirected against phenomenology:

Transcendency in every form is an immanent existential characteristic, constituted within the ego. Every imaginable sense, every imaginable being, whether the latter is called immanent or transcendent, falls within the domain of
transcendental subjectivity, as the subjectivity that constitutes sense and being. The attempt to conceive the universe of true being as something lying outside the universe of possible consciousness, possible knowledge, possible evidence, the two being related to one another merely externally, is nonsensical. They belong together essentially; and as belonging together essentially, they are also concretely one, one in the only absolute concretion: transcendental subjectivity. If transcendental subjectivity is the universe of possible sense, then an outside is precisely - nonsense. [CM p.84]

The question then arises how true reflection can be possible? If there is no outside, then from which vantage point can the subject look upon itself, reflect upon itself as an object for consciousness and not a “mere” appearance?

More precisely, if the meaning of the other is objectively constituted “within” the intentional consciousness of subjectivity, then reflection “in the other” is rendered possible, but the recourse to an absolute truth of subjectivity is lost in appearance. Reflection can no longer decide whether the phenomenon appearing before its eye is truly an appearance in accordance with its a priori constitutive syntheses, or, whether it is merely the appearance of an appearance. This is because the constitutive syntheses are themselves an appearance for consciousness, and at the “deepest level” of intentional analysis.

If, as Husserl says in his next sentence, “But even nonsense is always a mode of sense and has its nonsensicalness within the sphere of possible insight” [ibid.], then there can be no essential justification for an essential difference between sense and nonsense within the realm of ownness which marks the ideality and universality of transcendental subjectivity. Without this differentiation there can be no absolute or apodictic verification of the true sense of an object intended within and by the transcendental subject. This is
because one no longer has recourse to an essential differentiation between the ontical and ontological status of the intended object.

Thus either "otherness" has no place within transcendental subjectivity, in which case it falls into solipsism, or else its quest for a reflective truth is rent apart by the space, the paradox of the infinite regress, opened by the necessary appearance of temporality as a phenomenon of consciousness. In order to conceive of time in terms of its appearance or phenomenality in consciousness we must resort to the reference to a spatial horizon, as we saw in our reading of Kant. The necessity of this reference to a "spatial" horizon means that time cannot form the final or original constitutive horizon of meaning for the subject. This means that a) the spatial horizon of the phenomenological transcendental subject cannot be reduced to, or wholly determined by the subject’s temporal horizon and b) we can then no longer talk of a constitutive temporal horizon independent of a spatial horizon and vice versa, and that neither horizon can originally constitute or determine the subject’s intentional meaning.

This problem can be expressed otherwise as Husserl’s neglect of the irreducibility of the subject’s relation to infinity which would exceed the temporal determination of the transcendental subject. This structure is such that it would both render the subject possible, and simultaneously rend it asunder, in the face of a necessary relation to its non-constituted infinite other.

We can now read the structure of this relation in the first sections of Heidegger’s Being and Time, where he analyses the existential-ontological horizons of meaning. We will focus in particular upon his understanding of Dasein’s spatial horizon in relation to the possibility of signification, as articulated in the structures of Dasein’s primordial and irreducible Being-in.
It will be argued that the clue to Heidegger’s subjection of the traditional conceptions of time to a radical trembling, articulated as the ecstatic temporalisation of temporality, is implicitly held within these structures. The analyses of these structures should also help us to grasp Derrida’s understanding of the need for an account of an irreducible “spacing” within language, and the relation of the subject to its (non-constituted) other.

6. The Meaning of Being

In *Being and Time* Heidegger sets out to clarify the conditions under which the word Being can take on meaning and generally come into question. For Heidegger, meaning only arises insofar as there is an interpretational structure within which Being can take on a sense. He holds that without a relationship between such an interpretational structure and the word Being we could never even begin to say what something “is.” Nothing could take on meaning, because meaning is indissociable from the interpretational structure formed around the particular verb forms of the word Being.

For Heidegger, we must first ask about the meaning of the word Being before we can begin to legitimately ask about the meaning of the things around us, about the meaning of the entities we see before us in our everyday living. Historically, that is, in Western history, such a question has nearly always been posed from within the resources of the philosophical tradition, but even here, Heidegger holds, the question of the meaning of Being has always been passed over in favour of the question of the meaning of particular entities. The problem is that because the question of the meaning of Being is almost only found, even in this derivative form, in the language of philosophy, this language, and this way of posing the question of the meaning of Being, has effected and dominated this meaning, and in such a
way as to shroud other ways of questioning and experiencing it.

However, even if we have no direct way of questioning the meaning of Being itself, even if the proper orientation towards this question is already shrouded in the very fact of the necessity of an orientation toward Being (if both the orientation and the word Being are to take on significance), this orientation and this meaning remain a fact. As Heidegger says:

We do not know what ‘Being’ means. But even if we ask ‘What is “Being”?’, we keep within an understanding of the ‘is’, though we are unable to fix conceptually what that ‘is’ signifies. We do not even know the horizon in terms of which that meaning is to be grasped and fixed. But this vague understanding of Being is still a fact. [BT. p.25].

This orientation toward Being, this vague understanding of the word “Being,” its usage in everyday language, in general inquiry, is also expressed in this rough and ready language as a way of being.

In fact, the first half of Heidegger’s analysis of the question of Being, demands that we pay close attention to the lexical scope of the word “way” in relation to the word “Being.” One of the conditions of the multiple senses of this word, in terms of a way of being, is that something has this way of being as its own Being. As condition of the scope of the sense of the word “way,” as used in this phrase, something has, as its “way of being”, a vague understanding, an asking of, a having access to, even a rough, shrouded indeterminate access to, the meaning of this word Being. Heidegger terms this entity, which has these orientations towards Being as it own being, Dasein. Without this entity, the phrase “way of being” would lose even its rough and ready sense, for there would be nothing to have a way of being.
Displacing the Cartesian Subject

This consideration of the conditions of asking about being, as a way of Being, is meant to displace Descartes' thought of the *ego cogito ergo sum*. Descartes, holds Heidegger, was prejudiced by the thought of the medieval scholastics. Because of this, Descartes never questioned the being of the *res cogitans* (a thinking thing), assuming that it was a finite *ens creatum*, created by the *ens infinitum*, God. It is through this interpretation of the nature of the *res cogitans*, that Descartes can think that God would secure our objective judgement. This is because God is posited as the final *ens increatum*, the true source of all things. We have already seen that a determination of the *ens infinitum* as *ens increatum* must be illegitimate, because the *ens infinitum* must exceed the finite judgement of the *res cogitans*.

Far from providing a radical new foundation for the knowledge of entities, Descartes merely carried over the old structures of thought which he wished to criticise. These structures stretch back to ancient Greek thought, where Descartes' thought of the *subiectum*, as that within which things come to appear, is a translation of the Greek thought *hypokeimenon*. Heidegger thus elsewhere says that, in Descartes:

> the very essence of man itself changes, in that man becomes subject. We must understand this word *subiectum* ... as the translation of the Greek *hypokeimenon*. The word names that-which-lies-before, which, as ground, gathers everything onto itself. This metaphysical meaning of the concept of subject has first of all no special relationship to man and none at all to the I. ³⁷

After Descartes, however, Being is almost always understood in terms of the present intentional conscious scope of the subject, where the subject is

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always considered to be the minimum condition of man himself. Heidegger does not pose the question of Being, and its disclosure in Dasein, in order to simply overcome and do away with Cartesian thought. This is, after all, a way of understanding Being, especially in the way it closes off the question of Being. In order to comprehend the question of Being, what it is to question something like the word “Being,” we must be able to pass through the different historical ways of asking and answering this question, so that we can begin to understand how this question is approached in modern times.

What he does argue is that the concept of the subject and subjectivity presents a highly abstract way of thinking of our world in terms of a relation between a minimum judging subject, and a represented world of objects. Heidegger uses the concept of Dasein, and the phenomenological analyses and descriptions stemming from this concept, to try and make clear how artificial and abstract subject based ways of grasping the meaning of Being actually are.

7. The Practical Nature of Consciousness

Heidegger puts this problem of our abstract ways of conceiving things in a practical context with his famous example of the hammer. Heidegger invokes the idea of tools in order to demonstrate the difference between the very abstract idea of seeing, or being conscious of, a thing as an object or appearance, something present-at-hand, and the seeing, or being conscious of a thing as it is used in an everyday context.

This demonstration does not serve to justify a distinction between a pragmatic and a theoretical consciousness of things. Heidegger is rather concerned with clarifying the fact that a theoretical grasp of being, conceiving of things as present-at-hand has, since early Greek philosophy, obscured the
pragmatic "nature" of consciousness. What is radical about Heidegger's argument is that he shows that the theoretical "consciousness" obscures this pragmatic nature by insisting upon a clear cut distinction between theoria and praxis. Heidegger will thus show how when we look closely at the Greek idea of pragmata - mere things - it actually interrupts or threatens this distinction, calling the interpretation of being as the consciousness of what is present into question.

The meaning of pragmata is rooted in the idea of things that we can use, the idea being that things in general are subject to control and ordering. Thus, for example, for Plato, the appropriate practical use of a thing is one which conforms to its idea, to its theoretical presentation as eidos. For, when a hammer is used, is taken in the hand to hammer a nail into wood, or a hole in a wall, although the person who hammers may be conscious of the hammer in the hand, the hammer is never presented to consciousness as something like an appearance which the subject simply "sees." If one simply looks at a hammer in terms of its appearance, then its meaning as a hammer "in-itself" tends to fade away. One sees a geometric shape of certain mass and density, fabricated from certain materials. But, argues Heidegger, such a manner of seeing fundamentally misses the essence of the hammer, such a seeing is far removed from understanding its meaning. Even if this theoretical way of seeing stipulates that the hammer is a tool to be used in such and such a way, for such and such a purpose, it is still remote from the meaning of the tool itself.

It is only when hammering with the hammer that its meaning as a tool reveals itself and is most intimately understood. One is not so much conscious of the hammer itself. The blur of its motion and the jarring of its strike can hardly be said to present the hammer in all its clarity to consciousness.
Indeed, if we take the example of driving a car along a well known route it is often the case that the driver is hardly aware of driving, let alone aware of the car, until his destination is reached. In driving the car, however, the driver has all the while almost all too well understood what it is to drive a car, what the car is there for. It is the same with the hammer. Its meaning is understood in terms of hammering, not in terms of its presentation to consciousness. Heidegger thus says:

the less we just stare at the hammer-Thing, and the more we seize hold of it and use it, the more primordial does our relationship to it become, and the more unveiledly is it encountered as that which it is - as equipment. The hammering itself uncovers the specific ‘manipulability’ [“Handlichkeit”] of the hammer. The kind of Being which equipment possesses - in which it manifests itself in its own right - we call “readiness-to-hand” [Zuhandenheit]. [BT p.98]

Obviously this understanding is not utterly unconscious or unthought. The meaning of the hammer is revealed in terms of the referentiality of its use, the in-order-to, and the towards-which the hammering is directed. Thus the hammer hammers a nail into the wall, in order that a picture may be hung, or the car is driven toward a destination, in order that a meeting may take place. Heidegger says that this understanding is therefore not “sightless” or “blind,” but is unthematic and non-theoretical. The hammer, and the car, are things ready-to-hand, and the understanding or use of things ready-to-hand never focuses simply and exclusively on the things themselves, but on their practical context, in the direction of what is going to happen, and in terms of what is needed in order that such and such a thing might happen.

This explanation of the ontological understanding of things as ready-to-hand still leaves unexplained the fact that we do understand things as present-at-hand, in terms of a theoretical understanding, or an idea. Indeed, it is this
theoretical understanding which has allowed us here to undertake such a description of things as ready-to-hand. Even if the ready-to-hand is understood in terms of a referentiality towards other things ready-to-hand, the referentiality of the ready-to-hand cannot be devoid of reference to what is also present-at-hand. If there were never the appearance of an idea of what is to come, of what might or should be, then there would be no toward-which, or in-order-to, which the ready-to-hand thing might refer to. There must therefore be some manner in which things ready-to-hand can be conceived of as present-at-hand, in other words, as intentional objects of cognition.

This is because it is always possible that certain situations can arise in which the ready-to-hand equipment is no longer adequate to the task at hand. The hammer, for example, could be the wrong tool for the job, in which case it becomes "conspicuous" (auffällig) through its unsuitability for the job at hand. Or it is lost, in which case it becomes "obtrusive" (aufdringlich) in the need to find it if the work is to be completed. Or else the hammer is broken, and becomes "obstinate" (aufsässig) in the attempt to repair it in order to get the job done:

The modes of conspicuousness, obtrusiveness, and obstinacy all have the function of bringing to the fore the characteristic of present-at-hand in what is ready-to-hand. But the ready-to-hand is not thereby observed and stared at as something present-at-hand; the presence-at-hand which makes itself known is still bound up in the readiness-to-hand of equipment. [BT. p.104]

Heidegger's move here is especially interesting for our reading of the subject. In accordance with the tradition, which makes an absolute distinction between theoria and praxis, and designates the meaning of a defined term as a totality, Heidegger designates the referentiality of the ready-to-hand a totality. The referentiality of the ready-to-hand is only perceived, however, insofar as its "functional" totality can be interrupted. This interruption or
breakdown is articulated in terms of the present-at-hand. Likewise, if we attempt to conceive of a world of objects as merely present-at-hand, the resulting totality is interrupted by the resistance of the ready-to-hand equipment to thematisation.

What this means is that the consciousness of things from a practical point of view and the conception of them from a theoretical point of view are intimately dependent upon each other for their respective meanings. Neither of these respective meanings - the meaning of a thing understood as object, present-at-hand to the conscious subject, or the meaning of a thing understood as tool or equipment (Zeug), ready-to-hand to be used by the conscious subject - will ever be free of a certain contamination or interruption of meaning from the other perspective.

Both of these perspectives or interpretations are routed in the traditional understanding of consciousness and subjectivity, and are diametrically opposed to one another. Without this strict opposition between theory and praxis, reflection and action, intellectual and practical reasoning, the meaning of the subject’s judgement, as the locus of intentional consciousness, could not make sense. The meaning of the subject’s judgement depends upon a strict hierarchical division between its theoretical and practical realms.

The Breakdown of Theoria and Praxis

Perhaps the most familiar version of this original division between theoria and praxis, is Descartes’ division between mind (or cognition) and body (or corporeal extended world). Here the subject’s Cogito judges the empirical extended world, within which it acts, and reflects and decides upon the validity of its judgement. The subject’s judgement effectively decides the
meaning of the extended corporeal world of objects, including its own corporeal action in this world. Without this division the subject effectively has no object about which to judge.

Thus, when Heidegger shows that the two realms are a) not strictly divided, and b) not hierarchically arranged, he threatens the assumed sovereignty of the subject's judgement. The breakdown of this division would suggest that the source of the meaning of the subject, of consciousness itself, lies outside the subject, outside of the presence of intentional consciousness.

This division breaks down as follows: The referential structure of the ready-to-hand, which is essentially nonthematic and inconspicuous, can only come to light in that it has already been disturbed and becomes obtrusive as the present-at-hand. The job that I should be completing also comes to light in this obtrusiveness. What I want to do becomes clearer when I am immediately prevented from carrying it out by the very tools I intended to use. I not only think about the missing tool, I think about other ways of completing the job and other tools which I might use. I tend to picture the task in its entirety, including other possibilities.

What Heidegger is arguing is that an ideal representation issues from the breakdown of the referential totality of the ready-to-hand equipment. This present-at-hand picture of what should be presents the referentiality of the ready-to-hand as a totality. Yet the fact of this present-at-hand picture demonstrates that if there ever was such a totality, it has broken down. Even the representation of things being seen as either ready-to-hand equipment or present-at-hand entities is merely present-at-hand, and would therefore miss the "thing-in-itself." What Heidegger appears to be tracing is not two interpretations of Being, but rather a fundamental abyss in the articulation of Being. The meaning of Being is articulated in the very interruption of its
articulation or interpretation as a totality.

It is this experience which, he holds, gives rise to our understanding of a "world." Whatever this meaning might be, it cannot be presented as a totality, which means it cannot be presented. The articulation (or presentation) of the meaning of Being always refers to a non-meaning beyond or outside the terms of the particular interpretation in which it is articulated. Thus, in the case of the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand, each interpretation of the Being of the world only has a meaning insofar as it makes reference to the other. The reference to the other means that this meaning can never be a totality - it always refers to that which is not and cannot be present. On the other hand, this reference to a beyond, or an other, forms the condition of possibility of interpretation in general taking on meaning.

This breakdown of the referential totality of the ready-to-hand has thus already occurred even before anything has actually broken or gone missing because there never was a referential totality in the first place. This totality is rather presented to us in the present-at-hand representation of something like the meaning of the ready-to-hand. This understanding of the Being of the world of which we are aware is always already an interpretation, in which the thing is existentially given as being there. The world exists, and already has a meaning as a world, which effectively means that the existence of this meaning is already an interpretation. This interpretation is therefore obviously pre-theoretical, and primordial. Insofar as we understand something as something in this interpretation, then this thing is interpreted as already having a meaning. Insofar as it has a meaning it both exists and has being, as a totality:

The concept of meaning embraces the formal existential
framework of what necessarily belongs to that which an understanding interpretation Articulates. *Meaning is the “upon which” of a projection in terms of which something becomes intelligible as something; it gets its structure from a fore-having, a fore-sight, and a fore-conception.* In so far as understanding and interpretation make up the existential state of Being of the “there,” “meaning” must be conceived as the formal-existential framework of the disclosedness which belongs to understanding. [BT p.193]

It is only Dasein which can have or not have meaning. Unlike the Cartesian or Husserlian concept of subjectivity, in which meaning is constitutively intended by the transcendental subject, the concept of Dasein articulates the field in which meaning in general obtains. For it is only to Dasein that the disclosedness of entities takes place, and this concept is used precisely to resist the notion that the meaning of a thing is constituted within this field.

Dasein is thus conceived as that entity “in” which both an opening and a limit point of a conceptual network is delimited, in which and through which Being *is*. This disclosure occurs in terms of an apophathic phenomenal world in which Dasein is ‘already’ posited as that entity for which

in its very Being, that Being is an issue for it. ... Understanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of Dasein’s Being. ... Thus Dasein’s understanding of Being pertains with equal primordiality both to an understanding of something like a ‘world’, and to the understanding of the Being of those entities which become accessible within the world. [BT p.33]

Thus there is no possibility of something like Dasein without the open horizon of an already given world “within” which it finds itself, within which it can *be*. Simultaneously there is no world, no signification, without the
disclosive opening which Dasein "is." Heidegger terms this constitutive horizon Dasein’s Being-in-the-world.

What is suggested here is that this horizon is, in the first instance, rendered possible by the spatiality of Dasein in which its being-there is understood by Heidegger as the relational possibility of Being-in. This is a basic ontological state which is characterised by, and renders possible, Dasein’s de-severance [Ent-fernung] and directionality [Ausrichtung], that is, Dasein’s spatiality in the world.

8. Space, Time, and Consciousness

What we wish to argue is that the distinction between the totality of entities ready-to-hand and the totality of entities present-at-hand in the world collapses due to the nature of Dasein’s spatiality. Furthermore, we would like

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38 As such, at this stage, the concept of Dasein resists humanistic or anthropologistic interpretations such as Sartre’s translation of the term as human reality in Being and Nothingness.

It is to be understood as the existential condition through which Being in general can take on significance. However, as Derrida suggests in his essay “The Ends of Man,” (Margins of Philosophy), this anthropological reading of Dasein, and Heidegger’s project, is partly legitimated insofar as Dasein stands in an intimate relation with “us,” understood, always, as man in general. He says, for example: “just as Dasein - the being which we ourselves are - serves as an exemplary text, a good ‘lesson’ for making explicit the meaning of Being, so the name of man remains the link or the paleonymic guiding thread which ties the analytic of Dasein to the totality of metaphysics’ traditional discourse. ... We can see then that Dasein, though not man, is nevertheless nothing other than man. It is ... a repetition of the essence of man permitting a return to what is before the metaphysical concepts of humanitas. ... The value of proximity, that is, of presence in general, therefore decides the essential orientation of this analytic of Dasein.” [pp.126-127]. Although this is not directly our concern here, it should, in principle, be possible to show that the analytic of Dasein’s spatiality, which was never completed in its relation to primordial temporality, would have served, probably against Heidegger’s intention, to fracture and displace this orientation of the analytic of Dasein. In shaking the distinctions made between the ontic and ontological spatial significations of, respectively, nearness or proximity; and distance or farness, it should also set Being understood as presence into relief, since it is only within these distinctions that Heidegger’s portrayal of the presencing of presence can operate.
to suggest that it is Dasein’s spatiality which provides the initial lever to Heidegger’s destruction of the traditional conceptions of time, and likewise, his destruction of the traditional subject. It is through these analyses that we hope to arrive at an understanding of what it can mean to state that meaning is already spatialised, as Derrida suggests in “Speech and Phenomena.”

We have already seen in the previous brief accounts that the meaning of things, understood either pragmatically or theoretically, is always experienced in terms of a disruption of the totality which such an understanding implies. Dasein thus finds itself within a world of things the meaning of which is articulated in terms of an almost constant interruption of a precomprehended, or presumed, totality of relations. This presumption of the meaning of things, which Heidegger defines as a primordial “fore-having, a fore-sight, and a fore-conception” [BT p.193] is itself possible only on condition of its interruption. This means, in effect, that the meaning of things of which we are aware occurs only on condition of a relation or reference to a “primordial” indeterminacy or indefiniteness in our perceived world.

However, before we can give a direct account of this indeterminacy, we must understand how it is arrived at. We must therefore examine the conditions of possibility of Dasein having something like a world in which things are encounterable for it.

**Dasein’s De-severance**

Heidegger holds that in order that Dasein “have” a world in the first place, Dasein must have the ability to be touched by, and to be involved in, the world. This is described by a basic characteristic of Dasein: Being-in. This is, in the first instance, a dwelling, a being familiar with, a precomprehended orientation with respect to the things encounterable in the world. We have
already seen this characteristic articulated in terms of Dasein’s interpretative understanding of things ready-to-hand. Such things are interpretatively understood as already having an existential meaning insofar as they projectively refer to a totality of equipment which is not yet “there.” Thus I hammer the nail into the wall in order that the cabinet may be hung up, in order that my things may be stowed away, etc. My interpretative understanding of the hammer, within which it takes on significance as a hammer, includes this projected totality of references. This totality, however, is at all times futural - it is never present.

The meaning of the hammer will always include a reference to that which is not present, namely a futural horizon of meaning. This would seem to suggest that meaning is constituted from a temporal horizon. But, although Heidegger’s analyses direct us to concentrate solely upon the temporal constitution of meaning, which includes Dasein’s spatiality, we should also be aware of the importance of Dasein’s spatiality in his analysis of meaning, and Heidegger’s general wariness in dealing with the relation between Dasein’s spatiality and its temporality. Heidegger himself says:

the demonstration that this spatiality is existentially possible only through temporality, cannot aim either at deducing space from time or at dissolving it into pure time. If Dasein’s spatiality is ‘embraced’ by temporality in the sense of being existentially founded upon it, then this connection between them ... is also different from the priority of time over space in Kant’s sense. [BT p.418]

Then, regarding the relation between spatiality and signification, he goes on to say:

The ecstatical temporality of the spatiality that is characteristic of Dasein, makes it intelligible that space is independent of time; but, on the other hand, this same temporality also makes intelligible Dasein’s ‘dependence’ on space - a ‘dependence’
which manifests itself in the well known phenomenon that both Dasein’s interpretations of itself and the whole stock of significations which belong to language in general are dominated through and through by ‘spatial representations.’ This priority of the spatial in the Articulation of concepts and significations has its basis not in some specific power which space possesses, but in Dasein’s kind of Being. Temporality [also understands itself] ... from those spatial relationships which making-present is constantly meeting in the ready-to-hand as having presence, it takes its clues for Articulating that which has been understood and can be interpreted in the understanding in general. [BT p. 420]

We would argue further, as Heidegger later does in his essay “Time and Being,”39 where he rejects the derivation of space from time in §70 of Being and Time, and indicates a common source of both time and space, that Dasein’s spatiality is just as much irreducible in the constitution of meaning, as is its temporality. If we return to the example of the futural horizon in the meaning of the hammer, it is difficult to see how this referentiality is only temporal. If we examine it closely we will see that it must also be spatially determined.

As was said above, the general condition of Dasein’s spatiality is Being-in. Heidegger describes the general characteristics of this state as a familiar orientation within a world of entities which Dasein can encounter. Since Dasein’s understanding of its world is always a projected understanding, this familiarity is itself a projected fore-conception of the totality of relations within which Dasein is involved. We have already seen that the meaning of things is constituted only insofar as the presumption of a totality of things either ready-to-hand or present-at-hand, is interrupted or contaminated, by the other interpretative perspective. If we now interpret this

schema in terms of Dasein's primordial spatiality and temporality, we see likewise that the familiar projected spatial totality of Being-in, can only be projected, and conceived, insofar as it is interrupted and contaminated by Dasein's futural temporal horizon, and vice versa. What we wish to suggest is that neither Dasein's temporal horizon, nor its spatial horizon, can be primordially constitutive of meaning in general, but that the constitution of both horizons rely upon a prior reference to a general indeterminacy of meaning. We think that it is this referentiality which Heidegger designates by the paradoxical movement of the temporalisation of temporality.

In order to understand this idea of interruption as constitutive of meaning in our reading of Heidegger, we must first realise that when Heidegger talks of Dasein's spatiality, he means neither an objective, empirical space, nor a purely subjective intuition as in Kant. The spatial scope of Dasein does not describe a subject somehow outside the world, but capable of taking up a relationship to existing objects within the world, outside of itself, in some sort of objective subject-object relation. This is a theoretical attitude which already presupposes Being-in-the-world as its possibility:

Dasein is never "proximally" an entity which is, so to speak, free from Being-in, but which sometimes has the inclination to take up a "relationship" towards the world. Taking up relationships towards the world is possible only because Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, is as it is. This state of Being does not arise just because some other entity is present-at-hand, outside of Dasein and meets up with it. Such an entity can "meet up with" Dasein only in so far as it can, of its own accord, show itself within a world. [BT p.84]

Dasein's spatiality therefore describes the conditions under which we can have something like an understanding of space as either objective or subjective in the first place. It cannot be that my understanding somehow
imbues the objects surrounding me with spatial meaning. For, before I can even have a sense of a subjective inside and an objective outside, I must always already be spatially orientated within the world.

Thus, for example, the table upon which I write is not proximally experienced as a total object in space, removed at a certain distance from my body. That is only one of the possible descriptions of the relation between my body and the table. This would be a fairly artificial and sophisticated view of the situation in which my Dasein finds itself, the description of spatiality as it is in terms of the present-at-hand. Rather, whilst I am writing, the table tends to be neither here nor there in relation to my being. It does not take on a significance as a spatial object, or an object in space, whilst I am concentrating on my writing. The kind of being which its has for me is that described by the ready-to-hand.

As Heidegger says, “In Dasein there lies an essential tendency towards closeness” [BT p.140] which means that Dasein’s spatiality consists of affective rather than effective boundaries in that an object takes up space for Dasein insofar as it can touch or affect Dasein in some way or another, and is thus brought close to Dasein. But this is only possible if Dasein simultaneously “makes” space for the said object, bringing it into a differentiated state whereby it can affect or hold attention. For instance, if the table gives way, or sways due to my activity, it concerns me and comes into view.40 It dictates the direction of attention and is de-severed from the

40 The table is only meant as an extreme example of the interruption of our familiar orientation in the world. De-severance implies such an interruption, but this interruption need not necessarily be the breakdown of something. It can also simply be “bringing something into view,” or “taking notice of something.” In both cases de-severance is meant to describe how things come out of and recede into the background as they come to our attention. Heidegger’s point is that in order to attend to something or other the (continued...)
phenomenal distance which it beforehand had as being neither here nor there: “De-severing” amounts to making the farness vanish - that is, making the remoteness of something disappear, bringing it close. Dasein is essentially de-severant: it lets any entity be encountered close by as the entity which it is. [BT p.139]

We have already seen this phenomenon of interruption in our analyses of the distinction between the referential totality of the ready-to-hand and the totality of meaning expressed in the present-at-hand. These were explained in their temporal contexts, that Dasein’s interpretative understanding projects a referential totality which is already interrupted by its temporal structure - this totality is never present. In other words, the referential totality projected in the meaning of the hammer includes a non-determinable relation to the future, and can therefore itself only be understood from the perspective of the present-at-hand, because it is not yet ready-to-hand. This interruption is here formulated in terms of the temporal horizon of the future, which leads Heidegger to determine the meaning of Dasein’s being as the temporalisation of temporality.

What we see, however, is that this projection must also be spatial, that there is no temporal horizon without a spatial horizon of Being-in which it necessarily interrupts. There could be no meaning to Dasein without the interplay of these two horizons. If a thing cannot be de-severed, through the interruption of the projected referential totality of the ready-to-hand, then it cannot take on meaning for Dasein. It remains immersed within the undifferentiated totality of its relations, and thus we cannot be conscious of it. However, without this de-severance in which a thing takes on its spatial

(...continued)

object of our attention must be actively differentiated from its surroundings, which are then perceived as distant.
signification we would also not be aware of the constitution of its meaning from Dasein's horizon of temporality. The "openness" of the temporal horizon of the future, into which the understanding of the thing as ready-to-hand projects the referential totality of the "in-order-to," is open only on condition of Dasein's de-severance, for it is only in terms of de-severance that Dasein can appreciate something like a horizon.

Thus de-severance is a limit structure of Dasein which is not simply related to the signification of a phenomenon "for" Dasein, but forms one of the conditions of possibility of the signification of a phenomenon in general, and thus always accompanies this signification. One could say it is the "space" in which a spatial signification can signify. It is not delimited by distantiability - in objective measurable terms its range is immeasurable because its scope exceeds even the most distant star one can see, or the smallest particle one can detect because it is precisely the condition and space in which they can be detected. I can therefore never step outside or overcome my de-severant range:

As Being-in-the-world, Dasein maintains itself essentially in a de-severing. This de-severance - the farness of the ready-to-hand from Dasein itself - is something Dasein can never cross over. ... Dasein can ... traverse the "between" of this distance [between two places], but only in such a way that the distance itself becomes one which has been desevered. So little has Dasein crossed over its de-severance that it has rather taken it along with it and keeps doing so constantly; for Dasein is essentially de-severance - that is, it is spatial. It cannot wander about within the current range of its de-severances; it can never do more than change them. [BT p.142-143]

De-severance is Dasein's horizonal delimitation as Being-there, and every horizon which Dasein "has" is always already "spatial." However, we should not understand this "spatiality" as objectively measurable space which is a
reductive interpretation of Dasein’s horizontal spatiality understood as de-severance.

**Dasein’s Directionality**

De-severance does not exhaust Dasein’s spatiality. Another constitutive condition of Dasein’s spatiality is directionality. De-severance may open the differing spatial horizons within which I orientate myself and things take on significance for me, but it cannot differentiate between these horizons. In other words, it can account for the disruption of the projected referential totality of the ready-to-hand, but it cannot account for its referentiality. Directionality, or the referentiality of an orientation, is an irreducible condition of a phenomenon taking on significance:

As de-severant Being-in, Dasein has likewise the character of directionality. Every bringing-close has already taken in advance a direction toward a region out of which what is de-severed brings itself close, so that one can come across it with regard to its place. [BT p.143]

Dasein must therefore always already be orientated within the world which is given to it as an open ended referential network of signs. These take on meaning only in their reference to the horizons opened in Dasein’s de-severant Being-in. Only if Dasein has the character of directionality and is able to orientate itself toward something, which thus stands in a referential relation, can that phenomenon have significance as something. This significance arises insofar as Dasein is directed toward a horizon of meaning opened by Dasein’s de-severance. Dasein is thus always already referred to such a horizon in its involvement in the world. This means that the meaning of this horizon must always be indefinite, because it is constituted through its reference to something else. This indefiniteness to which, or, as Heidegger
says, "whither" something always refers, can be understood as a contextual background. This background, whilst never being present, must always structurally be there. This whither, or context, Heidegger terms the *region*, in which things can have their place:

"In the region of" means not only "in the direction of" but also within the range [*Umkreis*] of something that lies in that direction. The kind of place which is constituted by direction and remoteness (and closeness is only a mode of the latter) is already orientated towards a region and orientated within it. Something like a region must be discovered if there is to be any possibility of allotting or coming across places for a totality of equipment that is circumspectively at one's disposal. [BT p.136]

The region is the articulation of Dasein's spatiality in terms of a referentiality towards a horizontal opening, i.e. a context. This context is always, in relation to the signification of the phenomena, itself nowhere. Its meaning is constituted through the reference of the ready-to-hand phenomena towards a projected totality of involvement. In this context the ready-to-hand phenomenon functions as a sign, and, indeed, only has meaning insofar as it functions as such. Dasein can concern itself with the ready-to-hand phenomenon in its possible usage, and is orientated by the phenomenon's referentiality as a sign for something. Dasein's deseverance and directionality consists of something like an indeterminate pointing toward the open horizon of the future:

41 Cf. *Being and Time*: ¶ 24. "Space and Dasein's Spatiality," where Heidegger writes: "In the phenomenon of the region we have already indicated that on the basis of which space is discovered beforehand in Dasein. By a 'region' we have understood the "whither" to which an equipment-context ready-to-hand might possibly belong, when that context is of such a sort that it can be encountered as directionally desevered - that is, as having been placed. ... In general the "whither" gets prescribed by a referential totality which has been made fast in a "for-the-sake-of-which" of concern, and within which letting something be involved by freeing it, assigns itself." [BT, p.145]
Circumspective concern is de-severing which gives directionality. In this concern - that is, in the Being-in-the-world of Dasein itself - a supply of “signs” is presented. Signs, as equipment, take over the giving of directions in a way which is explicit and easily manipulable. They keep explicitly open those regions which have been used circumspectively - the particular “whithers” to which something belongs or goes, or gets bought or fetched. If Dasein is, it already has, as directing and desevering, its own discovered region. [BT p. 143]

This means, however, that Dasein’s spatiality cannot exist apart from its temporality and, furthermore, its “temporality” is conditioned by its “spatiality.” Without Dasein’s spatiality there is no “sign” for temporality, and vice versa. In the context of our analyses of the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand, the temporal horizon of the in-order-to is opened, and can only signify, insofar as there exists a spatial Being-in and toward-which. This means that the horizon of Dasein’s meaning will always have both a spatial and temporal determination which are irreducible to each other.

In other words the sign through which temporality is articulated must always take up “space.” Its meaning must always refer to a spatial horizon which, in terms of temporality, is other than time. Such a sign, which amounts to the sign in general, since we are here talking about the general conditions under which Being can signify, can never articulate, or present, a pure unity of meaning. On the other hand the meaning of the sign through which “space” is articulated must always refer to a temporal horizon which is not articulatable in terms of a spatial horizon.

Thus, in order that time and space take on meaning for Dasein there must already be a “prior” reference to what is other, to what is non-present and non-presentable. This reference of meaning, of what “is,” of presence to an indeterminate non-presence or non-meaning, in which Dasein’s “temporality” is already “spatialised,” and its “spatiality” is already
“temporalised,” is indicated in *Being and Time* by the general movement of
the destructuring of the traditional conceptualisation of Being traced by the
temporalisation of temporality. This movement can be said to mark the
necessary reference of the horizon of time to its other, which means, so long
as the meaning of Being is defined in terms of Presence, and in terms of time,
we cannot determine this meaning, it remains obscured or forgotten.

9. The Destructuring of Consciousness
Reading Heidegger so, we find that what is structurally necessary to Dasein’s
being aware of something, of a thing having significance for Dasein, is a
certain referential indeterminacy from out of which, and against which,
phenomena can differ from one another. Only so can they have significance
for Dasein. Our reading suggests that this structural indeterminacy arises from
the interplay between Dasein’s spatial and temporal horizons of meaning, in
which the thing has meaning as a sign.

This means, however, that the sign “in itself,” or thing as sign, can
never have a meaning in itself. It must always refer beyond itself if it is to
take on meaning. Thus, if we interpret meaning in general, positing the
horizon of time as its existential condition of possibility, this horizon will only
signify insofar as it refers “outside” of itself. If meaning in general is
understood in terms of Presence then the condition that temporality signifies
is that it already has a spatial signification.

It is tempting to conclude from this that a sign only has meaning insofar
as it is spatially contextualised, in other words, that we can only be aware of
things within a spatial environment. This, however, misses the point of our
analyses. If we interpret Heidegger so, we miss the fundamental movement
of the destructuring of the traditional understanding of meaning and
consciousness, and it is this destructuring which forms the basic experience of *Being and Time*.

We have already witnessed that in each stage of the phenomenological analysis Heidegger has taken the traditional distinctions which are used to describe our consciousness of the world and, rather than simply abandon them, he, as it were, turned them upon themselves. The distinction between the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand, essential to his existential analyses, derives from the traditional distinction between *theoria* and *praxis*. This distinction forms the lexical matrix within which the distinction between *eidos* and *hyle* can take on a corresponding significance in reference to that-which-lies-before - *hypokeimenon*. *Theoria* and *praxis* articulate two different ways of seeing and dealing with the *hypokeimenon*, either in terms of its idea or form, or in terms of its physical matter. It is the articulation of *hypokeimenon* through *theoria*, in terms of the *eidos* which discloses the truth of that-which-lies-before. In modern terms this matrix is translated by the subject's consciousness in which its substance, its intentional life, is articulated in terms of form and matter, where the ideal form determines the meaning of corporeal matter.

Heidegger unfolds the full lexical matrix of these distinctions, by phenomenologically showing what is necessary if these terms are to take on the meaning which is assigned to them. In doing so he destructures the very possibility of our experiencing the meaning of such a phenomenality, but this destructuring enables us to see what is meant by these distinctions, in the sense of what they are meant to express. It also shows that it is impossible for these distinctions to express what they are meant to. Thus we have seen that at each stage the terms of each distinction have been firstly overturned, in that Heidegger has concentrated on provisionally showing that the meaning of the
traditionally prior term is actually derived from its opposite. Since this overturning upsets the hierarchy of the opposition, through which the distinction normally obtains its meaning, this meaning is itself disturbed, until the language and syntax of the tradition reveals itself as inadequate to that which it seeks to express.

If we take a last brief look at Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein’s spatiality, then we can see that Being-in cannot be regarded as an already spatial characteristic of Dasein. It is rather the mark or trace of the non-determinate relational condition through which Dasein has a spatial meaning, both in relation to time and to space. If Being-in is “grounded” in the temporalisation of temporality, then temporalisation must be simultaneously understood as a spatialisation which occurs “before” every defined temporal structure, i.e. the ecstatic horizons of past, present, and future.

Thus, in terms of the analysis, “before” Dasein can be-there, the there must be opened as a primordial space “within” which Dasein can be, as the disclosive openness of the there. The temporalisation of temporality, as constitutive of Dasein, “is” the space of Dasein’s other, the possibility of Dasein’s being-other, which “is” the future, the possibility of death, the reflection of a not-I in another, which interrupts the ipseity of Dasein. In other words, there can neither be space nor time in themselves. Insofar as they signify then they must have both the characteristics of the sign, expression and reference. Thus, insofar as “time” “is” it must be spatial. In our analyses of Derrida and Husserl we will see that we can expand this thesis in order to show that insofar as consciousness has a meaning, that it is constituted from a temporal horizon, it is also necessarily spatial. This play between the “spatiality” and “temporality” of the transcendental subject indicates a primordial reference of the subject to a non-determinable, non-presentable
meaning, which we have named the transcendent infinite.

Part II: Husserl's Phenomenological Subject
10. Derrida's Critique
Our reading of Heidegger has indicated that Husserl's conception of the transcendental subject, like Kant's, rests on an inadequate interpretation of meaning. We have seen that this inadequacy revolves around the necessity for an account of referentiality. Since Husserl's transcendental subject should express a totality of meaning, and referentiality in general "means" the interruption of such a totality, Husserl's concept of the phenomenological transcendental subject cannot provide such an account.

Furthermore, if, as we have argued, spatial referentiality is necessary to meaning insofar as meaning is understood in terms of presence, then the understanding of meaning from the perspective of the transcendental subject should stand in a definitive relationship to such a referentiality. This relation should be as follows: 1. Spatial referentiality can be shown to be necessary to the constitution of meaning in the transcendental subject. 2. This necessity threatens the viability of the transcendental subject's expression or presentation of its meaning. 3. Husserl's conception of the transcendental subject as the expressive locus of all meaning must therefore represent a repression of such a referentiality which tries to avoid such a collapse of the subject's meaning.

We can now begin to look at the form of this referentiality in Husserl's transcendental subject. We shall approach this through Derrida's reading of Husserl in his essay "Speech and Phenomena." Here Derrida both explains and demonstrates the necessary role of referentiality in the subject's constitution of meaning. He does this by revealing the phenomenological site
within which an essentially mediate spatial referentiality can be passed off, or interpreted, as the immediate and full expression of pure meaning. This site is the voice of the phenomenological transcendental subject.

Derrida purports to detect a tension at the very heart of Husserl’s phenomenological analysis. He holds this tension to be a decisive condition of phenomenological critique, whilst being produced by this critique as a symptomatic problem. Husserl’s phenomenological project organises and orientates its analyses in terms of a resolution or reduction of this problem.

This tension appears and reappears at several differing levels of Husserl’s analyses. For example, one can detect it between the descriptive and the analytic or critical scope of phenomenology.\textsuperscript{42} This is because the

\textsuperscript{42} Cf. David Wood’s reading of Husserl and Derrida in his book \textit{The Deconstruction of Time}. Basically our reading of the two agrees with Wood’s, but only up to a certain point where Derrida is accused by Wood of somewhat idealising Husserl, reducing, for example, his understanding of presence to the simple now. (Cf pp. 124ff). Wood goes on to assert that Derrida’s argument “that difference opens up subjectivity to the outside is not one that he convincingly sustains. He succeeds at most in showing that a certain spatiality can in a rather abstruse sense be located within subjectivity.” [ibid p.129]. It is here that Wood misses the point of Derrida’s analyses (or refuses to see it, since he points it out at other stages of his argumentation). For Derrida never \textit{seriously} argues that difference objectively grounds subjectivity. And he never \textit{seriously} argues that a certain spatiality is located - how could it be “located”?- in either consciousness or subjectivity, which is why “space” is always in quotation marks for Derrida. What Derrida describes is what metaphysical argumentation commits itself to. It is within Husserl’s argumentation, which is guided by his commitment to presence - to expressing what truly “is” - that difference and spatiality are necessary within subjectivity in order to supplement the presentation of the structures of subjectivity. Wood is absolutely right when he says this position is not sustainable, but this does not constitute an objection to Derrida’s reading of Husserl, for this is precisely Derrida’s point. Husserl’s phenomenology cannot, in all seriousness, sustain the truth of its descriptions, because they lead to conclusions which the metaphors of truth, and knowledge, cannot, according to their own logic and premises, be used to describe. In these situations the language of philosophy finds itself exhausted, and simply resort to not mentioning these areas if it is to maintain the validity of its descriptions. If Derrida’s “arguments” are no more or less valid than those of the tradition, this is because they \textit{are} traditional, as Wood himself comments [ibid p.127], and it is because they are traditional that they cannot be sustained. What they are, however, is strategical, and whilst Wood gives an account of strategy as argumentation, tackling it upon philosophical (continued...)
critical register of Husserl’s language will always attempt to institute an absolute separation between its descriptive and analytic components.

The necessity of this separation is fairly obvious, because without it the validity of both registers would be endangered. This is due to the loss of all objective or exterior criteria from which a description can be critically evaluated and validated. That is, one could no longer decide whether a description were true or false.

What is less obvious, and what Derrida shows, is that the impossibility of realizing and maintaining the separation between phenomenology’s descriptive and analytic registers is itself a necessary condition for the ideal representation of such a separation. It has already been noted above that this tension occurs in phenomenology’s description of the temporalization and intersubjectivity of the transcendental subject. Here one experiences firstly

42(...continued)
grounds, he underemphasises the point that Derrida writes on the margins of philosophy. For Wood, this is merely a case of risking sterility, that is, of not listening to what Derrida says, because he no longer conforms to the traditional requirements of wanting-to-say-something, of being committed to the truth, to presence. Wood never asks, however, what this sterility could comprise. He touches upon the themes of repression in Derrida, but never asks what kind of text is it that undermines, or supports such repression. That is, Wood misses both the political and ethical weight of Derrida’s argumentation, which breaks down the traditional boundaries between philosophical and political discourses (Cf. His Of Spirit, in which he first discusses such a sterility in the context of the so-called Heidegger Affair. Also important are his “The Afterword” and “Restitutions,” in which these dimensions of Derrida’s work are brought out.) Derrida is concerned with the style, rather than content, of interpretation which Husserl uses, and its implications, and therefore mimics it, in order to draw out these implications, and to show the “truth” behind this discourse. Subjectivity is constituted neither from identity nor difference, but all these metaphors necessarily refer to a necessary indeterminacy of language, or of life, if one prefers, which they seek to cut out, to repress. This desire is never, in terms of the metaphors which express it, legitimate - it is, as Nietzsche points out, and both Derrida and Wood reiterate, a lie. Its expression therefore falls into the realm of persuasion, of force, of politics as identity, as Lacoue-Labarthe says. The network of terms and analyses which Derrida has built up over the years, under the heading deconstruction, such as différence, serve as markers for a legitimate and necessary resistance to this desire.
the impossibility and necessity of grasping the separation between internal time itself and the consciousness of internal time, i.e. the appearance of time to consciousness. That is, one cannot experience the distinction between temporalization itself and the modal form in which it appears. Secondly one experiences the simultaneous impossibility and necessity of grasping the meaning of the other qua other as something “outside” the scope of the transcendental subject.

The phenomenological experiencing of both of these distinctions, that is, the substantiation of these distinctions, is absolutely necessary if the phenomenological subject is to be apodictically grounded, “beyond all doubt,” and thus apodictically presented, rather than merely ideally represented. However, from the premises of the transcendental phenomenological subject it is impossible to obtain verification of this experience. This necessary experience is denied by the very idea of the constitution of the subject’s meaning. As Derrida says:

Let us note only, in order to here specify our intention, that phenomenology seems to us tormented, if not contested from within, by its own descriptions of the movement of temporalization and of the constitution of intersubjectivity. At the heart of what ties together these two decisive moments of description we recognize an irreducible nonpresence as having a constitutive value, and with it a nonlife, a nonpresence or nonself-belonging of the living present, an ineradicable nonprimordiality. [SP p.6-7]

Derrida’s critique centres around his perception that Husserl has, despite the radical intentions of phenomenology, non-critically taken up the traditional philosophical interpretation of language. This interpretation will dominate and direct the whole course of the phenomenological analysis. Derrida thus holds that Husserl:

had, in a most traditional manner, determined the essence of
language by taking the logical as its telos or its norm. That this telos is that of being as presence is what we wish to here suggest. [SP p.8]

He holds that it is precisely Husserl’s somewhat hasty treatment of language and his understanding of signs and signification which produces this tension in phenomenology.

Derrida’s reading is based on the interpretation of the nature of signification that Husserl gives in the first part of the *Logical Investigations*. Here Husserl makes a division between two heterogeneous aspects of the sign - expression, and indication. This division, holds Derrida, conforms to the traditional, metaphysical interpretation of language, and determines the whole of Husserl’s phenomenological project.

Derrida thus interprets Husserl as putting forward a doctrine of language in which there are two concepts of signification. The first is expression, whereby a sign directly expresses its meaning. The second is indication, in which a sign refers to a meaning which is not included within the expressive sense of that sign. Ideally speaking an indicative sign can be understood as a present empirical or physical mark which points to a non-present meaning. Its signifying function consists purely in its referentiality to a meaning, in itself it has no meaning:

According to Husserl there are signs that express nothing because they convey nothing one could call (we still have to put it in German) *Bedeutung* or *Sinn*. Such is the indicative sign. Certainly an indicative sign is a sign, as is an expression. But, unlike an expression, an indicative sign is deprived of *Bedeutung* or *Sinn*; it is *bedeutungslos, sinnlos*. But, nonetheless, it is not without signification, no signifying without the signified. [SP. p.17]

Derrida will later argue that this division commits phenomenology to a reference to spatialisation within meaning. However, within the
interpretational matrix which phenomenology uses, i.e. that of presence, this reference to a spatiality cannot be included within such an expression, because such a referentiality could never be purely present. Such a critique is possible because Husserl understands the indicative sign in terms of its empirical materiality, which is always contingent and inessential in relation to the express meaning which such a sign points to, or “carries.”

This, in turn, means that Husserl thinks that the expressive sign takes priority over the indicative sign. This is because expression is considered to be the proper form of meaning - the meaning of an object is properly announced through its expression. Indication, on the other hand, can only point to a meaning, it can never properly express a meaning. In this context, meaning is understood by Husserl (and can only be understood) as what an expression ideally “means,” what an expression is meant to say, or really wants to say:

Without forcing Husserl’s intention we could perhaps define, if not translate, bedeuten by “mean” [or “want to say”; in French vouloir-dire], in the sense that a speaking subject, “expressing himself,” as Husserl says, “about something,” means or wants to say something and that an expression likewise means or “wants to say” something. One would thus be assured that the meaning (Bedeutung) is always what a discourse or somebody wants to say: what is conveyed, then, is always a linguistic sense, a discursive content. [SP p.18]

Expression is thus the proper form of meaning in that it embodies the ideality of meaning announced by the subject’s expression of what it means. We have already seen in the Kantian conception of the subject that the “I think” must accompany all of the subject’s representations. Husserl, holds Derrida, is moving along the same lines of analysis, except that he has re-interpreted the “I think...”proper to the subject, as “I mean...”.

Ultimately the expression of meaning must be understood from this
perspective, from meaning understood in terms of its ideality. We can understand this ideality as the meaning the subject wants to express - the meaning it would ideally express if the reproduction of the immediacy of the subject’s “I mean...” did not always factually involve a mediation. This “I mean...” is essentially the subjective condition of the subject’s intentional cognition, and thus expression is the essence and meaning of the subject’s cognition. Expressed meaning is the subject’s cognition.

Indication thus ultimately always refers to this ideal expression of what the subject means in its intentional cognition. The indicative sign only has meaning insofar as it actually expresses a meaning, otherwise it only refers to an expressed meaning. This effectively means that Derrida takes Husserl to understand the subject’s cognition as the self-evident expression of the subject’s meaning. The indicative sign is then used by Husserl to explain the physical mediation of this express meaning (what the subject means, or wants to say) in communication between two separate subjects. This physical mediation is, in itself, meaningless, and only has meaning insofar as it refers to what the subject means to say.

What could possibly be the objection to this understanding of signification in the subject? It is true that when I communicate with someone there must be some reference to a reality outside of my own subjectivity otherwise I could not locate someone else as being other than me. But surely Husserl is right in thinking that what I mean is constituted by my subjective processes alone as an internal expression of my thought. For example, when I think of an object, then surely it is not necessary for the meaning of my thought to refer beyond thought? Surely the meaning of such an imagined object can only be strictly internal, constituted only by my imagination, and only present to my perception as such? Any reference to an empirical reality
beyond my subjective perception of the imagined object is surely inessential?'

This, however, is not really Derrida’s point. Derrida is not strictly arguing that there is an irreducible empirical spatiality within signification, although at times it is easy to forget this. For Derrida "space," "spacing" and "spatiality" are always in quotation marks when taken in relation to signification. This is because of two factors: 1. Derrida wants to avoid the question whether empirical extension is real. The quotation marks serve to suspend this question. 2. Derrida wants to show that the meaning given to spatiality within a conceptual system which resorts to using a division between time and space, between ideality and extension, not only exceeds its determination within that system, but exceeds the system of conceptuality itself. Writing "space" in quotation marks, serves to indicate the inadequacy of a conceptual system in general, i.e. the concept of conceptuality, to describe the entire scope of its elements. At some stage, the meaning of the "elements" of such a "system" will exceed the descriptive scope of the metaphor of the concept, indicating meanings beyond its powers of description.

The concept of "space" is therefore an example of this general movement which Derrida ascribes to every conceptual system. His objection to Husserl is thus not that there must be spatiality in meaning. He does not argue that a meaning must always have empirical or physical extension, or that the meaning of the subject is constituted from the basis of its empirical extended world - its body, or that there really is difference "before" identity. All these arguments would simply be reversals of the stance taken by Idealism in general, and would probably belong to the same sources of dogma which Derrida is seeking to criticise.

They are, furthermore, hardly viable positions to take against Husserl's
form of phenomenological Idealism, which consists of a whole battery of more than convincing arguments against such a position. Phenomenology's whole agenda seems designed to show that the only possible objects which answer to the demands of scientific thought are those described by transcendental phenomenology, in terms of their subjective conditions of possibility. Such an agenda surely means that objects are referred to only in their pure ideality, in terms of their possible meaning for consciousness, rather than their actual, or empirical status.

It is here that Derrida's critique begins to function. He is strongly aware that Husserl cannot accept the possibility that meaning has real empirical extension - it is anyway, a highly dubious proposition. What Derrida tries to demonstrate is that Husserl's uncritical interpretation of language commits phenomenology at certain stages, to just such a view. As he says:

What governs here is the absolute difference between body and soul. Writing is a body that expresses something only if we actually pronounce the verbal expression that animates it, if its space is temporalized. The word is a body that means something only if an actual intention animates it and makes it pass from the state of inert sonority (Körper) to that of an animated body (Leib). This body proper to words expresses something only if it is animated (sinnbelebt) by an act of meaning (bedeuten) which transforms it into a spiritual flesh (geistige Leiblichkeit). But only the Geistigkeit or Lebendigkeit is independent and primordial. [SP p.81]

This conforms to the traditional Cartesian doctrine of an absolute difference between Cogito and extensio, an opposition which phenomenology should, at least according to Husserl, have called in to question and displaced. Surely this is also the case. The refinement of phenomenological description should have surpassed this naive belief.
Derrida's argument is that it cannot because of Husserl's approach to language. This is because the distinction between expressive and indicative signs determines a whole set of distinctions without which phenomenology could not operate.

Derrida's argument runs along the following lines. He holds that Husserl thinks there are two heterogenous aspects to the sign, the first being expression, the second indication. The expression of the meaning of something is the presentation of its ideal meaning, in the sense of what is meant, or what someone means to say. Expression therefore presents the essential in meaning. The indication of the meaning of something, on the other hand, is secondary to the expression of meaning. Indication is the empirical or physical mediation of the ideal meaning which takes place in, for example, communication, or any other form of signification which refers to a reality outside the subject's subjective perception. This includes reference to any material existence over and above the ideal existence of the subject's ego. Expression is therefore the essential manifestation of the subject's inner, subjective meaning - what I meant to say, what I meant when I thought x or y. Indication refers this meaning to an outside world, to an other person outside of myself, and is useful in transporting meaning, but ideally and essentially, has nothing to do with its constitution. Derrida points out that Husserl thinks that:

we know already in fact that the discursive sign, and consequently the meaning, is always involved, always caught up in an indicative system. Caught up is the same as contaminated .... In fact and always (allzeit verflochten ist) to the extent to which the meaning is taken up in communicative speech. [SP p.20]

He then locates his critique exactly at this point. Husserl has already made an essential distinction between the ideal inner subjective life of the subject - its
structures of intentionality, and an external empirical world, a world of existent facts. This distinction lies hidden within the distinction made between expressive and indicative aspects of the sign. These two heterogenous functions of the sign already rely upon a clear cut distinction between what is intentional, i.e. the ideality of meaning, and what is factual and empirical, i.e. the physical or empirical indication of meaning outside the inner intentionality of consciousness. This distinction, however, is never phenomenologically justified, nor logically grounded. It amounts to a belief about the world which is never subjected to phenomenological critique.

Derrida’s claim goes much further than simply attributing a localised dogmatism to phenomenology. He believes that this distinction determines the whole of phenomenology’s trajectory. This is because he detects a slippage in the distinction between the essential and factual levels of Husserl’s analyses. For Husserl, meaning is essentially expression, but he says that it is factually impossible to separate expression from indication, because factually, signification always involves reference to an existent, empirical, physical world. This belief in a real empirical world is denoted by the very idea of a fact.

However, if the very distinction between fact and intention has not yet been phenomenologically criticised and thus grounded, then this factual analysis applies to all signification. For, if signification is essentially expression, in the sense of the expression of an ideal intentionality, whilst indication is factually contingent to meaning, in the sense of an empirical sign for meaning, then the essential meaning of both elements of signification becomes obscure. In general the necessary distinction between de jure and de facto levels of analysis is dependent upon an essential distinction between the two aspects of the sign, in which their function and meaning is already
decided. The distinction between these two sorts of signs, however, is already \textit{de jure}, and thus we are involved in a contradiction which does not allow us to separate the factual from the essential. If it is \textit{in fact} impossible to separate these two forms of signification, then this fact, argues Derrida, must be essential to phenomenology:

The whole analysis will thus advance in this separation between \textit{de facto} and \textit{de jure}, existence and essence, reality and intentional function. ... And its \textit{de jure} import, the right to a distinction between fact and intention, depends entirely on language and, in language, on the validity of a radical distinction between indication and expression. [SP p.21]

Derrida holds that this distinction between expression and indication thus governs the whole of phenomenology's trajectory, subjecting it to an internal tension, in which the necessary empiricity, or worldliness of the sign is shut out by the expression of meaning within the phenomenological reduction. Without this reference to an exteriority there would be no "inner" "subjective" expression of meaning. Simultaneously this exteriority of the indicative sign threatens the purity of the subject's inner expression with incoherence. In other words it threatens the subject with death, for it threatens to rupture the ideal solitude of the subjective "inner" life of the subject. This "inner" meaning of the subject is expression which is not yet exteriorised - its pure "I mean...". This can only be posited in terms of the exclusion by the transcendental reduction of all reference to a possible exteriority, to everything other than the subject. This exclusion is something which Husserl holds to be factually impossible, and Derrida argues to be essentially impossible:

The meaning is therefore \textit{present to the self} in the life of a present that has not yet gone forth from itself into the world, space, or nature. All these "goings-forth" effectively exile this life of self-presence in indication. We now know that indication,
which thus far includes practically the whole surface of language, is the process of death at work in signs. As soon as the other appears, indicative language - another name for the relation with death - can no longer be effaced. [SP p.40]

The distinction between indication and expression, and thus essence and fact, inside and outside, and all the distinctions caught up in phenomenology’s system, depend upon this effacement of the other by the meaning of the transcendental subject. Derrida’s argument is basically that such a distinction is a fiction, a belief. It is not just that such a distinction has not been critically proved by phenomenology, but that it cannot be proved, because the distinction between the expression and indication of meaning is structurally undecidable. It is this undecidability, in this case represented by the relationship of the expression of meaning to a certain empiricity - the belief in a real external world, or an objective spatiality - which “contaminates” the phenomenological project from beginning to end.

However, Derrida’s critique of Husserl is centred on the Ideas, and the Logical Investigations. He himself admits that there is a question as to whether Husserl’s later work is concerned with how knowledge is produced, or with founding knowledge per se. In order to see this it is necessary to read Husserl himself. The reading here will be restricted to his Cartesian Meditations, for two reasons: firstly, if Derrida is correct in his assertion that Husserl’s division between expressive and indicative signs, set forth in the Logical Investigations, dominates and determines the project of a transcendental phenomenology according to traditional metaphysical assumptions, then it should be possible to read the effects of this determination in the much later Cartesian Meditations. Secondly, if, as

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43 Husserl E., Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology.
Husserl asserts, the foundation of an apodictically secured science rests in the apodictic verification of the intentional structures of the transcendental subject, and these meditations present such a verification, then it should be possible to analyse the guiding intention behind the phenomenological analysis and grounding of transcendental subjectivity within the scope of this book. This should then indicate at what stages the necessary referentiality of meaning interrupts and disturbs its full expression by the transcendental subject. We will concentrate upon the relation between the subject and the transcendency of its world. We will then look at Derrida's explanation of how it is possible to conceive of meaning as pure subjective expression i.e. ideality, without being able to realize the necessity of a reference to an irreducible exteriority.

11. Husserl's Project

Husserl's Cartesian Meditations effectively reintroduces a new Cartesian spirit into twentieth century thought in the form of a phenomenology of the transcendental subject. Husserl here proposes transcendental subjectivity as the essence and ground of phenomenology and hence of philosophy itself. Thus he says:

following Descartes, we make the great reversal that, if made in the right manner, leads to transcendental subjectivity: the turn to the ego cogito as the ultimate and apodictically certain basis for judgements, the basis on which any radical philosophy must be based. [CM p.18]

Husserl wished to establish transcendental phenomenology as a thinking within which the old assumptions and prejudices of scientific and philosophical discourse could be criticised. This radical critique should, simultaneously, provide a new, absolutely secure ground for philosophical
investigation into the nature of the world.

Husserl can be read according to these and other stated intentions, which include the wish to remedy a corrupt metaphysics. This, holds Husserl, according to a very traditional reading of the philosophical canon, has become distorted and impure due to "metaphysical adventure" carried out in the spirit of "all speculative excess" [CM p.139]. Husserl therefore intends to cure metaphysics of this wanton excess, to bring it back to its proper path of thought through its radical phenomenological critique.

If Husserl is read solely in this light then we are strongly tempted to agree wholeheartedly with Derrida's criticism that Husserl repeats the tradition of metaphysical idealism. However, when we read Husserl's later work, such as the Cartesian Meditations, and his Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness, closely, we find just such speculative excesses and certain fundamental ambiguities which reveal themselves as necessary to phenomenological description. Although Husserl is not wont to emphasise these excesses, neither does he deny or suppress them.

Thus, at this stage of the reading, we should perhaps be wary of passing over the narrative development in the Cartesian Meditations. In doing so we would run the risk of reducing certain speculative threads of this progression to a singular determination of the intended meaning of this book.44

44 Even if one wishes to remain true to these speculative tendencies it should be noted that Husserl thinks it necessary at the very beginning of the Cartesian Meditations, to return to Descartes' first premise and point of departure, that of the ego cogito ergo sum, as the first originary apodictic evidence. He thus determines philosophy and the subject, as the domains of critical inquiry and truth, without paying attention to the possibility of the inscription of a functioning critical discourse within areas other than a so-called pure philosophy, and without legitimating this strict division between philosophy and other possible discourses. It is as if art, literature, and the empirical sciences had no critical
Phenomenological Speculation

It could well be that these ambiguities and excesses arise because of Husserl’s unequivocal assertion for the need for a philosophical unity within which the reforming of the sciences can be rationally articulated. This is one of the contexts within which Husserl’s text can be said to be marked by an ambiguity. For the determination of an absolute origin is forced on Husserl when he asserts:

Only within the systematic unity of philosophy can they [the empirical sciences] develop into genuine sciences. As they have developed historically, on the other hand, they lack that

44(...continued)
effect of their own, and were always dependent upon philosophy for such an effect. Even if this is so, which is disputed here, Husserl makes little effort to justify and demonstrate this.

In other words, at least in the Cartesian Meditations, his reading of Descartes is restricted to its logical content, and excludes any mention of its rhetorical and literary form. For, as Heidegger shows in his essay “The word of Nietzsche: God is dead,” to which we will turn our attention later on, the proposition *ego cogito ergo sum* is not so much a new phenomenon in philosophy - a new idea - as a rewriting, a translation, of the Ancients conceptual network in which the Greek usage of Hypokeimenon (that which is) was inscribed. Thus whilst the idea was not exactly new, the literary device used by Descartes to carry out this translation had probably never been used before in the scope of philosophical writing. After all, it is difficult, if not impossible, to envisage the persuasive force of the *ego cogito* without the rigorous and exclusive use of the autobiographical form to perform this argumentation, a device to which Husserl must also, necessarily, resort.

And yet, as Derrida points out, within the locus of a restriction, such as the focus upon, and the prioritisation of a logical grammar, or the expressive sign, Husserl effectively denies the necessity of such devices both in the constitution of sense in general, and as internal necessities to his own argumentation. If elsewhere, in his Logical Investigations, Husserl, commenting on the word “I,” says:

What its meaning is at the moment can be gleaned only from the living utterance and from the intuitive circumstances which surround it. If we read this word without knowing who wrote it, it is perhaps not meaningless but is at least estranged from its normal meaning. [From SP. p.96]

then is not the “I,” which is always called forth by Husserl in the Cartesian Meditations when it comes to the execution of the transcendental epoché, also estranged from the normal meaning he necessarily intended it to carry?
scientific genuineness which would consist in their complete and ultimate grounding on the basis of absolute insights, insights behind which one cannot go back any further. Hence the need for a radical rebuilding that satisfies the idea of philosophy as the all-inclusive unity of the sciences, within the unity of such an absolutely rational grounding. [CM p.1-2]

Thus the assertion of the origin of such a grounding is contained in the assertion of the possibility of such a grounding. This origin, and together with it the concept of origin in general, is always articulated as that singular determination of meaning behind which one cannot go any further. Husserl asserts that this origin is expressed as the innermost apodicticity of the subject. This is specifically Descartes’ subject, the philosophising “I” which maintains its meaning in the very suspension of belief in all previously accumulated knowledge, the doubting subject.

It is here that the ambiguity begins to have an effect, an effect to which Husserl is not entirely blind, and which he will later comment upon in the progression of his meditations. This comment or suspicion throws another light upon Husserl’s phenomenology which Derrida at least partly misses. The ambiguity which is at work here is opened by the presupposition of the radically doubting subject. Logically we must begin here, with the apodicticity of the Cartesian subject. But Husserl will also throw logic into doubt within the scope of his transcendental epoché - is he not then necessarily committed to a false start?

In other words, can one ever be certain that the doubting meditator who “Keeps only himself, qua pure ego of his cogitationes, as having an absolutely indubitable existence, as something that cannot be done away with, something that would exist even though this world were non-existent” [CM p.3] is always identical with himself? Only a subject identical over time could offer an authentic ground from which Husserl’s project can begin, but
is this not thrown into doubt as well? It is not that the ego which thinks "now" is not assured of existence at that precise point in time - this fact is beyond question. It is rather that the fact that the ego who thought "then" is more than merely formally the same as the ego who thinks "now" is not necessarily deducible from this fact.

Secondly, if one cannot be certain that this "I" who meditates is always self-identical, how is one to be certain that he is truly alone in himself "qua pure ego" as Husserl says? Is it not rather that the thought of the thinking ego - the subject reflected in time - is always attended by the possibility of being otherwise, of being forgotten, or of carrying another meaning than was originally intended? Husserl will answer this question in two ways:

1. He will stipulate that the I, the pure transcendent ego, is an ideal repetition - a formal repetition - of a possible ego and exists therefore only as an ideal possibility of the concrete ego - the psychological ego. The veracity of all existential internal experiences of the ego is therefore bracketed out by the transcendental epoché through which the transcendent ego is reached. Thus all apodictic evidences only refer to the possibility of the realisation of this formal point. This still begs the question how one can verify an ideal unity which would be inherent within this repetition without reference to a content (over time) of this form. This also stands in opposition to his earlier affirmation that the word "I," estranged from its "normal" living origin, is deprived of its normal sense. In relation to the ideal possibility of its infinite repetition, the "normal" sense of the transcendent ego, the "I," would necessarily veer towards non-sense, or more precisely, towards a sense which could never be remembered and thus verified.

2. Later, Husserl will note, after stating that there must necessarily be a relation to something other within the transcendental subject in order that an
Objectively verifiable world can be conceived of as existing, that:

The empathies [towards the other] lie within the immanency that belongs to me as "ego" of the reduction. These non-originary presentations function together with all the others in the constitution of the "world." Therefore what is set forth in Meditations I-III must have made implicit use also of empathy - only it was not mentioned. The difference between other persons and me as a person is itself a constituted differentiation between transcendental I (ego in the second sense) and transcendental others; and the transcendental intersubjective constitution of the world, as a world for all and a world that contains the transcendental subjects, mundanized as men. In the absolute and original ego of the reduction the world is constituted, as a world that is constituted as transcendentally intersubjective in every transcendental Ego. [CM p.64 fn.1]

This at least suggests that the "absolute and original ego of the reduction" was already false as soon as it was posed in its absolute form. It is, at least with reference to the Cartesian Meditations, at times difficult to subscribe to Derrida's reading of this problem as a tension within phenomenology. It is more than possible to interpret this tension as a speculative excess inherent in phenomenology which sustains the acuity of phenomenological analyses over and above Derrida's accusations of a repetition of the traditional motives of the metaphysics of presence.

In Husserl, all the analyses which Derrida indicates as exemplifying a tension, those of time, of the alter-ego, of apperception, or representation, never simply bury the problems they raise. If this were the case this would suggest a simple tension in the work, such as one experiences in Kant's positing of noumena. These descriptive analyses go too far for this, which suggests, as has been argued, at least an other Husserl to that of Derrida, a statement that Derrida would perhaps not totally disagree with. It still remains, however, to pass through the transcendental reduction in order to
ascertain to what extent this other Husserl is able to speak.

12. Transcendental Reduction and Objectivity

We should therefore turn our attention to the opening of the transcendental reduction. It is within this reduction that Husserl begins his enterprise. This reduction is meant to take place at the origin of scientific discourse and knowledge - in the first principle of a first philosophy, *ego cogito ergo sum*. His aim, like Descartes before him, is to suspend belief in all knowledge which is not yet absolutely certain. With this in mind he states:

> And so we make a new beginning, each for himself and in himself, with the decision of philosophers who begin radically: that at first we shall put out of action all the convictions we have been accepting up to now, including all our sciences. Let the idea guiding our meditations be at first the Cartesian idea of a science that shall be established as radically genuine, ultimately an all-embracing science. [CM p.9]

This leads Husserl to question the legitimacy of such a beginning: if the belief in the validity of the sciences in general is suspended, how can we follow their alleged ideal, and how can we know whether this ideal is legitimate. True to the radicality of Cartesian doubt, from which the transcendental reduction stems, Husserl thinks although we are not to be persuaded by the veracity of the ideal of the sciences, that does not mean that they simply disappear out of sight. He admits that we cannot simply suspend our presumptive attitude towards philosophical and scientific discourse if we have already decided to participate within the scope of its given structures, no matter how critical this participation might be.\(^{45}\)

\(^{45}\) The move which Husserl here performs within the scope of the transcendental reduction is remarkably similar to Heidegger’s conception of *Destruktion* and *Abbau*, which will be later refined and translated by Derrida under the heading *Déconstruction*. (continued...)
We can, however, suspend our judgement regarding their truth and their logic, regarding them as possible discourses, in which knowledge could be grounded, and follow the course of their argumentation. This leads Husserl to an understanding of the objects of phenomenological description which grasps them in their ideal possibility rather than their actuality:

Naturally we get the general idea of science from the sciences that are factually given. If they have become for us, in our radical critical attitude, merely alleged sciences, then, according to what has already been said, their final idea has become, in a like sense, a mere supposition. ... Nevertheless we do have it in this form, and in a state of indeterminate fluid generality; accordingly we have also the idea of philosophy: as an idea about which we do not know whether or how it can be actualised. [CM p.8]

We wish to show that within the interpretational matrix offered by phenomenology, this reference in the transcendental reduction to a possible real or factual world is only possible on the necessary presupposition of a real factual world. In other words, an empirical world, the sense of which arises before that constituted by the subject. Husserl's contention, however, is that this exteriority is itself ideal, contained within the subject, and its meaning thus constituted by the transcendental subject.46

45(...continued)
He follows the trajectory of the use of certain concepts central to scientific thought without granting them absolute validity, in order to determine the possible scope and conditions of their function. Concepts which cannot sustain themselves by their own criteria are therefore suspended within the phenomenological reduction, from which perspective they can be criticised.

46 It should be noted that the reduction is, at this stage of the Cartesian Meditations, only a provisional attitude, which must demonstrate its objective grounding during the course of the meditations. Even at the end of these meditations it is not absolutely clear whether this provisionality is ever overcome, especially when Husserl says that this is still a “first stage of phenomenology - a stage which in its own manner is itself still infected with a certain naïveté (the naïveté of apodicticity)” [CM p.151]. The validity of the (continued...)
The Suspension of Judgement

Husserl thus begins his meditations with an implicit reading of Descartes, and, provisionally starts from the same radical suspension of all truth claims, that is, the suspension of all things which are judged to be true. He thus begins with himself, as he who suspends his judgement from the things around him. This, however, in no way renders the world of the meditating philosopher non-existent. It is always there as a possible world for the philosopher. What is suspended is the question whether it is there in reality. Within this suspension of the division between reality and illusion, Husserl distinguishes between the suspension itself, and what this judicative act suspends: namely judgement itself.

Judicative doing is therefore the activity which is ascribed to the philosophising subject within which he can accept a judgement as true, that is, believe it to be grounded, or suspend his belief in it. Within this context there is then a distinction between immediate and mediate judgements whereby

mediate judgements have such a sense-relatedness to other judgements that judicatively believing them "presupposes" believing these others - in the manner characteristic of a believing of an account of something believed already. [CM p.10]

Immediate judgements thus have the form: x=y, and mediate judgements the form: if x=y then p. The proper object of judicative activity is judgement itself, and includes the validation of a judgement, whereby, ideally, it is

transcendental reduction is rooted in the nature of apodictic evidence, and if this itself is called into question, the provisionality of the reduction as the origin of the phenomenological project is reinforced.
concretely and absolutely grounded. This grounding of a judgement consists, for Husserl, in the apodictic demonstration of a judgement’s validity and forms the cornerstone of his phenomenological project, for without such a grounding one would not be able to talk in terms of the possession of certain knowledge. This grounding therefore takes on the characteristic of a necessary property of the knowing subject, where a property or acquisition is understood as

a grounding already executed, or to the truth shown therein, [to which] one can “return” at will. By virtue of this freedom to reactualize such a truth, with awareness of it as one and the same, it is an abiding acquisition or possession and, as such, is called a cognition. [CM p.10]

This does not mean, however, that a cognition should be understood as simply a wayward thought ethereally emanating from somewhere in the subject’s vicinity which the subject somehow reaches out and grasps, making it its own. A subject is not something which exists and then “has” thoughts or cognitions. The subject is rather fully grounded in cognition - it is what the subject itself means or intends. Cognition is conceived of as the ability of the subject to possess a meaning as its own and which therefore necessarily includes at all times the possibility of a demonstration of this possession. This gives rise to the idea of evidence, whereby

In a genuine grounding, judgements show themselves as “correct,” as “agreeing,” that is to say, the grounding is an agreement of the judgement with the judged state of affairs [Urteilsverhalt] (the affair or affair-complex [Sachverhalt]) “itself.” More precisely stated: Judging is meaning - and, as a rule, merely supposing - that such and such exists and has such and such determinations; the judgement (what is judged) is then a merely supposed affair or complex of affairs, as what is meant. But, contrasted with that, there is sometimes a pre-eminent judicative meaning [Meinen], a judicative having of such and such itself. This having is called evidence. In it the
affair, the complex (or state) of affairs, instead of being meant "from afar," is present as the affair "itself," the affair-complex or state-of-affairs "itself"; the judger accordingly possesses it itself. [CM p.10]

For Husserl, the intentional subject therefore consists of its meaning, or judgement, insofar as this meaning or judgement self-evidently belongs to the subject itself, i.e. it expresses the subject's own sense or meaning.

The Apodicticity of the Reduction

At this stage, however, Husserl is not yet at the reduction proper to the transcendental subject. It is within this context that he will contend that he has overthrown the Cartesian subject because Descartes missed the transcendental nature of the subject. At this stage of his meditations he feels certain enough to state that:

We have gained a measure of clarity sufficient to let us fix, for our whole further procedure, a first methodological principle. It is plain that I, as someone beginning philosophically, since I am striving toward the presumptive end, genuine science, must neither make nor go on accepting any judgement as scientific that I have not derived from evidence, from "experiences" in which the affairs and affair-complexes are present to me as "they themselves." [CM p.13]

This then gives rise to the notion of apodictic evidence:

An apodictic evidence, however, is not merely certainty of the affairs or the affair-complexes (states-of-affairs) evident in it; rather it discloses itself, to a critical reflection, as having the signal peculiarity of being at the same time the absolute unimaginableness (inconceivability) of their non-being, and thus excluding in advance every doubt as "objectless," empty. [CM p.15-16]

It is from this ideal of the sciences of securing knowledge from absolute, irrefutable evidence, that Husserl concludes that the premise of the Cartesian
subject, the *ego cogito ergo sum* is the first apodictic evidence which the philosopher can possess. However, the veracity of any relation to anything other than the ego posited in this statement is suspended, in what he terms the transcendental epoché. It is important to realise that for Husserl it is only this ego, in all its ideality, which is apodictic. This does not yet include the veracity of thoughts stemming from this ideal ego in reflection about itself. Within this epoché, at this stage of the meditation, nothing other than this statement is accepted as apodictically true. This suspension is executed only from within the scope of this statement. This expression of the subject is the performance of the transcendental epoché by the transcendental subject in which its existence is apodictically verified.

As has been said, however, this abstention from belief in the world does not destroy its appearance to the subject, it only suspends the validation of its claim to an external existence, outside that of the subject. The claim of the “objective” world to a real being-in-itself is no longer accepted by the doubting subject as being true. Within this realm the minimal subject is still confronted with a world, but no longer one to which it takes a judgemental stance. This holding back from judgement - the performance of the epoché - nonetheless exists, and to it thus belongs the world as a phenomenon. The subject, holds Husserl, experiences this field of phenomena as its life - the awareness of this passing phenomenal field is the subject’s awareness of its pure life in its subjectivity:

This universal depriving of acceptance, this “inhibiting” or “putting out of play” of all positions taken toward the already-given Objective world and, in the first place, all existential positions (those concerning being, illusion, possible being, being likely, probable, etc.), - or, as it is called, this “phenomenological epoché” and “parenthesizing” of the Objective world - therefore does not leave us confronting
nothing. On the contrary we gain possession of something by it; and what we (or, to speak more precisely, what I, the one who is meditating) acquire by it is my pure living, with all the pure subjective processes making this up, and everything meant in them, purely as meant in them: the universe of “phenomena” in the (particular and also the wider) phenomenological sense. [CM p.20-21]

And, shortly afterwards:

The epoché can also be said to be the radical and universal method by which I apprehend myself purely: as Ego, and with my own pure conscious life, in and by which the entire Objective world exists for me and is precisely as it is for me. [CM p.21]

It is thus within the transcendental epoché that the subject comes to confront the sense of its intentional conscious life. It is only within this sphere that something can have sense for the transcendental subject, as a totality of meaning.

These basic principles of phenomenology characterize the transcendental subject in the entirety of its possible meaning. The forms of its cognition, within which the meaning of every object intended by the subject has meaning for the subject, therefore form the apodictical ground of the possible knowledge which the subject can have. It is important to realize when reading Husserl, that he is only concerned with the possible meaning of an intentional object, what and how an object means something for the subject. Husserl holds that it is only this meaning that the subject can apodictically and evidentially possess, and thus know for certain.

However, we have already seen that this leads to accusations of solipsism and of an infinite regress at the heart of phenomenology, a tension which is not easily escaped by Husserl. We have also suggested that these tensions are themselves produced by the radicality and rigour of Husserl’s
phenomenological description set against the necessities of his analytical project. We can put it this way: on the one hand, whilst the analytical project requires the subject to immediately and transparently express its pure meaning to itself, the phenomenological description of this process commits this expression to refer to an exteriority in which this meaning is given its possible objectivity, and is not simply subjective. On the other hand, if the phenomenological description itself is to describe the processes of cognition "themselves," and thus in accordance with the analytical project, then it too must refer to an exteriority from which the modes of appearance can be apodictically distinguished from appearance itself.

In both cases we arrive at a necessary conjunction, which can be said to be both the opening and closure of the phenomenological subject. This is the necessary referral of its cognition to a transcendent world. It is also here that Derrida's critique takes on its pertinence.

13. Transcendence in the Phenomenological Subject
Does not Husserl also discover this tension in phenomenology during the course of his meditations? The answer to this must be both yes and no. As Derrida points out, the project of transcendental phenomenology essentially recognizes that a relation between the Cogito and a beyond, an outside, is necessary if we are to conceive of anything like a verifiable, objective meaning. This essential going out beyond itself of the Cogito is what is meant by Husserl's description of the Cogito as necessarily intending a horizon in the constitution of the meaning of its intended object:

without exception, every conscious process is, in itself, consciousness of such and such, regardless of what the rightful actuality-status of this objective such-and-such may be, and regardless of the circumstances that I, as standing in the
transcendental attitude, abstain from acceptance of this object as well as from all my other natural acceptances. ... Each Cogito, each conscious process, we may also say, "means" something or other and bears in itself, in this manner peculiar to the meant, its particular cogitatum. ... Conscious processes are also called intentional; but then the word intentionality signifies nothing else than this universal fundamental property of consciousness: to be consciousness of something; as a Cogito to bear within itself its cogitatum. [CM p.33]

We can understand this from the perspective of the Cartesian ego, which must be formally indicated as the condition of cognition in general. These two conditions, however, mutually determine one another. The "I" of the transcendental subject always has a necessary existence in cognition, but only in so far as cognition has a content which stretches beyond its formal condition. In other words the "I" can mean something only in so far that something is "there" of which it is conscious. This indeterminate "there" is the Cogito's general horizon of meaning, which is articulated in its relation to a transcendent world, with its web of constitutive horizons.

Phenomenology thus represents the attempt to encompass the necessary intention of an exteriority within the scope of what can be meaningful for the subject. Husserl recognizes that without a certain reference to an "outside," or an "other" within the scope of the subject's intentional meaning, this meaning could never lay claim to being objective. We could never understand meaning in terms of an objective realm which is necessarily exterior and transcendent to our subjective judgement. Without this reference to a general exteriority the subject could not discern the form of its thought from its content, it could not know whether its thought had an "objective" meaning, and could thus not distinguish what an object in general could mean.

This can be understood in terms of what the subject is said to intend.
or perceive. For example, Husserl says that the basic phenomenal condition of consciousness is the consciousness of its own temporal flux. This temporal flux of consciousness is the transcendental condition of the subject’s differentiation and identification of the sense and meaning of its intentional objects. If, however, the subject perceives this temporal flux itself as an intentional object, and the meaning of this flux for the subject can only be constituted from the subject’s cognitive processes in which this meaning is “mine,” then surely there can be no legitimate differentiation between the sense of the subject’s ego and the sense of the object which it constitutes. Within the scope of the phenomenological epoché this, however, must surely be the case. The problem of how Husserl can explain the existence of our sense of a transcendent world of objects thus remains when he says:

The Objective world, the world that exists for me, that always has and always will exist for me, the only world that ever can exist for me - this world, with all its Objects, I said, derives its whole sense and its existential status, which it has for me, from me myself, from me as the transcendental Ego, the Ego who comes to the fore only with the transcendental-phenomenological epoché. [CM p.26]

The problem is that the very idea of a transcendental ego presupposes a distinction between the ego’s sense of itself and the sense of the ego’s intended object. Husserl believes that meaning only obtains within the realm of the transcendental subject and that this realm - the subject and its cogitation - is its own only phenomenon of which one can be apodictically certain. This means that the difficulty remains of explaining how the subject can differentiate within itself in order to express the meaning of its object, even if this object is itself, and what the sense of such an expression could possibly be.

Without a reference to a transcendent horizon, an externality, the
subject's expression of what it intends - the expression of its ideal meaning - would express nothing, could say nothing, could neither identify nor indicate anything. All that this expression could say, or indicate, would be a tautology. If this is the case then the intended object remains indeterminate, because it is in no way differentiated from the subject - if we could still talk of a subject as such. For, if the intended object - its ideal meaning - is in no way external to the subject "I," then it would be nothing other than the subject, which would be to say nothing about the subject other than "I."

However, Husserl recognizes and emphasises the role of the transcendence of the objective world within the transcendental subject. Is there not some justification in his positing the transcendental subject as the condition of possibility of sense in general, including the sense of the transcendence of the world for the subject? Is it not logically impossible for the subject to envisage a sense which does not belong to it, that is external to it?

Husserl restricts his analysis to the possibility of a logical sense. Within the locus of this restriction, it appears certain that Husserl must be right in designating a necessary relation between the interiority of the subject and the exteriority of the world in the intended meaning of an object. The sense of the world in the cognition of an object is always constituted as being transcendent to the subject. This transcendence does not mean for Husserl that it is not first constituted in the subject, insofar as it is a component of intentional meaning for the subject. What is important for him is that within the attitude of the phenomenological epoché one realizes that all posited meaning is ideal - a possible cognition by the subject.

Phenomenological description is thus the apodictic presentation of the transcendental-logical conditions which are required by the subject's
cognition in order for a particular cognition to have a sense which can be meaningfully expressed. This means that the sense of the transcendence of the world does not indicate the real existence of a transcendent world, only the possibility of its existence. For the subject, the world can only be apodictically expressed in terms of this possibility of cognition. Its transcendence in relation to the subject is a condition of this possibility which is produced by the subject. We have no way of apodictically knowing whether the world in itself is real:

Just as the reduced Ego is not a piece of the world, so, conversely, neither the world nor any worldly Object is a piece of my Ego, to be found in my conscious life as a really inherent part of it, as a complex of data of sensation or a complex of acts. This "transcendence" is part of the intrinsic sense of anything worldly, despite the fact that anything worldly necessarily acquires all the sense determining it, along with its existential status, exclusively from my experiencing, my objectivating, thinking, valuing, or doing, at particular times ... . If this "transcendence," which consists in being non-really included, is part of the intrinsic sense of the world, then, by way of contrast, the Ego himself, who bears within him the world as an accepted sense and who, in turn, is necessarily presupposed by this sense, is legitimately called transcendental, in the phenomenological sense. [CM p.26]

The subject therefore constitutes the transcendent sense of the world as immanent within it, and opposed to the interiority of the subject. The distinction between the exteriority of an object and the interiority of the subject who perceives that object is thus always interior to the subject’s constitution of the sense of an object. For Husserl, this distinction therefore falls into the category of the irreal, although it is a necessary transcendental condition of the subject’s cognition of a possible object, which may or may not be perceived as being real. This would suggest that Husserl is describing the conditions of the production of possible knowledge, within which the
unity of subject and object is a necessary condition, but not necessarily an obtainable condition, i.e. it is posited only ideally and never really. Such a reading of Husserl is supported when he describes the necessary being-in-consciousness of every intended object:

This being-in-consciousness is a *being-in of a completely unique kind*: not a being-in-consciousness as a really intrinsic component part, but rather a being-in-it "ideally" as something *intentional*, something appearing - or, equivalently stated, a being-in-it as its immanent *objective sense.* The "object" of consciousness, the object as having identity "with itself" during the flowing subjective process, does not come into the process from outside; on the contrary, it is included as a sense in the subjective process itself - and thus as an "*intentional effect*" produced by the synthesis of consciousness. [CM p.42]

This must be true of every intentional cognition of an object, and forms the basic structure of the horizontal nature of intentionality. Every cognition must refer to a transcendent immanency of meaning within the object appearance itself. The Cogito thus always intends a meaning beyond, or exterior to, its own presented scope, in terms of an expectational horizon of meaning which conditions the meaning presented in the cognition of an object. For Husserl, the significance of this exteriority within the cognition is, however, constituted within the subject itself. The problem thus still remains how one is to apodictically, that is, absolutely, differentiate between the appearance of an object in its ideal constitution, and the appearance of this ideal constitution of the object in phenomenological reflection.

The objection is not so much that one could not decide which is real and which is non-real - for Husserl both fall in the realm of a condition of possibility, a necessary potentiality of the subject if it is to cognise an object. The objection is rather how one delimits these appearances as *actually* non-real, fictive or imaginary. Given that all objects of consciousness are actually
i.e. apodictically, ideal, how can one apodictically differentiate between the categories of the real and of the imaginary? In order to describe all objects of consciousness as ideal, one must have already made the distinction between the real and the imaginary or irreal. There is a distinct difference between delimiting the subject as an ideal structure, which would be apodictically irreal, or as a “fictive” or “imaginary” structure, the apodicticity of which would be necessarily indeterminate. At the moment, however, we are concerned with the structure of the intentional horizon of the world, and what form the possibility of this fiction might take place in this case.

It is here that Derrida’s reading of Husserl is most enlightening. Derrida firstly asks whether it is possible to truly express the structures of consciousness, when their meaning is constituted from these very same structures. He answers this by showing that there must be an indication or reference within predicative expression to an indeterminacy, which resists predication. The pure expression of the subject is, as indicated above, a belief or fiction for Derrida. He then asks how such a belief is possible, and outlines a phenomenology of the voice of the subject which goes someway in explaining this possibility. Moreover, it is certainly useful in understanding why we find the concept of transcendental subjectivity and of the subject in a general state of collapse.

14. The Cogito’s Expression

We have argued that it is Husserl’s commitment to a reference in cognition to a transcendent exteriority which interrupts his project of an apodictically grounded science. It is this fact that there must be an intended or meant object which transcends the scope of the subject’s expression if intentionality is to make sense, which must be expressed and made evident in its expression.
Such an expression must directly present the evident validity of a judgement in accordance with a pre-predicative state of affairs. It must therefore itself be evident as a direct expression. Conceived thus, such an expression must evidently express the meaning which is meant in the subject's cognition of the said state of affairs. Thus Husserl is led to say:

Yet there is one more thing that should be brought out, to supplement what we have said. We must distinguish the judgement in the broadest sense (something meant as being) and evidence in the broadest sense from the pre-predicative judgement and from pre-predicative evidence. That which is meant or, perchance, evidently viewed receives predicative expression; and science always intends to judge expressly and keep the judgement or the truth fixed, as an express judgement or as an express truth. But the expression as such has its own comparatively good or bad way of fitting what is meant or itself given; and therefore has its own evidence or non-evidence, which also goes into the predicking. Consequently evidence of the expression is also a determining part of the idea of scientific truth, as predicative complexes that are, or can be, grounded absolutely. [CM. p.11]

This means, however, that cognition, understood as the evidential possession of the meaning of something, is nothing other than the pure expression of the cognising subject itself. Pure expression is therefore nothing other than the demonstration or presentation of what the subject means immediately to itself. This then raises the problem of whether the distinction between a pure pre-predicative sphere and a pure predicative sphere can be legitimated, which, in this case, means nothing other than founding the possibility of apodictic expression in general. Here Derrida locates the problem of the voice of the subject. He holds that it is the ideality of vocal expression which would form the ideal mediation and verification of the subject to itself, an immediate mediation which must occur if knowledge is to obtain a logical foundation.

Following the ideal structure of objective knowledge, Husserl deduces
that a *de facto* truth claim must be verified in judicative expression. This judgement only obtains insofar as its evident demonstration is always freely repeatable and the same, i.e., that it is always present in the possibility of a free return to its presentation. This presentation is understood as the apodictic expression of such a truth and, once acquired, takes on the status of a "true" cognition. This presupposes, however, a pre-predicative sphere which is necessarily "there" before this expression. The *ego cogito ergo sum* is necessarily the first predicative expression of the sense of this indeterminate pre-predicative sphere. The sense of a pre-predicative sphere therefore belongs to the subject itself.

However, if this is so then one is thrown into the enigma of how the subject can mediate - express - a sphere which resists such a mediation, which must resist the determination of its meaning by judgement even though it is necessarily the ground of such a determination. In other words, for there to be a pure expression of what the subject means there must be a relation to an outside within which expression is grounded. However, as a pure expression of meaning which is immediately present to the subject, this expression poses itself as the obliteration of this outside in its very articulation. As Derrida says:

> By a strange paradox, meaning would isolate the concentrated purity of its *ex-pressiveness* just at that moment when the relation to a certain outside is suspended. Only to a certain outside, because this reduction does not eliminate, but rather reveals, within pure expression, a relation to an object, namely, the intending of an objective ideality which stands face to face with the meaning-intention, the *Bedeutungsintention*. What we just called a paradox is in fact only the phenomenological project in its essence. [SP p.22]

It is precisely here that this necessary reference to an indeterminacy, which is what such a pre-predicative exteriority represents, threatens the whole of
the phenomenological project, for it renders its telos paradoxical, unsinnig. Derrida thinks that Husserl must therefore repress this reference in the expression of the subject’s meaning, and does so by idealising the meaning of expression itself:

Ex-pression is exteriorization ... . The meaning (bedeuten) intends an outside which is that of an ideal ob-ject [Gegenstand]. 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. [SP p.32]

Derrida gives us an account of how it is possible to maintain such a repression through the tools provided by phenomenology. He holds that in order to do so, philosophy in general, and in this case Husserl, must perform a division of language into expression and indication. In our reading of Heidegger we have already seen the necessity and the collapse of this distinction in consciousness, articulated in terms of the ready-to-hand, and present-at-hand. Derrida goes further and describes how this distinction is maintained through the phenomenon of the voice, which Husserl interprets in terms of its ideality:

It is not in the sonorous substance or in the physical voice, in the body of speech in the world, that he will recognize an original affinity with the logos in general, but in the voice phenomenologically taken, speech in its transcendental flesh, in the breath, the intentional animation that transforms the body of the word into flesh, makes of the Körper a Leib, a geistige Leiblichkeit. The phenomenological voice would be this spiritual flesh that continues to speak and to be present to itself - to hear itself - in the absence of the world. [SP p.16]

This symptomatic treatment of language where the expression of meaning is taken as purely vocal is, for Derrida, akin to a wide prevailing dogma. It forms an index for a wider philosophical containment and interpretation of
desire in general. This is the reduction of the meaning of meaning in general to presence - to what is present, both temporally in terms of what "is," and spatially in terms of what is most near. Thus he says of Husserl:

The factor of presence, the ultimate court of appeal for the whole of this discourse, is itself modified, without being lost, each time there is a question of the presence (in the two related senses, of the proximity of what is set forth as an object of intuition, and the proximity of the temporal present which gives the clear and present intuition of the object its form) of any object whatever to consciousness, in the clear evidence of a fulfilled intuition. ... Every time this element of presence becomes threatened, Husserl will awaken it, recall it, and bring it back to itself in the form of a telos - that is, an Idea in the Kantian sense. ... This ideality is the very form in which the presence of an object in general may be indefinitely repeated as the same. [SP p.9]

We have already seen that the meaning of the subject is always and only what it expresses in predicative judgement. Whilst the predicative expression of the ego cogito presupposes the reference to a pre-predicative, i.e. indeterminate, sphere of which it is the expression, it simultaneously presupposes an absolute distinction between these two spheres. Without this distinction its expression would be threatened by its referentiality towards indeterminacy. This would mean that the expression of the ego cogito would be open to a differentiation within its meaning. But if this distinction is absolute (which it must be if the expression of the ego cogito is to remain the identical to itself), then there can be no relation or interplay between these two spheres. This would mean that there could be no expressive determination of meaning within the subject. Effectively the subject would be dead. On the other hand, the referentiality of the subject's expression would also insinuate an indeterminacy into the heart of the subject's meaning because it always refers beyond the "ideality" of the subject's expression toward its other. In the case
of the ideality of the subject's expression this other is indicated by all concepts which are in some way mediate to consciousness, such as the empirical, the real, the visible and the spatial. The referentiality of the sign is thus also a death warrant for the phenomenological subject. As Derrida says:

Visibility and spatiality as such could only destroy the self-presence of will and spiritual animation which opens up discourse. They are literally the death of that self-presence. [SP p.35]

Upon what grounds is it then possible to interpret the subject as the condition of the expression of meaning? Why does Husserl think that the subject can possess an apodictic expression of meaning, when his descriptions suggest that meaning can never be absolutely present to the subject, that it is "constituted" from beyond the "interiority" of the subject?

The Voice of the Subject

Derrida's analysis suggests that it is the phenomenological understanding of vocal expression which explains this repression of everything which does not belong to the ideality of the subject's expression i.e. the visible, the spatial, the empirical. If Husserl's analysis of meaning is to function, then the subject must possess a way of immediately expressing itself to itself. This medium of expression must, in effect, be absolutely transparent to the subject, avoiding all reference to anything beyond. The apodictic expression of the subject's meaning is, as we have seen, ideal - it refers only to what the subject intends, and not to any mediation of this intention. The subject, for example, does not need to communicate its intention to itself - it is already apparent in the very fact of the intention. Derrida maintains that it is the experience of the voice which allows us to believe in the existence of such a medium.
The voice, even when taken empirically, has certain characteristics which could well give the impression of such a medium. As Derrida says, when one talks, one hears one's self speak, and has the impression that this hearing-one's-self-speak is without mediation. This is because, when we focus upon the vocal medium itself, sound, then what we hear fades as soon as it is heard. In doing so one has the impression that the voice itself is immaterial and immediate - it belongs to the realm of ideality rather that of empirical spatiality:

This immediate presence [of the voice to consciousness] results from the fact that the phenomenological "body" of the signifier seems to fade away at the very moment it is produced; it seems already to belong to the element of ideality. [SP p.77]

This impression forms a model for thinking in which thought is reduced to an immediate interior dialogue of the subject with itself. Derrida thinks that this experience forms the basis of the idea of a pure interiority of the subject, in which the expressed meaning of the subject is absolutely present to consciousness. This experience constitutes the subject's certainty of its autonomous existence over and above that of the world. Derrida thus holds that when I hear myself speak I understand myself in terms of a pure auto-affection in which the meaning of my cognition is immediately present. Because this auto-affection is always immediate and pure the meaning of my expression is always transparent, and always mine. The object of the subject's expression is thus always ideal because it is expressed in this transcendent medium of the voice. The expression of meaning by the subject therefore makes no reference to the exterior of the subject:

As pure auto-affection, the operation of hearing oneself speak seems to reduce even the inward surface of one's own body; in its phenomenal being it seems capable of dispensing with this exteriority within interiority, this interior space in which our
experience or image of our own body is spread forth. This is why hearing oneself speak is experienced as an absolute pure auto-affection, occurring in a self-proximity that would in fact be the absolute reduction of space in general. It is this purity that makes it fit for universality. Requiring the intervention of no determinate surface in the world, being produced in the world as pure auto-affection, it is a signifying substance absolutely at our disposition. For the voice meets no obstacle to its emission in the world precisely because it is produced as pure auto-affection. [SP p.79]

Derrida holds, however, that in so understanding the voice, one misses the inherent empiricity of its medium: sound. The phenomenon of sound necessarily refers to the concept of an empirical, material mediation, within which the reality of a material, spatial world is already included. Derrida believes that Husserl’s understanding of the intentional consciousness ignores the fact that these categories of empirical reality are necessary when conceiving the phenomenon of sound, and concentrates only upon the phenomenon of the voice. It is only so, through the initial presupposition and consequent reduction of the world’s empirical reality - its material spatiality - that Husserl can conceive a pure interiority to the subject. This interiority of the subject, the ideality of its identity, is always transcendent to the facticity of the world i.e. the presupposition of the empirical reality of its existence. Derrida argues that

the unity of sound and voice, which allows the voice to be produced in the world as pure auto-affection, is the sole case to escape the distinction between what is worldly and what is transcendental; by the same token, it makes that distinction possible. ... [Thus] no consciousness is possible without the voice. The voice is the being which is present to itself in the form of universality, as con-sciousness; the voice is consciousness. [SP p.79-80]

If there is no unity between sound and voice, if one admits the necessary
empiricity of sound, then this pure auto-affection, the proposed ideality of the "I exist..." of the subject, is interrupted. It would be interrupted because the category of the empirical would, when opposed to the pure autonomy of the subject, represents absolute difference. One would then be committed to saying that the subject is constituted differentially, rather than in terms of its identity, its autonomous transcendent meaning.

Surely, however, this argument cannot explain away the rigorousness of Husserl's phenomenological descriptions, which suspend such empiricity in the transcendental reduction, as their very condition of possibility?

This, however, is Derrida's point. Husserl's understanding of language as being divided into expression and indication, takes vocal expression as if it were totally ideal, stripped of all empiricity or materiality. But to do so one must already know what such empiricity or materiality means in itself. However, for Husserl the only thing that the subject can be apodictically certain of is its own cognition. This is all that really exists for the subject. This means that sound and voice must, from the phenomenological perspective, be presented as an ideal unity, for they are never really represented at all. In, for example, the cognition of a word, it is not important whether the word itself has a worldly existence or not. What is important is that it can be imagined, and it is this imagination - the pure subjective activity of the subject's cognition - which exists for the subject. Derrida thus says:

In imagination the existence of the word is not implied, even by virtue of intentional sense. There exists only the imagination of the word, which is absolutely certain and self-present insofar as it is lived. This, then, is already a phenomenological reduction which isolates the subjective experience as the sphere of absolute certainty and absolute existence. [SP p.44]

And, later:

The ideal object is the most objective of objects; independent of
the here-and-now acts and events of the empirical subjectivity which intends it, it can be repeated infinitely while remaining the same. Since its presence to intuition, its being-before the gaze, has no essential dependence on any worldly or empirical synthesis, the re-establishment of its sense in the form of presence becomes a universal and unlimited possibility. But, being nothing outside the world, this ideal being must be constituted, repeated, and expressed in a medium that does not impair the presence and self-presence of the acts that aim at it, a medium which both preserves the presence of the object before intuition and self-presence, the absolute proximity of the acts to themselves. The ideality of the object, which is only its being-for a nonempirical consciousness, can only be expressed in an element whose phenomenality does not have worldly form. The name of this element is the voice. The voice is heard. [SP p.76]

The point is that the empiricity of the world is simultaneously presupposed and suspended as soon as one proposes a hierarchical distinction between expression and indication, and this occurs before Husserl even proposes the transcendental reduction. It is only upon the basis of this initial reduction that the transcendental reduction can be formulated. This reduction is itself based on the reduction of the voice to a pure ideality, even though this ideality has never been subjected to a phenomenological critique. The voice never is, and never can be, the object of Husserl’s phenomenological critique, for such a critique would threaten the phenomenological project.

As soon as we recognise that a reduction takes place before the transcendental epoché, the auto-affection constitutive of the subject can no longer be said to be itself constituted by the subject. There is already a division between the world and the intentionality of the subject - pure and absolute subjectivity - which is already crossed out in the expression of this absolute subjectivity in terms of the ideality of the voice. On the one hand, the voice - the pure expression of the subject’s cognition - must transcend the
division between the interiority of the subject and the empirical exteriority of
the world. It must express this distinction in terms of its apodictic ideality, in
terms of its truth. On the other hand, we cannot conceive of the voice without
reference to the concept of sound which is always an empirical concept,
dependent upon the reference to an existent non-ideal world. Such a
conception, however, disrupts the pure interiority of the subject, the presence
of the subject’s intentional consciousness to itself, because it makes reference
to something other than the subject, necessarily outside of and non-identical
to the intentional sphere of the subject. In terms of the conceptual framework
in which the subject is conceived, this difference must be absolute. Such a
difference is inconceivable from within the concept of intentional subjectivity,
and therefore its meaning cannot be constituted on the basis of this concept.
Husserl’s transcendental reduction is therefore rendered impure, always
contaminated by an outside, something other than what the subject can intend
or constitute:

Taking auto-affection as the exercise of the voice, auto-affection
supposed that a pure difference comes to divide self-presence.
In this pure self difference is rooted the possibility of everything
we think we can exclude from auto affection: space, the outside,
the world, the body, etc. As soon as it is admitted that auto-
affection is the condition for self-presence, no pure
transcendental reduction is possible. [SP p.82]

It still remains to be explained how this idealisation of the voice in the
phenomenological representation of the subject introduces an empirical
spatiality into cognition, i.e. into what the subject means. Through what
conceptual structure can the phenomenon of the voice introduce a necessary
reference to an exteriority into the subject, when the subject itself is only ever
posited in terms of its ideal unity? The answer which Derrida provides is the
relation between the temporality and spatiality of the subject which is
constituted in the idea of the subject's pure auto-affection.

If the concept of the transcendental subject is, as Husserl seems to believe, rooted in the idea of a self-constitutive pure auto-affection in which what the subject intends, what it means, is immediately present to the subject, then the phenomenological description of the intentional structures of consciousness will also be determined by this idea. In the cognition of an object the foremost of these structures is the consciousness of time and space.

We can explain this as follows: ideally, pure auto-affection is the self-constituted immediate representation of the existence of the subject's intention to itself. This is the essence of consciousness expressed in the "I am..." or "I think..." formally necessary to the conception of the subject's cognition in general. This, for Husserl, is the living immediacy of subjective thought itself - the living presence of subjective life, in which the subject is immediately conscious of itself. For Husserl, the transcendental condition for consciousness in general is therefore the necessary awareness of its own temporality, for it is only within a general matrix of time that the subject can present itself to itself in consciousness.

Husserl's phenomenological analyses of the consciousness of temporality are no doubt revolutionary in that they bring us closer to understanding that non-present modalities of time are necessary to our conception of what we mean by the present, or what is "now." Without these analyses it is doubtful whether Heidegger could have written Being and Time, which draws heavily upon Husserl's Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness. Derrida's own understanding of temporality also relies heavily upon these analyses, and one could feasibly argue that he does not do justice to them in "Speech and Phenomena," as indeed David Wood has done.
The thrust of Derrida’s critique, and also our interest here, does not, however, lie in this direction. Derrida is in general interested in the status of writing in philosophy, symptomatic of the operation of a general repression of alterity, executed in the name of a *logos* in which meaning and truth are generally understood in terms of presence and presentation. Whilst the rigour of phenomenological description leads Husserl to a confrontation with such alterity in which it must be described, Derrida is interested in the consequences of this confrontation for the status of this phenomenological description.

Derrida is thus not so much interested in whether Husserl’s phenomenological descriptions are true or false, but whether the category of truth, as understood in phenomenology, can be legitimately applied to them. Through this we can begin to see how and when the representation of the subject, its description, exceeds its stated intention and must necessarily refer to other ways of thinking which lie “outside” the intended scope of the concept of the subject and subjectivity.

Derrida’s use of auto-affection to describe the “movement” of intentional cognition - the subject’s temporalisation - in the phenomenological description of the structures of consciousness is therefore designed to demonstrate how the necessary reference to alterity throws the possibility of an apodictic certainty i.e. the truth, of these descriptions into question. Consciousness is, in the operation of auto-affection, determined as the living present, and, strictly speaking, it can only be apodictically certain of this living present. The truth of phenomenological description must therefore, in general, be founded upon the basis of this living presence. Auto-affection, however, as Derrida demonstrates, and as we have seen above, must introduce an alterity into this living presence of the subject. In other words,
an alterity, irreducible to the transcendental structures of consciousness, constitutes the very temporalisation of consciousness in which the subject is determined in terms of what is "now," or of what is present. This presence will thus always appear at some stage to be constituted from outside of itself, making a necessary reference to an "outside of subjective time" in general, in other words to the concept of an irreducible "empirical" world, or "space."

Derrida thus argues that:

The process by which the living now, produced by spontaneous generation, must, in order to be a now and to be retained on another now, affect itself without recourse to anything empirical but with a new primordial actuality in which it would become a non-now, a past now - this process is indeed a pure auto-affection in which the same is the same only in being affected by the other, only by becoming the other of the same. This auto-affection must be pure since the primordial impression is here affected by nothing other than itself... [SP p.85]

This means, however, that when we attempt to describe this movement, in itself and in truth, i.e. as referring only to the living presence of consciousness, as soon as we attempt to bring a determinate object into this description, we can only speak metaphorically. Auto-affection, the representation of the "I am..." necessary to the subject's cognition in the medium of the voice, can never itself truly transcend the world, it never escapes the reference to an outside, even if this outside tends toward the unnamable. The Cogito itself might transcend the world, but this transcendence does not belong to the voice, it remains unsayable. Within phenomenology, however, this transcendence is determined, that is, described, as the temporality proper to consciousness - the present. Derrida is basically arguing that this understanding of the subject in terms of the present is a metaphorical structure rather than the intended ontological structure. He thus says:
We speak metaphorically as soon as we introduce a determinate being into the description of this "movement"; we talk about "movement" in the very terms that movement makes possible. But we have been always already adrift in ontic metaphor; temporalization here is the root of a metaphor that can only be primordial. The word "time" itself, as it has always been understood in the history of metaphysics, is a metaphor which at the same time both indicates and dissimulates the "movement" of this auto-affection. [SP p.85]

If we understand the description of the subject in terms of the living presence of consciousness as a metaphorical description rather than an ontological one, then we can only understand it in terms of a reference to other metaphors. In other words, Derrida disputes whether such descriptions can ever be essential. If we now try to describe this "movement" of metaphorisation we must also revert to a metaphoric use of language, and so on. It should be pointed out that this metaphoric movement toward the unnamable is also indicated by Husserl in terms of the infinite regress experienced in the eidetic description of temporality. Husserl, however, always tends to reassign the meaning of such phenomena to the constitutive operation of the transcendental subject. Derrida, on the other hand, tends to remain true to the consequences of such a "metaphorisation." Thus he holds that the living present of consciousness must always retain within it a trace of that which remains non-identical and non-appropriable to it, and thus renders this simple presence non-simple and non-primordial:

The living present springs forth out of its nonidentity with itself and from the possibility of 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. [SP p.85]

This explains why he describes the temporalisation of the subject in terms of
"spacing" or "spatiality." Within the context of the language used to describe the subject this opening up of the living presence of consciousness onto an outside, must always refer to spatial metaphors. They are metaphors because the "interiority" and "exteriority" of the subject are spatial figures which are not meant to indicate spatial regions, but transcendental conditions of possibility. They are necessary because the originary condition of meaning in general is temporality, and, within the set of distinctions in which it is traditionally used time can only function and begin to make sense when it is described in terms of spatial metaphor. Its meaning must thus always retain a trace of a spatial sense. This spatial sense makes time "possible," but at the same time it dissimulates its meaning because it remains "other" to temporality. Derrida argues that:

Since the trace is the intimate relation of the living present with its outside, the openness upon exteriority in general, upon the sphere of what is not "one's own," etc., the temporalization of sense is, from the outset, a "spacing." As soon as we admit spacing both as "interval" or difference and as openness upon the outside, there can no longer be any absolute inside, for the "outside" has insinuated itself into the movement by which the inside of the nonspatial, which is called "time," appears, is constituted, is "presented." Space is "in" time; it is time's pure leaving itself; it is the "outside-itself" as the self-relation of time. The externality of space, externality as space, does not overtake time; rather, it opens as pure "outside" "within" the movement of temporalization. [SP p.86]

This argument may well, as David Wood argues, appear very Hegelian. We should remember, however, that Derrida shows that "space" and "time" are metaphors because they can only be designated and described through their reference to each other, and to other terms, all of which remain necessarily "outside" the scope of their meaning. If we try to describe space then we will eventually end up describing it in terms of presence and non-presence, which,
strictly speaking are no longer spatial terms but temporal ones, and are therefore temporal metaphors for space. Similarly if we attempt to describe time we will eventually end up referring to spatial terms, which are then likewise metaphors for time. In general terms one could say that the phenomenological reduction actually reduces the very metaphoricity of language, which it itself calls forth, to the idea of the pure expression of the thing in itself, which can never be metaphorical. Therefore Derrida cannot be accused of really believing that there is an *actual* time which is opened up by an *actual* space. He is rather describing the understanding of space and time which Husserl's formulation of the phenomenological subject commits us to, and the fact that this understanding cannot be contained within this formulation.

What does such an analysis mean for the phenomenological subject? Is it possible to reach the pure interiority of the subject, necessary for the expression of apodictic truth, through the means of the transcendental reduction? The answer is obviously no, but this still leaves the question as to what the phenomenological reduction actually is, or better, how we are to describe it.

Derrida is absolutely clear on this matter. Because the reduction can never be pure, because the interiority of the subject is always infected by the reference to an outside in its very expression, this expression always takes on an *as if* structure. The claim of ideal objectivity inherent in the phenomenological subject's intention of an ideal object is thus a posture, an act - the thing itself, ideal or not, can never be truly present to the subject, even if it acts as if it were. The stage for such an act is the phenomenological reduction itself:

As a relation between an inside and an outside in general, an
existent and a nonexistent in general, a constituting and constituted in general, temporalization is at once the very power and limit of phenomenological reduction. Hearing oneself speak is not the inwardness of an inside that is closed in upon itself; it is the irreducible openness in the inside; it is the eye and world within speech. Phenomenological reduction is a scene, a theatre stage. [SP p.86]

It is upon this stage that what we have called the transcendent infinite is determined as the object of cognition. What Derrida is suggesting is that such a determination is “only” a characterisation, it can never be known to be true. In other words, the determinate object of the subject’s cognition, whether it be itself, or an ideal object, is never really present. According to the traditional conception of truth and illusion or fiction, its presentation must be of the order of a belief or fiction.

This fiction, however, is not without its consequences. Insofar as it poses itself as the expression of the true meaning of the subject, in its attempted determination of the undecidable relation between thought and the transcendent infinite, it represents a repressional structure. Derrida highlights this repressonal structure by focussing in general upon the symptomatic repression of writing within Western philosophy in favour of the voice of the subject.

At base, Derrida is attempting to dislodge a traditional wish to restrict and contain a certain desire which can be said to be the desire of the other, of what is other to the unity of the self. Derrida reads this movement of desire symptomatically through philosophy’s historical tendency to prioritise the spoken word over the written. Writing is seen to threaten the singularity of the spoken meaning through its capacity to duplicate meaning without recourse to an original source. This is interpreted in opposition to the spoken word. This spoken word itself, its structure and meaning, is taken as
stemming from, and manifesting, the meaning of its source, the speaking subject.

The structure of consciousness is therefore implied and constituted within this repressational matrix, but is thus produced as an ideal structure which maintains its dominance through positing itself as the ideal structure within which and upon which all other ideal structures are inscribed and grounded.

This repressional matrix, by its very nature, will always be more or less inadequate to its task, and necessarily so. The full repression of what remains unthought, but necessary to conscious life - the essence of modern philosophical knowledge - which is articulated in the desire for the full presentation or expression of an absolute term, would mean, as was shown above, the death of the subject. Which means that this repression is resisted, and this resistance has its effects - in this case the multiplication and differentiation of the meanings of the ego cogito. One then experiences a suppression of these unwanted effects through a policing and enforcement of the boundaries which would ideally delimit conscious life. It is in this context that one can understand Derrida’s accusation that Husserl modifies every speculative thread which might disrupt the unity of the transcendental subject, in an attempt to tie them back up and secure them in the knot of presence.

15. Summary of Section II
In the preceding chapters we have seen how the necessity for the reference of the subject’s cognition to a transcendent exteriority can threaten the Husserlian concept of the phenomenological subject, together with the accompanying descriptions of its constitutive intentional structures with collapse.
Our reading of Heidegger has attempted to describe how binary conceptuality necessarily falls into incoherency. Generally this is because whilst meaning is conceived of as a simple presence, the meaning of each term must refer to its opposite. However, this referentiality of meaning cannot be thought of in terms of a simple presence because the meaning of each term should be simple, discrete and present in-itself, whilst such a reference would mean that the simple presence of meaning could no longer be possible, the reference being always to a non-present term.

Thus, for example, the meaning of Dasein's world as ready-to-hand can only be articulated through Dasein's interpretation of its world as present-at-hand. On the other hand, this interpretation of the world must, in terms of the oppositional structure which Heidegger sets up and then destructures, be based in the pre-conceptual understanding of the world as ready-to-hand. Heidegger's deconstructing of this opposition shows that Dasein's world cannot be understood in terms of a totality. Its meaning can never be wholly present within the binary opposition of the ready-to-hand and present-at-hand. The meaning of each concept necessarily refers beyond the scope of its terms, to a meaning which cannot be presented in, or fully translated into, these terms.

We have tried to explain this general example in terms of the relation between Dasein's general temporal horizon of understanding, within which meaning can be conceived of as being present, and Dasein's spatial horizon of meaning, within which Dasein can understand itself as Being-in-the-world. We have tried to show how Dasein's spatial horizon interrupts or dislocates its temporal horizon, in which meaning, understood as presence, is itself located, and vice versa. We have argued that this movement of interruption is what Heidegger means by the temporalisation of temporality.
Within this context, we can understand the general reduction of meaning to a simple presence as a repression of a necessary referentiality without which no sign could have meaning. We have indicated through our reading of Heidegger that such a repression stretches back in history to the conceptual system belonging to early Greek thought, and that this repression is not merely a result of the modern concept of the subject.

This reading then forms the background for Derrida’s critique of the phenomenological subject. Here we have read this general conceptual collapse, opened up by a necessary referentiality of meaning, in terms of the necessary relation between the concept of the phenomenological subject and that of an empirical, spatial world, with its inherent transcendency.

We have not only tried to show how the concept of a transcendent world - a real, empirical, non-ideal space - is necessary to the constitution of meaning in the subject, we have also tried to show the “mechanisms” through which it is possible for the concept of the phenomenological transcendental subject to repress such a necessity. We have used Derrida to illuminate how the interpretation of language in terms of expression and indication, and the subsequent idealisation of the voice in the subject, leads to the repression of a necessary reference to what in general is “other” to the subject. We have done this by outlining the necessity for a reference to a spatial metaphor in the conception of the pure “temporal” interiority of the subject in which meaning is constituted, even though such a reference can never be admitted if one holds that meaning is constituted “within” the subject. In conclusion we have argued that, according to the traditional opposition between truth and fiction, the interiority necessary to the phenomenological subject must be determined as a belief or fiction, and it is by means of this “fiction” of a pure interiority and a pure exteriority, an “inside” and an “outside” of sense and
meaning that this general repressional structure can operate.

What these analyses suggest is that the very concept of reality, of either an “actual” or an “underlying” reality, which includes the concept of an empirical, spatial world, is also part of this fiction of the subject, and thus of this general repression. We have seen that there is a necessary reference to such a transcendent term within the concept of the subject, but it would be wrong to determine such a term as existent. The objection could here be raised that when we start calling reality in general into question, we are risking the incoherency of madness. We have already shown, however, that the conceptual network within which meaning and sense is situated is itself, at certain points, incoherent. When the distinction between a general inside and outside, between temporality and spatiality, begins to collapse, then the distinction between reason and unreason, between sense and madness, begins to collapse with it.

In the following chapters we therefore wish to show that the concept of the subject cannot be reduced to an underlying or transcendent reality which has historically determined its conception. We wish to explore how the concept of the subject can itself resist this general repression, paradoxically transcending the attempt to reduce it to an objectified historical determination. In order to do so we shall examine the general distinction between the madness and rationale of the subject, arguing with Derrida against Foucault’s thesis that the distinction between the two is explicable from a social-historical perspective. In doing so we hope to show that the determination of what we have termed the transcendent infinite as a transcendent historical reality belongs as much to the general repressional structure Derrida calls presence as does the ideal objectivity of the phenomenological subject.
Section III: The Transcendence of the Subject’s Interiority

Part I: Heidegger’s reading of the Subject in Nietzsche

The madman, on the contrary, is clearly ... the one who seeks God, since he cries out after God. Has a thinking man perhaps here really cried out de profundis? And the ear of our thinking, does it still not hear the cry? It will refuse to hear it so long as it does not begin to think. Thinking begins only when we have come to know that reason, glorified for centuries, is the most stiff necked adversary of thought. [TWN p. 112]

Narr in Verzweiflung
Ach! Was ich schrieb auf Tisch und Wand
Mit Narrenherz und Narrenhand,
Das sollte Tisch und Wand mir zieren?...
Doch ihr sagt: “Narrenhände schmieren,-
Und Tisch und Wand soll man purgieren,
Bis auch die letzte Spur verschwand!”
Erlaubt! Ich lege hand mit an-,
Ich lernte Schwamm und Besen führen,
Als Kritiker, als Wassermann.
Doch, wenn die Arbeit abgetan,
Säh’ gern ich euch, ihr Überweisen,
Mit Weisheit Tisch und Wand besch......

In order to better understand the question of madness and rationality in the subject it is worth examining Heidegger’s account of the subject and subjectivity. Heidegger exerts no less an influence in Foucault’s work than in Derrida’s, and his interpretation of the subject through his understanding of Nietzsche’s doctrine of the Will to Power and the Overman provides great insight into the conceptual network in which we traditionally understand the subject and subjectivity. In the previous sections we have seen that the concept of the subject must always refer to an indeterminate transcendent

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infinity. It was argued that the subject’s judgement, what it means, represents a repression of this necessary referentiality. In the following section on Heidegger it will be argued that the referentiality of the subject includes a necessary reference to an irreducible “concept” of justice, which exceeds the subject’s reflective judgement or perception. That is why we can interpret the subject’s reflective judgement as an illegitimate repressonal act of force. Thus, through a close reading of Heidegger’s analysis of Nietzsche we should be able to see what is at stake in the confrontation between Derrida and Foucault.

16. The Will to Power

In “The Word of Nietzsche: God is Dead” Heidegger analyses Nietzsche’s understanding of the problem of subjectivity as the final articulation of metaphysics. His interpretation is initially focused upon Nietzsche’s pronouncement, issued from the mouth of the madman come too soon, that God is dead. He proceeds to show the conceptual network in which this pronouncement can be understood beyond a merely theological framework. Heidegger quotes this passage from Nietzsche:

Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market place, and cried incessantly, “I seek God! I seek God!” As many of those who do not believe in God were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter. Why, did he get lost? said one. Did he lose his way like a child? said another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? or emigrated? Thus they yelled and laughed. The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his glances.

"Whither is God" he cried. “I shall tell you. We have killed him - you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how have we done this? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What did
we do when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving now? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there any way up or down left? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night and more night coming on all the while? Must not lanterns be lit in the morning? Do we not hear anything yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we not smell anything yet of God's decomposition? Gods too decompose. God is dead. God remains dead.

"And we have killed him. How shall we, the murderers of all murderers, comfort ourselves? What was holiest and most powerful of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives. Who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games will we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we not ourselves become gods simply to seem worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and whoever will be born after us - for the sake of this deed he will be part of a higher history than all history hitherto."

Here the madman fell silent and looked again at his listeners; and they too were silent and stared at him in astonishment. At last he threw his lantern on the ground, and it broke and went out. "I came too early," he said then; my time has not come yet. This tremendous event is still on its way, still wandering - it has not yet reached the ears of man. Lightning and thunder require time, the light of the stars requires time, deeds require time even after they are done, before they can be seen and heard. This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars - and yet they have done it themselves."

It has been related further that on the same day the madman entered divers churches and there sang his requiem aeternam deo. Led out and called to account, he is said to have replied each time, "What are these churches now if they are not the tombs and sepulchres of God?" [TWN p.59-60]

This passage, Heidegger argues, can only be understood in terms of Nietzsche's metaphysical doctrine of the Will to Power, and the idea of the
Overman. The concept of the Will to Power is inherently connected with Nietzsche’s idea of nihilism, understood as the re-evaluation of accepted norms and truths, of accepted values. Heidegger sets this within the context of the breakdown of the metaphysical distinction between the worldly or sensuous, and the non-worldly suprasensuous, which has determined the concept of the subject since Plato. The phrase “God is dead...” can only be essentially understood within this context, because it is this distinction which historically determines our understanding of Being. Such a phrase, argues Heidegger, represents the consciousness of the breakdown of this distinction, in which the subject’s perception - in other words, consciousness - is determined as valuation.

In order to grasp this we must first understand the nature of value. Heidegger argues that in order to conceive of value and valuation one needs a perspective, a place from which to see:

The essence of value lies in its being a point-of-view. Value means that upon which the eye is fixed. Value means that which is in view for a seeing that aims at something or that, as we say, reckons upon something and therewith must reckon with something else. Value stands in intimate relation to a so-much, to quantity and number. Hence values are related to a "numerical and mensural scale" (Will to Power, Aph. 710, 1888). The question still remains: Upon what is the scale of increase and decrease, in its turn, grounded? [TWN p.71]

Heidegger understands the Will to Power as grounded in the modern experience of conceptuality. Being is thus always understood in terms of what is intended, what the subject sees, as perceptio. It is only from a grasp of subjectivity as intentionality that the Will to Power can be understood.

A value can only exist insofar as it is posited in cognition. An object has significance only to the extent that it is seen to be worth something and is thus fully constituted through intentional perception. A value cannot be an
object in itself, which perception comes across and judges to be worth so and so much. Rather, value lies within this very act of intentional judgement which constitutes its object in view through its evaluation. Value is thus the relation within which an object of perception can be constituted, identified, and differentiated from other objects.

It is in this sense that “According to Nietzsche, with values as points-of-view, ‘preservation-enhancement conditions’ are posited.” [TWN p.72] In other words, objects of perception can be expressed, perceived and understood as differentiated elements, in which the factor of differentiation is a relation of value. In order for an object to have value within perception it must be perceived as having a period of duration - it must be preserved within and by perception.

But the second point concerning enhancement - growing stronger - is harder to grasp, since it appears to contradict our everyday experience of life in general. We tend to think within a traditional entropic framework whereby objects decay into disorder. However, this is essentially a misunderstanding of the term value as an object rather than as perceptual relation.

The point is that if the modern world is perceived in terms of decay, then the value of the world as decaying must be getting stronger. This value must be continually enhanced if this perception is to be maintained. Perception understood as such cannot stem from the lack of an object which it desires. Desire itself - the will of the subject - is understood as the constitutive relation of perception, (in Nietzsche’s terms, the Will to Power) whereby desire constitutes, or wills, its own conditions of possibility. As such it is neither passive nor active in relation to its object, since it constitutes its object as the condition of its own preservation and enhancement.

Heidegger analyses the terms “will” and “power” in relation to this
context of the subject’s perception understood as valuation - as preservation-enhancement. On this basis the will is not to be understood as the psychological activity of the willing subject. Will is understood as the ground of intentionality itself, as the ground of value-positing:

The will is not a desiring, and not a mere striving after something, but rather willing is in itself a commanding (cf. Thus Spoke Zarathustra, parts I and II; see also Will to Power, Aph. 668, 1888). Commanding has its essence in the fact that the master who commands has conscious disposal over the possibilities for effective action. What is commanded in the command is the accomplishing of that disposal. In the command, the one who commands (not only the one who executes) is obedient to that disposing and to that being able to dispose, and in that way obeys himself. Accordingly, the one who commands proves superior to himself in that he ventures even his own self. Commanding ... is self conquest and is more difficult than obeying. Will is gathering oneself together for the given task. ... What the will wills it has already. For the will wills its will. Its will is what it has willed. The will wills itself. It mounts beyond itself. Accordingly, the will as will wills out beyond itself and must at the same time in that way bring itself behind itself and beneath itself. [TWN p.77]

Will, as commanding, has as its attribute consciousness. This is always the consciousness of what "is," of a world in which there are significant values. These values are always posited in terms of a disposability for consciousness. They are articulated by an intentional realm in which objects always have meaning for consciousness, and are constituted by their relational value to consciousness.

Object formation thus simultaneously implies subject formation, in that the consciousness of valuation, of effective action, is itself constituted in terms of this valuation. Thus the will, as command, always exceeds a constituted, determinate self in the very perception of the self. The self, however, as self-consciousness, is a necessary condition of the will and so
Heidegger argues that “the will wills itself.” It creates its own conditions of possibility through perception. The subject’s intentional perception therefore always overreaches its self-constituted ground - it stabilises and destabilises itself in the movement of value positing, its value positing being the condition of its preservation and enhancement.

This explains why the will to will is grounded in the Will to Power in terms of its normative explanation, that is, in relation to truth. Power serves as a grounding concept for the will to will because, being a question of value, the relation between stable conceptual formations and the possibility of their destabilisation is always quantitative. As such these can only be thought in terms of a stronger or more powerful conceptual formation:

Therefore Nietzsche can say: “To will at all is the same thing as to will to become stronger, to will to grow...” (Will to Power, Aph. 675, 1887-88). “Stronger” means here “more power” and that means: only power. For the essence of power lies in being master over the level of power attained at any time. Power is power only when and only so long as it remains power-enhancement and commands for itself “more power.” Even a mere pause in power-enhancement, even a mere remaining at a standstill at a level of power, is already the beginning of the decline of power. To the essence of power belongs the overpowering of itself. Such overpowering belongs to and springs from power itself, in that power is command and as command empowers itself for the overpowering of its particular level of power at any given time ... it empowers itself for this reason alone: to attain power over itself in the unconditionality belonging to its essence. [TWN p.78]

In order to accomplish this the Will to Power must first create its own conditions of possibility, that is, the means through which power can be both preserved and enhanced at the same time. We have already seen that values in general are the conditions of this preservation and enhancement of power. Therefore, the Will to Power must posit values in general, and, as a condition
of this positing, a particular network of values in which its own conceptual configuration is rendered possible. It achieves this by perceiving the dominant social and conceptual formations as values, as perceptual relations rather than absolute principles of social order. These formerly absolute principles are thus devalued precisely as values, but only according to a "new" valuation.

Thus Heidegger argues that if the Will to Power is to enhance its own standing, then it must be formulated or thought in terms of its essentiality, in its formation of what, existentially, is. Power formations can only exist on the condition of their rightful claim to unconditional being, that is, on condition of their truth as existential formations. The Will to Power must thus posit its truth, the truth of its relative formation, as a certainty. Truth is thus a necessary condition, expressed in terms of this making secure, of the Will to Power, posited by the Will to Power as a value necessary to its enhancement in the establishment of what existentially is.

Heidegger holds this movement to be in accord with the traditional thought of metaphysics since Descartes onwards, manifested in the modern understanding of the subject. The concept of the Will to Power is the final manifestation of this formation of metaphysics, and metaphysics in general. He says:

Nietzsche remains in the unbroken line of the metaphysical tradition when he calls that which is established and made fast in the Will to Power for its own preservation purely and simply Being, or what is in being, or truth. Accordingly, truth is a condition posited in the essence of the Will to Power, namely, the condition of the preservation of power. Truth is, as this condition, a value. ... Truth is now, and indeed through an essentially historical origin out of the modes of its essence just mentioned, that which - making stably constant - makes secure the constant reserve, belonging to the sphere from out of which the Will to Power wills itself. [TWN p.84-85]
Thus truth is rendered a value in that it is a necessary condition posited by the Will to Power. This means, however, that truth can no longer be the highest value or principle of being, of what is. It is a necessary but not sufficient condition of the Will to Power. This can be explained by the fact that truth, as a making secure of power formations, cannot act as a spur to reformulate power formations. It would resist any movement of reformulation, of transgression. Truth, understood as certainty, is deathly, and represents a stagnation of power if it is conceived of as a sufficient condition. This sufficient condition must necessarily lie beyond any perception of the subject, and, as such, resists this movement of valuation. Heidegger locates this condition in the notion of justice, in which he holds the modern concept of subjectivity to be bound.

17. Justice

Heidegger thus returns to the opening of modern metaphysics, to Descartes’ Latin translation of the Greek experience of “that which is, the hypokeimenon” [TWN p.88], into the subiectum, into the modern experience of the ego cogito. We have already seen above that the locus and condition of truth appearing is the will itself. For it is the will which posits the conditions of power, and truth, as we have seen, is a necessary condition of power. The will, understood as the subject’s intentional perception, wills its own conditions of possibility. In other words, if the intentional perception of the subject is to maintain itself as a conceptual formation it must intend or perceive itself as its own object. The essential condition of the subject’s perception is thus the subject knowing itself:

That which is (subiectum) presents itself [präsentiert sich], and indeed presents itself to itself, in the mode of the ego cogito. This self-presenting, this re-presentation [Re-präsentation]
(setting-before [Vor-stellung]), is the Being of that which is in
being qua subiectum. Self-knowing-itself is transformed into
subject purely and simply. In self-knowing-itself, all knowing
and what is knowable for it gathers itself together. It is a
gathering of knowing, as a mountain range is a gathering
together of mountains. The subjectivity of the subject is, as such
a gathering together, co-agitatio (cogitatio), conscientia, a
gathering of knowing [Ge-wissen], consciousness (conscience).
But the co-agitatio is already, in itself, velle, willing. In the
subjectness of the subject, will comes to appearance as the
essence of subjectness. Modern metaphysics, as the
metaphysics of subjectness, thinks the Being of that which is in
the sense of will. [TWN p.88]

That is, Being is determined in modern metaphysics as subiectum. The Being
of anything must be expressed in relation to a subject, and this relation is
always expressed as the ego cogito. The subject, as the mode or form of that
which is, must therefore present itself. Since the subiectum is the realm in
which being signifies, the subject must present itself to itself, and at the same
time register this presentation. The register for the presentation of self to self,
that is, self knowing itself, will therefore always be the subjectivity of the
subject. For example, in Kant’s “I think” this representation must always
accompany every sensible intuition, in order for the intuition to register as
sensible.

Thus the condition of the self knowing itself in terms of the subject, is
that it perceive itself in the act of knowing. Heidegger terms this act the
gathering of knowing, the co-agitatio. This is the modern experience of
intentional consciousness which constitutes itself in the very act of positing
significant objects for itself. This knowledge of objects is gathered together
and ordered according to the transcendental structures of consciousness. This
positing, as we have seen above, is the will. The will is therefore the essence
of the subjectivity of the subject, in terms of which all Being registers.
This structure corresponds to the structure of the Will to Power in that truth is now self-certainty. The truth of the subject is the making secure of the self by the representing subject in the act of representation. The truth of the subject’s representation is presented in terms of a justification validated by its claim to making secure:

The representing is now correct when it is right in relation to this claim to secureness. Proved correct [richtig] in this way, it is, as “rightly dealt with” [recht gefertigt] and as at our disposal, made right, justified [gerecht-fertigt]. The truth of anything that is in being, in the sense of the self-certainty of subjectness, is, as secureness (certitudo), fundamentally the making-right, the justifying, of representing and of what it represents before representing one’s own clarity. Justification (justificatio) is the accomplishing of iustitia [justice or rightness] and is thus justice [Gerechtigkeit] itself. [TWN p.89]

Thus the essential condition of modern experience, of subjectivity, is justice. In intentional consciousness truth is nothing other than the justification of the subject’s representation in terms of it being indubitably certain. Without a prior concept of “making-right,” of bringing what is right to the fore, we could not conceive of truth. In order to have such a conception we must always already refer to a “concept” of right or justice.

However, justice, as conceived in Nietzsche’s metaphysics, necessarily stands outside and opposed to the Will to Power. Within the Will to Power justice remains unthinkable. This is because it claims a right which is always absolute, beyond any value posited within consciousness. It transcends the value of truth in which the subject’s judgement or perception is made secure. In other words, the subject’s intention necessarily refers to a “concept” of justice which transcends conceptuality in general. If the Will to Power is the mode in which being presences, in which everything is the product of value-positing, then its essence, metaphysically named here as justice, cannot be
approached, cannot be thought. How could one justify the determinate or metaphysical representation, whatever it may be, of justice as being right? We obviously cannot since we enter into an infinite regress in which justice is always presupposed before its representation. Heidegger thinks that this simultaneous necessity and inability to finally and fully justify every representation of what is, is the reason why we cannot think the essence of nihilism - the metaphysical expression of what is:

Justice is, however, the truth of whatever is, the truth determined by Being itself. As this truth it is metaphysics itself in its modern completion. In metaphysics as such is concealed the reason why Nietzsche can indeed experience nihilism metaphysically as the history of value-positing, yet nevertheless cannot think the essence of nihilism. [TWN p.93]

This necessary reference of the concept of subjectivity to a concept of justice which remains beyond the perception of the subject effectively means that no determination, or determinate representation of the essence of cognition can be justified. The determinate representation of cognition, the attempt to represent or say what the subject's Cogito means, to reflect upon it in judgement, must be represented as moment of injustice in relation to the Cogito.

18. The Madman

Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche can itself be said to be captured by this metaphysical appropriation of thought. For even though at every stage in Heidegger's argument the dissimulating force of Nietzsche's word is always marked, it is always reappropriated within the proper structure of the history of Being.

At every stage of the argument where one might read a dissimulation of meaning, whereby the essence and meaning of Nietzsche's word would be
forever dissimulated, two forms of truth operate and support each other. The first is adequation. In each case, where essential meaning is pursued, the representation of this truth must be made adequate to its grounding structure. This ground, however, will always be essence itself - that is, Being. This is according to a pathway already prescribed by Being, as the history of Western thought, in the epoch of metaphysics. This ensures the return of the detached, dissimulated meaning of Nietzsche's word to the realm of Being, according to its proper course - its rightful representation. We have already seen, however, that such a representation can never be fully justified.

The second value of truth is veiling/unveiling, in which, in every stage, Being or essence is lacking, this lack being the proper home of truth. On this basis, the history of Being is issued forth, as the determination of what is, so that the meaning of being can begin its circular course, its proper course, to return to its proper place. Underlying this is the presupposition that the meaning of Nietzsche's word is never, finally, lost, that it has, in the end, a determinate meaning, that Being, in the end, has a name:

Thought from out of the destining of Being, the nihil in "nihilism" means that Nothing is befalling Being. Being is not coming into the light of its own essence. In the appearing of whatever is as such, Being itself remains wanting. The truth of Being falls from memory. It remains forgotten.

Thus nihilism would be in its essence a history that runs its course along with Being itself. It would lie in Being's own essence, then, that Being remain unthought because it withdraws. Being itself withdraws into its truth. It harbours itself safely within its truth and conceals itself in such harbouring....

Assuming that every "is" lies in Being, the essence of nihilism consists in the fact that Nothing is befalling Being itself. Being itself is Being in its truth, which truth belongs to Being. [TWN p.110-11]

Is this not, implicitly, the attempt to reinstate the meaning of Being, against
the word of Nietzsche, which perhaps more than anything shows itself as not simply a singular word, which at every locus of interpretation resists its reduction to a determinate meaning?

However, our topic remains the subject, which was opened by the words of the madman. If our hypothesis is true, we should be able to decipher it in Heidegger’s understanding of the madman.

It is first of all the madman who says Nietzsche’s word, not Nietzsche himself. In order to understand the meaning of the word issued forth, that “God is dead” we would first of all have to understand why Nietzsche speaks through the mouth of a madman, what the madman signifies, before the question of what his speech, what his words signify. Heidegger says of the madman that:

He is “de-ranged” [ver-rückt]. For he is dis-lodged [ausgerückt] from the level of man hitherto, where the ideals of the suprasensory world, which have become unreal, are passed off for the real while yet their opposite is realizing itself. This de-ranged man is carried out [hinausgerückt] beyond man hitherto. Nevertheless, in this way he has only been drawn into [eingerückt] being the predetermined essence of man hitherto, the animal rationale. [TWN p.111-12]

As such, asserts Heidegger, he has nothing in common with the men of reason who are simply unbelievers, he speaks from outside of reason, from out of the realm of thinking harboured in Being. Opposed to this the truth of his word is obscured by that “stiff necked adversary of thought” - reason. It is only thought oriented from Being, as opposed to reason, which is capable of hearing his cry.

And yet, having nothing in common with his listeners, he binds himself to them, - “Whither is God” he cried. “I shall tell you. We have killed him - you and I.” Here, he can be understood, he is no longer alone, he stands
together with man, the rational man, within the locus of the same described by "we - you and I." But his words are not understood, he withdraws his light, and once more stands alone:

"I came too soon ... my time has not come yet. This tremendous event is still on its way, still wandering - it has not yet reached the ears of man. ... This deed is still more distant from them than the most distant stars - and yet they have done it themselves." [Ibid.]

He speaks then, for the first time as a rational man, within the locus of the "we," but his words fall upon deaf ears, their meaning is not grasped. The locus in which they would have meaning does not yet exist. Reason itself cannot hear the truth of her own words, and declares that they are the words of a madman. And in the second instant he testifies to this in his very withdrawal from this locus. He withdraws to the locus of the I, of the singular subject beyond the rational community of the we, and from this vantage he denounces man as God's murderer whilst no longer being included within this concept. He is no longer associated with God's murderers - it is they that have committed the deed, not the madman. But placed outside of the rational community his words will still not obtain significance. He addresses no one in particular, there is no one to listen.

Is reason therefore absolutely opposed to the words of the madman? Strictly speaking, no. The madman identifies himself with the rational man and speaks rationally to the rational man, but he cannot be understood, either from within or from outside the rational community. The madman, as uttering the truth of man, that "God is dead" speaks from a space, which, transgressing the inside and outside of rationality, speaking within and without rationality, dissimulates the meaning of his word as a rational enunciation. It is reason - man as the speaking subject - which is necessary
to hear this enunciation, for it is only within the rational community of man as “We - you and I” that this enunciation can be heard. And it is reason - the madman as the essence of the speaking subject, as the *animal rationale* - which cannot hear itself speak. Here the madman is the possibility of reason’s own dissimulation, but not its opposition. Madness as the promise of reason in its very threat. Reason, in the vanity of its own madness, has always attempted to repress this threat, by enclosing it within a history which would always unjustifiably determine the sense or non-sense of thought in general.

In the next section we shall see how the Cogito resists this reduction, and dissimulates its own determinate meaning.

Part II: The Historical Meaning of the Cogito

In “Cogito and the History of Madness” Derrida intervenes in Foucault’s work at a very precise point. His reading centres on the opening of the subject, on the intersection of a philosophical and a socio-historical perspective upon the subject. If there is a real confrontation between Derrida and Foucault then it is located at this point in their opposing readings of Descartes.

Foucault’s *Madness and Civilisation* can be said to be the attempt to narrate the production of the division between sense and non-sense, or reason and unreason, through reason’s conception and confinement of madness. He holds that this confinement can be located in the historical formation of reason, in the form of the Cartesian subject. Foucault thus holds that Descartes’ philosophical delineation of the subject is bound within a wider historical horizon as both a symptom and cause of this confinement of madness.

What Derrida questions is whether such a narration is possible within
the horizons it must set itself, without it falling into the same structures of confinement which it seeks to denounce. Upon what grounds can historical cognition and demonstration be more truthful than its subject matter, when this is cognition in general, in this particular case, the Cartesian Cogito? In other words, does Foucault himself subject his historical subject, cognition and madness, to the same structures of reason which he holds to have confined madness, within his archaeology of its silence? Does not his archaeology, in the very axioms of its narrative, itself partake of the structures of rational discourse which he seeks to undermine and criticize? If not, then how is his historical account to make sense?

Derrida’s critique is thus aimed at the a priori possibility of conducting such an archaeology without repeating the violence which Foucault finds in rationality’s confinement of madness. His reading is therefore far less concerned with the narration of this archaeology, than with the axioms upon which this narrative is grounded. The weight of his critique therefore bears down upon the philosophical and methodological demands of Foucault’s enterprise.

19. The Historical Location of the Cogito

Derrida detects two opposing projects within *Madness and Civilisation*. The first appears to be the dominant one. This is to write the history of madness as it is interned and confined through what might be termed a process of productive definition, by the rationalism of the Classical period, from the middle of the seventeenth century until the end of the eighteenth century. Foucault, however, wanted to write a history of madness from outside the confines of a reason which had already damned madness, that is, from the side of madness itself. He wanted to articulate the very silence which he saw
as a product of reason; to allow madness to speak for itself. At its extreme
this would mean allowing madness back into the realm from which it had
been expelled, allowing its subjectivity truth, allowing it back into the truth
of subjectivity. Thus, in the preface to *Madness and Civilisation* he says:

In the serene world of mental illness, modern man no longer
communicates with the madman: on one hand, the man of
reason delegates the physician to madness, thereby authorizing
a relation only through the abstract universality of disease; on
the other, the man of madness communicates with society only
by the intermediary of an equally abstract reason which is order,
physical and moral constraint, the anonymous pressure of the
group, the requirements of conformity. As for a common
dialogue, there is no such thing; or rather, there is no such thing
any longer; the constitution of madness as a mental illness, at
the end of the eighteenth century, affords the evidence of a
broken dialogue, posits the separation as already effected, and
thrusts into oblivion all those stammered, imperfect words
without fixed syntax in which the exchange between madness
and reason was made. The language of psychiatry, which is a
monologue of reason on madness, has been established only on
the basis of such a silence.

I have not tried to write the history of that language, but
rather the archaeology of that silence. [MC p.xii-xiii]

Foucault’s book is the attempt to narrate the relation between reason and
what he terms unreason, the domain from out of which madness is drawn and
defined by reason, in the very attempt to confine and limit this domain. In
other words, he attempts to historically articulate and locate the relation
between classical rational cognition, exemplified in the idea of the Cartesian
subject, and madness:

For classical man, madness was not the natural condition, the
human and psychological root of unreason; it was only
unreason’s empirical form; and the madman, tracing the course
of human degradation to the frenzied nadir of animality,
disclosed that underlying realm of unreason which threatens
man and envelopes - at a tremendous distance - all the forms of
Derrida argues that this narrative, however, takes the form of a historical account and explanation. If this is to make sense, if we are to understand it as making sense, then it must be grounded in the prioritisation of a certain factual period of time, within which Foucault holds madness, the experience of madness, to be rooted and organised. Moreover, Foucault is committed to thinking that madness itself is open to empirical inquiry and explanation in terms of the historical relation between reason and unreason. He must therefore at some stage assume that he already knows what madness is. Derrida holds that these conditions and assumptions of Foucault’s discourse conform to and repeat the structures of rationality which have served to intern madness through its definition. He believes that Foucault executes an act of force upon thought itself by means of the very structures whose violence Foucault sought to condemn.

The matrix of the question which Derrida thus poses to Foucault is the relation of historical discourse to thought in general, and the Cartesian Cogito in particular. This is articulated specifically in relation to sense and non-sense, or reason and unreason. Foucault, in his interpretation of Descartes, makes a very strong claim, saying that the thought of the Cartesian subject can never be mad, and that this fact can be seen in the historical development of reason. This implicitly means that the philosophical moment, which is always, essentially, a statement of what sense is, can be historically accounted for. Foucault thus holds that the thought of philosophy can be reduced and explained by a history of philosophy, traced through philosophy’s determination of non-sense. Derrida argues that such a thesis simply repeats the repressional violence of rationality, because it remains within, and conforms to, the confines and telos of reason.
However, Derrida’s reading is not simply a critique of and confrontation with Foucault’s book, but also what Derrida would regard as a necessary repetition of the problematic it is involved in:

in the light of the rereading of the Cartesian Cogito that we shall be led to propose ... will it not be possible to interrogate certain philosophical and methodological presuppositions of this history of madness? ... And if it is true, as Foucault says, as he admits by citing Pascal, that one cannot speak of madness except in relation to that “other form of madness” that allows men “not to be mad,” that is, except in relation to reason, it will perhaps be possible not to add anything whatsoever to what Foucault has said, but perhaps only to repeat once more, on the site of this division of which Foucault speaks so well, the meaning, a meaning of the Cogito or (plural) Cogitos [CHM p.33]

In order to throw this question and this assumption into relief, Derrida mimics Foucault’s gesture as regards the philosophical text of the Meditations, and the philosophical text of Madness and Civilization. Derrida’s question is therefore, what history must the subject have in order to be mad? His answer does not strictly oppose Foucault’s. However, it creates a differentiation within Foucault’s historical account, which calls the relation between the concept of history and the understanding of the rational subject into question.

The Internment of the Cogito

In proposing this set of questions, Derrida creates a slippage of meaning in his reading of Foucault. Derrida’s text repeats the possible justification for Foucault’s interpretation and historical localisation of the Cartesian Cogito. However, it repeats it by acting out the possibilities of this justification latent in Foucault’s discourse. In so doing Derrida creates in his own text a parody of Foucault’s. For example, in Madness and Civilization, the question of the status of philosophical discourse, both in particular and in general, is left
obscure. Foucault plucks out the Meditations from the Classical period, to mark its beginning, and as a prologue to the book he wishes to write, but without ever explaining it as a philosophical discourse. As Derrida later says:

We are not told whether or not this passage of the first Meditation, interpreted by Foucault as a philosophical internment of madness, is destined, as a prelude to the historical and sociopolitical drama, to set the tone for the entire drama to be played. Is this “act of force,” described in the dimension of theoretical knowledge and metaphysics, a symptom, a cause, a language? ... And if this act of force has a structural affinity with the totality of the drama, what is the status of this affinity? Finally, whatever the place reserved for philosophy in this total historical structure may be, why the sole choice of the Cartesian example? [CHM p.44]

Derrida, however, himself copies this gesture. He selects and concentrates on three pages of Madness and Civilisation, which form the opening to the book. The manner of this selection mirrors Foucault’s selection of Descartes’ text, which he holds to mark the turn of thought which opens the Classical epoch. Derrida could be accused of reducing an extremely complex historical narrative to a brief statement of its philosophical intentions. This, however, is Derrida’s point. “His” text is no more legitimate in its formal criticism of Foucault’s text, than Foucault himself. But if its formal structure raises questions of legitimacy this is because it repeats the structure of Foucault’s text, demonstrating in its movement the violence of reductive objectification.

The question which Derrida sets is not simply one of justification, but also one of destination, both of the philosophical word within Foucault’s narrative; and of the word itself, spoken by the thinking subject within the history of reason.

If Foucault, as he claims, wishes to write the archaeology of this silence of madness, after it has been interned, that is, after all its legible signs
have been made the property of reason (as Foucault claims they are), then how can this archaeology be meaningful unless it participates in this internment?

But, first of all, is there a history of silence? Further, is not an archaeology, even of silence, a logic, that is, an organized language, a project, an order, a sentence, a work? Would not the archaeology of silence be the most efficacious and subtle restoration, the repetition, in the most irreducibly ambiguous meaning of the word, of the act perpetrated against madness - and be so at the very moment when this act is denounced? [CHM p.35]

This is a general criticism of Foucault’s project, insofar as Foucault conceives it as an account in which a history is told and meant to be understood, that is, insofar as he holds it to be an objective, rational account. In other words, if the structure of truth belongs strictly to rationality, as Foucault implicitly holds in Madness and Civilization, if the philosophical moment of language is enclosed within, and transcended by, the archaeological account of its possibility, if the order of this archaeology is to be understood, then surely the order and language of its truth must fall within the conceptual range of the rationality which Foucault seeks, on behalf of madness, to put on trial?

20. The Silence of Madness

This general criticism has a further application in terms of the relation between madness and reason. If reason itself enables and enforces the division between itself and unreason, in which madness forms the empirical index of the limit of reason, then the rational formulation of the question of madness in Foucault’s language must reiterate this division. If Foucault’s archaeology is to truly demonstrate the historical fact of this division then it itself cannot be mad - it must itself expel the possibility of its own madness.
In other words, it must repeat reason's own strange act of force, initiated, so Foucault claims, by Descartes' articulation of the Cogito. Derrida therefore asks:

What is the historical responsibility of this logic of archaeology? Where should it be situated? Does it suffice to stack the tools of psychiatry neatly, inside a tightly shut workshop, in order to return to innocence and to end all complicity with the rational or political order which keeps madness captive? ... Nothing within this language, and no one among those who speak it, can escape the historical guilt - if there is one, and if it is historical in a classical sense - which Foucault apparently wishes to put on trial. But such a trial may be impossible, for by the simple fact of their articulation the proceedings and verdict unceasingly reiterate the crime. If the Order of which we are speaking is so powerful, if its power is unique of its kind, this is so precisely by virtue of the universal, structural, and infinite complicity in which it compromises all those who understand it in its own language, even when this language provides them with the form of their own denunciation. Order is then denounced within order. [CHM p.35]

The trial of both reason and madness has always taken place within the juridical setting of rationality. If Foucault's analysis could be correct, then the judgement arrived at in such a setting must always be rational, which means, once again, the exclusion of the possibility of its madness. Madness is once more damned, this time by the language which seeks to offer it retribution and to judge the truly guilty.48 Thus if Foucault's historical account is to have

48 It is this fact which forms the locus of Derrida's strongest objection to Foucault, and which Foucault, in his reply "My Body, This Paper, This Fire" (referred to as BPF) to Derrida's essay, acknowledges as an attack upon his position, a position which Derrida never actually claims that Foucault absolutely takes. That is, Derrida holds that there is no order outside of rationality, which is the language of order. And this is precisely what Foucault holds, at least in these earlier writings, to be possible. He thus holds that Derrida's practice of textual reading is itself a repetition of classical rationality, a fact that Derrida would not deny, although he would hold that his writing exceeds this metaphysical closure. But, against this, Foucault asserts:

(continued...)
sense, then it must already belong to the order of reason, and especially in the case of madness or non-sense. This is because, if something is to obtain sense, then it must, in the first instance, partake of the order of sense; and madness, whatever else it may be, and especially as it is designated in Foucault's book, is not of this order. If there is a sense to reason's disruption by non-sense, then the articulation of this disruption can only take place within this order, for "outside" of this order, there is no articulation which can obtain rational sense. Which does not mean that there is no mark outside reason, but rather that there is no sensible mark outside of reason. There is no "outside" of reason which is sayable, precisely because reason has already articulated the division between its "outside" and "inside," as a condition of universality in general:

The revolution against reason ... can be made only within it. ... Since the revolution against reason, from the moment it is articulated, can operate only within reason, it always has the limited scope of what is called, precisely in the language of a

(...continued)

I will not say that it is a metaphysics, metaphysics itself or its closure which is hiding in this "textualisation" of discursive practices. I'll go much further than that: I shall say that what can be seen here so visibly is a historically well-determined little pedagogy. A pedagogy which teaches the pupil that there is nothing outside of the text, but that in it, in its blanks and its silences, there reigns the reserve of the origin; that it is therefore unnecessary to search elsewhere, but that here, not in the words, certainly, but in the words under erasure, in their grid, the "sense of being" is said. A pedagogy which gives conversely to the master's voice the limitless sovereignty which allows it to restate the text indefinitely. [BPF p.27]. But this misses the point, whilst at the same time reiterating it. Derrida's manoeuvre in his essay was always aimed at undermining the sovereignty of the voice of the master, as we can see from his preface. And precisely because the sovereignty of the master's voice marks both the necessity and the impossibility of its determination, historical or otherwise. It cannot be historically determined, because then it would not occupy a position of absolute sovereignty - this would be taken over by the voice of the historian, and it must be historically determined because, outside of its historical determination, that is the determination of an origin, a memory, a tradition, it would have no sense.
department of *internal* affairs, a disturbance. A history, that is, an archaeology against reason doubtless cannot be written, for, despite all appearances to the contrary, the concept of history has always been a rational one. It is the meaning of "history" or *archia* that should have been questioned first, perhaps. A writing that exceeds, by questioning them, the values "origin," "reason," and "history" could not be contained within the metaphysical closure of an archaeology. [CHM p.36]

**The Historical Sign of the Subject**

Derrida thus asks whether Foucault's interpretation of Descartes is justifiable on two levels. Firstly, in terms of the interpretation itself, whether Foucault has read Descartes correctly. Included in this question is whether there is such a thing as a correct interpretation. Secondly, in terms of the position, that is, the determinable meaning of this interpretation in relation to its philosophical presuppositions. Here Derrida is basically asking whether one can legitimately give an historical account of a philosophical content and meaning:

In asking if the interpretation is justifiable, I am therefore asking about two things, putting two preliminary questions into one: (a) Have we fully understood the sign itself, in itself? In other words, has what Descartes said and meant been clearly perceived? This comprehension of the sign in and of itself, in its immediate materiality as a sign, if I may so call it, is only the first moment but also the indispensable condition of all hermeneutics and of any claim to transition from the sign to the signified ... .(b) second implication of the first question: once understood as a sign, does Descartes' stated intention have with the total historical structure to which it is to be related the relationship assigned to it? ... That is, again, two questions in one: Does it have the historical meaning assigned to it? does it have this meaning, a given meaning Foucault assigns to it? Or, second, does it have the *historical* meaning assigned to it? Is this meaning exhausted by its historicity? [CHM p.32-33]

That is, in order to conduct an historical analysis of Descartes' text, which
purports to uncover the historical meaning of the text, one must first understand interpretation in general. In other words, Foucault assumes a certain structure of, and relation to, the sign in general, and, because he does not clarify this relation, it is not at all clear whether this assumption is justified.

Derrida argues that Foucault simply accepts the traditional conception of signification without subjecting it to a critique. Such a critique is especially called for when one is attempting to articulate the division between sense and non-sense in general, for such an analysis operates at the very limits of meaning. Derrida thus points out that in order to understand Descartes' text fully, that is, in terms of its obvious (in this instance philosophical) and hidden (in this instance, historical) meanings, Foucault must understand Descartes' language - its structure and its meaning. If this were possible, however, it would then be impossible for Foucault even to begin to detect a latent meaning, that is, a meaning hidden from Descartes himself, it would be impossible for him even to begin an interpretation of the text. This is because the differentiation between a latent and an obvious meaning, which Foucault assumes, could not be upheld.

For, if this identification of the real and true meaning of Descartes' text were possible, if one could fully present the meaning of a text, let us say, in an historical account, then the presence of a latent meaning, of a differentiation between a latent and manifest meaning, would be absolutely impossible. Foucault, above all, in his archaeology of the silence of madness in relation to the rational Cogito of Descartes, contends that such a latent meaning exists. He depends upon an implicit division between philosophical discourse and historical discourse, on the one hand, and reason and unreason, on the other. Foucault both assumes such divisions, for without them he
would simply have nothing to uncover, and yet if his historical narrative is true, then it must transcend these divisions in order to give an account of them.

Derrida contends that it is rather the equivocality of the concept of the sign and signification itself, which gives rise to the differentiation between latent and manifest meaning, to the possibility of interpretation itself. This equivocality or indeterminateness in conceptuality itself, in reason itself, "means" that the meaning of a sign in general can never be fully presented:

The latent content of a dream (and of any behaviour and of consciousness in general) communicates with the manifest content only through the unity of a language - a language that the analyst must speak as well as possible. ... As well as possible: progress in the knowledge and practice of a language being by nature infinitely open (first by virtue of the original and essential equivocality of the signifier, at least in the language of "everyday life," its indeterminateness and playing space being precisely that which liberates the difference between hidden and stated meaning; then, by virtue of the original and essential communication between different languages throughout history; finally, by virtue of the play, the relation to itself, or "sedimentation," of every language), are not the insecurities and insufficiencies of analysis axiomatic or irreducible? And does not the historian of philosophy, whatever his method, abandon himself to the same dangers? [CHM p.307-8]

This is a problem faced by all hermeneutics. Foucault’s discourse is a historical one, and therefore places this problem of understanding the sign and its meaning within the matrix of a historical interpretation. But is the nature of the sign in relation to its meaning or possible meanings such that it can be grasped and fully accounted for from a historical perspective? Even if the meaning of Descartes’ text could be fully understood, is its meaning, and meaning in general, in every way historical?
21. The Madness of the Project

Derrida, however, detects another project within Foucault’s book, which he holds to exceed and even neutralise the project of an archaeology. This is Foucault’s attempt to uncover the space in which the language of reason and unreason are made possible. This would indicate the possibility of a mark of thought, of the Cogito, beyond its captivation in speech and in determinate meaning - the origin of sense and non-sense before their division was accomplished. This other project is the attempt to articulate the possibility of this division between reason and unreason from the side of unreason:

as he experiences a necessity of speaking which must escape the objectivist project of classical reason - a necessity of speaking even at the price of a war declared by the language of reason against itself, a war in which language would recapture itself, destroy itself, or unceasingly revive the act of its own destruction - the allégation of an archaeology of silence, a purist, intransigent, nonviolent, nondialectical allégation, is often counterbalanced, equilibrated, I should even say contradicted by a discourse in Foucault’s book that is not only the admission of a difficulty, but the formation of another project, a project that is not an expediency, but a different and more ambitious one, a project more effectively ambitious than the first one. [CHM p.36]

This project contradicts an historical archaeology because it is not the formulation of the unthinkable. It is rather the attempt to allow it to say itself in the very impossibility of having a voice. It would be the trace of the mark of madness in its very non-sense, within rational thought itself. This project is no less rational than that of an archaeology of knowledge except that the mark or sign which it attempts to articulate can never be made sensible, because it belongs neither to a determinate sense, nor to a determinate non-sense. The trace of such a mark points back to an understanding in which the division between sense and non-sense had not yet been made. This
understanding, always in the form of a *logos*, or a determinate form of the *logos*, would be older, more originary, than the rationality of the classical epoch, which would then appear as an effect rather than cause of the division between reason and madness.

Foucault’s projected language would thus be the attempt to articulate itself along an axis which is other than the sense of reason, that is, from beyond the support offered by sense:

The admission of this difficulty can be found in such sentences as these: “The perception which seeks to grasp them [in question are the miseries and murmurings of madness] in their wild state, necessarily belongs to a world that has already captured them. The liberty of madness can be understood only from high in the fortress that holds madness prisoner. And there madness possesses only the morose sum of its prison experiences, its mute experience of persecution. And we - we possess only its description as a man wanted.” And, later, Foucault speaks of a madness “whose wild state can never be restored in and of itself” and of an “inaccessible primitive purity.”

Because this difficulty, or this impossibility, must reverberate within the language used to describe this history of madness, Foucault, in effect, acknowledges the necessity of maintaining his discourse within what he calls a “relativity without recourse,” that is, without support from an absolute reason or logos. The simultaneous necessity and impossibility of what Foucault elsewhere calls “a language without support,” that is to say, a language declining, in principle if not in fact, to articulate itself along the lines of the syntax of reason. [CHM p.37]

This attempt agrees in principle with Derrida’s critique of the project of an archaeology, and undermines it along the same lines as Derrida’s critique. Foucault’s historical account of madness is undermined by his project of letting madness say itself outside of the support of sense. This means that there is an implicit binding between the concept of sense and the concept of
history - the two support each other in an economy of circulation and correspondence. Before examining this we should look at the manner in which this history, and history in general, is undermined by the attempt to let madness say itself, that is, to allow its source to be articulated.

**The Mark of Reason’s Madness**

The project of letting madness speak is, however, problematic, even impossible. Foucault must posit madness in an *a priori* relation to reason, in which the two determine each other. For, if this division takes place, and is posited from the side of reason, then madness must be a place of silence in terms of sense and meaning. Within this space reason has no voice, and the voice has no reason. The attempt to say or to think the space of this division is, in other words, the mark of madness - it has no destination, can arrive at no singular meaning, it articulates nothing. As Foucault says:

> Joining vision and blindness, image and judgements, hallucination and language, sleep and waking, day and night, madness is ultimately nothing, for it unites in them all that is negative. But the paradox of this *nothing* is to *manifest* itself, to explode in signs, in words, in gestures. [MC p.107]

This means that although madness can be marked, its mark has no determinate meaning. Madness exceeds the sense given it in the *logos*, and therefore cannot be said. Which means that every “true” mark of madness stands beyond the order of sensible articulation, which includes its historical account, which belongs to this order as soon as it claims to account for something. Foucault is well aware of this fact when he states:

> Meaningless disorder as madness, it [reason] reveals, when it examines it, only ordered classifications, rigorous mechanisms in soul and body, language articulated according to a visible logic. All that madness can say of itself is merely reason, though it is itself the negation of reason. In short, a rational hold over
*madness is always possible and necessary, to the very degree that madness is non-reason.*

There is only one word which summarizes this experience, *Unreason.* [MC p.107]

This perspective throws the whole enterprise of an archaeological study of the classical age, in which this period is prioritised as the epoch in which this division took place, into question. For if all that madness can say of itself is reason then it must be construed as having always been so. This is because the only history that madness could ever have had would be one of rationality. It would be impossible for madness to narrate its own history. Madness, understood as the mark of unreason, as the opposite of rational cognition, is, in its sovereign right as a subject of enunciation belonging to the space of unreason, the oblivion of history in general. In other words, the concept of madness marks the radical absence of memory, or rather, a certain memory which could secure the sense of madness in that it can recall and project the sense of the sentence uttered from the space of madness, if “madness” itself could still be said to truly exist.

However, if all that can be said of madness in general is reason, then the division between reason and madness or unreason cannot be historically, or even philosophically, located.\(^49\) This has a second, wider consequence. If madness can only be sensibly marked within the sphere of reason, even if this mark is nonsensical, then reason must be other than conceived by Foucault. It cannot be so alienated from the experience of madness as he proposes. This can be seen, for example, in the very fact that reason marks madness as a

\(^{49}\) It should be noted here that it is difficult to tell from Foucault’s book whether madness is, in general, simply the negation of reason as unreason, or whether madness has a specific locus within the space of unreason. This difficulty is not thematically resolved, but it can be said that, in general, madness obtains specificity in Foucault’s discourse through its empirical study, whilst in principle its analysis is restricted to the division between reason and unreason.
domain for study, for articulation, in the very knowledge that it is inarticulatable. Nonetheless madness functions in Foucault's book, if nowhere else, as a concept, albeit one that exceeds its own conceptualisation. This experience and this project of grasping madness is, in itself, a form of rational "madness," as is often vividly portrayed by Foucault's account of rationality's grasp of madness in its empirical formation. Perhaps the clearest sign of rationality's own madness is given by the manner in which doctors have attempted to treat madness, and their rational justification of these treatments. Foucault always follows this movement with an eye on what it is to be really mad:

Fallowes explains the beneficial mechanism of his *oleum cephalicum*; in madness, "black vapours clog the very fine blood vessels through which the animal spirits must pass"; the blood is thus deprived of direction; it encumbers the veins of the brain where it stagnates, unless it is agitated by a confused movement "that distracts the ideas." *Oleum cephalicum* has the advantage of provoking "little pustules on the head"; they are anointed with oil to keep them from drying out and so that "the black vapours lodged in the brain" may continue to escape. But burning and cauterising the body at any point produces the same effect. ... In his *Instructions* of 1785 ... Francois Doublet recommends that if bleedings, purges, baths and showers do not cure mania, the use of "cauters, setons, superficial abscesses, inoculation of scabies" will. [MC p.164]

If madness is shown here, is made present, it is through the madness of the division which is enacted by the voice of reason. Reason, insofar as it testifies its own reasonableness, cannot say that it is mad, but that does not mean that it is not mad. Reason must always run the risk of being mad - of uttering nonsense - before the reflection and judgement of the sense of this utterance. Again, the question as to whether this attestation - reason's attestation of its own reasonableness - is in itself madness or not, cannot be posed in the
moment of its reflection. It cannot, with meaning, reflect that it is mad, say that it is mad, because it has already decided that madness is the limit of sense, it is non-sense. Reason, insofar as it makes a claim for sense, must always run the gauntlet of non-sense at the very point of the enunciation of sense because, from the perspective of rationality, the sense of this enunciation only obtains insofar as it is not mad. Reason is not mad insofar as it can articulate its rationality and can recall that it has made this attestation. The point is, however, that this recall is necessary, but at the same time, through this very same movement, impossible. The possibility of madness infects reason at every point of enunciation. If we experience a tension in Foucault’s work it is precisely at this point of the enunciation of madness in the very recognition of its impossibility. It is at this point that Foucault takes us to the very limits of language itself in the experience of the division between madness and reason. It is at this point that he is most profound and escapes Derrida’s criticism of him for proposing a totalitarian account of madness, but also undermines his own historical account of the rise of madness, in which this division between reason and unreason is located in the so called Classical period.

Nonetheless, there remains in Madness and Civilisation the historical account and interpretation of the Cartesian Cogito. We should, therefore, finally turn to the interpretation of Descartes in order to see the locus of this critique, and the internment thereby enacted. Through this analysis we wish to show the relation of the subject to the possibility both of its history and its madness.
22. History or Fiction - the Madness of the Cogito

Foucault accuses Descartes of excluding madness from the methodological movement of doubt in establishing of the truth of the subject's Cogito. He claims that this exclusion takes place in the first stages of the Meditations, that is, at the stage of natural doubt. For Foucault, the fact that Descartes says he cannot be mad when he refers to the certainty of the perception of his body means that he excludes madness from the possibility of thought. Madness belongs to the realm of the unthinkable, and is immediately expelled outside the realm of reason. He understands Descartes as saying that it is better to take dreams as an example for the fact that I can doubt the existence of my body, for a reasonable man can dream, and still argue, whereas a madman can never be reasonable, could never seriously present an argument. Foucault argues that through this circumvention of madness in favour of dreaming, Descartes secures the subject's knowledge of certain objects. Foucault holds that dreaming and error always leave a residue of truth. For example, simple primary elements of cognition, such as colours, or numbers and their relations which madness would threaten if it were not excluded from the possibility of the thinking subject. Foucault asserts that "I cannot be mad because I think."

For madness it is otherwise; if its dangers do not threaten the methodology, or the essence of its truth, it is not simply because this thing, even in the thought of the madman, cannot be false; it is rather that because it is me that thinks, then I cannot be mad. When I believe that I have a body, how can I ascertain that this is a more pertinent truth than that held by the one who imagines he has a body of glass? Most certainly because: "these are madmen, and I would not be less extravagant if I were to follow their example." It is not the permanence of truth which guarantees thought against madness, in the same way as it permits thought to remove itself from error, or to emerge from the dream; it is an impossibility to be mad that is essential not
to the object of thought, but to the thinking subject.50

Foucault thus holds that Descartes excludes the possibility of madness from thought without justification. Descartes assumes that he knows what madness already is, and never seriously considers it as a possible form of cognition. Foucault further argues that this exclusion marks a new historical epoch, the formulation of the Cogito by Descartes being a symptom of this historical period.

Madness: Dreaming: and Evil Demons

Derrida argues that Foucault concentrates only on the first movement of the Meditations, which remains at the level of natural rather than metaphysical doubt. Even if madness is replaced by the example of dreaming, it is not circumvented by this example. This is not because madness subjects thought to a too radical an experience of doubt, but because it is not a sufficient experience of doubt. It is neither universal enough to be used as a pedagogic example, nor, in its empirical natural state, is its epistemological threat to truth wide ranging enough. Madness does not always place reality in doubt, only sometimes, whereas dreaming always does. Dreaming is the hyperbolical exasperation of madness, which takes the epistemological threat of madness to its extreme at the stage of natural doubt. This stage is where simple intelligible truths, such as mathematical axioms, remain as a residuum of certain truths. Dreaming also has the advantage over madness that it is a more acceptable example to the layman who would otherwise recoil from the threat of madness, even though the threat to truth operating within the scope of dreaming is stronger than the threat of madness. As Derrida argues:

The reference to dreams ... constitutes ... the hyperbolical exasperation of the hypothesis of madness. ... Moreover, Descartes is concerned here not with determining the concept of madness but with utilizing the popular notion of insanity for juridical and methodological ends, in order to ask questions of principle regarding only the truth of ideas. ... From this point of view the sleeper, or the dreamer, is madder than the madman. ... It is in the case of sleep and not in that of insanity, that the absolute totality of ideas of sensory origin becomes suspect ... . The hypothesis of insanity is therefore not a good example ... for at least two reasons. (a) It does not cover the totality of the field of sensory perception. ... (b) It is not a useful ... example pedagogically, because it meets the resistance of the non-philosopher who does not have the audacity to follow the philosopher when the latter agrees that he might indeed be mad at the very moment when he speaks. [CHM p.51]

The real point is that madness is not circumvented by Descartes in this movement from madness to dreaming because dreaming itself is not considered a radical enough moment of doubt by Descartes. It is a rhetorical step which paves the way for, and is itself eclipsed by, the most radical moment of doubt experienceable by the subject. This is the hyperbolic moment of the evil genius or demon - literally the moment of the demonic within thought. This moment will obliterate every step taken by the path of natural doubt, for it will threaten everything natural with the possibility of epistemological obliteration. The idea of Man himself as doubting subject will be open to this obliteration. This is because, at the summit of the doubting subject, all sensible intuition, all marks of sense, all marks of articulation and reason, will be subject to the scope of doubt opened by its hyperbolisation in the hypothesis of the evil demon. This is the true metaphysical stage of the methodology of doubt, and subjects the totality of sensory and intellectual knowledge to the possibility of a literal derangement. The hyperbole of the evil demon introduces the subject's Cogito to the possibility of a
metaphysical madness, from which the subject will never escape:

Now, the recourse to the fiction of the evil genius will evoke, conjure up, the possibility of a total madness, a total derangement over which I could have no control because it is inflicted upon me - hypothetically - leaving me no responsibility for it. Total derangement is the possibility of a madness that is no longer a disorder of the body, of the object, the body-object outside the boundaries of the res cogitans, outside the boundaries of the policed city, secure in its existence as thinking subjectivity, but is a madness that will bring subversion to pure thought and to its purely intelligible objects, to the field of its clear and distinct ideas, to the realm of the mathematical truths which escape natural doubt. [CHM p.52-53]

Two things are emphasised here, the most obvious being that the hypothesis of the evil demon constitutes the ruination of all knowledge. All objects of thought are thus subjected to the possibility of doubt through the metaphysical hyperbolisation: This is posited by Descartes when he interrupts his reverie of natural doubt.

Nevertheless, I have for a long time had in my mind the belief that there is a God who is all-powerful and by whom I was created and made as I am. And who can give me the assurance that this God has not arranged that there should be no earth, no heaven, no extended body, no figure, no magnitude, or place, and that nevertheless I should have the perception of all these things, and the persuasion that they do not exist other than as I see them? And, further, as I sometimes think that others are mistaken, even in the things that they think they know most certainly, it is possible that God has wished that I should be deceived every time I add two and three or count the sides of a square, or form some judgement even simpler, if anything simpler than that can be imagined. [MFP p.98]

The second point emphasised by Derrida is that this hypothesis takes the form of a fiction. It should here be noted that the possible existence of an all-powerful god and of an all-powerful deceiving demon can be posited within the scope of this fiction. For, within the scope of this fiction, we experience
a doubt of such radicality that we can even doubt the word of Descartes - the sense of this narrative - to the point where no recollection of this experience is possible. One would have to identify with Descartes’ experienced intention at the very moment of its conception. But because this moment of cognition is only ever formal, and never determinate, it is structurally impossible to recall the determinate meaning of this moment of cognition. That is, the Cogito “itself” can neither be perceived nor reflected.

23. Recollection and Repression of the Cogito
The attempt to recollect this point of the Cogito would constitute the confinement of this point of excess, as Foucault himself has argued, but at another point in the progression of the Meditations. Derrida does not dispute that Descartes does, later on, repress the fundamental non-objectivity, or indeterminacy, of this point by determining it within the confines of a knowledge secured by the existence of a supremely good God. But this can only be seen to be a repression of this point of the Cogito because, within the ellipsis opened by the hyperbole of the demon, all judgement is suspended. At this point it does not matter whether the hypothesis is of a God or of a demon, whether the suspension of all judgement is morally good or morally bad, because this judgement is itself suspended, and reality and truth fall solely within the realm of the possible. It is within the scope of this suspension that Descartes can say “everything said here about a God is a fable” [Meditations p.99], and can with complete equanimity introduce the fable of the evil demon. This is because the idea of an omnipotent being, and of an evil demon, register only in the space of possibility. Within the scope of this fable the only thing which can exist is a thinking subject. It is of absolutely no consequence whether the thought of the thinking subject is mad
or sane. Thus Derrida will later say that:

The Cogito escapes madness only because at its own moment, under its own authority, it is valid even if I am mad, even if my thoughts are completely mad. There is a value and a meaning of the Cogito, as of existence, which escape the alternative of a determined madness or a determined reason. ... The hyperbolical audacity of the Cartesian Cogito, its mad audacity ... would consist in the return to an original point which no longer belongs to either a determined reason or a determined unreason, no longer belongs to them as opposition or alternative. Whether I am mad or not, Cogito, sum. Madness is therefore, in every sense of the word, only one case of thought (within thought). [CHM pp.55-56]

This includes the determinate recollection - the reflection - of the Cogito in memory, in other words, the first moment of its history. History, at this point of the Cogito, falls into the realm of possibility, which means that its objective truth is suspended. This suspension, the possibility of this suspension, is precisely the opening of the historicity of the subject - the very possibility of its existence, the very possibility of sense itself. For it is only against this background of the transcendent infinity of the Cogito that the determinate recollection of history in general can begin its narrative.

At first glance this appears to defy the very possibility of this point in Descartes’ enterprise - if this is so, how could Descartes even begin the project of doubt? It would undermine the possibility of ascertaining that Descartes himself historically undertook this experiment, that we could recall this point of his experience in the establishment of the Cogito. But this is precisely Derrida’s argument. We are indeed unable to objectively ascertain that Descartes, as a determinate subject, ever reached this point, just as Descartes himself, as a determinate subject, could not recollect this point. For this point of thought is valid beyond all determinate forms of thought - that is, it is has a meaning which transcends all possible determination, and thus
moves in the direction of infinity. Understood in these terms, Descartes as a
determinate subject in the history of reason can only ever obtain validity in
the register of possibility, and not in the register of objective truth, which is
also the register of an objective history. We cannot decide whether this
*possibility* of cognition is ever true or false, real or fictional, because it
remains structurally indeterminate. This indeterminacy of the Cogito - its
transcendent infinity - forms the very *possibility* of determinate, reflective
thought, but itself remains beyond the determination of judgement in general.

This is not to say that there is no history, and no memory within the
scope of the Cogito of the thinking subject. On the contrary, within the
formation of the "I think therefore I am," a *possible* history and a *possible*
memory - a possible sense or meaning of the subject - is always posited. Such
a history, or, in other words, a content of cognition, can only be formulated
in terms of the subject's relation to the infinite, that is, to possibility in
general. Possible meaning is thus necessarily prior to all determinate meaning
as its condition, but it is also the mark of the impossibility of a total
determination of meaning. The total determination of the meaning of the
subject can only ever be the project of the subject in its attempt to secure its
foundations, in relation to an infinity which it can never transcend. This
attempt to transcend infinity is reason's madness - the attempt to say the
unsayable - from out of which meaning, the meaning of the subject - its
determinate history and sense, its very direction and orientation - must stem.

As Derrida says:

"Madness is the absence of a work." This is a fundamental
motif of Foucault's book. Now, the work starts with the most
elementary discourse, with the first articulation of a meaning,
with the first syntactical usage of an "as such," for to make a
sentence is to manifest a possible meaning. By its essence, the
sentence is normal. It carries normality within it, that is *sense,*
PAGE NUMBERING AS ORIGINAL
that I am, because I necessarily state this in relation to infinity, my memory
of myself as being "as such" is constituted as a possibility of my existence,
and at the same time is erased in the possibility of not being true. In this
moment the temporality of the subject is stripped of its objective truth. This
is because this point of the Cogito is at all times formally repeatable, and at
all times singularly unique - it exists only under its own erasure from all
determinate forms of perception. It is in this sense that Derrida criticises
Foucault's reading of Descartes, when he says:

The extent to which doubt and the Cartesian Cogito are
punctuated by this project of a singular and unprecedented
excess ... is also the extent to which any effort to reduce this
project, to enclose it within a determined historical structure,
however comprehensive, risks missing the essential, risks
dulling the point itself. Such an effort risks doing violence to
this project in turn ... and a violence of a totalitarian and
historicist style which eludes meaning and the origin of
meaning. ... Structuralist totalitarianism here would be
responsible for an internment of the Cogito similar to the
violences of the classical age. ... I think, therefore, that (in
Descartes) everything can be reduced to a determined historical
totality except the hyperbolical project. Now, this project
belongs to the narration narrating itself and not to the narration
narrated by Foucault. It cannot be recounted, cannot be
objectified as an event in determined history. [CHM p.58]

This point is nothing other than the mark of the hyperbolical project as the
necessary moment of fictionality within determinate rationality, or, as
Heidegger would say, of untruth in truth. It can, in other contexts, be read as
the mark of madness, or of silence, or of literature within rationality, and
signals both the possibility and impossibility of the subject discursively
grasping its existence. This conceptual reflection of the subject upon itself
relies on the assumption that the identity and meaning of the subject remain
substantially the same. This can only be verified through memory - the
subject’s certainty of its continual identity in time. This memory is all that can separate the cognition of the rational subject from that of the madman.

We have seen, however, through Derrida’s argument, that the subject’s Cogito transcends this memory, and thus the possibility of reassuring itself that its thought is not mad falls away. In this sense Foucault is utterly correct to say that reason has entombed the possibility of its own madness, but not at the point of the Cartesian Cogito. This occurs rather at the stage when the subject attempts to reassure itself of the validity of its perception by deferring its reflection to a moment of absolute objectivity, in other words, God. It is the belief in the absolute objectivity of God which assures the subject of the truth of its perception, of its reflection and of its memory or history. The concept of history itself is only possible on the basis of this belief, and thus represents the subject’s reassurance of its own rational cognition and meaning. We have already seen in our readings of both Descartes and Husserl that this reference of the Cogito to objectivity cannot secure a determinate identity or meaning for the subject, the transcendence of this realm thwarting every determinate, finite, that is, historical judgement. Determinate or finite thought is, however, no less thwarted by the transcendence of the Cogito’s existence itself, the meaning of which stretches beyond both a determinate rationality and a determinate madness. Determinate thought, rational judgement, only exists through the repression of this madness: that of transcendence within the subject. The subject can only speak or express itself against this transcendence, which is its own. The validation of a singular meaning and memory of the subject as the subject tries to say itself and reassure itself within the locus of this saying: this is the madness and the crisis which haunts the truth of subjectivity:

Crisis or oblivion is perhaps not an accident, but rather the
destiny of speaking philosophy - the philosophy which lives only by imprisoning madness, but which would die as thought, and by a still worse violence, if a new speech did not at every instant liberate previous madness while enclosing within itself, in its present existence, the madman of the day. It is only by virtue of this oppression of madness that finite thought, that is to say, history, can reign. Extending this truth to historicity in general, without keeping to a determined historical moment, one could say that the reign of finite thought can be established only on the basis of the more or less disguised internment, humiliation, fettering and mockery of the madman within us, of the madman who can only be the fool of a logos which is father, master, and king. [CHM p.61]

25. Summary of Section III

In the preceding chapters we have seen that the subject’s Cogito exists in a moment which necessarily transcends all determinate or finite thought. This means that the Cogito both exceeds and resists the attempt to reduce its meaning to an underlying constitutive historical reality.

In our reading of Heidegger’s interpretation of Nietzsche we have tried to demonstrate that the referentiality of the subject’s Cogito is grounded in the necessary reference of subjectivity to a “concept” of justice, which exceeds any finite, i.e. reflexive determination. It is this reference which renders the determinate judgement which characterises the so-called metaphysical epoch illegitimate in its attempt to reduce the meaning of the Cogito to a determinate historical form or structure.

For this reason we also suggested that Heidegger, despite his analysis, is guilty of such a reduction in that he repeatedly translates Nietzsche’s thought in terms of the history of the forgetting of Being, by means of which Heidegger characterises the metaphysical epoch to which he holds Nietzsche belongs. This reduction illegitimately excludes a moment of the Cogito, so we
have termed this reduction repressive.

In our reading of Derrida and Foucault we have tried to outline exactly what constitutes this necessary moment of cognition. Following Derrida’s interpretation of the Cartesian Cogito we have argued that the Cogito, articulated as *ego cogito ergo sum*, exceeds all forms of determinate thought. We have thus defended Descartes’ argument that the subject’s Cogito has a meaning whether its content is true or fictional.

We further argued that the *reflection* of this meaning, i.e. the determination what the Cogito actually means introduces the *possibility* of historical narrative, or memory into subjectivity. It is by means of the illegitimate determination of this possibility that the subject’s reflection can be assured of the sense of its judgement.

This, however, relies upon a determinate or finite judgement upon the *ego cogito* itself, which effectively posits that its meaning remains the same, whatever the content of its thought. We have therefore, with Derrida, argued that such a determination is illegitimate. This means that the assertion that the meaning of the subject’s Cogito remains substantially the same over time is of the order of a belief. We have therefore argued that the objective judgement as to the determinate meaning of the subject’s Cogito, whether its meaning makes sense or is mad is, in both cases, a belief which represses the infinite transcendence of thought itself.

It remains to be seen, however, how this assertion of the truth operates within the concept of the subject and subjectivity. In the final chapters on Freud and Derrida’s critique of Lacan we will therefore attempt to show the relationship and operation of truth and fiction within the concept of the subject. In our interpretation of Freud we will attempt to demonstrate that theory itself, understood in terms of the idea of a thesis or thematisation,
breaks down in its attempt to explain consciousness because, in the face of
the infinite transcendence of thought, it has no recourse to truth. In other
words, the idea of reducing subjectivity to a thesis or principle, in the
articulation of the truth of subjective or conscious life, will be shown to be a
fiction. The assertion of the truth of such a fiction will constitute what Freud
understands as repression.

In our reading of Derrida's critique of Lacan we will try to show how
truth itself operates in the repressional production of such a thesis about
subjectivity, and why such a repression can never be complete.
Section IV: The Truth of the Subject’s Transcendence

Part I: Freud’s Truth

Now let us call “conscious” the conception which is present to our consciousness and of which we are aware, and let this be the only meaning of the term conscious .... We were accustomed to think that every latent idea was so because it was weak and that it grew conscious as soon as it was strong. We have now gained the conviction that there are some latent ideas which do not penetrate into consciousness, however strong they may have become. Therefore we may call the latent ideas of the first type foreconscious, whilst we reserve the term unconscious for the latter type .... The term unconscious designates especially ideas with a certain dynamic character, ideas keeping apart from consciousness in spite of their intensity and activity. [OM p.50-53]

If we are to die ourselves, and first to lose in death those who are dearest to us, it is easier to submit to a remorseless law of nature, to the sublime ananke [Necessity], than to a chance which might perhaps have been escaped. It may be, however, that this belief in the internal necessity of dying is only another of those illusions which we have created ‘um die Schwere des Daseins zu ertragen.’ It is certainly not a primeval belief. [OM p.317]

In “Le Facteur De La Vérité” Derrida engages in a reading of Lacan’s “Seminar on The Purloined Letter.” In this reading he attempts to displace the framework through which Lacan levers out the message that Poe’s “The Purloined Letter” apparently sends regarding the “repetition compulsion.” Before embarking on a discussion of this reading we will take a look at the question and the text which motivates and organises this “confrontation.” This is Freud’s essay “Beyond The Pleasure Principle” [OM p.275], which tackles the problem that the repetition compulsion presents to psychoanalytic theory and praxis.
The interpretation put forward is based upon Derrida’s reading of this essay in his “To Speculate - On Freud” [PSF pp. 257-409]. Derrida’s interpretation is highly intricate. I have restricted the analyses to reproducing two essential steps in Derrida’s reading. 1. The speculative play between the hypotheses of conflicting life and death instincts which determine psychic activity. 2. The speculative nature of these hypotheses.

26. The Compulsion to Repeat

At the beginning of “Beyond The Pleasure Principle” Freud’s question is: what is it that compels, for instance, a traumatised person to repeat the unpleasurable details of the trauma, in opposition to the Pleasure Principle? This principle is the instinct which drives the psyche towards the attainment of pleasure. Pleasure is defined as the attainment of constancy, keeping the levels of excitation as low as possible. It stands as the highest principle of psychic functioning, as the instinct which governs all psychical behaviour.

Freud goes on to reiterate this problem in other examples, in which he observes this compulsion to repeat at work. A child, for example, on seeing his mother leave him, to return later, obsessively takes to a game which ostensibly repeats this unpleasurable experience. The child achieves this repetition of the original experience by throwing objects away from himself again and again, whilst uttering the sound ö-o-o-o, which both Freud and the Mother, after prolonged observation, came to understand as the German word ‘fort’ meaning ‘gone’. The full economy of this game was realised by Freud:

One day I made the observation which confirmed my view. The child had a wooden reel with a piece of string tied round it. It never occurred to him to pull it along the floor behind him, for instance, and play at its being a carriage. What he did was to hold the reel by the string and very skilfully throw it over the edge of his curtained cot, so that it disappeared into it, at the
same time uttering his expressive ‘o-o-o-o’. He then pulled the reel out of the cot again by the string and hailed its reappearance with a joyful ‘da’ [there]. This, then, was the complete game - disappearance and return. [OM p.284]

It is possible to explain the game in terms of the child mastering the loss of the mother. Such an explanation would obviously be in accordance with the Pleasure Principle. However, in the first instance, the unpleasurable experience must have been repeated by the child, irrespective of, and in opposition to, the Pleasure Principle.

These two examples, of traumatised patients and a small child are, however, extreme cases. On a more general level, Freud finds that this repetitive behaviour can be observed in the lives of some normal people. The impression they give is of being pursued by a malignant fate or possessed by some ‘daemonic’ power ... . The compulsion which is here in evidence differs in no way from the compulsion to repeat we have found in neurotics, even though the people we are now considering have never shown any signs of dealing with a neurotic conflict by producing symptoms. Thus we have come across people all of whose human relationships have the same outcome: such as the benefactor who is abandoned in anger after a time by each of his protégés ... ; or the man whose friendships all end in betrayal by his friend; ... or again, the lover each of whose love affairs with a woman passes through the same phases and reaches the same conclusion. This ‘perpetual occurrence of the same thing’ causes us no astonishment when it relates to active behaviour on the part of the person concerned and when we can discern in him an essential character-trait which always remains the same and which is compelled to find expression in a repetition of the same experiences. [OM p.292-3]

This repetitive behaviour, however, cannot be said to lower the excitation levels of the psyche, and can even serve to raise them. These factors of repetition thus stand in opposition, or at least serve as a delay to, or
modification of, the Pleasure Principle. This leads Freud to posit this compulsion to repeat as a characteristic of the instinctual life of the psyche which stretches beyond the Pleasure Principle.

Derrida argues that the status of this beyond is problematic from the perspective either of the Pleasure Principle, or of the compulsion to repeat. This is especially because the theoretical sovereignty of the Pleasure Principle seems indubitable, for without it desire, whether conscious or unconscious, would make little sense. Freud thus finds himself in need of certain speculations, possibly even a new kind of speculation altogether, which would serve to explain these two instinctual characteristics which must oppose each other, whilst at the same time maintaining that the Pleasure Principle retains its validity.

The Play of Life and Death
This speculation leads to the positing of two types of instinct. On the one hand the compulsion to repeat which Freud maintains is a desire to return to an earlier state of things. This, if taken to its extreme, becomes nothing less than a desire for death, (which comes under the general term of the death instincts). These desires are described by Freud as the ego instincts, and are characterised by the Reality Principle. This principle marks the recognition that immediate gratification will, in some cases, lead to the destruction of the organism - to its death. Such instincts serve to dampen the excesses of desire. On the other hand, there are the sexual instincts. These are the desires to proliferate, to grow and to change - the life instincts. These are unconscious and are aligned with the Pleasure Principle.

This characterisation of psychic life in terms of a fundamental duality of the instincts leads Freud to undermine the opposition between the ‘two’
instinctual drives. After positing the distinction between the sexual instincts and the ego instincts he traverses this opposition by insisting that both share similar values in certain conditions.

By rerouting the sexual instincts, the ego can save the organism's life. This can lead to pleasure at some stages, even if an excitation of energy levels in the psyche occurs in the process. This excitation is unpleasurable, and therefore cannot be explained purely in terms of the Pleasure Principle. The ego therefore acts in terms of a self-preservation which eventually might end in pleasure. The possibility of this end - the teleological structure inherent in the Pleasure Principle - rests upon its deferment. This is in accordance with the Pleasure Principle, and along the lines of the libidinal instincts, but cannot be wholly accounted for by them.

Similarly, but from the other side, he notes that:

From the very first we recognised the presence of a sadistic component in the sexual instinct. As we know, it can make itself independent and can, in the form of a perversion, dominate an individual's entire sexual activity. It also emerges as a predominant component instinct in one of the 'pregenital organisations,' as I have named them. But how can the sadistic instinct, whose aim it is to injure the object, be derived from Eros, the preserver of life? Is it not plausible to suppose that this sadism is in fact a death instinct which, under the influence of the narcissistic libido, has been forced away from the ego and has consequently only emerged in relation to the object? It now enters the service of the sexual function. [OM p.327]

Despite this intermixing of the life and death instincts Freud maintains that his 'theory', or speculations in this matter remain thoroughly dualistic. In maintaining this he admits that a catch remains:

The dominating tendency of mental life, and perhaps of nervous life in general, is the effort to reduce, to keep constant or to remove internal tension due to stimuli ... - a tendency which finds expression in the Pleasure Principle; and our recognition
of that fact is one of our strongest reasons for believing in the existence of death instincts.

But we still feel our line of thought appreciably hampered by the fact that we cannot ascribe to the sexual instinct the characteristic of a compulsion to repeat which first put us on the track of the death instincts. [OM p.329]

This is a problem for Freud insofar as he believes the sexual instinct provides a principle through which psychic activity can be explained. However, the existence of a death instinct cannot be explained from the perspective of the Pleasure Principle.

This theoretical impasse results from the nature of Freud's speculation. For what Freud proposes here cannot be understood as simply a dialectical opposition. The beyond of the Pleasure Principle will always thwart any a dialectical harmonisation in the form of a third term. This is most easily understood in terms of his description of the opposition between life and death instincts. If the sexual instincts were not delayed in some way then the organism would certainly die. Similarly if the death instincts were experienced purely - the desire to return to an earlier state of being, then the organism would just as surely die. The condition of instinctual life would thus be the deferral of the satisfaction of the instincts. Thus we have as this condition, on the one hand, the deferral of the sexual instincts, articulated by the Pleasure Principle, and on the other hand, the deferral of the repetition compulsion, or death instincts. Derrida argues that:

Pure Pleasure and pure reality are ideal limits, which is as much to say fictions. The one is as destructive and mortal as the other. Between the two the different detour therefore forms the very actuality of the process, of the "psychic" process as a "living" process. Such an "actuality," then, is never present or given...

Therefore, one cannot speak of effective actuality, of Wirklichkeit, if at least, and in the extent to which, it is coordinated with the value of presence. [PSF p.284]
The description of the psyche in terms of this “dualism” of life and death instincts creates conceptual problems. For, if the function of psychic activity is explained by the play of deferral of these instincts, then this explanation cannot present the functioning of the psyche in full. The Pleasure Principle, understood as the organising principle of the psyche, can never be the sole principle of psychic activity, but neither can the compulsion to repeat, understood in terms of the Reality Principle, explain or describe it in full. Since both are conceived of only in terms of their mutual opposition and mutual deferral neither can we conceive of a third term within which their relationship could be presented. The description and explanation of the psyche in terms of a death instinct such as the Reality Principle, cannot be translated or made meaningful in terms of the Pleasure Principle, and vice versa. To do so would mean to articulate and make present the differential relation which separates these two principles. Since this would only be possible in terms of either the Pleasure Principle or the Reality Principle, such an articulation - the thesis as to what this difference really is - is structurally impossible. Derrida traces such a differential relation with the term différence because such a term defies its full presentation, and makes it clear that the accepted understanding of presence is itself uncertain, and thus cannot legitimately be used to define this relation.

The “hypothesis” with which I read this text and several others would go in the direction of disengaging that which is engaged here between the first principle and that which appears as its other, to wit, the reality principle as its other, the death drive as its other: a structure of alteration without opposition. That which seems, then, to make the belonging - a belonging without interiority - of death to pleasure more continuous, more immanent, and more natural too, also makes it more scandalous as concerns a dialectics or a logic of opposition, of position, or of thesis. There is no thesis of this différence. The thesis would
be the death sentence (arrêt de mort) of différance. [PSF p.285]

Thus, the compulsion to repeat renders the Pleasure Principle meaningless, because it must come before the Pleasure Principle, and vice versa. Each is haunted by the other, as the possibility of the other's death.

27. The Abyss of the Unconscious

One might argue that this collapse could be explained by Freud's analysis of the unconscious as resistant to conscious representation. Unconscious ideas are representations which are active, but never present to consciousness. Conscious ideas, on the other hand, are defined by Freud as those which are present to consciousness. If we are to explain the functioning of the psyche - how the unconscious produces consciousness, and how consciousness acts upon the unconscious - then we must describe unconscious activity. Unconscious psychic activity is not, however, something which can be simply presented in the same way that we represent the activities of our digestive processes. The realm of consciousness is designated by Freud in terms of Presence, a presence which unconscious activity serves to produce. This raises the question whether the unconscious activity of the psyche can be presented and explained in terms of a governing principle such as the

51 Cf. Georg Groddeck Sigmund Freud: Briefwechsel, where Freud writes "Denn das Unbewußtsein ist doch nur etwas Phänomenales, ein Kennzeichen in Ermangelung einer besseren Bekanntschaft, wie wenn ich sagen würde: der Herr im Havelock, dessen Gesicht ich nicht deutlich sehen kann. Was mache ich, wenn er einmal ohne dieses Kleidungsstück auftritt?" [p.52-53] - "The unconsciousness is really only something phenomenal, a characteristic for lack of better acquaintance, just as I would say: the man from Havelock whose face I can't clearly see. What should I do if he once turns up without this garment?" [My translation]. Properly speaking the unconscious is a provisional aid in describing and explaining psychic processes. The problem in explaining these processes, however, is not simply that the unconscious is not an entity which could then be described. It is rather that the processes that it designates are conceived of as partly producing conscious ideas through which these processes would then be described and presented.
Pleasure Principle. One could never be certain whether such a principle described and explained unconscious activity “itself” or the effects of such activity, of which it would also be a product. The explanation of unconscious activity would always indicate a beyond which it could not appropriate, could not present, and could not explain. Thus, in the dichotomy of the life and death instincts, the play between the two principles always designates a space beyond their opposition, beyond our conceptions of “life” and “death.” This beyond renders the validity of their explanation of psychic activity uncertain, and yet it is only through the opposition and play of these two principles that we can trace this beyond - perhaps the mark of unconscious activity “itself.”

This theoretical uncertainty, says Freud, is generated by:

our being obliged to operate with the scientific terms, that is to say with the figurative language, peculiar to psychology (or, more precisely, to depth psychology). We could not otherwise describe the processes at all, and indeed we could not have become aware of them. [OM p.334]

At the extremity of this speculation, and in accordance with this uncertainty, Freud ‘locates’ the origin of the sexual instincts beyond scientific rationale, in a hypothesis of so fantastic a kind - a myth rather than a scientific explanation - that I should not venture to produce it here, were it not that it fulfils precisely the one condition whose fulfilment we desire. For it traces the origin of an instinct to a need to restore an earlier state of things. [OM p.331]

The myth concerns the origin of love between the sexes as described by Plato in the Symposium. Aristophanes, Socrates’s prime protagonist, recounts the myth:

Everything about these primaeval men was double: they had four hands and four feet, two faces, two privy parts, and so on. Eventually Zeus decided to cut these men in two, ‘like a sorb-apple which is halved for pickling’. After the division had been
made, 'the two parts of man, each desiring his other half, came together, and threw their arms about one another eager to grow into one'. [OM p.331]

From this it might appear that the principles of psychoanalysis are located in an original living unity which was rent asunder, and, struggling against the obstacles which nature puts forward, through various diversions, seeks to return to its original state. Such an origin would restore the theoretical primacy of the Pleasure Principle, rendering the death instinct a secondary phenomenon of this original desire. Freud, however, here breaks off in his speculations, and leaves the truth suspended in the midst of the myth. Derrida holds that this suspension is not simply fortuitous.

He points out that this myth is not just any old myth, nor is the Symposium irrelevant to Freud's subject matter - Eros. Neither is Aristophanes simply another protagonist for Plato, whom he held at least partly responsible for Socrates's death. And yet Freud never even bothers to name the prime figure in this discourse, Socrates. Derrida argues that such omissions are hardly accidental:

Freud omits the scene of the text, including the placing in abîme of the memories of lacunae .... In this great omission he forgets Socrates. He leaves Plato alone with Aristophanes, he leaves it to Plato to leave it to Aristophanes to develop the theory .... To omit Socrates when one writes, is not to omit just anything or anyone, especially when one is writing about Plato. Especially when one is writing about a dialogue of Plato's in which Socrates, a Socrates and the Socrates, is not a simple supernumerary. ... If Freud in his turn erases Socrates, which only accentuates his profile in what remains here of the Symposium, is this in order to pay homage to Plato for an acknowledgement of debt? ... No, on the contrary. It is in order to take the origin away from Plato, and to make him, already, an heir. Not of Socrates, who is too close and too proper to him. But of someone much further away. It would be to exaggerate - a bit - to read this passage as a destitution of Plato. It would be
to exaggerate, a bit, to say that Freud is vehemently determined to secondarize, to minimize, to devalue, but in the end he does insist a great deal on the fact that Plato has invented nothing, that his lack of originality is indeed the sign of the truth of what he says, that he had to inherit an entire tradition, etc. [PSF p.374]

As Derrida earlier says, Freud's speculations on the origins of the psyche, cast the idea of an origin itself in the form of a speculation which suspends the truth of this idea. Freud disturbs the Platonic idea of both origin and truth, breaking down the oppositional structure which would separate mimetic forms, such as myths, stories and fictions, from their "true origins."

The Platonic Determination of Mimesis

Plato creates this distinction in order to be able to determine, appropriate and control those structures of representation, which might otherwise threaten his theory of forms with dissemblance. Plato must at all costs maintain that the true nature of things lies in their idea, and not in their representation. If he does not then he cannot maintain that it is the philosopher, rather than the artist or poet, who understands what is right and true because he busies himself with ideas. He therefore characterises the artist or poet as secondary to the philosopher through the reflection and determination of the work of the artist - mimesis - as reproductive representation which copies an original exemplar, rather than representing the original itself, as the philosopher supposedly does.

What is meant by character? A powerful elucidation of this term has been given by Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe; in his essay "Typography."52 The

52 Lacoue-Labarthe, P., "Typography," in: Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics. Referred to as TYP.
argument, briefly, is as follows: In the Republic Plato determines mimesis as imitation. Imitation is always a secondary, inferior copy of an originary exemplarity. Therefore art, as an imperfect copy of reality, has no place in the perfection of the just Polis - it is improper. As improper, however, mimesis necessarily returns to trouble the philosopher's city state since it can only be ejected by a mimetic ruse. That is, it is represented by philosophy as properly improper, but this representation is itself then improper. Thus philosophical representation itself is always contaminated by the improper.

Several consequences arise from this. Firstly, the Greek notion of truth, aletheia (unconcealment) is threatened by a displacement in that presentation would always already be inflected by a representation.

Mimesis, as Plato experiences it (but not necessarily thinks it, even when he 'theorises' about it), requires the supposition that something governs or precedes aletheia itself, or more precisely, de-stabilises aletheia - something that is not unrelated, strange as it may seem, to that determination of truth that Heidegger always endeavoured to consider as secondary and derived (the determination of truth as homoiosis, as adequation, similitude, or resemblance), but that would in its turn be displaced, in any case removed from the horizon of accuracy and of exactitude (of e-evidence), never being rigorously where one expects to see it or precisely what one wants to know. [TYP p.121]

In order to guard against this destabilisation of the truth Plato resorts to the above mimetic ruse, but in doing so, necessarily produces the figure (or form) as a representative or incarnation of that which is to be excluded from the state, in this case the poet:

given that the operation in question gets underway, in Plato, with the choice of the poet as the privileged figure of mimetism in general, it allows us to understand ... that the determination

53 Plato, The Republic. Referred to as REP.
of a scapegoat, the selection of a representative of mimesis, is strictly inevitable from the moment when an act of expulsion (differentiation and rejection) is involved and what is to be expelled - because it is nothing other than mimetic representation 'itself,' that is, mimesis as the unassignable danger that representation might be primal, or, what amounts to the same thing, the danger of an originary absence of subjective 'property' or 'propriety' - can only be the externalised, scenic spectacular mimesis. For it is quite necessary, in the rejection of the 'bearer of mimesis,' that the victim incarnate in one way or another this impropriety, this lack of being proper necessarily supposed, as Plato knows very well, by the mimetic fact. [TYP p.115]

For Lacoue-Labarthe this decision is an “onto-ideo-logical reduction” (TYP p.95) of mimesis by philosophy, which, in demarcating the figure of mimesis, and thus the figure in general, creates the figure of an author-subject who carries out the work of mimesis. The authority assigned to the figure of the subject is produced through the subjection of “mimesis” in its determinative representation as being only a work of imitation.

But if the subjection of mimesis produces the subject, then this subject is always already typecast - the imitation of a character who always imitates. Philosophy cannot finally arrest its inherent instability, even through the earliest, most rigorous education, as Plato would attempt, because this education would already be typographical, a repetition and aggravation of the 'mimetic' exclusion. And if character is an (anti)-mimetic production, in which, and through which, mimesis "confirms, even as it unsettles, typogrophy, ... between ethos and tupos" (TYP, p. 128) it brings into play desire. This desire would be essentially doubled, on the one hand the desire of the subject (represented by the philosopher as essentially decidable, that is, imprintable - malleable, but firm enough to bear the stamp of the "dike, the ontologico-political law par excellence" (TYP, p.129)), and on the other hand,
the desire of the philosopher ruler, which will be represented as the Law of the Polis.

Thus, in *The Republic*, the book’s penultimate chapter consists of a rejection of mimesis as that which leads away from the truth:

The dramatic poet produces a similarly bad state of affairs in the mind [*psuche - character/mind*] of the individual, by encouraging the unreasoning part of it, which cannot distinguish greater and less but the thinks the same things are now large and now small, and by creating images far removed from the truth. [REP p.435]

This argument, however, functions for Plato as a *charm* whose recitation wards of the evils of the charms presented by the poet or the painter (cf. REP p.439). For Lacoue-Labarthe, this *charm* [*pharmakon*] appears to be situated at the level of theorisation, through which the type of character which would make up an artist (particularly the ‘bad’ dissimulating type of artist) can be thrown out of the city state. This, it would seem, is not immediately an easy thing to do, since if the mimetician is the dissembler par excellence, it still remains to identify and catch him. Plato, with all his cunning, catches him in the mirror. The analogy of the artist as mirror carrier - his ‘work’ being produced through the reflection of the mirror - significantly reduces the artist through the displacement of the abyssal structure of *mimesis* in terms of the reflecting subject and no longer in terms of mimetician ‘himself’.

But the abyssal structure erected by Plato is quite simply false. For Plato has installed the mimetician *within* the mirror - has represented him, but unfairly. Instead of the question “who is the mimetician?” we have the question “what is *mimesis*?” The mimetician is caught in the reflection of the mirror and is essentially reduced within a theoretical reflection of reflection. With this trick of the mirror we see the paradigm of a whole discourse revolving around theory and theorisation, which in the same movement traps
the mimetician in the reflective glance, whilst removing from him all authority over *mimesis*. *Mimesis* is theoretically represented as being nothing other than a mirror - a tool through which one can imitate or represent things. These imitations, since they can mislead, are always of the order of a lie or a falsehood - artistic fiction is thus always perceived in terms of a lie. The artist or painter is theoretically reflected as the one who simply carries this mirror. Implicitly Plato argues that since we can all do that, his activities are not simply of no merit, but felicitous, since the artist, at least in Plato's eyes, claims that *he himself* has produced these imitations. *Mimesis* is (mis)appropriated by and through this theorisation, forcefully defined as imitation. Under the gaze of the mirror of theoretical reflection the type(s) of character(s) who are mimetic are defined as fictioneers, or in less polite terms, liars. This is where the lie, in its opposition to truth as presentation, comes in. But the whole manoeuvre is itself a trick of the mirror - a fiction. Through it Plato surreptitiously undermines the laws he espouses.

The consequences, says Lacoue-Labarthe, are far reaching. What is caught (holding the mirror) in the mirror (but as a fiction) is the reflecting subject produced as subjected, or determined, by theorisation. And it is subjected precisely to quell (or expel, or even assassinate) that in the subject which would undermine the propriety of the law of identification:

Because of this it is perhaps not abusive to suggest that the victim is always, whatever his status, a *mimos*. That is, in effect, anyone at all, by a 'just anyone' who signals himself ... as 'such,' who exhibits 'his' non-identity, who brings along 'his' history (Oedipus) or 'his' function (the king), in 'his' *ethos* (the fool) or 'his' trade (the actor, the artist), the dreaded evidence of the primal status and undivided rule of mimetic confusion. The victim is not arbitrary. The choice of a representative of mimesis - of a 'better qualified' representative of mimesis, a 'specialist' - always bears in the fact on the one who *shows*
himself (i.e. shows ‘himself’) as being at once everything - and nothing. The pharmakos, individual or collective, is always a monster (it is well known that every society maintains or creates such monsters). [TYP p.116]54

This movement of mimetic expulsion further requires Plato to install an onto-ideo-typo-logy through the imposition of a dichotomy between truth/falsehood or, more precisely, a dichotomy between good/bad fiction, given that his own theoretical schema is a fiction, and as such, is constituted on the basis of a lie. If this seems implausible, Lacoue-Labarthe points out that there is always a decision in Plato regarding the status of myth or fiction, whether it is good or bad, especially in terms of the education of the citizens of the Polis.

Why, in reality, and on what conditions, can we say that myths lie? where, exactly, does their power come from? How is it that they (re)present an image of man so little appropriate and that the lessons they teach are only, so to speak, ‘lessons of depropriation?’ Upon what, finally, can the ethical condemnation of myths be founded? And why defend the truth? These questions are all the more pressing in that the lie, in itself, is not strictly condemned. It is judged at any rate inevitable - politically inevitable - when, for example, it is a matter of the ‘interest of the state,’ of safeguarding what has been installed, of truth in its proper sense. In other words, these questions are all the more pressing in that the lie is a pharmakon that must be handled delicately ... and something whose usage - that is to say, whose conversion into a political remedy - requires that one know what to abide by; it is a pharmakon, if you will, which

54 Also cf: “To this list one might add, by way of example, thinking of a famous passage from The Gay Science (Aphorism 361), ‘the’ Jew and ‘the’ woman: in short everyone (and history has ceaselessly confirmed this in a terrifying way) of whom ‘one’ can say that they do not have visibly - do not manifest - any property, that they always offer themselves as (something they are’ not). Thus all of those, as well, to whom ‘one’ denies, in the very name of proprietary defensiveness, the right to property. As we know, an entire economy of fear (and consequently of stupidity) is at play here.” [TYP p.116, fn. 117]
can be manipulated only if we have already decided its case.

Mimesis, then, returns, but this time in state service through its circumscription in theory. But this circumscription is, in reality, a conscription through which the subject is produced as subjected, that is, inscribed within the laws of the city state. However, the very undecidability of mimesis always produces a delay with respect to this conscription, and as such, complicates everything. That is to say, the figure engendered by the characterisation of the mimetician, which is achieved through the trick of the mirror, from the standpoint of which mimesis (not the mimetician) is decided upon as imitation - a fall or degradation of the real - this figure is mimetically constituted, and repeats the abyssal structure in itself. The figure through which subjective property might be decided upon remains undecideable. If the subject is to be (and can only be) decided upon with respect to this figure, it will always exceed or escape this determination, which in turn only serves to redouble the attempt of determination, through the failure of the installation of the figure or, in other words, the failure of the installation of a paradigm (that of the mirror - theoretical reflection).

One can argue that Freud speculates on the failure of just such a paradigm to explain the nature of psychical activity. The nature of Freud’s speculations indicates that his object - the psyche - cannot be explained in terms of the Platonic determination of “truth” and “origin” because these are constituted by (unconscious) structures which by definition lie beyond the scope of these concepts. When we attempt to describe these structures in terms of these concepts we are lured into a mode of speculation which undermines the very idea of a determinate object or structure which can be presented as such.
The catch which Freud discerned in the compulsion to repeat is thus displaced as the figure of truth caught within the net of mythology, but without any reference through which this myth can be discerned as truly mythological. In truth, the origin and the site of the compulsion to repeat would be mythological - which is, at least according to Plato, a mimetic structure, and therefore not true. Derrida therefore argues that what is at stake for Freud is undoing the Platonic idea of truth.

In other words: the movement and lure of the instincts. On the one hand there is the movement of desire itself - self-preservation in terms of immediate satisfaction of desire, in terms of the Pleasure Principle. But if this is achieved without check then the organism achieves the lowest possible energy level - its death. On the other hand there are the death instincts, which, in terms of the compulsion to repeat, seek to return to an earlier state of things. But again, without the vacillation introduced by the life instincts this leads the organism to its death. The lure of the truth in either instinct, where the instinct is understood as the true determining principle of the organism, as an absolute rule and condition of its life, culminates abruptly in non-inscription - in death.

If this effect and movement of the unconscious within consciousness occurs at the level suggested here, at the level of truth, fiction and conceptualisation, then we should be able to see its play and its consequences in the 'confrontation' between Derrida and Lacan. This is because both texts offer an interpretation of the compulsion to repeat which poses the question of truth in psychoanalysis in its relation to the structures of the subjectivity which it must analyse, and to fiction.
Part II: The Subject of Confrontation

The principle of the vis inertiae, for example, seems to be identical in physics and metaphysics. It is not more true in the former, that a large body is with more difficulty set in motion than a smaller one, and that its subsequent momentum is commensurate with this difficulty, than it is in the latter, that intellects of vaster capacity, while more forcible, more constant, and more eventful in their movements than those of inferior grade, are yet the less readily moved. - The Purloined Letter. [PP p.20]

Anyone who is acquainted with the sheer complexity, especially at the level of presentation and style, of the work of both Lacan and Derrida, might well be dismayed at the confrontation enacted in Derrida’s attack on Lacan’s work in “Le Facteur de la Vérité”. In his reading of Lacan’s “Seminar on The Purloined Letter,” Derrida accuses Lacan of violently framing the text of “The Purloined Letter” in order to produce the psychoanalytic meaning and truth that Lacan wishes to see validated. This accusation, however, seems to miss a certain element of the refusal of truth which is evident in Lacan’s style and procedure. It appears that in this confrontation it is Derrida who frames Lacan framing the “The Purloined Letter”.

However, before looking at Derrida’s characterisation and criticism of Lacan’s Seminar, it is worthwhile examining the overall orientation of his critique.
28. **Derrida’s Critique of Lacan**

Derrida’s work on the dissemination of the classical logocentric and phallicentric conceptual apparatus of metaphysics maintains a subtle connection with psychoanalysis through the concept of castration. Castration is the force and threat of the phallus, of the father, which directs the child’s sexual desire to its proper object. However, the logic of castration exceeds the law and direction of the phallus, disseminating the logic of identity which constitutes, and is supported by, the law of the phallus. For Derrida dissemination is this disruption of the symbolic order of the father and phallus. In *Positions* he says:

> In effect, in these analyses [in *Dissemination*] the concept of castration is indissociable from that of dissemination. But dissemination situates the *more or less* that indefinitely resists - and equally situates that which resists against - the effect of subjectivity, of subjectivation, of appropriation ... What Lacan calls ... the order of the “symbolic.” Escapes it and disorganizes it, makes it drift, marks its writing, with all the implied risks, but without letting itself be conceived in the categories of the “imaginary” or “real.” I have never been convinced of the necessity of this conceptual tripartition. ... [Dissemination] is also the possibility of deconstructing ... of unsewing ... the symbolic order in its general structure *and* in its modifications, in the general *and* determined forms of sociality, the “family” or culture. [PS pp.83-85]

The logic of the relation between castration and dissemination can be outlined as follows: The cut of castration determines the sexuality of the child either in terms of the dominant force of the phallus whose rule is enforced through the threat of castration, or in terms of the castrated woman who is already subordinated to the law of the phallus in that she lacks precisely this force. This is the logic of the so-called Oedipal structure.

However, this firstly presumes a matrix of inscription beyond the
simple duality of masculine and feminine upon which the threat of the cut operates. The threat of castration seeks to bring this multiplicity under the control of its law in the dual determination of sexuality, a law which would always be threatened by that which resists identification, being neither purely male nor female. It is also worth noting that such states of 'fluidity' are also beyond the scope of psychoanalysis - such as schizophrenia and psychotic states where the processes of identification are impaired, rather than neurosis.

What interests Derrida is that the logic of castration threatens the law of the phallus, which can only erect itself through the force of a violent repression of this multiplicity, whilst the conditions of this force - the multiplicity 'itself' - remain beyond its control. The cut threatened by the phallus is only able to threaten the phallus and those structures which come under its law. This threat of castration can thus only operate after the sexual determination in which the law and threat of the phallus is already recognised.

Sexual identity in these terms is thus based upon a fallacy and is riddled through and through with the possibility of doubling and quadrupling. The law of the phallus is supported precisely by this identification structure in which the possibility of doubling and dissimulation is always present, and as such it can never be the law of determination. When represented as fully present it therefore acts in terms of a repression of this duplicity. However, the agency of this repression is itself double edged, and thus threatens the law of the Phallus itself with dissemination.

What occurs here is a mimetic act whose inherent dissembling effects are severely controlled through a delineation and determination of mimesis itself, according to the traditional categories of rationality, as a limited field of representation generally given the heading 'art,' 'literature,' or fiction in general. The law of the phallus acts as if its law were singularly significant,
and its agency singularly real. In order to do so it must control the doubling effects of this mimetic act in particular, and *mimesis* in general. It must therefore determine *mimesis* as purely and simply reproductive representation and then effect a scission between ‘proper’ and ‘improper’ representation according to its own law of repression. It *represents* what *mimesis* is, and holds that this representation is more proper, and more true than the representation offered by ‘*mimesis*.’ Whatever is then designated as mimetic is framed within the matrix and truth of the law of the phallus. This division, however, can never operate to full effect, since this determination of *mimesis* is itself a mimetic act, and, in the logic of this repression, must itself be ‘improper’ or illegitimate. *Mimesis* ‘itself’ thus, by definition, remains fundamentally uncontrollable. Thus Derrida says:

What is at stake, what is in question, is a certain turn of writing which in effect is often indicated under the heading of ‘literature’ or ‘art,’” but which can be defined only from the vantage point of a *general* deconstruction which resists against (or against which resists) not *psychoanalysis in general* (on the contrary), but a certain capacity, a certain determined pertinence of psychoanalytic concepts that can be measured here, at a certain stage of their development. From this point of view, certain “literary” texts have an “analytic” and deconstructive capacity greater than certain psychoanalytic discourses which *apply* their theoretical apparatus to these texts, or “apply” a given state of their theoretical apparatus, with its openings, but also with its presuppositions, at a given moment of its elaboration. Such would be the relation between the theoretical apparatus supporting the “Seminar on ‘The Purloined Letter,’” Poe’s text, and doubtless several others. [PS pp.112-113]

Thus Derrida locates his confrontation with Lacan in the context of the dissemination of a phallologocentrism which plays a dominant role in certain psychoanalytic discourses.

This is not, however, a charge simply against Lacan. Rather it is
directed against a certain conceptual context of psychoanalysis which can be placed under the general term “analysis”, particularly applied analysis.

This structure, as we have seen, marks the space of an undermining of its phallogocentric determination, as much as it resists it. The scene of psychoanalysis in general overflows its own phallogocentric structure, but at certain points this structure remains dominant and resists its dispersion with a repressive interpretative violence. Derrida notes that at these loci Lacan’s discourse displays a remarkable evasion, centring around certain difficulties and questions which might disorganise this dominant role of phallogocentric analysis.

These evasions nonetheless remain in Lacan’s discourse, and in relation to what they avoid they cannot simply be accidental. Their crux, and the crux of the questions covered over, is the possibility of the psychoanalytic scene of confrontation - the point of face to face analysis between analyst and analysand. What, according to Derrida, is being evaded, suspended, placed under control, is this confrontation itself, with its implicit assumption and assurance of the identity of analyst and analysand, the analyst being the dominant and guiding figure in this opposition. It is this strict delineation which is subject to a duplicitous disorganisation.

The question implicitly pushed forward by Derrida is whether this confrontation ever happens? Or does the analyst simply project the tools of his trade and construct the representation of the patient, in other words, his subject? The question raised here is how does Derrida analyse this closure of the analytic scene itself, how does he confront Lacan?
29. The Confrontation

Derrida's discourse ostensibly presents itself as a critical analysis of Lacan's interpretation of Poe's "The Purloined Letter." However, its criticisms are directed at the status of truth and fiction (mimesis) in analytic discourse. Thus he says that the economy of truth in the Seminar is such that:

In truth, the truth inhabits fiction as the master of the house, as the law of the house, as the economy of fiction. The truth executes the economy of fiction, directs, organizes, and makes possible fiction: "It is that truth, let us note, which makes the very existence of truth possible."

The issue then is to ground fiction in truth, to guarantee fiction its conditions of possibility in truth, and to do so without even indicating, as does Das Unheimliche, literary fiction's eternally renewed resistance to the general law of psychoanalytic knowledge. [PSF p.426]

Derrida's general critique is that Lacan decides upon the true nature of the object of his analysis, in this case Poe's literary text, before he has even justified this decision. Lacan firstly designates Poe's story a fiction, without even asking what really comprises fiction, and then proceeds to demonstrate how this fiction illustrates the truth of (his) psychoanalytic explanation of subjective intentions and roles. Derrida's objection to this is that Lacan reduces his object of analysis to the interpretational matrix which he uses to analyse it. In this manner Lacan cannot fail to demonstrate the "truth" of his explanation of the characters' actions in the story, because his analysis only "sees" what conforms to its truth. The thrust of Derrida's objection to this procedure is threefold.
The Fiction Of the Psychoanalytic Frame

The first limit [of the analysis] contains the entire Seminar, and it reprints its marks indefinitely on it: what the literary example yields is a message. Which will have to be deciphered on the basis of Freud’s teaching. [PSF p.427]

Derrida holds that this singular meaning is produced by Lacan’s reduction of the fiction of “The Purloined Letter” by placing it under the classical tripartite frame of psychoanalytic discourse - the Oedipal triangle, or, in Lacanian terms, the symbolic, the real, and the imaginary. It is within this frame and limit that the psychoanalytic interpretation of the story’s meaning or message is true; and the true message of the story will be found to accord with its reference to the psychoanalytic frame:

Without ever saying a word about it, Lacan excludes the textual fiction from within which he has extracted the so-called general narration. An operation made that much easier, and all too self-evidently easier, by the fact that the narration does not surpass by a word the fiction that is entitled “The Purloined Letter”. But that is the fiction. There is an invisible, but structurally irreducible, frame around the narration. [PSF p.431]

According to Lacan this meaning is the movement of the letter in the story - its misappropriation and reappropriation to its proper place, the true and proper trajectory of which is authentically understood from the position of the analyst - Dupin. Lacan interprets the movement of the letter as the circular movement of a pure signifier. He equates this movement of the pure signifier as the unconscious movement within the story, the necessary trajectory of which produces the subjective roles of the characters according to the law of castration. It is the letter’s lack of a determinable location which determines its trajectory, and this trajectory determines the characters’ subjective roles. Within this trajectory, however, the letter, or pure signifier, has a proper destination, which the subjective position of the analyst is able to determine.
Thus Derrida will later say:

This determination of the proper, of the law of the proper, of economy, therefore leads back to castration as truth, to the figure of woman as the figure of castration and of truth, to castration as truth. Which above all does not mean, as one might tend to believe, to truth as essential dislocation and irreducible fragmentation. Castration-truth, on the contrary, is that which contracts itself (stricture of the ring) in order to bring the phallus, the signifier, the letter, or the fetish back into their oikos, their familial dwelling, their proper place. [PSF p.441]

The Reductive Effect of the Frame

Since the psychoanalytic frame serves to translate its object of analysis into its own terms, by means of a violent reduction of its scope, the truth which it identifies is of course its own truth, organised by the referential structure of the frame. This translation and reduction serve to exclude those terms which remain untranslatable by the scope of its language. In this case, argues Derrida, the narrating function of the narrator is 'neutralised' by the frame as not being effective in the determination of the subjectivity of the characters - i.e. it is a purely transparent medium which has no effect. This exclusion is the hermeneutic moment of the analysis in which fiction is related, and brought back to, its true meaning:

There is here, first of all, a formal limit of the analysis. The formal structure of the text is overlooked ... The structure of fiction is reduced at the very moment when it is related to its condition of truth. This leads to poor formalism. ... This formalism is rigidly illogical once, on the pretext of excluding the author, one no longer takes into account either the “scription-fiction” and the “scriptor-fictor,” or the narrating narration and the narrator. This formalism guarantees, as always, the surreptitious extraction of a semantic content within which psychoanalysis applies its entire interpretive work. Formalism and hermeneutic semanticism always support one
Within this psychoanalytic frame the structure of the story is reduced to two ‘triangular’ scenes where the letter is stolen, first from the Queen by the minister, and then from the minister by Dupin. This triangulation omits several narrated passages which locate the story in a wider field of reference:

By framing [the narrator] in this violent way, by cutting the narrated figure itself from a fourth side in order to see only triangles, one evades perhaps a certain complication, perhaps of the Oedipal structure, which is announced in the scene of writing. [PSF p.433]

It is, according to Derrida, in terms of this double triangulation that Lacan reads Poe’s story. The letter, which, for Lacan, signifies nothing in itself and is thus a pure signifier, determines the meaning and actions of the characters into whose possession it falls, whilst itself lacking any determinate meaning. Thus for Lacan the meaning or message of Poe’s story is restricted to the double theft and movement of the letter, and the analyst - Dupin, who can detect its true movement and place.

Derrida holds that it is only through isolating these two scenes from the rest of the narrative structure that Lacan is able to interpret the true message of the story as the determination of the subjective and intersubjective roles which the characters play by the movement of the letter. Lacan posits these roles in terms of a triadic structure which is contained within the analytic look which each successive subjective position is capable of in relation to the letter. Thus there is the position of the person who sees nothing; the position of the person who sees the first seeing nothing, but maintains the illusion that nothing is seen; and the final position of the person who sees the position of the other two and is able to take the letter. The first position is occupied respectively by the King and the police - the upholders of the law; the second
is occupied respectively by the Queen and the minister; whilst the last is occupied by the minister and then Dupin - the master analyst who delivers the letter back to its proper place.

This repetition, which Lacan understands in terms of the compulsion to repeat, is explained in the Seminar according to the trajectory of the letter itself. For Lacan the notion that the subjectivity of the characters lies beyond this determination is illusory, and thus their action as ‘free’ and ‘independent’ subjects is strictly determined as imaginary.

The structure of their actions, however, reveals itself, to the eye of the analyst, as subject to the law of the symbolic order, the necessary order imposed by the movement of the signifier - the lack of meaning - in its production of meaning. The letter, as pure signifier, reveals the contours and movement of this order. In these terms the letter has no real or proper place, but must, as a letter, have a proper itinerary and destination, from which it has been diverted, and to which, if the law which it both threatens and symbolises is to be upheld, it must be returned. The lack, which the letter is, must, at all costs, be returned to its proper destination, for it is on this basis that the subject is properly constituted.

It is this diversion of the signifier from its proper object which determines the characters in their repetitive uptake of the respective positions. Because the letter has no determinate meaning outside of its circulation, because the letter itself has no place which can be empirically verified, and because it symbolises the social pact between King and Queen - the general social order - through its threat to that pact upon its diversion from its proper destination, every character touched by it is subject to its law of circulation. As soon as the Queen ‘hides’ the letter by leaving it in the open, she is helpless before the action of the minister. Similarly, the minister, who
disguises the letter with his own feminine handwriting, is helpless before the
eyes of Dupin - if he wishes to keep the letter 'hidden' he must do precisely
nothing, acting as if the letter means something else. And finally Dupin
himself is rendered helpless at the end of the story, for if his designed revenge
upon the minister is to be accomplished then he must also act as if nothing
had occurred. From this Lacan points out that the planned downfall of the
minister is in no way assured, and never can be because Dupin, in the
position of letter bearer, is unable to effect anything without alerting the
minister to the fact of the purloined letter.

The letter is thus the true subject of the tale for Lacan. Its circulation
constitutes the subjects' actions in an intersubjective triad which in turn
guarantees the return of the letter, the pure signifier, to its proper site, its
proper destination as a letter, as a signifier. At the same time this circulation
guarantees its truth, its unveiling as the (veiled) truth and meaning of "The
Purloined Letter" through the constitution of an authentic analytic position in
which the proper site of this lack of the signified - the truth of this circulation
and story - can be read. This is both in terms of the truth itself and, as Derrida
pertinently says, in terms of the truth of the phallic law - castration. This is
the third position in the triad, as occupied successively by the minister,
Dupin, and, lastly, Lacan, which determines who can successfully deliver,
present, the message of the letter:

This proper place [of the letter], known to Dupin, and to the
psychoanalyst, who in oscillating fashion ... occupies Dupin's
position, is the place of castration: woman as the unveiled site
of the lack of a penis, as the truth of the phallus, that is of
castration. The truth of the purloined letter is the truth, its
meaning is meaning, its law is the law, the contract of truth with
itself in the logos. Beneath this notion of the pact (and therefore
of adequation), the notion of veiling/unveiling tunes the entire
Seminar to the Heideggerian discourse on truth. Veiling/unveiling here concerns a hole, a non-being: the truth of Being as non-being. [PSF p.439]

Within this structure the delivery of the letter, the circulation of the signifier is always guaranteed, as is the indestructibility of its truth as not having meaning:

In castration, the phallus is indivisible, and therefore indestructible, like the letter which takes its place. And this is why the motivated, never demonstrated presupposition of the materiality of the letter as indivisibility is indispensable for this restricted economy, this circulation of the proper. [PSF p.441]

The analyst, authentically verified in his subjective position as analyst, verifies the true trajectory of this circulation. It is he who successfully delivers the misdirected message, the lack (of signification), the message and law of the unconscious, to its proper place - the site of castration - in accordance with its law.

This economy of truth, in which all terms are made to refer to a first and final transcendental term or paradigm, is therefore central to Lacan’s analysis of Poe’s text. Thus it is unsurprising that Derrida identifies in Lacan’s argument the traditional conceptual structure in which every term which might disrupt this structure is idealised, interiorised and homogenised through the function of the frame. In Lacan’s case the meaning of the story is contained in the movement of the letter, in which the letter always reaches its final, proper destination, never failing to deliver the determining message of the unconscious, lying beyond the possibility of division or destruction. The analysis itself thus can be authentically verified in reference back to this structure according to what Derrida terms a phallogocentric conceptual organisation in which every term is located by the frame as referring to the frame, and has a focal point from which this truth can be presented or said:
Both imports of the value of truth are represented in the Seminar, as we have seen. 1. Adequation, in the circular return and proper course, from the origin to the end, from the signifier’s place of detachment to its place of reattachment .... 2. Veiling-unveiling as the structure of the lack: castration, the proper site of the signifier, origin and destination of its letter, shows nothing in its veiling. Therefore, it veils itself in unveiling. But this operation of the truth has a proper place: its contours being [étant] the place of the lack of Being [manque à être] on the basis of which the signifier detaches itself for its literal circuit. These two values of truth lean and support each other [s’etaient]. They are indissociable. They need speech or the phonetization of the letter as soon as the phallus has to be kept [gardé], has to return to its point of departure, has not to be disseminated en route. [PSF pp.463-464]

Within this structure, the patient remains firmly fixed to the couch, the duplicitous possibilities of a *mise en abîme* between patient and analyst kept strictly under the control of the purveyor of this truth and law.

**The Truth of the Frame**

The final fold of Derrida’s argument is to demonstrate, by rigorously following the logic of this framing and translation, that the truth it produces and pronounces disrupts this frame according to the structures we have seen above. This truth is ceaselessly inscribed by an element of fiction that it cannot contain or interiorise, and must always remain blind to. Thus, Derrida points out that if, as Lacan says, all the characters are determined, in rotational fashion, by the movement of the letter, in which each character successively occupies each subjective position, then both Dupin and the analyst (Lacan) are necessarily subject to a blind spot as soon as they pluck the letter - the signifier - from the place where they know it is to be found. As soon as Lacan holds onto the position of the all seeing, all saying analyst -
Dupin in his mastery of the drama - he enforces a distinction between the authentic and inauthentic analyst - the second and third positions in the intersubjective triad. This distinction, and the hierarchy which implicitly supports and facilitates it, serves as a repression of the inherent and necessary duplicity of the characters in the story, the story itself, and of the conceptual character of fiction, within which both are inscribed. This duplicity, or rather the inherent possibility of the formation of simulacra occurs "before" any determination of the characters' subjective identity under Lacan's analysis:

The fancy of an identification between two doubled doubles, the major investment in a relationship which engages Dupin outside of the "intersubjective triads" of the "real drama" and the narrator "inside" what he narrates, the circulation of desires and capital, of signifiers and letters, before and beyond the "two triangles," the "primal" and secondary ones, the consecutive fissioning of the positions, starting with the position of Lacan, who like all the characters, inside and outside the narration, successively occupies all the places - all of this makes of triangular logic a very limited play within the play. And if the dual relation between two doubles (which Lacan would reduce to the imaginary) includes and envelopes the entire space said to be of the symbolic, overflows and simulates it, ceaselessly ruining it and disorganising it, then the opposition of the imaginary and the symbolic, and above all its implicit hierarchy, appears to be of very limited pertinence: that is, if one measures it against the squaring of such a scene of writing. [PSF p.490-492]

Lacan's accounting of the letter, as the agency of the unconscious, thus serves to fix the subject in its proper place in accordance with the laws of the proper object of psychoanalysis - the unconscious. As has been said, every moment of disruption through the possible positing of simulacra is brought under control or neutralised. However, this possibility is the condition of Lacan's conceptual system itself. The movement of the letter depends in the
first instance upon the possibility of its simulacrum. The minister must have another similar letter in his pocket before he is able to steal the "original." Similarly, Dupin must be able to duplicate the form of the letter if his theft and revenge are to take effect. Similarly each character must be able to duplicate the other as condition of the letter's circulation, rather than as a consequence of it. This means, in effect, that the letter's circulation, as Lacan perceives it, is never assured, it might always go astray, or even get destroyed. It is precisely this possibility, argues Derrida, that forms the threat of the letter within the story - that it might never be found:

Not that the letter never arrives at its destination, but that it belongs to the structure of the letter to be capable, always, of not arriving. And without this threat (breach of contract, division or multiplication, the separation without return from the phallus which was begun for a moment by the Queen, that is, by every "subject"), the circuit of the letter would not have even begun. But with this threat, the circuit can always not finish. Here dissemination threatens the law of the signifier and of castration as the contract of the truth. Itbroaches, breaches [entamer] the unity of the signifier, that is, of the phallus. [PSF p.444]

If its return was assured, if it were indestructible and indivisible, as Lacan posits, there would be no point at which the letter would form a threat, would create anxiety, would motivate the actions of the characters. The letter would never have moved - a dead letter so to speak.

This pattern is repeated at the level of the story itself, entitled "The Purloined Letter." It forms a part of a trilogy together with "The Murders of the Rue Morgue" and "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt", both of which it refers to in a series of literary references, which, according to Derrida, is omitted in Lacan's Seminar. If, as Lacan posits, the letter and its circulation is the meaning of "The Purloined Letter," then how can this meaning account for
the intertwining threads between the three stories within the trilogy, and the references within this trilogy to literature "itself"? In other words, if, as Lacan asserts, the purloined letter is the true subject of "The Purloined Letter", and "The Purloined Letter" refers beyond itself, or inscribes itself within a net of literature (beginning with its reference to books and libraries, and ending in a quoted quote from Crébillon's *Atrée et Thyeste* - which is also referred to in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" - an ancient tale of betrayal via a stolen letter) then how can its meaning be confined simply to the singular letter (which was never singular in the first instance)? Thus Derrida says:

The text entitled "The Purloined Letter" imprints (itself in) these effects of indirection. I have indicated only the most salient ones in order to begin to unlock a reading: the play of doubles, divisibility without end, textual references from *fac-simile* to *fac-simile*, the framing of the frames, the interminable supplementarity of the quotation marks ... . The *mise en abîme* of the title above all: "The Purloined Letter" is the text, the text in a text ... . The title is a title of the text, it names the text, it names itself, and thus includes itself by pretending to name an object described in the text. "The Purloined Letter" operates as a text which evades every assignable destination, and produces, or rather induces by deducing itself, this unassignableness at the precise moment when it narrates the arrival of a letter. It feigns meaning to say something, and letting one think that "a letter always arrives at its destination," authentic, intact and undivided, at the moment when and in the place where the feint, written before the letter, by itself separates from itself. [PSF pp.492-493]

It is only through the perspective of the frame that Lacan is able to posit the "true meaning" of the story as the circulation, beginning to end, loss to return, of the letter. He believes this to be the movement of the pure signifier, which is also the signified, of the story, which respectively determines the subjective positions and actions of the characters in the story. However, this is also a
discourse upon the truth of psychoanalytic explanation and analysis as
demonstrated in a story, and how it is possible that an analyst can
authentically identify this truth in the analysis of his subject. This subject is
brought severely under the control of the analyst’s framework, in the
psychoanalytic delineation of its truth. These are thus the stakes in question -
the true scene of the subject itself - the subject under analysis, or the subject
subjected through analysis:

What thus finds itself controlled is Unheimlichkeit, and the
anguishing disarray which can be provoked - without any hope
of reappropriation, of closure, or of truth - by reference from
simulacrum to simulacrum, from double to double. If one
wished to make it the example of a law at any price, the Dupin
trilogy ... exemplifies this uncontrollability, disrupting every
verification of an identity. By neutralising the double in the
trilogy, the Seminar does everything necessary to avoid what
“Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis” calls “uncontrollable anxiety.”
The analysand’s anxiety of course. [PSF p.460-1]

According to the general structure of the argument, what this deduction lacks
is therefore precisely a frame of reference which it will not find it since it has
been framed out of the picture. For, if this is the ‘true message’ of the story,
then it will remain uncertain whether it is the analyst (Lacan in this case) who
determines the truth of the text (a piece of fiction), or whether the text
determines the analyst. This perpetual uncertainty disturbs the frame in terms
of the triadic structure of the symbolic, the real, and the imaginary in which
Lacan/the analyst pronounces his truth upon his subject, because it
continually and necessarily reintroduces the text as lying beyond, or
exceeding the meaning given to it by the analyst. The text to be analysed, the
subject under analysis, thus always threatens the identification of its meaning
by the analyst with rupture. The analyst’s judgement, his subjective role, will
thus always represent an illegitimate repression of the analysand, since it will
already be infected by its own concept of fictionality in its determination of the meaning of a certain fiction called the determinate subject.

30. The Subject under Analysis

Derrida’s criticisms are an attempt to undermine the distinction between analyst and analysand. Derrida argues that there would be no final axis of reference for the analyst to verify what the analysand means. However, the fact remains that it is Derrida who identifies both Lacan and the systematic structure in his work as the subject of his confrontation. Surely there is something amiss here.

Such a question has already been covered by Derrida. In Positions he points to the ‘heart’ of his writing, holding that:

I try to write (in) the space in which is posed the question of speech and meaning. I try to write the question: (what is) meaning to say? Therefore it is necessary in such a space, and guided by such a question, that writing literally mean nothing. Not that it is absurd in the way that absurdity has always been in solidarity with metaphysical meaning. It simply tempts itself, tenders itself, attempts to keep itself at the point of the exhaustion of meaning .... It is in this sense that I risk meaning nothing that can simply be understood, or that is a simple affair of hearing. [PS p.14 translation modified]

We have already seen that the contextual complexities and considerations which motivate Derrida already serve to undermine or defer the location and identification of a singular Lacan, or a singular Lacanian doctrine. This structure of contextual deferral is further complicated by the fact that Derrida shows how truth is always already infected with a mimetic structure which it seeks to control, how it is infected with its own fictionality. Its telling is an act, as much in the sense of a theatrical staging as an authentic reality.

In accordance with this fact Derrida enacts a scene of confrontation.
and analysis, in which the logic of analysis itself, that is, reason, is played to its full, to the extent that its staging comes into the play. Derrida cannot step outside the play of this logic in order straightforwardly to denounce it - to take a position against another position - because the distinction between outside and inside, between two opposing positions, is already a necessary scene prescribed by this logic. Rather he follows its play to the point where it becomes untenable in its own terms, to a point of slippage of the structures which support it, including his own analysis.

This means that the conceptual framework with which he works is subject to a constant and explicit slippage within which it is shown that no single term can be located as the meaning of his analysis. At all points of such a location there occurs an essential equivocation between, for instance, the signifier and its signified, or the performative and the constative. Derrida enacts an analysis of Lacan, much of which is resisted by the equivocal nature of Lacan’s writing. He thus, as it were, paints a picture of Lacan’s analysis through the process of analysis itself, framing the frame of analysis in general, through the articulation and dislocation of the concept of the frame itself, and truth of the subject which it produces.

Thus Derrida’s argument ‘against’ Lacan maintains an equivocal status between, for instance, accusing Lacan himself, or a generalised reading which can be organised within Lacan’s text. Through this equivocation Derrida’s text undermines the distinctions which would support such a confrontation both between himself and Lacan, and within psychoanalysis itself.

It is the confrontation itself, in the scene of analysis, which Derrida seeks to undermine. This is because it is precisely the scene of analysis which determines the subject(s) of the confrontation, decides the outcome of the confrontation, on the assumption that there is a delimitable confrontation. The
outcome of the analysis will thus be exactly what the analysis seeks - the truth of its explanations will always be verified. In the case of psychoanalysis Derrida argues that this truth comes down to a non-oppositional determination of the libido as singularly masculine in accord with the dominant structure of rational analysis: reason itself:

The reason for this never elucidated characteristic [the non-oppositional determination of the libido as singularly masculine] can, in effect, only be "glimpsed": because there is no reason for it: it is reason. Before, during, and after Freud. The characteristic drawn from reason. By it, for it, beneath it. In the logic said to be "of the kettle" (a check drawn from reason), reason will always be right. [PSF pp.482-3 my italics]

The scene of analysis, of psychoanalysis, thus always finds, with insistent repetition, its real subject (and this scene determines subjectivity itself). In its 'confrontation' with its subject it discovers that the truth of its subject is always its own truth. This entails a repression of the conditions of the analysis of the subject or patient. These conditions remain beyond the scope of such an analysis, forming, as it were, its unconscious, or its other. Thus, in the face of what we have earlier termed a transcendent infinity inseparable from the idea of the subject and its subjectivity, such an analysis can only repeat itself in terms of a more violent repression, which if taken to its final conclusion would mean nothing other than the death of the subject. The compulsion to repeat - the death instinct - is thus seated in reason itself, prescribed in the analytic scene of confrontation, and will only be resisted insofar as this conclusion is deferred in the dissemination of reason.

Derrida's 'confrontation' with Lacan is thus constantly deferred through the undermining of the distinction between analyst and analysand. What is opened up is a textual network in which a certain set of questions can be organized and articulated which revolve around the conditions of the
psychoanalytic scene 'itself,' in which analyst confronts analysand, as the two subjects of the prescribed scene. It could be said that what is thrown into question here is the relation between subjectivity or consciousness; the determinate concept of the subject and the concept of confrontation in truth assumed by the traditional psychoanalytic scene. As we have seen, certain of Freud's speculations demand a radical rethinking of the possibility of thinking a determinate subject and subjectivity in relation to truth. However, it appears that certain analytic tools of psychoanalysis remain rooted in traditional forms of conceptualisation. This conceptualisation includes, at the heart of the psychoanalytic scene, the traditional repressive determination of the subject and subjectivity in terms of a determinate rationality.

31. **Summary of Section IV.**

In the preceding chapters we have examined the relationship of truth and fiction in the analysis of the meaning of the subject and subjectivity in the particular case of psychoanalysis. This relationship was explored both in terms of general psychoanalytic theory, in our reading of Freud, and in terms of the application of this theory in the practical analytic scene.

Our reading of Freud suggested that an analysis which attempts to present a determinate meaning of subjectivity or consciousness would always be untrue because it must refer to terms which remain outside the scope of its articulation. Such terms, ideas, or representations, for example, the idea of death, although necessary to an analytic determination of the meaning of subjectivity or consciousness form the unconscious or other of this analytic. In other words, the necessary reference of subjectivity or consciousness to a beyond, an unconscious, or its other, always defers the presentation of its determinate meaning in analysis. This calls for new ways of describing and
understanding subjectivity beyond determining its singular meaning, some of
which have been followed in this thesis, which would resist or disrupt the
repression of what we have termed the transcendent infinite in subjectivity.

Our reading of Derrida’s critique of Lacan demonstrated how, in
applied psychoanalysis, the movement and values of truth as adequation and
veiling/unveiling support and reinforce the general repressive structure of
determinate thought in the production of a determinate meaning of the subject
and subjectivity. We have argued that such a movement represses and seeks
to control and determine an irreducible and indeterminate moment necessary
to the conception of subjectivity through the determination of this moment as
mimetic or fictional. This moment threatens the truth of every applied analysis
of subjectivity in general, and the particular subject or analysand under
analysis, with dissemblance. This is because the truth of such an analysis is
always already itself constituted by this moment of indeterminacy which it
seeks to bring under control through the concept of mimesis.

We have argued that the assertion of the truth of such an analysis is
therefore a repression of this moment through the application of a determined
concept of mimesis or fiction within the concept of the subject and
subjectivity. Without such a repression the analytic confrontation between
analyst and analysand, in which the analyst determines the meaning of the
analysand’s subjectivity or conscious activity through his understanding of its
unconscious determination, is impossible. If we understand this confrontation
as a structure of repression, however, then it is rendered illegitimate - it
cannot uphold its claim to being a true “confrontation,” in which the meaning
of the analysand’s subjective life is determined by the analyst.
Our readings of the concept of the subject and its relationship to what we have called the transcendent infinite can be seen to consist of three moments of simultaneous repression and resistance against this repression. It is through these repressions of the transcendent infinite that subject-based knowledge can be believed to be a realisable possibility. We can detect these moments of repression insofar as the subject’s necessary relation to a transcendent infinity exceeds and disrupts them. The concept of the subject can therefore be said to be rent or split across three aporias of the transcendent infinite, and the subsequent attempt to repress and appropriate these aporias. These three moments of repression can be delineated as follows:

1. The first moment of the repression of the subject’s relation to the transcendent infinite resides in the attempt to reduce an essentially irreducible referentiality of the subject’s Cogito to a singular, determinate horizon of time understood as Presence, the Here and Now. The Cogito’s necessary relation to the transcendent infinite must always exceed this horizonal determination of what the subject is because it is a relation to what is essentially indeterminable. This means, as we have seen in our interpretations of Kant, Heidegger and Husserl, that the thought of the transcendent infinite in relation to this attempted horizonal determination, will always be represented as other than time. Within the representational structure belonging to this repression, this other, the irreducible condition of representation itself, will always be determined as a secondary horizon of the subject, dependent upon the temporal horizon (the schematism of time) for its meaning. The necessary and irreducible exteriority of the transcendent infinite is therefore, in its relation to the horizon of time, reappropriated, controlled and reduced to a
determinate spatial horizon of the subject.

This repressive reduction is consistent with the belief that the relation between the transcendent infinite and the subject is one of determination through which we could know what the transcendent infinite is within the scope of this relation. Since we have already seen in the reading of Kant and Descartes that this is an impossibility, this reduction amounts to an attempt to enforce a rigorous, hierarchical distinction between a temporal horizon of the subject and a spatial one.

This distinction in turn illegitimately enforces, and is reinforced by, the distinction between an outer and inner (spatial and temporal) meaning or sense of the subject. Here, as before, the outer spatial or extended meaning - the realm of objects - is always determined by the subject’s inner temporal meaning.

We have already seen, however, in Kant’s postulation of the schematism, that although the temporal inner sense of the subject determines the outer “objective,” “spatial,” sense, we can never legitimately distinguish between the “pure” intuitions of time and space. The representation of each intuition necessarily refers beyond the determinate scope of the particular intuition to a transcendent indeterminacy. This means that we can never legitimately know whether the transcendental conditions of space and time are fulfilled. Such a knowledge amounts to a transcendental illusion, or belief, and represses the necessary referentiality of the subject to the transcendent infinite.

In our reading of Husserl, following Derrida’s critique, we examined the reduction of this necessary referentiality of the meaning of the Cogito to a singular horizon of meaning, in this case represented by the reference to the ideality of a transcendent world. We saw how this ideality is always
threatened with disruption by the necessary reference to concepts or terms, in this case the concept of the empirical, the meaning of which cannot be explained or articulated in ideal terms. We argued that this is because Husserl makes a strong distinction between the ideality of the subject’s meaning, and the reality of the world, the transcendence of which it must refer to in its judgement if there is to be anything like an understanding of objective thought. The reality of the world, however, to which the concept or term empirical belongs in Husserl (at least, according to Derrida’s interpretation), is accessible to Husserl’s phenomenological subject only in terms of its ideality, i.e. in the mode of the transcendental reduction.

We have followed Derrida’s argument that this reduction is only possible on the basis of a prior de jure distinction between ideality and reality, value and fact, and, more generally, between the inside and outside of the subject’s intentional realm before the transcendental reduction has taken place. However, according to Husserl’s conception of the phenomenological subject, constituted in the transcendental reduction, such a distinction cannot be legitimately made because the meaning of reality, fact, and the empirical world cannot be known apodictically in itself, it can only be known ideally after the transcendental reduction has taken place. This means that the meaning of such terms remains obscured by the phenomenological reduction, and that the phenomenological description of the intentional structures of the subject, i.e. the description of what the subject means in its ideality, will carry over this obscurity into the meaning of the subject.

This also means, however, that this meaning will never be simply a determinate, constituted meaning. Every determination of this meaning will always necessarily be other than a singular determinate horizon, whether
temporal or spatial. It is therefore possible to read this determination of meaning, constituted within a temporal horizon, as a repressional structure which would obscure, hide away, and never mention a negotiation with the transcendent infinite - what is other than, or exceeds, determinate thought. This negotiation is, however, absolutely necessary if we are to legitimately approach our guiding question, if we are ever to “do” justice to what someone means, to what the subject of writing, gesture, or speech, means.

We have attempted such a negotiation through our readings of the necessary externality within the thought and meaning of the subject.

2. The second moment of repression of the necessary relation of the subject to the transcendent infinite resides in the attempt to decide the legitimate scope of the subject’s judgement, i.e. the scope of the subject’s legitimate, proper sense and meaning. We have already seen, in the short analysis of Descartes’ *Meditations*, why it is necessary for him to fall back upon the illegitimate assertion that deception is degenerate, whilst truth is always good, and is thus assured by a good God, if he is to establish the legitimacy of the subject’s objective judgement, over and above the transcendent infinity of the Cogito’s meaning.

This assertion amounts to establishing a history of the subject, within which the subject’s identity is assured, and the irruptive force of the transcendent infinite is entombed and regulated. This is necessary if *objective* judgement is to be justified, for if I do not remember, from instance to instance, that it was “I,” the very same “I,” who judged or thought this or that, then I cannot be assured of the truth of “my” judgement - I could not be assured that this judgement in fact belonged to me.

This is because I could not be assured that I have not fantasised, dreamt, imagined or simply falsified a judgement that is given to me in
memory. Without this assurance, which, in Descartes, is provided by the God who would not deceive, the subject could never be certain of the sense of its own judgement. The subject could not be certain whether the content of a thought was given by something other than the subject, outside of the subject or whether it stemmed from the subject’s own capacity to judge.

The subject could thus, in general, never be certain whether a particular judgement about an object was, in the first instance, true or false. This is because the subject could no longer locate the sense of the object. Without this location it could not decide whether this sense originated in the subject, in its judgement, in which case it must make sense for the subject, or if the subject fantasised the sense of the judgement. This would entail the possibility that the judgement came from elsewhere outside the subject, in which case this sense is no longer that of the subject - it is non-sense, or madness, for the subject.

The enforcement of the assurance of the subject’s proper, objective memory, therefore consists in the attempt to enforce a decision about the proper and rightful sense of the subject’s judgement in the face of the transcendent infinite of the subject’s Cogito. This thought insists upon the justification of the subject’s own objective judgement, whilst simultaneously disinheriting the subject from judgement and thought determined as a property belonging to the subject. The subject subsists, desists, in this very disenfranchisement, which is thought itself - the relation between the subject’s Cogito and the transcendent infinite. We have thus argued in our reading of Heidegger’s interpretation of Nietzsche that the concept of the subject and subjectivity makes a necessary reference to a prior “concept” of justice or right, the terms of which always exceed determinate thought. Without this reference the Cogito itself could make no legitimate claim to its
existence, for this existence only has meaning in the very idea of being able to make the claim *ego cogito ergo sum*. Since this existence is defined only in terms of this claim, and not in terms of a *determinate* right - which would be to say what the Cogito is, or means - its meaning is always indeterminate.

This means that the enforcement of the rightful sense of the subject’s judgement will always be an illegitimate decision. This is seen in the insistence that this sense *belongs* to the subject, that it is, in its very properness, a property of the subject. Such a decision, and its enforcement, insists that judgement remain within its proper bounds, within the interiority of the subject. Within the representational structure inherent within such a decision, the transcendent infinite, which is inherent in the Cogito itself, is necessarily represented in relation to this sense as non-sense, as madness, a threat to the proper sense of the subject. As such it must be regulated, kept within its proper bounds outside of the subject’s sense, locked out and incarcerated as a thought never to be remembered, because it is not thought proper.

In the illegitimate enforcement of the distinction between sense and non-sense, although the latter is just as inherent in the former, non-sense will always be the secondary, derivative category. The assumption of a proper sense of the subject attempts to incarcerate the irruptive thought of the transcendent infinite. This incarceration is always inherent within the “theoretical” differentiation between the inner and outer, temporal and spatial, horizons of the subject, reinforcing the sovereignty of the subject’s judgement. This is because these distinctions support the distinction between the “inner” theoretical realm of the subject, and an “outer” realm of reality in which the subject practically acts.

We have seen, however, in our reading of Descartes, that it is precisely
the transcendent infinite which institutes the very possibility of the sense of the subject, a sense beyond the determined sense of judgement, and the determined non-sense of madness. In our reading of Derrida's critique of Foucault we have argued that the incarceration of this thought occurs within the establishment of a certain memory - a memory which would enforce the rightful property of the subject. This incarceration is marked by, and can be read through, an illegitimate enforcement of the sense of the subject.

This enforcement of the objective judgement of the subject marks a necessary transgression, breaking through or exceeding the distinction between the theoretical and the practical, even though it must uphold this distinction. It supports this distinction in the assertion of the reality of a localisation of sense and non-sense, in the social incarceration of what is interpreted as madness. A history, or memory, of the subject, necessarily insists upon a sense of reality of the events which structure its course. Anything which threatens this sense of reality must, for the sake of the assurance proffered by the subject's history, be regulated, controlled, incarcerated. This regulation, control and incarceration must, however, partake of the reality it assures, for it is only so that such a repressional structure can enforce and ensure its own continuation.

In this necessity, the distinction between the "theoretical" and the "practical," or, more generally, the distinction between the "ideal" and the "real," is enforced by being transgressed. This transgression ensures that the theoretical positing of a totality of sense is never purely ideal. Its effects are never limited purely to an ideal realm, but also serve to practically enforce a reality which in turn supports the truth of the theoretical (its ideality) in the name of the posited totality. This means that the decision about the rightful scope and sense of the subject, does not simply entail a (harmless) ideal
incarceration of what is other to the proper sense of the subject as non-sense or an ideal madness. This decision is always the effect of a practical, real, physical, incarceration and repression of what is other to the sense of the subject, in that this decision is the attempt to enforce such a reality.

We have seen in our reading of Foucault, and Derrida's critique of him, how this incarceration is made in the name of Reason to defend it against its own inherent madness. The meaning of the subject - its relation to the transcendent infinite - thus takes on a necessary practical dimension within its very justification - its ethos. In other words, the determination of the sense of the subject, a repressional structure which operates through a determinate, bodily localisation of thought, is never simply theoretical, but is already part of a "practical" repression. This "practical" repression suppresses the necessary irruption of what we can call the ethical moment of the subject - precisely its relation to the transcendent infinite. In order to read this moment, and its suppression - to do justice to the meaning of the subject we have tried to negotiate the possibility and incarceration of the madness of the subject.

3. The third moment of the repression of the transcendent infinite resides in the attempt, in accordance with the "decision" about the legitimate scope and sense of the subject, to enforce the truth of this delimitation, to make certain that the course of such a decision always arrives at its proper destination. Such an enforcement attempts to ensure that the course of the subject's judgement always arrives, always comes back to, truth, and is not dissembled in fiction, fantasy, or a mirage of the truth. As such, this amounts to the illegitimate regulation and policing of an economy of truth, which tries to ensure that the highest values - truth, freedom, the moral virtues - always belong to and always return to their proper place - the reflective subject. We have attempted to examine this economy of truth in our readings of Hégel,

We have already seen that the values attributed to the subject can never simply be idealities. The attempt to substantialise, or to ground, or ontologize the subject, cannot be a purely theoretical activity. This is because the condition of possibility of such an attempt is that its effects always transgress the distinction between the theoretical and the practical, the ideal and the real, in the very attempt to enforce these distinctions as a totality.

This transgression, which, in effect, is the relation of the Cogito to the transcendent infinite, is precisely that which this enforcement seeks to bring under control. Thus, in our reading of Lacan, we have seen how the analyst institutes a scene of "confrontation" between analysand and analyst, the truth and reality of which is determined and controlled by the subjective position of the analyst.

We have already seen that the condition of this appropriation is the relation of the subject's Cogito to the transcendent infinite. In our reading of Freud it was possible to interpret this relation in terms of the relation between consciousness, understood as what is present, and the unconscious. This relation not only necessarily exceeds this determination, but also renders its enforcement a priori illegitimate, since, in this transgressive excess, it deprives the subject of every determinate property. This power of transgression, an originary non-appropriable violence, thus haunts this appropriation with the ever-present possibility of its legitimate disappropriation. It threatens the "realities" which the "subject" claims as its own legitimate and true property with their own legitimate transgression. It threatens them with the possibility that they are neither true, nor real, nor legitimate. The substantialisation of the subject in terms of a thesis or explaining principle therefore belongs to a network of effects which make up
the attempt to secure total control over this transgressional power within an instituted order. Reason is always necessarily bound up with this call to order, whether it be social, political or theoretical, as the discourse through which one is brought to believe in the possibility of an order in general. And the establishment of such an order means the establishment and maintenance of authority, rule and control.

In order to achieve this control it is necessary to situate the inherently transgressive and dispersive power of the transcendent infinite within an authoritative body of control. This is attempted in the substantialisation or ontologization of the subject. We have already seen two movements of this enforcement, this first being the reduction of the externality of the transcendent infinite to the secondary spatial horizon in order to ground the subject's knowledge in general; the second being the more or less physical, social, real, enforcement of this knowledge, in a history which would both assure the subject in the legitimacy of the sense of its judgement, and justify the incarceration of all that would threaten this sense. The third movement is the attempt to enforce these incarcerations in order that the subject can pretend to itself that it knows that these incarcerations are legitimate.

In this instance of repression it is not enough to simply incarcerate and subdue what is perceived or interpreted as being a threat to this order. Reason must also have control over the fantasy of this threat. Reason must have control over fantasy - the imagined, the fictional, the fantastical - itself. And it attempts to do so through the no less “fantastical” concepts of fantasy - the imagined, the fictional, the fantastical. It must be ascertained that truth - the highest value of the subject's cognition - determines mimesis or fiction in all its possibilities, and that through this determination the transgressive power inherent in mimesis is always brought back to its proper place, cured of its
transgressive wanderings. The problem is that the content of these concepts necessarily exceeds their articulation because they are themselves mimetically constituted.

However, if the order of reason, expressed in the substantialisation of the subject, is to maintain its position of authority, if authority in general is to maintain its stance of sovereignty, it must appropriate and control this power of dispersion for itself. It cannot accept that this power to disperse exceeds the possibility of its appropriation, even though, or rather precisely because, this authorial body uses this dispersive and transgressive power to establish its own reality through appropriation. It cannot accept that its own "reality" is no more true than the "reality" proffered by, for example, the fiction of the evil demon, in Descartes, or, in Hegel, the fiction of the master's risk and the slave's fear, and in Lacan, the analyst's fear of das Unheimliche, but also fiction in general, even though they have the "same" origin.

We have thus explicated in our reading of Derrida and Lacan how this repression is achieved through a reductive translation of the relationship of the Cogito to what we have called the transcendent infinite. This has been shown to be the condition of possibility of both the transgressive nature of both fiction and truth and yet is reduced to the category of fiction in general, in which fiction, or mimesis is defined by its lack of truth. This determination of the truth of fiction by the frame of truth itself ensures that the passage of thought - a judgement - always comes back to, is always adequate to, this value of truth. By cutting out the necessary relation of the Cogito to the possibility of its fictive determination, the possibility that its truth is also a fiction, it is ensured that meaning only has value in that it refers to truth. The definition of fiction or mimesis as imitation, i.e. that it lacks truth (in truth),
that its truth is not there, is hidden, or veiled, itself shows or unveils, in its
form and contours, the proper place of this lack of true meaning. This lack
ensures the (almost) complete detachment of the Cogito from truth and its
subsequent return to its proper place - to the reflected truth of the subject.
The Cogito - the subjectivity of the subject - is thus determined by Reason
as in reality being a fiction which is produced by the laws of Reason. The
movement of the Cogito demonstrates the truth of this determination. This
determination, however, is only possible on the condition of the repression
of the Cogito’s necessary mimetic indeterminacy, and the mimetic nature of
Reason’s representation of mimesis itself. This takes place in the repression
of the necessary relation between the truth of the Cogito and the necessary
possibility of its fictionality - in other words the relation of the Cogito to the
transcendent infinite.

The last section of the thesis also introduces a psychoanalytic language
and analysis through which we are able to re-read the thesis in the conclusion
in terms of the concept of repression. Would repression thus be the last word
on the subject and its necessary relation to a transcendent infinite? It allows
us to return to the subject and re-interpret it in terms of a movement of
repression. However, if we adopt this re-reading as the “truth” of the subject,
does not this reading commit us to repeating the very gesture of repression
which we have criticised? What is this movement which we have described
as repression? Does it not remain fully inscribed and determined within the
history of metaphysics? Or is rather that repression can no longer be simply
understood as a concept?

Freud says “that the essence of repression lies simply in turning
something away, and keeping it at a distance, from the conscious” [OM
p.147]. This formulation, and the whole theoretical apparatus which supports
it and makes it possible, namely the relation between the unconscious and consciousness, the Pleasure principle and the reality principle, renders the presentation of every term within this conceptual matrix problematic. This is because the thought of repression is both historically and conceptually derived from the idea that consciousness intentionally decides what meaning is. So long as all meaning is subjected to the concept of the subject, whereby the subjectivity of the subject designates a realm of presence to which all meaning eventually belongs, or is gathered, in the act of thought, the *co-agitatio*, then the act of thought itself must be determined as the subject’s will. The subject’s will is thus the essence of subjectivity, and the highest principle of all meaning. It is only on the basis of the formulation of this principle, which is nothing other than Freud’s formulation of the Pleasure Principle, that repression can be articulated.

We have followed the historical development of this principle from Descartes, in his original formulation of the *ego cogito*, through to Kant and Hegel. In Kant the realm of meaning is first restricted to what the subject puts into its object. In Hegel the subject reveals itself to be its own and only proper object in the notion of Spirit, the essence of which is shown to be desire.

In our readings of more “contemporary” descriptions of the subject we have seen that the articulation of the subject in terms of a highest principle is impossible. This is because the full presentation of the subject’s meaning results in the “death” or obliteration of this meaning. Thus Husserl’s phenomenological formulation of the intentional subject can only function on the basis of a certain “forgetting.” The necessary referentiality of the phenomenological subject is omitted by Husserl. On the other hand, in Foucault, we have seen that we cannot legitimately reduce the meaning of the
subject to what philosophy has supposedly forgotten in its historical production of the concept of the subject. This too is based upon a forgetting or omission of a necessary referentiality of the subject to what is other than its principle of organisation. In Lacan, however, we have also seen that these "facts" do not allow us to locate the truth of the subject in the simple absence of a determined principle, in the absence of the phallus, or in the "pure" arbitrariness of the "pure" signifier.

This appears to leave us in a quandary in trying to think and describe the concept of the subject and subjectivity. However, the readings of Heidegger and Freud, which supplement those of Derrida's texts, serve to indicate a development in thought which goes "beyond" a classical metaphysics of the subject.

In our initial reading of Heidegger we have seen how in general there is a necessary referentiality within meaning which always defers any total reduction of meaning to a singular matrix of interpretation. Thus, for example, the ontological analyses of Dasein in terms of the ready-to-hand, is always deferred in terms of its necessary ontical presentation in terms of the present-at-hand, and vice versa.

In our second reading of Heidegger, this analysis is located within Heidegger's understanding of subjectivity. Here he shows that the highest principle of subjectivity, namely the will, must necessarily refer to a prior "concept" of justice, which cannot be determined in terms of this principle. The reduction of the subject to either a concept of the will, or to a determined concept of justice, is thus always deferred. This necessary reference to justice also explains why the omission of such a referral can then be understood in terms of legitimacy.

As soon as we understand consciousness in general in terms of its
legitimation, or, more precisely, its non-legitimation, rather than in terms of its being, then we enter into the language and question of power and repression. Heidegger effectively demonstrates this in his reading of Nietzsche's Will to Power. For, if the operation of the will of the subject is shown to be illegitimate, then this can only be thought on the basis of a differential of competing forces.

Legitimacy is understood in terms of a demand which must be answered, in the sense that a term, element or concept necessary to the function of a given conceptual system cannot be legitimately excluded from that system. Such a necessity means that the exclusion of such a term would be impossible since it would mean the demise of the conceptual system. Such "exclusions" can thus only be thought on the basis of a difference in the particular forces of signification within a conceptual system, in which certain terms, elements and concepts are prioritised at the expense of others.  

55 Cf. Derrida's "Force and Signification": "By its very articulation force becomes a phenomenon. Hegel demonstrated convincingly that the explication of a phenomenon by a force is a tautology. But in saying this, one must refer to language's peculiar inability to emerge from itself in order to articulate its origin, and not to the thought of force. Force is the other of language without which language would not be what it is." (Writing and Difference, p.26-27). Derrida's notion of force, which is here being taken up, is Nietzschean, (cf. "Différence" in Margins of Philosophy). Here the condition of force is its differentiation in quantitative terms - "Force itself is never present; it is only a play of differences and quantities." (Margins. p.17). Within this play of differences force 'is' the condition of displacement, but it is only qualified as such (valued as a phenomenon) through the quantitative differentiation of its effects (in Kantian terms the constitution of a manifold of different objects of cognition). As such, force in itself is never realised - the phenomenon of force traces an essence which, if thinkable at all, could only be thought from within an order which is completely other to, and yet the positive condition of, the discursive order in which language is situated. Thus, for Derrida, the force of discourse is its differentiation from and displacement of, the discursive context in which it is set. This is to be understood in a thoroughly historicised way. The history of Western thought "is" this displacement, the deferral and differentiation of its own conventions and normatives. For Derrida, as for Heidegger, the most powerful and stable of these conventions is the organisation of the discursive order which falls under the general rubric (continued...)

268
differential of these forces can only be articulated in terms of the structures and language of repression and production.

Thus we come to our reading of Freud. Here we have moved from a philosophical discourse to a psychoanalytic one, although it is clear that the lineage we have traced between the two discourses makes a strict differentiation problematic. By following this lineage we can see that the Pleasure Principle can only be thought on the basis of the "essence" of the subject and subjectivity - the will. Freud shows, however, that the psyche can only function if the realisation of desire in terms of the Pleasure Principle is infinitely deferred, i.e. is subject to, and part of, a mechanism of repression. He does this from two perspectives. Firstly, the acceptance of empirical observation of phenomenon which would repudiate the Pleasure Principle, namely the repetition compulsion. Secondly, the observation that there must be another mechanism besides that of the Pleasure Principle because, if not, following it would very quickly lead to destruction.

What is of importance here is not so much the description of the individual psyche, but the speculative thought which gives rise to it, and goes beyond the traditional descriptions of the subject. This speculation does so precisely by taking the logic of these descriptions to their extreme. The Pleasure Principle is, in one sense, the fulfilment of the will of the subject, but it also raises the question, makes it possible to ask, why it is impossible to fulfill. This impossibility can only be couched in terms of a movement of repression, in other words, of deferral.

The speculation which engages in this thought of repression cannot be described in terms of the hierarchical dichotomies of classical logic since it

(...continued)

of the thought of truth as Presence.
does not conform to any of these. It cannot be described in terms of the Hegelian dialectic because each term would defer the presentation of the other without recourse to any third term or to any telos - the Pleasure Principle indefinitely delayed by the Reality Principle, and vice versa. This means, in effect, that we could never legitimately say, or present, what repression is within the subject, and neither could we legitimately describe the production of the subject through the mechanism of repression. Its presentation would always, in terms of its own syntax and organisation, be deferred. In other words, insofar as there is a concept of repression at work in our reading and re-reading of the subject, then it functions in terms of its undermining or deferral of conceptuality in general, and thus, of the concept of the subject itself.

We therefore find the loci of the these structures of repression organised around the aporetic logic put forward in the fourth chapter of the thesis. These aporias of the subject serve to disseminate or to defer any attempt to present a true narrative of the subject, hierarchically organised under a guiding concept or principle. In other words, the “movement” which repression designates is never simply repressive, but simultaneously productive, simultaneously disseminating of meaning. We have thus seen that the metaphysical desire to ground the subject, either ideally or substantially, is itself produced in the very impossibility of its fulfilment. It is this impossibility - the necessity of maintaining a relation with the transcendent infinite - which makes it possible that such a desire take on force. The subject we have attempted to describe in this thesis “subsists” within this movement.

This raises a new set of questions. On the one hand we have the question of the object: if desire is constituted through repression, through its deferral, then how are we to understand pleasure? Towards exactly what does
desire strive if its fulfilment would always result in nothing other than death? On the other hand we have the question of the narration of this object: how are we to describe the relation between desire and pleasure? We have seen that the thesis as such - the thematic, and, eventually, the thetic, is inadequate to the description of its obliteration. What then, is its status? What is the status of a discourse which is part of the object which it analyses? These questions remain beyond the scope of this work. We have simply attempted to prepare the way for such questions.

Thus, what we have tried to construct under the title repression, and in accordance with the Derrida's thought of deconstruction, is an athesis of the concept of the subject and subjectivity. We have attempted to tell the story of the subject in such a way as to undermine the idea and the authority of the subject. In other words we have attempted to narrate the story of the subject after its deconstruction.
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1. Robert Bernasconi, “Deconstruction and the Possibility of Ethics”.

278