

THE UNDERSTANDING OF DIFFERENCE
IN HEIDEGGER AND DERRIDA

by


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In this study, I offer an account of the relationship between Heidegger's notion of difference and Derrida's notion of différance in light of the question of Being. I argue that, while Derrida's account of différance calls into question Heidegger's characterization of difference as that which allows for presence, this same account calls itself into question as well, that is, in the manner of the liar paradox--if it is true, it is false--which is just to say it is undecidable in the Derridian sense of the term. I come to these conclusions through a close reading of Heidegger's Identity and Difference and Derrida's Speech and Phenomena, where I uncover a motif of external and internal relations which I employ in contrasting difference and différance.

In addition, this study is concerned with the doctrine of God, a doctrine which I suggest is closely related to Heidegger's question of Being insofar as both attempt to account for the genesis of things. I argue that, while Heidegger's account undercuts traditional theism, the problematization of the question of Being by virtue of différance suggests that the theological project, insofar as it involves giving an account of the absolute, i.e., God, has likewise been called into question. I suggest further that this situation indicates the need to redirect the concerns of theology toward interpersonal and social issues, and that this move does not set a precedent insofar as certain Western and Eastern approaches have always valued releasement from doctrinal attachments as a way to encourage the best in human relations.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents,
Robert and Viola Donkel.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The philosophy of Martin Heidegger is, for the most part, committed to the exploration of what he termed the Seinsfrage or question of Being. This exploration, as Heidegger characterizes it, is an investigation into what it means for something to be. It is thus an investigation into the very Being of beings. In Heidegger's work, this becomes an enquiry into how the Being or presence of individual beings comes about. What Heidegger wants to know is: What allows for the presence, which he regards as characteristic of all beings? For example, if there is a beautiful pink vase containing a dozen red roses on the table, what interests Heidegger is not what one would traditionally term the characteristics of this vase, i.e., that it is pink with red roses, stands thirteen inches high, is four inches across, and so forth. Nor is he interested in one's aesthetic judgment regarding this object, or in what one can discover regarding its biological, chemical, or atomic makeup. Rather, what interests Heidegger is what allows for the simple presence of the object inasmuch as it appears.

Heidegger goes on to claim that the distinction between Being or presence, and the beings which, as present, participate in this general presence, already plays a role in the thought of various thinkers within the western philosophical tradition. The distinction between Being and beings, or what Heidegger calls the "ontological difference," therefore, is already apparent. But, as implied previously, it is Heidegger's contention that what has not been asked is the question regarding what allows for the presence of the present itself.

As I will discuss in more detail later on, inasmuch as Heidegger takes both terms of the Being/beings distinction to be present, his inquiry into what allows for presence is likewise an inquiry into what allows for the distinction. In other words, inasmuch as the terms of the distinction in being present participate in the presence, which, as concepts, they also signify, Heidegger's inquiry into what allows for presence takes place as an inquiry into what allows for the terms of the distinction. His interest is not in the content of the terms, but simply in the fact that their presence needs to be accounted for.

In light of this, Heidegger commences with a reflection on the difference within the distinction between Being and beings, or what might otherwise be characterized as a reflection on the difference as such that the relation

between the terms named by the ontological difference presupposes. What he suggests is that it is in some sense the difference itself which, in holding apart the terms, allows them to be. Heidegger claims, therefore, that it is the difference which in fact allows for the presence of the terms themselves.

Without such a difference "between" the terms, so to speak, it is Heidegger's contention that no Being, thought in the traditional sense as presence, would appear. Put simply, Heidegger's inquiry into the meaning of Being, understood as a concern with what allows for presence, becomes a reflection on the role of difference itself in this process.

But what can this reflection on difference mean? I will take up this issue in more detail later on, but let me simply note now that the reflection on difference in Heidegger's later work results in its characterization as an event of differentiation. Moreover, this event is characterized by Heidegger as unfolding in a quite specific and particular way. Thus, for Heidegger, the question regarding what allows for presence is answered by the isolation of this event of differentiation.

But while Heidegger thus claimed to have isolated this forgotten element of the tradition, nevertheless, inasmuch as thinking this thought of difference appeared as a

substantial departure from the philosophical thought which had preceded it, Heidegger was under no illusion that the work of the thinker was complete. Rather, the new task of thinking which Heidegger set forth was to be precisely the challenge of thinking the difference.

This task has subsequently been taken up by various thinkers in various ways, but it will be the primary focus of this study to offer an account of how this task has been carried on in the work of the contemporary French philosopher Jacques Derrida, particularly as regards his notion of différance.

Generally speaking, Derrida's philosophy is concerned with the role played by difference in the relation between terms which indicate presence. Thus, like Heidegger, he is interested in the part which difference plays in questions regarding presence and meaning. However, whereas for Heidegger the role played by difference in allowing for the presence and meaning of terms is always positive, for Derrida, difference also in some sense calls the presence and meaning of terms into question.

This is the case because, in thinking the difference, Derrida is lead to claim that it is not only an event of differentiation such as Heidegger understood it, but in addition an event which in some way clouds the clarity of that which it would differentiate. Thus, in Derrida's

thought, difference somehow makes problematic the very presence of the terms themselves.

This new understanding of difference, which Derrida likewise characterizes in a quite specific way, he calls différance. This will all be discussed in more detail as the study proceeds, but, for now, it is important to note only that while both Heidegger and Derrida think difference, their alternate characterizations of the same lead to opposite conclusions regarding the role of difference in allowing for Being as presence. I will therefore take up Derrida's notion of différance both because it is self-consciously involved with the Heideggerean project, and because it seems to offer an interesting, if not problematic, account of what further thinking regarding difference may entail.

What this study sets out to do is to offer a comparative reading of Heidegger's difference and Derrida's dif-férance in light of Heidegger's original concern with what allows for Being as presence. Inasmuch as this comparative reading is a reading in light of Heidegger's original concern, the driving force behind this investigation stems from an interest in following through with Heidegger's own charge to think the difference. Moreover, inasmuch as such a task necessarily has its own criteria--which may or may not be consistently upheld by the very texts which claim to embody

it--this reading will additionally be a critical one in the sense of pointing out apparent inconsistencies in the texts of these two thinkers.

In general, therefore, this study aims at a critical comparison of these two characterizations of difference in light of the guiding concern with what allows for presence. In this way, I hope to do justice not only to the respective notions of difference in these two thinkers, but, in addition, to contribute something to the task of thinking the difference itself along the way.

In light of this, I will argue for the following conclusion: Assuming Derrida's understanding of presence and identity, his account of différance ironically calls into question Being as presence, difference, and the Seinsfrage itself. However, this same account calls itself into question as well, that is, in the manner of the liar paradox--if it is true it is false--which is just to say it is undecidable in the Derridian sense of the term. All of which suggests that the question of Being is at a dead end.

But in addition to these specific concerns, this study is also involved more generally with certain theological issues, particularly the doctrine of God. The connection I see between the question of Being and this doctrine will be explored in the opening pages of the following chapter, and

it will play an important role throughout my account of Heidegger.

In the third and fourth chapters, which focus primarily on Derrida, this theological component will fade into the background. However, in the fifth and concluding chapter, the implications of Derrida's work, insofar as it suggests the problematization of the question of Being, will be discussed in terms of theological considerations.

Briefly, the connection which I propose is based on the observation that both the Seinsfrage and the doctrine of God are attempts to offer an account of what is most fundamental in regard to the genesis of things. They both attempt to locate that element which accounts for the coming into being of what is. However, whereas traditional theology postulates that this element is a being of the sort that accounts for the being of all other beings, Heidegger's Seinsfrage, as I will explain in Chapter II, undercuts this account by questioning what accounts for being itself. The connection with Derrida follows from the problematization of the Seinsfrage brought on by différance.

I will suggest that this problematization results in the frustration of the theological project, at least insofar as this involves giving an account of the absolute, i.e., God, and indicates the need to redirect the concerns of theology toward ethical-moral and social issues.

Characterizing the Seinsfrage in terms of theological concerns is an approach which I hope will not only give the question of Being a context in which it is meaningful, but also lead to insight regarding the status of theological questioning in light of Heidegger's and Derrida's work.

All of this will be laid out in greater detail as the study proceeds. In the first section of this chapter, I briefly outline the content of the subsequent chapters. In the second section, I will discuss some considerations regarding the hermeneutics (i.e., the problem of interpretation) of this study.

Chapter Outline

In Chapter II, I will first discuss the background of the Seinsfrage in light of Heidegger's early interest in theology and phenomenology, and introduce the question of Being as a concern with what allows for presence, or what Heidegger calls "presencing." I will then examine Heidegger's notion of difference, especially as it is characterized in his later work, Identity and Difference.¹ I have selected this work from among Heidegger's texts because it is there that the issue of difference first becomes his explicit focus, and further because, even in relation to his subsequent works, it is there that difference is characterized with the most depth and clarity. In light of this

text, I will discuss Heidegger's characterization of the operation of difference as an event of differentiation. Heidegger calls this event the Ereignis, or the "event of appropriation," by which he means the way in which present terms and their difference are intimately involved.

Finally, I will explore the logic of difference in light of the motif of external and internal relations, a motif which I feel is useful in characterizing the contrast between Heidegger's difference and Derrida's différance. I will suggest that Heidegger's logic of difference implies that terms, in coming to be present, must relate to one another "externally." This means that, while terms are dependent on each other by virtue of the difference, this dependency is characterized by Heidegger in a way which suggests that the terms nonetheless remain external or outside of one another in this situation. I will then go on to suggest that such a relationship of dependency might alternately be characterized in such a way that the terms could be said to relate "internally," that is, in such a fashion that each term locates itself, by virtue of the dependency relation, within the other term. Moreover, this latter characterization suggests further that if terms are located within one another, that this situation leads to the "contamination" of the terms themselves, and thus to a problematization of their alleged presence.

In Chapter III, I begin with a general discussion of Derrida's notion of différance, particularly as it is characterized in his early work Speech and Phenomena.² I have chosen to focus on this work because I am of the opinion that it contains his most explicit and sustained treatment of the notion of différance, and also because it is the place where the theory behind the notion of différance--insofar as this involves a certain characterization of relations--takes shape. In this light, I will pose three questions:

First, in Derrida's account of différance, are relations in fact characterized as internal? In response, I will argue that Derrida's notion of différance does clearly employ a motif of internal relations.

Second, if relations are so characterized, how is it that this characterization can be accounted for? In this regard, I will suggest that it is plausible, in light of insights gained from Derrida's reading of Edmund Husserl's analysis of time, to understand this characterization as arising from certain considerations regarding what is allegedly required for the presentation of the present suggested by phenomenological analysis.

Third, in light of the characterization of difference in terms of internal relations as différance, what are the implications of the problem of contamination? In responding

to this concern, I will suggest that such contamination effectively calls into question the presence of the present.

I will then proceed with an analysis of différance in which I develop its implications in light of its problematization of presence. In doing so, I argue for the following: First, insofar as différance calls presence into question, it can be understood to problematize the operational aspect of itself as well. Second, this situation suggests that différance is to be found only in the narrative of its own self-defeat. Third, this suggests further that, insofar as the problematization of presence is also the problematization of meaning, that the very narrative which embodies the argument of différance is called into question by that same argument.

All of this indicates a final paradox, whereby assuming that the narrative is true indicates that it is false, and assuming that it is false indicates that it is true. I therefore suggest that whether the account of différance is true or false is logically undecidable.

Finally, I turn to an issue in Derrida's work which I think is indicative of an inconsistency. This is the notion of "effects" as it is employed in various places in Derrida's text. This issue is important not only because it indicates an inconsistency, but further because it leaves différance sounding like it allows for presence (i.e.,

effects) in the same way as does Heidegger's difference, effectively dissolving the contrast between the two. I will argue that this element in Derrida's text is an errant strain which cannot be supported in light of the majority of his presentation. Nonetheless, this issue is significant in that it plays the important role in certain examples of secondary literature of skewing the characterization of the Heidegger-Derrida relationship to the extent that the contrast between the two thinkers all but disappears.

In the fourth chapter, I take up the issue of the status of Derrida's discourse of effects in more detail. After reviewing several preliminary issues, I turn to an essay by David Wood entitled, "Différance and the Problem of Strategy."³ I take up this particular essay because it puts forth a criticism similar to my own, and yet comes to different conclusions regarding the implications of this criticism. A contemporary commentator who has written extensively on Derrida's thought in relation to metaphysics, Wood also sees an inconsistency in Derrida's work, albeit from a slightly different angle. However, Wood tends to take Derrida's comments concerning différance allowing for effects at face value, which leads him, in opposition to Derrida's own claims, to suggest that Derrida's project is still implicated in a certain transcendental metaphysics.

In response, I argue that Wood should not so willingly accept Derrida's claims regarding effects, and that in doing so he shows his own unwillingness to understand the problematization of metaphysics as a problematization of meaning. I then turn to another example of secondary literature which even more explicitly dissolves any substantiative contrast between Heidegger and Derrida, John Caputo's Radical Hermeneutics.⁴ I look to this work because, while offering a highly sympathetic reading of Heidegger, like the previous essay, it also takes Derrida's discourse of effects at face value.

Caputo is a well-known commentator on Heidegger and Meister Eckhart, and while I suggest that his study has much to offer regarding the affective consequences of Heidegger's and Derrida's work, his apparent lack of awareness regarding the tension between the problematization of presence and the discourse of effects in Derrida's text leads him to characterize Heidegger's and Derrida's notions of difference as if they were practically identical. Finally, I suggest that the problem exhibited by both of these pieces of literature is that they tend to privilege what the author of a text claims for it at the expense of attending to what the text actually exhibits.

In the fifth and concluding chapter, I begin with a brief review of the major points of the study. I then point

out various issues that have not been pursued which might be fruitful to further work in this area.

Finally, I turn to a discussion of some of the implications of this study in light of certain theological concerns which I first introduced in Chapter II. I suggest that one way to interpret the results of this study is to understand them as suggesting a move away from a theology centered on the doctrine of God, toward a theology concerned with more practical issues, i.e., ethics, love, and social life. Further, I suggest that the frustration of the theistic project can in fact be interpreted as in the service of love and community inasmuch as certain Western and Eastern approaches have always valued the frustration of theological reason at a certain level as a way to characterize and encourage the best in human relations.

In general, however, any attempt to commence with a study such as this is immediately met with a number of important concerns. First, and most obvious, is the concern with the meaning of the technical terms which these thinkers employ. As is apparent in the above outline, both of these thinkers not only generate new terms, but they also use traditional terms in an often specialized or technical sense. In an attempt to make such a situation more palatable, I have included a limited glossary of terms in the appendix to this study. Moreover, the text of the study itself will

help to clarify many of these terms as they arise. The same should be said regarding some of the points of the outline itself. As the chapters unfold the moves of argument will become clearer than they may be at present.

But in addition to these more obvious concerns, there are also further issues of a more specialized sort that face such an investigation. For the most part, I think that these concerns can be labeled "hermeneutic," in that they involve the question of interpretation, or how one reads the texts in question.

Hermeneutic Considerations

In light of what has been presented, the informed reader may be concerned that taking up what has come to be understood more generally as the textual practice of deconstruction, in terms that are decidedly philosophical, may be to miss the point. I often get the impression that deconstruction proper, by virtue of its own claims, tends to impart itself with a certain immunity to philosophical criticism. In terms of this study, one may wonder how it is possible to deal with Derridian différance through what amounts to a philosophical comparison with Heideggerean difference. How can the activity of interpreting various texts, which this study must employ if not presuppose, get under way? Does not the arrival of différance problematize

this very possibility? Further, what about différance itself? Is it legitimate to single it out for consideration when Derrida himself submits it to constant substitution in an attempt to keep it from becoming a master concept?

While the legitimacy of these concerns cannot be questioned, it must be noted that they are wide of the mark when brought to bear on the present study. First, it is important to note that this study is not about deconstruction per se, in the sense of explicitly engaging in an exploration of the problematics of textual practice. It is also not an explicit employment of deconstructive practice as such, in the sense of offering what must now be considered a classical deconstructive reading.

Rather, this study aims more at what could be characterized as an exploration of deconstruction's underlying philosophical commitments insofar as they are grounded in the Heideggerean problematics of difference and Being. As such, the result here will be to show what the displacement of meaning that seems to animate deconstruction's textual practice presupposes philosophically. This result, however, even if it should suggest itself, is clearly not the explicit purpose of this study; rather, it may turn out to be simply one of its peripheral benefits.

This response, however, may still not be satisfying insofar as the notion of rendering explicit, "philosophical

presuppositions," appears to be one of the activities made suspect with the advent of deconstructive practice. Thus, in light of deconstruction, it can still be asked how interpretation can get underway in such a project? It seems that the situation exists of having to employ a certain hermeneutic to investigate a position that claims to show hermeneutics itself to be, in some sense, problematic.

What can be made of this situation? It appears that one is faced with at least two options. The first is to shy away from an engagement with the issue, and in so doing implicitly elevate deconstruction to the status of omnipotence. The second invites one, while clearly acknowledging the irony that this situation may involve, to proceed cautiously ahead with the project.

From my perspective the latter option is the only viable alternative. This viability is not grounded in random choice, however, as it can be argued that one should feel no obligation to accept the thrust of deconstructive practice without at least examining the presuppositions on which it may be based, even if these presuppositions, and the hermeneutic methodology one uses to uncover them, are ultimately called into question by the results of the investigation itself. This ironically self-effacing situation should not be avoided.

Moreover, much to the disdain of a certain reading of deconstruction, if the investigation has been commenced at the proper level, the arrival of this irony will in itself signal a form of truth that is not unfamiliar to the philosophical ear. The philosopher will have investigated the limits of his or her discourse and not uncritically presupposed them. In addition, is this not the situation that Derrida himself has always claimed for his practice?

Deconstruction is always tied to the finitude of the text, and this somewhat ironic relationship remains even as the text is opened up through this textual practice. The text is in essence self-effacing, but this very fact is philosophically significant and can be understood in terms of a certain sense of truth. It may even be thought that Hegel has somehow returned (or never left), at least insofar as this irony offers a certain conclusion or completeness to knowledge. I will let that speculation lie, however, and move on to the other concern regarding the singling out of différance.

It is of course true that Derrida does evoke an economic exchange of terms in his discourse, and insofar as this strategy may prevent one term from coming to dominate the rest, this strategy seems to be called for. Nonetheless, it should also be clear that this strategy does nothing to lessen the fact that this economy is itself made

possible by his own employment of a certain logic of difference as différance. Further, the alleged undecidability of these terms is itself in some direct sense an effect of dif-
férance, and while it may in turn apply to itself in terms of evoking a certain destabilizing economic displacement, it does this only through the playing out of its own internal logic. Insofar as his economy of terms presupposes what is at issue here, it is therefore inappropriate to use this as a foil to criticize a priori this investigation.

This discussion, since it is in fact a response to possible concerns of a somewhat specialized nature, has presupposed that the reader, who might have such concerns, is versed in some of the issues surrounding hermeneutics and deconstruction. Of course this may not be the case. In light of this, I would encourage the reader new to this material to press on through the study, upon which I trust that the issues involved will become clear. However, to assist the reader in understanding the context of this study, I now offer a brief account of where this study stands in relation to the larger body of literature on Heidegger and Derrida.

There are at least two general approaches to Heidegger represented in the literature. First, there are those studies which focus on Heidegger's early work up to the mid nineteen thirties. For the most part, these studies utilize

Being and Time⁵ as their principal point of reference. Moreover, these studies of the early Heidegger can be further divided into those that see Heidegger's work in terms of the concerns of existentialism, and those that see his work suggesting a new approach to hermeneutics. Examples of the first group include studies such as Michael Zimmerman's Eclipse of the Self: The Development of Heidegger's Concept of Authenticity,⁶ and the essays collected in Frederick Elliston's Heidegger's Existential Analytic.⁷ Examples of the second group include Hans-Georg Gadamer's Truth and Method,⁸ and Richard Palmer's Hermeneutics.⁹

The second general approach to Heidegger is through his later works, such as On the Way to Language,¹⁰ On Time and Being,¹¹ and Identity and Difference. Studies with this focus tend to be primarily concerned with transcendental-ontological issues, i.e., the question of Being. Examples of this approach include John Caputo's Heidegger and Aquinas,¹² Joseph Kockelmans On the Truth of Being,¹³ and Reiner Schurmann's Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy.¹⁴ The present study belongs in this group.

In terms of Derrida, I think the situation is similar in that the literature can be divided around whether it focuses on his early or later work. Those studies that focus on his early work, such as Edmund Husserl's "Origin

of Geometry"¹⁵ and Speech and Phenomena, for the most part read Derrida in terms of philosophical concerns, that is, they interpret Derrida's work in light of its relationship to existing issues and concerns within the philosophical tradition. Examples of this approach include Rodolphe Gasché's The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection,¹⁶ Irene Harvey's Derrida and the Economy of Différance,¹⁷ and John Llewelyn's Derrida on the Threshold of Sense.¹⁸ This study, insofar as it reads Derrida in light of the concerns of Heidegger's Seinsfrage, is also an example of this approach.

The second approach to Derrida, which tends to focus on his more recent works, such as Glas¹⁹ and The Post Card,²⁰ stresses the literary aspect of his investigations. Studies which fall in this group see deconstruction as an approach to reading and writing texts. As such, they tend to be less concerned with placing deconstruction in the context of philosophical issues per se, and more concerned with emphasizing deconstruction's alleged distance from philosophy. Examples include Geoffrey Hartman's Saving the Text,²¹ Gregory Ulmer's Applied Grammatology,²² and numerous other examples characteristic of the reception of deconstruction by the American literary establishment.

This list is certainly not complete in that there are always examples which do not fit neatly into such schemes.

Nonetheless, it may be useful in generally locating where the present study lies.

Before moving on to the next chapter, it may be helpful to discuss what could be called the general hermeneutic style of this investigation. This study is generally indebted to the type of questioning that both Heidegger and Derrida display. This style of questioning recognizes a certain distinction that it may be helpful to explicate briefly here.

In approaching a text, it is always possible to ask what the author meant by a certain passage, phrase, or concept. Or one may wonder what the employment of a certain word can tell us about its meaning in some particular context. In both of these cases, concern is strongest about its meaning as intended or given. This means that one is interested either in what the author intended it to mean, or in what its current employment suggests about its meaning.

However, another option in approaching a text is to question it with an eye toward some possible meaning that may be lying latent or dormant within a particular resource, whether a passage, phrase, or word. It may be that neither the author's apparently intended meaning, nor the initial meaning that presents itself within a particular context, exhausts the resources that the issue may in fact contain. A particular constellation of words may, on a more careful

reading, seem to have an alternate agenda that is not wholly equitable with either their intended or apparently contextually given meaning. Paying attention to this other possibility is often fruitful. Rather than burdening this suggestion with an example, which I fear might only lead to confusion, let me suggest further that the recognition of this latent meaning may involve being attuned to a particular agenda, whether logical or otherwise, which unfolds as a path which makes a certain claim on the allegiance of the thinker.

Both of these general approaches to the text will be employed concurrently throughout the readings offered as the study proceeds. I will always be concerned with both the contextually given or intended meaning, and the possibility of some latent but imposing agenda that may be awaiting release. In this light, I claim two things for the readings which I offer in this study. First, that they are textually plausible, and second, that they offer a helpful and persuasive account of the relation between difference and différance in the sense of contributing something to the understanding of these notions.

Getting a clearer understanding of what this form of reading involves, however, necessitates getting on with the study. Heidegger's claimed uncovering of the forgotten inner life of the tradition in terms of the question of

Being is both the genesis of this approach and its classic exemplification. It is to this event I will now turn in Chapter II.

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CHAPTER II

HEIDEGGER AND THE QUESTION
OF DIFFERENCE

Heidegger's philosophy has often been employed to illuminate a wide range of issues.¹ For the purposes of this study, however, I read Heidegger quite selectively and focused exclusively on the question of Being. However, inasmuch as this reading places Heidegger within the tradition of metaphysical-ontological questioning, I will for the most part ignore the applicability of his thought to humanistic ethical-political concerns.² The issue of the role of humanism in his thought is itself an interesting and complex topic,³ but it is beyond both the scope and interests of this study.

By "humanism," I am speaking in the broadest sense about that view that takes as its issue the human condition. From this perspective, the relevance of philosophical matters is thought to be grounded in their ability to illuminate some facet of this condition, and, it is hoped, to improve it. In this light, most ethical-moral and social-political discourse is fundamentally humanistic, in that its concerns always involve a reference to the welfare of the

individual, and/or his or her placement within the larger social context. This concern is often made manifest either by a descriptive analysis of the individual's situation for the purposes of enlightenment, or through prescriptive suggestions which call for some kind of change regarding this situation. Frequently the necessity of both is indicated. One way or the other, what is important is that this study will not be directly involved with such concerns.

It might be argued, however, that this separation between ontology and humanism is philosophically suspect. Is it possible, let alone legitimate, to read what is characterized as "fundamental ontology"⁴ as a project outside the concerns of humanism's horizon? While the issue of its legitimacy will have to be decided elsewhere,⁵ that such a reading is at least possible is confirmed by noting the way the problem is taken up by Heidegger himself. By grounding the problem in the texts of the western tradition from the Pre-Socratics onward, he claims for the Seinsfrage a particular priority in relation to humanism's concerns.

Thus, on Heidegger's understanding, it is not that the Seinsfrage is anti-humanistic, but rather that it occupies a place prior to the realm of humanistic interests. Moreover, this priority must be understood in the sense often attributed to something which brings something else about, insofar

as Heidegger claims that humanism's arrival as a historical epoch is first opened up by the advent of Being.

In other words, Being, as that which brings about humanism as a specific grouping of interests which takes place at a particular historical time, has a priority over that which it brings about. This priority suggests further that Being can be investigated independently of that which it is thought to bring about.

Whether this is a valid claim is certainly open to question. But what is less questionable is that Heidegger's characterization of the Seinsfrage in terms of this priority at least claims for itself the independence suggested. It is in light of this priority, therefore, that I will offer a reading of the Seinsfrage that for the most part passes over concerns regarding the meaning it may have for the larger ethical-political sphere. The intention here, then, is to be faithful to Heidegger and to the Seinsfrage as he portrays it. Faithfulness in this context will consist in not questioning the priority that Heidegger claims for the problem. The concern of this study is whether this faithfulness will lead to the same conclusion that Heidegger puts forth, or whether certain insights gained from Derrida will suggest another outcome, one that may show Heidegger's project to be ironically self-problematic. The nature of this situation will be made clear as I proceed.

With the above delimitation in mind, initially in this chapter I will discuss Heidegger's Seinsfrage in terms of its background and development. This will set the stage for the analysis of difference as its culminating development when I take up Identity and Difference later on.

The Background to the
Question of Being

Part I

Heidegger opens Being and Time with the following excerpt from Plato's Sophist:

For manifestly you have long been aware of what you mean when you use the expression "being." We, however, who used to think we understood it, have now become perplexed.⁶

This "perplexity" was taken up by Heidegger himself in a way that appears quite autobiographical. For while it is clear that at the turn of the century the philosophical tradition was not self-consciously so perplexed, it is also clear that the young Heidegger was already struggling with this issue in all of its acknowledged vagueness.

As recorded in his essay, "My Way to Phenomenology,"⁷ Heidegger began his academic career as a student of theology at the University of Freiburg in the winter of 1909-1910. After four semesters, he switched his area of concentration from theology to philosophy, seemingly motivated by his interest in the problem of Being, which was coming to play

an ever larger role in his academic life. The genesis for the initial formulation of this problem, insofar as it concerned Heidegger, appears to have been his encounter with Frans Brentano's work on Aristotle's doctrine of Being:

Ever since 1907, Brentano's dissertation "On the Manifold Meaning of Being Since Aristotle" (1862) had been the chief help and guide of my first awkward attempts to penetrate into philosophy. The following question concerned me in a quite vague manner: If being is predicated in manifold meanings, then what is its leading fundamental meaning? What does Being mean?⁸

This concern was invigorated upon his encounter with Edmund Husserl's Logical Investigations.⁹ From this encounter, the problem of Being was to take on a decisive character in Heidegger's thought. Upon Husserl's arrival at Freiberg in 1916 as Heinrich Rickert's successor, Heidegger availed himself of Husserl's particular method of phenomenological "seeing" as a guide back into Aristotle and the problem opened up through Brentano's dissertation:

However, the clearer it became to me that the increasing familiarity with phenomenological seeing was fruitful for the interpretation of Aristotle's writing, the less I could separate myself from Aristotle and the other Greek thinkers. Of course I could not immediately see what decisive consequences my renewed occupation with Aristotle was to have.¹⁰

These "decisive consequences" were to become manifest as Heidegger continued to reengage the Logical Investigations. In particular, work prepared for seminars on the sixth investigation¹¹ led to the following crucial insight:

There I learned one thing--at first rather led by surmise than guided by founded insight: What occurs for phenomenology of the acts of consciousness as the self-manifestation of phenomena is thought more originally by Aristotle and in all Greek thinking and existence as aletheia, as the unconcealedness of what is present, it's being revealed, it's showing itself. That which phenomenological investigations rediscovered as the supporting attitude of thought proves to be the fundamental trait of Greek thinking, if not indeed of philosophy as such. The more decisively this insight became clear to me, the more pressing the question became: Whence and how is it determined what must be experienced as "the things themselves" in accordance with the principle of phenomenology? Is it consciousness and its objectivity or is it the Being of beings in its unconcealedness and concealment? Thus I was brought to the path of the question of Being, illuminated by the phenomenological attitude, again made uneasy in a different way than previously by the questions prompted by Brentano's dissertation.¹²

Thus, driven by the insight, if not the presupposition, that Being had one fundamental meaning or sense,¹³ and that access to this meaning was most originally available through a certain phenomenological method in some sense already present in the Greek's, Heidegger commenced with his work of explicating this meaning.

However, a further element in this picture must be kept in mind. It should be remembered that Heidegger's interests were originally theological in nature. After he gave up his theological studies proper, he notes:

I still attended theological lectures in the years following 1911, Carl Braig's lecture course on dogmatics. My interest in speculative theology led me to do this, above all the penetrating kind of thinking which this teacher concretely demonstrated in every lecture hour. On a few walks when I was allowed to accompany him, I first heard of Schelling's and Hegel's significance for speculative theology as distinguished

from the dogmatic system of scholasticism. Thus the tension between ontology and speculative theology as the structure of metaphysics entered the field of my search.¹⁴

Of course, one can account for this continued interest in a number of ways. Perhaps it was strictly Braig's method of questioning that attracted Heidegger. Thinking as questioning comes to play a significant role in Heidegger's later thought, and it was never a less-than-significant dimension of the problem of Being. Or perhaps it was the social or ethical-moral dimensions of theology that interested Heidegger.

But speculative theology, or what one would today call philosophical theology, is not the place to go to engage in extended ethical-moral discourse. Other possible accounts abound, but I find it a helpful suggestion that Heidegger's continued interest in theology, even after severing his formal study of it, was maintained because he recognized that the problem of Being was intrinsic to its subject matter. Theology, particularly the brand of speculative theology that was and is present in the German tradition, deals with notions such as the fundamental, the absolute, and the unconditioned, in ways that tell of a discourse that does not recognize the same split between theology and philosophy that is presupposed today. Thus, insofar as both philosophy as ontology and speculative theology seem to

share a concern with these and other notions, both can be thought of in the same light.

Of course it is possible to claim that speculative theology is in fact philosophy proper, or inversely that philosophy is in essence theological, but what is more significant than such debates is the recognition that both of these disciplines are reducible to the general category of metaphysics, and that both have a concern with, and presuppositions about, Being as such. The tension between ontology (philosophy) and speculative theology as the structure of metaphysics that Heidegger mentions above, therefore, is the recognition of the commonality of their concerns insofar as they meet in their interest in Being. Moreover, to Heidegger, this interest is non-explicit in that, even though both take up a particular meaning of Being, neither takes that particular meaning to be an issue for it. Thus the meaning of Being is presupposed, and metaphysics is that general realm where this presupposition is put into effect. For Heidegger, metaphysics utilizes a particular meaning of Being, but it has forgotten that this meaning should itself be an issue for it insofar as there may be other alternatives of meaning.

The reason I want to stress this theological dimension of his background, however, is to suggest that it may be a particularly helpful way of understanding what the sense of

the question of Being actually involves. I hope the following will provide a context in which the question will be meaningful.

It is possible to identify at least two strains in the Judao-Christian theological tradition. The one strain plays itself out as a discourse involving an interest in the human condition. This strain embodies all of the salvific and ethical-moral concerns that invest these religious traditions. In other words, it is fundamentally humanistic. Another strain can be identified, however, which, while no doubt related to this prior strain, has essentially different concerns.

This strain involves theology or God-talk proper, and is concerned not so much with human-divine interaction, but rather with the doctrine of God as an intellectual adventure of thinking the absolute. God in this light becomes a symbol for the end aim of the process of thinking toward this absolute. God and the absolute thus become identified as this end point. It may be suggested then that this strain is grounded in the desire to somehow locate a particular intellectual resting place, whereby thought, in proceeding as far as possible, arrives at a point of termination, that by virtue of this fact must be understood as the absolute. As such, this place is deemed worthy of reverence.

Granted that this is a highly speculative suggestion, but it does not take much investigation to connect it with the spirit of the German theological-philosophical tradition. Interestingly, Schelling and Hegel in particular can be read so as to find them as participants in just such an unsaid scheme, but it is outside of my primary interest to engage in that reading here.

Thus far, this absolute has no meaning or direction and is only a vague notion that stands as the end point of a certain path of thinking. But in the theological tradition, God is understood fundamentally as creator. It is therefore suggestive that the end point, as God or the absolute, is the end point of a thinking that attempts to think radically this doctrine of creation. In essence, then, the absolute can be identified as the end point of a thinking that attempts to think the traditional doctrine of creation in a more extended fashion. The absolute now has a particular focus and a specific meaning. The question then becomes what the perusal of the absolute as the last word on the question of creation involves. While this is not the place for a full account of this connection, let me briefly discuss how this question or issue regarding the doctrine of creation can be assimilated to Heidegger's question of Being.

The problem with the traditional doctrine of creation is that it always posits some type of primary or original being to account for the creation of all other being. What is unsatisfying about this is that it seems to leave out what the doctrine itself is posited to account for. On the one hand, the meaning of the act of creation itself, what brings it about, if you will, is left out, even if it is accepted that it takes place by virtue of a creator. On the other hand, the status of a creator as some type of a being is never addressed in terms of what brings about its own being. Even given the traditional doctrine, the question can still be asked as to what the meaning of creation proper involves. What is it for a being, primary or otherwise, to be? Notice how the notion of creation in fact implies the question about being.

To answer the question of creation in terms of the traditional doctrine implies nothing about either the being of God or the being of the creation. What goes unexpressed but implied in the traditional doctrine is the concern about how creation comes about as such, not simply that it has come about. But the how of creation here must be understood in the proper way. It is not a question that seeks its answer within the paradigm of scientific mechanism and causation. It is not a question that even physics can take up, let alone answer. Rather, it can still be asked at the end of

physics discourse. What is implicit, but nonetheless goes unexamined in the traditional doctrine of creation, is the sheer wonder of how anything, be it an energy state or a rose, has being. Moreover, what this wonder seeks is an investigation into the meaning of being in terms of what is most fundamental in bringing it about.

This investigation would extend the doctrine of creation by taking up its unsaid but animating concerns, and directing them into a path of thought that would attempt to move towards uncovering that which brings about being. In this sense, the absolute would stand at the end of that path signified by the last possible thought on that which brings being about. Understood in this way, the traditional theological doctrine of creation can be seen to imply the question about the Being of beings which Heidegger takes up. Simply put, a thinking whose orientation is toward the notion of genesis is one for which the question of the Being of beings should become an issue.

I am suggesting two things. First, that Heidegger's early interest in theology should be taken into account in terms of his background insofar as speculative theology of the historical period that interested Heidegger may have a connection with the question about the Being of beings. Second, regardless of what degree of actual influence one feels justified in attributing to this connection, as an

explanatory tool it helps to give the Seinsfrage a context in which its various moves are more meaningful.

Reading the question of Being as a project grounded in a very specific theological-philosophical tradition may secure for the question a certain hearing which it would not otherwise receive. Unfortunately the focus of the present study does not allow the pursual of this grounding any further than the brief sketch above has suggested. However, I will return to this general point in the last section of the concluding chapter, when I discuss the implications of this study.

Part II

Aside from speculations about the theological dimensions of his background, and the clear influence of Brentano's work on Aristotle, Husserl's phenomenology was unquestionably the major influence on Heidegger's work. In it, he found a methodology, or, perhaps more accurately, a way of seeing, which he would use to investigate Being. Although the Husserl-Heidegger relationship is clearly an issue in itself, for my purposes, a couple of points in particular stand out.¹⁵

First, the emphasis in phenomenology on the phenomena, or that which shows itself, allows a real focusing in on the primary data of the Seinsfrage. This means that, insofar as

the question of Being is concerned with inquiring into what brings about that which shows itself, it is precisely this showing forth of phenomena which is the basis of the question. The Seinsfrage therefore requires phenomena in order to get its concerns regarding what brings about such phenomena off the ground. The phenomena in all of its original clarity appears, and in so appearing becomes that which in having appearance invites the question about what brings about this appearing or appearance.

Second, in phenomenology, this appearing or showing itself is thought to take place at a level where many traditional epistemological concerns appear to be less important. For example, one of the moves that Husserl makes is to bracket out all judgment regarding the existence of objects independent of consciousness. Phenomenology is thus concerned only with an object as an object of consciousness, and not as an object in the world. This move, which Husserl refers to as the suspension of the natural standpoint, or the *epoche*,¹⁶ is an attempt to turn philosophy into a method of pure description, which, in simply describing the content of consciousness, would offer an account prior to any subsequent theoretical commitments, such as whether or not objects exist independently of consciousness. This is not a form skepticism, however, in that Husserl is not doubting the existence of real objects, but merely suspending

judgment regarding the issue in favor of the pure description of the content of consciousness itself.

But there is also a further and somewhat stronger claim implicit in this move to the effect that, in describing the objects of consciousness, one has already described everything essential regarding real objects themselves. In other words, the suspension makes no difference if the description of the object is the primary concern. Husserl notes:

Let us suppose that we are looking with pleasure in a garden at a blossoming apple-tree. . . . From the natural standpoint the apple-tree is something that exists in the transcendent reality of space, and the perception as well as the pleasure of a psychical state which we enjoy as real human beings. . . . Let us now pass over to the phenomenological standpoint. The transcendent world enters its "bracket"; in respect of its real being we use the disconnecting epoch . . . yet a relationship between perception and perceived . . . is obviously left over, . . . everything remains . . . even the phenomenologically reduced perceptual experience is a perception of "this apple-tree in bloom, in this garden, and so forth."¹⁷

Thus, on Husserl's account, nothing is lost in suspending judgment regarding the status of phenomenal objects.

But this notion of the status of phenomenal objects suggests a further point, which is that, insofar as Husserl, for methodological purposes, refuses to admit of a distinction between objects independent or outside of consciousness and those within the same, that the traditional notion of ontology is also suspended. I bring this point up because the reader may be wondering just what types of objects Heidegger's Seinsfrage seeks to give an account of. In

other words, is the question of Being an enquiry into what brings about imaginary, illusory, or fictional objects, or is it concerned solely with objects which are said to really exist? But in light of Heidegger's starting point in Husserl's phenomenology, this concern for what sort of existence an object has has already been suspended. The Seinsfrage is therefore not concerned with the ontological classification of objects in terms of what type of existence they have, but is concerned only with what brings about the objects themselves.

For example, since phenomenology is concerned solely with that which shows itself in consciousness, a fictional object such as a unicorn has basically the same status as does the apple-tree in the garden. Thus, while the notion of the ontological status of some particular phenomenal object traditionally refers back to a consideration of its reality in terms of actual existence (what Husserl refers to in the above passage as "real being"), and this phrase usually refers to its alleged status insofar as it is thought to be independent of consciousness, for phenomenology, since both the unicorn and the apple-tree present themselves as phenomena, the question of their ontological status is suspended. A thing's ontological status in terms of whether it "exists," therefore, is no longer decided by reference to whether it is thought to be mind independent, but rather

existence is now linked with appearance, so that whatever presents itself "exists," but only in this highly qualified sense. The traditional concerns of ontology are thus suspended.

What is important to see is that in terms of some phenomena the act of judgment regarding its ontological status is understood by phenomenology to be already implicated in philosophical theory. Husserl claims that any judgment regarding the mind independence of phenomenal objects must start with the awareness of phenomena and then construct a theory on top of that awareness. But this theory, while it requires the phenomena as its raw data, is not derivable from what is given in the phenomena itself. For Husserl, therefore, theory must be bracketed out long enough to examine the data itself. In a Cartesian-like fashion, phenomenology seeks a reduction to what is most fundamental and philosophically unincumbered.

In light of the question of Being, what this reduction allows for is a more direct access to the primary data, without undo entanglement in issues that are less than primary, if the main concern is with that which brings phenomena about. Thus, while for Husserl this reduction effectively suspends all ontology, in terms of Heidegger's concerns, ontology is shifted from the classification of phenomenal objects based on whether or not they exist in the world, to

a concern with what brings about the phenomena themselves. In other words, while Husserl effectively suspends interest in traditional ontological concerns, and in so doing apparently admits of no other options for ontology, Heidegger, following Husserl's lead, also suspends traditional ontological concerns, but then shifts the meaning of ontology, insofar as this involves the Seinsfrage, to a concern with what brings phenomena about.

It was suggested in the first point above that the basic supposition of phenomenology--that there are phenomena which show themselves--is also the starting point for the question of Being which asks about how this showing-forth of phenomena takes place. In light of this, two points need to be reemphasized. First, the question of Being always assumes the presence of phenomena. This means that the presence of phenomena are never in question. Second, its *raison d'être* is wholly to inquire into what brings about the presence of such phenomena. The Seinsfrage, therefore, always assumes the phenomenological attitude. At the end of "My Way to Phenomenology," Heidegger suggests:

But in what is most its own phenomenology is not a school. It is the possibility of thinking, at times changing and only thus persisting, of corresponding to the claim of what is to be thought. If phenomenology is thus experienced and retained, it can disappear as a designation in favor of the matter of thinking whose manifestness remains a mystery.¹⁸

The mystery of the matter of thinking referred to here invites one to explore further this mystery in terms of the question regarding what brings about present phenomena.

Part III

Insofar as I have used this expression "present phenomena," or related expressions, several times above, it may have occurred to the reader that these expressions have a certain tautological character. Does not the notion of phenomena, as that which shows itself, already contain everything that is said in the idea of being present? A present phenomena must simply be a phenomena that is present, what other type of phenomena could there be? From the phenomenological perspective, there could clearly be no other. A phenomena in its very essence is present, and the manifestation of a phenomena is itself its presence.

In terms of my concerns, therefore, it is inaccurate to admit to a distinction here. Being present is another way of saying phenomena, and being a phenomena is another way of saying something is present. More specifically, the showing-itself as an appearing, appears only insofar as it is an instance of the presence which marks this appearing as such, and insofar as this instantiation is the essence of the appearance their common identity can be asserted. I hope this tautological circularity will be persuasive of the

claim that to talk of phenomena is the same as to talk of being present.

Moreover, being present can be understood as a particular case subsumable under the more general concept of presence. Every phenomena, in being present, is an instance of the general category of presence. Presence then simply points to the general case of what being present implies.

A phenomena, in being present, is said to have presence. This connection is necessary. In light of this, the question of Being can be understood as an attempt to account for what brings about both presence in the general sense, and the present as such, insofar as the latter is merely a particular instance of the general case. Understanding the Seinsfrage as a question about what brings about presence can be filled out, however, by expanding this discourse in terms of presence and the present with a further notion.

In the essay "Time and Being," Heidegger states:

Being, by which all beings as such are marked, Being means presencing. Thought with regard to what presences, presencing shows itself as a letting-presence.¹⁹

That which the question about what brings about presence seeks to inaugurate, then, is an investigation into the presencing of presence as such. Presencing means presence thought in terms of what lets presence be. This subtle distinction between presencing and presence, or presencing and

what is present, is fundamental and marks all of Heidegger's discourse on the Seinsfrage.

What Heidegger seeks is an account of how the presence of what is present comes about. In other words, what Heidegger wants to know is, what brings about presence in terms of its presencing? But before proceeding, some further clarification is called for regarding this notion.

Up to this point, I have characterized the Seinsfrage as an investigation into what brings presence about. However, with the advent of the notion of presencing, a further refinement has been added. Heidegger thus employs presencing to indicate more explicitly that the real issue regarding presence is its coming about. But note closely what this notion attempts to do. While not calling into question the final facticity of presence, it nonetheless attempts to redirect one's interest in presence to the activity of its arrival, i.e., to its coming into presence. This means that the focus of interest is not to be on presence as a terminus or product, but rather on the process of arrival that Heidegger claims characterizes all presence. Presencing is thus presence thought in terms of its activity of arrival or its coming into presence.

Previously, when I have characterized the Seinsfrage as an investigation into what brings presence about, I have spoken of presence as a product in need of an account of its

arrival. With the notion of presencing, the activity of this arrival has been given a name. Presencing names the active coming into being of presence. However, even with this active process now named, no further insight had been gained into the question regarding what brings about this process of coming into presence. In other words, while presencing names this active coming into presence, it does not account for what brings this activity about, i.e., it does not account for what brings about this coming into presence.

With the notion of presencing, Heidegger is not giving an answer to the question of Being, but rather simply clarifying the issue which the question seeks an account of. His investigation, therefore, as an enquiry into what brings about presence, is more accurately characterized as an inquiry into what brings about the presencing of presence. With this clarified, let me now pick up where I left off.

According to Heidegger, what has been forgotten by the philosophical tradition since the time of the Pre-Socratics is the understanding of Being in terms of presencing. Subsequent to the Pre-Socratics,²⁰ he claims that the tradition has been solely marked by the understanding of Being as presence or the present.

Given this dominant characterization, as has been suggested throughout this account, the more original or prior

question about how phenomena come about in terms of their presencing has been overlooked. Moreover, metaphysics and ontology have been the horizon where this characterization of Being as presence has been particularly explicit, and yet unquestioned.

In light of this dominant understanding, the discourse of metaphysics has, on Heidegger's reading, become incapable of supporting any other option. Moreover, one of the primary symptoms of this situation, according to Heidegger, is the claim that the question of Being itself is nonsensical or based on a misunderstanding.²¹ For him, this simply shows that the dominant characterization of Being as presence has asserted itself at the expense of all other options. This of course leads to some of the difficulty in reading Heidegger, who in effect strives to setup an alternate discourse which will support an investigation into Being as presencing.

So far, then, in this scheme we have the present (das Anwesende), represented as an instance of the general mode of presence (die Anwesenheit), and subsequently characterized in terms of the activity of its coming into presence as presencing (das Anwesen). In addition, it is also now possible to understand Heidegger's use of the terms Being and being. Being is generally understood to indicate presencing. The other term, being, then becomes the place holder

for the notion of presence, or in the case of a being, the present. To place these notions in relief, phenomena equate with being which equates with presence, and the coming into presence of phenomena equates with Being which equates with presencing.

Once again, however, what is really at issue is what brings about this presencing. Moreover, whatever can be isolated as that which brings presencing about will be the answer the question of Being. With this in mind, let me now discuss further what this notion of "bringing about," in light of its employment in terms of the presencing of presence, involves.

Part IV

Understanding the Seinsfrage as an investigation into what brings about the presencing of presence suggests that it is a transcendental project of the type inaugurated by Kant. Heidegger's involvement in a certain form of Kantian transcendentalism is an enigmatic area of Heideggerean scholarship, and one which I will not make a substantial contribution to here. However, for the purposes of this study, it will prove helpful to review a couple of the less controversial points regarding this issue.

In general it is clear that Heidegger's questioning takes place in dialogue with Kant, and is concerned with the

notions of the transcendental and the a priori insofar as these notions might be understood to involve the question of Being. This much at least can be gained from the appearance of Heidegger's book on Kant, Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics.²² What is less than clear, however, is how to understand the characterization of the Seinsfrage as a concern with what brings about the presencing of phenomena in light of the generally Kantian interest in uncovering a priori or transcendental conditions of possibility. Initially, it appears as if these two projects are fundamentally the same, and if taken in terms of their underlying concerns, I think that it is safe to assume that this is the case. In The Basic Problems of Phenomenology, Heidegger claims:

With this distinction between being and beings and the selection of being as theme we depart in principal from the domain of beings. We surmount it, transcend it. We can also call the science of being, as critical science, transcendental science. In doing so we are not simply taking over unaltered the concept of the transcendental in Kant, although we are indeed adopting its original sense and its true tendency, perhaps still concealed from Kant.²³

The generally transcendental character of Heidegger's project can thus be affirmed. But while the above passage clearly suggests that the Seinsfrage is a transcendental project, it also suggests that this notion, as Heidegger employs it, has a different sense than it does in Kant.

Moreover, Heidegger claims to be recovering the original sense of the concept which was, as he says, "perhaps still concealed from Kant. . . ." Thus, while the question of Being, as a concern with what brings about presencing, is in essence a concern with uncovering the transcendental or a priori conditions of presencing, these transcendental conditions cannot be immediately identified with Kant's.

In The Basic Problems of Phenomenology, Heidegger's criticism of Kant's transcendental project has little to do with the impulse of this notion, i.e., with the desire to locate transcendental or a priori conditions; rather, his criticism amounts to the claim that Kant has not consistently followed through with the implications of this project. The problem, on Heidegger's reading, centers on a certain tension in Kant's characterization of the notion of the "ego."²⁴ While this is not the place for a full account of Heidegger's discussion regarding this issue, the following passages will offer an outline of the situation.

To begin with, in support of what he takes to be one reading of Kant's position, Heidegger notes:

From our previous considerations we know that for Kant being equals perceivedness. The basic condition of the being of beings, or of perceivedness, are therefore the basic condition of the being-known of things. However, the basic condition of knowing as knowing is the ego as "I-think." Hence Kant continually inculcates that the ego is not a representation, that it is not a represented object, not a being in the sense of an object, but rather the ground of the possibility of all

representing, all perceiving, hence of all the perceived-ness of beings and thus the ground of all being. As original synthetic unity of apperception, the ego is the fundamental ontological condition of all being.²⁵

Thus, on Heidegger's reading, Kant's notion of the ego can be interpreted so as to suggest that it is the transcendental condition for all being. Moreover, for this reason, Heidegger claims that Kant's project in the Critique of Pure Reason²⁶ is basically ontological.²⁷

But what is of particular importance is the fact that, as Heidegger notes further:

The ego is not something isolated, not a mere point, but always "I-think," that is, "I-combine". . . . Combinability and, corresponding to it, its own form, its respective unity, are grounded in the "I-combine." Thus the ego is the fundamental ontological condition, the transcendental that lies at the heart of every particular a priori.²⁸

For Heidegger, this suggests that the "ego" is not merely a being or an instance of presence, but is in some sense an active synthesis that must be the prior condition for any present being whatsoever. Given this reading, the close association between Kant's transcendental interests and Heidegger's Seinsfrage can be clearly ascertained. Both are concerned with isolating conditions which are prior to being thought in terms of presence, but which bring the presencing of presence about. Moreover, insofar as the ego is allegedly not a thing, but a process of combining, it is clear that the notion of prior conditions as it is employed here does

not suggest some static state of affairs that could be characterized as present, but rather indicates something more active in the sense of a process, movement, or event.

But while it is possible to read Kant in this way, Heidegger also identifies another strain in Kant's thought, one which suggests that the issue of whether or not the ego is an extant thing or present being is still open to question. Further on in the same text Heidegger notes:

The question remains, How is this acting itself to be interpreted as a way of being? In reference to Kant the question becomes: Does he not after all fall back again into conceiving this active ego as an end which is in the sense of one extant being among other extant beings?²⁹

In other words, due to certain tensions in Kant's characterization of the ego, which I will not discuss further here, Heidegger questions whether Kant has really gone beyond the notion of the ego as a primary thing, i.e., as a present being.

As is often the case in Heidegger's discourse, statements such as the above are meant rhetorically, and thus Heidegger's question can be taken as a verdict. For Heidegger, although Kant's transcendental philosophy is on the right track, it fails in not being consistent regarding the characterization of the ego as other than a substantial thing, i.e., a being. Thus, it also fails to be fully transcendental insofar as the ego--if it is still being thought of in terms of presence--cannot then be the transcendental

condition of the presencing of presence. All of which suggests the important point that presencing, or whatever subsequent or operative factor may turn up upon its further analysis (i.e., difference), cannot be characterized in terms of presence or the present. That which brings about the presencing of presence must, therefore, be non-present or non-phenomenalizable. Kant's project is not consistent enough regarding its own ontological commitments for Heidegger's purposes, although the transcendental intention is a move in the right direction.

Moreover, while it is true that Heidegger eventually gives up most of the terms that would on the face of it implicate his project within the horizon of transcendental discourse, I think it is nonetheless also true that for the most part he never gives up what the intentions of this discourse are. In other words, although he may cease to evoke the Kantian discourse proper, his fundamental intention in terms of the Seinsfrage is always to think more fundamentally into what brings about the presencing of presence, and this project always involves certain transcendental modes of thought.

But it is also important to note that in Heidegger's understanding this intention itself can no more be linked explicitly with Kant than it can with any particular figure within the western tradition. Kant's concerns are merely a

particular representation of the underlying concern with Being that animates the western tradition, but of which it is for the most part unaware.

Heidegger's own geographical and historical situation, however, probably suggests the reason why his initial framing of the Seinsfrage starts out within the horizon of Kantian discourse. This fact suggests to me that one should not read Heidegger as a Kantian, but rather read him as one who found in Kant a particular characterization of the question of Being that one way or the other has concerned the entire tradition. However, insofar as he does eventually leave much of the Kantian discourse behind, I think one must see this as based in his concern about the tendency--already apparent in Kant--to confuse the conditions of presencing with presence itself.

One hedge against this is to quit speaking the discourse which leads to this tendency, and for the most part this is what he did. But in doing so, as I have already noted, his later work generates other problems regarding how one is to read the often obscure formulations he puts forth. In light of this problem, I see no reason why one cannot explore his thought by using more common discourse, as long as one is careful not to confuse presence with presencing. I will proceed carefully under this assumption.

Part V

In further consideration of the transcendental character of the project, it might also be noted that what I have above called non-presence might be just as easily be characterized as pre-presence. The "pre" here suggests a consideration of that which brings about presencing, thought as the transcendental or a priori, in terms of the issue of temporality. This issue comes up because at first glance there appears to be a sense in which a transcendental project, insofar as it seeks the "prior" conditions of something, already seems to be involved with time. Moreover, Heidegger's interest in the question of time and temporality as it involves the Seinsfrage is well documented from Being and Time to On Time and Being.³⁰ In fact, further on in The Basic Problems of Phenomenology, while still discussing Kant's notion of the ego, Heidegger notes:

Perhaps it is precisely time which is the a priori of the ego--time, to be sure, in a more original sense than Kant was able to conceive it.³¹

Further, it is also clear that with my talk of the present, presence, and presencing, I have already entered into a yet-to-be-made explicit engagement with temporal concerns. Therefore, I will now take up this issue, and the more original sense of time which Heidegger alludes to in the above passage.

As I have noted, that which brings about presencing cannot belong to either the present or to presence. This yet-to-be-disclosed factor must therefore be non-present or in some sense pre-present insofar as it seems to come before the actuality of presence. One can understand this characteristic of coming before as the a priori. In The Basic Problems of Phenomenology, again in reference to Kant, Heidegger notes:

In the preface to his Metaphysische Anfangsgrunde der Naturwissenschaft [Metaphysical Principals of Natural Science], Kant says: "Now to cognize something a priori means to cognize it from its mere possibility." Consequently, a priori means that which makes beings as beings possible in what and how they are. But why is this possibility or, more precisely, this determinant of possibility labeled by the term "earlier"? Obviously not because we recognize it as earlier than beings. For what we experience first and foremost is beings, that which is; we recognize being only later or maybe even not at all. This time-determination "earlier" cannot refer to the temporal order given by the common concept of time in the sense of intratemporality.³²

The reference to coming before cannot be taken in the temporal sense. In other words, contrary to what seems apparent at first, coming before cannot be understood in terms of being earlier. That which brings about presencing does not somehow come before presence in the sense of "at an earlier time."

But one can already surmise this from the discussion of the notion of presencing, because it is clear that, in not being an instance of presence itself, presencing does not occupy a location in terms of a temporal "now" point. In

other words, in the traditional understanding of time as a series of ordered now points only that which is somehow present in the sense of being characterizable as a now can be thought of as occupying a temporal location in terms of the earlier. The notions of earlier and later seem to make sense only if one is dealing with instances of presence thought in terms of the now. From this it is also apparent that another way of thinking about the present is through its characterization as the now. Only phenomena that are present in terms of the now can be given temporal ordering in the sense of the earlier or the later.

What then is meant by attributing a certain a priority to the notion of presencing, or that which brings it about, if the notion of the prior so employed cannot be taken as indicative of a temporal location in the sense of an earlier? Further on, Heidegger states:

Because the original determinate of possibility, the origin of possibility itself, is time, time temporalizes itself as the absolute earliest. Time is earlier than any possible earlier of whatever sort, because it is the basic condition for an earlier as such. And because time as the source of all enablings (possibilities) is the earliest, all possibilities as such in their possibility-making function have the character of the earlier. That is to say they are a priori. But, from the fact that time is the earliest in the sense of being the possibility of every earlier and of every a priori foundational ordering, it does not follow that time is ontically the first being; nor does it follow that time is forever and eternal, quite apart from the impropriety of calling time a being at all.³³

With the statement that "time is earlier than any possible earlier of whatever sort, because it is the basic condition for an earlier as such . . . ," some insight into this question has been secured. That which brings about presencing is earlier not because it is temporally ordered in terms of the before, this as I noted above is only possible for the present characterized as a now, but rather that which brings about the presencing of presence or the present is analogous to time as the "basic condition for an earlier as such. . . ." If one understands time as this "basic condition" to be that which brings about the temporal locations of earlier and later, then time is in some sense that which brings about the now itself insofar as the references to earlier and later are simply references to ordered now points. Time, as the "basic condition for an earlier as such . . . ," is thus the basic condition for the now, inasmuch as it only comes about through its ordered referencing to the earlier and later.

I have already noted that the now and the present cannot be understood apart from one another, and that that which brings about presencing is what brings about the present; and further that time is now the prior condition of temporal ordering and, by virtue of that, that which brings about the now. The close association between Being and time is thus becoming apparent. Time brings about the temporal

ordering which allows for the now as differentiated from the earlier and the later, and Being as presencing lets the present, thought in terms of the temporality of the now, come into being. In this sense then both Being and time are a priori. They are respectively that which brings about both being and time, and as such they poses a certain priority, but not a priority that would suggest that either comes before being or time in a temporal sense.

Thus, Heidegger's understanding of the a priori shows it to be an unusual concept in that it suggests a sense of temporal priority, but simultaneously asks to be understood as that which brings about temporal priority. To put this in terms of a visual metaphor, its priority seems to take place almost diagonally to the temporal continuum of earlier and later. Both Being and time are, therefore, a priori, or more precisely, the a priori is both Being and time.

What Heidegger claims, then, is that the a priori is a suitable characterization for that which brings about both Being as presencing, and time as the process of temporal ordering. While separate, both are thought most insightfully in terms of that which brings them about, i.e., in terms of the process of presencing itself. Presencing, or that which brings it about, comes before the present only in this qualified sense, and thus the notion of coming before does not admit of any temporally ordered succession.

But clearly a change has taken place in Heidegger's understanding of time. In the previous discussion, a new sense of time has arisen, and it has animated the account of the a priori above. This change in the understanding of time is implied throughout the passage cited above, but is explicitly suggested by the last line, where Heidegger states that "it does not follow that time is ontically the first being; nor does it follow that time is forever and eternal, quite apart from the impropriety of calling time a being at all. . . ." ³⁴ To call time a being is not proper, because in doing so one reduces it solely to the notion of a now, or in a general sense to the horizon of nows.

As I mentioned above, the traditional understanding of time that Heidegger is here reacting to is characterized in just this fashion. On Heidegger's reading, the traditional understanding of time, grounded primarily in Aristotle's explication of the concept in the Physics, ³⁵ characterized time as an extended series of now points. This understanding left unasked the question about how the now, in terms of this extension, comes about. In other words, the extension as an extension--in light of the nows placement within this extension--was never explicitly addressed. Time was thus understood under the rubrics of the presence of the now, and the question as to what brings about the now in terms of its presencing did not become an issue.

But notice that this is once again the same criticism that was levied against the traditional understanding of Being. In fact, the two accounts both point to the same issue, i.e., the overlooked question regarding what brings about the presencing of the present as the now in all of its manifold senses. The emphasis in Heidegger's new understanding of time, therefore, is on what brings about the now in terms of its extended ordering. He seeks an inquiry into how the foundational ordering is itself given, and this given-ness is understood to be time. Accordingly, as with Being, there is a shift in concern from the present in terms of the now to what brings about its being given as such. Thus, what the Seinsfrage involves is an investigation into what brings about the presencing of both being and time, and, whatever this factor is shown to be, it will be characterized as the authentic meaning of Being and time. Moreover, it might be helpful to denote this new understanding of the meaning of time by making the same move I followed regarding Being/being, that is, capitalizing the first letter to call attention to the shift in focus from time as the present or presence, to Time as the presencing of presence or the present as the now.

While the issues of Being and Time are dubiously distinct, they are nonetheless interrelated to the extent that the issue for both is the inquiry into what brings about

presencing. Speaking of presencing in terms of the "it gives," Heidegger notes:

Thus true time appears as the "It" of which we speak when we say: It gives Being. The destiny in which It gives Being lies in the extending of time. Does this reference show time to be the "It" that gives Being? By no means. For time itself remains the gift of an "It gives" whose giving preserves the realm in which presence is extended. Thus the "It" continues to be undetermined, and we ourselves continue to be puzzled.³⁶

It is in light of this puzzlement that I will now direct the focus of this discussion towards the "it" that gives as that which brings presencing about.

Part VI

So far, I have characterized the Seinsfrage as an investigation into what brings about the presencing of presence or the present. Moreover, I have characterized the distinction between presencing and presence/present as a distinction between Being and being or beings. It will also be remembered that Heidegger claims that the tradition has never recognized Being as presencing, and instead has thought Being in terms of presence or the present. But this is not to say that the tradition has not recognized a distinction between Being and beings; rather, it is just that this distinction has been understood merely as one between beings as present and Being as the general mode of presence of which they are instances.

Being in this sense is understood to be the most general concept or ground in which all beings are grounded by virtue of their instantiation in presence insofar as they are present.³⁷ The tradition has recognized a distinction, but it is not the one that has become important for consideration here. Or is it? Heidegger calls this prior distinction that is recognized by the tradition the "ontological difference," and most of his later thought is engaged directly with thinking about this distinction.³⁸

In light of my account so far, this fact may leave the reader somewhat puzzled. How is a concern with Being as presencing related to a concern with this traditional distinction, even if it is now called the ontological difference? It may be asked what presencing has to do with this distinction that, as I have noted, does not recognize it to begin with. In what way is presencing, or that which brings it about, involved with this distinction?

As I have noted, Heidegger claims that the tradition has forgotten Being as the presencing of presence or the present, and instead recognized only the distinction between Being as presence and beings as present. This latter or ontological difference is the distinction that the tradition has always employed. However, on Heidegger's account, something is lacking in the way that the tradition is involved with this distinction, for while it recognizes the elements

of the distinction, Being and beings, it fails to inquire into that which the distinction involves, i.e., a difference. Regarding this distinction, Heidegger notes:

The distinction is more suitably named by the word "difference," by which it is indicated that beings and Being somehow are carried outside of one another, separated and yet related to one another. . . . The distinction as a difference means that a difference exists between Being and beings. Whence and how it comes to such a difference is not said. Let difference be for the moment only named as the occasion and impulse for the question into this difference.³⁹

In other words, although the terms of the distinction are employed for various purposes within the tradition, what has not been addressed is the difference that the relation between the terms named by the ontological difference employs. What Heidegger is suggesting is that what has been overlooked is the difference, understood in the sense of a between or median, which separates Being and beings.

Notice here that the focus is not on the terms set apart by the difference, thus on what one would normally characterize as the distinction itself, but only on the distinction insofar as it presupposes a difference. That is why Heidegger characterizes the difference in the above passage as the "difference." He is trying to suggest an understanding of the difference as that which lies between the terms in question, or what might be otherwise thought of as their middle ground. What concerns him is that the

tradition has apparently not recognized this element in its discourse regarding Being and beings.

But Heidegger's claim is not merely that the distinction between Being and beings employs a previously unarticulated difference, but, moreover, that this difference is in some sense the origin of the distinction itself, and in that sense is more fundamental than anything thought by the tradition of metaphysics insofar as its discourse has simply centered on various accounts of Being and beings. Heidegger notes:

That which bears such a name refers our thinking into the region for which the guiding words of metaphysics--Being and beings, ground and grounded--no longer suffice. For what these words name, what the manner of thinking which is guided by them represents, originates as that which differs by virtue of the difference, the origin of which can no longer be thought within the scope of metaphysics.⁴⁰

That which differs, i.e., Being and beings, ground and grounded, originate "by virtue of the difference."

Heidegger claims that it is the difference itself that is the origin which brings about the terms employed by the tradition.

But notice that with the characterization of difference as the origin which brings about Being and beings, ground and grounded, and so forth, the answer to the question regarding what brings presencing about has been located. The difference, understood in the way that Heidegger characterizes it, is that element which brings about presencing.

Difference lets what is present come to presence, that is, it lets presencing take place. One can now start to see how Heidegger's characterization of Being as presencing is involved with his consideration of the ontological difference, because if the difference thought as dif-ference is that which in some way brings about the terms of the distinction, then the presencing of the terms of the distinction itself is brought about by the dif-ference.

Moreover, the answer to the question posed above regarding the relationship between Being as presencing and the ontological difference is now available. The presencing of the terms of the distinction brought about by the difference is the new understanding of the Being of beings that I have been discussing. Heidegger comes to understand Being as presencing in terms of the difference which brings it about. In this light, let me suggest that difference should be thought of as the operative element in the presencing of presence. But two issues implicit in the above discussion call for further attention.

First, it is important to note that in terms of the ontological difference, for Heidegger there is not a real contrast between the presencing of the terms of the distinction, i.e., "Being" and "beings," and the presencing of Being and beings themselves. In other words, there is no distinction here between the terms and that to which they refer.

Note again the above passage. Heidegger starts by claiming that "the guiding words of metaphysics--Being and being, ground and grounded--no longer suffice. . . ."41 This would indicate that what is no longer sufficient--due to the discovery of a more fundamental origin--is the words or terms of the ontological difference. This suggests that Heidegger is concerned only with the origin of words, or with that which brings about terms, and not with the things to which they refer. However, in the next line he claims: "For what these words name . . . originates as that which differs by virtue of the difference. . . ."42 This statement would lead one to conclude the opposite, that is, that Heidegger is not concerned merely with how words or terms come about, but with what brings about the real things to which words refer. But the fact that Heidegger seems to confuse the traditional distinction between words or terms and that which they represent probably indicates that this distinction is not important for his purposes. Let me explain.

In terms of the ontological difference, it will be remembered that the term "Being" refers to presence and the term "beings" refers to things which are present. Again, Heidegger's concern is with what brings about the presencing of presence or the present. But in terms of the distinction, the terms not only refer respectively to presence and the present, but as terms they are also instances of

presence themselves. In other words, they are both instances of the presence to which they refer.

Being as a term becomes an instance of the presence to which as a concept it refers, and beings as a term becomes an instance of the present to which as a concept it refers. Both Being and beings, presence and the present, become instances of that to which they refer. Notice, however, that in terms of the distinction, Being is not simply the general mode of presence, but as a term is an instance of itself. It thus also becomes something which is present. In this way, both Being and beings appear as instances of presence, even though the prior term also indicates the general mode of presence of which they are instances. When Heidegger questions the ontological difference in terms of the difference itself, therefore, he is taking both terms as particular instances of presence. This means that he understands these terms to be basically like other instances of presence. For Heidegger, then, these terms are not merely ontologically neutral concepts which refer to ontologically definite realities; rather, the terms themselves are ontologically definite, i.e., they are themselves examples of present things.

Now the notion that a word or term is a present thing, i.e., a being, may strike the reader as somewhat puzzling, but it must be remembered that for Heidegger everything

which is present has basically the same status. Thus, for example, the term "beings," insofar as it is present as a term, appears as just another example of a being. From this perspective, there is no contrast between the word or term "being" and a real being; the former is already a case of the latter. It is at least in part because of this move that Heidegger can overlook the distinction between words and that to which they refer. For Heidegger, both are examples of beings, and since he is concerned only with how the presencing of present beings comes about, giving an account of how a term comes about is the same as giving an account of how a "real" being comes about.

Moreover, as I discussed in Part III, in light of Heidegger's background in phenomenology, there is no longer a distinction between what is real and what is other than real, inasmuch as such traditional ontological concerns have been suspended. The only thing of interest is the presence of phenomena and how such presence comes about.

In light of this discussion, it can be seen that Heidegger's characterization of the difference as that which brings about presencing, as it is gained from his reflections on the ontological difference, is made possible by his taking terms to be "things." Give this supposition, he can go back and uncover an element which has not played a part in traditional discussions of the distinction, i.e., the

difference, and claim that insofar as it brings about the terms of the distinction it thus brings about beings in general. Therefore, as noted regarding the passage above, he can speak of the presencing of the terms of a distinction in the same breath as the presencing of the things themselves; they are one and the same.

Second, then, it should also be pointed out that Heidegger's analysis of the role of difference (difference) in bringing about the ontological difference, as a specific difference, also applies to all other differences. In other words, by isolating the difference as that which brings about the ontological difference between Being and beings, and in so doing brings about the presencing of the same, Heidegger is not merely accounting for the presencing of these two terms, i.e., this specific difference, but rather is offering an account of the origin of all differences, i.e., of all instances of presence. The role of difference as it is derived from the analysis of the ontological difference is thus universally applicable. What Heidegger has isolated as that which brings presencing about, functions in terms of all instances of presence.

At this point, I must engage Heidegger's texts in a more explicit way. To more closely examine the thought of difference, I will now take up sections from Heidegger's work, Identity and Difference, along with several other

relevant texts. Along the way, I will focus particularly on how difference is depicted in terms of what one could call its operation. What I seek is a reading of difference that will show how it functions as that which brings about the presencing of presence.

The Thought of Difference

Part I

Heidegger's Identity and Difference is a particularly rich example of his later work. First published in 1957, it deals most explicitly with the difference, which he takes to be the primary matter for thought.⁴³ It consists of two essays: "The Principle of Identity," and "The Onto-theological Constitution of Metaphysics."⁴⁴ I will address several particularly applicable issues in these essays, starting in the reverse order.

In "The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics," Heidegger, in dialogue with Hegel, lays out the region of thought that the tradition, understood as metaphysics, has not addressed. As I noted in the last part of the previous section, what is unthought is the role of the difference itself in the ontological difference between Being and beings. Heidegger thus calls for a step back from metaphysics in order to engage this unthought dimension of the difference. He notes:

What do you make of the difference if Being as well as beings appear by virtue of the difference, each in its own way? To do justice to this question, we must first assume a proper position face to face with the difference. Such a confrontation becomes manifest to us once we accomplish the step back. Only as this step gains for us greater distance does what is near give itself as such, does nearness achieve its first radiance. By the step back, we set the matter of thinking, Being as difference, free to enter a position face to face, which may well remain wholly without an object.⁴⁵

The step back, therefore, is taken once the ontological difference is posed and questioned in terms of the difference itself. Notice that it is a step back from metaphysics, not a disavowal of metaphysics proper. What Heidegger seeks is not the rejection of metaphysics, but the source of metaphysics that it has itself left unthought. Ultimately this source, as difference, is nothing other than Being understood in a deeper way. So that while Heidegger's project attempts to move outside of metaphysics understood in terms of presence, one dimension of metaphysics--that which seeks what is most fundamental--is in essence deepened by the thought of difference.

Thus, while the Seinsfrage is transformed and eventually dropped insofar as it utilizes the language of Being, the notion of Being which is left behind or taken out of circulation is only the Being of metaphysics. Being as presencing thought in terms of the difference is the characterization that Heidegger, even in his later work, as I have noted here, never moves away. Further, his eventual

dropping of the word Being merely serves to enforce the contrast between the two senses of Being--Heidegger's and that of metaphysics--that I have been discussing.

Moreover, this move also serves as a strategic guard against falling back into characterizing presencing in terms of presence. The suggestion that Heidegger overcomes the discourse of Being is accurate on my reading only insofar as one means by discourse simply the word Being itself. It is not accurate, if discourse implies that the intent of the Seinsfrage, that is, questioning toward what is most fundamental in terms of what brings about the presencing of presence, has been left behind.

Heidegger claims that, with the step back, the way is cleared for the confrontation with the matter for thought which is the difference itself. Such a confrontation will bring us face to face with the difference, which nonetheless as a confrontation "may well remain wholly without an object. . . ."46 This last point is obvious, but important. From all I have said, it is clear that difference could not be an object, phenomena, or mode of presence. What then, it may be asked, does this matter for thought invite one to think?

It may be helpful in starting to explore Heidegger's characterization of difference in more depth to consider difference in terms of an analogy with mathematical

functions. A mathematical function, like division, for example, clearly has no presence. One does not go looking for some-thing called division; rather, one understands it simply as an operation. A function in this sense then is not a present thing, but simply a "taking place" that leads to an outcome. It has, in ordinary terms, no substance, but is merely a performance.⁴⁷

However, one should not take this analogy too far, in that, insofar as metaphors like operation and performance imply action or movement, they miss the mark when applied to difference which, to Heidegger, cannot be construed in terms of movement.⁴⁸ What is required is that one understands a function here to be in some sense static. The emphasis once again, however, is on the non-present or non-substantial status of a function, which nonetheless brings about a certain state of affairs. With this quite general suggestion in mind, let me now discuss what Heidegger uncovers by virtue of the face-to-face encounter with difference.

As I noted previously, this encounter with difference is only possible once the shift is made away from focusing one's attention on the terms Being and beings toward focusing on their relationship. It is Heidegger's contention that such a relationship always presupposes a difference by virtue of which the two-ness implied in the notion of relationship can be understood. He claims that the way is

cleared for the difference to become apparent once this relation is noted. Moreover, since the terms themselves in their duality seem to presuppose this difference, it is suggested that it is the difference itself that deserves a certain priority, inasmuch as it appears to be that which allows for the terms themselves.

Instead of understanding the presence of the terms as something that can be affirmed prior to their differentiated relationship, Heidegger claims that it is the relation as brought about by virtue of the difference itself that is what allows for the terms. From this perspective, the identity of the terms is grounded in the difference inasmuch as they appear to presuppose it. In the lines prior to the passage cited above, Heidegger notes:

We shall discard all views and explanations, and instead note the following: this thing that is called difference, we encounter it everywhere and always in the matter of thinking, in beings as such--encounter it so unquestioningly that we do not even notice this encounter itself. Nor does anything compel us to notice it. Our thinking is free either to pass over the difference without a thought or to think of it specifically as such. But this freedom does not apply in every case. Unexpectedly it may happen that thinking finds itself called upon to ask: what does it say this Being that is mentioned so often? If Being here shows itself concurrently as the Being of . . . [beings], thus in the genitive of the difference, then the preceding question is more properly: what do you make of the difference if Being as well as beings appear by virtue of the difference, each in its own way?⁴⁹

To Heidegger, then, the difference, as the presupposition of the relation, is that which brings about what comes to be so

related. Difference is that which brings about the presenting of the presence of the terms.

Moreover, this characterization of the difference suggests that the terms that it brings about share in a type of mutual dependency insofar as a term is what it is only insofar as it is different from another term. Thus, being different from, or being other than, is what lets a term be what it is, and this situation is brought about through the difference. What this dependency amounts to is that a term must never lose connection with its other as set apart by the difference; to do so is to lose itself.

The presence of terms is brought about by, and is dependent on, the difference, which is to say further that terms are always necessarily connected to each other through this difference. For any term, then, dependency on the difference is also dependency on the other that the difference brings about. But before proceeding any further with this, let me first turn to an issue that may be a cause of some concern.

In light of the preceding discussion, the reader may be wondering just what sense of "priority" is here being claimed for difference. When Heidegger states in the above passage that "Being as well as beings appear by virtue of the difference," how is this "by virtue of" to be understood?⁵⁰ Is difference here being posited as prior to and

independent of identity? Given what I have already noted about difference, I am compelled to answer: Prior? In some sense, yes. Independent? Clearly not. Now I doubt that one can be argued into accepting the privileging of difference anymore than one can be argued into accepting the Seinsfrage outright. But there is surely a distinction here between acceptance and understanding, and the latter is all that is required of the reader. With this in mind, I offer the following account.

Part II

To begin with, in terms of priority, on Heidegger's account the prior cannot be understood in terms of the temporal designation of the earlier. This is the case because a designation such as earlier already implies or presupposes a difference. The difference is presupposed insofar as the earlier apparently relies implicitly on a referent, i.e., that which it is earlier than. Thus, therefore, insofar as the earlier always implies something like the later, the pair presupposes a difference. To understand difference in terms of priority characterized as the temporal earlier is to beg the question by presupposing what is at issue, i.e., the difference itself. One cannot, therefore, speak of difference as prior if by prior one has in mind anything like the notion of a temporal earlier. If one were to claim that

the difference is prior, one would have to understand this in an a-temporal way. But what about logical priority?

At first glance, to claim that difference is logically prior might appear a comforting solution to this problem. But insofar as logic itself is based on relations and distinctions, it appears that to claim logical priority is just to presuppose once again the difference that is at issue. To claim that difference is logically prior is to presuppose the difference on which the priority itself is predicated. The situation of logical priority appears, therefore, to be similar to that of temporal priority: both presuppose what is at issue, and suggest that, in general, the notion of priority is always already implicated in difference.

Given this state of affairs, it might be thought that the designation "prior" is simply not applicable to difference, and given what I have noted this is clearly the case if prior is taken in either of the senses mentioned above. Nonetheless, there is still something suggestive about the fact that everywhere we look, and with every thought we entertain, difference is presupposed. This phenomenological reality still seems to call one to affirm some sense of priority for difference.

One must, however, be clear that this affirmation cannot be satisfied by making difference into an element in a distinction. Such a move not only begs the question, as I

have noted, but also results in difference being made into an "element," thus necessitating its characterization in terms of presence.

Note, however, that this same call to affirm priority has been apparent from the beginning of the discussion of Heidegger's discourse on Being. In this light, it will be remembered that Heidegger has always affirmed a certain priority of Being over beings, and later of presencing over presence. But the priority here has been neither temporal nor logical, but rather, following Joseph Kockelmans characterization, what one could call "ontological."⁵¹ Thus, Being is never before or apart from beings, nor is presencing ever before or apart from presence; rather, Being and presencing in relation to beings and presence is merely the process of the coming about of the latter. Similarly, difference is not some-thing other than presence, but is instead the function which brings the presencing of presence about. Priority in this context therefore seems to be based on a type of dependency which is suggested by the notion of "bringing about" itself. In this way Heidegger's prioritizing of difference can be understood to follow simply from the fact that it allegedly brings about presence.

What I am claiming is that to understand Heidegger's discourse on difference, insofar as it involves the notion of priority, one must not take difference in strict contrast

to identity as if a distinction could be drawn between the two. Doing so not only begs the question by presupposing a difference on which the distinction is based, but moreover it involves characterizing difference as a present element in a distinction. Rather, Heidegger's analysis suggests that difference can be characterized as prior only insofar as this notion is taken to mean that it brings about the presencing of presence. Thus, difference is not something other than identity or presence, but is rather that function which brings them about.

In light of this, it is clear that difference cannot be strictly separated from identity, but is nonetheless--as the function of identity--isolatable at a certain level of abstraction. What this means is that one is misled if, in the discourse, one finds oneself reading difference as some reified thing which can enter into relations. While priority is implied, therefore, it is not of the type that would sanction that characterization.

In light of the above, I have already answered the second part of the question which involved the issue of the alleged independence of difference. As I have noted, difference is clearly not independent of identity or presence. This is because independence, much like the traditional characterization of priority, presupposes both that a difference is already at work, and that what is independent is

in some sense a substantial element or present thing. Of course, neither of these characterizations can be legitimately applied to difference. Given this, it is clear that difference, as that function which brings about identity or presence, is not something that can exist apart from that which it brings about. Once again, it is prior only insofar as its role is characterized in terms of "bringing about," and such a characterization does not imply any independent existence.

In terms of both priority and independence, one could say that difference is prior insofar as it brings about the presencing of presence, but is dependent, in terms of its own actuality as a function, on that which it brings about. Simply put, difference as a function cannot exist apart from that which it is the function thereof. While this may sound somewhat strange, if one refrains from reifying difference into a second term, it will be apparent that it is not that different from an analogy that would suggest that the function of dividing is what brings about a mathematical division, but that in terms of its own actuality as a function it is nonetheless clearly dependent on the realization of such a division. One only runs into trouble here if one understands this as a relation between two terms (dividing and a division), rather than as a discourse about a function which brings terms about.

But the reader may still be concerned. Is not the real issue here the very claim that difference is that which brings about identity and presence? Why does Heidegger characterize ontological dependency in the order that he does? In other words, why should one understand difference to be that which brings about identity or presence and not the other way around? Does difference, even characterized as the function which brings about identity, impose itself on one any more forcefully than bare identity itself? Thus, when Heidegger speaks of encountering difference "everywhere and always in the matter of thinking," as he does in the passage above, one is inclined to respond by pointing out that this in no way mandates the privileging of difference over identity or presence insofar as the latter are themselves encountered with apparently equal facticity in life and thought. Why then the privileging of difference in terms of ontological dependence and priority?

In responding to this concern, let me first stress that one must keep in mind the apparent presupposition that Heidegger has in thinking about Being, that Being, as such, is an issue. Heidegger's project presupposes that simple being, characterized in terms of presence, is not the whole story about Being itself. From his perspective, it is only a tradition blinded by its own metaphysics that can proceed without questioning more deeply into the being of simple

presence. Given this starting point, whatever its ultimate justification may be, it is not surprising then that when in the depths of his analysis difference turns up as a heretofore unquestioned element, that it is going to be privileged as that which brings about the simple presence or identity that it was originally the purpose of the Seinsfrage to put in question. In other words, given the Seinsfrage one has no reason to expect that Heidegger, upon the advent of the difference, would look to identity and presence and in some dialectical affirmation claim a symmetrical ontological dependency between difference and identity or presence of the type that the question above suggests. To do so would be to presuppose what he takes to be at issue, i.e., the Being of beings or the presencing of identity or presence. While this question certainly looks legitimate from one perspective, it is certainly not the perspective that Heidegger holds at the beginning.

To make this more specific, let me say that to claim that identity or presence has just as much ontological priority as difference--which Heidegger takes to be that which brings the former about--is simply to beg the question of Being. It is to refuse to play Heidegger's game by denying the presupposition on which the game is based. For the same reason, it is an example of an external critique whereby what is at issue is denied outright prior to a full

engagement with its concerns and their associated logic. But in addition to these considerations, there is also a further issue which might help to shed more light on this situation.

I suggested earlier in this chapter (Section One, Part I) that it might be helpful in coming to terms with the question of Being to understand Heidegger's project as involving certain religious concerns. In particular, I suggested that the Being question might be viewed as that path of thought that seeks what is absolute or ultimate, characterized in terms of the last possible thought on the genesis of being. However, another way of articulating the notion of the absolute in this context, particularly insofar as it involves the notion of the last possible thought, would be in terms of the "fundamental."

The fundamental in this context would be that isolatable dimension or element, irreducible by further thought, that could be taken into account for the genesis of being. With this in mind, and given the flow of Heidegger's path from Being to presencing, it is quite understandable how difference comes to be characterized as this fundamental or the absolute. Thus, with two terms in hand--Being and beings--and the issue of there presencing isolated as the central matter for thought, the subsequent realization that any further analysis and its resultant outcome would in fact

presuppose difference must have clearly suggested to Heidegger that it was in fact difference itself that was this irreducible element that he had sought. This element would of course then come to be characterized as the genitive component of presence, or that which brings about presencing.

In relation to this issue of the question of difference, Joseph Kockelmans cites William Richardson:

It appears that Heidegger wished to suggest that asking this question is typical for his own way of thinking and "bears testimony to his relentless pursuit of an always more fundamental, always receding source."⁵²

If one attempts to understand the priority of difference in light of the paradigm I have suggested, I think Heidegger's moves seem more understandable, if not somewhat more justified. But as Kockelmans suggestively points out, one must understand this move, as Heidegger apparently did himself, insofar as it is "typical for his own way of thinking," a "way" that is admittedly hard to pin down, not only in terms of its method but in terms of its concerns as well.

A further point might be helpful in illuminating the privileging of difference. Again, it must be remembered that the privileging of difference is nothing other than the privileging of Being that had been a part of Heidegger's doctrine since Being and Time. To understand this privileging, one must keep in mind that, for Heidegger, Being is always an a priori.

The notion of the a priori as Heidegger understands it not only suggests the particular peculiarities of the characterization of the prior which I discussed in Section One, Part IV, but also implies that that which is prior in terms of the a priori is also prior to the understanding. Being is that by virtue of which beings are understandable, but which itself cannot be fully understood. Once again, however, in light of this formulation, a theological analogy is suggested.

In traditional theology, God is understood as that which while surpassing all understanding nonetheless makes all understandable. In other words, God is characterized as the non-sensible, non-intelligible source of all sensation and intelligibility. It is not hard to see that, for Heidegger, Being plays a similar role. However, I do not mean to imply that Being is in any way God for Heidegger, but simply to point out that the structural elements of the problem of understanding are analogous. Moreover, in doing so, I also want to suggest once again that it may be within this theological context that the privileging of Being, presencing, and finally difference, thought in the terms of the a priori can be most effectively understood.

Along these lines, John Caputo notes a suggestive correlation between certain passages in St. Bonaventure's The Minds Road to God⁵³ and Heidegger's notion of the a priori,

insofar as it involves the privileging of Being as prior to understanding. This correlation comes about by virtue of the fact that Carl Braig's book, On Being: Outline of Ontology,⁵⁴ which Heidegger mentions as being influential in the early formation of the Seinsfrage,⁵⁵ opens with a passage from Bonaventure's book:

[He] distinguishes between pure Being (ipsum esse, esse purissimum), on the one hand, and particular beings (entia particularia) and universals (et universalia), on the other. Bonaventure claims that Being is what first enters the intellect, that Being is the first concept that the mind conceives, without which nothing else is intelligible. In Being and Time Heidegger cites virtually the same notion from St. Thomas (SZ, 1,3/43;ST,I-II,94,2). For both Heidegger and the medieval thinkers Being is an "a priori," a prius which precedes our understanding of particular beings.⁵⁶

Caputo goes on to point out that, like Heidegger, the Saint nonetheless also recognizes that the intellect contains a certain blindness insofar as it fails to recognize Being itself:

"Marvelous then is the blindness of the intellect which does not consider that which is its primary object and without which it can know nothing." The human mind, "intent upon particular and universal beings," ignores Being itself, which it looks upon as darkness and nothingness, even as the eye, intent upon perceiving colors, takes no account of the light which illuminates them. Bonaventure says: "When it [the mind] looks upon the light of the highest Being, it seems to see nothing, not understanding that darkness itself is the fullest manifestation of the mind."⁵⁷

Caputo concludes that:

It does not take much imagination to see what Heidegger could later make of this passage. For the saint is pointing here to our pre-ontological understanding of Being, the forgotten horizon which makes our

understanding of beings possible. And the blindness of the intellect suggests Heidegger's oblivion of Being in favor of beings, which even Heidegger himself calls a "blindness toward Being. . . ." Though it may be foolish to say that Heidegger learned all this from St. Bonaventure, it is not so foolish to see in this passage a signpost pointing Heidegger in a certain direction.⁵⁸

Once again, all of this simply suggests the extent to which Heidegger's moves, such as the privileging of Being and difference, seem to make more sense when understood against the backdrop of scholastic theology. But in light of this, two points must be noted. First, this backdrop does not make Heidegger's moves legitimate, anymore than it is itself legitimate. Second, one should not gather from this comparison that Heidegger's moves are in essence theological, at least not in any traditional sense. As mentioned in Section One, Part I, it might be that the theological tradition itself contains certain strains that can best be characterized as metaphysical or ontological.

I now return to the main topic, which is how Heidegger characterizes this difference which he has so prioritized and privileged. Even if the readers' concerns have not been put to rest by the proceeding discussion, I hope they have at least been persuaded to press on by virtue of the larger context of understanding provided here.

Part III

As I have noted, difference is to be understood as that which brings about the presencing of presence. However, more can be said here about the characteristics of this difference. In this light, Heidegger offers a series of conceptual refinements aimed at exploring its operation more fully.

So far, I have suggested that difference opens up a situation whereby what is unfolded is at the same time held together by virtue of the unfolding. Thus Being and beings are set apart, and yet in this very setting apart are held together. It can be said that difference carries out of itself, and yet holds together through itself, the terms in question. This mutual bearing outside of--while bearing together--is the function of the difference, and that which shows it to be that which brings presencing about. In the essay "Language," Heidegger describes this function as follows:

The unifying scission [difference] gathers together the two [differentiated elements] out of itself, insofar as it calls them into the fissure (Riss) which it itself is.⁵⁹

Notice that it "gathers together the two" from "out of itself." Thus the gathering together is a holding together by virtue of the unfolding itself. What is unfolded is held in the mutual tension of this fold by the difference which is

what brings about the fold itself. Thus the terms are both unfolded into, and sustained in, the relationship of presence by virtue of the difference. The difference, as the nexus point of the un-folding, therefore always holds together that which is unfolded in an essential relationship that reflects this nexus point itself. Moreover, as I suggested at the end of Section Two, Part I, this relationship is one of mutual dependency between the terms, whereby each term must always be in a relationship with its other through the difference for either to be. The totality of this situation of the dependency relation brought about through the difference is called the Ereignis, which has been translated as the "event of appropriation."⁶⁰

At the outset, the notion of appropriation as it is employed in this context may strike the reader as peculiar. One normally understands this notion to suggest a certain "taking possession of" something.⁶¹ For example, I may appropriate a colleague's manuscript for the purpose of utilizing it in a current research project. But what is such a notion doing in the context in which it appears here? Let me explain.

Etymologically, the word Ereignis contains at least three senses. First, in common parlance, it has the meaning of event, occurrence, or happening. More interesting, however, are its two root meanings. As Joan Stambaugh points

out in her introduction to Identity and Difference,⁶² Ereignis involves both the sense of the word er-eignen and the sense of the word er-augnen.

In the first case, er-eignen means own, or one's own. In this context, the employment of this term suggests a certain ownership, or a making something one's own by taking possession of it. But it also suggests a certain process of coming into one's own in the sense of arriving where one belongs. Along with this latter sense of the term goes the notion of propriety or the proper, insofar as it is proper to be where one belongs. Thus this term suggests both a sense of appropriating something, or making it one's own, and a sense of the coming into being of oneness itself.

In this light the first sense of the term er-eignen already suggests the translation of Ereignis in terms of appropriation. But to understand the second sense of the term er-eignen, and how it relates to Ereignis, one must address the second root meaning of Ereignis itself.

In the second case, then, er-augnen, as derived from auge, which means eye, implies a certain seeing. This seeing can be understood in terms of phenomenology as a form of showing itself in the present. For there to be seeing, there must be an appearance or a showing forth of something in presence. In this light, er-augnen can be understood to suggest the notion of presencing itself. Moreover, the

connection between this notion and the second sense of er-eignen as a coming into one's own can now be made explicit.

In this context, coming into one's own is to be understood precisely as that process of coming into presence thought in terms of presencing. In presencing, a thing comes into that which is most its own, i.e., into presence as present. Thus, the second sense of er-eignen is understood to have essentially the same meaning as er-augnen, both indicate the presencing of presence.

But the question remains: What does the first sense of er-eignen, understood in terms of appropriation, have to do with presencing? In terms of the translation of Ereignis as the "event of appropriation," one can see that the second sense of er-eignen, when coupled with the sense of er-augnen and thought together in terms of presencing, indicates that the event or occurrence which is the common meaning of Ereignis is nothing other than the "event" of presencing itself. But the complete translation of Ereignis is not the "event of presencing"; it is the "event of appropriation." However, inasmuch as Ereignis is translated in terms of event, and event here does mean presencing, at least half of the situation has been clarified. But the question regarding the meaning of the notion of appropriation remains unanswered.

In his introduction to Poetry, Language, Thought, in the context of discussing Heidegger's essay "The Thing" in which the notion of the fourfold is explored, Albert Hofstadter explains Ereignis in the following way:

Thus ereignen comes to mean, in his writing, the joint process by which the four of the fourfold are able, first, to come out into the light and clearing of truth, and thus each to exist in its own truthful way, and secondly, to exist in appropriation of and to each other, belonging together in the round dance of their being; and what is more, this mutual appropriation becomes the very process by which the emergence into the light and clearing occurs, for it happens through the sublimely simple play of their mutual mirroring. The mutual lighting-up, reflecting, eraugnen is at the same time the mutual belonging, appropriating, ereignen; and conversely, the happening, das Ereignis, by which alone the meaning of Being can be determined, is this play of eraugnen and ereignen: it is an Eraugnen which is an Ereignen and an Ereignen which is an Eraugnen.⁶³

Ereignis, then, as I noted above, can be understood to contain two senses in addition to its general meaning as event or occurrence.

First, it means simply the presencing of presence, or the coming into presence in terms of appearing, that I have been discussing all along. Moreover, inasmuch as I have characterized difference as that which brings about presencing, Ereignis can be understood as the event of difference itself. In other words, it is the event of differentiation which unfolds the differentiated terms into their mutual relationship.

Regarding this relationship, I have already noted that it is one of mutual dependency whereby the terms rely on each other, i.e., they can be only if they are connected to each other through the difference. But let me be clear. What is being claimed is that a term can come into presence only if it is differentiated from what then comes to be its other. If a term is not in this relationship of difference with its other term, than there are no terms. For there to be term "A," there must be some term "non-A," which makes possible the appearance of "A" itself. Likewise, term "non-A" is involved in the same dependent relation inasmuch as it relies on term "A" for its own being. They are, therefore, mutually dependent. What they presuppose is the difference which brings about this dependent relationship.

But again the difference is not some-thing other than the terms in question, and most importantly it is not some third thing which must be related to the terms themselves; rather, it is merely the function of otherness that each term must presuppose to be what it is. It is simply the scission between terms that is the mark of otherness itself. What is crucial is that it is understood that this relationship between terms is essential, i.e., the terms cannot be without it.

Second, then, Ereignis suggests a situation in effect between terms whereby the terms are mutually dependent on

each other for their own being. This relation of dependence is characterized as appropriation. In the context of this discussion, what this means is that each term stands in a relationship of mutual need in regard to the other term, i.e., it requires the other term in order to be what it is.

This notion of needing or requiring the other term is characterized--in admittedly a quite anthropomorphic way--as an appropriation of the other term. Thus it is said that terms appropriate one another. Regarding this notion of appropriation, again in relation to the fourfold, Hofstadter notes:

Each therewith reflects itself, in its own way, into its Eigenes, its own, within the simpleness of the four. The mirroring, lighting each of the four, ereignet their eigenes presencing into the simple belonging to one another. It is clear that Heidegger here is making use of the "own" meaning of "eigen" to read the sense of the verb ereignen as to make one's own, to appropriate. But instead of "appropriate" in the sense of one's own appropriation of something for oneself, for which the verb sich (etwas) aneignen is already available, Heidegger wants to speak of an activity or process by which nothing "selfish" occurs, but rather by which different members of the world are brought into belonging to and with one another and are helped to realize themselves and each other in realizing this belonging. . . . Ereignen is the verb that names the appropriating by which there can be a meaningful mutual entrusting and belonging of the four to each other.⁶⁴

The notion of appropriation as it is employed in this context simply suggests the insight that I have already discussed regarding the essential dependency of one term on the other by virtue of the difference. Insofar as terms are

essentially connected to one another, they are said to appropriate each other. Appropriation, then, in the sense in which it is intended here, suggests a certain relation of mutual belonging together that is thought to take place between terms which reflect their dependency on the difference and, thus, their dependency on each other.

Thus the two senses of Ereignis can now be brought together. As the "event of appropriation," Ereignis names the event of differentiation which brings about the presencing of terms in the form of an appropriative relationship. But as Hofstadter notes in the passage above, "this mutual appropriation becomes the very process by which the emergence into light and clearing occurs." The appropriative relation is not therefore something which takes place only after the terms are already present, but is understood along with difference as an a priori event which first brings the terms into presence.

In this light, appropriation can be understood as a description of the logic of relations which is implicit in the difference as the event of presencing. Difference comes about as this appropriative relation of mutually dependent belonging. In other words, difference brings about presencing by virtue of the opening of such a relation. Heidegger has thus offered an analysis of difference which suggests that it has certain characteristics, i.e., it can be

identified with a particular type of relationship. Ereignis is simply another name for the event of presencing thought in terms of the difference which comes about as this relation of mutually dependent belonging.

With this thought, I come to the conclusion of my exposition of Heidegger's exploration of the Seinsfrage as an investigation into difference. In another passage from On Time and Being, Heidegger states:

In the phrase "Being as Appropriation," the word "as" now means: Being, letting-presence sent in Appropriating, time extended in Appropriating. Time and Being appropriated in Appropriation. And Appropriation itself? Can we say anything more about it?⁶⁵

Further on, he notes:

What remains to be said? Only this: Appropriation appropriates. Saying this, we say the Same in terms of the Same about the Same.⁶⁶

Thus Ereignis, as the event of appropriation, is Heidegger's last word on the issue of the Seinsfrage, as least insofar as this involves plummeting its depths in terms of the analysis of difference. However, it should be remembered that, insofar as his investigation has been an inquiry into a particular form of differentiation (difference as a relation of mutual belonging, i.e., appropriation), it has implicitly suggested a certain logic of difference.

In Section Three of this chapter, I will examine this characterization of difference in terms of its logic in more detail, and, moreover, suggest something that may have been

overlooked. However, before I move on to this, I will briefly cover three other related issues.

Part IV

In the first essay of Identity and Difference, "The Principal of Identity," Heidegger attempts to lay out an alternate account of identity grounded in the event of appropriation. He is concerned here with characterizing identity in terms of the dependency relation. In this light, he reads the classical principal of identity: $A = A$, as A is A . To Heidegger, the "is" employed here signifies once again that a certain relation is in effect. This relation is again characterized as a certain belonging-together at the heart of identity itself.

Moreover, as I noted in Part III, this belonging is fundamental in terms of the dependency relation as brought forth through the difference. Identity is thus brought about with respect to the belonging, which, in expressing the dependency relation, once again suggests the difference understood as the event of appropriation. Therefore, identity now belongs to this event:

[It] becomes clear that Being belongs with thinking to an identity whose active essence stems from that letting belong together which we call the appropriation. The essence of identity is a property of the event of appropriation.⁶⁷

As with presence, identity is thought to be grounded in the difference by virtue of its logic of appropriation. Let me now say a few words regarding Heidegger's philosophy of language.

Heidegger's thought, and his later thought in particular, moves away from the fundamentally Aristotelian view of language which recognized a distinction between meaning as interior and expression as subsequent and exterior, to a position whereby it is the expression of language itself that first brings about meaning. Language to Heidegger is not to be understood as communication or representation of some prior meaning, therefore, but rather as the original coming about of meaning itself. Thus language, as manifestive in this sense, is closely related to the issues of the Seinsfrage insofar as the unfolding of terms within the difference as the event of appropriation is now also understood to be the origin of language and meaning.⁶⁸ This means that the terms of language take on meaning by virtue of the same relation of mutually dependent belonging as brought forth through the difference that brings about presencing. In fact, the presencing of terms and the "presencing" of the meaning of the terms takes place in fundamentally the same way, i.e., through difference as appropriation.

Thus language itself is a presencing of meaning first given through the event of difference as appropriation.

Moreover, two things follow from this account that are significant. First, insofar as the presencing of language is the first sign of meaning, Heidegger claims that it is not man himself that speaks, but rather it is that man as such is spoken by language. This means that man does not bring presencing through language, but that language as the site of presencing brings man. Of course, man facilitates this process by being that being which is the vessel capable of embodying this disclosure, but man's role is only passive receptivity in the face of the presencing which, in giving the gift of language, opens the world as meaning. It can therefore be said that man does not accomplish language, but rather undergoes language as such.⁶⁹ This means that man's role as a linguistic being is basically one of passive receptivity to what comes to presence in and through language itself.

Second, it follows from this that language itself is grounded in the deeper strata of Being that I have been addressing. Thus, while language is clearly essential to the presencing process thought in terms of difference, the event of difference itself is not essentially linguistic in character; rather, it seems to have a certain pre-linguistic status. This is the case because, as I have noted, language comes about through the difference, and as such is present only by virtue of the difference as the event of presencing.

Difference therefore does not "happen in language," but rather "is the happening of language."⁷⁰ This distinction is important in that it suggests that, insofar as I will be dealing with language in this study, I will be interested in it only in terms of how it comes about, that is, in terms of ontological considerations. Moreover, this suggests that, insofar as there is nothing essentially linguistic about difference, an investigation into the logic of difference is not necessarily an investigation into language.

In terms of the issue of language in general, then, Heidegger, in a style characteristic of his later work, notes:

Language speaks as the peal of stillness. Stillness stills by the carrying out, the bearing and enduring, of world and things in their presence. The carrying out of world and thing in the manner of stilling is the appropriative taking place [Ereignis] of the difference. Language, the peal of stillness, is, inasmuch as the difference takes place. Language goes on as the taking place or occurring of the difference for world and things.⁷¹

With this in mind let me now turn to another issue which I have so far ignored.

Early on, I noted that for Heidegger the characterization of Being as presencing was thought to have been overlooked or forgotten (if one acknowledges its ambiguous appearance in certain Pre-Socratics) by the tradition. By remaining out of touch with this characterization, the meaning of Being remained in oblivion. However, it might be

thought that with the advent of Heidegger's investigations that this exile has now been overcome and that the oblivion of Being has been remedied. But this is apparently the case in only one sense, because, in On Time and Being, it is said that:

The thinking that begins with Being and Time is thus, on the one hand, an awakening from the oblivion of Being--an awakening which must be understood as a recollection of something which has never been thought --but on the other hand, as this awakening, not an extinguishing of the oblivion of Being, but a placing oneself in it and standing within it. Thus the awakening from the oblivion of Being to the oblivion of Being is the awakening into Appropriation.⁷²

The oblivion of Being has thus been overcome insofar as this involves the arrival of the proper question as inaugurated in Heidegger's thought.

But Heidegger's answer to the question in light of appropriation or difference shows that one is still in perpetual oblivion in terms of the availability of any more insight regarding the presencing process itself. In other words, one could say that, on the one hand, with the recognition of the difference, the meaning of the question of Being itself has been rescued from oblivion. However, on the other hand, oblivion as such has not thereby been overcome inasmuch as Heidegger seems to suggest that reflection on the difference simply places one within an oblivion of a more insidious sort.

This second sense of oblivion seems to be implied by the fact that one never really gets at the meaning of presencing as difference inasmuch as there is nothing substantial there to pursue. Difference, as I have already noted, is not some-thing-present but the function of presencing which grants presence. Thus, difference does not offer a present ground on which to rest in the fullness of meaning, but rather plays more the role of a void at the heart of meaning itself from which it nonetheless flows.

In light of my previous discussion, none of this should come as a surprise. But there may be another dimension to this second sense of oblivion to be found in Heidegger's discourse.

In On Time and Being, Heidegger notes, in reference to Being as the "it gives," that:

The latter withdraws in favor of the gift which It gives. That gift is thought and conceptualized from then on exclusively as Being with regard to beings. A giving which gives only its gift, but in the giving holds itself back and withdraws, such a giving we call sending.⁷³

Thus, that which gives withdraws and holds itself back. Oblivion, then, when taken in this sense, seems to imply some more substantial dimension or element which as withdrawn is self-withheld at the same time as it gives presence. But this notion of withdrawal or holding back seems to suggest that a certain structure is present in Heidegger's understanding of presencing. In this light,

presencing can be understood as a process of un-concealment whereby what is unconcealed as present is so evoked at the expense of presencing itself which conceals itself or holds itself back in this same act.

This notion of unconcealment is Heidegger's translation of the Greek word aletheia. On Heidegger's reading, this word contains at least two dimensions. A-letheia translated as un-concealment directly suggests that these two dimensions are a structure whereby in every act of unconcealment there is a mutual concealment. Thus a-letheia as un-concealment gets at the essential tension that Heidegger apparently finds at the heart of every event of presencing. Presencing contains a structured tension whereby it withdraws in giving its gift of presence. Further on, Heidegger wonders:

[Does] self-concealing, concealment, lethe belongs to a-letheia, not just as an addition, not as shadow to light, but rather as the heart of aletheia? And does not even a keeping and preserving rule in this self-concealing of the opening or presence from which unconcealment can be granted to begin with, and thus what is present can appear in its presence? If this were so, then the opening would not be the mere opening of presence, but the opening of presence concealing itself, the opening of a self-concealing sheltering.⁷⁴

Thus the "keeping" and "preserving" of that which withdraws seems to tell of a certain something which is sheltered in the act of presencing. In this light, the meaning of oblivion in this second sense seems to be involved with the perpetual unavailability of what is so sheltered. The

oblivion of Being then points to that which withdraws into shelter in the very act of presencing itself. Moreover, oblivion understood in this way cannot be overcome inasmuch as this concealment belongs to the very structure of the presencing event. The heart of presencing itself never reveals itself.

But the reader may now be wondering how passages such as the previous two can be reconciled with the bulk of my previous discussion. How is it that what is isolated as that which brings presencing about, i.e., the difference, can be attributed with characteristics that seem to suggest that it lies concealed as some latent presence? On the surface, it clearly seems senseless to attribute such presence to difference which obviously cannot be an instance of presence itself. Why then is this discourse of sheltering evoked if it is apparently neither necessary to nor consistent with the rest of the Seinsfrage as it unfolds?

While this is an interesting and important issue. I will not offer any further account of it in this study. Instead, I will pursue an issue which I take to be more important for Heidegger's concerns as they relate to his account of difference. This issue, which I will introduce in the next section, can be characterized as the concern over contamination.

The Role of Contamination in the
Logic of Difference

Part I

Let me again focus on difference as the event of appropriation. Difference, as I noted previously, is that unique event which comes forth as appropriation. Now the "as" employed in this sentence implies something quite specific; it suggests that difference, insofar as it takes place, does so in terms of a particular type of relationship. This relationship, as I have noted, is one of mutual dependency whereby terms depend on each other in order to come about in terms of presence and identity. The heart of this dependence involves the claim that the terms take on identity and presence by virtue of a relationship which finds each belonging to the other by virtue of the delimitation set forth by the difference.

But something very specific calls for recognition here. One must pay close attention to the fact that the terms, in belonging to one another, apparently do so externally as mediated by the difference. In other words, the terms, while mutually belonging to each other, participate in this situation in a way that suggests that they are nonetheless outside of one another. Thus the difference mediates the terms, which, while depending on one another, do so only

through this mediation, which, in offering them their identity and presence, at the same time keeps them apart.

As suggested above, one could say then that the terms relate to each other externally in that it is only through the mediation of the difference that the terms, so to speak, meet each other. To put this quite metaphorically, the terms apparently meet only at the border, always respecting the delineation of its boundary, which, as what marks the other as other, is what brings them about and sustains them.

What this means in terms of appropriation is that, in making the other its own, a term manifests this ownness externally. In terms of the relation of belonging together, this means that while the terms are always in contact, this contact is not of the sort that would suggest that the terms somehow penetrate each other. In other words, the notion of appropriation characterized in terms of belonging together does not indicate that the terms reside within one another. The dependency relation brought forth through the difference does not suggest what one could call an internal relationship, i.e., one where the terms permeate each other.

Thus, in Heidegger's logic, appropriation is characterized as a necessary but nonetheless external relationship between the term and its other as set up through the difference. What is important to focus on here is the

characterization of appropriation in terms of this externality.

But the reader may now be wondering what justification I have for so readily characterizing the appropriative relation in this way. Certainly one other possible option would have been to interpret appropriation as suggesting some form of internal relationship between terms. Exploring this option, one might be led to claim that, in making the other its own, a term does not in fact strictly respect the boundary between it and its other. Rather, in appropriation it might be thought that the relation of belonging together is not an external one. As indicated above, this would mean that the terms might be understood to belong to one another in such a fashion that they mutually penetrate each other. On this account the appropriative dependency relation would be interpreted so as to suggest that the belonging together of the terms takes place so essentially that the terms must in some sense mutually permeate one another. Moreover, this account might also be taken to suggest that the logic of external belonging outlined previously is not a characterization that will account for the presencing of presence. It might be that, upon further analysis, one is forced to acknowledge that the belonging of appropriation must involve a certain mutual internalization between terms in order to account for identity and presence.

However, if one should find this account more plausible based on the logic in question, it must then be asked: What becomes of identity and presence in light of this account? Surprisingly, this question suggests itself because, while this option might have been pursued for the purpose of correcting the underdeveloped logic of externality in the interest of accounting for identity and presence, in fact it might prove questionable how either can then be understood in light of this correction once the doctrine of relations comes to be characterized as internal.

Along with this characterization comes the suggestion that a difference has inserted itself not only between the terms in question but within the terms as well, a difference that may be seen to disrupt the very end aim of identity and presence that it was thought to be in the service of.⁷⁵ If this case was found to be plausible in light of the logic at hand, the understanding of difference as that which brings about presencing would have to be subsequently characterized as self-defeating in terms of the same.

The exploration of this option is the topic of the third chapter; thus, therefore, I am in danger of getting ahead of myself. I bring up this issue here only to preliminarily set up the contrast around which the focus of this study orbits, and to introduce a term, i.e., contamination, which will come to characterize this focus.

In light of this latter option, contamination suggests the degree to which the introduction of the other into the alleged purity of the term in question by virtue of the relation of belonging might be seen to taint or corrupt the said purity of the term, with the possible result being the problematization of identity and presence, as suggested above. Thus contamination is that state of affairs whereby, due to some form of internalization between terms, they lose their respective identities and presence. In essence, they are so inner-penetrant that they lose themselves in the very situation which was precipitated in their coming about.

Now this account already suggests that there could be various degrees, levels, or types of contamination, but I am reserving this designation for that degree, level, or type that results in the full breakdown or non-manifestation of identity and presence as alluded to above. Other forms of contamination, should there be any, I will always note with some qualification. With this in mind, then, let me examine a few further passages from Heidegger's texts in hopes of shoring up my interpretation of appropriation as a belonging together characterizable in terms of external relations.

Part II

In another passage from the essay "Language," Heidegger, in reflecting on the relation between world and things (or Being and beings, or any terms, for that matter), notes:

For world and things do not subsist alongside one another. They penetrate each other. Thus the two transverse a middle. In it, they are at one. Thus at one they are intimate. The middle of the two is intimacy--in Latin, inter. The corresponding German word is unter, the English inter-. The intimacy of world and thing is not a fusion. Intimacy obtains only where the intimate--world and thing--divides itself cleanly and remains separated. In the midst of the two, in the between of world and thing, in their inter, division prevails: a difference. The intimacy of world and thing is present in the separation of the between; it is present in the difference.⁷⁶

Of particular interest in this passage is that it is said that the terms "penetrate each other." Does this penetration suggest a type of contamination? Since he claims that "world and things do not subsist alongside one another" but "penetrate each other," it might be thought that appropriation is here being characterized as involving a certain degree of internalization between terms.

But this penetration is clearly not to the point of being at the expense of either term insofar as the identity and presence of the terms themselves are apparently never in question. Rather, the employment of the notion of penetration here seems to call attention to their mutuality evoked

through the difference. They penetrate each other insofar as they have a central root.

Heidegger states: "the two transverse a middle." Thus their penetration occurs within the middle thought as the difference. Their penetration, then, is understood as a result of their common origin within the unity that is this middle as such. Within this middle, he claims "they are at one." This being at one is subsequently characterized in terms of "intimacy." Once again, however, he notes that "the intimacy of world and thing is not a fusion."

From this, one can gather that penetration is to be understood as an intimacy that takes place by virtue of their mutual rootedness within the difference as their common center. In other words, the difference, as that which brings about the unfolding, evokes an intimate relationship whereby the terms are so related by virtue of their instantiation in the common one from which they unfold. The penetration of terms then must be interpreted as a comment about their rootedness in a common genetic source, and not as a claim about their status in terms of their manifest unfoldedness. Terms inter-penetrate at the point of their common nexus in the difference, but this is ultimately in service of their distinct separateness. Again, Heidegger notes: "Intimacy obtains only where the intimate . . . divides itself cleanly and remains separated."

Thus it seems plausible to interpret this passage as suggesting that a kind of contamination, characterized by Heidegger as penetration, does take place, but that it is in fact limited strictly to the boundary between the terms understood as the difference. While one might characterize this as a form of contamination, the qualification that it is limited strictly to the point of the difference itself, and the fact that in being so limited it does not call for the internalization of the terms to the point of their mutual dissolution, implies that it does not meet the criteria of contamination proper, as I briefly outlined above.

Further, then, as suggested previously, appropriation is thus characterized in Heidegger's logic as a necessary but nonetheless external relation of belonging together whereby the terms, although meeting in the commonality of the difference, still respect its boundary as that which brings them about through this relationship. Thus it is maintained that identity and presence are made possible by this doctrine of external relations understood as appropriation.

In another essay, entitled "The Thing," Heidegger notes:

The gathered presence of the mirror-play of the world, joining in this way, is the ringing. In the ringing of the mirror-playing ring, the four nestle into their unifying presence, in which each one retains its own nature. So nestling, they join together, worlding, the world.⁷⁷

The "worlding" referred to here is the function of the difference as the event of appropriation which in evoking the world lets the four (earth, sky, divinities, and mortals) "nestle" in a way "in which each one retains its own nature." The "nestling" of "unifying presence" mentioned here is clearly not a breakdown of a terms "own nature," but is rather the manifestation of this nature in presence as an identity through the unifying yet differing function of the difference. Moreover the "mirror-play" as the event-uation of the "unifying presence" is thus appropriation characterized in terms of the externality of the relation which it names. Thus, once again, there appears to be little to suggest that there is contamination proper, in the sense that I have characterized it, employed in this passage insofar as relations still continue to be characterized as external by virtue of the difference.

But in light of what has been suggested above regarding the other option insofar as it involves contamination, it is apparently the retention of a terms "own nature" itself that has become the issue. Moreover, it must be remembered that this issue surfaces only after it becomes questionable whether appropriation as a belonging together understood as in terms of external relations is adequate in terms of its logic to bring presence about. It may be that a doctrine of internal relations, possibly called for to make Heidegger's

account of presencing operative in terms of difference as the event of appropriation, might also bring on such a large degree of contamination that this same function will have to be alternately characterized as that which makes presence impossible.⁷⁸

Part III

With this suggestion, a transition to the next chapter is called for. There I will take up Derrida's analysis as it applies to these issues. But before moving on, allow me to review and summarize the three crucial points of this last section, and, moreover, to suggest how these will prefigure my concerns in the following chapter.

First, and most obvious, is that presence itself has never been called into question by Heidegger's project. The playing out of the Seinsfrage, as an attempt to offer an account of the presencing of presence thought in terms of difference, never questions the original phenomena which as its primary data grounds the question. In other words, in Heidegger's account, the phenomena are never in question, just their mode of coming about.

Second, in connection with this, in the passages I have examined, there has been no incidence of contamination of the type that would problematize presence or its arrival through presencing.

Third, I have suggested that this is the case because difference as the event of appropriation can be characterized as involving a doctrine of external relations, a doctrine which is thought to be capable of accounting for the presencing of presence. In this way, since relations are always thought to be external, contamination never becomes an issue and the presencing of presence is never problematized.

In the next chapter, however, each of these points will be called into question. First, I will discuss whether the logic of difference as appropriation characterized in terms of a doctrine of external relations is adequate to account for the presencing of presence. In other words, can relations characterized as external account for what Heidegger suggests is essential for presencing inasmuch as it involves difference as bringing forth an appropriative relation of mutual belonging?

Moreover, if external relations are found to be inadequate for the purposes of presencing so stated, and an alternate analysis open to characterization as the doctrine of internal relations suggests itself as a way to make the presencing of presence functional, what is one to make of the by-product of this corrected logic characterizable as contamination insofar as it apparently problematizes the identity and presence of the terms themselves?

Finally, if this contamination is revealed to be unavoidable in light of this logic of internal relations, what becomes of the presencing of presence that it was the *raison d'être* of this new logic, as applied to difference as appropriation, to make functional? In other words, in what sense does the correction necessary to make Heidegger's project work also show it to be self-defeating?

While the answers to these questions for the most part have already been indicated, what remains to be done is to investigate the logic that apparently calls for such moves. Specifically, I address the hinge issue of the adequacy of the alleged externality of the relation of belonging insofar as it appears to be the operative mechanism which drives the logic of appropriation in terms of difference forward. Thus, with the pivotal concern clearly in focus, I move on to examine Derrida and différance.

Notes

1. See, for example, Frederick A. Olafson, Heidegger and the Philosophy of the Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); Robert Bernasconi, The Question of Language in Heidegger's History of Being (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press International, 1985); James Perotti, Heidegger and the Divine: The Thinker, The Poet, and God (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1974); and Richard Rorty, Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

2. This applicability has been pursued in various ways. Examples include: Schurmann, Heidegger on Being and Acting; Werner Marx, Is There a Measure on Earth? Foundations for a Non-metaphysical Ethics, trans. Thomas J. Nenon and Reginald Lilly (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); and Mark Blitz, Heidegger's "Being and Time" and the Possibility of Political Philosophy (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981).

3. See Martin Heidegger, "A Letter on Humanism," trans. Edger Lohner, in Philosophy in the Twentieth Century, ed. William Barrett and Henry D. Aiken (New York: Random House, 1962), III:270-302; also note Jacques Derrida's interesting treatment of this issue in his essay, "The Ends of Man," in Margins of Philosophy, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 109-136.

4. "Fundamental ontology" is the description given to the methodology of the Seinsfrage as it appears in Heidegger's Being and Time, pp. 33-35.

5. See Jacques Derrida, Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), for an interesting examination of this and other issues related to Heidegger's political discourse as it involves his ontology.

6. Heidegger, Being and Time, p. 19 (from Plato's Sophist, 244a).

7. Martin Heidegger, "My Way to Phenomenology," in On Time and Being, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), pp. 74-82. This essay was written in honor of

the publisher Hermann (Max) Niemeyer on the occasion of his eightieth birthday. Niemeyer was the original publisher of Edmund Husserl's work, and as such became the principal instrument by virtue of which phenomenology came to be recognized.

8. Ibid., p. 74.
9. Edmund Husserl, Logical Investigations, trans. J. N. Findlay (New York: Humanities Press, 1970).
10. Heidegger, "My Way to Phenomenology," p. 78.
11. Husserl, Logical Investigations, sec. 6.
12. Heidegger, "My Way to Phenomenology," p. 79.
13. Heidegger, Being and Time, p. 19. Note the translator's footnote no. 2, regarding the translation of "Sinn" as meaning or sense.
14. Heidegger, "My Way to Phenomenology," p. 75.
15. For a more complete treatment of this issue, see, for example, Timothy J. Stapleton, Husserl and Heidegger: The Question of a Phenomenological Beginning (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1983).
16. See Edmund Husserl, Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology, trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson (New York: Collier-Macmillan, 1962), chap. 3, sec. 31, p. 98, and chap. 3, sec. 32, p. 100.
17. Ibid., chap. 9, sec. 88, p. 239.
18. Heidegger, "My Way to Phenomenology," p. 82.
19. Martin Heidegger, "Time and Being," in On Time and Being, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 5.
20. The question regarding the extent to which the Pre-Socratics were apparently aware of this understanding of Being is an interesting issue for Heideggerean scholarship. Moreover, whether Heidegger himself is justified in claiming that anything like this characterization can be found in the Pre-Socratics is an issue that warrants further attention.
21. See Rudolf Carnap, "The Overcoming of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language," reprinted in Michael

Murray, ed., Heidegger and Modern Philosophy: Critical Essays (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), pp. 23-34.

22. Martin Heidegger, Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics, trans. James S. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962).

23. Martin Heidegger, The Basic Problems of Phenomenology, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 17.

24. For a full account of this tension, see *Ibid.*, pp. 146-147.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129.

26. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. N. K. Smith (New York: St. Martins Press, 1965).

27. Heidegger claims: "Kant always stresses here that as transcendental philosophy ontology has to do with knowledge of objects. This does not mean, as Neo-Kantianism interpreted it, epistemology. Instead, since ontology treats of the being of beings and, as we know, Kant's conviction is that being, actuality, equals perceivedness, being known, it follows that ontology as science of being must be the science of the being-known of objects and of their possibility. It is for this reason that ontology is transcendental philosophy. The interpretation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason as epistemology completely misses the true meaning"; see Heidegger, The Basic Problems of Phenomenology, p. 128.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

30. Being and Time, originally published in 1927, was Heidegger's earliest work dealing directly with the topic of temporality; his On Time and Being, originally published in 1969, was one of the last works where the topic was explicitly engaged.

31. Heidegger, The Basic Problems of Phenomenology, p. 145.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 324.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 325.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

35. Aristotle, Physics, in The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), book IV, sec. C, pp. 289-300.

36. Heidegger, "Time and Being," p. 17

37. Martin Heidegger, "The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics," in Identity and Difference, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 57-60. This bilingual edition contains both English and German versions; some footnotes will include page numbers for the German version in parentheses.

38. Heidegger's understanding of what it means to "think about something" is quite peculiar, and is involved with the ontological discourse he is trying to open up. In brief, he often expresses the notion of "thinking about something" in terms of "thinking x," or "thinking the x." For example, one does not "think about Being," rather one "thinks Being." This move is meant to guard against the tendency to think that one is thinking about something in the sense of a present thing. The phrase "thinking about x" seems to suggest that "x" is some present thing more readily than does the phrase "thinking x," which attempts to disarm this tendency. To "think Being" is not to think about some mode of presence that "thinking about Being" may suggest. See Martin Heidegger, What Is Called Thinking, trans. Fred W. Wieck and J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).

39. Martin Heidegger, Nietzsche, trans. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), II:209.

40. Heidegger, "The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics," p. 71.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. Heidegger, Identity and Difference. In the introduction, Joan Stambaugh notes: "It came as no surprise to this translator when Heidegger stated that he considered Identity and Difference to be the most important thing he has published since Being and Time."

44. Martin Heidegger, "The Principle of Identity," in Identity and Difference, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 23-41; and Heidegger, "The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics," pp. 42-74.

45. Heidegger, "The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics," pp. 63-64.

46. Ibid., p. 64.

47. From the Latin functio, meaning "to perform."

48. This is based on the fact that, as I have noted, difference must in some sense be the prior-opening of temporality as well as of being. This prior-ity does not allow difference to be understood in terms of movement, which would thus implicate it in temporal extension insofar as movement appears to be so implicated itself. In other words, since movement is traditionally thought to "take time," and difference must be that which brings about temporal extension, difference cannot itself be understood in terms of movement. It is the prior opening of temporality which movement itself presupposes. Thus difference as a function must be understood outside of the notion of movement. In the same light, it cannot be understood in terms of a process, if process is understood to presuppose temporality.

49. Heidegger, "The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics," pp. 63-64 (German, pp. 131-132)

50. Ibid., p. 64.

51. See Kockelmans, On the Truth of Being, p. 71. Note that Kockelmans characterizes the notion of Ereignis, which I will address shortly, as "ontologically prior" to Being. In essence, this suggests the appropriateness of the same characterization for the relation of difference to identity and presence. Also note Heidegger's own characterization of the question of Being itself in terms of "ontological priority" in Being and Time, pp. 28-31. All the "answers" to this question likewise seem to be involved with this same priority.

52. Here, Kockelmans, On the Truth of Being, p. 80, cites William J. Richardson, Martin Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), p. 501.

53. Saint Bonaventure, The Mind's Road to God, trans. George Boas, Library of Liberal Arts (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953), pp. 35-36.

54. Carl Braig, Vom Sein: Abriss der Ontologie (Freiburg: Herder, 1896).
55. Heidegger, "My Way to Phenomenology," p. 74.
56. Caputo, Heidegger and Aquinas, p. 48.
57. Ibid., p. 49.
58. Ibid.
59. Martin Heidegger, "Language," in Poetry, Language, Thought, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 207. This translation, however, was modified to the way it appears here by Kockelmans, On the Truth of Being, p. 88.
60. For further reflections on this translation see Hofstadter's introduction to Martin Heidegger, Poetry, Language, Thought, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 19-21.
61. The Random House Dictionary, s.v., "Appropriation."
62. Heidegger, Identity and Difference, p. 14.
63. See Hofstadter's introduction to Heidegger, Poetry, Language, Thought, p. 21.
64. Ibid., pp. 19-20.
65. Heidegger, "Time and Being," p. 22.
66. Ibid., p. 24.
67. Heidegger, "The Principal of Identity," p. 39 (German, p. 103).
68. The essay "Language" in Heidegger's Poetry, Language, Thought contains what are probably some of Heidegger's most explicit statements on the topic.
69. This distinction I borrow from Matthew Fox's translation of one of Meister Eckhart's sermons, entitled "Letting Go of Intellect Creates a Transformation of Knowledge." There in another context Eckhart says: "For the event of hearing the eternal word is within me while the act of seeing departs from me. I undergo hearing, but I accomplish seeing. Our happiness, however, does not lie in our

accomplishments but rather in the fact that we undergo God." The open receptivity implied by this mode of comportment has parallels with much of Heidegger's work, but seems particularly apt in light of Heidegger's understanding of language. Matthew Fox, Breakthrough: Meister Eckharts Creation Spirituality in New Translation (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1980), sermon 18, p. 256. Other studies that explore the Heidegger/Eckhart relationship include: Reiner Schurmann, Meister Eckhart: Mystic and Philosopher (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978); and John Caputo, The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1978).

70. Caputo, Heidegger and Aquinas, p. 162.

71. Heidegger, "Language," p. 207.

72. This is from Alfred Guzzoni's "Summary of a Seminar on the Lecture 'Time and Being'," which is included in Heidegger's On Time and Being, pp. 29-30. In the reference section of On Time and Being, p. 84, it is noted that "the publication of the summary serves the purpose of clarifying and sharpening what is questionable in the text of the lecture."

73. Heidegger, "Time and Being," p. 8.

74. Heidegger, "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking," in On Time and Being, p. 71.

75. This characterization is borrowed from the introduction to Douglas Atkins, Reading Deconstruction Deconstructive Reading (Lexington: Kentucky University Press, 1983). However, the context here is quite dissimilar.

76. Heidegger, "Language," p. 202.

77. Martin Heidegger, "The Thing," in Poetry, Language, Thought, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 180.

78. The notion of "impossible" applied in this context has been suggested in various places as of late. In particular, see Gasché, The Tain of the Mirror, for an interesting, although not necessarily parallel application.

CHAPTER III

DERRIDA AND DIFFÉRANCE

In the previous chapter, I suggested that the crucial issue for the Seinsfrage in terms of difference is the occurrence of contamination, which may result if the appropriate relation is characterized as internal. I also suggested that this characterization might be called for by virtue of a reading of Heidegger's texts that finds this relation there characterized as external, and which further finds such a characterization inadequate to account for the presencing of presence. The result of this is that the characterization of relations that may be required to make difference functional in bringing about the presencing of presence may also call presence into question.

With this general thesis in mind, in this chapter, I will offer readings of several of Derrida's texts that will show how his notion of différance can be used to illuminate this problem. In particular, I will focus on the hinge issue of the externality versus the internality of relations, and explore how this issue is present in his discourse on différance.

To accomplish this, in the first section, I will explore this neologism as it appears in several of his earlier essays, including Speech and Phenomena,¹ "Différance,"² and Positions.³ Following this, in Section Two, I will again turn to Heidegger, analyzing further his characterization of difference in light of différance. Finally, in Section Three, I will examine a further issue apparent in Derrida's discourse on différance, which can be characterized as the employment of the notion of "effects." Here the question will be raised as to whether this employment can be supported in light of what I have already noted about différance. Before I begin, however, a few preliminary matters call for attention.

Insofar as this study attempts to bring together two diverse and complex thinkers around an issue of quite specific focus, the reader may be left wondering about the nature of this connection. From the perspective of this study, the question might arise strictly from the side of the Derridean: To what extent is Derrida's discussion of différance indebted or otherwise connected to Heideggerean difference? With this question in mind, it may prove helpful to remember that, in an interview with Henri Ronse contained in Positions, Derrida noted:

What I have attempted to do would not have been possible without the opening of Heidegger's questions. And first, since we must proceed rapidly here, would not have been possible without the attention to what

Heidegger calls the difference between Being and beings, the ontico-ontological difference such as, in a way, it remains unthought by philosophy.⁴

Moreover, in Of Grammatology, while reflecting specifically on the relation of difference and différance he claims:

One must therefore go by way of the question of being as it is directed by Heidegger and by him alone, at and beyond onto-theology, in order to reach the rigorous thought of that strange nondifference and in order to determine it correctly. . . .

It [différance] can, however, be thought of in the closest proximity to itself only on one condition: that one begins by determining it as the ontico-ontological difference before erasing that determination. The necessity of passing through that erased determination, the necessity of that trick of writing is irreducible.⁵

And further, in the essay "Différance," he suggests:

It already appears that the kind of questioning we are thus led back to is, let us say, the Heideggerian kind, and that différance seems to lead us back to the ontico-ontological difference. But permit me to postpone this reference. I shall only note that between différance as temporalizing-temporalization (which we can no longer conceive within the horizon of the present) and what Heidegger says about temporalization in Sein und Zeit (namely, that as the transcendental horizon of the question of being it must be freed from the traditional and metaphysical domination by the present or the now) --between these two there is a close, if not exhaustive and irreducibly necessary interconnection.⁶

Given statements such as these, it seems clear that there is a close relationship between Heidegger and Derrida around this issue of difference. But while there certainly seems to be a relationship, as is already suggested by the passages above, the exact nature of this relationship is complex.

Further on in Positions, in an interview with Jean-Louis Houdebine and Guy Scarpetta, while pondering the general character of Heidegger's discourse, Derrida notes:

Since in the course of an interview like this one I can only formulate, shall we say, a traveler's impressions, I sometimes have the feeling that the Heideggerean problematic is the most "profound" and "Powerful" defense of what I attempt to put into question under the rubric of the thought of presence.⁷

Such a "feeling" I will interpret as attributable to the concern over the apparent lack of the employment of contamination within Heidegger's logic of difference.

In this light, in a revealing series of remarks made at a colloquium entitled "Reading Heidegger" held at the University of Essex in May of 1986, and recorded in outline form by David Krell, Derrida noted:

Contamination, a contagion born of contact and a kind of touching, foils every strategy of protection; it puts at risk the central theme of Heidegger's thinking --that of the ontological difference. . . .

Being's difference from beings is itself dissimulated in beings, and thus appears to be a kind of contamination. Yet Heidegger would insist that contamination is merely and "ontic" scheme, a mere metaphor. . . .

Contamination requires the thinking of a kind of différance that is not yet or no longer ontological difference.⁸

The reference here to "a kind of contamination" points to the issue that surfaced toward the end of the previous chapter regarding the apparent limitation of contamination at the heart of Heidegger's logic of difference. As I noted, while one could persuasively argue that there is an element

of contamination between the terms insofar as they mutually penetrate in the between of the difference, nonetheless, this contamination was found not to problematize the identity or presence of the terms themselves, but rather to allow for the same insofar as it is the basis of their relation of mutual belonging. I thus felt justified in reading this contamination to be of a quite qualified sort, and clearly indicative of Heidegger's characterization of relations as external. Thus, from the perspective of this study, once again the issue of contamination is central, and insofar as this issue hinges on whether relations are characterized as external or internal within the logic of difference as appropriation, the path of investigation is clear.

However, the very narrow focus of interest as suggested by this issue will lead me to pass over many of the interesting analyses of Heidegger that take place in Derrida's texts.⁹ Rather than spending time exploring Derrida's readings of Heidegger, I investigate what seems to be suggested by the logic of Derrida's différance itself, and how in terms of that logic it relates to Heidegger's difference. Thus, while the narrowness of this focus admittedly leaves out much of interest in terms of the larger Heidegger-Derrida confrontation, it nonetheless seems justified, given what is at issue.

It must also be pointed out that, in light of my search for the rationale which accounts for the move from difference to différance, I will often employ a discourse that may strike the reader as quite metaphorical. However, given the nature of the topic, I trust the reader will bear with the various metaphorical descriptions which will help to serve the purpose of illumination.¹⁰

It should also be stressed that, as with Heidegger's difference, I am not here inaugurating a study into the manifold meaning of différance in Derrida. This qualification, however, is particularly applicable to Derrida's différance insofar as it is apparently grounded in the multiple sources that make up what has come to be recognized as the contemporary thought of difference.

In light of this perspective, one could approach différance through Hegel, Nietzsche, Saussure, Freud, Merleau-Ponty, Levinas, Bataille, Blanchot, Deleuze, or any number of other sources, and with equal success be able to show numerous points of contact and genetic influence.¹¹ My approach, to some extent, does that in terms of Husserl and Heidegger. However, my aim is narrower, not only in being interested strictly in the relationship with Heidegger, but more specifically in attempting only to explicate the logic inherent in différance itself.

Thus, while background influences are clearly important, I will be interested only in the final product of those influences, as it appears in terms of its own inner structure, within a narrow range of texts, and most importantly, in light of the context of Heidegger's problematic. With this in mind, let me move on with the investigation of différance.

The Logic of Différance

Part I

Derrida's notion of différance contains at least two primary meanings. As David Allison explains in a translator's footnote to Speech and Phenomena:

From the French "différence" he derives the term "différance." As in the Latin "differre," the French "différer" bears two quite distinct significations. One has a reference to spatiality, as the English "to differ"--to be at variance, to be unlike, apart, dissimilar, distinct in nature or quality from something. This is even more evident in its cognate form, "to differentiate." The other signification has a reference to temporality, as in the English "to defer"--to put off action to a future time, to delay or postpone.¹²

In reference to its English translation, he goes on to note:

I have thus chosen to follow Derrida's employment of différance by rendering it as "differance" in English. This should not be too disconcerting a translation, for it incorporates the common origin of the two relevant English verbs, "to defer" and "to differ," namely the Latin differre.¹³

Thus, différance names a certain combining of differing and deferral.

More specifically, differing indicates a certain "interval," "distance," or "spacing" that must occur between terms in order for them to be present and meaningful.¹⁴ In this characterization, one can already see the close association with Heidegger's difference. This is suggested because, insofar as differing as spacing is that which allows for the presence of the terms, it appears to be nothing more or less than the function of presencing that was likewise the characterization attributed to Heidegger's difference. At this point, one might understand differing to embody all that one understood about Heidegger's difference as appropriation. However, in terms of Derrida's différance, this is clearly not the end of the story, because, along with indicating differing, as noted above, it also indicates deferral.

Deferral indicates a reference to a certain temporal delay or postponement, i.e., a putting-off of some expected actuality or occurrence. In this sense, Derrida wants to understand deferral as "temporalizing."¹⁵ This dimension of delay or postponement did not come up previously in my discussion of Heidegger's discourse. This element appears to be new with Derrida. But the question then imposes itself: What is then delayed or postponed, and what does this have to do with differing as that which brings about presence and

meaning? In answering, let me return to the "a" of dif-
férence and its meaning.

Différance indicates the combining of the meanings of both differing and deferral. Yet this combining is not of the sort that might at first be suggested. To begin with, it is not of the sort that, by virtue of a reduction of the two terms, results in some third term that would incorporate their meanings. Thus différance does not signify something else besides differing and deferral, nor, on the other hand, does it respect the individual meanings of the two insofar as they might be understood as a type of dichotomy.

Thus, différance does not simply contain or encircle the two separate significations. Rather, the "a" of dif-
férence points to an inherent complexity whereby the allegedly distinct meanings of differing and deferral are neither reduced to a third term which would incorporate the two, nor sustained in a distinction which would respect the two. The neologism différance, therefore, attempts to indicate what Derrida apparently takes to be the only option left, i.e., a certain complication of the meaning of the terms themselves, whereby their status as separate terms is called into question.

What this means is that the allegedly distinct meanings of the terms cannot be maintained. In other words, on Derrida's account, one cannot clearly dissociate the meaning of

one term from the other to begin with, thereby making it impossible to treat these terms either as parts to be incorporated in a more inclusive whole, or as elements in a dichotomy. Thus, it is not as if différance contains an abundance of meaning in the form of multiple meanings, but rather that each of these alleged meanings is thought to have already been called into question. In this way, dif-férance cannot be understood as a term rich in meaning, but must be thought of as indicating a certain problematization of meaning itself.

The logic that Derrida employs to suggest such an account of meaning and language clearly involves the notion of internal relations, and insofar as the account of this notion consumes most of the current chapter, I will not discuss it in detail here. Nonetheless, it must be understood that, on Derrida's account, this problematization of meaning is itself nothing but a deferral, delay, or postponement of meaning. Derrida uses the notion of deferral to indicate that, insofar as the meaning of some term is understood to have been already called into question, its meaning can be thought of as having been postponed or put off.

This characterization comes about in part by virtue of Derrida's account of language, which involves the claim that the signifier, i.e., the word or symbol, does not ever refer to a signified, i.e., the thing itself, but rather always

only to another signifier. Words, therefore, do not refer to things, but rather only to other words. This account results in the further claim that the meaning of a word is gained only through the process of referring to other words in a chain of differential associations. Thus, the meaning of a word is not contained within itself, but is a matter of following out the chain of signifiers of which it is a part.

However, since this chain is infinite, a final meaning can never be secured. Thus, insofar as this process of reference is never completed, i.e., never terminates in a final referent, Derrida is led to characterize this process as a deferral or postponement of meaning itself. Again, this account will be clarified once Derrida's notion of relations is made more explicit.

It can be seen, therefore, that différance, in a strange way, signifies within itself the very deferral of presence and meaning that one of its constituents--deferral--names. Moreover, in so indicating this problematization of presence and meaning within itself, it also suggests the extension of this problematization to the entire field of presence. In this way, différance embodies a certain frustration of presence and meaning that it, as a type of function, allegedly brings about. Thus, it plays the role of a particular instance of the universal problematization that it confers on presence and meaning in general.

In addition, the "a" of différance also plays a certain strategic role by indicating this complication of meaning that différance as a function secures for itself. It does this because, in French, the difference between différence and différance cannot be heard. The "a," in effect, is silent. This silence symbolizes both the lack of the presence of différance itself, and more generally the lack of presence that it is thought to induce. In the essay "Différance," Derrida notes:

It is written or read, but it is not heard. It cannot be heard, and we shall see in what respects it is also beyond the order of understanding. It is put forward by a silent mark. . . .¹⁶

However, in the discussion so far, although I have briefly examined what is said or claimed about différance as differing and deferral, I have yet to explore how these two notions are involved with one another. To repeat a question from the essay "Différance": "How are différance as temporalizing [deferral] and différance as spacing [differing] co-joined?"¹⁷ And, more specifically, what is at the heart of this notion of deferral?

So far, I have merely asserted it as temporalization or postponement, and briefly related it to Derrida's account of language. It remains to be asked what this notion has to do with differing as that which allegedly brings about presence. Moreover, as a pedagogical point, it should be stressed that understanding the self-problematic nature of

the notion of différance depends on understanding the deeper logic of differing and deferral on which its self-problematization, and thus that of presence, in general, is based.

In the above section, while I have offered a superficial characterization of the notion, I have not uncovered the rationale on which such a characterization is based. This suggests this point: that an understanding of différance in Derrida cannot be had merely by repeating the multivalent significations suggested by the "a." Such a presentation misses the heart of the matter. What must be stressed is that the self-problematic nature of the notion of différance points to the deeper logic that brings about this situation. Before one can come to terms with différance, and particularly the meaning of its "a," one must come to terms with the logic or rationale that animates this admittedly graphic indicator of multivalence.¹⁸ Thus, in an examination of différance, it is toward this logic that one must turn. Moreover, one must do so with an eye specifically toward deferral as that element for which an account is sought. How, then, is the alleged self-problematization of presence evoked, and what role does deferral play in a situation that would otherwise be characterizable as one which brings presence about?

In the first interview in Positions with Henri Ronse, entitled "Implications," Derrida claims:

What defers presence . . . is the very basis on which presence is announced.¹⁹

Such a statement already suggests a close accord between deferral as the problematization of presence, and differing as the "basis on which [it] is announced." In fact, this accord must be examined closely.

Notice again what is said here: "What defers presence . . . is the very basis on which [it] is announced." The role of the "is" in this statement is crucial. What is suggested here is that there is a certain identification possible between that which defers or problematizes presence, and the basis by virtue of which it would be brought about. Moreover, this identification suggests that the element which does the deferring is the same element which would bring it (presence) about. This same element, of course, must be differing. Thus, it appears that the implicit claim here is that differing, as that which would bring about presence, itself contains the seeds of its own frustration or incompleteness, and that this situation is noted as deferral.

In this one sense, then, things are not as they at first appeared. Differing and deferral are not simply two significations, each being at odds with one another in terms of bringing about presence as opposed to calling it into

question. Rather, from this short statement, one can see that, in some sense which must be explored, differing itself contains the logic that will show it to be both that which would bring presence about, and that which calls presence into question. Deferral, then, is simply the result of the self-problematic nature of the logic of differing. It merely reports the non-actualization of presence which differing somehow suggests.

This characterization of deferral as a result is once again indicated by the first two words of Derrida's statement. When he says "what defers presence," it is clear that deferral is merely the result and not the operative within the problematic. The "what" here indicates that there is something besides deferral itself that is doing the deferring. Thus, the "what" which "is the very basis," is in fact the operative element, and insofar as the only other element available is differing, it seems clear that it deserves this characterization.

This indicates that deferral is merely the result of the complex operation of differing that Derrida proposes. Moreover, insofar as the differing of Derridean différance carries through the Heideggerean problematic of difference as appropriation by virtue of its like characterization as that which brings about presence, the complex relation of this pair is clearly suggested. But, in this light, what

now needs to be explored, as suggested earlier, is the differing of différance insofar as it apparently involves a certain logic of self-problematization in terms of the presencing of presence. More specifically, I have already noted that this logic might be thought to take on the characteristics that it does by virtue of a certain employment of the belonging relation as internal. Thus, I will now turn to some of Derrida's texts, where I can examine this logic of internality in more detail.

Part II

In a particularly rich passage from the essay "Différance," Derrida notes:

Différance is what makes the movement of signification possible only if each element that is said to be "present," appearing on the stage of presence, is related to something other than itself but retains the mark of a past element and already lets itself be hollowed out by the mark of its relation to a future element. This trace relates no less to what is called the future than to what is called the past, and it constitutes what is called the present by this very relation to what it is not, to what it absolutely is not; that is, not even to a past or future considered as a modified present. In order for it to be, an interval must separate it from what it is not; but the interval that constitutes it in the present must also, and by the same token, divide the present in itself, thus dividing, along with the present, everything that can be conceived on its basis, this is, every being--in particular, for our metaphysical language, the substance or subject.²⁰

There are three questions which should be brought to bear on the reading of this passage. First, are relations in fact characterized here as internal? Second, how--if they are so

characterized--can this characterization can be accounted for? In other words, what rationale leads Derrida to characterize relations in this way? And third, does this situation then result in the problematization of presence through contamination? What I seek is an answer to each of these questions in light of the passage at hand.

In terms of the first question, it should be noted that Derrida claims that each element "is related to something other than itself but retains the mark of a past element and already lets itself be hollowed out by the mark of its relation to a future element."²¹ Several words call for particular attention.

The first is "retains." Notice in the passage that an element is said to be "related to something other than itself," i.e., to some other element, but at the same time to "retain" the mark of that element. On my reading, the retention of this mark of the other suggests a form of internality. In this light, the mark as a mark might be thought of as an imprint, and, insofar as an imprint is not other than the body on which it is imprinted, the mark as imprint suggests a certain one-ness with the element in question. Thus, the unity of mark and element suggests that this situation is one of internality. The mark is internal, or within the element itself.

This characterization is further suggested by virtue of the fact that the mark is said to be retained. This notion of retention suggests a certain internal appropriation between the elements, i.e., an internalization of the other insofar as the other is said to be retained. In the translation of the same essay by Alan Bass contained in Margins of Philosophy, the corresponding lines of this segment of the passage read that the element "is related to something other than itself, thereby keeping within itself the mark of the past element."²² Thus, "retains the mark" is retranslated as "keeping within itself the mark." The notion of retention thus being changed out, or rather enhanced, by a translation that brings out the internality more explicitly.

Given Bass's translation one can clearly see that the element in question is thought to be occupied by its other. In other words, the relation of belonging is characterized here in a way which suggests that terms mutually penetrate one another. Once again, it is the fact that this appropriative relation is characterized as one in which the other is internal to the element in question that makes it important for my concerns. With this move, a doctrine of internal relations is already clearly in force.

Another phrase of importance is "hollowed out." As was similarly the case with "retain," the element is said to be "hollowed out by the mark." This hollowing out indicates at

least two meanings. First, it again indicates the presence of the mark or other within the element itself. Even in common parlance, hollowing out suggests a certain entering within that which is being hollowed. Moreover, to be hollow is to have "a space or cavity inside."²³ Thus, the mark or other comes to occupy this space inside the element in question. Once again, internality is affirmed.

Second, this internality, however, is not necessarily one of peaceful occupation; the other, in hollowing out the element, essentially carves out the inside and reduces the substance of the element itself. That is, hollowing out is not simply the internalization of the other within the element, but is, in addition, and by virtue of the same move, the diminishment of the element itself. Internalization is also a problematization of the element. This notion of diminishment is even expressed by some of the other common meanings of hollow, such as to be "empty" or "without worth."²⁴ Thus, in being hollowed out by the other, the element also undergoes a certain subtraction from what was allegedly its essence.

To return to Bass's translation again, one finds the same line reading, "already letting itself be vitiated by the mark of its relation to the future element."²⁵ By replacing "hollowed out" with "vitiated," which commonly means to "impair the quality of," "debase or corrupt," or

make "legally invalid,"²⁶ Bass's translation stresses more explicitly the sense of problematization that is implicit, but not as forthright, in the notion of hollowed out.

In terms of the accuracy of these translations, this segment of the passage, as it originally appears, reads:

Lui-meme, gardant en lui la marque de l'element passe et se laissant deja creuser par la marque de son rapport a l'element futur.²⁷

On my reading, the word gardant, as it appears in the context of the first line, suggests the notion of "keeping within," thus indicating the accuracy of Bass's translation of the first part of the sentence. On the other hand, the word creuser in the context of the second line suggests "hollowing out," or "excavation," thus indicating the closer accuracy of Allison's translation of the second part of the sentence. Overall, then, on my account, this segment of the passage should be translated as: "thereby keeping within itself the mark of a past element and already letting itself be hollowed out by the mark of its relation to a future element."

Regardless, however, in terms of the main issue, the problematization that I have previously characterized as contamination is already suggested here. I will return to this issue shortly. However, in light of the first question regarding the presence of internality, an answer has been secured.

Given what I have noted in regard to the above few lines of the passage, it seems nearly incontrovertible that Derrida is here employing a certain doctrine of internal relations. In this schema, elements are associated through a relation of appropriative belonging. But this appropriative relation is now characterized as one in which the terms reside within one another. In this way, a term's identity, insofar as it might be understood as a type of nucleus, is not simply unitary or autonomous within itself; rather, it is always already compounded with what was to be its other.

This compounding takes place within the element itself, internal to what would be its self-same identity. Thus, instead of there being simply a difference between the self-same elements, there is in terms of this logic a complication at the heart of the elements themselves. This complication, whereby an element is no longer simply itself because it contains otherness, postpones its would-be identity, presence, and meaning.

Inasmuch as one can understand this as a commentary on the logic of appropriation, it appears that appropriation is here characterized as involving the full internalization of the other within the element in question. But, granted that the relation of appropriative belonging is here characterized as internal, the question remains: Why, in contrast to Heidegger, does Derrida regard this relation to be an

internal one? With this, then, I will move on to the second question.

Toward the end of the passage, Derrida goes on: "In order for it to be, an interval must separate it from what it is not."²⁸ In order for the present, or anything, to be present, an "interval," or difference, must "separate it," or divide it, "from what it is not," i.e., its other. So far, so good. This is basically the same schema I traced previously in my analysis of Heidegger's difference. However, in the next few lines, the divergence from this schema surfaces. Derrida goes on: "But the interval that constitutes it in the present must also, and by the same token, divide the present in itself, thus dividing, along with the present, everything that can be conceived on its basis."²⁹ The difference that is constitutive is additionally characterized as problematizing what it constitutes, i.e., the present and "everything that can be conceived on its basis." As I noted above, this problematization comes about because the difference brings about a situation whereby otherness is internal to the element, and since this complicates the simple self-sameness which, on this model, is essential to presence and identity, such a situation calls both into question.

For the most part, I have already covered this notion of internal complication above in discussing the first

question. Thus, the second question still remains: Why must "the interval that constitutes it" also problematize it? What is the purpose and force of the "must also" as it is written here? In other words, insofar as it is apparently the internality of the other within the self-same which leads to this problematization, why should the appropriative relation be characterized as internal?

Given this unanswered concern, which is nonetheless the heart of my interest in Derrida's discourse, I have apparently exhausted what this passage has to offer in the way of insight into this issue. For the moment, the second question goes unanswered, but I will return to it by way of taking up another of Derrida's texts shortly. Let me first respond to the third question.

Given what I have already noted regarding internal complication, i.e., contamination, it is probably sufficiently clear that such a situation calls into question any notion of simple presence. But this claim can be understood in at least two ways. First, if presence or the present is always understood to be tied to the notion of simple self-sameness, then this internal complication, in problematizing this simplicity, will be understood to call presence and identity into question. This is apparently Derrida's position. On the other hand, even if one is sympathetic to Derrida's account, the option is still open to interpret this account

as simply calling into the question the presupposition that the present is itself a self-same unity. In this light, one may be able to start with a different understanding of presence and identity and thereby sidestep the critical force of this account.

However, regardless of one's final conclusions regarding this issue, I am at the moment concerned only with giving an account of Derrida's moves within the context of his apparent presuppositions, even if these suggest that he has a quite specific, if not overly narrow, understanding of presence and identity.

As I have noted previously, such a problematization of presence is often characterized by Derrida as deferral or postponement, thus indicating the perpetual extension of the fulfillment of the promise of presence. In other words, presence is itself nothing more than a promise which never reaches fulfillment. But it is important to be clear here. Notice that it is not that presence is problematized after the fact, but rather that it is problematized at what would be its source. Presence never takes place inasmuch as it is contaminated from the start. Moreover, in this way, contamination comes into focus and receives its characterization as that which signifies the internal complication of the would-be simplicity of identity and presence. Therefore, given his apparent presuppositions, the situation outlined

by Derrida does result in the problematization of presence by virtue of contamination, brought forth within what would have been the function which brought it about.

However, insofar as the logic that animates such an account has still not been made explicit, I return to the second question, and, with this re-engagement, turn to another of Derrida's texts in hopes of locating the rationale which is behind his characterization of relations as internal.

Part III

In his work Speech and Phenomena, one of the issues which engages Derrida is the analysis of time found in Husserl's Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness. In this work, Husserl applies the phenomenological method to the analysis of temporality, as Derrida notes:

Heidegger in Sein und Zeit calls [this work] the first in the history of philosophy to break with a concept of time inherited from Aristotle's Physics, determined according to the basic notions of the "now," the "point," the "limit," and the "circle."³⁰

What interests me here is that it is in Derrida's reading of Husserl's analysis that one can locate what appears to be the reasoning behind his characterization of relations as internal. Thus, without getting too far afield into the finer points of Husserl's analysis, allow me the following

characterization as a way into what I take to be the heart of the matter.

On Derrida's reading, phenomenology tends to presuppose a pure, simple, self-identical, "present," which as its basis is essential to all of its subsequent constructions. Remember that it is this basis of the present or presence that the Seinsfrage seeks to give an account of in terms of presencing. Thus, while the Seinsfrage accounts for presencing in terms of a certain non-presence--the function of difference as appropriation--it nonetheless never questions the simple presence, identity, or meaning, which it intends to account for.

Not surprisingly, then, this same notion of a simple present plays an important part in Husserl's analysis of time. Derrida notes:

Whether or not it is a metaphysical presupposition, the concept of punctuality, of the now as stigma, still plays a major role in The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness. . . . In phenomenology, the idea of primordial presence and in general of "beginning," "absolute beginning" or principium, always refers back to this "source-point."³¹

And further:

It is to this self-same identity of the actual now that Husserl refers in the "im selben Augenblick" we begin with. Moreover, within philosophy there is no possible objection concerning this privilege of the present-now; it defines the very element of philosophical thought, it is evidence itself, conscious thought itself, it governs every possible concept of truth and sense.³²

Hence, Derrida claims that Husserl still wants to assert the primacy of the present as a "now." However, on Derrida's reading, this assertion appears to be in trouble from the beginning by virtue of the fact that Husserl's own analysis seems to make such a claim problematic. Derrida notes:

Despite this motif of the punctual now as "primal form" (Urform) of consciousness (Ideas I), the body of the description in The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness and elsewhere prohibits our speaking of a simple self-identity of the present. In this way not only is what could be called the metaphysical assurance par excellence shaken, but, closer to our concerns, the "im selben Augenblick" argument in the Investigations is undermined.³³

This is allegedly the case because, on Husserl's account, the perception of time is based on the possibility of remembering the past and projecting the future. This remembrance is called retention, and the projection is labeled protention. From this perspective, then, the present is not conceived as somehow isolated or independent, but is rather understood to be constituted on the basis of its placement between these two other modes. In this way, the present comes about by virtue of being divided from what then becomes its other. Once again, this division is nothing other than the movement of difference that I have been tracking all along.

However, insofar as I have at this point suggested only that the three modes (retention, the present, and protention) are set up in a mutually dependent fashion beside one

another, I have merely repeated the Heideggerean schema insofar as this characterization suggests external relations. In other words, while the present now is not understood from this perspective to be independent from that to which it is related, it is nonetheless still present, the only contrast being that its dependence on otherness through difference, i.e., the appropriative relation, has been made explicit.

But this characterization is clearly incomplete insofar as it attempts to do justice to Husserl's thought. Again, something in Derrida's reading of Husserl's text signals a problematization of the very "now" which Husserl allegedly needs to generate the discourse of phenomenology, and which likewise Heidegger needs to ground the Seinsfrage. But such a problematization appears to be already inherent in the terms which I noted above.

In this light, one must note carefully that it is not simply a matter of the present standing, as it were, between retention and protention. These two terms do not just signify simple modes of time corresponding to what one would normally characterize as the past and the future. Rather, these two notions suggest remembrance and projection. It is therefore incorrect to set up a tripartite structure of retention, the present, and protention in a way that would suggest that these are separate elements. In other words, characterizing them in terms of external relations, albeit

even if this structure is understood to be allowed for by virtue of the function of difference, is insufficient to get to the heart of the matter here. Rather, what these two words suggest is that the now contains what is retained and projected within its scope. This means that the past and the future do not simply lie outside of the now, but are incorporated within the alleged self-same unity of the now itself.

The relation between the now and the past and the future is an internal one. However, insofar as the internality of this situation results in the complication of the "now's" self-same unity or simplicity, it can be seen once again that the now has been contaminated to the point of its problematization. Thus, I am once again at the heart of the matter, in which case let me now pick up this problematic in more detail, then relate it explicitly to the main concern.

After examining several passages from Husserl's text, Derrida goes on to note:

One then sees quickly that the presence of the perceived present can appear as such only inasmuch as it is continuously compounded with a nonpresence and nonperception, with primary memory and expectation (retention and protention). These nonperceptions are neither added to, nor do they occasionally accompany, the actually perceived now; they are essentially and indispensably involved in its possibility.³⁴

The presence of the present is thus allowed for by virtue of the fact that it is "compounded" through retention and protention with what Derrida notes as "nonpresence" and

"nonperception." This nonpresence or nonperception indicates what one would normally call the past and the future. This designation is apparently called for due to the fact that the past and future are not usually understood to be present in the same way that the present is. Thus, the past and future appear as a type of nonpresence in relation to the alleged presence of the present. But notice that it is nonetheless the presence of these two nonpresences in the event of compounding that is thought to allow for the presence of the present. Thus, in some sense, nonpresence is "indispensably involved" in bringing about the presence of the now.

But it is not as if these two nonpresences--the past and future--could simply come before and from without the would-be present. Rather, these nonpresences themselves only become present in their modified way by virtue of what Derrida, in the previous passage, notes as compounding, i.e., the combining or mixing of elements within the now itself. It is not as if these two temporal notions are in fact re-presenting some past or future state of affairs, but rather it is by virtue of the compounding itself that the past and future are first presented in terms of their nonpresence.

In this way, just as the present now is allegedly presented by virtue of being compounded with the past and the

future, likewise these two modes are themselves brought about in this same event. Derrida offers the following passage from Husserl, suggesting this shift from a representative to a presentative understanding of the past as it is suggested by the notion of compounding:

If we call perception the act in which all "origination" lies, which constitutes originally, then primary remembrance is perception. For only in primary remembrance [retention] do we see what is past; only in it is the past constituted, i.e., not in a representative but in a presentative way.³⁵

From this it can be gathered that the past, the present, and the future are all given by virtue of retention and protention. In other words, they are all given by virtue of the event of compounding, which is nothing but the event of retention and protention itself.

However, something interesting has happened in the above passage. Notice again that Husserl has said that "primary remembrance is perception." Moreover, "primary remembrance" is itself nothing other than retention. Thus, insofar as retention names what is fundamentally a nonpresence, Husserl has admitted that perception indicates a nonpresence. Derrida notes:

Husserl admittedly says that retention is still a perception. But this is the absolutely unique case-- Husserl never recognized any other--of a perceiving in which the perceived is not a present but a past existing as a modification of the present.³⁶

But if perception involves nonpresence, what has happened to the privileged position of the now, which was thought to be

inextricably tied to perception and presence? How can perception indicate anything other than presence? On the other hand, given the claimed role of the compounding of non-presence in bringing about the now, how could perception itself indicate anything other than a certain nonpresence?

Derrida offers two further passages from Husserl's text:

If we now relate what has been said about perception to the differences of the given-ness with which temporal objects make their appearance, then the antithesis of perception is primary remembrance, which appears here, and primary expectation (retention and protention), whereby perception and non-perception continually pass over into one another.³⁷

He notes further:

In an ideal sense, then, perception (impression) would be the phase of consciousness which constitutes the pure now, and memory every other phase of the continuity. But this is just an ideal limit, something abstract which can be nothing for itself. Moreover, it is also true that even this ideal now is not something toto caelo different from the not-now but continually accommodates itself thereto. The continual transition from perception to primary remembrance conforms to this accommodation.³⁸

What stands as crucial in both passages is the claim that while perception (i.e., the "now") ideally suggests the absence of any nonperception or nonpresence within its scope, in fact such an ideality is impossible to support. Moreover, this impossibility is not based on anything outside of perception, but is rather a by-product of the very function of compounding (of the past and the future thought of as primary remembrance and primary expectation, subsequently

characterized as retention and protention), which was to serve as what brought it about. Husserl thus admits of a certain "accommodation" between the "ideal limit" of the now, which as "something abstract . . . can be nothing for itself," and the "not-now," which indicates a certain non-presence. However, as Derrida notes:

As soon as we admit this continuity of the now and the not-now, perception and nonperception, in the zone of primordiality common to primordial impression and primordial retention, we admit the other into the self-identity of the Augenblick; nonpresence and nonevidence are admitted into the blink of the instant. There is a duration to the blink, and it closes the eye. This alterity is in fact the condition for presence, presentation, and thus for Vorstellung in general; it precedes all the dissociations that could be produced in presence, in Vorstellung. The difference between retention and reproduction, between primary memory and secondary memory, is not the radical difference Husserl wanted between perception and nonperception; it is rather a difference between two modifications of nonperception. . . . Once again, this relation to nonpresence neither befalls, surrounds, nor conceals the presence of the primordial impression; rather it makes possible its ever renewed upsurge and virginity. However, it radically destroys any possibility of a simple self-identity.³⁹

On Derrida's reading, the compounding of nonpresence within the would-be simplicity of the now destroys this same simplicity, and with it, the now itself.

In terms of phenomenology, this would mean that, while Husserl attempts to derive the now from what he characterizes as the "constitutive flux," this same flux imposes itself against such a derivation. Derrida cites from Husserl:

If . . . we now consider the constitutive phenomena, we find a flux, and every phase of this flux is a

continuity of shading. However, in principle, no phase of this flux is to be broadened out to a continuous succession; therefore, the flux should not be thought to be so transformed that this phase is extended in identity with itself.⁴⁰

Such a "continuity of shading" is no longer characterizable in terms of simple self-same identity or presence. From this perspective, one could say that time or temporality, insofar as it suggests presence or the presence of a self-identical present, is itself called into question. Derrida then applies this critical reading to various other issues. However, what is important for my account is the previous characterization of compounding in terms of internality.

It was noted in the passage cited above that presence can appear "only inasmuch as it is continuously compounded with a nonpresence." Moreover, it seems clear that this notion of compounding is meant to indicate, as Derrida elsewhere states quite explicitly, "that nonpresence and otherness are internal to presence."⁴¹ Thus the event of compounding indicates the internalization of nonpresence or the other into the alleged unity of the now.

But notice here that it is not just because the other that it admitted into the inside of the now is characterized as a nonpresence that the now is subject to complication. The other does not have to be a nonpresence; it simply has to be an other. In fact, as I indicated above, such a nonpresence is not strictly non-present anyway, by virtue of

its very presentation within the alleged unity of the now through the event of compounding. This presentation does not suggest strict nonpresence, but, rather, as Derrida himself notes in the above passage, appears as "a modification of the present." In other words, what is characterized as non-present is still present inasmuch as it is presented.

What this indicates is that it is not important to Derrida's account that nonpresence per se is admitted inside the now, but rather that any other is admitted inside. In other words, the account does not need to specify the content of what is admitted through compounding, but merely that something other is admitted in this fashion. The only reason that Derrida specifies the other to be a nonpresence in this particular case is that the issue in this context is explicitly temporality, and the past and future--in contrast to the alleged presence of the present--are normally characterized in terms of nonpresence.

From my perspective, however, the content of what is so admitted is of less importance than the fact that the admittance itself is clearly characterized in terms of internality. Thus, whether nonpresence is admitted into an element characterized as the now, or whether some alternate other is admitted into some element itself characterized alternately, what is important, on my reading, is that the relation is understood to be internal.

In terms of Derrida's analysis, this point does not change a thing, because what does the work in his account is not the notion of nonpresence, but that this nonpresence approaches the alleged unity of the now as an other which internalizes itself in the same. Thus, when he says "that nonpresence and otherness are internal to presence," he means in effect that nonpresence as otherness is internal to presence. Again, this point does nothing to change the meaning of his account, but merely suggests the arbitrary nature of the content of the variables in the formula. In this way, one might write this "formula" as: "x" as otherness is internal to "y," with "x" and "y" indicating any two elements.

This does not suggest that his account is anything other than an account which calls into question the presence of the present, but merely points out that the logic on which the account is based--insofar as it involves internal relations--can be dealt with quite apart from the content to which the logic applies. Let me now return to the main issue.

As I suggested previously, what is being claimed in this account is that the now is not a self-same unity, but rather an internally differentiated whole which contains separate elements, i.e., the past and the future. Thus, the event of compounding is really an event of self-

differentiation within the alleged unity of the now itself. In this light, if the now requires the presence of the past and the future within its scope in order to itself be presented, and, moreover, if these other two temporal modes are themselves first presented by virtue of the same event, then at least two significant points follow from this account.

First, it should be clear that it is again the function of difference itself which allows for the presentation or presencing of the past, the present now, and the future. Second, it should also be clear that if the modes of past and future reside within what would have been the simple self-same unity of the present now, then the now itself--insofar as it is regarded as a unity--is called into question through this internal complication or contamination.

In this light, one can understand Derrida's account of internal relations to be based on the observation that the difference that was thought to be between the three elements, in fact, appears to reside within one of the elements itself. To put this into context, Derrida recharacterizes Heidegger's relation of appropriative belonging in such a fashion that the difference internally divides and thus problematizes the identity of the thing which it was to bring about.

But in suggesting that the thing, or in this case the now, is internally divided, it is not hereby being claimed

that the now is somehow both itself and its other. Rather, once it is admitted that the now contains the other two temporal modes, there is no longer any sense of the identity of the now remaining with which to secure such an internal dichotomy. Thus, on Derrida's account, it is apparently the case that once it is admitted that the other must reside within the now in order for it to be presented, it is at the same time necessary to conclude that, by virtue of the same situation, there will be no presentation of the now.

On my reading, therefore, one can account for Derrida's divergence from Heidegger's characterization of difference and the appropriative relation by examining his reading of Husserl's analysis of temporality, and noting the motif of internal relations which is presented there. Thus, the second question has been answered, and with it I bring to a close my discussion of the three questions I posed at the outset of Part II.

By way of review, in response to the first question, I suggested that Derrida does characterize relations as internal. In response to the second question, I suggested further that he regards relations in this way by virtue of the insight gained from Husserl's analysis of temporality, which suggests that the now contains otherness. And, in response to the third question, I indicated that this otherness

within the now leads to its contamination, thus calling it into question.

Moreover, in light of the previous discussion, it seems plausible to suggest further that, from Derrida's perspective, Heidegger's account of presencing in terms of the function of difference as the event of appropriation is incomplete. This is the case because, insofar as Heidegger characterizes the appropriative relation as an external one, it does not meet the requirements of internal compounding which Derrida takes to be necessary for presencing. Thus, based on a certain phenomenological analysis, he notices what Heidegger--at least on this account--apparently missed, that is, that the appropriative relation must be internal if the element in question is going to be presented.

Of course, as I have noted, this same requirement calls presence itself into question, thus suggesting that one can characterize the function of difference as self-defeating. Ironically, on this account, the very function that would allow for presence also keeps it from coming about. In light of this situation, I conclude that the distinguishing characteristic of différance is nothing but this internality.

With all of this in mind, a further question is suggested. How is it that Heidegger's account apparently does not take into consideration what Derrida takes to be

crucial? Is it, as I suggested above, that Heidegger simply misses something--the role of otherness--in his analysis of the present? Or is there a certain turning away from this insight regarding internality within the text itself?

Taking this latter possibility as a starting point, in the next section I will explore several passages from Heidegger's texts where statements which the reader might construe as indicative of internality are qualified to the point of forcefully reaffirming external relations. But before moving on to this issue, I must first address one other important point.

Part IV

As I indicated earlier, the logic or rationale that animates the characterization of relations as internal is not necessarily specific to any particular area of inquiry. Thus, while this logic can be isolated from its content, much as the function of mathematical variables can be isolated from the numerical content of particular numbers, nonetheless, the logic and the variables are ultimately nothing without some final reference to content. In light of this, I will briefly discuss the way in which this logic of internality applies to the issue of language.

Let me begin by recalling that, on Heidegger's view, language is dependent on the event of difference. In this

way, while the unitary elements of language are thought to be brought about by the difference in terms of mutual dependency through the appropriative relation, this dependency--characterized in terms of externality--does not problematize the meaning of the elements themselves, and in fact allows for the same. But in light of Derrida's characterization of relations as internal, it is suggested that the fate of the elements of meaning should be the same as the fate of any element which is thought to be self-same, and in fact this is the case.

Thus, on Derrida's account, while a word would allegedly gain its meaning by an internalized reference to some other word or meaning, and this other would do likewise ad infinitum, this same process--given what I have noted about contamination given the logic of internality--would not let a word gain a meaning, but would result in a complication of meaning. This means that, on Derrida's account, a word or signifier is thought to be compounded by the other signifiers in its semantic field.

What this suggests, as in the case of the now, is that a word does not simply signify one meaning, but in fact signifies various other meanings within the chain of signifiers of which it is a part. For Derrida, this situation suggests that the exact meaning of a word is in principle undecidable, since in signifying multiple meanings it is always

already implicated in a certain ambivalence. Thus, even given certain contextual constraints, a word could in fact signify many meanings, and in being so multivalent, it would in actuality mean nothing, or at least nothing strictly decidable.

This last qualification is quite important, however, in that in terms of meaning, decidability seems to play the same role in Derrida's account that unity did in the prior analysis. In this light, the analogy which suggests itself is this: Insofar as in terms of ontology the lack of unity is the problematization of presence or being, in terms of language the lack of decidability is the problematization of meaning. Thus unity is to presence and being what decidability is to meaning. All of which, in terms of the logic at issue, amounts to the same thing.

Thus, in contrast to Heidegger's account, whereby difference stands as that which brings about language and meaning, Derrida's différance suggests the problematization of the same, due once again to his doctrine of internal relations and the complication of self-same identity which it suggests. Again, whether one takes this as a critique of meaning outright, or rather as a critique of Derrida's apparent presuppositions regarding identity and meaning, is still an issue open to question.

However, inasmuch as the problematization of meaning outlined here has been gained by virtue of the meaning embodied in the narrative which I have been unfolding, the status of this narrative itself seems to be worthy of question. In this light, one might take it as suspect that I must apparently rely on that which is being called into question in order to argue for this problematization itself. What this indicates to me is that there is a certain paradox at the heart of Derrida's account. Moreover, insofar as this account, on my reading, is basically the following out of the Seinsfrage, this suggests further that the question of Being itself is, in the end, indicative of a certain paradox. But I am getting ahead of myself. I will take up this issue in more detail in Section Three of this chapter. For now, however let me move on to Section Two and take up the issue introduced above regarding the apparent turning away from the logic of internality as it plays itself out in Heidegger's texts.

Difference and Différance.

Part I

As I have noted, there has been a significant shift from difference to différance. But with this in mind, it might prove interesting to go back to Heidegger and attempt to isolate some further, and possibly more explicit,

instances which find his text affirming external relations. I pursue this here for two reasons: first, to reiterate the contrast between Heidegger and Derrida on this issue; and, second, in light of what I have suggested regarding Derrida's quite explicit internality, to reinforce my reading of Heidegger's more subtle, if not more hermeneutically controversial, externality. With these points in mind let me proceed.

To begin, in staying with the current theme of temporality, let me return to the work On Time and Being, and note that toward the middle of the essay of the same name, while characterizing the relationship of the modes of past, present, and future, Heidegger notes:

In future, in past, in the present, that giving brings about to each its own presencing, holds them apart thus opened and so holds them toward one another in the nearness by which the three dimensions remain near one another. For this reason we call the first, original, literally incipient extending in which the unity of true time consists "nearing nearness," "nearhood" (Nabbeit), an early word still used by Kant. But it brings future, past and present near to one another by distancing them.⁴²

This passage repeats the same general schema I have noted previously, in that the "giving" that "brings about to each its own presencing" is the same event that is named as the "literally incipient extending" or "nearhood." This event is nothing other than the function of difference thought in terms of appropriation.

Notice that, in light of the context of my interest here, in the last line he states: "But it brings future, past, and present near to one another by distancing them." The "it" in this sentence again names the difference. Thus, it is claimed that the difference brings the elements of the tripartite structure "near to one another," and in so doing literally "brings about to each its own presencing." But notice that this bringing near, which is the function of the difference, is also a distancing. In fact as he suggests, "it" brings the three modes "near to one another by distancing them." Thus, the bringing near takes place by virtue of the distancing itself. What is important in this characterization is that the distancing is given a certain priority over the nearness, which is to say that the differentiating function takes place in terms of a quite unequivocal division between elements which likewise relates them in nearness insofar as they remain clearly differentiated or distanced.

Thus, there is no incidence of contamination implied here. The notion of nearing, which might be understood to suggest a certain sense of coming together, clearly does not suggest a contaminatory situation indicative of the loss of all particularity. Rather, the particularity of the temporal modes as modes, i.e., the presentation of the past, present, and future as identifiable elements within the

spread, indicates the externality of the relation of mutual belonging as brought forth through the differentiating function itself. Inasmuch as the notion of nearness is here qualified by being derived from the distancing brought about through the difference, I take this passage to be another example of Heidegger's characterization of the appropriative relation as external. Being "near" in this context is nothing but a sign of an elements self-same identity allowed for by virtue of the difference, whereby it can be close to its other by remaining externally separated through the same.

But while this passage again shows Heidegger's characterization of relations as external, there are further passages that find him affirming this characterization more forcefully. Let me now turn to a few more passages, this time from Identity and Difference.

In the second essay of this work, "The Onto-theological Constitution of Metaphysics," Heidegger attempts to show how the elements "Being" and "beings" are brought about by the difference. At this point in his work, he characterizes the difference in terms of the notion of a "transition" from Being to beings. He therefore characterizes the difference as the "between," which is presupposed in the notion of a transition from one element to the other.

In describing the role of the elements involved in this movement of transition, he uses the terms "overwhelming" and "arrival." Thus, he claims that Being comes over, or overwhelms beings, and as such arrives at beings. Moreover, it is in this very overwhelming or coming over to beings that Being itself is first presented. Likewise, it is upon Beings arrival at beings that they are also first brought to light. It is thus in the transition of overwhelming and arrival--through the difference that this schema presupposes--that both Being and beings first appear. Heidegger describes this as follows:

The Being of beings means Being which is beings. The "is" here speaks transitively, in transition. Being here becomes present in the manner of a transition to beings. But Being does not leave its own place and go over to beings, as though beings were first without Being and could be approached by Being subsequently. Being transits (that), comes unconcealingly over (that) which arrives as something of itself unconcealed only by that coming-over.⁴³

On my account, what is important in this is not so much its theoretical legitimacy, or even its clarity. Rather, the reason I bring it up at this point is to set the stage for an examination of two further passages which employ the notions of overwhelming and arrival in speaking of Being and beings. These passages interest me because their respective characterizations of the relations between the two in terms of externality and internality do not appear to be consistent. In light of the admittedly vague meanings of Heideg-

ger's technical terms as outlined above, let me nonetheless note their employment with respect to the question of externality as it takes place in the following.

Part II

A little further on, while speaking of the role of the difference, Heidegger notes:

That differentiation alone grants and holds apart the "between," in which the overwhelming and the arrival are held toward one another, are borne away from and toward each other. The difference of Being and beings, as the differentiation of overwhelming and arrival, is the perdurance (Austrag) of the two. . . . Within this perdurance there prevails a clearing...and this its prevalence bestows the being apart, and the being toward each other, of overwhelming and arrival.⁴⁴

Notice here that the difference between Being and beings, characterized as the difference between overwhelming and arrival, is further characterized in terms of being granted by a "between," which holds the two "toward one another" while at the same time letting them be "borne away from" each other. Once again, it appears as if the being "borne away from," brought about by virtue of the "between," is what allows for the orientation of "towardness" to begin with.

In particular, what must be noted here is that these metaphors of "toward," "away from," and "being apart" clearly suggest that the relation between overwhelming and arrival, and thus between Being and beings, is here being

characterized as an external one. With this in mind, let me now move on a few pages in the same essay and note another characterization of the same issue. Three pages further, Heidegger notes:

One comes over the other, one arrives in the other. Overwhelming and arrival appear in each other in reciprocal reflection. Speaking in terms of the difference, this means: perdurance is a circling, the circling of Being and beings around each other.⁴⁵

Here, the notion of perdurance (Austrag), as in the above passage, simply means the bearing, or carrying out, in an enduring fashion, of the relationship in question.⁴⁶ Thus, here it indicates nothing other than the very relation into which I am inquiring.

But more importantly, notice how overwhelming and arrival are characterized in this passage. He claims that: "One comes over the other, one arrives in the other." Now what is the role of this coming "over" and arrival "in" as it appears here? In particular, how is it that arrival is here characterized as an arrival "in" the other? Moreover, he goes on state that "overwhelming and arrival appear in each other in reciprocal reflection." Thus, insofar as he claims that the two "appear in each other," it appears that twice in this passage he has characterized the relation in question in a way that might be construed as suggesting a certain degree of internality. If one "arrives in the other," and each "appear in each other," might one not take

this to indicate a certain breach with Heidegger's previous characterization of the same relation?

In the passage above, I already noted that he characterized this situation in terms of "toward," "away from," and "being apart," all of which clearly did not suggest any degree of internality. But here this same situation undergoes a certain metaphorical shift clearly suggestive of a move toward internality. Thus, how is it that a schema indicative of the two elements "being apart," or held "away from," one another can be brought into accord with the same schema indicating that the two appear "in" each other?

In her introduction to Identity and Difference, Joan Stambaugh, in dealing with the same issue, notes:

The difference grants a "Between" in which the Overwhelming of Being and the arrival in beings are held toward each other and yet held apart.⁴⁷

And, further, in a footnote explaining the notion of arrival, she notes:

Arrival (Ankunft) is, so to speak, the "place" (in beings) in which Being arrives.⁴⁸

But this explanation does nothing to account for the apparent ambiguity. First, it is questionable whether the characterization of arrival as a "place in beings" does justice to arrival even if it should be characterized in terms of internality. Rather, as I have noted, it would be more accurate to suggest that arrival is the transitional movement of Being into beings, and as such the presencing of

beings proper, and not simply the site or "place" in beings of such an arrival.

Nonetheless, the problem here is still present. How is it that on Stambaugh's account, as suggested by the ambiguity of the same in Heidegger's, Being's overwhelming and alleged arrival in beings can at the same time be characterized as a holding apart of the same? In other words, if, as I have noted, overwhelming is nothing but the transitional component indicative of the presencing of Being, and arrival is likewise the transitional component indicative of the presencing of beings, how is it that the former can be characterized as arriving within the latter at the same time as it is claimed that the two are held apart by the difference? Stambaugh's characterization attempts to solve this tension by simply compressing the two passages into one sentence. But, as I have noted, far from resolving this issue, this does nothing but focus ones attention more explicitly on the problem at hand.

To summarize, then, the dilemma is as follows. On the one hand, Heidegger seems to suggest that the elements Being and beings, understood in terms of overwhelming and arrival, relate to one another through a dependent, but nonetheless external, relation as suggested by metaphors such as "being apart," and being "born away from." On the other hand, in light of the presence of metaphors such as "arrives in" and

"appears in," he seems to imply that this same relation is in some sense internal.

Thus, in terms of my concerns, Heidegger's text has here reached a crucial point. But how will this tension be resolved? It should be pointed out that, even if the text itself opted for internality, it does not necessarily follow that it would employ this internality to the same end as Derrida's account suggests. In fact, the text could itself speak the language of internality with perfect clarity and still not follow the lead of Derrida's argument.⁴⁹

In the case of Heidegger's text, however, even this possibility is not taken up. Rather, in light of the passage in question, this brief excursion into the discourse of internality is itself quickly put in check. Thus, let me refer the reader to the last line of the passage, which reads: "Speaking in terms of the difference, this means: perdurance is a circling, the circling of Being and beings around each other."

It seems to me that the notion of "circling . . . around," as it is employed here, once again clearly suggests external relations. Thus, I would claim that, insofar as the two circle around one another, they cannot be said to reside within one another. The notion of "circling . . . around" clearly indicates a relation whereby what are related are outside of one another, and thus external.

Therefore, on my reading, a place has been reached in Heidegger's text which finds it reaffirming the external right at the point when the reader--by virtue of the preceding lines of the passage--might be ready to affirm the other option. I have thus isolated in Heidegger's text a point at which it could be said that a decision has been made. At this point, the text turns away from affirming internality, and instead reaffirms the external.

But this is not the only passage in which such a move takes place. In this light, let me move on and examine another passage, this time from the work Poetry, Language, Thought, where the situation appears similar.

Part III

In the essay entitled "The Thing," Heidegger, in discussing his notion of the four-fold, notes:

Earth and sky, divinities and mortals--being at one with one another of their own accord--belong together by way of the simpleness of the united fourfold. Each of the four mirrors in its own way the presence of the others. Each therewith reflects itself in its own way into its own within the simpleness of the four. This mirroring does not portray a likeness. . . . The appropriative mirroring sets each of the four free into its own, but it binds these free ones into the simplicity of their essential being toward one another.⁵⁰

Apart from the usual peculiarities of Heidegger's pseudo-poetic presentation, what stands out in this passage is again the apparent tension between the hint of internality and the subsequent qualifications reaffirming the external

relation of the elements. Thus, while Heidegger characterizes the four as "being at one with one another," and as each mirroring "the presence of the others,"--all of which might be taken to suggest a degree of internality--at the same time, in each of the phrases where this hint of internality might be developed further, there likewise occurs subtle qualifications that keep this suggestion in check, thus reaffirming externality. Insofar as he characterizes the four as "being at one with one another," therefore, he completes this phrase by noting that this "being at one" takes place "of their own accord."

Likewise, insofar as Heidegger suggests that each of the four mirrors "the presence of the others," he prefaces this by noting that "each of the four mirrors in its own way," all of which indicates that the loss of self-same identity inherent in internality--as suggested by the discourse of mirroring--is always qualified by an affirmation of what amounts to the value of Eigenheit or "ownness." In other words, as I have noted previously, while Heidegger always asserts the appropriative mutual dependence of the elements by virtue of their relation through the difference, in this case characterized through the metaphor of mirroring, this same process is always characterized as allowing for the self-same identity or ownness of the elements themselves.

However, while such subtle qualification is clearly present throughout this passage, it is in the following line that it becomes quite explicit. Heidegger states: "This mirroring does not portray a likeness." In other words, the identity of the element or thing is clearly not called into question by this mirroring. Rather, as he goes on to state: "The appropriative mirroring sets each of the four free into its own."

What strikes me is the force of this qualification. It is as if there is already an unstated concern here about the possible problematization of the thing or element if the mirroring should be taken to suggest a degree of internality. But, as one can see, the text strictly, if not implicitly, warns one not to interpret mirroring in this way. Thus, the mirroring is credited with offering to the elements their very presencing into being or ownness. Given the bounds of my interest and analysis, this should all suggest that the mirroring is to be read as indicative of nothing if not a strictly external relation. Thus, again the text appears to lead the reader away from interpreting relations as internal, toward reaffirming the external.

In returning to Heidegger's texts, I have noted in particular two things. First, I have again affirmed Heidegger's characterization of the relation of appropriative belonging in terms of externality. Second, I have noted

crucial points in the text which reaffirm external relations, even in passages where the text initially appears to suggest otherwise.

To review, in this chapter I have claimed that if Heidegger's characterization of difference in terms of the external relation of appropriative belonging is recharacterized in terms of internal relations as différance, then presence itself will be called into question. Thus, in terms of bringing about presence, différance is self-defeating.

But this characterization may not be loyal to the letter of Derrida's own account. Thus, as I indicated in Chapter I, in the next section, I will take up Derrida's employment of the notion of "effects" as it plays itself out in his discourse on différance.

My concern with this issue is the following. Insofar as my reading of Derrida's account of différance has suggested that, by virtue of its self-defeating operation, all presence and identity is always already problematized, how is it that Derrida at times still speaks of the "effects" of différance? In other words, what ontological status can be afforded to these "effects" if the presence and identity on which all ontology is predicated has already been shown to be problematic?

In arguing for the questionableness of this element of his discourse I will first extend the discussion of dif-férance by returning to the issue of the paradox that I touched on earlier. Then I will look at several passages from Derrida texts where he speaks of the "effects" of dif-férance, and discuss the problem I see with this notion. This discussion will close chapter III and lead me into Chapter IV, where I will then examine how this issue of "effects" influences the characterization of the Heidegger-Derrida relationship within select secondary literature.

Différance and the Discourse of Effects

Part I

So far in my discussion, I have noted that, inasmuch as différance names a situation of internal relations between would-be elements, this same situation keeps these elements from ever being presented. Thus, the function of différance is both the potential of the elements and the basis of their non-actualization. In this way, différance would serve to bring about the elements, but due to the required compounding of an element with its other in the process of presentation, the elements would be contaminated, and, given the apparent presuppositions of this account regarding self-same identity, such a situation would result in the problematization of the elements and, accordingly, their non-

presentation. Since this problematization is always already in effect, the event of presencing never takes place.

But to extend the analysis here, it should also be pointed out that, inasmuch as the presencing of the elements never takes place, then neither does the function of difference, which is simply the operative factor in presencing. In other words, if no elements are presented, then the event which would have allowed for their presentation does not itself take place. Clearly, there can be no event of presencing if nothing comes to presence. All of which is to say nothing more than this: Once identity is problematized, so likewise is difference. They stand or fall together.

Thus, while in following Heidegger I have characterized difference as ontologically prior to identity, one can at the same time see that, as I also indicated earlier, this priority does not mean that there is any independence of the two in terms of actuality. Rather, without what difference would allow for, i.e., the presence of the present, the function of difference itself, inasmuch as it now indicates the self-defeat of presencing, is itself ruled out. If difference is characterized as involving the appropriative relation as internal, then not only does it problematize presence, but in the same move it problematizes its own actuality as well. However, given this account, the

question then arises as to the status of difference, or différance, if in fact it is never actual.

But what does it mean to claim that différance is not actual? It means that if one could imagine the process of différance to take place, one would soon be convinced that, due to the logic that it involves, it in fact could not take place. Thus, the account here is a type of reductio ad absurdum. First, one starts with presence, and an account of its coming about in terms of presencing by virtue of difference. Then one analyzes the data that phenomenology supplies about the present, i.e., that it requires otherness within its scope in order to be presented, and follows through by bringing this data to bear on the original account. Eventually one sees that this project is impossible, since this same requirement calls into question the would-be present. Moreover, without the present, the difference itself, inasmuch as it is what is operative in the process of presencing, is itself ruled out. Thus, one ends up without the present, and without the event which would bring it about. What status, then, does différance ultimately have?

On my reading, given the account I have suggested here, différance should be understood to be present nowhere but in the narrative of the reductio argument itself. In other words, it is nothing apart from the narrative which tells of its own self-problematization. It is, therefore, simply a

would-be situation, the account of which is the narrative of the argument itself.

But what about the status of this narrative? How is it that it seems to escape the problematization of presence and meaning which it claims to show is the general case? With this question, I return to the issue of the status of this discourse itself, and thus to the paradox which, as I indicated previously, seems to me to be present at the end of Derrida's path. Let me now speculatively take up this issue before moving on to the question of the issue of "effects" in Derrida's discourse.

Part II

As I discussed previously in Section Two, Part IV, on Derrida's account, the problematization of meaning is based on the problematization of decidability, i.e., of making problematic, decisions regarding the exact meaning of a word, phrase, passage, or text. Once again, this comes about inasmuch as the internal complication of what was allegedly a self-same semantic unit leaves that unity complex, thus making it impossible for any one signifier to signify only one meaning. Thus, given the resultant multivalence, deciding on the meaning of a particular signifier, or chain of signifiers, is always problematic.

But this situation would appear then to have significant consequences for the status of Derrida's account inasmuch as it relies on a certain constancy and decidability of meaning to make its point. In fact, it seems to me that one must suppose that the meaning of his account is at least consistent and decidable in some sense for it to have any critical force whatsoever, that is, for its claims regarding the problematization of presence and meaning to be intelligible. Without being able to be clear about the meaning of his account--or mine, inasmuch as it is simply a reading of his--this discourse is itself worth little, given its intended purpose.

More specifically, then, the problem is this. Insofar as this discourse argues for the problematization of presence, identity, meaning, and so forth, it must likewise then be arguing for its own problematization. In other words, it is implicitly claiming that its meaning is itself problematic. What then is one to make of this situation? It seems to me that it suggests the following paradox.

If the discourse tells of its own problematization, one must either accept this claim or deny it, i.e., one must either take the discourse to be true or else assume it to be false. If one takes the first option, then one must assert that, in being true, the discourse speaks truthfully about its own problematic status. But to be faithful here, one

cannot continue to take the claim regarding this status to be sanctioned by the truth of the discourse itself, which can be viable only in the realm of meaning which it has already claimed is problematic. Thus, if one accepts the truth of the discourse, one must at the same time assert that, in some sense at least, it is false.

On the other hand, if one starts with the other option and asserts that it is false, then this does nothing but conversely indicate its truth. What takes place here, then, is in effect a form of the "liar" paradox, whereby in stating its own falsity, the sentence--or in this case the entire narrative--opens up a logical impasse insofar as its truth indicates its falsity, and its falsity indicates its truth. And, although this is not the place to enter into further discussion of the "liar," I think that it is safe to say that this situation can be quite legitimately characterized as a form of undecidability in regard to the truth status of the discourse itself. Not surprisingly, therefore, the undecidability that the account claims applies to language in fact applies to the account itself, thus leaving one at a certain dead end insofar as this appears to be the end point of the discourse on the Seinsfrage.

But this situation is not necessarily a negative one in that the path to this dead end, at least on my reading, has been quite informative. This is the case, even if the

information gained along the way has a particularly ironic character. In fact, it may be that this irony is the only message that Derrida's account of the Seinsfrage has to offer. Nonetheless, I must now turn to the issue I mentioned previously regarding Derrida's employment of the notion of "effects."

Part III

As I have noted, on my reading, difference, when characterized in terms of internal relations as différance, brings about nothing, i.e., no presence of the present, no elements, and, it goes without saying, no "effects." But while this is my reading of différance, it is not always the way that Derrida characterizes the same. There are places in his text that suggest that différance does allow for certain effects, effects of the sort that seem to be in contrast with the problematization of presence--and thus one would assume of effects--that clearly plays such a large role in his discourse.

At this point, then, it is my intent to examine, first, several passages in Derrida's texts where this issue arises. Afterward, I will suggest the importance of this issue, which, inasmuch as it tends to affect the characterization of the Heidegger-Derrida relationship within the secondary

literature, I will then explore in greater depth in the next chapter.

To begin, let me return again to the first interview of Positions. There, Derrida notes, in the context of discussing the various dimensions of différance, that:

The movement of différance, as that which produces different things, that which differentiates, is the common root of all oppositional concepts that mark our language.⁵¹

And further that:

Différance is also the production, if it can still be put this way, of these differences.⁵²

And still further that:

These differences . . . are the effects of différance.⁵³

The question that suggests itself here is how this characterization of différance as a producer of effects can be brought into accord with the notion of the same as that which problematizes presence. How is it that what allegedly calls presence into question can at the same time allow for effects, which insofar as they can be phenomenally apprehended, must apparently be instances of presence themselves?

It would seem as if the problematization of presence would have ruled out all talk of effects long ago. Thus, Derrida's characterization of différance in these passages appears out of place, given the logic of his presentation as it appears elsewhere. To reinforce this apparent conflict in his text, and to ward off the impulse to interpret it as

a mere isolated case, let me now turn to the essay "Différence" for further indications of the same issue. Here again, note Derrida claiming that:

What we note as différance will thus be the movement of play that "produces" (and not by something that is simply an activity) these differences, these effects of difference. . . . Différance is the nonfull, nonsimple "origin"; it is the structured and differing origin of differences.⁵⁴

Thus, différance is again characterized in terms of production insofar as its movement allows for differences, i.e., the stable products that are synonymous with presence and identity. Similarly, further on toward the end of the same essay, while speaking of the relative unnameability of différance, he notes:

What is unnameable is the play that brings about the nominal effects, the relatively unitary or atomic structures we call names.⁵⁵

While granting that the notion of effects is here somewhat qualified by its appearance after the word "nominal," this nonetheless does little to take away the force of the notion of effects itself, insofar as it is followed by a characterization indicating that they are in fact nothing other than "the relatively unitary or atomic structures we call names." Thus, différance is apparently still being characterized here in terms of production, and what it produces, i.e., effects, appear to be enough like instances of presence and identity to justify their characterization as such.

But what does all of this in fact suggest? On my reading, it suggests at least two things. First, as I have already indicated, it suggests that there is an apparent inconsistency in Derrida's own text insofar as it employs différance to indicate both the problematization of presence, and at the same time the production of presence in the form of effects. Second, what is equally striking about the above passages, however, is that for the most part they reproduce the Heideggerean schema. In other words, they employ différance as a producer which "allows for" or "brings about" x, i.e., in the same way which Heidegger's difference is employed. Both are characterized as a non-present function that nonetheless allows for some dimension of presence, be it Derrida's "effects," the elements of Heidegger's "fourfold," or otherwise. Thus, if one reads Derrida's différance only in light of passages such as the above, or otherwise emphasizes those passages over others where the alternate schema of the problematization of presence is employed, then one will be led to see little contrast between Heidegger's difference and Derrida's différance.

To complicate matters, let me point out the following passage, again taken from the essay "Différance." About midway through the essay, Derrida notes:

We thus come to posit presence--and, in particular, consciousness, the being-next-to-itself of

consciousness--no longer as the absolutely matrical form of being but as a "determination" and an "effect." Presence is a determination and effect within a system which is no longer that of presence but that of différance. . . . This system is of such a kind that even to designate consciousness as an effect or determination--for strategic reasons, reasons that can be more or less clearly considered and systematically ascertained--is to continue to operate according to the vocabulary of that very thing to be de-limited.⁵⁶

Again in this passage, presence is characterized as an effect of différance, but this time there is a qualification added which might be cause for consideration. In the last few lines, Derrida suggests that this characterization might in fact be in force for strategic reasons, and thus to take too straightforwardly the language of "effects" might be to miss the point of what is in question. One must somehow use this language without at the same time putting too much confidence in its power or meaning.

But if one were to follow this suggestion, and thus assume that the language of effects is itself somehow problematic, then it is consequently a short move to the doctrine of the problematization of presence that I suspected was the correct reading all along. It bears asking, then, strategic considerations duly acknowledged, how is it that the requirement for the same nonetheless leads Derrida to employ this discourse of effects to the extent that he does?

In this light, the very frequency and force of this employment might be taken to suggest that some of what he says about différance and its alleged effects plays a role in his

discourse which, far from being simply a strategic move, is in fact necessary to the content of his discourse itself. In other words, some of what he says about différance producing effects may in fact be needed to make some of his other claims plausible.

Regardless, I will go no further with this issue here. Rather, it is where I will start in the next chapter, where, in light of a similar point brought up in an essay entitled "Différance and the Problem of Strategy" by David Wood, I will take up the issue. After examining it in light of the essay, I will then draw a connection, in light of another secondary work, between this question and the larger issue of the Heidegger-Derrida relationship. With this in mind, let me now move on to the next chapter.

Notes

1. See Derrida, Speech and Phenomena.
2. See Derrida, "Différance," in Speech and Phenomena, pp. 129-160 (the first English translation). This essay is also contained in Margins of Philosophy, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 1-27. All references will be to the first translation unless otherwise noted. The article had also been published as "La Différance" in Marges de la Philosophie, Les Editions de Minuit (1972), pp. 1-29, originally published in Bulletin de la Societe Française de Philosophie, 62, no. 3 (July, 1968), n.p.
3. Jacques Derrida, Positions, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981).
4. Ibid., p. 11.
5. Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. 23-24.
6. Derrida, "Différance," p. 139.
7. Derrida, Positions, p. 55.
8. Jacques Derrida, "On Reading Heidegger: An Outline of Remarks to the Essex Colloquium." compiled by David Krell, in Research in Phenomenology 17 (1987): 172-173.
9. For example, see these works by Jacques Derrida: "The Ends of Man," pp. 111-136; "Geschlecht: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference," Research in Phenomenology 13 (1983): 65-83; "Geschlecht II: Heidegger's Hand," trans. John P. Leavey, in John Sallis, ed., Deconstruction and Philosophy (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 161-196; and, most recently, Of Spirit.
10. For an in-depth look at Derrida's theory of metaphor, see his essays "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," in Margins of Philosophy, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 209-

271; and "The Retrait of Metaphor," trans. F. Gasdner, in Enclitic 2 (Fall 1978): 5-33.

11. Two recent works by Mark C. Taylor, Deconstruction in Context (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), and Altaarity (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), put forth just such a historical grouping around the nexus of difference-différance, both with quite interesting results.

12. Derrida, Speech and Phenomena, p. 82, fn. 8.

13. Ibid.

14. Derrida, "Différance," pp. 136-137.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid., p. 132.

17. Ibid., p. 137.

18. Ibid. Note the characterization of "multivalence" here.

19. Derrida, Positions, p. 8. This interview is entitled "Implications."

20. Derrida, "Différance," pp. 142-143.

21. Ibid., p. 142.

22. Derrida, "Différance," in Margins of Philosophy, p. 13. Note that the underlining is mine.

23. The Random House Dictionary, s.v., "Hollow."

24. Ibid.

25. Derrida, "Différance," in Margins of Philosophy, p. 13. Note that the underlining is mine.

26. The Random House Dictionary, s.v., "Vitiated."

27. Derrida's "La différence" in Marges de la philosophie, Les Editions de Minuit (1972), p. 13, was later published in Margins of Philosophy.

28. Derrida, "Différance," p. 143.

29. Ibid., p. 144.
30. Derrida, Speech and Phenomena, p. 61. Note also that Derrida treats the issue of Heidegger's claims about Aristotle's alleged understanding of time in his essay "Ousia and Gramme: Note on a Note from Being and Time," in Margins of Philosophy, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 31-67.
31. Derrida, Speech and Phenomena, p. 61.
32. Ibid., p. 62.
33. Ibid., pp. 63-64.
34. Ibid., p. 64.
35. Edmund Husserl, Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness, ed. Martin Heidegger, trans. James C. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), sec. 17, p. 64, as cited in Derrida, Speech and Phenomena, p. 64. Note that the italics (underlining) have been added by Derrida.
36. Derrida, Speech and Phenomena, p. 64.
37. Husserl, Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness, sec. 16, p. 62, as cited in Derrida, Speech and Phenomena, p. 65.
38. Ibid., sec. 16, p. 63, as cited in Derrida, Speech and Phenomena, p. 65.
39. Derrida, Speech and Phenomena, pp. 65-66.
40. Husserl, Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness, sec. 35, p. 99, as cited in Derrida, Speech and Phenomena, p. 66.
41. Derrida, Speech and Phenomena, p. 66.
42. Heidegger, On Time and Being, p. 15.
43. Heidegger, "The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics," p. 64 (German, p. 132).
44. Ibid., p. 65 (German, pp. 132-133).
45. Ibid., p. 69 (German, pp. 137-138).

46. See Joan Stambaugh's introduction to Heidegger's Identity and Difference, p. 17, fn. 3.

47. Ibid., p. 17.

48. Ibid., p. 17, fn. 2.

49. This appears to be the case with Hegel, whose text seems for the most part to speak the discourse of internality while simultaneously disregarding, or at least otherwise characterizing, the alleged consequences of what I have been discussing. Thus, in Positions, Derrida notes: "I have attempted to distinguish différance . . . from Hegelian difference, and have done so precisely at the point at which Hegel, in the greater Logic (11, 1, cg. 2C) determines difference as contradiction only in order to resolve it, to interiorize it, to lift it up (according to the syllogistic process of speculative dialectics) into the self-presence of an onto-theological or onto-teleological synthesis" (p. 44).

From my perspective, the issue revolves around passages such as the following, where Hegel seems on the one hand to consistently characterize relations as internal, but on the other, goes on to employ this internality in a way which allegedly sanctions identity. Thus, in The Logic, he notes: "The one is made visible in the other, and is only in so far as that other is. Essential difference is therefore Opposition; according to which the different is not confronted by any other but by its other. That is, either of these two (Positive and Negative) is stamped with a characteristic of its own only in relation to the other: the one is only reflected into itself as it is reflected into the other" (p. 220; underlining added). Or, further on: "The Negative is to be, no less independently, negative self-relating, self-subsistent, and yet at the same time as Negative must on every point have this its self-relation, i.e., its Positive, only in the other" (p. 224; underlining added). And, finally: "The Ground is the unity of identity and difference, the truth of what difference and identity have turned out to be--the reflection-into-self, which is equally a reflection-into-an-other, and vice versa" (p. 224; underlining added). From Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, The Logic of Hegel: Being Part One of the "Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences" (1830), 2nd ed., trans. William Wallace (London: Oxford-Clarendon Press, 1892).

Thus, while each of the pair is reciprocally reflected into one another, thus suggesting internality, nonetheless, on Hegel's account, this still leads to identity, inasmuch as this reflection into the other is at the same time a re-

flection into self and vice versa. The self is, as it were, always brought back to itself in going out from itself, i.e., the would-be loss is always preserved. The self is essentially a recapitulation. Thus, internality is not characterized here as leading to contamination and the problematization of identity, but rather as allowing for identity itself, even if this identity is essentially tied to and derived through the other. It is through this preservation of the elements, or sides of the contradiction, that the dialectic can be employed and Aufhebung enacted, whereby the terms are preserved in order to be lifted up to a higher synthesis. In this way, the essentiality of the other in the contradiction is employed in the service of the preservation of the other as other, i.e., as a "position" (see Derrida's discussion of this in the last pages of Positions, pp. 93-96), even though, as Derrida has suggested, the internality so characterized can be read to suggest otherwise.

Moreover, I think one must be careful here in too quickly characterizing Hegel's doctrine of relations as "internal," the traditional habit of doing so notwithstanding. Rather, it seems to me that, given a certain post-Derridian perspective on what internality in fact looks like, Hegel's employment of the same appears much less rigorous, especially in the passages above where its link-up with the metaphor of reflection might be read to suggest that, where the notion of "reflection into" is employed, this is suggestive merely of the direction of its essential relation and not its location as such. At least the spirit if not the letter of this ambiguity appears to be present in the Zusätze to The Logic of Hegel, where it is said, on the one hand, that: "Both are in essential relation to one another; and the one of the two is, only insofar as it excludes the other from it, and thus relates itself thereto" (p. 222; underlining added). Alternately, two paragraphs further, it is noted that: "Whatever exists is concrete, with difference and opposition in itself" (p. 223; underlining added).

Clearly a conflict exists here between the externality suggested by the first passage and the internality suggested by the second. In this light, it might be suggested that what seems important for Hegel is not so much the internality of the relation, but rather the essentiality of the other to the element in question, which, in effect, allows for the critique of Kant's abstract "thing-in-itself" (Hegel, The Logic of Hegel, p. 231). In other words, the very fact that the relation between elements is a dependent one may be what is crucial.

But even if this is the case, admittedly this interest is for the most part employed by virtue of what looks like the discourse of internality. Thus, on my reading, two points follow: First, while Hegel seems to employ the discourse of internality, nonetheless, given its ambiguity in his text, his larger interests, and the results of its employment, it is not altogether clear whether this is merely accidental, or, moreover, whether one may in fact be reading what amounts to a post-Hegelean notion of internality into Hegel's text. (Of course, from a certain hermeneutical perspective, this is always the case, which suggests that this dialogue is probably more with Kojève and others than with Hegel himself.) Second, even if he is thought to employ internality intentionally, by not characterizing the same as involving contamination, he is able to derive identity of some sort from this relation.

Now whether in fact this is a legitimate move remains an ongoing question. Certainly, from the perspective I have explored in this study, it would have to be ruled invalid. But this brings up the even more complex question of Hegel's relationship to Heidegger on this issue, and while the focus of the current study does not allow much digression on this matter, suffice to note my admittedly oversimplified gloss of the situation, as follows:

From Heidegger's perspective, Hegel would seem to deny depth to the difference thought as the function of presencing. As such, Heidegger can accuse Hegel of still characterizing Being in terms of presence. Thus, he allegedly employs difference without acknowledging the depths of its ontological role, as does Heidegger. However, on the other hand, it appears as if Hegel's employment of difference--the problematics of its reading as acknowledge above notwithstanding--unlike Heidegger's, is more clearly indicative of internality. Thus, while Heidegger seems to turn away from the same, Hegel embraces it, even if he does not read the consequences of this characterization in the same light as Derrida.

To sum up, Hegel can critique Heidegger for turning away from internality, while Heidegger can critique Hegel for not recognizing the ontological function of difference in presencing. On the other hand, Derrida can critique Hegel for not recognizing both the ontological role difference in Heidegger's sense, and the consequences of internality. And, finally, Derrida can critique Heidegger for not recognizing the need for internality, and thus the self-defeat of the Seinsfrage, as I have been discussing in this study.

Once again, however, this is just a proposal of how one might read this situation. Doing justice to this issue would require another study. In particular, as noted above, and as Derrida himself has noted (see the last interview in Positions), the difficulties of reading Hegel on the issue of difference and internality should not be underestimated. For more on the Hegel-Heidegger issue, see: Dennis J. Schmidt, The Ubiquity of the Finite: Hegel, Heidegger, and the Entitlements of Philosophy (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1987); David Klob, The Critique of Pure Modernity (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), chap. 10-11; and Martin Heidegger, Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), especially pages 141-148.

50. Heidegger, "The Thing," p. 179.
51. Derrida, Positions, p. 9.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Derrida, "Différance," p. 141.
55. Ibid., p. 159.
56. Ibid., p. 147.

CHAPTER IV

DIFFÉRANCE AND THE LITERATURE

In a footnote from a recent work by Reiner Schurmann entitled Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy, he notes:

If Derrida feels authorized to do (partially) unto Heidegger as Heidegger has done unto Nietzsche, then the price he pays is equally high: he must negate the difference between presence and presencing [die Anwesenheit and das Anwesen] in Heidegger, [and] reduce "the question of being [to] an intra-metaphysical effect."¹

While the focus of this study does not allow me to address the interesting reference to Nietzsche here, in terms of characterizing what Derrida allegedly does to Heidegger, this passage offers a resource with which to review my progress and set a course.

In the previous chapter, I offered a reading of Derrida's logic which called into question presence and presencing. Presence was problematized by an alternate account of the operation of presencing, which was then itself noted to be problematic. This indicated that neither of these terms could be maintained, given the logic of différance. Thus, while somewhat out of the context intended by Schurmann, it can be pointed out that on my reading it is the

problematization of the distinction between presence and presencing which Derrida can be characterized as evoking.

But the second point which Schurmann brings up suggests a tension: If the question of being is taken to be an "intra-metaphysical effect," as Schurmann correctly cites Derrida as having claimed,² then the question arises: How can the question itself be an effect--an effect of dif-férance it is alleged--if presence has already been called into question? In other words, how can the notion of the "effects" of différance make sense if différance problematizes the presencing of presence? Therefore, if one takes what Derrida claims regarding the logic of différance seriously, it is hard to see how différance can be accorded any role in the issuance of "effects," a concept which is inextricably tied to the general motif of presence itself.

Thus the question of Being, or anything else, for that matter, cannot be characterized as an effect of différance. But the fact that, as Schurmann suggests, Derrida employs these two motifs, i.e., the problematization of presence and the discourse of effects, suggests the importance of this issue for my concerns in the present chapter.

In the closing lines of the previous chapter, I noted a further element in Derrida's text that might be taken as a response to this concern regarding the discourse of effects. While Derrida does employ a discourse of effects in various

places throughout his texts, at the same time he often suggests that one should not take statements such as these literally. Rather, one is encouraged to understand that words are often being employed in a quite tentative fashion. He will periodically employ a word in what appears to be an ordinary way, only to add a disclaimer to the effect that the ordinary meaning of the word is one of the things being called into question.

This maneuver is based on the practice known as sous rature, or writing under erasure.³ This practice, which can be indicated graphically by a peculiar crossing out of the word in question, gets its impetus from Heidegger's performance of the same in The Question of Being,⁴ where he crosses out the word "Being" to indicate both its inaccuracy and yet necessity to the movement of thought he is explicating.

This practice is employed by Derrida to suggest that, while one is limited to the resource of words and meaning at one's disposal, insofar as these meanings are for the most part taken to be stable and meaning-full, i.e., to be indicative of presence, they do not adequately indicate the problematization of meaning and presence suggested by the logic of différance. Thus, while continuing to operate in the realm of meaning, and thus employing ordinary words in what appears to be an ordinary fashion, at the same time at

certain points these words cannot be taken at face value insofar as--from the perspective of différance--they often indicate nothing other than their own problematization. It is in this light that in the discussion that followed his original presentation of the essay "Différance," Derrida noted regarding his general strategy in that essay that:

At each step I was obliged to proceed by ellipses, corrections, and corrections of corrections, dropping each concept at the very moment at which it seemed necessary for me to use it, etc.⁵

Therefore, as I noted in reference to the last cited passage in the previous chapter,⁶ it is possible to find Derrida claiming both that différance evokes effects, and at the same time that the notion of effects as it is employed is at best a provisional characterization belonging to the realm of meaning that is being called into question.

However, it is not clear just how much of the meaning of what Derrida claims must be so qualified can be so qualified without calling into question what he does want to claim for différance regarding its role not only in the constitution of meaning, but also in its problematization.⁷ This issue is particularly acute insofar as it involves the issue of effects, because the problematization of effects is also the problematization of meaning, since meaning would be one of the effects allowed for by différance, if Derrida's qualifications about such a characterization were not taken into account, and my reading of its logic was ignored.

What is crucial about this situation is that, if the problematization of the effects-meaning schema is evoked, then the characterization of différance as that which problematizes meaning is itself made suspect. If différance allows for or produces no meaning, then it is hard to see how it can itself be meaningfully labeled as a dis-allower or a non-producer of the same, because such a characterization can be understood only as a meaningful product of the very production which it is thought to call into question. It is allegedly nothing other than the work of différance itself--a characterization which is already an instance of meaningful discourse--which brings about the problematization of meaning.

On my reading, this situation is paradoxical in that any positive formulation of différance--including the positive claim that it problematizes meaning--is already problematized by différance. In fact, any characterization of différance is merely another effect already shown to be problematic in light of its own claims.

As I suggested in the previous chapter (Section III, Part II), this situation does not confirm without ambivalence the truth of différance on some higher level as might at first be thought, but, rather, in light of the fact that such truth likewise indicates its falsity and, vis-a-vis, indicates that it is undecidable whether the account of

différance is true or false. If there is any truth to this situation, it is not the truth of différance per se, but rather the truth of the undecidability inherent in the paradox itself, or rather--inasmuch as what is now undecidable is the veracity of the claims regarding undecidability that différance suggests--what may be more accurately characterized as the undecidability as to the status of undecidability itself. Therefore, instead of undecidability being made legitimate by différance, one finds this undecidability applying to the account of différance itself, thus leaving open--or undecidable--the question as to the status of its claims regarding undecidability. In this sense, what is undecidable then is the status of undecidability itself insofar as it is wedded to the account offered by virtue of différance.⁸

I have responded to this paradox by embracing it. I could do this without hesitation, because my concern has been limited to offering a reading of the Seinsfrage insofar as it plays itself out in the thought of these two thinkers. Outside of this, I have been under no obligation to make différance accomplish anything that might be characterized as useful or meaningful. Thus I have taken the force of Derrida's qualifications about the language of effects seriously, since a discourse of effects could not be brought

into accord with my reading of the logic of différance itself.

The issue then is whether Derrida is willing to give up, or at least qualify, much of the unequivocal characterization of accounting for the displacement of meaning that différance is frequently given in his texts, and instead characterize it in terms that are more ambivalent and less useful. The danger of letting the ambivalence of the account of différance go unheeded is the danger, frequently voiced in other contexts by Derrida himself,⁹ of letting meaning domesticate non-meaning, thus reclaiming the perceived loss embodied in the latter in its own terms. In other words, it is again the risk of the domestication of a certain non-presence by presence itself, which would be nothing other than a further example and extension of the characterization of being as presence which Derrida is allegedly on guard to ward against.¹⁰ It is only the application of undecidability to the account of différance itself--and thus to its claims regarding undecidability--as suggested by the paradox, that can forestall this process of recovery.¹¹

Therefore, my concern here is with Derrida's own self-understanding of what his texts imply, as indicated by the divergence between what the logic of différance suggests, even as it is confirmed by the practice of erasure, and the

thrust of its alternate employment, not only as it manifests in a discourse of effects, but further as it is characterized in a quite decidable--or one might say truthful--fashion as that which allows for the problematization of meaning even when erasure is in force. As Derrida often claims to show regarding other texts, one wonders whether Derrida himself is not involved in a type of suppression regarding the implications of his own work.¹²

These concerns, however, have not gone without attention in the literature. Thus I have reproduced here--albeit with a slight twist--an argument made by a recent commentator by the name of David Wood in an essay entitled "Dif-férance and the Problem of Strategy."¹³ In the first section of this chapter I will take up the concerns of this essay in more detail. In particular, I will be interested in the fact that, in spite of his recognition of the problem that the discourse of effects poses for some of Derrida's other claims, particularly those that involve the doctrine of erasure, Wood is nonetheless led to characterize the implications of this situation quite differently than I have. I will also note how his characterization suggests an alternate reading of the relation between difference and différance. In Section Two, I will turn to a recent work by John Caputo entitled Radical Hermeneutics,¹⁴ and discuss the

presence of the same reading of this relationship as it occurs there.

Différance and the Strategy of Effects

Part I

To set the stage for an examination of Wood's concerns, let me point out that the essay in question opens with the following lines.

On various occasions in the past, in a series of appreciative responses to the work of Jacques Derrida, I have expressed reservations about the scope and legitimacy of his deconstructive strategy. I have argued that any positive formulations it offers are wedded to transcendental modes of thought, and that "erasure" is no protection against this charge.¹⁵

First, then, one must note that the essay I will be discussing is, for the most part, a summary of concerns that Wood had previously expressed elsewhere. In particular, these concerns in one form or the other had already surfaced in an essay published in 1980 entitled "Derrida and the Paradoxes of Reflection," and in a further essay published in 1982 entitled "Time and the Sign."¹⁶ Thus, "Différance and the Problem of Strategy," which was first presented at the annual Warwick Workshop in Continental Philosophy, and was initially published in 1985, attempts to draw together in a more concise way issues that had their impetus in Wood's encounter with Derrida's work in various other contexts.

Just as important, the above passage explicitly indicates the issue which I take to be of primary interest in the essay, which is Wood's claim that positive formulations of deconstructive strategy in general, and différance in particular, implicate it in what he takes to be transcendental modes of thought. What I must do, then, is investigate how, on Wood's view, this claim is involved with the question of the status of effects insofar as this motif is related to the doctrine of erasure.

Thus, for my purposes, the importance of this essay is twofold. First, it explicitly addresses the issue of the status of effects. And, second, it deals with this issue in such a way that the characterization of the relation between Heidegger's difference and Derrida's différance ends up looking substantially different than I have characterized it previously. With these general issues in mind, let me now turn to a few passages from the essay where Wood sets forth his claims.

First, in noting what he characterizes as some of his doubts, he claims that:

"Presence" cannot be made into an "effect" of dif-
férance because the only language in which this makes anything like sense is the language of transcendental causation. If one uses this language under erasure, its force is illusory. If one uses it straightforwardly, one is guilty of mere (intrametaphysical) inversion.¹⁷

Then, further on, in somewhat more detail he notes:

Despite his warnings that we should not do this, Derrida must be interpreted as offering, at least formally speaking, transcendental arguments. I say "formally" for although he does not posit transcendental entities, he is offering us "conditions for the possibility of . . ." and not just logical conditions, but a "productive activity" that brings about effects. But is not this reading somewhat naive? I think we ought to notice that Derrida does not always caution us against understanding such claims in a traditional transcendental way. Great stretches of Positions go unprotected by such precautions. The reply to this, as Gayatri Spivak says, is that there is always an "invisible erasure." Why? It is clear that on those occasions on which he does warn against a metaphysical reading, the force of his remarks is not restricted to those occasions but is quite general. But if we are not to suppose that différance literally produces effects (because the language of production and cause/effect is appropriate only to relations to a generative ground, i.e., a "presence") then his remarks do not have the force intended.¹⁸

And, finally, in summary, he concludes:

So to repeat my claim: it is that Derrida either uses transcendental forms of arguments in explaining the term différance, in which case he undermines his whole project, or he does not, in which case the force of all he says about différance (and its intelligibility) evaporates.¹⁹

The problem here, as Wood points out, and as I have already noted, is that there is an apparent conflict suggested if one tries to take both the notion of effects and the doctrine of erasure seriously. Thus, on the one hand, if one allows différance to be characterized as a producer of effects, then one not only accords différance a certain transcendental role, but, moreover, this characterization, insofar as it reproduces the Heideggerean schema, dissolves the

contrast which I have noted to be inherent in the logic of these two notions.

Thus, if the discourse of effects is taken seriously, or out of erasure, then différance allows for presence and is thus not unlike Heidegger's difference. On the other hand, if erasure is taken to apply already to all references of effects--effects in this case then being nothing but a provisional but inaccurate characterization--then the characterization of différance as a transcendental function which produces effects is inaccurate.

In this latter case, différance allows for or produces nothing in the way of effects, identity, meaning, presence, or the present. Of course, this is the option that I have chosen to affirm by virtue of what appears, on my reading, to be required, given the logic of différance itself. But, as I have noted, this option not only leaves différance less than useful in that it can no longer be employed to account for identity, meaning, presence, and so forth, but, moreover, by virtue of the fact that it makes claims about the problematization of the same, it puts itself in a paradoxical position regarding its own status. I take it to be this fate that is alluded to in the last passage cited above, where Wood shows concern about its possible lack of intelligibility if the doctrine of erasure is taken to override the discourse of effects.

Thus Wood's concern is as follows. How can différance be accorded a transcendental role as that which allows for effects at the same time that the general doctrine of erasure would suggest that there is no force in such a characterization? From Wood's perspective, this situation apparently suggests a choice between two options. Either dif-férance must be understood as a type of transcendental operative which allows for effects, i.e., for some form of presence, thus undermining at least some of the claims of the project, or else the discourse of effects must be understood to be under erasure, in which case much of what is claimed for différance regarding what it accomplishes or accounts for is drained of its force.

Thus Wood wants to claim, among other things, that Derrida cannot have it both ways. Either différance still plays a transcendental role in accounting for presence, which represents a certain "repetition of key metaphysical motifs at the very end of Derrida's project,"²⁰ or else, alternately, the positive claims that Derrida must make regarding différance if it is going to do its critical work will be vacuous, suggesting that "it is actually important to the ultimate shape of his thesis (what he wants to do with the term différance for example) that he uses such terms out of erasure."²¹

In light of this dilemma, what Wood opts to suggest is already foreshadowed in the previous line. Thus he resolves this situation by privileging what Derrida is apparently trying to accomplish with the employment of différance (a certain critical activity which will unsettle sedimented hierarchies among other things), over what Derrida seems additionally to claim regarding the status of différance itself inasmuch as it is frequently characterized as problematizing the metaphysics of presence.²²

In this way, Wood selects to read this situation in light of the first option, which suggests that, while différance has not then broken from certain transcendental-metaphysical motifs, it nonetheless is thus accorded a certain useful strategic role. Thus, in resolving this situation, Wood chooses the intelligibility and usefulness of différance, which its link with the discourse of effects would support, at the expense of any breach with transcendental metaphysics--and thus with intelligibility--that a full employment of erasure--not to mention an analysis of its logic such as I have offered previously--might suggest. In drawing together his own position in "Differance and the Problem of Strategy" (p. 68), he is thus lead to claim:

What I am questioning is Derrida's self-understanding--his understanding of the possibility of a discourse other than that of "metaphysics."

And further:

My admiration for his achievement does not depend on believing in his own assessment of its absolute radicality with regard to the circle of Western thought.

And finally:

Derrida has transformed the way we think about and read (or perhaps write) philosophy, he has transformed our confidence in a representable relationship between the inside and the outside of philosophy. But his strategic dependence on such metaphysical values as . . . formally transcendental arguments essentially limits his achievement.²³

Thus, in the end, as the opening lines of the essay had already promised, Wood is ultimately appreciative of Derrida's work. But this appreciation, as Wood notes above, is not in regard to what one may characterize as the transgressive role of différance inasmuch as this may suggest a breach with Western metaphysics, but rather is more limited in recognizing that, while metaphysics may not have been overcome, at least in terms of strategy it "opens up the space of alternate theoretical possibilities."²⁴

Thus, I think one could accurately characterize Wood's position as follows. While he does not pursue a reading of différance that would lead to the transgression of metaphysics because of his aforementioned concerns over its useful intelligibility if erasure is rigorously evoked, by the same token he does see a certain transcendental radicality in différance invested with the power if not to overcome metaphysics, than at least to offer a certain critical revision of the same. Thus it has a certain transformative

role to play, which, as he notes, suggests that "philosophy on the move is the only possible transgression of metaphysics. There is no other place to go."²⁵

On Wood's reading, while différance is still implicated in a certain transcendental motif by virtue of the presence of the discourse of effects, and is held there by the lack of intelligibility that the option indicative of the erasure of this discourse would imply, at the same time différance, insofar as it suggests a general deconstructive strategy, is still useful in making one aware of certain ruling dichotomies, and in effect outlining the realm of metaphysics in which one is enclosed. Moreover, in doing so, it allegedly opens up the possibility of new styles of philosophical writing.

For Wood, then, Derrida is somehow mistaken about the ability of différance to induce a problematization of the metaphysics of presence. In fact, this appears to be the case if one puts as much weight in the discourse of effects as Wood does. Moreover, this reading does seem to be called for inasmuch as the legitimacy of such a reading tends to be supported by the apparent lack of intelligibility which befalls différance, if it is understood in terms of the other option. Thus, if one wants to keep the force--to reuse Wood's term--of what is claimed for différance intact, i.e., that it accounts for or produces certain effects, then one

must apparently affirm the reading that Wood offers, thus implicating différance in a certain transcendental role.

But notice that on this reading différance can be characterized as transcendental for the same reason that this would be an accurate characterization of Heidegger's difference, which is that its role so characterized is that of a condition or function which allows for or brings about "X." Thus, différance is characterized here as a function which brings about the presencing of presence in the form of effects. On my reading, as noted above, this clearly reproduces the Heideggerean schema, and in so doing draws difference and différance into a nearly indistinguishable accord. Both are thus characterized as allowing for the presencing of presence in some form.

The immediate result of Wood's reading, therefore, can be succinctly stated. If one opts for the usefulness and intelligibility of différance in light of due consideration regarding the option between the discourse of effects and the doctrine of erasure, and if one opts for the former over the latter, then one will likely be led to characterize the difference-différance relation in a way that suggests their near compliance. In this light, Wood's reading can be seen to suggest a characterization of the difference-différance relation substantially different from the one I have

suggested is called for in light of the logic of différance itself.

But before moving on in Section Two to take up a further example of this alternate reading, this time as it plays itself out in a recent work by John Caputo, let me first address several further issues.

Part II

To begin, it must be noted that, for the most part, at least insofar as it involves the analysis of the apparent conflict between effects and erasure, I am in general agreement with Wood's assessment of Derrida's text. There does appear to be a problematic tension in the text indicative of the issue in question of how one is to read the discourse of effects in light of the doctrine of erasure and vis-a-vis. But let me be clear: In terms of my response to this issue, I have taken a substantially different path from Wood.

In this light the following considerations must be noted. Let it be recalled that, based on my reading, I affirmed the doctrine of erasure over the discourse of effects, and in fact characterized the latter as being quite out of place, given the logic inherent in différance itself. Thus, on my reading, there was never a real conflict between erasure and effects to begin with, inasmuch as the former,

in supporting my characterization of différance, ruled out a priori any logical space for the latter.

In this sense, methodologically speaking, unlike Wood, I did not first come to the text and find this tension, but rather in first approaching the text through an analysis of différance, I was never aware of the issue until I noticed what appeared to be an alternate and--by that time what I already took to be--incongruous element in the text itself, i.e., the talk of effects. Thus, while in agreement with Wood about the presence of the issue, on the other hand, in terms of my reading of différance, the issue had already been decided.

Clearly, this decision for erasure at the expense of effects places me in a position opposite that of Wood. Thus, in response to the inevitable concern regarding the legitimacy of my decision in this regard, I can only refer to the body of my analysis of différance evoked previously, and hope that the argument developed there is persuasive. But, in so doing, I then likewise feel justified in posing what amounts to the same question to Wood. How is it that he is given to privilege the discourse of effects over the alternate claims regarding erasure? And, moreover, in this same light, I also feel called to put forth an even more imposing question to Derrida himself, which is: How is it that the text embodies this conflict to begin with? In

other words, why does his text contain a discourse of effects in the first place? While I will surely not be able to answer either of these questions conclusively, in what follows, I will briefly explore several factors that might be taken to contribute to this situation.

Let me start with the most approachable of these concerns, which is that of why Wood chooses to privilege the discourse of effects over a more radical reading of erasure. The most obvious response to this question I have in fact already noted. Wood chooses to privilege the discourse of effects both because it keeps différance useful in its various employments, and because the other option leaves it somewhat unintelligible. If différance is not intelligible, then it is certainly not useful for any particular employment, whether that employment is productive or critical. Thus Wood's choice is accounted for by the fact that it keeps différance useful and meaningful.

In fact, it seems to me that the latter element is in this case employed in the service of the former insofar as what is being valued here is apparently the ability of différance to account for and accomplish certain tasks, for example, to account for a certain critical activity which has a particularly disruptive force, i.e., deconstruction. Thus I think that one can legitimately suggest that Wood's choice in part stems from the not unimportant desire to keep

the critical force of the deconstructive project alive, and in so doing support what he takes to be Derrida's for-the-most-part strategic-critical interest in the same. In other words, even given a choice, I do not think that Wood would opt for a more radical reading of the problematization of presence and meaning, both because of his interest in doing justice to what he reads as Derrida's primary concerns, and because of his own interests as suggested in the passages noted above.

But I also want to suggest that the characterization of this situation as a choice is not something that Wood would probably sanction in the first place, precisely because, for him, the lack of intelligibility of what I have characterized as the other option gives to the same the status of being no option at all. For Wood, this lack of intelligibility suggests that there is only one valid choice, which in essence is no choice. The question thus suggests itself as to what apparently keeps Wood from characterizing this situation in terms that indicate that there is a choice to be made here. In this light, let me propose the following as a speculative account of what may be at work in Wood's apparent lack of interest in developing what I take to be the other option.

Initially, one must again note Wood's claim, previously cited above, to the effect that if erasure is evoked, there-

by rescuing différance from a certain transcendental motif, then "the force of all he [Derrida] says about différance (and its intelligibility) evaporates."²⁶ What must be questioned here is precisely what is being avoided in this statement. As I mentioned previously, it does not take much interpretive licence to suggest that it is nothing but the lack of intelligibility that would have to be attributed to différance itself if erasure was consistently employed. What apparently signals danger to Wood is the possible lack of meaning or intelligibility that différance would be burdened with if one were to maintain the claim regarding the universal applicability of erasure. But in this light, let me note further the following considerations.

Clearly, one of the claims regarding différance is that it offers a critique of the metaphysics of presence. Moreover, I have noted that a critique of meaning accompanies this critique of presence. With this in mind, it is also suggested that the would-be vehicle of this problematization--insofar as this vehicle can be characterized as nothing other than the justificative account of the same suggested by the logic of différance--is itself also open to a certain self-problematization. In other words, one cannot expect the account of problematization implied by the logic of différance to escape somehow the problematization which it suggests is universally applicable to all presence and

meaning. In fact, if one takes the account suggested in light of the logic of différance seriously, it seems clear, as I have noted in various ways previously, that its claims must be turned in on themselves in such a way that a certain paradox indicative of undecidability is evoked.

In this light, clearly différance has nothing to fear regarding a certain unintelligibility. In fact, on my reading, one is not being loyal to what is suggested in light of the logic of différance itself unless the end point of its characterization is a certain undecidability which drains it of its force, and leaves it--in traditional terms--for the most part unintelligible.

Moreover, it must be remembered that this unintelligibility is based not only on its final status as undecidable, but, further, as I have discussed previously, is grounded in its own non-actual status when characterized as a mere would-be function. For this same reason, on my reading, différance cannot be accorded any transcendental efficacy by virtue of the fact that--in being what amounts to a mere self-effacing narrative of its own impossibility--it is clearly neither a "condition for the possibility of," nor a "productive activity that brings about effects." All of which suggests further that the notion of the transcendental requires for its meaningful employment that it be linked to some phenomenal result, without which its application, as in

the case at hand, is quite wide of the mark. In the end, one comes upon a certain place of frustration regarding dif-férance.

Therefore, the question that I must rhetorically pose is: Why is the arrival at this place not understood to be the very problematization of metaphysics itself? Does Wood think that the problematization of metaphysics could be evoked by a meaningful critique without the latter just reproducing one's involvement in the metaphysics of presence and meaning itself? Surely it is the case that if one is going to call into question metaphysics in this sense, then the site or place of this event should not simply reproduce the metaphysics that are in question, but rather should at least suggest a certain paradox regarding the status of the tools of the critique itself. Thus, to worry about the lack of intelligibility here is to miss the point, which is that the limit or transgression of metaphysics--however one may want to characterize this--has not in fact been reached until one is face to face with a certain suspension or problematization of intelligibility.

Wood's apparent refusal to address what I have characterized as the other option clearly reveals his presuppositions. In this light, I think it is plausible to suggest that what he awaits in terms of the problematization or transgression of metaphysics is essentially a meaningful

transgression, something which my analysis takes to be simply an oxymoron. On my account, to be meaningfully transgressive is not to be transgressive at all, insofar as transgression in this context is the problematization of meaning itself. Thus, if this place is going to be suggestive of any real problematization or transgression of metaphysics, and metaphysics is nothing other than the metaphysics of presence and meaning, then surely this place, if it is to characterize adequately this motif of problematization, cannot itself be indicative of meaning and intelligibility.

In the same way, the critique of metaphysics will not in fact be a critique if critique means simply the meaningful account of the problematization of the same. Rather, if consistently characterized, the critique of metaphysics will have no force as a critique if the point of the problematization of metaphysics has been reached. From my perspective, it can be said that one can judge one's proximity to this point by noting the diminishment of intelligible force as it is approached. Thus, what one must be willing to do is to follow différance to the point of its apparent frustration, and there admit that in no longer knowing, one has reached the place where metaphysics has been called into question. In this way, what one must get accustomed to is the fact that such a situation is not going to be meaning-

ful. If it were, the problematization would not yet be fully deployed.

Now some such as Wood may want to claim that all of this merely suggests that metaphysics cannot in fact be transgressed or called into question, and if by this they mean to suggest that there is no way to step meaningfully beyond metaphysics, then I must concur. However, as I have suggested above, insofar as the horizon of metaphysics is allegedly the field of presence and meaning, to claim that metaphysics cannot be overcome by virtue of the fact that such a move ceases to be meaningful or intelligible is simply to beg the question.

Of course metaphysics cannot be overcome if one thinks that this move will embody a certain intelligibility indicative of meaning. But if one lets go of this supposition, which appears a priori to be overly restrictive, then metaphysics can indeed be problematized if not overcome, albeit even if this new place is only distinguished by a certain frustrating lack of intelligibility. Thus, in response to Wood's claim regarding Derrida that--

The lesson we draw from him, is not merely that, as he says, there is no sense in doing without metaphysical concepts in trying to overcome metaphysics, but that there is no prospect whatever of eliminating metaphysical concepts and strategies. Instead, the project of overcoming metaphysics must be repeated indefinitely.²⁷

--I must reply that, while I can certainly support the last sentence, to the prior statement "that there is no prospect whatever of eliminating metaphysical concepts and strategies," I have to reply: Of course there is, one must simply be willing to embrace a certain lack of intelligibility that such a project presupposes to begin with.

Thus, my reading suggests that one can in fact evoke a certain problematization of metaphysics, as long as one does not expect the account of this problematization itself to be ultimately metaphysical, i.e., to be meaning-full. All of which amounts to no more or less than the following question. Is Wood, in his disregard for what I have characterized as the other option--insofar as it admittedly suggests a certain lack of intelligible force as applied to dif-férance as supported by the doctrine of erasure--in effect saying anything more than that there is no way of continuing to do metaphysics during or after the critique of metaphysics? I think not, for if this was not the thrust of his claim he would recognize that the problematization of metaphysics itself is indicated by nothing other than the lack of intelligibility that he takes to be indicative of the hopelessness of such a project.

Thus, in review of my account of Wood, note that I have focused on two main points. First, I have explored and voiced support for his insightfulness in bringing into focus

the apparent tension in Derrida's text between the discourse of effects and the doctrine of erasure. Second, however, I have noted that, insofar as he can be taken to suggest that an accurate characterization of différance would sanction its involvement with the discourse of effects, apparently by virtue of his interest in maintaining its intelligibility at the expense of what I have argued is its breach with metaphysics, I have begged to differ with Wood on the importance of the role of effects in Derrida's text. Thus, I have claimed not only that the logic of différance itself leaves no room for the talk of effects, but, moreover, that Derrida's own doctrine of erasure--when employed consistently--supports such a reading.

But the real importance of this second point, as I suggested earlier, is precisely that Wood's characterization of différance shifts the characterization of the relation between Heidegger's difference and Derrida's différance away from the model of dissimilarity, which I claimed was called for in light of my prior analysis, to one of near identity. Thus, I found that, on Wood's reading, difference and différance are nearly indistinguishable in their role as the transcendental function which brings about the presencing of presence and the present in the form of effects.

In light of this situation, I must soon turn to another example of this same characterization as it is presented in

a recent work by John Caputo. Before moving on with this, however, let me first take up briefly the even more speculative question as to why Derrida's text contains this tension between effects and erasure in the first place. In other words, given the logic of différance I have employed, and what amounts to the support for the same in light of the doctrine of erasure, how is it that the discourse of effects even comes up?

Part III

There are numerous responses to such a concern, and I will note a few of them in passing, but for the most part, the account I want to suggest the plausibility of has in fact already been rehearsed in my account of Wood. Again, it is that, in some sense, it is the apparent desire displayed in Derrida's text to make différance accomplish something useful, i.e., critical, that keeps it back from the otherwise more radical formulation that its own logic, as supported by the doctrine of erasure, seems to call for. In particular, this turning away from its own implications is suggested, as I have noted, by two issues. First, the presence of the discourse of effects, and, second, the fact that, even when erasure is in force and the discourse of effects is at bay, there appears to be little recognition of the paradoxical status of the claims regarding différance

itself which on my reading, its logic implies. Thus, I have suggested both that the discourse of effects is inconsistent, and that the unequivocal discourse regarding what différance accounts for is likewise misplaced. In this light, let me now suggest further what aspires to be nothing more than a speculative account linking these two issues.

Might it not be that Derrida's employment of the discourse of effects is, after all, important to his project in that, if différance is characterized as allowing for effects, then différance itself can still be accorded some meaning of its own--inasmuch as meaning is simply an effect --as that which meaningfully accounts for the critical strategy of deconstruction? In other words, in being said to allow for effects or meaning in some sense, différance, by virtue of this very characterization, is given the licence to itself be meaningful, thus allowing it to take on the role of offering a theoretical justification for deconstructive strategy. Thus it becomes the theory or account of why deconstruction as a strategy is so implied.

What is important, then, is that this production of meaning, understood as one of the effects allowed for by différance, be accorded enough sufficiency to let différance itself take on the meaning that it needs to be useful in meaningfully accounting for what then must be understood as the somewhat more limited horizon of deconstructive cri-

tique. In other words, it must be enough meaning to let différance--as what accounts for the problematization of the same--stand for the most part as unambiguously meaningful in terms of this role. Thus, in allowing for the effect of meaning, différance would in essence allow for itself, and in so doing legitimize itself while likewise legitimizing what would then appear to be a more limited, but still critical, activity.

In essence, then, it would allow deconstruction--as a meaningful account of a certain problematization of meaning --to accomplish something which it may deem useful, i.e., the serious and meaningful critique of certain structures. Which is to say nothing other than that its critique could then have a certain persuasive effect, or in other words, it could make a difference.

However, one must keep in mind that, if this suggestion appears at all plausible, then the deconstructive project is revealed to be fundamentally incomplete, and not simply in the sense that it must be repeated indefinitely, but further and more importantly in the sense that, if some degree of meaning is still allowed for in principle as an effect of différance, then this leads to the retention of the latter itself within the realm of metaphysics. This would be the case not only because it would still play a certain transcendental role, but further because by allowing for

meaning and presence, and thus itself being characterizable in terms of the former, it also in some sense at least must participate in the latter. All of which might be taken to suggest a certain strategic motivation for such an employment of différance, even if such an employment shows a not insignificant disregard for what I have noted are the implications of its own inner logic.

However, in this light, a further point calls for attention. Inasmuch as it has been suggested that différance is employed as a theoretical account which serves to legitimize deconstructive practice, it seems in this sense to be a discourse of truth calling for the problematization of the same. Again, this is allegedly made possible on this model by the fact that, in allowing for the effects suggestive of some degree of meaning, it can itself embody enough meaning to suggest the truth of its subsequent critical claims. Thus, it can offer what amounts to a meaningful critique of meaning.

This results in the interesting situation whereby all unequivocal meaning is taken to be suspect except the meaning of the account that justifies such claims. On my reading, this is simply a contradiction. Either all meaning must be so problematized, thus calling into question the very formulation of the justificative account of problematization itself (in the form of a paradox suggestive of

undecidability regarding its truth status), or else the entire account must be taken to not problematize meaning to begin with. Thus, in terms of différance, not only must it not allow for effects, but by virtue of this same lack it must induce the self-effacement of the narrative of the account of problematization itself, at least to the point of suggesting a certain paradoxical undecidability regarding its truth status.

But it is apparently this final paradox that cannot be accepted by Derrida, inasmuch as it appears that his argument for the problematization of truth embodied in the notion of différance must be taken as truth itself if deconstruction is to have any argumentative force persuasive of its applicability and utility. Thus, the argument for what amounts to non-truth must in fact be true, in effect merely preserving the value of truth on another level. Thus, Derrida's goal is apparently a certain strategic utility employed at the expense of following through with what I have suggested are the implications of the logic of différance itself.

Finally, then, I must note that one account of why Derrida employs the discourse of effects as outlined above is that he is primarily interested in the practical usefulness of what deconstruction has to offer in the way of critical acumen. And, while one certainly cannot deny this utility,

it is suggested by my reading that it comes at the not insignificant expense of following through with the implications of différance as they are suggested by the text itself. But in light of this apparent turning away from the implications of différance, there are certainly other contributory factors if not equally persuasive accounts possible. Let me now briefly suggest a couple of these further considerations before moving on to the next section.

One other possible factor which might be taken to account for the discourse of effects, and all that I have noted that it implies, could be the not unimportant tie to phenomenology that clearly plays such a large role in Derrida's work. In this light, what I am proposing echoes a suggestion made by Robert Magliola in his Derrida on the Mend, to the effect that:

Derrida . . . (at least in practice) gives experience priority over "logical conclusions." When faced with the self-contradictions that infect "logical" theories of meaning, he decides against absurdism and in favor of experience--in favor, for example, of the fil conducteur, though he will have to salvage this thread in a new, "crossed-out" manner. . . . In short, if Derrida were not a phenomenologist, he would not judge himself obliged to account for this "thread" which characterizes everyday thinking: he is obliged because experience testifies to this "conductive thread."²⁸

Thus it might be that, as Magliola suggests, in the end Derrida in some sense privileges the harsh impositions of the reality of experience over certain logical conclusions that would otherwise call the former fundamentally into question.

In other words, he may be more of a phenomenologist, in the sense of wanting to take account of experience, than other dimensions of the logic of his texts would seem to suggest.

All of which brings up again the not-surprising point that there seems to be a tension between what one must take to be the two conflictive motifs in Derrida's text, i.e., the implicit logic of différance itself as explicitly supported by the doctrine of erasure, and the explicit discourse of effects. Again, however, I must stress that, even when the doctrine of erasure is explicitly in force in his text, the implicit self-problematization of the narrative of différance, inasmuch as it suggests a certain paradox, is never made explicit.

But in the service of further considerations, it should also be noted that, apart from phenomenology, it might also be the case--in accord with a certain realism which grounds itself in the apparent facts of meaning and experience--that the influence of structuralism on Derrida's work, insofar as it offers a certain accounting for the production of meaning, may not be as far from Derrida's focus as I have assumed. In this light, it might be suggested that, insofar as Derrida, from another perspective, is clearly as indebted to Saussure's work,²⁹ and thus to that of structuralism in general as to that of phenomenology, that while he may in fact be interested in a certain displacement of structure in

general,³⁰ he is not, however, interested in that account wrecking havoc on all dimensions of meaning per se. In other words, like structuralism, maybe he does want to account for meaning, but account for it in a way that more closely approximates one's real experience, which often does contain elements of equivocation and ambiguity.

Thus it might be claimed that he is basically involved in a modification of structuralism with the intent to make it account for experience more adequately. In this light, it is not hard to see how a discourse of effects would be called for. After all, something must account for the production of meaning, even if its properties as so produced invite its characterization in terms that stress a certain polysemia.

But with these considerations--and there are certainly others--I have exited my narrow path of concern. What is now called for is a return to the main issue, which is that of tracing the implications of the discourse of effects as they can be seen to shift the characterization of the relation between Heidegger's difference and Derrida's différance within the secondary literature. As such, I will now move on to the next section and take up select passages from Caputo's work, Radical Hermeneutics.

In light of what I have noted previously regarding Wood's choice to understand différance in terms of the

discourse of effects, what I now seek is a further example of how this characterization can be seen to shift the relation between difference-différance away from the motif of externality-internality, which I have argued characterizes this relation, toward what appears to be an alternate and-- what I take to be for the most part--inaccurate model indicative of their near parity.

Effects in Action

Part I

John Caputo's Radical Hermeneutics is an unquestionably substantial work with many notable qualities. However, insofar as I am interested strictly in its employment of dif-férance to the extent that this involves reference to the issue of effects, I will be required to pass over much of its merit and focus exclusively on the issue at hand.

In this light, what stands out in Caputo's presentation is again the apparent identification of difference and dif-férance, which is suggested insofar as both are credited with the issuance of effects. Along these lines, Caputo argues that, inasmuch as Heidegger's difference dispatches the effects of being, meaning, truth, and so forth, and as such accounts for their presence, this for the most part draws it into affinity with Derrida's différance which is similarly characterized as that which also elicits such

effects. Thus, in the sixth chapter of this work, in posing what amounts to a rhetorical question, Caputo notes:

Is the movement beyond Being to Ereignis [difference] the "same" as the grammatological reduction which makes Being an effect of différance?³¹

In what follows, the affirmative answer to this question is repeatedly deployed. But before moving on to some further passages where this deployment is demonstrated, let me first note a couple of points regarding the passage at hand.

First, let me mention again what should by now be obvious, which is that if the above schema is in fact taken to be veridical in its characterization of différance, then there will be essentially no substantiative deviation between difference and différance. In this light, any subsequent attempt at contrast would probably have more to do with how these thinkers may be read to characterize the implications of these notions than with the content or alleged operation of the notions themselves. And, in fact, as I will note shortly, this is for the most part the task that Caputo takes up in the latter part of his text.

Second, one should also note that in the above passage the implication of différance in the discourse of effects is asserted without question. In other words, the fact that différance allegedly issues forth certain effects is not even taken to be an issue. Rather, this motif is merely asserted in a quite unquestioned way. This basic tendency in

fact pervades Caputo's text, which appears to nowhere draw into question the status of the discourse of effects itself.

Thus, in this sense at least, Caputo is quite unlike Wood who, as I noted, at least takes the question of the status of this discourse to be an issue insofar as it appears on his reading to run into opposition in light of the doctrine of erasure and vis-a-vis. In Caputo, this conflict is not even addressed, and thus the characterization of différance in terms of effects goes unquestioned and unchallenged.

But let me point out that this situation not only enforces the différance-effects connection, but by ignoring or otherwise not noticing the issue that Wood at least names, it enforces it in all the more of an insidious fashion, i.e., unconsciously. Thus, in passing over the issue of the status of this discourse, Caputo appears to be less aware of the specifics of the situation that concerns me than is Wood.

But this apparent blindness, inasmuch as it does share with Wood the same final characterization regarding the différance-effects motif, results in the deployment of this motif in a quite unambiguous fashion. Thus, in moving on, let me now note a few passages where the deployment of this characterization appears to be in full swing.

In this light, Caputo notes, regarding Heidegger, that:

In his delimitation of Being in favor of that which gives/produces Being, Being and truth become "effects" in Derrida's sense.³²

And that:

There were numerous "truths" (in the sense of Wahrheit) over the epochs, all of them truth-events, events of a-letheia, ways that a-letheia happens, truths as "effects" of a-letheia, to give it a Derridean twist.³³

And further that:

By his use of a-letheia, he did not hold out in his hand the long-awaited truth of Being but only pointed to the matrix [difference] from which these many truths spring, in a way to which Derrida's account of a kind of protowriting [différance] which produces various metaphysical effects is comparable.³⁴

And still further that:

He was looking for a word which would do for him what différance does for Derrida, that is, distinguish a primary, originary difference from the difference which belongs to the identity/difference binary opposition, that is, difference as an effect.³⁵

And finally that:

Being and ground--and truth (Wahrheit) and the proper--are like balls being played to us, sent our way by a playful Ereignis (Derrida calls this an "effect").³⁶

Now, while there are certainly many themes running throughout these passages, I must nonetheless limit what I seek to gain from their appraisal to this one single point, which is, that clearly in each of the above Caputo, in various ways, explicitly suggests that Derrida's différance, like Heidegger's difference, in fact accounts for the production of presence understood in terms of the figure of "effects."

Thus, Being and being, truth and ground, and so forth, are all products or effects of difference-différance, which, in allowing for the presencing of presence, allows for these effects as such. In light of this characterization, it can be seen that, on Caputo's reading, there is for the most part no contrast between the function of Derrida's dif-férance and that of Heidegger's difference. As noted, they both operate as the function which brings about the presencing of presence in some form.

Part II

But of course this is not the end of the story, insofar as such a characterization has, in fact, its own effect. In this case, as mentioned previously, it shifts the characterization of the issue regarding the relation between difference and différance away from a model, such as I have employed, which would indicate that the issue can be worked out in light of the logic embodied in the notions themselves, to an alternate model which, in acknowledging little or no contrast within the same, instead characterizes the situation in terms of what it takes to be the various implications suggested by the notions themselves. To be more specific, the issue thus shifts to an investigation into how difference and différance--which are now thought to be identical in terms of their logical operation--are alternately

characterized in terms of their implications by Heidegger and Derrida.

In this light, one finds Caputo to be involved with the concern over the relation between what he reads to be the "celebrative" form of thought suggested by Derrida in light of différance, and the "meditative" form of thought suggested by Heidegger in light of difference.³⁷ What he means by this is that:

Derrida's deconstructive work issues in a grammatological exuberance which celebrates diversity, repetition, alteration. Heidegger's deconstructive work issues in a meditative stillness, which could not be more alert to the play in which all things are swept, but it is stunned by the power of its sweep and culminates in a deep sense of the play in which mortals play out their allotted time.³⁸

Thus, what Caputo proposes is a certain encompassing mediation between the themes of exuberance and meditation, which are thus characterized as possible attitudes of comportment toward the results of the workings of difference-différance. In this sense, Caputo sees Derrida's alleged celebration of multiplicity as the flip side of Heidegger's purported reverence for the same. But as Caputo is quick to point out, both of these attitudes, inasmuch as their mutual implication indicates the meaning of his "Radical Hermeneutics," are simply responses to the effects brought about by the same originating function of difference-différance. He notes:

I am always interested in the double-cross: subverting Heidegger by means of Derrida, subverting Derrida by means of Heidegger, and always by means of pressing their point of intersection--the delimitation of Being and truth (Wahrheit) as effects. That delimitation, I say, produces two different results--one typically Derridean, deconstructive, disruptive, and celebrative; the other typically Heideggerian, deconstructive but meditative--but both are profoundly, if differently, emancipatory.³⁹

Thus, while the final characterization of Heidegger's and Derrida's projects may take different forms, and suggest different self-understandings, for Caputo, what is important is that these characterizations all be indicative of a certain emancipatory discourse supposedly wrought through the recognition of the relativity of effects allowed for by difference-différance, which as he notes is their "point of intersection." In this way Caputo wants both to situate the issue of Heidegger and Derrida, difference and différance, around the focus of what I have above labeled attitudes of comportment, and to further claim that these attitudes are at base complementary in merely representing the two perspectival views of the presence of the multitude of effects brought forth through the operation of difference-différance.

While I am certainly interested in Caputo's comments on emancipation as the central outcome of these projects, just as certainly I cannot go along with the justification for the same in terms of the alleged compliance between difference and différance. Thus, while his claims are important

and insightful, particularly I think inasmuch as they might be taken to suggest the implications of Heidegger's difference, insofar as he attempts to make différance follow the same lead, I must ultimately take Caputo's characterization to be problematic.

On my reading, if there is any emancipation suggested in light of différance, it is clearly not by virtue of its characterization--in basically Heideggerean terms--as allowing for a multiple epiphany of effects, but precisely in calling into question such an epiphany, and in so doing frustrating the discourse of the Seinsfrage--and ultimately itself--enroute. In other words, what I take to be liberating in this context is nothing but the final undecidability bestowed on the project itself, which I previously suggested was apropos. But again, this may be more a matter of attitude than it is indicative of any decree inherent in the outcome proper.

Regardless, I cannot go along with Caputo's reading of différance as indicative of emancipation in the sense that he understands this. Différance, as I have noted, cannot be made to account for effects if its own suppositions and logic are made explicit, and in complementary support, if the doctrine of erasure is taken into consideration. In this way, it cannot take on the characteristics endowed it

in Caputo's account, even if the implications of the same have a certain admitted appeal.

Part III

Thus, in light of the examination of Caputo's text, I have once again noted a situation in which the presence of the différance-effects motif has shifted what I take to be the more accurate characterization of the difference-différance relation suggestive of their substantial dissimilarity to one indicative of their near identity. Additionally, I have noted that, in Caputo's case at least, this situation results in the reorganization of the issue around a concern for the attitudes of comportment toward the presence of the effects, instead of calling into question the possibility of the effects.

Thus, in both Wood and Caputo, I have observed that taking the discourse of effects seriously at the expense of entertaining other options shifts the Heidegger-Derrida, difference-différance relation away from the characterization suggested in light of my previous reading to one which, for the most part, reduces any substantiative contrast between the two.

There is nothing especially troubling about this except that it ignores what I have suggested are the textual instances which indicate a clear divergence between these two

notions in light of their characterization in terms of the motif of externality-internality, or what I originally noted as the issue of contamination. On one level, this is a minor point, but, nonetheless, it is a point which seriously affects the way in which the Heidegger-Derrida, difference-différance relation is characterized and understood.

In this light, it must be noted that this tendency to read différance in terms of effects, or production more generally, is not limited strictly to the literature which I have examined here. There are further examples--which the scope of this study does not allow the inclusion of--which apparently err in the same direction as Wood and Caputo.⁴⁰

Be that as it may, in concluding my coverage of the literature, I must suggest that it seems that what haunts the literature which I have examined is simply its privileging of what is claimed for these notions of difference and différance over what a closer engagement with the text itself reveals about the logic of the notions themselves. Thus, as both Heidegger and Derrida have supposedly taught us, each in their own way, one must pay close attention to what may be latent in terms of a text's own agenda as distinct from the manifest meaning often claimed for the text itself. In my reading, I have attempted to exhibit nothing more than a certain application of this attentiveness.

With this, then, I have come to the close of the current chapter. In the concluding chapter, I will first review what I have covered in this study, and further suggest certain points on which I have not touched. Finally, I will discuss the implications of all of this for more practical concerns.

Notes

1. Schurmann, Heidegger on Being and Acting, p. 362, n. 12.
2. Schurmann's reference here is to a passage from the essay "Différance" where Derrida notes: "And yet are not the thought of the meaning or truth of Being, the determination of différance as the ontico-ontological difference, difference thought within the horizon of the question of Being, still intrametaphysical effects of différance?" Jacques Derrida, "Différance," in Margins of Philosophy, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 22. (For the original English translation, see Jacques Derrida, "Différance," in Speech and Phenomena: And Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs, trans. David Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 153.) For my purposes, what is interesting here is simply the characterization of the discourse of Being as an effect of différance. On my reading, this could have already been claimed for Heidegger's difference, thus suggesting that such a conservative estimation of the role of différance is not enough to clearly distinguish it from the former. In fact, once the phrase "effects of" is slipped between "intrametaphysical" and "différance," it seems as if the latter is, in that very move, simply reinvested within the former by virtue of its apparently transcendental--if not metaphysical--role in allegedly allowing for such things as the elements of the discourse of Being. Thus, on my reading, giving différance such a characterization effectively keeps it within the realm of a certain transcendental metaphysics. However, I will catch up with the point of this discussion shortly in my investigation of David Wood's essay.
3. For a more complete discussion of this practice, see Spivak's introduction to Derrida, Of Grammatology, pp. xiii-xviii.
4. Martin Heidegger, The Question of Being, bilingual edition, trans. William Kluback and Jean T. Wilde (New York: Twayne, 1958), pp. 80-83.
5. This passage is from the discussion which followed the original presentation of the essay "La Différance" at the Sorbonne on January 27 of 1968. It was first published

in the Bulletin de la Societe Française de Philosophie, 62, no. 3, in July of that same year, and first appeared in translation in Spivak's introduction to Jacques Derrida, Of Grammatology, p. xviii. As she notes in a footnote to her introduction: "This remark occurs in the discussion following the lecture and is neither reprinted in Margins of Philosophy nor translated in Speech and Phenomena" (Derrida, Of Grammatology, p. 318, n. 14.). This situation has since been remedied by the translation and publication of the entire discussion in David Wood and Robert Bernasconi, eds., Derrida and Différance (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), pp. 83-95. Entitled "The Original Discussion of "Différance," this section of the work was translated by David Wood, Sarah Richmond, and Malcolm Bernard. Also note that Derrida and Différance was first published in a limited edition in 1985 by Parousia Press, The Department of Philosophy, University of Warwick, Coventry England, and is for the most part a collection of papers presented at the annual Warwick Workshop in Continental Philosophy.

6. Derrida, Speech and Phenomena, p. 147.

7. Note that in a footnote to his discussion of Husserl's text, regarding the "admirable" section 36 of The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness (p. 100), Derrida in fact suggests that "the very concept of constitution itself must be deconstructed." Derrida, Speech and Phenomena, p. 85, n. 9. Clearly, I take such a prescription--and all that it entails--quite seriously.

8. This same motif is suggested--albeit in another context--by Barbara Johnson in her work The Critical Difference (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. 146, where, at the end of the last section entitled "The Frame of Reference: Poe, Lacan, Derrida," she notes: "'Undecidability' can no more be used as a last word than 'destination'. . . . The 'undeterminable' is not opposed to the determinable; 'dissemination' is not opposed to repetition. If we could be sure of the difference between the determinable and the undeterminable, the undeterminable would be comprehended within the determinable. What is undecidable is whether a thing is decidable or not." Inasmuch as my reading suggests a localized undecidability regarding what--by virtue of différance--amounts to the doctrine of undecidability itself, its parallel with the above is indicated. This is an important, if often ignored, point in that if the doctrine of undecidability is itself left intact, as Johnson points out, this will simply lead to the reinstatement of the value of the determinable, the decidable, truth, and so forth, on some subsequent or higher level.

9. For example, see the thrust of Jacques Derrida's argument in "Cogito and the History of Madness," in Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 31-63.

10. See, for example, Derrida, Positions, p. 7.

11. But then this comes at the expense of really knowing anything regarding what différance--or deconstruction for that matter--does and does not accomplish, or its status in terms of validity. Of course this is not to deny its more practical and strategically oriented role of upsetting oppressive hierarchies; rather, it is merely to take away the ultimate theoretical justification--at least insofar as this suggests some final decidability with respect to its legitimacy--of that activity.

12. A motif aptly characterized by Spivak in her introduction to Of Grammatology, where in reference to Derrida's reading of Husserl's text, she notes that "the importance of the text of Edmund Husserl for Derrida lies precisely in its self-conflict. Husserl seems to Derrida to be a more than usually resolute suppressor of the more than usually astute grammatological suggestions implied by the Husserlian text" (Derrida, Of Grammatology, p. ii). For my own part, I can only respond: Precisely!

13. Wood, "Différance and the Problem of Strategy," pp. 63-70.

14. Caputo, Radical Hermeneutics.

15. Wood, "Différance and the Problem of Strategy," p. 63.

16. David Wood, "Derrida and the Paradoxes of Reflection," Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology 12, no. 3 (October, 1980): 225-238; and David Wood, "Time and the Sign," Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology 15, no. 2 (May 1982): 143-153. Subsequent extensions of this same theme can also be found in David Wood, "Following Derrida," in Deconstruction and Philosophy, ed. John Sallis (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 143-160; David Wood, "Heidegger After Derrida," Research in Phenomenology 17 (1987): 103-116; and David Wood, "Beyond Deconstruction?" in Contemporary French Philosophy, ed. A. Phillips Griffiths (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 175-194. Additionally, David Wood's recently published work, The Deconstruction of Time (New Jersey:

Humanities Press, July, 1989), also deals with essentially the same concerns, especially pages 273-280.

17. Wood, "Différance and the Problem of Strategy," p. 64.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid., p. 65.

20. Ibid., p. 68.

21. Ibid., pp. 64-65.

22. As a reminder, let me note that, for the purposes of this study, insofar as it mirrors the dominate themes of the tradition which it addresses, being outside of the metaphysics of presence is being outside of metaphysics proper. As such, metaphysics indicates nothing other than the value of presence.

23. Wood, "Différance and the Problem of Strategy," p. 68.

24. Ibid., p. 69.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., p. 65.

27. Ibid., p. 68.

28. Robert Magliola, Derrida on the Mend (Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1984), p. 28.

29. See Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistics, trans. Wade Baskin (New York: Fontana-Collins Press, 1974). Also note Derrida's discussion of the importance--and limits--of Saussure's account in the second chapter of Of Grammatology, entitled "Linguistics and Grammatology," pp. 27-73.

30. See, for example, Jacques Derrida's essay "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in Writing and Difference, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 278-293.

31. Caputo, Radical Hermeneutics, p. 159.

32. Ibid., pp. 171-172.

33. Ibid., pp. 176-177.
34. Ibid., p. 178.
35. Ibid., p. 179.
36. Ibid., p. 202.
37. Ibid., p. 192.
38. Ibid., p. 206.
39. Ibid., p. 198.
40. Note for example: Schurmann, Heidegger on Being and Acting previously cited; and Walter Brogan, "The Original Difference: Différance," in Derrida and Différance, ed. David Wood and Robert Bernasconi (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), pp. 31-39, to name only two that are close at hand. But, to be fair, there are also those works that do not seem to err in this way, at least as explicitly, such as: Gasché, The Tain of the Mirror; and, somewhat more cautiously, Gayle Ormiston, "The Economy of Duplicity," in Derrida and Différance, ed. David Wood and Robert Bernasconi (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), pp. 41-49. There are clearly numerous other examples on both sides of this issue, with more appearing--it seems--daily.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I will accomplish three things. First, I will review the main points of the study as they have unfolded, and summarize where I have ended up. Second, I will suggest some issues which either have not been addressed, or which I spent little time addressing, which should be taken up in any subsequent work in this area. Finally, in a more personal vein, I will discuss what I feel are some of the implications suggested by this study.

Review

It will be recalled that, after introducing the topic and discussing several methodological considerations in Chapter I, in Chapter II, I initially explored the basis of the question of Being in Heidegger's thought, and, subsequently, in following Heidegger's text, proceeded to explicate it in terms of the notion of difference. Then, to introduce the problematics of différance, I brought up the issue of contamination in light of the motif of external and internal relations, and argued that Heidegger's notion of

difference, understood in terms of the logic of appropriation, is clearly an example of the former.

I also indicated that a characterization of difference involving external relations may not be sufficient to account for the presencing of presence. Thus, I suggested that appropriation might have to be thought of in terms of internal relations in order to make difference do the job that Heidegger intends. However, I suggested that this characterization may have its own difficulties, insofar as internal relations led to contamination and thus to the problematization of presence.

I then turned, in Chapter III, to an investigation into Derrida's différance. There I noted that the latter could be understood as a further reflection on Heidegger's difference, and thus as an extension of the discourse on the Seinsfrage. But I also noted that Derrida characterizes relations as internal by virtue of his reading of Husserl's analysis of time, and that this account--while attempting to isolate what is necessary for the present to be--nonetheless leads Derrida to conclude that presence and meaning are always already problematized. This suggested that différance is ironically self-defeating in terms of the presencing of presence.

In light of this situation, I noted further that, without presence, difference itself is called into question.

This indicated that différance is present only in the narrative which tells of its own self-problematization. Moreover, since différance indicates the problematization of meaning, I argued that the status of this narrative is itself open to question.

I concluded that, while the operation of différance is ironic in always already problematizing what it would otherwise bring about, the narrative of différance is paradoxical, thus leaving its truth status--and that of the entire account--undecidable. In this way, not only are the concerns of the Seinsfarge called into question, insofar as they involve giving an account of the presencing of presence, but, moreover, the veracity of the account of the problematization of the presencing of presence is itself left open.

I then moved on to note that Derrida himself still employs a discourse of effects at various points in his texts. This suggests--contrary to what its logic and the doctrine of erasure seem to indicate--that différance somehow still produces presence. This is troubling, not only because it is inconsistent with the problematization of presence which différance is said to invoke, but, further, because such a characterization dissolves the contrast I have suggested between difference and différance.

In Chapter IV, I then turned to discussions of this issue in the literature, from which I chose two examples that struck me as particularly useful for my purposes. Both of these examples take Derrida's discourse of effects at face value, thereby supporting the characterization of dif-férance as a producer of presence, and negating the contrast between difference and différance, which I have argued for.

In this light, I looked first at an essay by David Wood where this situation was brought into explicit focus. There I noted that, while Wood successfully pointed to the issue, his suppositions about what would constitute a problematization or transgression of metaphysics nonetheless led him away from suggesting the impropriety of the discourse of effects. This came at the expense of keeping différance within metaphysics, and of virtually dissolving the contrast between Heidegger's difference and différance.

I then examined a work by John Caputo which exhibited the same final reduction of difference and différance, based on a reading which, like Wood's, paid little attention to what the textual logic of différance itself suggested, let alone the support for the same in terms of Derrida's doctrine of erasure. Thus I claimed that one of the problems with the literature I examined was that it apparently listened too closely to what the authors themselves claimed for their notions at the expense of following more closely the

life of the notions themselves within the text. This is an interesting situation, considering that the authors in question were some of the first to point out such a faux pas.

For Further Study

In this study, I have passed over several issues that might be taken as important to my concerns. The first issue, which I briefly touched on in Section II, Part IV of Chapter II, is the question regarding the role of letheia or concealment in Heidegger's interpretation of aletheia as unconcealment. As I noted at the time, this notion seems to suggest a certain abiding presence at the heart of the presencing process itself, inasmuch as talk of concealment seems to indicate that something is being concealed or sheltered. But, as I likewise noted, this notion seems to go against what Heidegger's text can otherwise be taken to indicate, i.e., the non-present status of the function of presencing when thought in terms of difference. Previously, I offered no account of this element in Heidegger's text, and I will again defer this issue. Suffice to say, however, that, on my reading, the role of concealment or sheltering within Heidegger's discourse should be accorded the same status which I gave to Derrida's discourse of effects, which suggests that it is a divergent if not conservative strain

which the weight of the remainder of his text seriously calls into question.

But this brings up a further point that should be noted, which is that Derrida's own understanding of Heidegger's text appears at times to be unduly influenced by what I take to be this errant strain. Thus, while, as I noted at the outset, this study has not stressed Derrida's own reading of Heidegger due to my interest in explicitly engaging the logic of difference-différance as it plays itself out within the texts themselves, nevertheless, I sometimes get the feeling that what Derrida takes to be problematic about Heidegger's project is merely this motif of sheltering. In other words, it seems as if Derrida at times takes this element so seriously that he is led to shift the nexus of concern to the issue of sheltering and away from what I take to be the more significant issue of contamination. This feeling is generated for the most part, but not exclusively, by some of his earlier writings.¹

Moreover, it is not hard to see that this concern might be accounted for by Derrida's own understanding of dif-férance, inasmuch as this understanding may involve the discourse of effects. This is suggested because, if Derrida does understand différance to be a producer of effects--its textual logic notwithstanding--then he may see little contrast between difference and différance himself, apart from

this issue of sheltering. This means that, at some point at least, Derrida's own understanding of the relation between these two notions might have hinged on the question of how to overcome the abiding presence implied by concealment or sheltering in Heidegger's account. Further, this same issue might be reflected in the literature, inasmuch as I have noted that the discourse of effects plays a not insignificant role there.

But whether all of this is a plausible suggestion, and further, whether if so, he continues to hold such a position, is clearly one of the things that further work in this area must address as it takes up more explicitly Derrida's own reading of Heidegger. I hope such a project will perhaps be a little more approachable, given the template of the logic of difference-différance which my account in this study has offered.

Another consideration which I have not addressed, as noted at the outset, is the possibility of what amounts to a deconstructive reading of Heidegger. As such I have attempted neither to read Derrida's notion of dissemination into Heidegger's text, nor have I taken up examples of the literature where this activity is employed.² I have steered clear of this approach to reading Heidegger for two primary reasons.

First, in light of the employment of difference as it plays itself out in Heidegger's texts, there is little support for such a reading, a reading which would again tend to dissolve the contrast between difference and différance, which my examination of various texts has suggested the plausibility of. Thus, while it may be in vogue to try to show the disruptive elements in a text in a deconstructive sense, in terms of the general flavor of Heidegger's project, my reading of it does not support such a characterization.

Second, however, and probably more important, is that even if there are such elements to be found in Heidegger's text--and the possibility of so arguing is always open--one cannot assume this going into a study such as this without stacking the deck in favor of the legitimacy of the deconstructive model. Thus, in light of my specific interests in comparatively examining the textual logic of difference and différance, such a starting point would merely serve to beg the question of the study.

But, to be more specific, the real problem with employing such a reading a priori is that it presupposes that the legitimacy of what I have termed the logic of différance is already a bygone conclusion. In other words, it employs the operation of différance in its hermeneutic encounter with difference, and while there is nothing especially

problematic about the employment of such a strategy after a study such as this, to employ it up front as a hermeneutic foil is simply to presuppose what is at issue, i.e., the question of the relation between difference and différance.

Thus, while this study has admittedly played itself out in terms of a certain hermeneutic style, this has not been a deconstructive one. If this strategy in the end appears problematic in light of the conclusions of the study itself, then so be it; nothing would be more fitting--from the perspective of deconstruction, anyway--than that the status of the study be indicative of the same irony that it has argued for in passing. But, again, the very option of a deconstructive reading of Heidegger simply suggests another direction for further study, a direction which would proceed in a style of discourse that--if current attempts are any indication--would be a decisive departure from the style displayed by the current work.

Within the immediate scope of the study, there are also several issues which are in need of further development. First, let it be remembered that, inasmuch as both difference and différance are notions that take place in critical dialogue with Husserl's phenomenology, and further since it has been suggested by my account that the movement from the former to the latter involves a close reference to certain phenomenological themes, it is indicated that a more

thorough investigation into this issue be commenced. In particular, one must examine more closely the extent to which Heidegger and Derrida are involved with phenomenology at the same time that they each attempt a certain exit from its horizons.

As I mentioned previously, in Derrida's case in particular, I have been left wondering about his presuppositions regarding identity and the present inasmuch as he seems to hold a very narrow view of these notions. To me, this suggests, among other things his close ties with Husserl's phenomenology, which is itself implicated in what is basically a Cartesian account of identity.³

Moreover, in terms of the same issue, this also applies to the question regarding Derrida's reading of Hegel. In fact, at some point the question must be taken up more explicitly as to the role of Hegel's understanding of difference in light of Heidegger's difference and Derrida's dif-férance. In particular, one needs to look further at the issue suggested in footnote 49 of Chapter III of how Hegel's difference might be characterized as, in some sense, standing between difference and différance.

In this light, this issue might be seen to again involve the problem of sheltering, or what one could call the depth dimension in Heidegger's understanding of his own difference, and is suggestive of the possibility that the

lack of this depth in Hegel's more functional understanding of the same--his alleged pre-Heideggerean blindness to its true ontological role, notwithstanding--might be understood to imply a certain radicality that Heidegger's understanding of his own difference does not consistently show. This radicality, at least in terms of the issue of sheltering, might be understood to offer a bridge to différance, thereby placing Hegel's difference at a precarious position somewhat center stage. Inasmuch as all of this is clearly beyond what the present study can contain, it is indicative of the need to explore this issue, along with the related considerations suggested in the aforementioned footnote, in more detail at another time.

Implications

Admittedly, this study has dealt with rather abstract issues. In fact, the question of Being itself has so little apparent connection to practical concerns that the reader may be wondering what the point has been. Moreover, this may be the case particularly inasmuch as the conclusions which I have drawn suggest that the Seinsfrage is in the end implicated in a certain frustrating irony and paradox, which, beyond the intellectual curiosity that often surrounds such puzzles, does little to convince one of the practical significance of such an endeavor.

But this study has not been entirely without a context which would make its moves more meaningful. In fact, it will be recalled that in the first section of Chapter II, I suggested that a particularly helpful way of understanding the question of Being is in terms of certain concerns which can best be characterized as religious or theological. There I suggested that Heidegger's question regarding the meaning of Being could be characterized as an attempt to think toward what is most fundamental in terms of the genesis of things. When seen in this light, Heidegger's concerns fall into place within the larger tradition of theological questioning about God.

However, as I also mentioned, Heidegger's approach to the problem of God is implicitly critical of the way the tradition has dealt with this issue, inasmuch as it has for the most part left unquestioned the status of the being of God. In other words, while God, as the supreme being, is thought to account for the being of all other beings, the question regarding what accounts for being itself, i.e., God's being and all other being, has gone unasked. Thus, Heidegger's project, as an attempt to account for the genesis or coming into presence of being itself, is a more radical approach to theological concerns that involve the doctrine of God. In this context, Heidegger is not looking for God, but for the process which lets being emerge. Thus it

is a project that, while theological in nature, is an attempt to step beyond the confines of traditional theology.

If one approaches this study in light of the above context, then several things follow. First, it should be clear that Heidegger's account of difference is the answer to his reformulated theological inquiry. This means that, theologically speaking, difference is more fundamental than the God of the tradition in the sense of accounting more radically for the genesis of being.

But one may wonder where this leaves the doctrine of God. While I have no conclusive answer to this question, let me suggest two points that should be kept in mind. First, regarding the concern with what is most fundamental in bringing about being, the characterization of God as the source of being has been overcome. This means that God is no longer the last word on the genesis of being. Second, however, at least on Heidegger's account, this situation is not indicative of the problematization of the being of God. God's being is no more problematic than any being which difference is thought to bring about.

Thus, while God's status as the source of being has been called into question, the characterization of God as a being has not been so problematized. Theologically, this suggests that, while the status of God has undergone qualification, at the same time the way has been cleared for

theology to proceed in a post-theistic direction. By post-theistic, I simply mean a form of God-talk or theology which has moved beyond being concerned with God in the traditional sense of a supreme being. Again, theology in this new sense is concerned only with the fundamental process, function, or event--however one may want to characterize this--which brings about being or presence.

In this light, the extension of Heidegger's reflections on difference by Derrida in the form of différance can also be understood as a form post-theistic theological inquiry. However, in the end, the irony of différance--in problematizing what it would bring about--and the paradox of the account itself--in showing its truth status to be undecidable--suggests, given Derrida's suppositions, that Heidegger's theological project is problematic in two ways. First, différance does not account for the genesis of beings, and in fact shows such a process to be always already problematized. Thus, not only is the theological concern not answered, but its basis, i.e., the being of beings, is in some sense called into question. Second, the validity of this account is itself shown to be ambivalent. In terms of theological concerns, all of this suggests that the project is at a dead end.

But this dead end can be interpreted in at least two ways. It can either be taken to indicate the futility of

this entire line of inquiry, thereby suggesting other theistic options, or it can be taken as indicative of the need to move beyond the narrow concerns of theology--insofar as this involves reflection on the doctrine of God--and to re-focus on issues that have more practical import.

An example of the first option--although not motivated by the results of Heidegger's and Derrida's work--is what has come to be referred to as Process Theism. This approach, getting its start from the process metaphysics of Alfred North Whitehead, seeks a revisionary account God which would take into account modern, i.e., scientific, forms of thought.⁴ Thus, while critical of traditional conceptions of God, nonetheless, it still sees theism of some sort as a viable option. However, while process theism is often touted as an option in post-modern theology, in terms of my concerns, it is not an option precisely because it does not address the fundamental issue, i.e., the being of God.⁵ Process theism, while admittedly offering interesting accounts of how the traditional attributes of God such as omnipotence can be reconciled with modern thought, simply does not address the ontological issues which I feel are the prerequisite concerns of post-modern theology.⁶

An example of the direction suggested by the second option might be what is referred to as Radical Theology. Radical theology attempts to accomplish theology without the

notion of God. This approach was discussed widely in the 1960s and then quickly faded from center stage by virtue of the theological conservatism which has characterized the last two decades. As represented by the thought of William Hamilton, one of its principal proponents, it emphasizes the social and ethical dimensions of theological thought at the expense of more abstract concerns. Hamilton notes:

My Protestant has no God, has no faith in God, and affirms both the death of God and the death of all forms of theism. Even so, he is not primarily a man of negation, for if there is a movement away from God and religion, there is the more important movement into, for, toward the world, worldly life, and the neighbor as the bearer of the worldly Jesus.⁷

And further that:

Faith is more like a place, a being with or standing beside the neighbor. Faith has almost collapsed into love, and the Protestant is no longer defined as the forgiven sinner, the simul justus et peccator, but as the one beside the neighbor, beside the enemy, at the disposal of the man in need.⁸

What is striking and unique about the way that radical theology champions this concern with the neighbor as the "bearer of the worldly Jesus" is that it attempts to do this without sanctioning this ethical-moral stance by reference to the hierarchy of reasons, which are part and parcel of traditional theological discourse. In other words, this call to love is not justified by virtue of some final reference to God handed down by theological dogmatics, i.e., the teachings of the church, but rather is grounded within the depths of the human situation itself. Hamilton suggests:

The death of God Protestant, it can be seen, has somewhat inverted the usual relation between faith and love, theology and ethics, God and neighbor. We are not proceeding from God and faith to neighbor and love, loving in such and such a way because we are loved in such and such a way. . . . Here, the Christian life, ethics, love, is first a decision about the self.⁹

The contrast here is that radical theology sees love as an existential issue, and not a theoretical issue that can be dictated by theological decree in the form of a reasoned analysis. Thus, it is opposed to any form of systematic theology, an approach which starts with a concept of God and then derives all subsequent theological doctrines and mandates from this archimedean point of reference. In systematic theology, God is always first cause and final reason, i.e., the alpha and the omega. In this light, radical theology sees any account which offers outside reasons or justification for love to be in the service of masking love itself. One solution to this situation is to call into question any scaffolding of reasons which keeps one from recognizing what it takes to be the case, i.e., that love is without reasons, without a "why." Radical theology in its own way attempts to do this by willing the "death of God."

In terms of the relationship between radical theology and Derrida's thought, I think it is plausible to suggest that, with the advent of the latter, radical theology has been given a theoretical basis on which to secure its more existential insights. The sources of radical theology lie

to a large extent in the literary expressions of William Blake, Fyodor Dostoevsky, John Milton, Leo Tolstoy, and Matthew Arnold. Thus, while firmly grounded in the skeptical disposition of modern atheism and the struggle of faith, the movement did not come to its insights through an examination of fundamental philosophical issues such as ontology and the question of Being. Radical theology needed the philosophical basis of Heidegger's and Derrida's thought in order to fill out its insights.

In this light, I would suggest that the skepticism of deconstruction is--theologically speaking--the handmaiden of radical, i.e., skeptical, theology, insofar as the former serves to complete the expression of the latter. In other words, deconstruction satisfies the need to justify why one does not, and should not, believe.

On the other hand, this suggests that Derrida's philosophy, like Heidegger's, may be most meaningful when employed in certain theological contexts, and, insofar as this may be the case, theology is at that point serving deconstruction. Moreover, the skeptical impulse of deconstruction may itself be based on concerns which are theological, insofar as Derrida's inquiries are closely involved with theological themes such as negative theology, the relation between Greek and Hebrew thought, and the problem of metaphor. Thus, it is important to take account of the

theological as well as the philosophical tradition when attempting to understand the motives and moves of deconstruction.

What I am suggesting in pointing to all of this is that, if this study is understood in a theological context and its conclusions regarding the frustration of a certain type of theological project are accepted, then one positive response to this situation is to recognize that it liberates one from a theology of controlling reason, that is, from a theology which attempts to give reasons to recommend or justify the highest form of human relations. In my opinion, what recommends the approach which would call such reason into question is simply the intuitive recognition that human relationships are not built around reasons or accounts, but are based rather on connections grounded in the depths of human experience.

In my experience, there is a certain opaqueness to such relations which suggests that they can be neither recommended by reasoned decree, nor explicated by reasoned account. Again, love has no reasons.

It is not possible for me to explain further the essence of such relations, but I can point out that this theme of being liberated or released from the authority of controlling reason is not a new one. In the tradition of German mysticism, Meister Eckhart is also one who had strong

sentiments regarding the value of breaking from the bonds of reason in matters of the heart. In fact, his discourse is characterized as mystical precisely because it offers a certain affront to reason in theological matters dealing with the spiritual life in community. This theme of releasment can be seen in the following excerpt from a poem by the mystical poet Angelus Silesius, who, as John Caputo has pointed out,¹⁰ was inspired by Eckhart's work:

The rose is without why; it blooms because it blooms.
It cares not for itself; asks not if it's seen.¹¹

It is also interesting to note that Silesius's poem plays a pivotal role in Heidegger's essay "The Principle of Ground," where it is likewise taken to be an expression of the Eckhartian theme of gelassenheit, or releasement.¹² For Heidegger, this notion also comes to symbolize the move away from metaphysical or controlling reason. However, whereas for Heidegger this releasement is ultimately into the depths of the difference which gives being, on the view which I have suggested, this releasment is from the entire problematic of such an account and the truth that it embodies. In light of the aporia, which has appeared, it is a releasment both from the Seinsfrage, and from the specific theological project which it involves.

Thus, on my view, releasment symbolizes the end of the epoch of the "why,"--at least in terms of ultimate theological questions--and a reengagement with the richness of the

life of myth, tradition, and passion in the service of being with the other. All in all, it embodies the spirit if not the letter of Nietzsche's reflections.

But the approach to life which I think this study suggests--at least when taken in a theological context--has precedents in various forms of Eastern thought, and while I have a rather cursory knowledge of the particulars of that tradition, in closing let me briefly suggest the following loose connections.

Of particular interest is the frustration of reason which is encouraged by various forms of Zen Buddhist practice, which serves to help the practitioner connect with the simple given-ness of life, and in so doing helps them get in touch with what is taken to be fundamental, i.e., the attitude of Karuna or compassion.¹³ Thus, in Zen, the attitude of compassion is liberated by ridding one of one's confidence in the ability of reason to aid in obtaining enlightenment, the fruit of which is compassion itself. In this light, it is taught that rational striving is of no avail, and in fact keeps one from transformation. Thus, true love and community are possible only after the will of controlling reason have been abandoned.

In a similar light, the teachings of the second century Indian philosopher Nagarjuna are also relevant.¹⁴ Nagarjuna employed a dialectical method of reasoning to call into

question many of the teaching that were originally attributed to the Buddha. The upshot of his arguments amount to the claim that reason is relative and illusory, and thus that reality is beyond reason or the intellect. Again, the result of this problematization of reason within the Madhyamika school of Buddhism, and others that have followed, has been to encourage the attitude of compassion, which is taken to be the basis of reality itself.¹⁵

Thus, while the dominant tradition in Western theological thought has assumed that reason and ethical-moral virtue go hand in hand, in the East a number of influential schools have grown up around the opposite hypothesis, that is, that the best of what humanity has to offer cannot be gained by, or understood through, the accounts of reason. If nothing else, in terms of theological considerations, this study can be taken as an affirmation of this insight.

Notes

1. Note, for example, his discussion of Martin Heidegger's text "Der Spruch des Anaximander" ("The Anaximander Fragment" in Early Greek Thinking, trans. David Krell and Frank Capuzzi [New York: Harper & Row, 1975]) toward the end of the essay "Différance" (Derrida, Speech and Phenomena, pp. 155-160), where this issue is taken up with regards to the concern over Heidegger's alleged desire for a "unique word," or "proper name" for Being. Now while this is certainly an interesting and important discussion, the fact is that it takes place for the most part outside of any explicit recognition of the issue of contamination. Thus, by virtue of such a discussion, one could easily get the impression that the question of sheltering (or the question regarding the "unique word" or "proper name"--which amounts to the same thing) is somehow the foremost issue between Heidegger and Derrida, difference and différance. This impression I have noted is inaccurate, and not only by virtue of what my analysis has suggested, but in light of what Derrida himself indicates in other texts.

In this light, let it again be noted that the importance of the issue of contamination is suggested by Derrida's comment at the Essex Colloquium in April of 1986 to the effect that "Contamination . . . puts at risk the central theme of Heidegger's thinking--that of the ontological difference" (Derrida, "On Reading Heidegger," pp. 172-173). But even here the issue of sheltering still surfaces. He notes: "The Heideggerian figure of Being's self-veiling, its withdrawal, reserve, reticence, holding-back, may well be a strategy of protection" (p. 173). However, the placement of this issue--at least in the published outline--as a subcategory under the general section heading which concerns contamination, indicates its somewhat reduced status.

Moreover, it seems as if the characterization here has shifted away from an interest in what amounts to the problematics of the issue of sheltering as such, which is suggested by the discussion in "Différance," to the somewhat different concern of how the notion of contamination itself renders such protection or sheltering problematic. Thus, while sheltering is still apparently an issue in Derrida's reading of Heidegger, it is an issue that is called into question by virtue of contamination. The debate then is no

longer on how to read the depths of difference in a more radical fashion, but on how to call this depth into question with the help of contamination. This latter understanding of the issue is much closer to my own.

2. Examples which come to mind are: Charles E. Scott, The Language of Difference (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1987), and Taylor, Altarity, both of whom attempt to read a certain displacement into Heidegger's text. In light of my reading, the most balanced treatment of this issue takes place at various points in the discussions which followed the paper presentations at the 1986 Colloquium at the University of Essex, entitled "On Reading Heidegger" cited previously.

For example, in a discussion regarding the notion of the "abyss" in Heidegger's text, Christopher Fynsk noted: "In On the Way to Language, the abyss appears precisely under the name of pain, which Heidegger relates to abyss. But the abyss is that by which difference folds upon itself and speaks, and the question would then be, 'What exactly is the nature of that tearing or articulation?' [Let me note here that this is essentially the question to which this study has been dedicated.] It is a joining and a tearing at the same time. Late in one of the essays he talks about the problem of the sounding, of the silent call of difference, about the necessity of a certain noise, which is introduced by human speaking; and the question becomes just how fundamental that noise is, just how fundamental that tearing of the abyss is which allows difference to fold upon itself and to speak. One has to work terribly hard in each case to bring out the dispersal, the dispersion, or the dissemination. I spend my time doing that! . . . But in each case my sense is that one has to work against enormous resistance; and in that sense, I would be more inclined to stress the kind of structural tendency in Heidegger towards reconstruction of the same. It is still one thing, in itself, still a certain oneness, or a certain privileged unity which is reaffirmed from beginning to end" (cited in Wood, "Heidegger After Derrida," pp. 114-115).

Or let me note further that in regards to a question from John Sallis about the possible impurity of "essence" in Heidegger's text Vom Wesen der Wahrheit, Derrida notes: "I am not sure that Heidegger would say in the case you mention it is impurity. There are many places in which he says, for instance, Wahrheit ist Unwahrheit, la verite de la verite est la non-verite. . . . So this reversal, or this quasi-negation, or non-identity of essence with itself, is not contamination, I would say. It is a reversal it is the Un-

But is it what I call contamination? I'm not so sure. It is still too pure, too rigorously delimited. It is not simply a dialectical reversal; it is not dialectic in that sense. Nonetheless, it is, again, something pure: the Unwesenheit, the Wnwahrheit, are as pure as Wesen and Wahrheit. What I am interested in is something out of focus; in French I would say flou" (cited in Derrida, "On Reading Heidegger," p. 180). Thus, based on my reading, while I must ultimately affirm the lack of contamination within Heidegger's text, which the above passages likewise indicate, I must nonetheless acknowledge the difficulty of the issue.

3. For more on this suggestion see Stapleton, Husserl and Heidegger, and especially Herbert Spiegleberg, The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960). For a look at the primary texts on this issue, see Edmund Husserl, Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969); and René Descartes, "Discourse on Method," in The Philosophical Works of Descartes, trans. Elizabeth Haldane and G. R. T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), II:92, and "Meditations on First Philosophy," in The Philosophical Works of Descartes, trans. Elizabeth Haldane and G. R. T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), II:190.

4. See Alfred North Whitehead, Process and Reality (New York: Macmillan, 1929), and also his Religion in the Making (New York: World, 1960).

5. For more on this and related issues, see David Griffin, William Beardslee, and Joe Holland, Varieties of Post-Modern Theology, ed. David Griffin (New York: The State University of New York Press, 1989).

6. However, this is not to suggest that Whitehead's work is devoid of certain post-modern impulses. Much as in Hegel's case, it seems that the verdict on Whitehead depends on certain subtleties of reading. The problem is with how Whitehead's work has been taken up by the theologians, who seem to be more than adept at bringing out the conservative strain in a thinker.

7. William Hamilton, "The Death of God Theologies Today" in Radical Theology and the Death of God, ed. Thomas Altizer and William Hamilton (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966), p. 37.

8. Ibid., pp. 36-37.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.
10. See Caputo, The Mystical Element in Heidegger's Thought, pp. 97-103. Caputo claims that the acknowledged source of inspiration for Silesius's work, The Cherubinic Wanderer, was Eckhart's work itself, which is likewise taken to be the source of inspiration for much of the German mystical-theological-philosophical tradition.
11. Angelus Silesius, Der Cherubinische Wandersmann (München: Goldmann, 1960), originally published in 1657. The English translation can be found in Frederick Frank, The Book of Angelus Silesius. With Observations by the Ancient Zen Masters, trans., drawn, and handwritten by Frederick Frank (New York: Knopf, 1976), sec. 1, 289/66.
12. Martin Heidegger, "The Principal of Ground," trans. Keith Hoeller, Man and World 7 (1974): 207-222.
13. Thomas Merton, Zen and the Birds of Appetite (New York: New Directions, 1968), p. 38.
14. Nagarjuna, Nagarjuna's Seventy Stanzas: A Buddhist Psychology of Emptiness, trans. David Ross Komito (Ithica N.Y.: Snow Lion, 1987).
15. It is also of interest that there is a growing body of literature which suggests parallels between Nagarjuna's thought and that of Derrida's, some of which includes: Magliola, Derrida on the Mend, previously cited; David Loy, Nonduality: A Study in Comparative Philosophy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); and David Loy, "The Culture of Deconstruction: A Mahayana Critique of Derrida," International Philosophical Quarterly 27, no. 1, Issue no. 105 (March 1987): 59-80.

For related considerations see: David Loy, "The Paradox of Causality in Madhyamika," International Philosophical Quarterly 25, no. 1, Issue no. 97 (March 1985): 63-72; Mervyn Sprung, ed. The Question of Being: East-West Perspectives (Pennsylvania: State University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977); Mervyn Sprung, ed. The Problem of Two Truths in Buddhism and Vendanta (Dordrecht-Holland: D. Ridel, 1973); and Mervyn Sprung, "The Problem of Being in Madhyamika Buddhism," in Developments in Buddhist Thought: Canadian Contributions to Buddhist Studies, ed. Roy Amore (Waterloo, Ontario, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1979), pp. 40-53.

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following is a limited glossary of terms presented to assist the reader with the often unfamiliar vocabulary which these thinkers utilize. Also note that insofar as the purpose here is strictly introductory, some explanations may lack the precision that employments of the term within the study display.

PRESENT: The notion of the present indicates the general characteristic of being which everything shares. In other words, to say that something "is," is to say likewise that it is present.

PRESENCE: This term simply indicates the general case of the above notion of being present. This means that when one says that something "is," in asserting that it is present, one has also asserted that it participates in, or has presence.

PRESENCING: This is Heidegger's term which means the coming about of presence or the present. Insofar as presence only appears in present things, presencing indicates that it is the very arrival of things themselves that is

interesting. Thus for Heidegger it is the presence-ing of the presence of the present which is worthy of attention.

BEINGS: This is usually written with a lower case "b" as "beings." As indicated above, beings are those things which appear as present. Thus it is beings about which it is said that they are present.

BEING: For Heidegger this term indicates two things. First, he uses it to indicate the general mode of presence in which beings, as present, participate. In this sense Being indicates presence. Heidegger claims that this understanding of Being is the understanding which characterizes the Western philosophical tradition. However, Heidegger also uses this term to indicate his concern with presencing, a concern not previously taken up in the tradition. Thus Heidegger employs this term in both the traditional sense as presence, and in a revisionary sense as presencing. Thus one must be careful to note whether he is characterizing the tradition, or suggesting his revisionary account, in order to avoid confusion.

SEINSFARGE: Heidegger's term for the Being question or question of Being. What this question invites is an investigation into what Being means. Heidegger attempts to get this question off the ground by drawing a distinction between our everyday awareness of things or "beings" insofar as they exist, with the fact that they exist. Thus it is

their existence as such that becomes an issue. The question of the meaning of Being then, seeks an account of how it is that beings come about in terms of their Being or existence. As implied above, the question can be most meaningfully framed in terms of presence and presencing. If we can agree that beings, as existent, are present to us, then Heidegger wants to inquire into how such presence arises. How is it that presencing takes place? Thus the question of the meaning of Being is really an inquiry into the possibility of presence in terms of its presencing. By thus shifting the focus away from Being as presence, to Being thought in terms of its possibility as presencing, Heidegger claims to have opened up a dimension of thought that was previously closed off to the Western philosophical tradition.

DIFFERENCE: This term refers to the event of differentiation which Heidegger comes to isolate as the essential element in accounting for the possibility of presence in terms of presencing. Thus for Heidegger presencing takes place by virtue of differentiation. Heidegger is lead to this characterization by noticing that the presence of the terms of the traditional distinction, i.e., that between Being as presence and beings as present which Heidegger labels the "ontological difference," are themselves allowed for by the difference presupposed by the distinction itself. For Heidegger this indicates that the lowest, or most

fundamental, common denominator which appears in an inquiry into what brings about the presence of present things is always the difference between the things or terms as such.

EREIGNIS: Translated as the "event of appropriation." This is Heidegger's term which indicates the way in which difference is able to unfold terms into presence. As such, Ereignis, or appropriation, can be understood to be the very mechanism of difference itself. What it implies is that in coming to be, terms are set apart into a relationship of mutually dependent belonging by virtue of the difference. Thus the terms relate to, or appropriate, one another across the difference, so to speak, to the extent that the event of differentiation is nothing other than the event signifying the coming about of this mutual situation.

DIFFERANCE: With an "a": This is Jacques Derrida's term, in part indebted to Heidegger's "difference," which implies that present terms would come about through a double movement of differentiation and deferral. To arrive in presence, things or terms must be differentiated from each other. But in addition Derrida claims that this movement requires that each term relate to the other in such a way that the resultant mutual dependency takes away the purity or unity of the terms on which the notions of presence and identity are predicated. Thus from the perspective of presence they always appear to be incomplete and thus non-

present. Thus Derrida's différance implies not only the coming about of presence, as does Heidegger's difference, but in addition implies a certain problematization of presence by virtue of the same movement. This claim suggests the importance of the relation between Heidegger and Derrida in regard to the "mechanics," or logic, of this issue.

CONTAMINATION: This term is Derrida's. It aims to put in focus what is at issue between Heidegger and Derrida in light of the difference\ différance relation. What this term points to is the degree to which it can be said that one term contaminates, or makes impure, the other, by virtue of the dependency relation brought on through differentiation. On my reading, in Heidegger's difference this relation of appropriation is characterized as not involving contamination. In other words, the terms, while relating to one another, do not seem to undergo the impurity that seems to characterize this relation as it is found in Derrida's différance. Another way to put this is to say that in Heidegger contamination appears to be lacking, and thus difference appears to be constructive, whereas in Derrida contamination appears as a result of his characterization of the appropriative relation, and thus difference, or dif-
férance, appears as de-constructive. Thus what I do in this study is explore the presence or absence of contamination,

apparent through these thinkers' respective characterizations of the appropriative relation, insofar as it unfolds through difference.

EXTERNAL, INTERNAL: These are my terms which I employ in the following manner. As noted above, insofar as the possibility of the presencing of presence depends on the lack of contamination, or what might otherwise be characterized as the purity of the terms, I suggest that this situation indicates that the appropriative relation in Heidegger is an "external" one, i.e., one whereby a term relates to its other as an other which stands outside of its own unity. For Derrida, on the other hand, the appropriative relation is "internal," whereby a term, in relating to its other, does so in such a fashion that the other comes to reside within or inside of its own unity. This situation, in taking away the purity of the term, and thus suggesting its contamination, effectively dissolves the distinction between the term and its other, thus doing away with the difference which was what allowed for its presence.

TIME: As discussed above in relation to the notion of Being, Heidegger employs the notion of time in at least two ways. First, he uses this notion to refer to the traditional sense of time as a series of "now" points. In this sense time is analogous to the traditional notion of Being in that both merely indicate presence. But Heidegger also

characterizes time in a revised sense as that which allows for the presence of the temporally ordered series itself. Again, this is like his revised characterization of Being as that which allows for presence.

UNDECIDABLE: This term, which plays an important role in the work of Derrida, suggests the extent to which the meaning of some term, phrase, passage, or entire text, is rendered problematic by virtue of the operation of dif-férance. When it is said that "x" is undecidable, this implies that a judgement as to its precise meaning is in principle impossible. I use this term in a similar fashion to indicate the impossibility of making a decision as to the truth status of a particular discourse, in this case the entire discourse of the Seinsfrage and its subsequent problematization.

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