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Deconstructing Hegel's Sign-making Imagination: Derrida and the Textual Imagination

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Trinity College Dublin 2012

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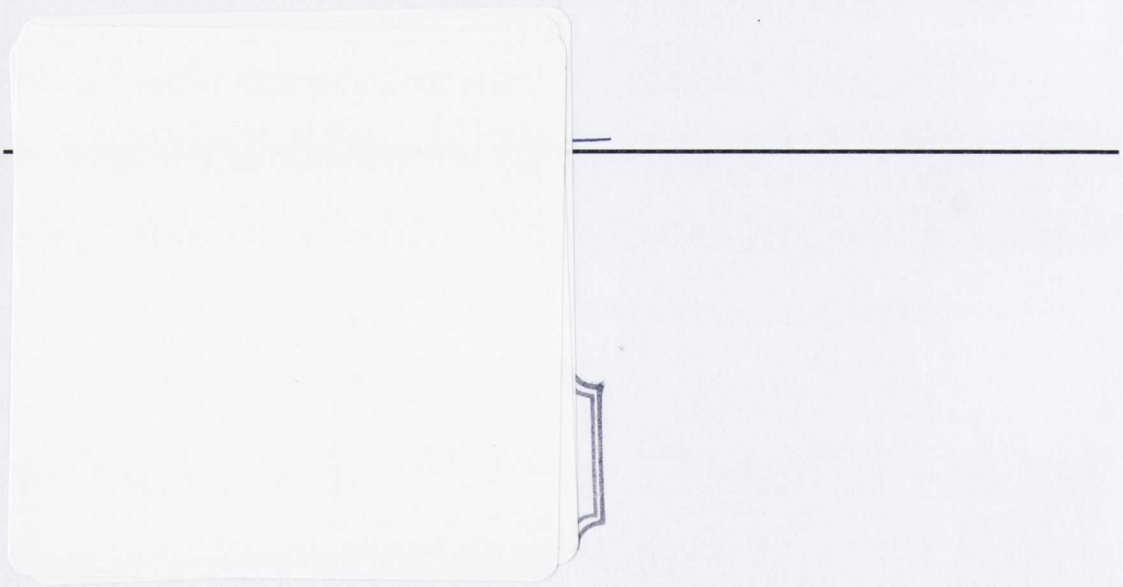

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For my mother, Anne,
who imagined by sacrificing the present

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Above all, I express my gratitude to David Scott for his friendship, for rekindling my fascination with the poetic and for abiding with me along the vertiginous pathways of Mallarmé's poetry. His insight into art has given me sight where before I could not see. I argue in this thesis that philosophers, in the work of reinventing their own discipline and often unbeknownst to themselves, will have been undertaking the labour of imagination; Professor Scott will have been undertaking the noble work of philosophy—despite whatever protestations he may make to the contrary—over the course of a lifetime he continues to devote to imagination.

Summary

Following the identification of ways in which deconstruction and imagination suggest the possibility of shedding light upon one another, I seek to overcome certain objections to the notion of a textual or deconstructive imagination emanating from Husserlian or Platonist models, by addressing questions of language's origination and creativity within the context of Hegel's inchoate and problematic notion of a sign-making imagination.

I explore the concept of a textual imagination of deconstruction by addressing certain problematics arising from Hegel's notion of a sign-making imagination that relate to language and creativity; namely, the origination of a nonmotivated mode of signification and the possibility of conceptual redetermination effected in philosophical thought or theoretical discourse. I attempt this project on the basis of certain affinities between deconstruction and imagination, including Derrida's procedure of inverting and displacing oppositions such as logos/imagination, and his reading practices that, as informed by his grammatology, explore a certain semantic dynamism in philosophical textuality that lends credence to the notion of an imagination being at work in the text.

I address certain objections to the notion of a linguistic imagination as they might emerge from Husserlian and Platonist approaches, particularly those relying on a reductive etymologism determining imagination as being related exclusively to visual images or mimetic representations, or in which the identity of the logos, discourse and conceptuality rest upon their supposed transcendence of the conditions in which imagination operates. Relying upon an untenable restriction of creativity to the field of the image and art rather than the sign and textuality, such objections perhaps indicate logocentric elements in the inherited concept of imagination in need of being deconstructed.

These objections can be overcome by having recourse to Hegel's dialectic of imagination, in which it is seen to be transformed by re-engaging with its own products (intuitions, images, symbols) right up to the point at which it generates nonmotivated signs. Rather than conceiving of the imagining subject on the basis of an inner faculty, Hegel construes imagination in terms of the subject's manifold relations with images and signs, and with the conventional systems in which they are determined. In the course of positing nonmotivated signification's superiority over hieroglyphic script, Hegel implicitly suggests, against his general logocentric thesis of the autonomy of conceptual signified meaning, that the conventional and interdependent nature of nonmotivated signs is essential to philosophical progress on account of it allowing thought to reconfigure its own conceptuality. As such, he identifies conditions in which one might formulate the notion of a conceptual or philosophical imagination. Though Hegel downplays the import of these subversive gestures by reducing linguistic signification to a function of memory, thereby reaffirming the logocentric notion that the nonmotivated signs marks the demise of imagination, a post-Saussurean and Derridean conceptuality (*parole/langue*, semiological difference) and approach enables us to re-pose and suggest resolutions to the problematics of language's origination and recreation of meaning within a nonmotivated and conventional signifying system. The problematic of language's origination can be posed in terms of the circularity by which *parole* and *langue* both appear to require one another's pre-existence. Since *parole* does not merely draw

from *langue* but can creative deviate from established signifier/signified relations, it must be recognised as possessing the power to *reaffirm, contest and produce alternatives* to existing signifier/signified relations in *langue*, or in other words, as having the power to bring into being and imagine otherwise its own enabling conventions.

Since it is possible to recognise *parole* and *langue*'s identity or mutual implication at the origin of language, their interplay can be posited as an ineradicable dynamic that accounts for the instability, and the possibility of redetermining, conceptual meaning. The notion of *parole* re-instituting signs thus resonates with the Hegelian insights into the possibility of thought reconfiguring its conceptuality.

The deconstructive imagination can in turn be understood as a historically reflexive mode of imagination recalling and pursuing overlooked instances in the textual history of metaphysics in which an inchoate idea that promised much in terms of exiting the closure of metaphysics was posited but ultimately frustrated by logocentric constraints. My attempt to retrieve and develop such a potentiality in Hegel's concept of sign-making imagination aims to provide a working example of the imagination as it is formalised within deconstructive procedures.

Omnis determinatio est negatio.
Spinoza

Contents

Part 1: A Dialectic of Deconstruction and Imagination: Affinities and Antagonisms

Chapter I: Deconstructing Imagination: An Introduction

Chapter II: Affinities between Deconstruction and Imagination: Toward a Textual and Post-logocentric Imagination

(i) First Affinity: Deconstruction as the Inversion and Displacement of the Opposition of Logos/Imagination

(ii) Second Affinity: The Concept of a Textual Imagination Implied by Derrida's Grammatology, Rhetoric and Mode of Deconstructive Reading

(iii) Third Affinity: The Productive Negativity Common to Imagination and Deconstruction: Imagining in the Texts of Metaphysics a Beyond to Metaphysics

(a) Negativity in Imagination: Husserl and Hegel

(b) Negativity in Deconstruction: Placing Conceptuality Sous rature

Chapter III: Antagonisms between Deconstruction and Imagination: The Dissolution of Imagination in the Anonymous Creativity of an Arbitrary Sign

(i) First Antagonism: The Resistance of the Phenomenological and Psychological Conceptions of Imagination to Deconstruction: The Reduction of Imagination to Imagining

(ii) Second Antagonism: Mimetic Resemblance as Delimiting Imagination, and Nonmotivated Signification as its Transcendence

(a) Husserlian Phenomenology: Signitive and Imaginative Intentionality

(b) Plato on Mimesis, Logos and *Phantasia*: Delimiting the Field Proper to Eikastic Imagination

Part 2: Deconstructing Hegel's *Zeichen Machende Phantasie*

Chapter IV: Contextualising the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*

(i) The Dialectic of Imagination in Hegel's Philosophy Subjective Spirit as Culminating in the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*

(ii) An Aporia in Hegel's Philosophy of Imagination: The Demise of an Imagination that Reinvents Itself

Chapter V: From the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* to *Parole* as a Creative Performance: Hegel on the Precipice of a Philosophical Imagination

(i) Hegel on the Transition from Symbol to Sign: Reinterpreting the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* as Creating *Langue*

(a) The Nonmotivated Sign as distinct from the Motivated Symbol

(b) The Objectivity of the Sign as distinct from the Subjective Symbol

(ii) Hegel's Reflections on Conceptual Change: Toward the Concept of a Philosophical Imagination

(a) Intimations in the Hegelian Text of a Conceptual Imagination: The Nonmotivated Sign as Facilitating Progress in the Logos

(b) The Semiology of *Différance* and *Supplémentarité* Underlying Hegel's Reflection on Conceptual Change

(c) The Textual Imagination of Philosophy Implied by Philosophical Conceptuality as inscribed in *Différance* and *Supplémentarité*

Chapter VI: *Gedächtnis,* Iterability and the Creation of Language: A Moment when *Parole* and *Langue* are Indistinguishable

(i) Hegel on *Gedächtnis*: Memory at the Origin of Language

(ii) The Originary Performances of *Parole*: The Recognition of Precedents

(iii) The Production of the Iterable Sign in Imagination's Self-Effacement: Imagination's Repeated Deaths as the Life of Culture

Chapter VII: The Textual and Deconstructive Imagination: A Question of Method

(i) Revisiting the First Affinity: Tracing the Displacement in the Imagining Subject

(ii) Revisiting the Second Affinity: The *Bricolage* of the Textual Imagination

(iii) Revisiting the Third Affinity: Imagination and the Deconstructive Turn to the Aporetic Moments of the Tradition

Bibliography

Part 1: A Dialectic of Deconstruction and Imagination: Affinities and Antagonisms

Chapter I: Deconstructing Imagination: An Introduction

My fundamental aim is to explore the possibility of a mutually enlightening dialectic between Derridean deconstruction and the concept of imagination. The nature of deconstruction might be clarified were it to be grasped as a strategic form of imagination, that is, as a textual mode of critique seeking to imagine the logocentric tradition otherwise by disclosing and developing potentialities overlooked in the metaphysical tradition. Inversely, light might be shed on the nature of imagination were it to be considered in the context of a certain deconstructive negativity inherent in its operation, by which it suspends the past and renders cultural memory a resource for rethinking the future, or negates the material of intuition or experience as *given*, and re-opens such material to new, representational potentialities. I will suggest that deconstruction might be understood, in particular as it is articulated in its formative stages in Derrida's texts of the late sixties and seventies, as a refined, formalised and critical mode of imagination that returns to aporetic moments in the inherited textual history of the west with a view to fastening upon what in them might yet break open the closure of metaphysics. In much of what follows, I return to aporias or moments of impasse in the texts of Husserl, Plato and Hegel at which the prospect of relating imagination to the nonmotivated sign, to the formation of concepts, and to the logos, was broached and entertained but ultimately frustrated by logocentric tenets emphasising the incommensurability of imagination and language.

Whatever else deconstruction might be, it is a mode of re-engagement with the past, in the form of an interpretative textual memory, that seeks to break new ground in and through reinterpreting the texts belonging to the very tradition it describes as logocentric and phonocentric. Such a conception of deconstruction identifies it with elements in a conventional determination of the concept of imagination; for it is predicated on the notions of memory and reproduction, as well as on a productive reworking of recollected or inherited material. If, as I later attempt to demonstrate, there is a certain element of negativity or "deconstruction" implicit in every operation

of imagination, deconstruction's manner of critique might be conceived as a moment of negativity within an imaginative performance of reading that seeks to enable the text being scrutinised to produce meaning that eludes or defies its metaphysical premises or canonical interpretations. However, to construe imagination in these terms is to displace it to an alien environment; that of the text, of textual interpretation and of a mode of signification that, insofar as it functions on the basis of arbitrary or aleatory relationships, appears resolutely opposed to imagination.

If deconstruction is to be described in terms of imagination, it can only be achieved through the forging of a concept of a textual imagination. Such a concept would effectively mediate between deconstruction and the classical conception of imagination: on the one hand, a tenable concept of a textual imagination would draw the concept away from its subordination to the word within the logocentric contexts in which it has been inscribed, a subordination and a contextual determination which render the notion of imagination as it stands inadmissible within a deconstructive discourse vigilant to inherited concepts importing with them their metaphysical underpinnings; and on the other hand, it would conceptualise and identify the forms of creativity in language that appear to be both an object on which deconstructive reading seizes, and evident in Derrida's playful mode of engaging with language. To entertain the notion that imagination and deconstruction might shed light on one another, it would have to be possible to conceive of imagination as being of relevance to creativity, originality and dynamism in the field not simply of literature, literary fiction or poetic devices but at the very heart of the logos in conceptual discourse.

For such a dialectic between imagination and deconstruction to be broached, several displacements in the classical concept of imagination would have to be made: it would have to be reconceived firstly, as being of relevance to texts and language rather than simply to visual images; secondly, as being intelligible other than as an innate subjective faculty, and to a greater extent in terms of a dynamic relation between the subject and its other; and thirdly, as being related not only to the creation of representations but also to the reinvention of the *conventions* of representational systems such as *langue* (in the Saussurean sense).

Difficult as these displacements in the concept of imagination may be to fathom or effect, they are not unprecedented in the philosophical determination of the concept. In Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline*,[1] and more specifically in the psychology of his philosophy of subjective spirit (*Geist*), there can be discerned shifts in the understanding of the concept of imagination (in *Einbildungskraft* and in *Phantasie*) whereby the orthodox psychological, visual, symbolic and artistic forms of imagination are interpreted as dialectical moments and historical shapes (*Gestalten*) that spirit assumes in the course of the mind and representation's (*Vorstellung*) progression; among these moments or historical shapes of consciousness, Hegel includes, in an unorthodox move, that of the sign-making imagination (*Zeichen machende Phantasie*) responsible for bringing nonmotivated linguistic signification into being. In concert with a sign-memory (*Gedächtnis*) that makes thought possible, the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* represents the culmination of his philosophy of subjective spirit, and the institution of spirit in its objective form.

To posit the concept of a textual imagination, it is not enough to recall Hegel's—inchoate and hastily discarded—concept of a sign-making imagination. Although Hegel's curious formulation promises to contest the traditional exclusion of imagination from the logos of philosophical thought, it ultimately, I argue, falls prey to a logocentric privileging of the logos over the imagination. This is evident in Hegel's relegation of the sign-making imagination to a moment that is negated and transcended by *Gedächtnis*, by the reproducibility of the sign, and ultimately by thought. Despite recognising imagination to have created the conditions in which thought could be possible, Hegel never formally acknowledges it as playing a role in conceptual or philosophical thought.

However, in the course of refuting Leibniz's project proposing to create a hieroglyphic script for international scholarship, Hegel does rely on an understanding of language and conceptual meaning conducive to understanding imagination as having reinvented itself in a linguistic form beyond its creation of nonmotivated signs. A nonmotivated system of writing is essential to philosophical thought, Hegel tells us, because, unlike in hieroglyphics in which alterations in thought are reflected in changes made to signifiers, such alterations in philosophical thinking are reflected at the level of the *interrelations* between conceptual meanings, and thus at the level of

the signified. Hegel implicitly recognises that the instability of interrelated meanings in a nonmotivated system of signification is essential to the possibility of thought reconfiguring the conceptuality in which it articulates itself, and thus to philosophical progress as a whole. He thus anticipates the Saussurean insight into linguistic meaning being subject to the relativity of interdependent signs, and the Derridean notion of the *différance* of conceptual meaning—of the differential relations that perpetually defer stable and present meaning. And in positing the capacity for thought to instigate changes in its own conceptuality, or as I will express it, for instances of *parole* to deviate from and reinscribe otherwise existing signifier/signified and sign-to-sign relations, I argue that Hegel effectively recognises the activity of imagination within philosophical thought.

Despite explicitly reaffirming the logocentric thesis that the nonmotivated sign amounts to the negation and transcendence of imagination, Hegel's adventure in relating *Phantasie* to linguistic signification enables us to broach and reframe certain problematics relating to creativity and language. In attempting to shed light on problematics relating to our difficulty in conceiving of the origination and possibility of nonmotivated signification, and in conceiving how conceptual meaning comes to be reinvented, I have recourse not only to the insights Hegel provides, but to Saussurean semiology, particularly as it is deconstructed and incorporated within Derridean grammatology. Fundamental to both questions will be the recognition that language is a fundamentally differential and conventional system, a system in which the dynamism of the interplay between *parole* and *langue* creates the possibility of imagination assuming a certain form within language. As such, I suggest a conception of imagination in which it is not confined solely to engaging inner visual images in a *sui generis* psychological act, or to mimetic modes of representation in the field of artistic creativity, but, following the advent of language in particular, in which it acquires a radically altered form such that its field of activity lies in the space between, on the one hand, the use of conventional elements, and on the other, the conventions that determine representation and signification.

If imagination can be reconceived as being capable of generating and regenerating the conventions that preside over linguistic meaning, its concept would shed light on the nature and operation of the deconstructive enterprise. On the basis,

firstly, of the concept of a *langue*-creating imagination responsible for bringing language into being; and secondly, a textual, conceptual or philosophical imagination that subverts and reworks existing conceptual relations as they are inscribed within *langue* and within binary oppositions, it might be possible to conceive of imagination assuming a deconstructive form that actively cultivates repressed potentialities in the texts of philosophy.

Several stages will be required in the elaboration of this argument. In Part 1, I deal, respectively, with the affinities and the antagonisms between deconstruction and imagination. In the course of arguing against objections to the notion of a textual imagination as they might issue from Husserlian phenomenology and a Platonist determination of imagination, and despite indications in both Husserl and Plato of imagination and signification being more closely related than they may appear, it will become apparent that the most promising precedent for a textual imagination lies in Hegel's notion of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*. Part 2 is devoted to addressing Hegel's ultimately unsatisfactory formulation of this notion, and to reformulating it as a *langue*-creating imagination operative immanently in innovative acts of *parole*. In the remainder of this introduction, I set out these stages of the argument.

As will become apparent in Chapter II, the strategies of deconstruction and the operation of imagination share a number of affinities. Deconstruction can be seen to relate to imagination on account, firstly, of the former's strategy of inverting and displacing hierarchical and entrenched metaphysical oppositions such as that of logos/imagination; secondly, on account of the notion of a textual imagination that is implied both by Derrida's theoretical semiology and his practice of reading philosophical texts; and thirdly, on account of the productive negativity that is evident in forms of imagination and in deconstructive critique; while imagination entails certain forms of negativity directed towards the given in setting forth an alternative future possibility, or toward the sign's materiality in its production of a representation or in *seeing* a sign *as* something else, deconstructive negativity harnesses the negativity of critique, and places received concepts *sous rature* with a view to letting the texts of metaphysics rewrite themselves. In the course of outlining the affinities, I note certain contemporary thinkers and projects central to the formation of my understanding of deconstruction and imagination.

Deconstruction as a movement can be identified with imagination as a concept subordinated to the logos in accordance with the hierarchical and entrenched oppositions that regulate philosophical conceptuality (imagination/logos, imagination/reason, intelligible/sensible, etc.). The concept of imagination is a concept or phenomenon widely recognised to have been disparaged or neglected within the western philosophy. If the history of metaphysics can be described as a logocentric tradition, it is not because it amounts to a homogeneous lineage repeating constant and undifferentiated theses; on the contrary, logocentrism manifests itself in the metaphysical tradition in the consistency of its suppressions, marginalisations and exclusions. The *phenomenon*, if not always the *concept* of imagination (supposing such a distinction can be made), can be said to be among those excluded, marginalised or repressed objects. Imagination can be said to figure as one of those alterities on which the identity of the logos has been founded; philosophy is *not* literature, sophistry; it is conceptual rather than rhetorical, discursive rather than creative, and so on. As such, the opposition logos/imagination presents itself as a dichotomy that the work of deconstruction might set out to invert, displace, and reinscribe otherwise within what might broadly be called post-metaphysical contexts and discourses. In inverting and displacing such oppositions—a key deconstructive strategy refined in the work of Rodolphe Gasché[2]—not only is the traditional logocentric repression of imagination challenged, the deconstructive imagination can also be said to be at work in seeking to think otherwise the conceptual and oppositional framework on which western thought has been founded. The displacement producing the notion of a textual imagination would reflect the dislocation that took place in French thought during the fifties and sixties, in which existentialist and phenomenological discourses, which concentrated on a concept of imagination defined in terms of the visual image and subjective freedom, gave way to (post)structuralist, deconstructive, and hermeneutic concerns focusing in large part on the force, dynamism and creativity of textual phenomena.[3]

A second affinity arises if we consider that Derrida's mode of reading implies a textual imagination, an imagination that recognises the power of signs and of *langues* to generate inexhaustible potentialities, potentialities that ensure the texts of the tradition remain perennially amenable to deconstructive reinterpretation. It can be

argued that certain facets of Derrida's work necessitate the formation of the concept of a textual imagination: firstly, his grammatological reinterpretation of Saussure's insights into semiological difference as the possibility of nonmotivated linguistic signification; secondly, the resulting mode of reinterpreting philosophical works insofar as they are inscribed *en différance* or within what Derrida describes as an *"échange entre parole et langue"*[4]; and, finally, his concentration on the neglected "rhetorical" dimension of philosophical texts.

My interest in Derrida was sparked by his early texts in which the strategy of deconstruction announced itself. Of particular concern to me were those works and essays in which he addressed questions of language, textual creativity or the elusiveness of philosophical meaning, against the background of a radical critique of the metaphysics of the sign and of phonocentric determinations of meaning apparent in Plato, Hegel, Saussure and Husserl, among others. It might be said that Derrida's work at this time revolved around three closely related motifs: semiology or grammatology; interpretative strategies of reading and hermeneutic and deconstructive practices; and the closure of metaphysics, or the intractable problem of thinking in a manner that eluded the west's metaphysical history, but that necessarily articulated itself within the very conceptual frameworks bequeathed by that tradition. Much of the thrust of Derrida's work of this time consisted in deconstructive readings of structuralist semiology, which resulted in a specifically grammatological project that sought to counteract the phonocentrism Derrida detected as being complicit within a metaphysical insistence on the immediate presence of meaning to consciousness, the voice or the speaker. In Derrida's redetermination of the notion of the text, it comes to be understood, in the first place, as *arche-écriture*, which describes the fundamental structure by which the text (any spoken or written utterance) must be referred to the codified, differential and inherently unstable system of *langue* for its meaning; and, in the second place, as woven of metaphorical, "rhetorical", and etymological threads that undermine the supposed ideality of nonmotivated conceptual signification and the supposed autonomy of its conceptual, logical or discursive stratum; and finally, as synonymous with the alterity of linguistic meaning and conventionality to the subject or author. Such an understanding of the text displaces the classical determination of language as the passive communicational vehicle of a transcendental author or signified, and perhaps also the determination of

the authorial imagination as an empirical or transcendental subjective locus of undifferentiated origination.

Derrida would bring his radically revised structuralist semiology or grammatology to bear in analyses of classical philosophical texts, in particular those which themselves addressed questions of linguistic meaning or writing. He would find in such texts a radical discrepancy between, on the one hand, their implicit or explicit theories of linguistic and philosophical meaning, and on the other, the manner in which meaning functioned in the text, or the way authors expected it to perform. What they failed to take account of was the capacity for texts to exceed the logocentric reduction of meaning to stable ontological determinations of a transcendental *hors-texte*, and the capacity of interpretation to arrive at plural potentialities that issued from one and the same text, or to produce, in Ricoeur's idiom, a *surcroît de sens*. Derrida's notions of the text and language suggest a semantic dynamism and creativity at heart of the prose text or philosophical work that can be recognised and reflected in the concept of a textual imagination. The work, effects and possibility of the textual imagination, I argue, amount to that to which the logocentric tradition will have been constitutively blind; and this blind-spot obfuscating the dynamism, creativity and volatility of meaning is constitutive of the metaphysics that determines linguistic meaning and conceptuality as immediately present, univocal and stable, and other representational forms as the field in which imagination produces the effects of absence, equivocality and destabilisation.

Deconstruction brought to light the textual dynamism of meaning as it was evident in the historical reinvention of philosophical conceptuality and its oppositions; this renewed appreciation of textual creativity perhaps indicates the necessity of broadening the concept of imagination to include both artistic *and* linguistic, visual *and* philosophical, aesthetic *and* semantic modes of creativity. Certainly, the notion of a textual imagination would contribute to redressing the blindness constitutive of metaphysics. And if the notion of a deconstructive imagination can be grounded in Derrida's manner of pursuing potentialities of meaning within texts, in reawakening us to imagination as it is operative within texts, it would, I believe, beyond drawing together dominant themes within his early work,

provide a useful mode of entry into precisely what Derrida's project of deconstruction sets out to achieve.

Beyond the visual fantasising or the intending of an absent object with which imagination is often exclusively identified, or even with metaphors or literary fiction, imagination might, then, be explored in terms of it assuming a role within critique, within the discourse of deconstruction and a radical hermeneutics of the text. It should be noted from the outset that my endeavour concentrates on relating imagination to the *nonmotivated* sign or the concept insofar as it is "unmotivated", rather than pursuing—as one might—the notion of a textual imagination in its relation to linguistic phenomena with which it might be more readily associated, for example, metaphor and literary fiction.

It is within the context of this distinction that the path I follow can be contrasted with Richard Kearney's project on imagination. Kearney's extensive work on imagination, which has sought to trace the concept's manifestations in western culture from its earliest origins and to pose questions of its imperilled state in postmodernity, has most recently culminated in the call for an imagination of language.[5] His early work drew attention to the concept of imagination's historicity, heterogeneity and richness by articulating its formulations within the major movements of Continental philosophy. In framing the work of imagination within the question of its production of *possibilities* generated over and against actuality, he did much to dislocate the concept from its traditional reduction to (inner, visual) images. This work, together with a reflection on Ricoeur's abiding interest in metaphor and the symbol, literary fiction and narrative, has led to Kearney proposing that Ricoeur's hermeneutics might best be understood in terms of an imagination of language. My project seeks to say something very similar with regard to Derrida, though the notions of an imagination of language in Derrida and Ricoeur would conceal differing if not conflicting emphases.[6]

My endeavour, while owing much to Kearney's and indeed to Ricoeur's work, nonetheless seeks to discern the activity and effects of imagination not in the more obvious loci of the literary text, narrative or fiction, but at the very heart of the logos, in the sign, concept or philosopheme *insofar as* they can be considered to function in

a semiologically *nonmotivated* fashion. In addition to emphasising the concept of imagination's varied history, I follow Hegel's valuable procedure of retracing the phenomenon of imagination "itself" in its historically differentiated but interrelated dialectical moments. Hegel understands imagination in his psychology not as an immutable faculty that remains untouched by its own creativity or creations, but as mutating in accordance with successive objects with which it engages or products with which it re-engages (intuitions, symbols and ultimately with linguistic signs). Thus, whereas Kearney's work emphasises the historicity of philosophy's conceptualisation of imagination, draws from a phenomenologico-hermeneutic concept of imagination, and seeks to explore imagination in those more motivated elements of language, my project takes its departure from Hegel's insistence on the historicity of imagination, and seeks to discern its traces in the formation of the nonmotivated sign, and in conceptual alteration and development. While it is no doubt counter-intuitive to think of imagination being at work in a nonmotivated sign, it is possible and necessary to overcome this apparent impediment, not only because language's creativity must be thought in terms of *langue* and the conventions that make the nonmotivated sign possible, but because exploring imagination solely within the field of poetry or literature would run the risk of leaving untouched the notion that the logos or philosophical conceptuality remains impervious to the creativity of a textual imagination. However, insofar as signs and abstract conceptuality are formed from motivated and nonmotivated elements, from their metaphorical etymological sources *and* by sign-to-sign interrelations, and the division between literary and philosophical discourses is less clear than ever, there can no question of substantialising the differences between a conceptual and a literary and poetic imagination.

In a third affinity, I explore the notion that productive forms of negativity, and the temporality of reinventing the future on the basis of the past, bind imagination and deconstruction. Since imagination can be described as negating the past with a view to reinventing the future, as severing the image from its status as a memory, or as suspending any commitment to the existence of what is imagined, it bears comparison with the negativity inherent in deconstruction that is instrumental in its attempt to reinvent the future otherwise than as a continuation of its logocentric past. Deconstructive reading critically re-engages with the tradition and seeks to develop its

frustrated potentialities beyond the stranglehold that Derrida and others in the Continental tradition believe metaphysics to continue to exert over our thinking.

Implicit in this understanding of imagination is the sense of a temporal movement, a reinterpretation of what lies within cultural memory undertaken with a view to reinventing a horizon of future potentialities. Similarly, and as will be studied in Husserl's notion of picture-consciousness, the imagination's involvement in the recognition of the object depicted in a picture entails a certain negation of the materiality of the image as such, a negation that discloses the possibility of *seeing* the picture or image *as* representational of something other than "itself", or other than as so much canvas and oil. A certain negativity, then, is, to be found in the operation of imagination, in its transformation of what is given into something other, in seeing something *as* something else (as in a sign), in recreating from what is inherited from tradition something irreducible to the traditional, or, as Aquinas recognised the deceptive potentiality of imagination, in seeing or making something other than it is.[7]

I argue that the productive negativity of deconstruction is evident in its strategy of placing *sous rature* inherited concepts, in particular those marginalised philosophemes such as imagination, which afford a critical perspective while also presenting the danger of importing metaphysical presuppositions and frameworks. But deconstructive negativity is also evident in a certain negation of negativity, in lifting the suppressions, repressions and marginalisations that have defined the metaphysical tradition. In such an operation, deconstruction pursues the overlooked potentialities of the tradition, in particular those points in philosophical texts at which its transgressions of the logocentric tradition meet with aporia or an intractable impasse; I argue that Hegel's notion of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*, in failing to be founded on a "resolution" to a certain circularity that impedes our understanding of language's origination, constitutes such an aporetic moment. The positive and imaginative work of deconstruction consists thereafter in pursuing the imaginative opening beyond the point at which it was arrested. Deconstruction might thus be construed as the negativity by which the past ceases to be (seen as) an inexorable unfolding leading toward the present, and becomes rather a host of inchoate and suppressed potentialities, and the resource of an imagination resolutely oriented toward an alternative horizon. In these various forms, deconstructive negativity can

thus be seen as a variant of the negativity at work in imagination in representational and creative forms, and in its mode of entertaining future potentialities by an intensification of the relation with the past. As such, deconstruction might be said to be the negative moment in a constructive process seeking to imagine an alternative mode of thinking to the logocentric habits of thought. As the work of Simon Critchley[8] has demonstrated, deconstruction is a movement that seeks to generate a beyond to the *closure* of western metaphysics; and as John Sallis[9] has set forth in several works, the labour of deconstruction might be construed as a new form of imagination that is disclosed in this very closure, in a closure that destabilises our received notions of imagination and gives the notion to be thought anew. This mode of conceiving of deconstruction is salient to the manner in which I attempt to retrieve and pursue Hegel's concept of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* beyond Hegel, or beyond its determination within Hegel's system of the *Encyclopaedia.*

It should be noted from the outset that my aim is not primarily to infer from the scattered remarks Derrida makes on imagination a particular position he adopts on the concept, or even to extrapolate simply from the essay he devotes to John Sallis's work on imagination;[10] it is rather to discern certain fundamental lines of rapprochement between, on the one hand, deconstruction as a practice or a set of versatile strategies devised so as to productively rethink the logocentric tradition and, on the other hand, the concept of imagination as analysed with regard either to certain of its abiding features that either transcend its heterogeneous philosophical formulations, or to certain of its features and potentialities that have been unjustifiably marginalised by the western metaphysical tradition.

In the course of elaborating on the rapprochement between deconstruction and imagination, it will be possible to recognise an unmistakable antagonism between them. It is these antagonisms, which take the form of potential objections to the formation of the notion of a textual imagination (of deconstruction), that I analyse in Chapter III. A Derridean or deconstructive concept of imagination would undermine certain pillars in the classical concept of imagination (its confinement to visual and mimetic modes of representation as opposed to language, its presupposition of imagination as the interior faculty of an individual); and it would do so to such an extent that the concept of imagination, certainly as understood in a narrow, empirical

sense, is brought to the verge of being unrecognisable.

Imagination is generally conceived on the basis of, firstly, it being a subjective faculty, and secondly, its restriction to mimetic modes of representation. An empiricist determination of imagination that identifies it as an inner psychological faculty working exclusively within the domain of (visual) images, or an idealist conception that grasps the logos as emerging precisely in its transcendence of imagination, appears to render the notion of a textual imagination unintelligible. I will contextualise these sources of potential objection, respectively, in Husserl's phenomenological determination of imagination, and in Plato's understanding of the imagination (in its eikastic and phantastic forms).

In Plato, the eikastic imagination—the imagination that sees in an image its original—is central to the metaphysical ascent toward the Ideas or Forms. But Plato deems the imagination, which he identifies not only with a mimetic relation between image and original *but also* with the dangerous *phantastic* proliferation of images removed from the original, to be exceeded by the attainment of the logos, which he recognises to be founded upon a mode of signification requiring the institution of the conventional sign. While the lack of a mimetic relation in the word facilitates the philosopher signifying the immaterial Ideas, Plato recognises that the absence of any intrinsic relation between word and meaning renders linguistic signification subject to convention, to deviant use by which meanings can be altered, by which they can, one might say, fall prey to the same fate as *phantastic* images. The rigidity of Plato's distinction between mimesis and logos prohibits a more thoroughgoing examination of the creativity and imagination operative within language as the element of the logos.

In Husserl's treatment of the various forms of intentionality (perceptual, imaginative and signitive), we will see that he wavers between recognising imagination, on the one hand, as being closely related to signitive intentionality (by which one intends an absent object through the linguistic sign), and on the other, as being reducible to a deviation from perceptual intentionality. Husserl will ultimately fall back to the more orthodox position that imaginative intentionality relates solely to perception. However, Kant's definition of the empirical imagination as a faculty that

intuits an absent object opens up the question of whether the operation of nonmotivated signification can be included within the scope of acts of imagination. Even though Husserl ultimately finds imagination to bear greater resemblance to intentional acts of perception, a critique of phenomenology's repression of the objective conventions of representation discloses the possibility of conceiving imagination in terms of the conventions necessary both to mimetic *and* nonmimetic modes of signification. The discrepancy arising from Husserl's restrictive determination of imagination to intentional acts relating to images can be seen in that he accepts imagination to be at work within the *epoché* or phenomenological reduction central to phenomenological methodology and philosophical thought.

It will, then, be possible to identify certain points in Plato and in Husserl at which they come close to, but resist, relating imagination to signification or to the logos. As such, the objections issuing from these disparate philosophical perspectives will be seen to rest on a common metaphysical ground, on the untenable preservation of the logos from "contamination" by the dynamism, creativity and materiality suggested by the imagination. I argue that what these potential objections set out, in fact, are determinations in the concept of imagination that imprison it within its metaphysical past, features of a concept destining it to fall into a state of relative redundancy beyond phenomenology or in postmodernity, and a concept whose metaphysical baggage accounts perhaps for it not having played a greater role in deconstructive discourse. Rather than perceive in Husserlian and Platonist philosophies the presentation of insurmountable obstacles to the formation of a revised notion of imagination, they perhaps indicate precisely what in the concept of imagination must be deconstructed for it to become relevant within semiological, hermeneutic and deconstructive discourses.

While productive deconstructive readings of Plato and Husserl could be undertaken, it is Hegel's largely overlooked treatment of imagination in his psychology that affords the greatest scope for conceiving of a linguistic imagination. In Part 2, I explore Hegel's thought in its mature form through a reading of his *Encyclopaedia*, particularly insofar as it implies imagination to be a dialectical moment belonging to the particular shape or form that consciousness assumes in an epoch, a conception of imagination not entirely dissimilar from the manner in which

we speak, for example, of the "classical" or "romantic imagination", or, as has come to be commonplace in post-phenomenological French hermeneutic thought, of "*l'imaginaire classique*". The sign-making imagination attributes a novel mode of signification (rather than this or that work), and rather than amounting to the *punctual* act of a determinate subject, it was an imagination particular to a certain pivotal period or dialectical moment in the development of intelligence (*Intelligenz*). Even by the standards of the epoch of German Idealism, when Kant, Schelling and Fichte had diversified and expanded the products and functions of imagination (Kant, for example, attributing to the transcendental imagination, at least in the original edition of his first *Critique*, the spontaneous creation of the *a priori* forms that rendered experience of the phenomenal world intelligible), this marked a radical departure from received treatments of imagination.

Hegel's mode of relating imagination to historical phases in the development of representation and signification draws him toward recognising the points of overlap in imagination and language's histories; the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* represents the fundamental point of intersection at which imagination sets forth a sign no longer requiring a mimetic, iconic or figurative relation to its signified. In this formulation, he effectively—but without reflecting upon the theoretical consequences for imagination—transgresses the restriction of imagination to mimetic modes of representation. For Hegel, however much spirit (*Geist*) may be relentlessly working its way toward a form of ultimate resolution or be driven by the clandestine force of dialectical rationality, language and the logos could only have come into being through processes in which discord, dissonance and negativity—and no little imagination—were apparent; language or the arbitrary sign could, for Hegel, come into being only in the wake of the tortuous path forged by *Einbildungskraft* and *Phantasie* reinteriorising intuitions as memories and images, acquiring the capacity to produce images spontaneously, generating symbols, and abstracting universals from the network of images lying within the mind's unconscious reservoir (*Schacht*). In Hegel's psychology, imagination can be seen to be transformed by re-engaging with its own products (intuitions, images, symbols), to be self-replenishing up to the point at which it generates nonmotivated signs. Rather than conceiving the imagining subject on the basis of an inner faculty—a notion common in the empirical psychology of his time which he rarely fails to critique—he gives imagination to be

thought in terms of the subject's manifold relations with both signs and images, broaching in the process the notion that imagination engages with the conventional systems within which signs and images are determined.

As I have touched upon, Hegel also suggests the conventional or interdependent nature of nonmotivated signs to be essential to thought reconfiguring and impacting upon its own conceptuality, and thus to philosophical progress. In refuting Leibniz's project of forming a hieroglyphic script for international scholarship, Hegel recognises philosophical thought as initiating changes in the *interrelations* between clusters of related concepts or in the reciprocal configuration of interdependent signifieds. As such, he identifies the conditions of a textual, philosophical or theoretical act or phenomenon that might give new meaning to the concept of imagination. If language and conceptuality are understood not simply as a communicational vehicle at our disposal but as a system that has always already interpreted the world for us, Hegel's observations imply that the imagination's reconfiguration amounts to the generation of new modes of seeing and interpreting the world. As such, the notion of a conceptual or philosophical imagination that arises in Hegel bears resemblance to Kant's transcendental imagination, insofar as they both posit imagination as predetermining experience. However, while Kant's transcendental imagination is an *a priori* predetermination of the form and thus the content of *empirical* experience or the phenomenal world, the Hegelian conceptual or philosophical imagination I am proposing operates at the level of language's predetermination and redetermination of the world as we understand it. As such, it is an imagination at work in the historical vicissitudes of conceptual formation, and can be seized upon in recreating the relationship between language and the world, in the interstice where the imagining subject always already finds itself.

To be sure, Hegel downplays the import of his subversive gestures by reducing linguistic signification to a function of memory, thereby reaffirming the logocentric notion that the nonmotivated signs marks the demise of imagination. However, a post-Saussurean and Derridean conceptuality (*parole/langue*, semiological difference, iterability, *différance*) enables us to re-pose and suggest resolutions to the problematics of language's origination, and the recreation of meaning within a nonmotivated and conventional signifying system that Hegel had

encountered. A tenable concept of a sign-making imagination would have to reflect and shed light on the way it is possible to create a form of *nonmotivated* signification, that is, in the absence of a mimetic resemblance binding signifier to signified. Saussure demonstrates that such a mode of signification is possible not simply because we interiorise, store and remember the arbitrary and conventional associations between words and their meanings (a naïve semiological position into which Hegel's thought tended to lapse), but because the signifier is inscribed within differential relations in *langue*. A nonmotivated relation between signifier and signified is possible on the basis that signs are differentiated from one another, or in other words, that signifiers are unique (and thus do not produce homonyms). From Saussure's insight into the differential structuring of *langue*, it can be inferred that the generation of language consisted not simply in signifiers labeling objects in the world or universals, but in generating a system in which the differences and interrelations between signifiers could be maintained.

While the notion of a differential system of *langue* enables us to grasp the *conditions of possibility* of a system of nonmotivated signification, it does not resolve the question of how a nonmotivated mode of signification could have been brought into being. However, the problematic of language's origination can be framed in terms of the circularity by which *parole* and *langue* both appear to require one another's pre-existence: how can one speak intelligibly or communicate through nonmotivated words without a codified system conventionalising otherwise arbitrary signifier/signified relations already being in place?

Although Hegel dryly observed that no convention in which signifier/signified relations were first agreed upon could have taken place, he never formulated or dwelled on this problematic; the resolution to it would have provided the notion of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* with formidable substance while also accentuating its capacity to disturb logocentric tenets in his own semiology. In the absence of relating the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* to the primordial explorations in *parole*, his concept of the sign-making imagination becomes an impoverished mode of mere labelling or name-giving, and he shifts the onus of accounting for language's origination onto *Gedächtnis*.

However, if imagination's role in creating language is irreducible to mere aleatory or arbitrary assignment, the absurdity of imagination amounting to the play of chance to which its concept is opposed can be avoided. Imagination's role in the forging of the nonmotivated sign begins rather with the objectivisation of *langue*, with the setting forth of a *potential* signifier/signified relation valid not simply for the speaker or person proposing the relation, but as potentially valid *for others*. In such performances, imagination is evident in the mode of the expression of an inner possibility, and in the projection of a possible mode of signification that marks a radical departure from mimetic modes of representation.

Parole can be understood as a performance, for, in an established language, it does not merely or only *passively* draw from *langue*; on the contrary, as a diachronic history, *parole* is punctuated by instances of semantic innovation in which it deviates in a productive way from established signifier/signified relations or signified meaning such as they exist. In the case of a dictionary citing the "first" instance of a word—the precedent that effectively instituted it, or which we retrospectively deem to have instituted it—we recognise a point at which *parole* becomes almost indistinguishable from *langue*, at which it possessed the *de facto* force of *langue*. Central to grasping the creativity of imagination in founding language will be the recognition that *parole* and *langue* relate to one another through precedents, through *parole* laying down precedents that—retrospectively—come to have the force and authority of *langue*. *Parole* must be conceived as possessing the power both to *reaffirm and* to *contest* and *produce* alternatives to existing signifier/signified relations in *langue*. Recognising the power of *parole* to reaffirm and perpetuate existing signifier/signified relations is essential to penetrating the circularity that obfuscates our understanding of the *parole*'s generation of *langue*.

The nature of imagination implied in creative performances giving rise to nonmotivated signs requires collaboration between individuals and a series of interconnected acts; as such, it is incompatible with the idealist notion of imagination as the "inner studio" (Hegel's *innere Werkschaft*), as the event of an idea, understood as a potentiality already fully unfolded in cognition, spontaneously coming to pass in the mind of a particular person; language was not, after all, an idea that occurred to someone, who thereafter sought to realise it materially. It suggests an imagination

entirely other to those conceptions in which it is a *sui generis* psychological act, to an imagination that does not assume different forms according to the particular materiality with which it is engaged (be it sound, the sculptor's stone, etc.) or the mode or system of representation within which it is operative (be it language, an art form, etc.). Rather than discerning in the etymological relation of imagination to image a primordial restriction of what the concept means, I draw on its relation to *imago* and *imitari* in which the notion of copying or iteration is prominent.

The distinction between the reproductive and productive forms of imagination—a distinction common since Hume and Kant—can be interpreted not as separate types of imaginative acts, but rather, in the form of the *langue*-creating imagination, as installing its innovative acts within conventional systems in the form of reproducibility or iterability. In creating itself as an iterable act, in instituting its innovation as a convention, the singular act of imagination, by that very fact, effaces or disguises the original scene of its origination in imagination. Within imagination as it functions in a conventional domain—which is not to say outside of mimetic relations but rather as encompassing both motivated and nonmotivated modes of representation—it achieves its death by its innovation being absorbed within the conventions of the system, by becoming a reproducible operation we no longer recognise as imaginative, or as having emanated in imagination as an *événement*, in the Derridean sense.

I bring to bear on the question of how conceptual change is instigated insights gained from recognising instances of *parole* to be capable of assuming, through the cultivation of novel intelligible sense and iteration, a status within *langue*, with all the force or authority that thereby accrues to them. The individual instance of innovation in *parole* can be related to the philosophical imagination, which does not seek to reinvent existing conceptual relations by argument alone, but by testing out new senses of concepts in the act of proposing them. Such acts entail not only the transgression and suspension of existing meanings, but also the attempt to institute them as iterable meanings. What makes language perpetually amenable to such acts is the fact that the nonmotivated sign, or in particular the abstract concept irreducible to an intuitable content or image, is inscribed *en différance*; that is, in differential relations that endlessly defer the possibility of a fixed conceptual meaning attaching

to an ontological essence existing *hors-texte*. The nonmotivated sign is inscribed within a structure of *supplémentarité*, in the sense that Derrida gives to the word, in which it describes the perennial possibility of an addition being made to an apparent plenitude that will in fact have been deficient or lacking from the outset. The absence of an intuition of the designated or signified object being present in the nonmotivated signifier, particularly in abstract concepts irreducible to an image of this or that thing, renders the signifier/signified relation always, in a sense, yet to be determined.

This, I believe, lies at the heart of Hegel's affirmation of nonmotivated signification as the medium of philosophical thought and of Derrida's early work, and it necessitates or justifies the formation of a concept of a textual, conceptual or philosophical imagination, paradoxical or counter-intuitive though such a formulation may be. The relative instability of signifier/signified relations, and the relativity of sign-to-sign relations, invite us to reconfigure the existing inherited conceptuality, even the conceptuality we have received that has rigidified and gives itself the impression of having effaced its origination in the singular events of imagination that will have shaped it one way rather than another. It may be that the closure of metaphysics consists precisely in its blindness to the textual imagination at work within its own texts; inversely, "exiting" the closure of metaphysics will require a particular, historically astute and critical form of the textual imagination; it is this form of imagination that I suggest Derrida's work to have set forth.

I conclude with an attempt to relate the textual to the deconstructive imagination. The notion of a deconstructive imagination, as I propose it, is irreducible to one more instance of a philosophical redetermination of existing conceptuality. Working on the premise that we have little else other than the stones of the ruined edifice of metaphysics with which to work and think, and that an "exit" to metaphysics is to be found only in and through an intensified rereading of its ruined texts, deconstruction, in its formative phases, seems to me to devise a method of returning to those occasions in the textual history of metaphysics in which attempts to reconfigure conceptual meaning were frustrated by a logocentric stranglehold. The deconstruction of metaphysics requires not only the identification of the latter's systemic suppressions and blind-spots, but necessitates submitting oneself to the

text's aporetic moments in which the merest inklings of a possibility beyond the comprehension or logic of metaphysics betrays itself.

Thus does deconstructive reading consist in exploiting the contradictory potentialities of a text, the occasions on which its general, logocentric or phonocentric thrust is undermined by the linguistic resources of the text, by the marginal, casual and otherwise insignificant remark at odds with the text's presupposition. This stratagem presupposes a work of collective textual memory, but also of imagination, of pursuing the thwarted potentiality beyond its arrested development. As such, deconstruction in its inception might be best characterised as a refined and complex form of the imagination such as it continuously reappeared in the philosophical texts it studies. Had Derrida explored his strategy in terms of imagination, deconstruction might as a movement have proved more transparent to readers, if no less objectionable to many precisely on account of it appearing to muddy the waters between imagination and philosophy, and all the oppositions that this distinction conditions and which it is conditioned by.

To perform such deconstructive work on the concept of imagination is, in any case, I believe, an urgent, feasible and worthwhile enterprise. As became apparent in Heidegger's proto-deconstructive reading of the editions of Kant's first *Critique* if not long before, imagination is at once a concept determined by metaphysics according to a logocentric model *and* a concept involved in the contestation of its own subordination to the logos.[11] Our assessment of the concept or of its connotation has been shaped by the perception that it has in western thought been much maligned, and that the injustice done unto it requires that it be redeemed. The ambiguous nature of the concept has allowed it both to perpetuate *and* to contest the metaphysical or logocentric order; that is, to be a marginalised element excluded by philosophical discourse that thereby possessed the power to contest the privileging of the autonomy of conceptual and philosophical discourse, yet also to inhabit and reaffirm the fundamental network of oppositions on which that discourse lives and which renders it intelligible. The resources of the concept of imagination are such that it can oscillate between these emphases from one contextual use or interpretation to the next; or perhaps, more accurately, this conflict has been interiorised within the concept, eventually exhausting it, leaving it a jaded notion washed up on the shores of a

postmodern age in which forms of representation—if such a thing still exists—and creativity—if such a thing is still possible—at once multiply in unforeseen directions within the context of an immense archivisation of the representations created in imagination. It is perhaps still unknown whether such vast quantities of retained material will amount to a resource for memory, for imagination or for deconstruction. But what deconstruction reminds us is that the divided nature of the concept can be used against itself as the interior dynamic that permits it to produce itself anew within unanticipated contexts, and that its very nebulousness, elusiveness or inner conflict can be perceived as conditions favourable to its—inevitably provisional—redetermination.

My endeavour seeks, in any case, to retrieve potentialities lost within the nooks, crannies and fissures of Hegel's texts, and to realise them insofar as possible, with the assistance of pioneering work into our understanding of the mysterious and enigmatic possibility of nonmotivated signs. As such, I attempt to proceed along the lines of a certain formalised mode of imagination that seemed to me to announce itself fervently in the pages of Derrida's early work but without announcing itself as such or by name, thus amounting to a potentiality potentially lost but perhaps retrievable on account of being barely veiled over.

Notes to Chapter I

[1] Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline* comprises Volumes 8, 9 and 10 of his collected works: *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in zwanzig Bänden, Frankfurt-am-Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970. I outline in greater detail the texts of Hegel with which I am concerned in Part II.

[2] For an extensive study of this deconstructive operation, see Rodolphe Gasché's work on deconstruction as a specifically philosophical enterprise, *The Tain of the Mirror. Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (London and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986, hereafter *TM*), especially Chapter 8, "Deconstructive Methodology", pp. 109-176.

[3] For a typical Derridean deconstructive reading of a structuralist work, in this case, Rousset's "Forme et signification", see "Force et signification" in *L'Écriture et la différence*, Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1967, pp. 9-51 (hereafter *ED*). Derrida's concern with the undecidable play of meaning in the text arose in part from critiques of structuralist readings which, he argued, enervated texts of their force by reducing them to perfectly transparent structures. Post-Heideggerian hermeneutic thinkers have shown themselves to be equally concerned with the question of textual meaning exceeding interpretative reduction. But the concept of imagination can hardly be said, despite certain notable exceptions in this field to which I will come, to have kept pace with these developments or been redetermined in the light of them. The prevalence of the notion of *l'imaginaire* in hermeneutic thought would confirm rather than deny this; for it posits the objectification of products of the imagination—symbolic meanings, for example—within codified structures, without being complemented by a concept of imagination that would account for the semantic creativity, dynamism and play that such structures afford, or for the fact that the meanings to which these structures give rise are constantly being worked over and re-instituted.

[4] "Dans une langue, dans le *système* de la langue, il n'y a que des différences. [...] Mais, d'une part, ces différences *jouent*: dans la langue, dans la parole aussi et dans l'échange entre langue et parole. D'autre part, ces différences sont elles-mêmes des *effets*. Elles ne sont pas tombées du ciel tout prêtes" ("La Différence" in *Marges de la philosophie*, Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1972, pp. 3-29, p.12; hereafter *Diff* and *MP*).

[5] Kearney's exploratory investigation of an imagination of language takes place in his *On Paul Ricoeur: The Owl of Minerva* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) in "Study 2: Imagination and Language" (pp. 35-59); see also his second dialogue with Ricoeur ("The Creativity of Language", pp. 127-145). Kearney's works addressing the question of imagination include: *Poetics of Imagining: Modern and Postmodern*, Edinburgh University Press, and New York: Fordham University Press, 1998; *The Wake of Imagination: Ideas of Creativity in Western Culture*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998; *Poetics of Modernity: Toward a Hermeneutic Imagination*, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1995.

[6] The differences concerned broach the Derrida/Ricoeur debate on metaphoricity and the philosophical concept. At issue in this debate is whether the etymological and metaphorical elements within abstract concepts compromise the autonomy of conceptuality and philosophical discourse; that is, whether conceptual discourse achieves a certain independence from the effects of metaphoricity (Ricoeur), or whether philosophical discourse betrays the impossibility of transcending metaphoricity in all conceptual discourse, most notably those treatises that seek to dominate the theme or concept of metaphor (*meta-phorein*) (Derrida). I have attempted to treat of this debate (*Metaphor, Metaphysics and Violence: The Debate between Derrida and Ricoeur*, M.A. Philosophy, Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2001, unpublished); I have also addressed the hermeneutic/deconstructive debate as it is played out in Derrida and Jean-Pierre Richard's views on Mallarmé (Between Mallarmé's *univers imaginaire* and the *page blanche*: The Difference between Richard and Derrida, M.Phil., Trinity College Dublin, 2005, unpublished). My present concern is to relate imagination to

the sign or concept *insofar as it is nonmotivated*, or rather, insofar as the sign or concept is referred and deferred to *langue* as the unstable mediating agency between signifier and signified.

[7] "Demons are known to work on men's imagination, until everything is other than it is" (*Summa Theologiae*, 5, 147).

[8] Critchley, Simon, *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Derrida and Levinas*, (Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1999, second edition). See in particular Part 2 "The Problem of Closure in Derrida", pp. 59-97.

[9] I will have occasion to refer to "Tense" ["Temps", trans. David Farrell Krell], an essay in which Derrida concentrates on John Sallis's work on imagination (in the festschrift *The Path of Archaic Thinking: Unfolding the Work of John Sallis*, ed. Kenneth Maly, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, pp. 49-7, hereafter *PAT*). (This essay is as yet, to my knowledge, unavailable in the original French; I have cited Derrida's work in English whenever it has proved impossible to obtain the text in French.) It is an irony of Derrida's work that, as a strategy conceived to overcome the closure of metaphysics, it was, initially at least, most warmly received outside of philosophy departments. Without a grasp of the fundamental reasons underlying Derrida's perceived need for an overcoming of metaphysics, deconstruction remains the unintelligible or obscure project it remains for some. But for Derrida, the project is one initiated in a tradition stretching from Nietzsche to Freud, and from Husserl to Heidegger. This becomes intelligible and urgent as soon as one realises that metaphysics does not simply present itself in dusty tomes of philosophical works that designate themselves as belonging to metaphysics as a discipline, but within the oppositions and conceptuality that weigh on and orient our own thought and within what often passes for common sense. The labour of reflection and critique that deconstruction demands commences, as I understand it, with one taking stock of the import and residue of metaphysics within one's own language, and therefore, ineluctably, within one's "own" patterns of thought.

[10] No sustained deconstructive reading of the concept of imagination appears in Derrida's vast corpus. However, apart from the reading of Sallis (cf. note 9 above), numerous remarks on the subject do appear. Aside from the analysis of Hegel's concept of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* in "Le Puits et la pyramide: Introduction à la sémiologie de Hegel" (in *MP*, pp. 79-127; hereafter *PP*) on which I will later comment, there are several principal references. In "Force et signification" (*ED*, pp. 9-49), Derrida treats of the continuity between the Kantian and Hegelian concepts of the productive imagination (pp. 14-18). In "L'Économimesis" (in *Mimesis - des articulations*, ed. Sylviane Agacinski, Paris: Aubier-Flammarion, 1975), some mention of imagination is made in considering Kant's reflections on art. In "La Pharmacie de Platon" (*Diss*), Derrida describes philosophy as having given imagination the status of *pharmakon*; he also comments on Plato's exclusion of the concept of play or *jeu* from the logos, *jeu* being a concept Derrida appears to identify with imagination. See also, in *La Voix et le phénomène: Introduction au signe dans la phénoménologie de Husserl* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967, hereafter *VP*), the long footnote (p. 50) addressing Husserl's critique of the classical psychology of the image, and indeed, the entire essay insofar as it addresses Husserl's attempt to exclude signs from the interior soliloquy of thought by speaking of words as being only imagined (as *Phantasievorstellungen* or imaginary representations); I have foregone the opportunity to develop this strand of Derrida's thought on imagination and the sign in my reading of Husserl on imagination below. The status of Rousseau's understanding of imagination, particularly as it is related to empathy and the perfectibility of mankind, comes under investigation (in *De la grammatologie*, Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1967, p. 259; hereafter *DG*). Of particular pertinence to my discussion of the opposition of imagination/reason is the following comment Derrida makes of Rousseau: "Or non seulement Rousseau distingue, comme il va de soi, entre imagination et raison mais il fait de cette différence le nerf de toute sa pensée" (*De la Grammatologie*, p. 259).

[11] In his reading of the Kantian concept of imagination in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (trans. Richard Taft, Studies in Continental Philosophy, Bloomington: Indiana

University Press, 1997), Heidegger concludes that the *Kritik zur reinen Vernunft* logically demands that imagination be seen as the ground of metaphysics; but this is a conclusion from which Kant recoils, as is evidenced, for Heidegger, in the amendments made to the second edition of the *Critique*, in which the imagination plays a significantly lesser role relative to that granted it in the first edition. The conclusion that Heidegger reaches with regard to imagination being the ground of the possibility of any future metaphysics could be argued to lead to his turn away from metaphysics as the name of the discipline to be pursued by philosophy toward the *Destruktion* of metaphysics as the task that philosophy has bestowed upon itself. By no means incidentally, Heidegger's mode of reading Kantianism beyond the logocentric limits Kant erected for himself is a proto-typical deconstructive mode of reading. My reading of Hegel's *Zeichen machende Phantasie* is analogous to Heidegger's reading of Kant to the extent that it centres on an equivocation in Hegel, in which he at first attributes language's origination to imagination, but recoils from the implications such a postulation would have, and ultimately accords to a sign-memory (*Gedächtnis*) the task of having brought language into being.

Chapter II: Affinities between Deconstruction and Imagination: Toward a Textual and Post-logocentric Imagination

Does deconstruction imagine, or does it deconstruct imagination? In addressing the question of what, if anything, imagination might have to do with deconstruction, one would have to contemplate the curious paradox by which they can appear to be both intricately intertwined *and* distinctively antagonistic. On the one hand, imagination, as a faculty or a field generally excluded from the logos by the metaphysical tradition, would appear to be the natural ally of deconstruction and to present it with a point of leverage with which to critique logocentrism and the metaphysics of presence. And yet, on the other hand, as a concept inscribed within the conceptuality of the history of metaphysics presupposing both a creative self-present authorial consciousness and an artistic, mimetic field of representation segregated from language, discourse and reason, imagination would equally appear to be the remnant of a mindset pre-existing the "decentring of the subject" and an anachronism belonging to a logocentric model of thinking. Imagination could feasibly be thought of as being an *object* or "target" of deconstruction, a concept designating a self-present consciousness as a locus of absolute origination which serves to exclude or repress the creativity and dynamism of meaning from the field of philosophical signification; and yet, at the same time it might be construed as a characteristic and an aspiration of the deconstructive enterprise inasmuch as it is availed of or employed in any attempt to challenge the status quo or in any endeavour projecting upon the future a host of new possibilities somehow drawn from, yet irreducible to, what is inherited from the past.

Such mutually exclusive possibilities perhaps stem from the plural and disseminated senses of the concept of imagination: according to a narrow conception, it can be understood as a faculty by which we produce inner images or external material pictures and representations, while, according to a broader conception or a more liberal usage of the term, it is bound up with human creativity in the breadth and diversity of its forms, in particular, with the subversive and trangressive force of *original* creations. In the event of adopting the more expansive sense of the concept, the question presents itself: is this inherited concept of the imagination to be conceived of as a strategic locus critical to the contestation of logocentric tendencies,

a deconstructible idea and a Trojan horse ideally situated to displace the metaphysical network from within, or is it a remnant of western metaphysics that has outlived the prominent or even inflated position it enjoyed in romanticism and German Idealism, whose use today inadvertently ensnares us in the ruse of ultimate points of origination?

From this ambiguity in the concept of imagination, whereby it appears in turn as a concept essential to the discourse of deconstruction *and* as harbouring certain metaphysical implications at odds with it, there emerge a series of affinities and antagonisms between imagination and deconstruction that I seek to analyse.

In this chapter, I set out, firstly, to elaborate a number of promising affinities between deconstruction and imagination that would suggest the possibility of a mutually enlightening dialectic between them; by investigating, on the one hand, deconstruction as a contemporary mode of imagination, and on the other hand, the concept of imagination as it might be deconstructed and reinscribed within a textual domain, their reciprocity might shed light on the nature both of deconstruction and of imagination. Several potential modes of relating deconstruction and imagination to one another present themselves, even if, as we shall see, impediments and resistance to developing these initial lines of rapport arise when one attempts to pursue them. I will treat of these three points of rapprochement between deconstruction, before, in the following chapter, outlining what in the classical determination of imagination resists conceiving of imagination as a textual and deconstructive operation.

(i) First Affinity: Deconstruction as the Inversion and Displacement of the Opposition Logos/Imagination

Imagination has in the history of philosophy consistently been understood to pose a threat to philosophical ideals. Thus, as we will see in the case of Plato in Chapter III, the eikastic imagination—the imagination that sees in an image (*eikon*) the faithful double of an original—is eventually transcended on the path toward the Ideas, while in Hegel's case, though imagination as embodied by art and poetry may be central to spirit's progression to absolute spirit, among the final obstacles which spirit must

overcome in realising itself fully can be included art, which is overtaken in modernity, and the (romantic) poetic imagination which gives way to the "prose of thought".[1] Kant may have constructed a concept of imagination that accounted for the generation of the categories and the a priori forms of intuition (time and space), and thus for the coherence and regularity of experience; but while he conceived of an imagination that projected a formal structure onto the world through which the raw contents or sense data of experience would be filtered, he would also, at least on Heidegger's reading, recoil from the compromised position in which reason would be placed by an all-encompassing conception of imagination.[2] What emerges in a consideration of the philosophical treatment of imagination beyond the evident heterogeneity of the objects or products attributed to it—time as an a priori form of intuition (Kant), the linguistic sign (Hegel), the subject/object dynamic, or the I/other relation in its entirety (Fichte)—is a certain ambivalence, or a rigorously supervised affirmation checked by the necessity of its delimitation. The philosophical elaboration of the contribution it makes invariably meets with a defining limit, beyond which, as an empirical faculty differing from yet retaining a form proximate to the senses, imagination would contaminate the purity of higher philosophical ideals, be it the logos, prose, or reason. The status predominantly held by imagination in philosophy, whereby it is both subordinate to the higher logocentric values it assists in realising yet also deemed to constitute a threat to those same ideals, renders it of potential use or interest to deconstruction.

In articulating this first form of affinity, I concentrate, in the first place, on characterising the subordinate position that imagination has held within the logocentric tradition, before, in the second place, sketching the manner in which the threat that imagination poses to metaphysics makes of it a potential tool in the deconstruction of metaphysics. More specifically, I concentrate on the deconstructive strategy of inverting and displacing metaphysical oppositions, and attempt to demonstrate how deconstructing the opposition of imagination/logos or of imagination/philosophy would be consistent with Derrida's *modus operandi*.

If deconstruction can appear both to preclude and be identified with imagination, it is because of a fundamental ambiguity in the concept: while imagination, in a variety of forms and languages (*phantasia*, *imagination*,

Einbildungskraft, *Phantasie*, and so on), is a philosophical concept if one judges by its recurrence and continual redefinition in numerous western metaphysical systems (both rationalist and empiricist), it is also a concept that philosophy has continually placed in a position of *subordination* to reason and to the logos. Imagination is a concept the identity of which is recognisable neither simply by the inferior position it holds within metaphysical oppositions nor as contesting the privilege or autonomy of reason and the logos, but by it being susceptible to both determinations. As such, the concept or value of imagination is divided against itself. It can suggest for instance a self-present subject to whom a faculty is available, and the capacity for the fantastical and irrational creation of dreams; it has also been understood as a form of mediation between the senses and reason, in addition to being determined as a faculty of intuition from which reason never truly establishes itself independently. Imagination is both a metaphysical concept that belongs to and reinforces the edifice to be deconstructed *and* a concept containing resources to threaten if not overthrow the ideality of logocentric values. It is perhaps less the case that the concept of imagination is inherited as *either* radically contesting logocentrism *or* complicit with it, than that the prevarication haunting its identity or value is bequeathed to us "within" the concept itself. The problematic posed is thus not that of which version of the concept of imagination is to be appropriated and which dispensed with, but how the contradictions or tensions that allow it an extraordinary malleability and versatility, are to be confronted, managed and set to work in its reformulation. Derrida has spoken of there being an opportune moment for the deconstruction of a particular concept, text, or convention; this crisis of identity in the concept of imagination perhaps affords us the opportunity for its redetermination, the very instability in its sense presenting the occasion for its deconstruction.

To speak of imagination's subordination to reason within the logocentric western tradition is nothing new. If one were to judge by more recent works on imagination,[3] its subjugation to reason is less a discovery made about its status in western history than an underlying narrative integrated within a contemporary understanding of the concept. For a considerable time now, certainly long after Baudelaire declared it "la reine des facultés",[4] we perhaps still feel that the injustice done unto imagination in the western tradition has yet to be righted. This is perhaps because imagination figured for so long within the historical chain of alterities to

philosophical reason (sophistry, rhetoric, art, mimesis, literature), those others against which philosophy has defined itself, and whose exteriorisation, repulsion or even suppression western philosophy has depended upon for its autonomy and sense of identity.

In what might be called the introduction to *Marges de la philosophie,*[5] "Tympan", Derrida argues that philosophical discourse, as exemplified by Hegel's texts, has systematically sought to control its other, to determine the values opposed to it (be it literature, sophistry, art or imagination) by appropriating them and determining them conceptually. Philosophy, being concerned with everything in general and nothing in particular, or with no specific disciplinary domain but with all disciplinary enquiry, has tended to grant itself the power to exceed itself; it has, according to Derrida, conferred upon itself the capacity to envelop and appropriate what it simultaneously casts out as lying beyond itself or its discipline. In this way, Derrida argues, philosophy provides itself with its proper *other*—the other that it somehow owns, the alterity by which it can declare what it is by what it is not. In other words, philosophy defines itself negatively by what lies within its *marges*. Philosophical conceptualisation, particularly such as it is evident in the marginal philosophical disciplines of poetics or aesthetics, is such that it can command imagination, articulate its truth, assign to it its place and, *at one and the same time*, exteriorise it, alienate it, determine it as being foreign to reason, discourse and logic. Hegel's notion of the task of aesthetics in modernity, as bringing to the form of conceptual knowledge the bygone history of the praxis of imagination in art, furnishes a prime example of this gesture of the simultaneous repulsion and re-appropriation of art and imagination. He keeps art—and imagination insofar as it is defined by it—at once outside the boundaries of philosophy yet rigorously subsumed within its sphere of knowledge.[6]

The philosophical mode of exerting control over a concept it posits as exceeding its own field is formalised in the philosophical and dialectical opposition, which Derrida has demonstrated to function not as the simple distinction between two parts of a whole but as the violent hierarchical organisation of two terms. The subordination of imagination to higher philosophical values is manifest in numerous hierarchical oppositions, both those in which it appears by name, and those in which it

is merely implicated: imagination/logos, metaphor/concept, image/word, signifier/signified, literature/philosophy, etc. We shall see in later chapters, in Plato and Hegel's respective conceptions of the path of reason (toward the Ideas or Forms in Plato's case and toward the absolute in Hegel) that the transcendence of imagination has been considered an essential step in the realisation of metaphysical ideals. Philosophy realises its ideal by liberating itself from imagination, for Plato by the logos differentiating itself from mimesis and thus enabling itself to signify the Ideas or Forms, and, for Hegel, by the "prose of thought" overcoming the poetic imagination in modernity. The fundamental and hegemonic disposition of western thought is encapsulated, for Derrida, in such instances of logocentrism; that is, in its privileging of the logos (the word, the concept, logic, reason) over—among other things—difference, the play of the sign, and imagination; and in the repeated positing of forms of transcendent and absolute (*absolvere*) presence in the form of Being (*ontos*), the Forms or Ideas, Man or God, which have each in their turn been set forth as lying beyond history, difference and perhaps, beyond imagination inasmuch as such an origination would amount to calling into question their ontological veracity or transcendental value. Imagination would in its classical forms be inconceivable or unintelligible outside the web of metaphysical oppositions, those in which it figures by name (imagination/logos, imagination/reason, imagination/memory), those in which it is suggested by virtual synonyms or cognates (image/word, image/text, madness/rationality) and those which provide the framework for its exposition (nature/culture, spontaneity/passivity, originality/repetition, and so on). It is this network of oppositions on which the discourse of metaphysics has thrived and which, for Derrida, continues to condition our thinking and ensures that metaphysics survives the conscious rejection and explicit declaration of its death or desuetude in modernity. As such, one may reject the metaphysical systems in which the meaning of imagination has been inscribed, but without this rejection amounting to an immediate reinvention of its concept.

Together with figuring as the lower term in philosophical oppositions, imagination has, since at least Plato and Aristotle, but perhaps most forcibly in Kant, figured as a form of mediation between oppositions, as the agency that traverses the boundary between the sensible and the intelligible, between the senses and the understanding or reason. But as such a form of mediation, imagination remains in a

position of subordination to the rational or intelligible form or ideal it assists in generating. It is the bridge that becomes irrelevant after affording safe passage to the other side. As an agent of dialectical mediation, imagination assumes a dual and even confused identity: it becomes, according to a curious logic Derrida has formulated, *neither* the sensible *nor* the intelligible and *both* the sensible and intelligible, neither the representation nor the represented but *both*. It is irreparably contaminated by the empirical as well as being the means to exceed the boundaries of sensible immediacy. Imagination has had for philosophy, as Derrida explicitly states, the status of a *pharmakon*, that is, both a remedy and a poison. In "La Pharmacie de Platon",[7] Derrida brings our attention to the curious logic of the *pharmakon*, a term that appears in Plato's *Phaedrus* and elsewhere in his corpus. While Derrida's fundamental concern in this essay lies with Plato's determination of *writing* as a *pharmakon*, he makes clear that the ambiguous logic supposed by the term is of broader relevance to the philosophical evaluation of its alterities. Derrida singles out the imagination—he specifically mentions the Kantian transcendental imagination—as having been determined by the ambiguous logic of the *pharmakon*. That imagination is a *pharmakon*, a mixed blessing, a necessary evil, is evident in what Kant writes of it outside of the sense it will attain in his transcendental philosophy:

> The imagination may be forgiven for occasional vagaries and for not keeping carefully within the limits of experience, since it gains its life and vigour by such flights and since it is always easier to moderate its boldness than to stimulate its languor. But the understanding which ought to *think* can never be forgiven for indulging in vagaries; for we depend upon it alone for assistance to set bounds, when necessary, to the vagaries of imagination.[8]

If for Plato, as Derrida reminds us, writing is the orphan that roams unsupervised by a paternal presence who alone can speak on the child's behalf, imagination is in this instance for Kant the unruly tyrannical child forgivable precisely because one cannot expect of it an inordinate degree of maturity; he is a child for whom the firm boundaries provided by reason, which is of its nature more measured, protect both itself and the understanding. Imagination is wont to transgress limits since exceeding the limits of (perceptual) intuition or empirical experience is its *raison d'être*. It is of its nature excessive, helpless to curb its own transgressive force. It can prove by this very excess, by the understanding not holding it in check, to be a menace: it is in the name of the understanding and thinking that limits must be set, Kant's presupposition being that thinking never takes the form of imagining nor imagining that of thought. It

is this rigorous and almost ever-present assumption that deconstruction, as a mode of critical thought or reflection undertaken in the name of rethinking and imagining anew the western tradition, appears to me not only to subvert by virtue of its formal structure, but also to be best placed to undermine. In any case, it would be possible to analyse endless treatments of imagination in which axiomatic presuppositions and oppositions similar to those regulating Kant's remarks play themselves out, and which betray the position the signifier "imagination" has held within philosophical conceptuality. But one need not have recourse to philosophers' numerous admonitions and ambiguous determinations of imagination in order to recognise the fundamentally equivocal logic and set of evaluations that has come to reside within the concept; the ambivalence that haunts the worth of imagination is in evidence much closer to home, in the more commonsensical but, for all that no less puzzling, logic by which it is so often evaluated: according to popular wisdom, though imagination is to be fostered in the child, the persistence of an—over-active—imagination in adulthood, of what one would once have called fancy, is said to be at best a source of immaturity, and at worst the harbinger of madness.

The philosophical subordination of imagination can be seen as an attempt to nullify the threat it poses to the higher values espoused by philosophy; consequently, by resisting the suppression of imagination, its full capacity to overthrow the autonomy of the logos can be unleashed. Deconstruction can as a movement be seen to have arisen partly out of the gesture by which the hegemony of logocentrism is challenged in the name of the lower terms in philosophical oppositions, including imagination. Such questioning of philosophy in the name of imagination would be as old as Rousseau's privileging of reverie over thought, as radical as the Nietzschean emphasis on the play of the sign outside of transcendent values of truth, and as recent as Heidegger in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* pursuing the potentiality of the Kantian imagination to undermine the pretensions of pure reason. But deconstruction has in a sense formalised the strategy of inverting, displacing and reinscribing the hierarchically organised terms of metaphysical oppositions.[9] Deconstructive inversion takes the form of an initial and provisional reversal of the privilege accorded to the higher term; but if the symmetrical inversion of the hierarchical opposition (the privileging of the signifier over the signified, the imagination over reason, etc.) were not to be followed by a displacement of the ground on which the opposition rests, one

would still remain within the oppositions of metaphysics. An example of the ineffectiveness of simple or symmetrical inversion appears in Derrida's critique of the etymologism by which the metaphorical basis of an abstract concept is privileged over its conceptual sense. In "La Mythologie blanche: La métaphore dans le texte philosophique",[10] Derrida hastens to point out that denying the absolute autonomy of the conceptual signified ought not to entail subscribing to an etymological reductionism by which all meaning is deemed to be exhausted once the etymological sources or metaphors submerged within the conceptual signifier are rediscovered and brought to light. A deconstruction of the ideality of conceptual meaning does not consist in swapping the untenable rationalism of "clear and distinct ideas" for a reductionist empiricism in which abstract meanings are reduced to undefined symbolic connotations. As essential as the initial gesture of inversion is to revisiting and casting in a new light the denigrated term in the opposition ("signifier", "imagination", etc.), to merely transfer the privilege accorded to the "higher" term to the lesser would be to remain in thrall to and leave intact the violence of metaphysical oppositions. For this reason, the opposition must be displaced *and* reinscribed, rethought outside of the hierarchical dissymmetry, and displaced such that it can be rethought within other discourses, within other networks of concepts. Thus, for example, following an initial privileging of the signifier over the signified that reverses the suppression of the former and rekindles it as an object that stimulates semiological analysis, the signifier/signified opposition must be rethought in terms of the *langue* by which any mediation between signifier and signified is possible; similarly, poetry might be accorded a privilege over the canons of prose so that firstly, the poetic (rhetorical, tropic, prosodic) elements of the philosophical text can be recognised other than as ornamental features of no import to the signified, argument or logic of the text, and secondly, the discursive and reflective mode of thought operative within poetry might come into view. It would thus be consistent with deconstructive practice for this operation of inversion and displacement to be explicitly performed on the opposition of imagination and its others (reason, logos, philosophy).

Imagination, as a concept that has played a role in contesting and subverting logocentric values, would be a natural ally to deconstruction; it is an inherited concept shaped and formed by its proclivity to challenge the primacy and possibility of an

ontological discourse said to be founded on reason, or, in other words, on its transcendence of imagination. Insofar as imagination was repressed or marginalised by a logocentric tradition on the grounds that it amounted to an empirical and sensible contamination of the ideally intelligible, it promises to provide a starting point from which to question idealist metaphysical premises. As a subordinated concept that contains resources to threaten the ideality of logocentric values, it provides a powerful point of leverage (*mochlos*[11]) within metaphysics by which the latter's oppositions might be deconstructed.

The deconstructive displacement of the opposition of logos/imagination would in part be a matter of bringing into question the exclusion of imagination from language, in particular the exclusion of imagination from prose, from the concept and thought; such an inversion would in other words be a matter of conceiving of an imagination of language, a textual imagination that transgresses the boundaries erected between the logos and imagination, philosophy and art. It is by no means coincidental, therefore, that in Derrida's reading practices, such as they inform and are informed by his semiology or grammatology, the inchoate notion of a textual imagination emerges in all but name. With this, we come to the second manner in which deconstruction might be discussed in related to imagination.

(ii) Second Affinity: The Concept of a Textual Imagination implied by Derrida's Grammatology, Rhetoric and Mode of Deconstructive Reading

The widely-held perception that deconstruction not only takes an interest in, but also models itself on literature, poetics or literary criticism—with fields more readily identifiable with imagination than with reason—has often led to it being summarily dismissed as a movement that would qualify as being properly philosophical. The accusations commonly brought against deconstruction count among them that it has conflated the boundaries between literature and philosophy, criticism and ontological discourse, imagination and truth. Imagination can be said to have a place in deconstruction because the latter fastens in particular upon those more "imaginative" textual phenomena, or at least those textual elements said to have sprung, if not from the imagination of a classically conceived authorial subject, then, from imagination in a certain, perhaps unheralded sense that can be identified with the creative potentialities of language, writing and textuality. Insofar as imagination has functioned as a concept central to the explanation of the origin and generation of modes of representation and signification, it might be supposed that deconstruction, in its renewal and radical reformulation of the question of the possibility of meaning in speech, in writing, and in systems of representation in general, has been addressing and proposing the concept of a textual imagination in all but name.

In the "absence" of philosophy's recognition of the linguistic and semantic creativity evident in its own texts and conceptuality, and for the want of terms that would grasp and lay bare the dynamism apparent in the history of philosophical conceptuality, the notion of imagination might serve to fill a semantic lacuna in the philosophical lexicon. And it could be called upon to do so *not despite* the traditional restriction of the concept of imagination to the visual image, to the field of artistic creativity, or to motivated forms of representation generally, but precisely because of, and in opposition to, this logocentric confinement of the concept of imagination.

In briefly exploring this notion of a textual imagination to which deconstructive interpretation gives rise, I will take, firstly, the manner in which Derridean grammatology arises from Saussure's insight into difference as the

condition of possibility of nonmotivated signification; and secondly, trace how Derrida's grammatology is brought to bear on philosophical texts, particularly those which themselves deal with questions of writing, textuality and conceptuality.

The key to the question of how nonmotivated signs could be possible lies, for Derrida, in retracing Saussure's pioneering investigation into the possibility of nonmotivated signification, an investigation set in motion by his foregrounding the issue of the so-called arbitrary nature of the signifier/signified relation.[12] The answer that Saussure provides to the possibility of the arbitrary sign or, perhaps more accurately, nonmotivated signification is, in a word, difference. What makes it possible for a signifier to function in the absence of any motivating link is the signifying element (whether its materiality be sound or inscription) being integrated within a system in which what counts are the differences between elements rather than the positive composition of the individual elements. The particular material composition of the individual signifier is significant only insofar as it is possible for it to be differentiated from the other elements comprising the system.[13] As Derrida encapsulates Saussure's insight: "Il ne peut y avoir d'arbitraire que parce que le système de signes est constitué par des différences, non par le plein des termes. Les éléments de la signification fonctionnent non par la force compacte de noyaux mais par le réseau des oppositions qui les distinguent et les rapportent les uns aux autres."[14] Despite it being relatively commonplace and being operative in systems other than language, semiological difference is not easy to grasp as an idea or in terms of the effects it wreaks on the system it constitutes. Derrida will attempt to trace these effects within writing and within philosophical texts in particular.

The differences in question are not those in the ordinary sense in which they derive from a contrast being made between two things; they are not differences between *positive* terms which arise or come to light *after* substantial elements are integrated and juxtaposed within a closed system; on the contrary, they are pure differences, differences which *constitute* the individual, arbitrarily "selected" elements as such, differences which logically precede the possibility of the *apparently* substantial elements that comprise the system.[15] As with the telephone number functioning in essence by *not* being any other element, the word is an empty space defined by its boundaries from other empty, bordered spaces—holes in a net as

Saussure's memorable analogy puts it. Consequently, linguistic meaning is a function of the intervals and interstices between fundamentally dynamic, variable and volatile elements, and not the fruit of a collection of robust, substantial and self-identical entities or things in themselves. Thus, while the material or lexical components may vary from one language to the next, what constitutes the underlying principle of language is the systematic use it makes of difference. What Saussure and Derrida's reasoning on semiological difference forces us to confront is a counter-intuitive logic that compels us to accept that the apparent immediacy of signified meaning and the process by which we lay hold of meaning determined in the form of presence are nothing less than delusions arising from an inattentiveness to the conditions that make nonmotivated signification possible. And since nonmotivated signification constitutes a normative ideal of the logocentric tradition, identifiable with the form to which prose and the concept ought to attain (as we will see in Hegel, in particular), the ramifications of Derridean semiology for philosophical discourse are extensive and profound.

Nonmotivated signifiers gain their unique identities—and they must be unique lest homonyms arise—by being inscribed in a network within which they are differentiated from one another (this mutual differentiation constituting the network) and thus produce *one another* as distinct, identifiable and iterable elements. Signifiers relate to one another, or differentiate themselves from one another, "before" they can be identified in a more or less rigid fashion with their signified. The particular material composition of a nonmotivated sign serves *not* to indicate what its signified is (as is at least partially the case in a motivated sign), but rather to ensure it of a unique identity within the system; this unique, unmistakable but hollow and relative identity fulfils the minimal conditions necessary for a nonmotivated sign; namely, that it be iterable. As such, semiological difference directs us toward an understanding of language as a system in which the synchronic constitution—the system of differences between signifiers—emphasises the diachronic fluctuation to which words and meaning are subject. Derrida effectively attempts to overcome any division between the synchronic differential system and the diachronic fluctuation in his notion of *différance*, the differential system being inscribed within a perpetual deferring of fixed or robust signifieds.[16]

The effects of semiological difference are not restricted to the formal constitution of signifiers; on the contrary, they reach into the constitution and genesis of conceptual meaning. As Derrida puts it, "ce principe de la différence, comme condition de la signification, affecte la *totalité du signe*, c'est-à-dire à la fois la face du signifié et la face du signifiant."[17] Since the signifier gains its identity from its differentiation from other signs, the conceptual signified, as Derrida puts it, "n'est jamais présent en lui-même, dans une présence suffisante qui ne renverrait qu'à lui-même".[18] A signified attains its sense not simply by being attached to a worldly object (a referent) or a universal sense, but through its differentiation from other signifieds; thus, one must know what *to teach* means to be capable of differentiating it from *to educate*, *to coach*, *to instruct*, etc. To take an example close to deconstruction's specific concerns, philosophemes, such as "idea" (*eidos*, *idée*, *Idee*, etc.) or "imagination" (*imagination*, *Einbildungskraft*, *Phantasie*, etc.), are less the substantial concepts whose constancy or essence survives or remains unaffected by their being "inserted" within different philosophical systems, than they are relative "entities" whose meaning or various senses are subject to the configuration of the conceptual and disciplinary field, or the particular philosophical system in which they are enmeshed.

The more abstract a concept is, or, in other words, the more it is distanced from referring to an identifiable empirical referent or object, the greater is its reliance on the differential relations of *langue* for its meaning; inversely, one could say that semiological difference renders possible abstract conceptuality. Equating the play of differences with the deferral of absolute loci of independent meaning, Derrida describes *différance*, with certain caveats, as the condition of the possibility of conceptuality: "Un tel jeu, la différance, n'est plus alors simplement un concept mais la possibilité de la conceptualité, du procès et du système conceptuels en général".[19] The credence that logocentric philosophies have placed in a supposedly immutable, reproducible, identical signified is contravened by a system whose conditions of possibility must be understood in terms of differences and relations between non-positive elements rather than in terms of independent, positive, and clear and distinct entities. And since *the play of differences* constitutes the imperfect, unstable and dynamic mode of mediation between signifier and signified, it is doubtful whether one can rigorously distinguish between the signifier and signified as operating at

independent levels; the nonmotivated status of the signifier, or the fact that the signified appears utterly unrelated to the signified, is deceptive to the extent that it suggest the independence of signified meaning from the signifier or the system that makes it possible. Being founded on a relation to alterity, to dynamic configurations, signified conceptual meaning is amenable to alteration, upheaval, and perhaps, to imaginative endeavours to shape it otherwise.

To the mediating system of differences to which the arbitrary or nonmotivated signifier or word must be referred for its systematic identity and conventional meaning, Saussure gives the name of *langue*. *Langue* is not simply this or that language, taken as a whole, which gives to words their meanings; it accounts rather for the extraordinary manner in which each and every language is constructed by the pure differences that enable a nonmotivated signifier to maintain a more or less stable identity and be affixed to a signified. Saussure differentiates *langue* from *parole*, which should be understood not simply as the events of speech in opposition to those of writing, but as the instances of use of the system of *langue*'s elements in general in opposition to the system itself. From a Derridean perspective, the written or spoken utterances or *énoncés* of a language as a whole constitute *parole*. In a sense, neither *langue* nor *parole* exists independently of the other: on the one hand, *langue* is embedded, or at least exists nowhere other than in the use of language; it is nowhere written down, perfectly abstracted or entirely set out elsewhere (however much we may attempt to achieve this in dictionaries or other works that, in seeking to explicate a particular *langue*, themselves avail of it simultaneously); on the other hand, every instance of *parole* requires the *langue* of which it represents but a fragment and but one of its minute potentialities, in order to be meaningful or to be other than mere sounds or lines on a page. *Langue* must in this sense be considered a radical alterity to every instance of *parole*; for even if the generation of any meaningful utterance will have necessitated recourse to *langue*, the instance of *parole* is unaccompanied by the code in its "entirety" that is necessary in order to decipher it. As a system that is neither simply absent nor present to the utterance, or as a code that exceeds the particular elements of the utterance while constituting it as meaningful, *langue* is the nonpresence to which each and every utterance and word, sentence and syntagm must be referred for its sense. In a sense, this recourse to a system that exceeds any given utterance or piece of text is the condition of meaning's "objectivity" or communal

accessibility but also of its volatility: of its "objectivity" since it is as a system independent of this or that user that (a) language provides a potentially universal communicational system; and of its volatility for, as defined by differential relations subject to shifts rather than by self-present entities, the signs within *langue* are defined by what they are not, or by their negative relations with other signs. Since *langue* is structured so as to make nonmotivated signification possible—to function in the absence of a mimetic or figurative relation to its signified—it cannot be determined as laying bare "the" ontological structure of the world.

Langue proves to be elusive or aloof, and to exceed the individual user, for another reason. As a system constituted by differences that precede and constitute elements, *langue* is a form of mediation between *parole* or the text and its signified that tends to conceal itself. Since, in deciphering a word, we neither necessarily consciously recognise its sense *by its differences* from other signifiers nor actively contrast its sense with other (related signifieds), the play of differences rarely if ever reveals itself *as such* in the signifying operation. The effective use of language demands only that the user have some unconscious sense of these synchronic differences constituting the meaning of the elements in *langue*; we need neither a theoretical apprehension of semiological difference in order to speak a language, nor strictly speaking, be aware of the diachronic fluctuations of signifiers and signifieds in the history of a language. As such, the play of differences in *langue* eludes analyses that confine themselves to the conscious experience or experiential accounts of the signifying operation. Failing to recognise the mediating role played by *langue* in nonmotivated signification leads to analyses in which signified meaning is assumed to be brought to presence by a passive signifier and without any *detour* to the differential conventionality of *langue*. Saussure's insight into the differential constitution of *langue* has the effect of fracturing the logocentric tendency to determine the signified as an object entirely mastered by the self-present speaking subject.[20]

Derrida's semiology, then, might be understood as fusing Saussurean insights into nonmotivated signification, semiological difference and *langue* with his own interest in writing, an interest sparked on the one hand, by the position writing holds with regard to the possibility of tradition and science or the preservability and ideality of meaning,[21] and on the other, by the systematic denigration of writing in the western

philosophical tradition.[22] Indeed, Derrida wished to bring to light that Saussure's demonstration of semiological difference, beyond its centrality in the formation of a modern synchronic linguistics, undermines logocentric and phonocentric tendencies in western thought. But this would also require departing from an inherent phonocentrism latent within Saussure that, for Derrida, was radically contradicted by his insights into difference—and not sound—being the essential condition of nonmotivated signification's possibility. Recognising that it is not the self-presence of the voice that makes nonmotivated signification possible, and that language's actual conditions of possibility render the meaning it produces inherently unstable, dynamic and deconstructible brings into question western thought's privileging of the logos, the voice and the self-presence of meaning. Inversely, these insights demonstrate logocentrism and phonocentrism to depend upon a repression of semiological difference and its effects upon the meaning created in texts. It may be that the logocentric exclusion of imagination from the field of the nonmotivated conceptual sign is closely related to this repression.

Treating the texts of philosophy as a resource that can contribute to the undoing of their own logic and as furnishing possibilities contrary to their canonical interpretation, as Derrida has done, was possible only on the basis of a reconception of textuality and writing. Beyond the immediate concerns of structuralist semiology, Derrida would bring advances in the understanding of the sign, language and writing to bear on critical questions of the hermeneutics of philosophical interpretation. A dialectic between Derrida's theory of writing and his practice of reading emerged on account of him reading, for example, a *text* by Rousseau on the nature and origin of *language*. What would come to light in many of these deconstructive readings of writings on language was the disparity between the author or philosopher's explicit theoretical assertions on language and the way in which language would actually function within his or her text.

Prior to addressing certain of Derrida's readings in which such discrepancies arise, let us first enquire into his subversion and reorganisation of the hierarchical opposition of speech/writing. Spoken language may be historically prior to the empirical origin of writing; however, since writing is a necessary possibility of any spoken system of signs, since, that is, any form of spoken language necessarily

implies the possibility of a system of writing functioning in the absence of the immediate presence of interlocutors, it is writing that is the logical precondition of speech. Rather than spoken language providing the key to the nature and possibility of linguistic functioning, meaning and thought, Derrida recognised that to explain the possibility of nonmotivated linguistic signification, one would have to account for how signification could be possible in the form of the written text, the text from which the presence and supervision of an author had withdrawn. In the operation of signification, in the movement from signifier to signified and from text to meaning, what the signifier or text must immediately be referred to is not authorial intentionality as the guarantor of its meaning; rather, one must and indeed does in the first instance refer the text to the language, and more specifically, to the system of *langue* that makes linguistic signification possible. *Langue* is not simply this or that language which gives to words its meanings; it is the extraordinary means by which a fundamentally nonmotivated mode of signification can operate. One must refer any spoken utterance *or* piece of writing to *langue*, that is, to the play of semiological differences between signifiers by which linguistic signification, as a *nonmotivated* movement from signifier to signified, is possible.

What makes an utterance meaningful is not the fact that it has been uttered by *someone*, but that it makes sense according to the *langue*, or can be accredited with sense in and through the conscious interpretation effected through consulting *langue* or the practically unconscious, passive and unnoticed operation that is no less dependent on the givenness of meaning in *langue*. It is writing that demonstrates this necessity most clearly, since it is the possibility of the signifying operation being *more or less* preserved in the absence of the intentionality of this or that particular conscious subject; but it is in fact equally relevant to spoken utterances. I may ask a speaker or a writer to clarify what they have said, but what has been said (*l'énoncé*) is intelligible strictly speaking only because *anyone* could have said it. In order for what I say to be intelligible to others and in the first place to myself, it must be possible to decipher it according to a code, a play of semiological differences as Saussure tells us, that necessarily exceeds any single individual language user. It is in this sense that Derrida speaks of the "écriture dans la parole",[23] the recourse to *langue* that is a necessary component of any—written or spoken—linguistic operation of signification.

This recourse to the nonpresence of *langue* is for Derrida at once the condition for the possibility of the text meaning *something* and the condition for the *im*possibility of it meaning *one, decidable* thing. It is language or *langue* that will have decided or failed to decide, once and for all, the meaning of a text, *langue* that will forever have left it *en différance*, which is to say open to imagination or amenable to being deconstructed. Since the referral to *langue* is the referral to a radical nonpresence, to a system of meanings that exceeds any given individual utterance, and that functions on the basis of pure, unstable differential relations, deciphering meaning is not the ideal reproduction of meaning it is often supposed to be. Differing from itself because it is composed from a system in which signifiers attain their identity and meaning through interrelations and contrasts, the text is such that it defers any definitive signification or ultimate interpretation. It is in this sense that textual meaning is constituted—or forever remains unconstituted—by *différance*, in this sense that every utterance, which is necessarily iterable yet not simply ideally reproducible, is inscribed en *différance*. The text neither conceals nor manifests an already constituted univocal signified merely awaiting its apprehension; in fact, the notion of the pure autonomous signified is based on the failure to attend to *langue* as the imperfect mediation between signifier and signified, as the interminable movement from a nonmotivated signifier to a signified that can only be articulated in and refined by recourse to yet more signifier/signified relations. *Langue* is the condition of the possibility of relating the signifier and signified, but also the condition of impossibility of an absolute self-identity of signifier and signified, of a signified being grasped in isolation from its signifier, from difference and from the conceptual and oppositional network in which it assumes its status as meaningful. In attempting to relate a nonmotivated linguistic signifier to a signified, and in attempting to repair the dislocation by which signs are what they are (signifiers, words, images, and so on) *and* what they are not (signifieds, referents), one has recourse to *langue* as a system that is irreducible to the form of presence. Understood in terms of the *langue* by which it is capable of signifying, and thus through a system of differences both at the level of the signifier and the signified, the notion of the text comprehends the relation between its signifying operation and its signified as haunted by indeterminacy, and thus as deconstructible. Understood as perennially deconstructible, the text becomes the material and resource not simply of memory or

recollection in which an ideal, pre-existing meaning would be recovered, but of imagination and interpretation in which the text is given to be re-read.

A central consequence of Derrida's arguments is that it is not only writing that is subject to distortions in meaning, as has been argued from Plato's *Phaedrus* to Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale*; on the contrary, the undecidability or absence of absolutely determinable meaning is the condition of all language. And it is this condition of language to which philosophers operating within a logocentric tradition have tended to remain blind. Consequently, in contradistinction to the logocentric and Platonist notion that the written *énoncé* is alone haunted by the nonpresence of the author, the conditions for the possibility of any linguistic meaning logically require (the possibility of) the nonpresence of the speaker. In speaking, even in the mute soliloquy that philosophers from Socrates to Husserl[24] have invested so much faith, a relation to the other or nonpresence of a language and a *langue* is necessary for signs to be intelligible.

Recognising *langue* to determine or fail to determine the meaning of a text, deconstructive reading debunks presuppositions underlying the metaphysics of meaning and interpretation, by which the operation of signification is assumed to be controlled and supervised by an extra- or supra-textual authority.[25] Deconstruction's undoing of the conventions of interpretation by which the meaning of a text is assumed to lie outside it in a point of (potential) presence—in an *hors-texte*, in the author, in truth, in an interpretation (re)productive of its signified—opens texts up to interpretations covered over by logocentric bias; thus does deconstructive reading aim to reopen the tradition to itself, making of it a fund of overlooked potentialities which themselves provide alternatives to the customary manner in which the tradition has constituted and determined itself. In interpreting a text without presuming to have foreknowledge of the author's intentionality, in fastening upon a moment of semantic undecidability covered over by a hasty interpretation or translation, in revealing the diverse and mutually contradictory interpretations to which a text lends itself, the text can be re-read outside of certain logocentric delimitations of meaning. It is not by chance, then, but rather on account of a radical reinterpretation of the conditions of the possibility of meaning, that Derrida's readings of classical philosophical texts have produced hitherto inconceivable readings, which in consequence, have

warranted his interpretations being described—for better or worse—as imaginative, in the revealingly pejorative or complimentary senses the word has to offer.

If the notion of imagination is relevant to Derrida's mode of reading, it is because of the plurality and dissemination of possible meanings he shows texts to generate. In the absence of a governing point of transcendental exteriority of the text, deconstructive reading often throws up plural and antagonistic interpretations of a text, a plurality that can include hitherto veiled-over potentialities that furnish the basis for imaginative new developments. As such, deconstruction can be construed as the experience of the dynamism and instability of meaning, not as a lamentable loss of presence, but rather as a stimulus to imagination and as the self-replenishing nature of an open tradition as its resource. The dynamism of meaning brought to the fore in Derrida's reading of texts suggests that the *langue* that gives to the text its meaning is a resource of imagination, and the text a fund of potentialities that may elude or exceed the author's conscious apprehension of it, but that remains amenable to subsequent readers, and thus, to subsequent authors. Derrida can be construed as attempting to open the text up to imaginative potentialities, to a plurality of possible senses that would dethrone the author from a position of omniscience with regard to the signified content of "his" or "her" text: the language or *langue* of a text thought to have decided the meaning of a text in fact renders it undecidable, ambiguous, and indeterminate. In a curious and paradoxical formulation, the concept of imagination is rejuvenated by the bracketing of the author as the simple form of originary self-presence; this is not to say, then, that the author is done away with purely and simply, but it is to overthrow the idea of the author as the authority of first and last resort in the meaning of the text, and to reread texts as being to given to meaning by being constituted—or by failing to be entirely constituted—in the terms of the *langue.* A residue of undecidability resists every attempt to pin the text down to a final resolute meaning, which is at once to conceive of the infinite deferral of the statement of the text's logos or, perhaps, the invitation provided by the emptying of the horizon of the logos to the infinite potentialities of imagination. Conceiving of a textual imagination on this basis does not necessarily dispatch the concept of imagination into the oblivion of conceiving of an imagination that belongs to no-one and everyone, a potential objection to which I will later return. The textual imagination implied by Derrida's work is a form of imagination relevant to the reader's interpretation of a

text producing possibilities which may or may not accord with an originary, authorial intention; more precisely, it is to conceive of imagination on the basis of dynamic relation between the text and its *langue*. As such, it displaces the conception of imagination as a subjective interiority or a private inner sanctum in which the text or work originated.[26]

Derrida's mode of reading philosophical texts was also profoundly influenced not only by insight into the nature and possibility of linguistic signification and writing but also by a rejection of the philosophical marginalisation of the rhetorical, tropic and etymological facets of its conceptuality. Derrida questioned logocentrism by focusing on philosophical texts' imagery and metaphors (the sun, *phora*), on their ambivalent and polysemantic terms (*Aufhebung*, *Khora*, *pharmakon*), in short on textual devices, elements or features that could be said to originate in a textual imagination. In "La mythologie blanche: La métaphore dans le texte philosophique",[27] Derrida formalised what had been implicit in his mode of reading: the project of speculating on the intertextual network of enduring philosophical metaphors that have shaped its conceptuality, secretly organised its discourse and that amount to a resource of familiar philosophical meanings which in part accounts for the historical coherence, longevity and continuity of metaphysical thinking. By focusing on so-called literary and textual, rhetorical and poetical features of the philosophical text logocentrically deemed to be, at best, superfluous flourishes or ornamental supplements and, at worst, threats to the ideality of its meaning, deconstruction assumed a form bearing a resemblance to literary or aesthetic criticism. What literary theorists had intuitively known all along with regard to the impossibility of reducing texts to unitary, decidable meanings was, for Derrida, precisely what philosophers had failed to recognise within their own texts. The philosophical texts Derrida would deconstruct were precisely those that had remained blind to the textual labour of an imagination at work in them, an imagination generative of the tropes it required to signify abstract supersensible meanings. This blindness related to philosophy's inability to recognise what it had designated by the name of rhetoric or sophistry, and what had thereby been relegated to the status of superfluous additions to the text, to be central to the construction of its supposedly pure logical and argumentative core. As Derrida encapsulated the significance of the tropic generation of meaning for the philosophical text's pretensions to a pure

argumentative structure existing independently of the complexities of signification: "La métaphoricité est la logique de la contamination and la contamination de la logique"[28].

In this vein, Derrida brought our attention to the fact that philosophers, even in the course of theoretically asserting the primacy of nonmotivated linguistic signification over motivated (symbolic, metaphorical) modes of signification, would not preclude themselves from having recourse to metaphorical modes of expression. Indeed, the play of differences whereby the text and its *langue* would condemn the text to undecidability, or the instability of conceptual meaning, and the rhetorical effects compromising the supposed autonomy of conceptual discourse, would all figure in Derrida's early readings. These features are apparent in readings Derrida gives of Hegel's semiology and Plato's *pharmakon*, of which I now give the most cursory readings in turn.

In "Le Puits et la pyramide: Introduction à la sémiologie de Hegel",[29] Derrida fastens on the contradiction between, on the one hand, the formal distinction Hegel makes between the nonmotivated sign and the symbol (the Egyptian pyramids being the ultimate symbolic work of art for Hegel); and, on the other hand, Hegel's recourse to the symbol of the pyramid in his attempt to describe the essence of relation between signifier and signified in the nonmotivated; he describes the sign as a pyramid, as a tomb into which a foreign soul (meaning) has been placed. Between Hegel's theoretical assertion and his rhetorical use of the symbol, a manifest contradiction appears. As such, the so-called rhetorical stratum of a text re-emerges within the Derridean reading not as the dispensable supplement to proper, literal, intended meaning but as figuring within the logic—or illogicality—of the text. Ultimately, Derrida points out in such readings that philosophers' use of language could never live up to the purity, univocality or decidability they ascribe to meaning when theorising upon it. Such a tortuous and contorted case as that of Hegel's use of "pyramid" to signify now the symbolic and now the nonmotivated demonstrates, for Derrida, that a theory and practice of reading more reflective of signification as it actually operates and is set to work in philosophical texts is urgently required.

Another example in which the play of meaning proves to have consequences at the argumentative or discursive level of the text is to be found in Derrida's interpretation of the *pharmakon* in Plato's *Phaedrus*. This term, replete with varying metaphorical elements, and within which an overwhelming play of different senses is at work (poison, remedy, scapegoat), Derrida demonstrates to be not a metaphorical ornament serving to illustrate an idea graphically, but rather a term in which the contradictions, subtleties and nuances of Plato's position on writing are encapsulated. The classical interpretation of Plato's understanding of writing tended to pass over such apparent metaphors or cases of entangled meaning; this was no doubt in part because *pharmakon* had been translated now as "remedy" and now as "poison". Derrida demonstrates the *pharmakon* to manifest the discrepancy between Plato's use of writing (in which he relies on the slippages in sense between one occurrence of *pharmakon* and the next) and his theoretical conception of meaning that ascribes all such deleterious effects befalling univocal self-present meaning to writing. Derrida's response is in effect to recognise that the nature of linguistic meaning, such as it is constituted by the system of *langue*, is given to self-contradictory meanings in both speech and writing; there is no refuge—either in speech, or in a thinking supposedly anterior to its expression in language—from such forms of contamination affecting conceptual meaning. Long before Hegel took advantage of plural and antagonistic meanings in certain words—in the *Aufhebung* most notably[30]—that he deemed the German language to have fortuitously bestowed for the purposes of speculative philosophy, Plato had allowed himself recourse to words whose knotted senses might facilitate the expression of his understanding of writing. In describing writing as a *pharmakon*, Plato happens upon a nucleus of several contradictory meanings that allows him to hedge his bets on writing, on what he judged to be a dangerous but practically indispensable supplement to speech. In this case, a metaphor's plural and disseminated senses prove to be critical to Plato maintaining an equivocal but "consistent" or consistently equivocal philosophical judgement of writing. It *is* a *pharmakon*, which is to say, good or bad, good and bad, a potential good that can go bad, and a malevolent threat that can be rescued from its worst excesses; for which reason, it must be theoretically disparaged (*pharmakon* can also be construed in the sense of "scapegoat") yet, so long as one recognises this and supervises it, the philosopher at least can avail of it. Rather than the dynamism of the *pharmakon* being reducible to the accident of a particular language that can be reduced in such a way as

to restore to the text a coherent and univocal sense, Derrida demonstrates it to both to account for, and contaminate, the authority of Plato's discursive logic. Plato had a vested interest in remaining blind to the role played by a polysemantic metaphor within the logic of his own discourse not only because the *pharmakon* covered over his sleight of hand, his prevarication, his double-gesture of shunning and retaining writing, but because he wanted to attribute the effects of such a polysemantic term solely to writing rather than to language as a whole, thereby preserving the self-presence of meaning in speech.

Derrida's mode of reading philosophical works would imply a form of imagination operating at a textual level within them, an imagination that manifests itself in the manner in which the linguistic resources of the text are set to work. Indeed, deconstruction might itself be said to constitute a textual mode of imagination orienting itself not merely to philosophical meaning such as it is constituted contemporaneously, but insofar as it is a product of an immense textual tradition; for deconstruction's return to the past in genealogical assessments of philosophical texts and conceptuality bears comparison with the initial orientation in a movement of imagination ultimately oriented toward the future. In the deconstructive strategies of relating a text to its *langue*, of examining it as a play between *parole* and *langue,* a form of imagination might be said to be operative given that it seeks to uncover hidden levers (*mochlos*) capable of reconfiguring the text.

But such a notion of imagination could neither be located within a self-presence of an authorial intention, nor restricted to the visual images or the mimetic works of art that are the traditional preserve of imagination. The textual imagination as a notion to which Derrida's mode of reading gives rise is less the source or the inner studio within the author to which interpretation must return, than it is the potentialities arising from the text, which can include those anticipated by the author as well as those that have passed by undetected, and that remain to be identified and elaborated by the reader.

However, while Derrida's work may suggest the concept of a textual imagination in the broad outline I have given, it does so without affording us a specific theory of imagination, and without having specified how we might think an

imagination that, as he specifically says of the concept of *différance*, is not a source or origin lying within the self-presence or consciousness of an author, and that is to be conceived as operating without a mimetic, figurative relation between signifier and signified.[31] As such, developing the concept of a textual imagination would necessitate a radical deconstruction of the concept of imagination to complement the radical overhaul that our conception of language has undergone since the linguistic turn generally, and more recently and specifically, since Derridean grammatology.

But the sense of a textual imagination must also be pursued within a broader context in which deconstruction arose; for Derrida's work remains unfathomable unless it is understood as being a response to the epoch in which he understands contemporary philosophy to be operating. This age is for Derrida unique in the demands it places upon philosophy. These demands relate to the need to create and develop—and perhaps imagine—a beyond to metaphysics. What I am calling the textual imagination of deconstruction, evident in the "recollection" of the tradition's overlooked possibilities and in the critical work that enables it to rewrite itself, is in part a response to the need to imagine a beyond to metaphysics from within its very *clôture*. It is to this third form in which a potential relation between deconstruction and imagination can be discerned that I now turn.

(iii) Third Affinity: The Productive Negativity Common to Imagination and Deconstruction: Imagining in the Texts of Metaphysics a Beyond to Metaphysics

Imagination appears to be inscribed within the operation, faith and aims of deconstruction inasmuch as its practice of reinterpreting western texts responds to a perceived need for a radically altered—nonlogocentric—future to that which Derrida perceives as by no means having been banished to the past. A third and final manner in which deconstruction might be related to imagination can be discerned, if we recognise the broader task that Derrida gives himself of generating a mode of thinking that exceeds the closure, limits and determinations of logocentric thought. Derrida's work has taken the form of a sustained critical engagement with the texts of the western tradition that seeks to create alternative modes of thinking to logocentrism. Central to deconstruction is the paradoxical notion that a "return" to the past might prove productive, or, in other words, that the ostensibly negative work apparent in a variety of critical strategies will, in the end, turn out to have been creative. Any attempt to come to terms with deconstruction, it appears to me, entails reflection on such paradoxes. It may be that similar paradoxical structures relating to the productivity of a certain negativity directed toward the past as given, inherited or recollected inhere within and organise the movement of imagination. For imagination (particularly when understood according to the distinction of the reproductive and productive imagination) appears to be founded on a similar idea, whereby reconceiving the past (what is given in memory) is critical to the creation of original representations and models in whose image the future can be refashioned. As such, working through a paradox that appears to inhabit both imagination and deconstruction might shed light on and disclose an inner mechanism fundamental to both.

To be sure, to speak of "imagining" in the sense of deconstruction imagining a future other to the logocentric past repeating itself is to speak of imagination beyond the narrow sense—beyond, let us say, Husserl's *phenomenological* imagination, which, for the purposes of attaining a rigorously empirical determination of imagination, restricts its field to intentional structures and the psychological capacity

to (re)produce visual images or to "see" in a material external image something other than the material support of the work (*Bildbewusstein*). Nonetheless, as I will attempt to demonstrate, even such a narrow conception of imagination contains the idea of a certain negativity that renders it structurally comparable to deconstructive negativity. Both the notion of the past furnishing the material for conceiving of the possibilities of the future, and of a certain negativity directed toward what is given to perception or in intuition, have been central to the conceptualisation of imagination. It is by virtue of imagination's capacity to draw images from memory and reconstruct them such that they do not—yet—refer to an existing referent that the imagination has been conceived as being intimately related to the future. Moreover, numerous philosophers' attempts to differentiate between the reproductive and productive imagination have entailed recourse to the latter's capacity to negate the memory-image, to suspend its reference to a prior experience, thus liberating it such that it can signify new, non-existent, fictional, possible referents. And insofar as imagination is integral to the possibility of seeing a figurative picture as representational or as such, or to entertaining such a picture as fictional, it entails a certain mode of negating (suspending, deferring, nullifying, neutralising) empirical reality, "ordinary" perception or the reality of the object or referent represented, signified or intended; it entails a negation of the material support of the painting, a suspension of perception such as it "ordinarily" receives what is perceived, in order that it can see an image *as* something other than itself. Imagination, as will become apparent, introduces a negative moment that is central to the possibility of representation, of creativity or originality, and to conceiving of alternative future possibilities.

To speak of deconstruction as a mode of imagination is to speak of the imagination in a conventional sense to the extent that it entails a negativity that reworks the past with a view to devising an alternative future. It is to speak of imagination as an act that projects into the future in and through a re-engagement with the past, of a collective or cultural memory as providing the material upon which imagination works in generating the hitherto unexperienced or the original—a value central to the notion of imagination. This manner of returning to the past so as to reformulate the future, of intensifying one's engagement with the texts of the tradition is the more commonsensical than paradoxical notion upon which deconstruction founds the possibility of thinking outside of the strictures of metaphysical thought.

The crucial point at which deconstruction and imagination converge lies in the past becoming a resource from which something entirely other to it can unfold in and through a labour of negativity. In exploring the negativity that is integral to the name of deconstruction, it will be necessary to recognise that it is neither the dialectical negativity of the Hegelian *Aufhebung* nor of transcendental critique; it is critical negativity directed toward the repressions or suppressions that Derrida believes to have underpinned the metaphysical project. As seen in the previous forms of affinity, this suppression has extended to the concept of imagination itself, to elements (the signifier, metaphor, etc.) that might be said to be products of a linguistic or textual imagination. Deconstructive negativity is directed at certain founding assumptions, hierarchical evaluations and exclusions, the overturning of which, at least according to Derrida's programme or itinerary, is to unleash new potentialities for thinking: from the texts of western metaphysics is to arise a mode and form of thinking irreducible to western metaphysics. Derrida's approach to the archive of western texts betrays an understanding of the inheritance of western metaphysics neither as the repository of cultural memory, nor—however much he understands metaphysics to perpetuate itself long after the explicit rejection of its central tenets—as a jaded or exhausted heritage; the key to overcoming metaphysics lies in liberating the suppressed potentialities of that tradition.

What I seek to demonstrate, then, on the basis of a certain—deconstructive and imaginative—negativity that interrupts the past insofar as it determines the future mechanically, "mindlessly" or unthinkingly, is that there exists a profound affinity between Derrida's *modus operandi* and the productive imagination. I will take up, firstly, the question of the imagination's relation to memory within the context of the temporality of the past/future it suggests, before attempting to recognise the role that negativity plays in imagination's relation to representation, to originality and the future. On the basis of a structure which transcends differences between various interpretations of imagination, it will, in the second place, be a question of recognising deconstruction as being founded upon the possibility of the retrieval and critique of the past enabling us to reorient ourselves in the future. On the basis of a shared relation to a temporality in which a negated or deconstructed past sets forth a new horizon of possibilities, it will be possible to suggest not only that deconstruction

might best be viewed as a mode of imagination, but that imagination in its most accomplished forms entails a deconstructive moment.

(a) Negativity in Imagination: Husserl and Hegel

To conceive of imagination as playing a role within the generation of alternatives to logocentric patterns of thought is to emphasise a certain facet of the concept of imagination; it is to lay stress on imagination not simply as the creation of *fictional* or *fantastical* representations but of representations or models that can potentially be realised in the future. The fictional and "futural" aspects of imagination may in fact be more closely related than they initially appear; what separates them is only the difference between what does *not* exist and what could but does not *yet* exist. If imagination is the dangerous moment within the movement of signification or truth when a representation, sign or image is created but is *indifferent* to the existence of its referent, it is also that moment when something other to existing or past reality can be envisaged, set forth or entertained. The originality of imagination is in this case its projection of what does not (yet) exist, the setting before oneself of a horizon of potentialities other to those which precondition the manner in which the future is unfolding. It is the sense of imagination as creating a horizon of possibilities as differing from what exists in actual fact that Richard Kearney has emphasised in much of his work on imagination.[32]

But what binds the *fictional* representation and the representation that might yet serve in relating to the future is their differentiation from the image as it exists or originates in memory. The distinction of productive imagination from memory or reproductive imagination is a central theme in various philosophies of imagination from Aristotle to Hume and beyond. But it is perhaps in Husserl's understanding of the modes in which the image is intended either as a memory or as a fictional image that this distinction is most clearly pronounced. In differentiating between the image that is recalled from memory, and the original, hitherto unseen image produced by imagination, Husserl characterises the latter as the "neutrality- modification" of the memory-image;[33] whereas the memory-image is posited as relating to an existent, to what *has been*, the image that is imagined is determined in such a way that it is neutral with regard to any such positing of the existence of its referent, whence the

fact that things that do not in actual fact exist (e.g. centaurs) can, in Husserl's idiom, be imagined. While centaurs may not exist, the noematic essence intended in the noetic, intentional operation of imagining centaurs does exist. What underlies Husserl's differentiation between, on the one hand, the recollection of an image, and, on the other, the imagining of an image, is the notion that while images available to imaginative consciousness will have been drawn from the storehouse of images in memory, they will in the case of imagination have been *neutralised* with regard to their reference to an earlier experience or indeed to any existing thing at all.

In a manner consistent with Husserl, and despite his analysis being more concerned with the genesis rather than the (intentional) structure of imagination, Hegel characterises the critical point at which imagination comes into its own in terms of it severing the image from its relation to memory or experience; only by the image being divorced from its original intuition as experienced and as internalised within memory can it be said to belong properly to imagination: "In so far as I now have before me the representation as *different* from the intuition, this is imagination."[34] Such a differentiation of the representation from its status as an intuition would encompass both the reproductive and productive imagination (*reproduktiv und produktiv Einbildungskraft*). However, the movement of (productive) imagination is irreducible to that of recollection or reproductive imagination, which merely restores the image, or the image's object, to presence before consciousness; the productive imagination draws images from the storehouse or pit (*Schacht*) of images or memories insofar as they are divorced from the moment of their reception, internalisation (*Erinnerung*) and storage, thereby generating representations wholly independent of their original source; the productive imagination is thus synonymous with representations before which a whole new array of potentialities that one might associate with imagination proper arises. Such potentialities emerge from its reinscription within a network of images that relate *to one another* rather than to the original experience or referent. For Hegel, the newly-disclosed potentialities include the possibility of images and signs referring to abstract universals, a seminal moment in the initiation of a process that will lead to the symbolic imagination and the sign-making imagination exteriorising intuitions such that they constitute the words of language.

The modes of the negation of perception, and of the merely reproductive capacity of memory essential to the concept of imagination under discussion, are perhaps most readily apparent in the phenomenon of reverie. Even if a perceived or recollected object triggers the flight into reverie, the intuition or conscious perceptual awareness of what is sensibly present must be negated or suspended for one's attention or desire to shift towards the representations entertained in the reverie; moreover, beyond the suspension of perceptual consciousness, no commitment need be made by the person engaged in reverie to the ontological reality of the represented object, whether the object's ontological unreality consists in its *immediate* absence or its universal non-existence. In any case, whether one takes Husserl's mode of phenomenological analysis concerned with the intentional structures that unite memory and imagination, or Hegel's phenomenology of the genesis of imagination, emphasis is laid on a necessarily negative moment in the operation of imagination; a moment in which the contents of memory are negated as such, in which the image refers no longer to a prior experience and whereby the object of the image becomes something other than material to be recollected.

But this moment of negativity is by no means restricted to the inner, psychological operation of imagination, to those instances where images drawn from memory are configured otherwise to the moment of their internalisation as memories; negativity is also evident in the operation by which a material figurative image—an external picture—becomes a representational object. Husserl's well-known analysis of *Bildbewusstein* or picture-consciousness bears out the necessity of the negativity involved in the phenomenological dissection of the moments involved in seeing what a picture represents. In the course of an analysis of picture-consciousness (*Bildbewusstein*) in which he refers to Dürer's engraving "Knight, Death and the Devil", Husserl notes: "A painting is only a likeness for a likeness-constituting consciousness, whose imaginative apperception, basing itself on a perception, first gives to its primary, perceptually apparent object the status and meaning of an image [a material, objective image]."[35] While Husserl's realist analysis is notable in particular for its debatable contention that a flesh-and-blood knight rather than the knight-as-depicted is the object intended by image-consciousness in "aesthetic contemplation", the necessity of a negative moment in which the image becomes recognisable as such is perhaps a less contentious implication of his understanding.

For in order to seize or re-cognise what is depicted in a drawing, picture or painting, one must first, if not in a temporal sense then in terms of a phenomenological analysis of the moments involved in picture-seeing, recognise the image qua image, the painting qua painting, the picture in its pictoriality, and so on. It must be recognised as being other to a non-representational object, as according with the curious logic by which a picture represents something other to itself. There is necessarily a vital moment in which the empirical materiality of the picture is negated *as such*, suspended as the object that is intended; for only on condition of re-cognising the picture not as so much oil on canvas or ink on paper but as an image can it be "seen" as something other to itself, and thus as representational in nature. In other words, the ordinary mode of perception in which sensible, material things are seen "as they are" must be negated in order for one to enter into the mode of consciousness necessary to recognising the picture in terms of its representational structure, the structure by which an image refers to what—as so much oil on canvas or ink on paper—it is in actual fact not.

To be sure, this moment does not take place as a moment in isolation or as consciously undertaken; this is perhaps less than ever the case when, in contemporary society, one dwells in the midst of an environment in which images are commonplace or superabundant rather than when, as at prior stages in human history, one would come upon images as objects capable of taking one by surprise, and when this moment of negativity might have appeared more or less as such to consciousness. Nonetheless, and however much a formalist analysis might wish from a theoretical point of view to avoid any radical distinction between the materiality of the painting and its object, at the level of analysing the process by which an image can be recognised to be representational at all, there necessarily exists a moment in the recognition of a representation in which the materiality of the image is seen as something other to itself. The painting, print or drawing must be recognised as operating according to the construct of a sign by which its physical attributes exceed themselves, transcend what would "ordinarily" be given to mere perception or non-pictorial consciousness. Such negativity at the heart of the representation as a mode of empirical transcendence is integral to imagination. If as Kant says in the *Critique of Judgement*, imagination is a power that creates a second nature out of the material supplied to it by actual nature,[36] it is only in virtue of it having negated the materiality

of nature—*geistlos Natur*, as Hegel would say—in the process of transforming it into the materiality of a sign (signifying something other than itself).[37]

Such negativity would be evident not only as a formal moment in the imagination related to recognising what is represented in a picture, but would be evident—as abstracted from such a mimetic representation—in the nonmotivated sign. Beyond the picture operating by means of a mimetic resemblance, negativity might be said to be operative in the nonmotivated sign by which a word (as a mere sound or an iterable content of intuition) is negated as such and referred to its signified; or indeed, in a more complex formulation but perhaps more accurate fashion, is referred to the conventional system of *langue* by which the signifier acquires both its status as a sign and the possibility of being attributed with a signified. I will explore this possibility at a later stage.

Negativity could, furthermore, be ascribed to the imagination insofar as it is attributed with the generation of specifically *original* works of art or the productive transgression of existing paradigms; the negativity of imagination would, under such a hypothesis that is in keeping with the manner in which we speak of the *imaginative* work of art and by which we mean something other than its *representational* capacities, be the suspension of existing norms and conventions. Even if it does not take place as a specific, discernible moment in the artist's consciousness, that is, even if he or she does not as a matter of course set out to destroy or even surpass tradition, what is achieved or effected by the truly original or ground-breaking work of art or text entails a transgression of existing norms. This form of the negativity of imagination, distinguishable from the semiological negativity by which the artwork transcends its materiality so as to be representational, might be understood in terms of the transgression of existing traditions, the overhaul of existing paradigms, the reinvention of predominating *Weltanschauungen*. An analysis of such a form of creative or productive negativity, which I cannot perform here but which will be implicit in recognising the negativity of deconstruction, would perhaps bring to light that productive negativity is the defining thread by which the broad and disparate array of senses and uses of "imagination" and its cognates can be brought together. But what remains of immediate relevance is that, in conventional, psychological understandings of imagination, negativity appears if not always in name then

implicitly in the understanding of the operation of imagination, and is integral to the manner in which the past is brought to bear on the future unfolding otherwise than as a mere iteration of what has gone before.

We have seen that the productive negativity of imagination is to be observed in the representation's indifference to the actuality of its referent's existence (a negation of ontological reality that opens up the fictional in accordance with Husserl's concept of neutrality-modification); in the negation of the memory-image such that it frees itself to become a potential sign and the index of more than a past, unique experience (Hegel); in the suspension of perception or of the materiality of the picture by which its pictorial passage from representation to represented can be retraced; and in the negation of the past as it is given in productive imagination. To the "futural" creativity and representational capacity of imagination understood in its opposition to memory is essential, then, a moment that is, strictly speaking, destructive. A stage is required in which what is merely given to or reproduced for consciousness is denied in the immanence of its presentation, and is imagined otherwise. It is only in virtue of the work of dismantling performed on the past as recollected that the future can be represented otherwise than as a repetition of the past. Insofar as the act, instance or event of imagination entails a certain negativity or violence, imagination might itself be said to entail a certain deconstructive effect upon what is given. In recognising this broadly deconstructive moment in imagination, the equivalent negative moment in the operation of deconstruction comes into view, the "dialectical moment" upon which Derrida appears to stake the possibility of the deconstructive enterprise amounting to a productive and imaginative operation capable of devising alternative potentialities to those of logocentrism.

(b) Negativity in Deconstruction: Placing Concepts *Sous rature*

Negativity is central to grasping the manner in which the concept of imagination relates both to the retrieval of the past and to the transformation that the past-as-recollected undergoes by which it becomes a resource available to reconstituting the future. Derrida's practice of "simultaneous" reading as writing and writing as reading suggests that he presupposes the archive of inherited western texts to be a resource of imagination, of an imagination charged with responding to the spectre of a

metaphysical past that continues to maintain its grip on the future of the west. The temporality of deconstruction, by which it reflexively retreats into the inherited texts of the western tradition so as to venture forth into a future imagined otherwise, is perhaps already outlined—however vaguely or inchoately—in the concept of imagination.

To be sure, such a form of imagination is to be understood not at the level of the individual psyche but at that of a cultural and textual phenomenon or strategy. The personal storehouse of images is not the resource with which deconstruction engages; on the contrary, it draws from its critique of the texts that form the collective inheritance, archive and memory of western thought. While some might regard the use of imagination in the expressions that ascribe imagination to an age, epoch or a people (as in the "classical imagination" or "*l'imaginaire classique*") as merely metaphorical, such expressions uncover and respect a fundamental truth: that the imagining subject does not exist within a historical vacuum, independently of the representational systems that enable him or her to imagine, or outside of the conventionality of meaning in general. In any case, imagination might be said to manifest itself in the operation of deconstruction insofar as its textual reflexivity—its folding back upon the works of western thought and literature—bears resemblance to the movement from the reproductive to the productive imagination, from recollection to a creativity that exceeds what is merely given or iterated. The ostentatiously negative epithet applied to Derrida's project might be said to capture the negativity that functions in a similar way to the negativity we have seen to be central to grasping the paradox inhering within the productive imagination. For deconstruction shares with imagination the notion of a retrieval of the past (of memory or inherited texts), and of the necessity of a negative action taken upon this past as supposedly *given* (as merely iterated and reproduced), with a view to producing alternative future possibilities. The various elements in question—tradition, the tradition of critique, the negativity of critique as it relates to the future (*l'à-venir*), the proximity of critique to an experience of otherness—are all assembled in the following remark Derrida makes with regard to his relation to the European and Enlightenment heritage:

> Ce que j'appelle "déconstruction", même quand c'est dirigé contre quelque chose de l'Europe, c'est européen, c'est un produit, un rapport à soi de l'Europe comme expérience de

l'altérité radicale. Depuis l'époque des Lumières, l'Europe s'autocritique en permanence, et dans cet héritage perfectible il y a une chance d'avenir. Du moins voudrais-je l'espérer, et c'est ce qui nourrit mon indignation devant des discours qui condamnent l'Europe définitivement comme si elle n'était que le lieu de ses crimes.[38]

The potential rapport between deconstruction and imagination can be explored by analysing the manner in which deconstructive reading forges at once a relation to the past and to the future: to the past as retained in the texts comprising the tradition yet which is and can be re-produced differently, and to the future as a horizon of possibilities irreducible to that of our expectations. In an epoch which Derrida and many others in the Continental philosophical tradition understand to remain delimited by the perpetuation of undetected metaphysical modes of thinking, what is central to the tradition being opened up to a broadened horizon of possibilities is the work of critique. I attempt firstly to sketch, from the perspective of the demand that the closure of metaphysics places on this epoch, Derrida's understanding of the past tradition as it bears on the future, before, secondly, focusing more directly on the negativity integral to the deconstructive project as the revival of suppressed or marginalised elements. Elements drawn from the tradition, when deconstructed, are to reinvent the tradition. In the light of this productivity, it may be possible to recognise the manner in which a certain negative moment not dissimilar to that integral to imagination is evident in deconstruction as a creative operation.

Exploring deconstruction as a mode of imagination becomes a more obvious or tenable point of entry into Derrida's work in the light of the role played by the theme of the *à-venir* in his later work. Deconstruction was for good reason seen to be uncommonly preoccupied with western philosophy's past; but as emerged in the later, increasingly politicised and ethical writings, Derrida was eager to stress that deconstruction amounts to nothing if it is not ultimately oriented toward the future or, as he was wont to say, toward *l'à-venir* or an *autre temps*.[39] Notably, he distinguished between the manner in which the future stands before us either as contained and appropriated within a horizon of expectations or as admitting of the advent of something *tout autre*. This distinction is crystallised in such notions as *l'événement* (the singular, unforeseeable, indeterminable occasion in which the absolutely other announces itself or *advient*) and *invention* as it appears in the essays of *Psyché: Inventions de l'autre*, the *invention de l'autre* including the sense of the invention of a

future *tout autre*. Derrida has made the rapprochement between his notion of *invention* and imagination explicit:

> Thus we have only now, whether wittingly or not, broached a question one might entitle, albeit only in French "l'invention d'un temps", or "temps et invention" or again, "le temps pour l'invention". If one takes *invention* to be a discovery of truth or the arrival (the making—or letting—come, as event) of what is not, of what is not yet, then in each case the word engages something one may name *imagination*.[40]

Where deconstruction and imagination intersect, for Derrida, lies in their both being relevant to *laisser venir l'événement*, to an invitation extended to the coming of the irreducibly other in the future. Letting the event come is not the passivity or desperation of waiting for an ill-defined something, but the labour of deconstruction, the work of preparing the conditions in which something entirely incommensurable with the past can emerge and be recognised as such. Derrida has, in the context of writing on John Sallis's work on the imagination, brought into relation the sense of the productive imagination (the opposition of productive/reproductive having conditioned both the Kantian and Hegelian concepts of imagination, as he reminds us in "Force et signification"[41]) with the *événement*. Proceeding cautiously, he distinguishes between

> imagination in its two senses, assuming that the distinction can ever be pure: *on the one hand*, imagination as production or reproduction of the image (the copy, the double, the representation), imagination that invents only by reflecting what it already finds there; and *on the other hand*, the imagination that invents by producing what never was present, thus hesitating between fiction and the event (and therefore prodding us to ask ourselves whether every event is not meant to risk fiction). Here one of the great questions concerning imagination is whether its concept is totally determined, contained and enclosed in a history of metaphysics; or whether "on the contrary" as Sallis himself suggests, a "closure of metaphysics" liberates the field or the play of imagination. Naturally, that cannot be a simple alternative. There is no *one* concept of the imagination, one sole homogeneous concept that would be interior *or* exterior to *the one sole* metaphysics, itself unique and self-identical.[42]

The *invention* can for Derrida be grasped only in terms of its status as an *événement*: "La structure de l'invention est singulière: c'est un événement que n'annonce aucun horizon d'attente, mais qu'un autre, un héritier, doit reconnaître."[43] What truly constitutes the event of invention necessarily defies all existing horizons of expectation, inevitably defeats our pre-programmed calculations as to what the future holds in store. The invention as innovative cannot be recognised as such in the moment of its occurrence or creativity; were it to be immediately recognisable,

assimilable within known paradigms, it would scarcely warrant being understood as an authentic break from the past; it would constitute rather the past repeating or perpetuating itself more or less as the same. It takes time—a delay or *décalage*—for the advent of something truly new to be recognised and realised as such; only by its re-cognition and re-affirmation can the *événement* herald something other to the past, only by its reaffirmation can inventiveness begin to work its effects upon the future. What presents itself as novel, as being truly inaugural and innovative, can have no bearing on the future unless it is reaffirmed within a set of conventions that reinscribes it within the continuity of a tradition, however much the *événement* or the *invention* may have interrupted that tradition. For the *événement* or the *invention* to count as such, it must be subject to the double affirmation that Derrida, borrowing from Joyce, encapsulates in the "*oui, oui*". While Derrida's thinking on the *événement* or the *invention* is of relevance to contexts other than those immediately relevant to the deconstructive movement, there can be little doubt that his reflections on such themes are instructive with regard to the fundamental orientation of deconstruction. (In addressing the question of the circularity of *parole* and *langue* at the origin of language, this theme of a double iteration, of an affirmation that realises the potentiality of a former inventive event, will be critical.)

One could find a concern with similar themes elsewhere in Derrida's later work, with what he describes in the course of discussing Rousseau's concept of imagination as "ce pouvoir d'anticipation qui excède la donnée sensible et présente vers l'inaperçu";[44] he has gone so far as to speak of deconstruction as a messianism without a messiah, a term no doubt too loaded or provocative for some, and wont to conflate deconstruction with the teleological or eschatological philosophies (Benjamin's messianic Marxism, for example) from which Derrida has attempted to distance himself.[45] And his approach to the institution of the university or the constitution of states is almost invariably grounded in the question of founding acts.[46] For Derrida, the political act of founding a new state can never justify itself in terms of the new law or order that it seeks to set in place, that is, that it has *yet* to put in place. Such a justification or legalisation of the founding act of a state can only be made retrospectively, *après-coup*, which does not render it *simply* illegal. For in suspending the jurisdiction or applicability of the law *in situ*, such a founding act finds itself having a curiously "alegal" status. Derrida finds it possible to recognise in

such a suspension of the law undertaken for the purpose of founding a new order or state a parallel with deconstruction; but if deconstruction can be described in such terms, it thereby shares much in common with the negativity of imagination.

However, deconstruction's orientation toward the future, and Derrida's understanding of it as a mode of intervention, can be grasped only on the basis of his conception of the present and the past—of the present as it has been determined by the past. The deconstructive project arises from a particular interpretation of the present epoch, itself determined by a certain consciousness of the past; this is to say that it is not only a departure from the prevalent phenomenologico-existentialist environment in post-war France, nor simply from the structuralist project to which Derrida recognised a considerable debt, but that it is the culmination of a tradition stretching back to Enlightenment and Kantian critique that challenges certain metaphysical ideals and deep-seated philosophical prejudices. Within the series of predecessors could be included, among other projects or thinkers, the Heideggerian *Destruktion* of the metaphysics of presence, the Nietzschean revaluation of all values, the Freudian questioning of the transparency of conscious experience, and, as we have seen, the Saussurean questioning of the self-presence of meaning in the name of the differential relations between signs.[47]

Derrida has situated himself within this tradition of subversion, within a line of descent that, with varying levels of historical consciousness, brings into question the most obstinate (logocentric) assumptions in western thought to have hitherto eluded sustained critical analysis. Of these figures, some of whom Ricoeur would describe as "maîtres du soupcon", Heidegger's project of the *Abbau* and *Destruktion* of the western metaphysics of presence perhaps sets the most immediate precedent to deconstruction. Derrida's project of deconstruction assumed the same reflexive form of *Destruktion*, and, as he has mentioned, his first uses of the word *deconstruction* came about as a result of attempting to translate these Heideggerian terms.[48] Both the Heideggerian *Destruktion* and Derridean deconstruction issue from a conception of the epoch in which we find ourselves at the closure of metaphysics—an epoch in which metaphysics or metaphysical conceptuality still preconditions thought yet in which this metaphysical thinking has shown itself to be exhausted or "irrelevant".[49]

The question of deconstruction's relation to imagination as arising in response to ontology today, or to the closure of metaphysics can be contextualised by addressing the work of John Sallis. The question that informs much of Sallis's work—"What becomes of imagination at the end of metaphysics?"[50]—implicitly recognises the undecidability by which this closure can be taken to amount to the end of imagination or to its liberation and re-opening. He asks:

> Is imagination—that is, the word, the concept, perhaps even the thing itself (if I may use, provisionally, this very classical schema)—entangled in the web of metaphysics in such a way that it too cannot but fall prey to a deconstruction that today would dislodge all metaphysical securities? Is the closure of metaphysics also the closure of imagination and of its field of play? Or, on the contrary, does the closure of metaphysics perhaps serve precisely to free imagination and to open fully its field?[51]

Commenting on issues that Sallis raises in such passages as this, Derrida writes:

> [Sallis's work] raises the hypothesis [...] that imagination would be the most efficacious of levers for all deconstruction of metaphysics. One must have imagination in order to "think" and deconstruct metaphysics. Those who do not do this lack imagination; not because they lack a faculty or power, whether acquired or natural, a gift or a talent, but because imagination is the very thing that metaphysics has either failed to think, in this way determining itself as metaphysics in that very failure, or has succeeded in suppressing, prohibiting, silencing, and marginalising [...], in this way determining itself as metaphysics in that very success.[52]

In suppressing the value or relevance of imagination, and in failing to "think" it beyond its supposed restriction to visual images, metaphysics has assured itself of its own perpetuation by preventing imaginative variations upon its historical configurations being brought forth, including those that might challenge its fundamental assumptions. Sallis brings to our attention the irony that, at a time when imagination is required to assume a specific role or make a certain contribution to overcoming the exhausted permutations of western metaphysics, its identity as a concept appears nebulous, and its possibility as dubious or remote as ever. Imagination is required more than ever when the closure of metaphysics leaves us within a milieu in which we are too late for the reassuring conceptual framework provided by metaphysics, yet too early for thinking or imagination—for thinking perhaps in a form that is imaginative—to have thought otherwise or deconstructed the language and resources bequeathed by metaphysics. When the metaphysical securities that facilitate conceiving of imagination—as a word, concept or the thing itself—no

longer remain in place, when the subject attributed with "having" an imagination has been decentered, and when the notion of creativity that designated a punctual or unique origination rather than a complex agglomeration of influences seems naïve, and the interplay of psychical faculties (perception, memory, imagination) no longer forms the given or stable context in which competing renderings of imagination can be debated, then, the question must be asked: what remains of imagination in its classical formulations but illusory forms that perhaps not only no longer exist, but never in fact served to comprehend the act, operation, function or possibilities of imagination?

What, for Sallis, fosters the hope of an unprecedented form of imagining being realised is that the field of metaphysics is no longer oriented toward the "τελος [telos] of originary presence", but is operating rather in "a field in which the operation of imagination never comes to rest in an absolute original aloof from the field and the play".[53] No longer subordinate to the teleological positing of an originary presence to which philosophy and reason are oriented, imagination might be freed by the very recognition that it now operates in the *absence* of a horizon dominated in advance by univocal notions of the end of rationality—by God, Spirit, Man, Being, and so on. The trembling that might be visited upon imagination by this withdrawal of absolutes from its horizon would also constitute its opportunity, its freedom and its vocation. What Sallis is ultimately suggesting is that the end of metaphysics is a time perhaps more conducive than ever to imagination, but only on condition that it assume a radically new form that projects something other than absolute forms of teleological presence. Does the possibility of imagining something *tout autre*, as Derrida would say, something that does not take the absolute form of a transcendental signified, imply or require a watershed in imagination beyond the question of *what* is imagined, but with regard to the—post-metaphysical—mode or *form* that imagination assumes? And does not deconstruction undertake the task of amounting to such a mode of imagination, given that, of all things, it seeks to reinstall not a form of potentially absolute presence that would amount to the perpetuation of the metaphysical and logocentric tradition, but seeks rather to generate a mode of limitless or incessant creativity within the tradition subject to no final closure? It may be that deconstruction is best understood as a response to the demand for a mode of

imagination that posits something other than a towering transcendental signified that, now more than ever, we would perhaps suspect to be a ruin in advance of its creation.

The necessity of a negative moment in deconstruction can be recognised as soon as deconstruction is understood not to set itself the conventional hermeneutic task of recollecting the past according to the operation of reproductive imagination. Deconstruction does not have as its objective what Derrida regards as the futile attempt to recuperate the past such that it is returned to immediate presence; attempts to recover meaning such as it existed in its inception are founded on the fallacious idea that textual meaning was ever entirely present to itself, that it could be reconstructed so as to be available other than as traces that survive the temporal transition to the present and outside of the work of interpretation. Reading the texts of the tradition is as old as the tradition itself, as inaugural as Plato staging or re-enacting encounters between Socrates and his predecessors. But Derrida's readings of philosophical texts are less the prelude or preamble to the expression of his "own" philosophy, less the preliminary engagement with tradition that is a canon of scholarship, than the scene of an encounter between itself (the text written by Derrida) and its other (the text read by Derrida). This engagement is interminable in that one never exhausts a text to the point that one's reading is concluded, least of all a deconstructive reading. Since the past remains a fundamental determinant of the future—and this remains the case in a western conceptuality oriented by logocentric ideals—it is only by a deconstructive genealogy of western conceptuality that a genuinely post-metaphysical language can be conceived. The "co-incidence" of writing and reading—of writing as the rereading of the tradition, and reading as the rewriting of the tradition—in Derrida's work manifests the way deconstruction organises itself in accordance with the temporality by which the inherited past becomes a reservoir or fund to be reread in the name of imagining a future unfolding otherwise than as determined logocentrically. The interminable demand for interpretation or the inexhaustibility of the text does not preclude the possibility of the reading being productive in a manner that makes it relevant to the present or future; on the contrary, this interminability, this inexhaustibility, this *surcroît de sens*, as Ricoeur would say, opens the tradition up to the possibility of it replenishing and reinventing itself.

Deconstructive reading is an attempt to occupy a position at the edge of the tradition at which it reinvents itself, not in the mode of an avant-garde venturing headlong into a new horizon of possibilities supposedly rid of constraints exerted upon it by the (logocentric) past; this is rather the pitfall to which numerous and often innovative movements have fallen prey. Deconstruction operates within the domain of cultural memory, as has been brought to light by Liam Kavanagh and Mark Dooley;[54] but its unashamedly fundamental orientation to the past belies its preoccupation with the future, with the *à-venir* and the singularity of the *événement* in which the mechanical unfolding of the future in accordance with the past is interrupted. The interminable desire to know the past, to arm oneself in the face of crisis, can, as Derrida has noted, defer the crucial moment of decision and critique (*krinein*).

To entertain the notion of a deconstructive imagination, it would be necessary to establish a firm rapport between the mechanisms of deconstruction and imagination as it is classically conceived, before proceeding to recognise how deconstruction might have effectively reinvented imagination to such an extent that it would be scarcely recognisable as such. More specifically, it would be necessary to discern in deconstruction the same paradoxical temporal structure that we have recognised as underlying the productive imagination. It would, moreover, be necessary to recognise deconstruction to be structured in accordance with the productive imagination at the level not of the individual subject, but rather as amounting to a potentiality that lies within the dialectic between, on the one hand, instituted conventions (of representation, of protocol, of academic or political praxis, of law, etc.), and, on the other, the deconstructive strategies of critique by which such conventions are reinscribed or rewritten otherwise in accordance with the "undeconstructible". (To the undeconstructible is reserved a singular status for the values to which deconstruction is to aspire. The idea of justice, relative to law as it is conventionally instituted, is Derrida's primary illustration of the difference between the deconstructible and undeconstructible).

We might broach the question of deconstructive negativity by way of Derrida commenting on the necessity of returning to the conceptuality of western metaphysics *sous rature*. The network of concepts and oppositions of western metaphysics is not only the force that continues one metaphysical system into the next, and that

maintains a certain continuity in the tradition, but also that which resists the discontinuity of the end of metaphysics or the attempt to break with that tradition. For Derrida, the overcoming of metaphysics is to be sought nowhere other than in the history and language of metaphysics. Deconstruction is founded on the recognition that there are no concepts available to the deconstruction of metaphysics that do not stem in one way or another from the tradition in the process of being deposed and reinvented. There is no language or conceptuality that is not in some way or other constituted by its norms; this is the case, as we have noted, even or perhaps especially in those concepts that are the "lower" terms in metaphysical oppositions. The bricks of the crumbling metaphysical edifice are those to be used in tearing it down as well as in any reconstructive operation. That the language in which deconstruction must be conducted includes terms belonging to metaphysics in need of deconstruction, or that it is utterly dependent on the tradition it critiques, constitutes therefore, not an *objection* to deconstruction, as has been argued according a quite peculiar yet prevalent misunderstanding; on the contrary, that deconstruction is bound to or complicit with the tradition it seeks to critique constitutes the *problematic* of a "post-metaphysical" age that Derrida has brought to light, the problematic that defines the plight of this epoch, and to which deconstruction has been "designed" as a response.

The strategy of drawing on western conceptuality *sous rature* can be grasped as a response to this problematic. Drawing upon the wealth of western conceptuality *sous rature* is to avail of concepts while vigilantly guarding against wittingly or unwittingly importing metaphysical schemas and frameworks central to its intelligibility into its discourse, and against subscribing to tenets upon which the use of such concepts depend. To place the concept *sous rature* is to suspend the supposed horizon of the word being affixed a sure and certain referent and to interrogate it according to the variety of historical roles it has played within discourses and within philosophical systems. Placing the concept *sous rature* is perhaps less a deliberate act that Derrida performs than a vigilance exercised with regard to inheriting a language that imposes itself upon one in all its intertextual complexity. A notion such as *idea* (*eidos*, *idée*, *Idee*, etc.) designates its different formulations in the tradition (the ontologically transcendent Platonic Idea, the Cartesian inner mental representation, the Hegelian Idea in which both these conceptions are evident, etc.) before if ever referring to the "thing" that the word idea is supposed to designate. There is no

simple, undifferentiated thing that *simply is* an *idea*, because the notion or word *idea* does not emerge as a simple entity from the network of its differentiated, disseminated uses, renderings, systematic formulations that effectively suspend indefinitely the word having a clear and distinct ontological reference or referent. Erasing the concept while repeating it, citing it rather than simply using it (as in the use of precautionary quotation marks), defining it by its status or its various formulations within the history of thought as much as by the "ontological entity" to which it refers, drawing upon its resources while abandoning certain of its implications, shifting it in a new direction while retaining elements necessary to it retaining a certain intelligibility: such are the complications and subtleties to which Derrida's discourse as a response to the closure of metaphysics leads.

Placing a concept *sous rature* such that it can be reinscribed within a discourse or context is not undertaken without risk, without the danger of the concept becoming initially unrecognisable. As with any act of foundation or of genuine imagination, one operates "prematurely" but necessarily within the order one seeks to bring into being, but before this order has in fact been instituted or definitively ushered into being. In its attempt to express itself outside the familiar terrain of language, norms and expectations, deconstruction sets itself an unenviable but ineluctable task. It is this almost impossible task in which Derrida understands not only deconstruction but the intellectual age as a whole to be embroiled. And which perhaps has led to him articulating deconstruction as a passion for the impossible, a mode of thought that thinks in a language or *langue* yet to have come into circulation as common currency. But this unrecognisability of what is newly invented or devised is the condition or effect of the imaginative transgression of existing conventions, the very hallmark distinguishing the *événement* or the *invention*. For his thought not to resurrect surreptitiously the entire metaphysical edifice that is encapsulated or engrained in its individual elements (terms, norms), Derrida appears willing to take the risk of remaining misunderstood, a risk perhaps intrinsic to imagination or imagining something new. If it can be said that deconstruction amounts to a form or mode of imagination, it should come as little surprise that it cannot be entirely intelligible either within the order it seeks to depose, nor indeed, entirely determinable within the "order" it seeks to create.

As Sallis writes: "Writing under erasure, attending to the subtlety and the risk of the move, one might then broach the demand of a logic of imagination."[55] But the attempt to deconstruct imagination or to elaborate the form of deconstruction in terms of imagination, in terms, that is, of a classical concept issuing from metaphysics, would entail putting the concept of imagination itself *sous rature*. It is to entertain the notion as a historical concept intertextually embedded within a multitude of philosophies before if ever determining it as the "thing" it is taken to be in one or other of these systems. To deconstruct imagination is to question the notion that it is reducible to a psychological faculty, and that it is to such a faculty that the concept unambiguously refers; it is to question at once the empiricism that restricts imagination to a faculty necessarily related to visual images and the rationalism by which it is charged with being an all-encompassing source or origination (as in the case of *a priori* forms of space and time for Kant, or of experience as a whole for Fichte).

The mode of drawing upon the concepts of metaphysics *sous rature* is worthy of comparison with the manner in which imagination suspends the status of memories or memory-images as such. The suspension that Husserl describes in the case of neutrality-modification, or that Hegel describes when speaking of the severing of the image from intuition that reinscribes it within a network of interrelated images (a network of images in which each image is extricated from its original referent), is not dissimilar to that which Derrida performs in availing of the concepts of metaphysics as belonging to an intertextual network rather than as designating an ontological entity. Both operations invert the order by which images and signs merely serve to express an existent being such that the image or sign is liberated from a delimiting origination; they both emphasise the *system* of signs or images within which the element of imagination or that being deconstructed is inscribed, such emphasis being the precondition of re-opening it to potential redetermination.[56]

One can approach the productive negativity of deconstruction from a point of view other than that of the strategy of placing terms *sous rature*, one that recognises its negativity to be directed at the suppressions or repressions that give to the metaphysical tradition a certain continuity.[57] Derrida appears to understand the texts of western metaphysics not as a series that can be yoked together on the basis of a

finite number of themes or theses that together constitute a homogeneous whole, but rather, as a tradition the hegemony and coherence of which is to be discerned in the consistency of its exclusions, dismissals and repressions. If the history of western metaphysics consists partly in the suppression of nonlogocentric potentialities, it follows that it still harbours in its texts opportunities to exit logocentric patterns of thought that might yet be fastened upon. As such, it is in the texts of western metaphysics that the possibilities of a nonlogocentric future are for Derrida to be generated.

What binds the productive and deconstructive forms of imagination in particular is the necessity of a negative moment in their operations amounting to being productive or creative. Both deconstruction and imagination found themselves upon the negation of what is simply given, restored to presence, inherited from another source. To grasp this, it was necessary to penetrate the superficial paradox by which a certain negativity is essential to the productive imagination, by which negativity differentiates it from the reproductive—which is to say, in a certain sense *un*productive—imagination. But it has also been necessary to survey the manner in which this negativity is essential to deconstruction. By approaching the nature and form of the negativity in deconstruction in the form of it placing western conceptuality *sous rature* and in terms of it negating the suppressions of the tradition, it has been possible to recognise the essential role played by deconstruction in assuming a form that is properly imaginative, productive and creative of an alternative future.

Deconstruction and imagination can, then, be seen to be implicated in each other's operations: every act, instance or event of imagination implies, at least in its effect, a negation of what is given to perception or memory; inversely, every operation of deconstruction implies a critical engagement with the past undertaken so as to resuscitate, or at least, be productive of an alternative potentiality relevant for the future. The temporality implied by deconstruction oriented toward a past from which a wholly other future is to emerge reassembles at a cultural level the relation between the psychological faculties of memory (reproductive imagination) and imagination proper (productive imagination).

To the question posed at the outset of this chapter—that of whether deconstruction imagines or whether it deconstructs imagination—one might, in the light of the three affinities pursued, conclude that the disjunction is founded on a false dichotomy. For deconstruction might be said to imagine in and through its mode of critically engaging the concepts it inherits from a tradition it describes as logocentric, among which can be counted the concept of imagination itself. In so doing, does not deconstruction generate an alternative model of imagination to that which would constitute the logocentric formulation of imagination, to that version of the concept that deconstruction would be obliged to abandon? Deconstruction equips itself in such a way that it can reinvent and reformulate inherited meanings beyond their embeddedness within logocentric conceptual systems. As such, deconstruction's most valuable contribution might be construed as setting forth not a method or repeatable procedure, but a mode of imagination that, like the deconstructive reading performance, is necessarily singular in each instance of its inventiveness.

Thus far, it has been a question of elucidating, firstly, the manner in which deconstruction's operation of inverting the more lowly terms in metaphysical oppositions could, in a consistent manner, be extended to imagination as a maligned concept or phenomenon in western thought; and secondly, the textual imagination that Derrida's mode of reading philosophical texts and his grammatology implies; and lastly, the task which deconstruction sets before itself insofar as it entails a critical engagement with an inherited past undertaken with a view to imagining a non-logocentric future. In other words, the inversion of imagination as it inheres in the "lesser" element of metaphysical oppositions (such as logos/imagination) entails the recognition of a textual imagination at work within the field conventionally designated by the logos, which in turn opens up the field of texts that, through critique, can be reopened to themselves as a resource for the imagination of a future other to that dominated by a logocentric past. Indeed, the act of inverting oppositions in defiance of a certain metaphysical hierarchy, and of fastening upon those moments in the texts of metaphysics when such inversion is already in evidence, might be seen as amounting to the deconstructive project of imagining a beyond to metaphysics.

However, such an understanding of the deconstructive and textual imagination sets itself as a distance from imagination understood in the much narrower sense of

the mental (re)production of images. Indeed, in the course of sketching certain rudimentary affinities between deconstruction and imagination, certain impediments to the forging of the concept of a textual or deconstructive imagination have already arisen. And it is to the points of apparently irreconcilable or irresolvable conflict between on the one hand, a deconstructive and textual imagination, and on the other, a classical imagination as bound up solely with motivated, figurative or mimetic images, that I now turn. What must be detected in countering these potential objections are moments in the metaphysical determination of imagination at which it is brought into relation to language and nonmotivated signification, even if such displacements in the classical boundary delimiting the concept of imagination were ultimately repressed or suppressed.

Notes to Chapter II

[1] "Poetry is the universal art of the spirit that has become free in itself and which is not tied down for its realization to external sensuous material; instead, it launches out exclusively in the inner space and the inner time of ideas and feelings. Yet, precisely at this highest stage, art now transcends itself, in that it forsakes the reconciled embodiment of the spirit in sensuous form and passes over from the poetry of imagination to the prose of thought" (Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, Vol. I, p. 89; see note 3 below for reference).

[2] See note 11, Chapter 1.

[3] In *Delimitations: Phenomenology and the End of Metaphysics* (Second Edition, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995, Chapter I) and in *Force of Imagination: The Sense of the Elemental* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000, hereafter *FoI*), John Sallis brings our attention to a striking example of the condemnation of imagination. Sallis notes that Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola's Renaissance work *On the Imagination* (*Liber de Imaginatione/On the Imagination*, Latin text with English translation by Harry Caplan, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930) has as its explicit aim to "pass sentence on the treacherous imagination" (cited by Sallis in *FoI*, p. 62). And even though, as we shall see, Hegel challenges the orthodox determination of the artistic imagination, he recognises that it has been identified with the values of caprice, arbitrariness and contingency. See *Hegel's Aesthetics: Introductory Lectures on Fine Art*, (Vols. I and II, trans. T. M. Knox, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 7-8; *Vorlesungen über die Äesthetik*, Vol. I-III, Werke in zwanzig Bänden, Bde. 16-17, Frankfurt-am-Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970, p. 20. Hereafter, reference will be made to the two volumes of *Hegel's Aesthetics: Introductory Lectures on Fine Art* as *ILA I* or *ILA II*, and to the German edition as *VA I, II, III*.

[4] Baudelaire, Charles, *Œuvres complètes*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1968, p. 397.

[5] "Tympan" in *MP*, pp. i-xxv.

[6] As Hegel makes clear in considering potential objections to the possibility of aesthetics as a science in the introduction to his *Lectures on Fine Art* (*ILA I*, pp. 3-14/*VA I* pp. 13-29), the lawless imagination's operation within the field of the arts threatens to render any veritable science (*Wissenschaft*) of art impossible. If aesthetics as a science is possible or even necessary, it is for Hegel because art's newfound relevance following its liberation from religious representation (*Vorstellung*) has itself grown stale, and because art in modernity has become a thing of the past (*ein Vergangenes*), an anachronism foreign to spirit in its modern, rational and scientific (*wissenschaftliche*) form. Art's demise as a practice of the imagination relevant to spirit's becoming and its self-identity had for Hegel been superseded by the need to conceptualise the historical field of art within a scientific discipline. The artistic field of imagination becomes the bygone form of otherness irrelevant to modern rationality, but one that philosophical conceptuality can reappropriate, and whose dialectical narrative (as the becoming of symbolic, classical and romantic forms of art) philosophy can recount and re-interiorise. For Hegel, art and imagination have not been fully realised until they are raised up and brought under the control of conceptual knowledge, until, that is, the myriad historical forms constituting their essence are enveloped within a conceptual field. In conceptualising imagination such that it is no longer of relevance to spirit (*Geist*) and represents an exteriority to philosophy as a discipline, it could be argued that Hegel was attempting, in accordance with a conventional philosophical procedure, to render itself immune to the possibility of imagination, to the threat of what Kant had called a "faculty of intuition" contaminating the ideality of the logos. But equally, Hegel's erection of a science of aesthetics capable of knowing the truth of art is also a gesture of re-appropriation and of mastery. In the age of modernity, philosophy has for Hegel come to know its other. His position regarding the relation between art and science, or imagination and philosophy, is as much the thorough articulation of the logic conditioning their relation within a logocentric tradition as it is a thesis he constructs and defends.

[7] "La Pharmacie de Platon", in *Diss,* p. 156.
[8] Kant, Immanuel, *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics,* trans. James Ellington, London: Hackett, 2002, Section 35; p. 47.
[9] See note 2, Chapter I.
[10] "La Mythologie blanche: La métaphore dans le texte philosophique", in *MP*, pp. 247-324.
[11] "*Mochlos, or The Conflict of the Faculites*", in *Logomachia: The Conflict of the Faculties Today*, ed. Richard Rand, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1992, pp. 1-35.
[12] Jonathan Culler's *Saussure* (London: Fontana, 1990; pp. 18-51) argues convincingly that the editors of the *Cours de linguistique générale* ought to have opened the work with what for Saussure constituted the fundamental question of linguistics; namely, that of the possibility of signification operating with an *arbitrary* linguistic sign (or with what, beyond Saussure, has come to be known as the "nonmotivated" sign). This is also, I believe, essential if one wishes to grasp Derridean grammatology, and thus, his approach to reading philosophical texts.
[13] "Si la partie conceptuelle de la valeur est constituée uniquement par des rapports et des différences avec les autres termes de la langue, on peut en dire en autant de sa partie matérielle. Ce qui importe dans le mot, ce n'est pas le son lui-même, mais les différences phoniques qui permettent de distinguer le mot de tous les autres, car ce sont elles qui portent la signification. [...] [I]l est évident que [...] jamais un fragment de la langue ne pourra être fondé, en dernière analyse, sur autre chose que sur sa non-coïncidence avec le reste. *Arbitraire* et *différentiel* sont deux qualités corrélatifs" (Saussure de, Ferdinand, *Cours de linguistique générale*, Paris: Payot, 1995, p. 163; hereafter *Cours*). A system of telephone numbers, in which a number is arbitrarily allocated to a user, can serve as an illustrative example. It is unnecessary for the particular telephone number to have any essential, intrinsic, motivated relation to the user to whom it is ascribed; it is necessary only that the number be different from all others in order for it to be indefinitely affixed to or identified with one and only one user. The apparent necessity of a motivated relation obtaining between the number and the user can be dispensed with if the sole condition of the number being a unique element within the system is satisfied, or in other words, if it is possible to consistently differentiate the number from all others.
[14] *Diff* in *MP*, p. 11.
[15] Derrida cites Saussure on this point: "Tout ce qui précède revient à dire que dans la langue il n'y a que des différences. Bien plus, une différence suppose en général des termes positifs entre lesquels elle s'établit: mais dans la langue, il n'y a que des différences sans termes positifs. Qu'on prenne le signifié ou le signifiant, la langue ne comporte ni les idées ni les sons qui préexistaient au système linguistique [...]. Ce qu'il y a d'idée ou de matière phonique dans un signe importe moins que ce qu'il y a autour de lui dans les autres signes" (cited in *Diff* in MP, p. 11).
[16] What is described here in terms of *différance* can also be explicated in terms of Derridean *supplémentarité*. Language accords with the logic of *supplémentarité* in that its lack of an ultimate origin, a unified basis or ground amounts to an inherent deficiency that has as a result the ineradicable possibility of one more possible interpretation being made of a text. But the ineluctable possibility of an extra definition, interpretation or reading, betrays the inherent impossibility of language yielding anything resembling the definitive, ideal and exhaustive meaning expressed by the concept or value of the logos. This logic of textual supplementarity is revealed in the conventions of the preface, that is, in the clarifying supplement or extra determinant added on *after* the writing of the text so as to define the body of the text *before* it is read: "Pour l'avant-propos, reformant un vouloir-dire après le coup, le texte est un écrit—un passé—que, dans une fausse apparence de présent, un auteur caché et tout-puissant, en pleine maîtrise de son produit, présente au lecteur comme son avenir" (from "Hors livre" in *Diss*, pp. 9-76, p. 13). (The expression "dans une fausse apparence de présent" is an allusion to Mallarmé's *Mimique* that Derrida will later analyse in *La Dissémination*). The necessity of the preface betrays the inherent deficiency of the text, by which it requires the impossibility of a determinant existing outside of its own play in order for its play to be arrested. The preface thus reveals the infinite regression to which textual meaning is subject,

while *supplémentarité* and *différance* capture the fact that tradition, *langue*, existing conventions, and so on, always face out onto a future because no absolutely self-sufficient ground exists in the beginning.

[17] *Diff* in *MP*, p. 11.

[18] *Diff* in *MP*, p. 11.

[19] *Diff* in *MP*, p. 11.

[20] In contrast to the self-concealment of *langue*, the mediation between signifier and signified in motivated forms of signification reveals itself in the form of the resemblance that obtains between them. Even if such resemblance is not absolute but has rather been conventionalised or overdetermined, (as in the case of pictograms or ideograms, where it is usually a simplified form of the object's defining features that is depicted), the form of the mediation the motivated sign relies upon is clearly visible. In opposition to the sign that functions by means of a figurative relation to signified, the particular material qualities of the nonmotivated signifier serve what is, strictly speaking, a non-signifying function, a function that relates to the possibility of the *system*'s constitution rather than directly to the generation of the signified's specific content. This non-signifying function relates to the possibility of a conventional system of signification operating in the absence of a motivated relation. This non-signifying or systematic "moment" in the nonmotivated signifying operation escapes an analysis that focuses on the conscious operation of signification; and yet, it is not without consequence for the signified meaning produced.

[21] On this subject, see Derrida's introduction to his translation of Husserl's work on geometry (*Introduction à la géométrie*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2010) and *Le Problème de la genèse dans la philosophie de Husserl*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990.

[22] See, for example, *La Dissémination* and *De la Grammatologie* for systematic explorations of the denigration of writing in Plato, Hegel and Rousseau. As exemplified by the *pharmakon*, this general denigration must be grasped within more complex, nuanced and tergiversating gestures.

[23] "Freud et la scène de l'écriture" in *ED*, p. 294.

[24] See *VP*, particularly Chapter 3, "Le Vouloir-dire comme soliloque", pp. 34-52.

[25] This extra-textual presence can and has assumed numerous forms: an author and the intention (*vouloir-dire*) animating the text; the divine presence legitimating the truth of Scripture; the self-present speech (*parole*) of which the written text is adjudged to be but the transcription; the logical or argumentative structure of the work for which the text is deemed to be but its mode of expression; the (structuralist) reading which would reduce the text to its synchronic structure; the ontological reality to which the text refers; the preface charged with predetermining and restricting the meaning of the text, and so on. Such a form of presence beyond the text, absolved of its textuality, would enable the interpretation of the text to bring forth a univocal, timeless, unambiguous and ideal meaning—in a word, its *logos*. Derrida posits that no such *hors-texte* evades the textuality of the text, which is *not* to say that there is no reality "beyond" the text but simply to problematise the question of linguistic reference and of signifying reality in any definitive, ultimate or ideal manner, and to question the possibility of reducing any text to a univocal signified, theme or content. The truth of the text does not lie outside it in a transcendent other, in a conceptual signified other to the signifier, or in a truth independent of its expression and articulation. What the textual history of philosophy and its tradition bequeaths is, for Derrida, neither a host of clear and unambiguous authorial intentions nor a set of proofs and arguments, but a wealth of texts from which, to be sure, authors' intentions and arguments can and must be recognised, but which can only be indirectly—textually—inferred and re-constituted from the relation between the text and its (partially obsolete, and, in any case, altered) *langue*.

[26] It would be incorrect therefore to recognise in Derrida's conception of the text the extreme formulation of "la mort de l'auteur". For Derrida recognises that a newfound conception of the text does not elide the author or subject but reassigns to him or her a new role within a complex space. It is possible for authors to write in a fashion consistent with his conception of the text. For Derrida, few writers have exemplified this radical reconception of the text

better than the poet, Mallarmé. No longer operating with a pretence to univocality, or with language conceived of as a medium expressing a prior authorial experience, Mallarmé does not recognise the text's inexhaustible play of meaning as the betrayal of itself or of his *vouloir-dire*; rather for Derrida, the Mallarmean text manifests the role of the author as erecting structures in which the play of a textual imagination can unfold. By receding from view as an author, by what he describes as ceding "l'initiative aux mots", Mallarmé demonstrates the possibility of the poem blossoming into a manifold of potential configurations precisely because of the absence of a governing or controlling authorial origination. The text conceives itself otherwise, produces itself otherwise, and offers itself to a process of reading and reinterpretation indistinguishable from the productive labour of imagination. The text is thus conceived in terms at odds with the notion of an origin (author, intention, experience) or a *telos* (a meaning communicated, a signified presented, a reality signified). The role of the poet as author is thus redetermined as facilitating the generation of structures in which the play of meaning can realise itself as an inexhaustible aesthetic and semantic resource. Cf. "La Double Séance" in *Diss*, pp. 215-279.

[27] "La Mythologie blanche: La métaphore dans le texte philosophique" in *MP*, pp. 247-324.

[28] *Diss*, pp. 186/7

[29] "Le Puits et la pyramide" in *MP*, pp. 79-128 (hereafter *PP*). Cf. *PP*, pp. 101-115. Derrida studies Hegel's logocentric privileging "de la parole sur l'écriture et de l'écriture phonétique sur tout autre système d'inscription, en particulier sur l'écriture hiéroglyphique ou idéographique" (p. 102) as well as the concept "décisif" of "*idéalité physique*" (p. 104).

[30] *Aufhebung* is a central term in Hegel's dialectics. Derrida's translation of the term is *relever*, while *sublation* is the neologism coined in English to translate it. Hegel draws on the word's several senses at once: *aufheben* can mean *to raise up* or *supersede*, *to cancel* or *suppress*. The plurality of its senses is evident in the sense that a law is *aufgehoben*, that is, transformed, amended, negated but also retained within the (hopefully) improved law that comes to supplant it. Within the context of the *Aufhebung* of a metaphysical opposition, the lower term is *aufgehoben*, that is, it is cancelled, annulled or negated in a movement that nonetheless raises it up to a higher echelon, in an operation of substitution (*relever*, "to relieve", in a certain sense) but also of ascension, since a third term is produced within which (the) opposition is retained but suppressed. Thus, for Hegel, in his philosophy of the idea or logic, the *Aufhebung* of being and nothingness is becoming. In a semiological context, the word or signifier is annulled and raised up to its meaning. Derrida has made clear that the neologism of *différance* amounts to a revised and deconstructed version of Hegel's notion of *Aufhebung*, particularly as it supervises or orchestrates the latter's understanding of the signifying operation: "Le signe y est compris selon la structure et le mouvement de l'*Aufhebung* par laquelle l'esprit, s'élevant au-dessus de la nature dans laquelle il s'était enfoui, la supprimant et la retenant à la fois, la sublimant en lui-même, s'accomplit comme liberté intérieure et se présente à lui-même pour lui-même, *comme tel*" (*PP* in *MP*, p. 87). Derrida's "concept" of *différance* responds to the *Aufhebung* in that it is the permanently arrested or perpetually repeated dialectical movement, ceaselessly deferring the resolution of the terms. The coining of *différance* is an attempt to conceive of the signifying operation outside of the horizon of presence implied by an absolute resolution in the presence of meaning: "[C]e que je décris ici pour définir, en la banalité de ses traits, la signification comme différance de temporisation, c'est la structure classiquement déterminée du signe : elle présuppose que le signe, différant la présence, n'est pensable qu'*à partir* de la présence qu'il diffère et *en vue* de la présence différée qu'on vise à se réapproprier. Suivant cette sémiologie, la substitution du signe à la chose même est à la fois *seconde* et *provisoire* : seconde depuis une présence originelle et perdue dont le signe viendrait à dériver ; provisoire au regard de cette présence finale et manquante en vue de laquelle le signe serait en mouvement de médiation" ("*Diff* in *MP*, pp. 9-10). As Derrida puts the antagonism between *différance* and *Aufhebung* in an interview, "S'il y avait une définition de la *différance*, ce serait justement la limite, l'interruption, la destruction de la relève hégélienne *partout* où elle opère. L'enjeu ici est énorme. Je dis bien l'*Aufhebung* hégélienne, telle que l'interprète un

certain discours hégélien, car il va de soi que ce double sens de *Aufhebung* pourrait s'écrire autrement. D'où sa proximité avec toutes les opérations qui sont conduites contre la spéculation dialectique de Hegel" (*Positions: Entretiens avec Henri Ronse, Julia Kristeva, Jean-Louis Houdebine, Guy Scarpetta*, Collection Critique, Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1972, pp. 55-6; hereafter *Pos*). See also "La Différance": "On plie l'*Aufhebung*—la relève—à s'écrire autrement. Peut-être, tout simplement à s'écrire. Mieux, à tenir compte de sa consommation d'écriture" (*Diff* in *MP*, p. 21).

[31] If language, as "constituted" by *différance*, cannot be said to have as its origin a punctual point of presence, imagination in its classical form cannot be conceived as the creative origin giving rise to it. Cf. *Diff*, pp. 12-15, for Derrida on "[c]e mouvement (actif) de la (production de la) différance sans origine". I comment later on the similar danger of interpreting imagination as a transcendental origin exempt from the play it produces.

[32] See, for example, *Poetics of Imagining: Modern and Postmodern*, Edinburgh University Press, and New York: Fordham University Press, 1998.

[33] Cf. §109 "The Neutrality Modification", p. 257, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Vol. I*, trans. F. Kersten, Dordrecht: Kluwer Publishers, 1983 (hereafter *Ideas I*).

[34] Hegel, G.W.F., *The Philosophical Propaedeuctic*, trans A. V. Miller, Oxford: Blackwell, 1986, p. 153. In Part 2, I shall analyse in greater detail the account of imagination's development that Hegel gives in the *Encyclopaedia*.

[35] Husserl, E., *Phantasy, Image-Consciousness and Memory* (vol. 19 of Husserl's Collected Works), trans. John Brough, Dordrecht: Springer, 2005, p. 437. Cf. also §111 "The Neutrality Modification and Phantasy", p. 260, in *Ideas I*.

[36] Kant, I., *Critique of Judgement*, §49; cited by Derrida in "Force et signification", *ED*, p. 16.

[37] Sartre also explores the centrality of negativity in the imagination. In *L'Imaginaire*, he writes that "la fonction néantisatrice propre à la conscience – que Heidegger appelle dépassement – est ce qui rend possible l'acte d'imagination." (*L'Imaginaire: psychologie phénoménologique de l'imagination*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1986; p. 358). The object of the negativity of imagination he takes to be "le monde": "C'est l'apparition de l'imaginaire devant la conscience qui permet de saisir la néantisation du monde comme sa condition essentielle et comme sa structure première." (ibid., p. 359). What is the status of "monde" here? Operating according to a crude distinction between the world and the imaginary, between *le réel* and *l'irréel*, Sartre effectively equates the world with the perceptual, sensible world. Operating with a notion of the imagination as an act abstracted from any mode or system of representation, Sartre fails to recognise that the negation or annihilation (*néantisation*) of "the world" is operative in all representational and signifying operations in which the formal materiality of a sign or image is taken to refer to something other than it is. In short, he overlooks the imagination as *seeing-as*. And since meanings in language make up the world as it is lived (*le vécu*), it makes little sense even within a phenomenological framework to speak of imagination as the annihilation of the world.

[38] From an interview with Derrida in *Le Monde*, October 8, 2004.

[39] "[To think an *autre temps*] one could no longer be content to describe or analyse: one would have to make something come (*faire venir*). Not merely to produce, in the sense in which to produce (*pro-ducere*) consists of conducting *what was already there* to the fore, *to the forefront*, that is, to the very first position, but to make something advene there where it was *not*. Further, to *make* something advene should always come back to letting it advene: what comes cannot be decided, cannot be by definition; that simply isn't done; it arrives, and one *can* and *should* only let it arrive; doubtless one would not know how to *produce* it" ("Tense", *PAT*, p.50).

[40] "Tense", *PAT*, p.52

[41] For Derrida's remarks on the opposition of productive/reproductive imagination in "Force et signification" see *ED*, pp. 16-18.

[42] "Tense", *PAT*, p. 56. Derrida continues: "We do *not* possess *the* concept of metaphysics and *the* concept of imagination; we have movements and tasks, an economy of mutations and

displacements, of processes, of phases and multiple phrases that are irreducibly heterogeneous, in which these concepts are formed—and in which they deform the non-identity-to-self that institutes and constitutes them."

[43] Jacques Derrida, *Psyché, Inventions de l'autre* (tome I), Éditions Galilée, 1987, pp. 14-15.

[44] *DG*, 259.

[45] See Derrida's reading of Benjamin's "Kritik zur Gewalt" in *Force de loi - Le "Fondement mystique de l'autorité"*, Paris: Galilée, 1994.

[46] See *Mochlos*, cited in note 11 above, and *Force de loi*, cited in note 52, for Derrida's analyses of founding acts.

[47] For a concise and compelling contextualisation of Derrida's work as emerging within this tradition of subversive critique stretching from Nietzsche to Freud and Heidegger, see Gayatri Chakravorty-Spivak's introduction to her translation of *De la grammatologie* in *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Charavorty-Spivak, Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, pp. ix-lxxxvii.

[48] See Gasché's analysis of the complex relation of deconstruction to Heideggerian *Destruktion* and *Abbau* in *TM*, pp. 109-120, "*Abbau, Destruktion*, Deconstruction".

[49] In the following quotation from Heidegger, the origination of deconstruction in his project of the *Destruktion* of ontology is clearly visible: "When [the ontological or onto-theological] tradition thus becomes master, it does so in such a way that what it 'transmits' is made so inaccessible, proximally and for the most part, that it rather becomes concealed. Tradition takes what has come down to us and delivers it over to self-evidence; it blocks our access to those primordial "sources" from which the categories and concepts handed down to us have been in part quite genuinely drawn. Indeed it makes us forget that they have had such an origin, and makes us suppose that the necessity of going back to these sources is something which we need not even understand. [...] [*Destruktion*] has nothing to do with a vicious relativizing of ontological standpoints. But this destruction is just as far from having the negative sense of shaking off the ontological tradition. We must, on the contrary, stake out the positive possibilities of that tradition, and this means keeping it within its limits; and these in turn are given factically in the way the question is formulated at the time, and in the way the possible field for investigation is thus bounded off. On its negative side, this destruction does not relate itself toward the past; its criticism is aimed at "today" and at the prevalent way of treating the history of ontology. But to bury the past in nullity (*Nichtigkeit*) is not the purpose of this destruction; its aim is positive; its negative function remains unexpressed and indirect" (*Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, New York: Harper, 2008, p. 43).

[50] Sallis, John, *Delimitations: Phenomenology and the End of Metaphysics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 2. The subject of imagination pervades Sallis's works, even those texts not specifically devoted to it. Those earlier works in which it figures most prominently include: *Double Truth* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995) and *Spacings—Of Reason and Imagination: In Texts of Kant, Fichte, Hegel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, hereafter *Del*). But his work on imagination is given in its most powerful formulation in *Force of Imagination: The Sense of the Elemental*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000, hereafter *FoI*). See also the festschrift written on his work, *The Path of Archaic Thinking: Unfolding the Work of John Sallis* (edited by Kenneth Maly, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), in particular the essay Derrida devotes to his work cited in Chapter I, note 8, and which I comment on presently.

[51] *Del*, pp. 3-4.

[52] "Tense" in PAT, p. 282 (fn. 4).

[53] *FoI*, p. 15.

[54] This relation between deconstruction and cultural memory is admirably explored by Liam Kavanagh and Mark Dooley in *The Philosophy of Derrida*, Durham: Acumen, 2006. However, as I am arguing, deconstruction's relation to cultural memory might be better understood as a reflexive turn within the broader trajectory of an operation of imagination. Cf. my study of Hegel on the relation between the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* and memory in Chapter VI.

[55] Sallis, *Del*, p. 15.

[56] That Derrida is fond of neologisms does not simply contravene the notion that our language is embedded within a long tradition; *différance*, for example, as he makes clear in "La différance" (Cf. *Diff* in *MP*, p.18ff.) emerges from the several scenes in which difference is already comprehended in terms of the deferral of a totality: Freudian *Nachträglichkeit* or the delayed effect produced by the unconscious; the Saussurean differential functioning of signs; Heidegger's concept of the ontic-ontological difference, to name but the most prominent. In any case, *différance* effectively places the concept of "difference", understood as the differences that can be subsumed within a universal or concept, *sous rature*.

[57] I forego here providing accounts of several of Derrida's readings that, in critiquing the metaphysical premises to which certain thinkers fall prey—even those who Derrida recognises as having made critical breakthroughs—pursue the text's potentiality beyond its logocentric constraints; I take up the notion of deconstruction revisiting aporetic instances within texts as one "moment" within a deconstructive operation in my final chapter.

Chapter III: Antagonisms between Deconstruction and Imagination: The Dissolution of Imagination in the Anonymous Creativity of an Arbitrary Sign

One cannot explore the possibility of a rapport between deconstruction and imagination without observing that their relation is marked by a certain antagonism. Two interrelated points at which the classical conception of imagination and deconstruction conflict with one another are immediately apparent; the first pertaining to the notion of a textual imagination, an imagination supposedly concerned with a *nonmotivated* or nonmimetic mode of signification; the second concerning the fact that the notion of a deconstructive imagination is irreducible to a psychological faculty.

It would have to be conceded that the formulation of a textual imagination, as implied by deconstructive reading practises, defies the conventional identification of imagination with mimetic modes of representation, that is, with forms of representation founded upon a resemblance between the representation and the represented. Indeed, if conceiving of a *textual* or linguistic imagination appears to set the concept of imagination at odds with itself, it is because it displaces it from the artistic domain of mimetic representation in which it has ordinarily figured. However much the concept of imagination may have expanded to encompass a broader conception of creativity (as in the expression "an imaginative artwork" or an "imaginative solution to a problem"), it remains closely identified with the inner production of visual or mimetic images. Linguistic signification, insofar as it operates on the basis of an arbitrary, nonmimetic and nonmotivated relation between signifier and signified, would thus appear to fall outside the field encompassed by imagination.

Moreover, if the nonmotivated system of language can operate only by virtue of a play of differences active within a *langue* that necessarily exceeds the individual language-user, the notion of an imagination generative or operative in the movement from signifier to signified, or in the interpretation of the relation between a text and its meaning, can appear incommensurable with the psychological discourse in which the concept of imagination is expounded. An imagination said to be at work in the text or

intertextually would present the apparent contradiction of an imagination belonging to no-one, a faculty or a power that was not the faculty of an individual, a creativity whose locus of origination lies within the potentialities of a semiological system rather than in the calculated projections of a rational, self-conscious—imagining—subject.

In outlining how deconstruction might be considered a form of negativity brought to bear on the past as a resource, it might be objected that one had departed from the scene of the individual psyche, from the mind's interplay of faculties which, from Aristotle to Kant, has formed the broad psychological context within which, whatever the heterogeneity of its formulations, the concept of imagination has been elaborated. And if conceiving of imagination is to be considered as operating not within the interplay of a subject's faculties, but in terms of a strategic "method" of interpretation or reinterpretation, it would entail conceiving of it on the basis of what might be said to be the metaphorical use of the notion, as when we speak of the "classical" or "romantic imagination". One would thus encounter in conceiving of a textual and a deconstructive imagination the seemingly insurmountable paradox of an imagination that transcends the self-presence of the subject, no longer permitting us to retrace a text or work to a subjective point of origination. No longer being predicated on an author, artist or subject, the concept of imagination thus employed would be stretched to the point of becoming not simply unfamiliar but unintelligible according to its conventional norms.[1]

Taking account of these points of antagonism between deconstruction and imagination would also be of consequence for the concept's integration within deconstructive discourse. In addition to the orthodox concept of imagination's resistance to being formulated in deconstruction's terms, one could say, inversely, that deconstruction is compelled to reject or abandon the concept of imagination on account of it being founded, firstly, upon the metaphysics of authorial subjectivity conceived on the basis of self-presence of meaning, and secondly, on the absolute distinction it presupposes between, on the one hand, artistic or mimetic representation, and, on the other, the logos. Were the concept of imagination as it has been inherited to appear in the discourse of deconstruction, it would import a web of interrelated metaphysical presuppositions to whose abandonment and overcoming

deconstruction is committed. As soon as one enlists or employs the concept of imagination with the intention of drawing upon its power to subvert logocentrism, one would in fact become complicit with what one denounces, given that the concept of imagination cannot but reaffirm the divide between the logos as a stable domain of meaning, and art and poetry as haunted by semantic ambiguity and dynamism. Far from imagination proving a valuable resource in the deconstruction of logocentrism, the concept would testify to the limitless capacity of metaphysics to reappropriate projects endeavouring to escape its frameworks. The concept of imagination would thus be relevant to deconstruction only insofar as it attests to Derrida's contention that metaphysical or logocentric premises perpetuate themselves within the conceptual network in which supposedly post-metaphysical thinking is conducted.

On this reading, the concept of imagination would no more admit of being twisted into the form required to conceive of a textual or deconstructive imagination than deconstructive discourse would wish to re-introduce into its discourse the metaphysical presuppositions necessary to the intelligibility of the concept. Derrida has outlined, perhaps most succinctly in the conclusion to "Les Fins de l'homme",[2] the two "options" for deconstruction operating within the closure of metaphysics. While one option would be "tenter la sortie et la déconstruction sans changer de terrain, en répétant l'implicite des concepts fondateurs et de la problématique originelle, en utilisant contre l'édifice les instruments ou les pierres disponibles dans la maison, c'est-à-dire aussi bien dans la langue"; the other would be "décider de changer de terrain de manière discontinue et irruptive, en s'installant brutalement dehors et en affirmant la rupture et la différence absolues". The first mode of deconstruction, in which one would retain the concept of imagination, risks "de confirmer, de consolider ou de *relever* sans cesse à une profondeur toujours plus sûre cela même qu'on prétend déconstruire. L'explication continue vers l'ouverture risque de s'enfoncer dans l'autisme de la clôture". The second strategy, that of an irruptive break from the tradition in which one might abandon entirely the (classical) concept of imagination, risks "habitant plus naïvement, plus étroitement que jamais le dedans qu'on déclare déserter, la simple pratique de la langue réinstalle sans cesse 'le nouveau' terrain sur le plus vieux sol". Availing of the classical concept of imagination with a view to inhabiting a genuinely post-metaphysical "beyond" would succeed only in perpetuating rather than discontinuing that tradition, while

reinventing the concept anew by declaring it to possess an entirely novel sense would result only in the concept operating in accordance with the patterns that hitherto determined it. In either case, one can only reinvent the concept of imagination through a thoroughgoing re-engagement with the concept's past contexts and determinations; such a practice or operation would itself bear upon the question of what imagination might be or might mean. However, what must be gleaned from Derrida's explication of the circumstance in which deconstruction or the post-metaphysical age finds itself is not only that deconstruction is, strictly speaking, a performance that is inscribed *en différance* and as such never arrives at an end, or that a "nouvelle écriture doit en tisser et entrelacer les deux motifs"; it is also that availing of a metaphysical concept such as imagination can by its use or uncritical resurrection reassemble the metaphysical edifice to which it belongs. And yet, to abandon the concept would risk reaffirming the logocentric blindness to the creativity and textual dynamism at work in the philosophical text, and be complicit with the perpetuation of the apparent semantic or conceptual lacuna that leads to this creativity or textual dynamism remaining unidentified and unnamed.

To subscribe to the objections posed by the classical concept of the imagination would lead to a conclusion wholly divergent from that reached above regarding the existence of promising lines of rapport between deconstruction and imagination; it would, rather, be inappropriate to speak of imagination as being illuminated by a supposed deconstructive moment inhering within it, or of deconstruction as being founded upon a certain critical negativity that is brought to bear on the past as a textual resource. Such transformations as would be required to render the concept of imagination relevant to deconstruction might be thought to run the risk of distorting the concept of imagination beyond all recognition. Rather than a fundamental reciprocity between the terms emerging, the relation between deconstruction and imagination would, according to this line of reasoning, be predicated on the basis of an irreducible heterogeneity, a mutual incommensurability precluding the translation of one into the terms of the other.

Such a conclusion would, however, as I will suggest, be premature. For in identifying these impediments to a dialectic of imagination and deconstruction, one is perhaps presented less with insurmountable obstacles than with the major

displacements that a deconstruction of the classical imagination would be entrusted with bringing about. The difficulties appearing to thwart this dialectic perhaps serve to indicate the dislocations that would have to be produced in order for the concept of imagination to be relevant in a post-metaphysical epoch.

Such a deconstruction of imagination is perhaps possible or conceivable only because such displacements are not entirely unprecedented in the philosophical history of the concept of imagination. I will endeavour to demonstrate that such displacements are—partially—achieved in Hegel's conception of imagination, even if in the end they remain inchoate and are all but extinguished by the logocentric forces at work within his own philosophy. In Hegel's system of the dialectical progression of spirit in his *Encyclopaedia of the Sciences in Outline*, not only does a concept of imagination emerge in which it is radically displaced as a faculty and reinvented as a series of dialectical moments attributed to a particular shape (*Gestalt*) of spirit or *Geist* in its development; within the dialectical progression of imagination, Hegel also specifically formulates two dialectical moments of imagination that are linguistic or textual in nature. As such, there can be detected in Hegel a conception of imagination in which it belongs to a particular historical consciousness (rather than to this or that individual) and in which the creativity of imagination bears upon language (rather than being of relevance solely to the field of subjective representation or the visual arts).

My aim in this chapter, then, is to outline the two fundamental objections to the pursuit of a dialectic between the concepts or operations of deconstruction and imagination: firstly, what can be called the psychological objection that might issue from a Husserlian phenomenological viewpoint; and secondly, what might be called the linguistic objection that would emanate not only from Husserlian phenomenology but also from the Platonist determination of the relation between mimesis and logos. Inversely, my aim is to outline the antipathy or indifference of Derridean deconstruction to the classical conception of imagination. In the course of outlining these points of conflict, I will offer some indications of the way in which the Hegelian revision of the conception of imagination—and a deconstructive reading of Hegel that pursues his revision of the concept beyond Hegelianism—might serve in overcoming these objections.

(i) First Antagonism: The Resistance of the Phenomenological and Psychological Conceptions of Imagination to Deconstruction: The Reduction of Imagination to Imagining

In adumbrating this first point of apparent incommensurability between imagination and deconstruction, it will be a question of laying out how a traditional psychological, empirical or phenomenological determination of the concept proves to be resistant to the dialectic between deconstruction and imagination. By focusing on objections that might be levelled against a reductionist phenomenological or psychological imagination, the need for a concept of imagination founded, firstly, on a subject conceived as constituted in the other, and secondly, on a more historical conception, will emerge. Since the notion of the textual imagination depends upon the idea of (a) language or a semiological system of conventions generating potentialities, any attempt to conceive of the "imagining subject" within the context of the text can be achieved only by relating the subject to potentialities that exceed the interiority of a psychological faculty. What will emerge is that the dialectic between deconstruction and imagination can be pursued only with a certain concept of imagination; it can be pursued only if it is possible to displace the "imagining subject" from the conventional psychological or phenomenological context to a semiological and historical context. The possibility of such a displacement—in which the imagining subject is conceived in relation to the system of representation that exceeds and constitutes it historically—will be seen to have a precedent in Hegel's system as outlined in his *Encyclopaedia*.

Husserl reconceives imagination on the basis of a founding insight of phenomenology, that of consciousness being structured in the form of intentionality. Intentionality expresses the structure of consciousness insofar as it is the intending of an object other to it. For Husserl consciousness is necessarily consciousness *of* something; imagination exists alongside perception and signitive (linguistic) consciousness as forms of intentionality, as modes in which consciousness intends an object. They are all variations of an act in which a subject intends an object that transcends the act of consciousness. Husserl demonstrates that even in the imaginative

act that intends an imaginary being (a centaur), this is still the case. For whether or not centaurs exist is irrelevant to the structure of the imaginative act as the intending of a centaur. In the more technical terminology Husserl will use following the *Logical Investigations* in the *Ideas*,[3] he speaks of the noematic essence (of the object intended) as being irreducible to the noetic act (of imagining); the noetic refers to the act of thinking or of experiencing, while the noematic refers to the thing thought or experienced. It is this noematic element that exists in the perceptual as well the imaginative act; it is the noematic essence intended in the imaginative act that exists irrespective of whether or not the imagined object exists. In subtle analyses, Husserl demonstrates that the object imagined is not the imagined object, that, in other words, the imagined centaur is not the centaur imagined: the imagined object is real (even if referring to a centaur), while the latter need not be real (such as is in fact the case in the example of the centaur). While the former exists (the centaur *is* the object of my act of imagining just as Pierre may be the object of my perception), the latter need not. The centaur's nonexistence is incidental with regard to the structure of intentional consciousness; in fact the nonexistence of the object imagined serves to lay bare the object-directedness of all conscious experience, to set in relief consciousness's orientation toward an object exceeding it; for even when the referent of the object has no existence—as in the case of the centaur—consciousness remains the intentional act directed toward an object. Imagination brackets the existence of empirical and worldly objects, intending the noematic essence of an object, irrespective of the factual existence of that object.

As such, imagination is of immense theoretical significance for the phenomenologist, and will prove to be pivotal to the decisive shift in Husserlian thinking in *Ideas* (1913); for the Husserlian epoché or reduction introduced in that work, which enables the phenomenologist to bracket the presuppositions of the "natural attitude", that is, to suspend judgement on and engagement with the empirical or accidental features of the world, is founded upon the potentiality of imagination to set aside or remain indifferent to the world in the particularity of its factual state of being. As such, the enclosed space of imagination, as the act intending a noematic essence or an object the existence or actuality of which is neither affirmed nor denied, stakes out the domain of consciousness within which phenomenological investigation—and in effect for Husserl, genuine philosophical thinking—takes place.

Husserl's investigation into imagination as a particular act of consciousness discloses the pure "interiority" of consciousness as grounded in an "outward-oriented" predisposition, as founded on (noetic) acts directed towards (noematic) objects that transcend that act; it is this structure that phenomenology is not only to investigate, it is also that form of consciousness which a philosophical form of thought seeking to exclude the contamination of presuppositions regarding the nature of empirical reality must assume. Both imagination and phenomenological thought suspend positing the existence of, and assuming to be known, the empirical world that would interrupt thought's phenomenological presentation of itself to itself. What proves decisive is thus the distinction between, on the one hand, the empirical world set over against consciousness, and on the other, the noematic essences that transcend consciousness but do not form part of the empirical world; it is imagining such essences as centaurs that forcefully brings this distinction, and much else besides, to light.

If imagination discloses the act-object dynamic proper to conscious experience and intentionality, phenomenological intentionality as brought to bear on the analysis of imagination brings to light its object-directedness, its "outward-oriented" disposition, its transcendence of the interior contents of mind. Husserl would never tire of critiquing the classical psychological reification of the image as an inner mental thing, and a physiological epiphenomenon. Grasping imagination as the intending of an object irreducible to an image marked a decisive historical shift in its conception; no longer could it be conceived as an intra-psychical conjuring of fictions, a necessarily insular act in which the mind toys with the facile potentialities of its representations, an aberrant or anomalous act of consciousness diverting the mind from its ontological engagement with reality. Imagination is no less an engagement with what exceeds the subject for being concerned with the fictional, for its suspension of positing the existence of the object intended. Hence the fact that Husserl will analyse imagination not only alongside memory, but also alongside other intentional acts of consciousness, re-contextualising imagination within a field that includes perceptual and signitive (linguistic) acts of consciousness. (We shall note in Husserl's analyses this proximity of imagination to the intentional act of linguistic signification—signitive intentionality—but also the clear distinction he makes between them, in the course of considering a second fundamental antagonism between a more classical and textual conception of imagination.) But in order to grasp

why the apparently concrete or even self-evident point of departure assumed or provided by the phenomenological analysis of imagination could not, from a Derridean perspective, constitute a sound principle on which a theory of imagination can be grounded, one would have to take up a the manner in which phenomenology reduces imagination to imagining in the first place.

The phenomenological approach to imagination is reductionist in that it assumes the primacy or privilege of imagination in its most concrete and empirical forms. This predetermination is complicit with a desire to return to phenomena as they are given, in this case to imagination as the intending of an object either through a "mental" image or through an external image. It is perhaps no coincidence that Husserl's delimitation of the concept of imagination is such that, as a phenomenon, it falls within the intentional acts of consciousness Husserl determines as presenting themselves to a subject reflexively turned inward toward its own conscious acts. Notwithstanding these preparatory delimitations of the concept of imagination made in advance of its phenomenological analysis, Husserl also makes clear that imagination plays a role within the methodology of imagination, noting the paradox that in its investigation of the essences of objects (eidetic phenomenology) phenomenologists must make use of imagination so as to entertain the range of possibilities by which the object under investigation can be delimited and defined. Husserl is thus not unaware of the irony that the philosophical investigation of essences is radically dependent on the capacity of imagination to generate fictional possibilities; such a recognition is as familiar as Aristotle's recognition that, when attempting to penetrate the essential nature of things, Attic tragedy's entertaining of the possible amounts to a superior basis to the historian's knowledge of the empirically or accidentally factual. In any case, imagination features within phenomenology's methodology of eidetic variation, in which the nature of the thing under investigation is imagined in all its variety, ideally to the point that its possibilities are exhausted, at which point its essence can be deduced. Imagination as such a form of entertaining and systematically exhausting the possible is irreducible to what might be called imagining, to the picturing of images, the drift into idle reverie. But while Husserl recognises that imagination is at issue within his philosophy both as an object of analysis (as illustrative of the intentionality of consciousness) *and* as it is pressed into service in the methodological procedures of

eidetic variation, he fails to acknowledge the irony that the intentional acts of imagining to be analysed do not include the more complex operation of imagination that is itself operative within phenomenological analysis.

It is this double implication of imagination as an object and a "tool" of phenomenological philosophy that forms the point of departure for Richard Kearney's analysis of Husserl's understanding of imagination[4] as well as figuring within John Sallis's critique of it. While Kearney implicitly takes the imagination as employed and as analysed to be more or less the same, Sallis's critique is founded on the recognition of a discrepancy between the imagining that phenomenology analyses and the more sophisticated form it assumes as employed in phenomenology's eidetic mode of analysis. Sallis wonders if Husserl can reasonably restrict the object of phenomenological analysis to two modes of imagining, to the intentionality of the (inner, visual) image and of the picture. In the context of analysing Husserl's analyses of imagination in its two forms—as the intending of an object through an internal image (phantasy) and through a material and external image (image-consciousness)—Sallis wonders whether this reductive mode of analysis is valid:

> The question is whether imagination can deploy its force in these ways, only in apprehension in and through an image. Is it certain that imagination—that what has been called by the diverse names that we gather under the name of imagination—comes about only as imagining, only in the specific comportment to images that this name designates and that the phenomenology of imagination—or rather, of imagining—takes as the exclusive theme of its analyses? [5]

The complex form that imagination assumes in phenomenological methodology would suggest that Sallis is correct to pose the question. The objects of a phenomenological analysis of imagination or imagining would scarcely encompass the more complex use made of imagination within phenomenological analysis itself, let alone the sense it has acquired from Aristotle to Kant as the *mediator* between the senses and intelligibility. Would imagination as it is employed in phenomenological analysis itself conform to the type of distinct intentional act that makes itself amenable to phenomenological analysis? The phenomenological imagination that concerns itself with varying the possibilities of a given object is irreducible to visualising an absent object or intending a non-present entity. What Husserl fails to recognise is that his theory of imagination would not encompass the more complex

modes of imagination that he himself recognises to be operative within phenomenological analysis and within philosophising construed as assuming a phenomenological form. The "extra" use or form of imagination in phenomenological methodology is necessarily the case of imagination missing from the forms of imagination analysed. The inevitability of this blind-spot in the phenomenology of imagination issues from its restrictive predetermination of imagination, from its desire to return to imagination as it is phenomenally given to consciousness.

One could pursue the blind-spot that inevitably recurs in phenomenological analyses of imagination in more recent works. Edward Casey's rigorous phenomenological analysis in *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study*[6] yields important positive results with regard to the nature of imagining. Casey draws upon his own personal examples of imagining—exemplary cases of imagining devised so as to serve as objects of his phenomenological analysis. The acts of imagining that take place in each separate case (in which Casey entertains images of swimming dolphins, for instance) do not constitute the same operation of imagination by which he devises *several hypothetical cases* of imagining for the purpose of phenomenologically analysing them. This is a vital distinction that remains unacknowledged in Casey's work. Let us try to spell it out clearly. The project of imagination by which, according to the necessities of eidetic variation, he brings into being a representative sample of acts of imagining is *not* the same act of imagining involved in picturing dolphins. We have in the one case the act of imagination as the imagining of a specific visual scene, in the other a complex operation of imagining a variety of possibilities, an act intertwined within a complex operation (that of phenomenological analysis). In the one case, imagining is a primarily visual operation, an act distinguishable from or independent of others, identifiable as an activity having a more or less definite and uninterrupted duration—in this sense of imagining, one is either imagining or one is not; in the other (the use phenomenological analysis makes of imagination), Casey is bringing into being a number of cases that had hitherto not existed, in a series of operations embedded within the aims and horizon of a broader project: he is *varying* the cases to be considered so as to present instances for a future analysis; he is entertaining the possibilities of a certain phenomenon (in this case, of imagining, but which could pertain to any number of objects of phenomenological analysis). When Casey is

imagining (creating) *cases* of imagining, creating examples that will serve as an exhaustive field to be analysed, the object or product of imagination can be described in terms of possibilities, examples or exemplary cases; however, when he is imagining (visualising) an object or a scene, the object or product of imagination can be described in terms of images, or as Husserl will hasten to point out, the object intended in the image.

What is omitted from Casey's analysis of examples of imagining (productive visualisation or of sensory reproduction) are the acts of imagining (the creation of hypothetical possibilities) that belong to phenomenological methodology, that appear in all cases of eidetic variation, whether or not imagining is the phenomenon being investigated. This is to overlook the significant role imagination plays in the phenomenological epoché. Phenomenological analysis cannot include within its own objects of analysis the form imagination must assume in its operation, in the erection of its theoretical and methodological procedures. It escapes Casey's analysis because he has predetermined imagination more or less as the picturing of images, as the flight into reverie, thereby blinding himself to the sophisticated mode imagination assumes within his own methodological procedures. As Sallis points out, it is hardly surprising that, having delimited imagination as imagining for the purposes of its phenomenological analysis, Casey will conclude imagination to be "a special form of self-entertainment in which the imaginer amuses himself with what he conjures."[7]

The conclusions that Casey reaches are thus in part a function of the phenomenological manner in which he sets up his enquiry. The autonomy that he wishes to secure for imagination is assured by his preliminary delimitation of imagination as imagining, as an act distinguishable from other mental acts. Only by predetermining or understanding imagination as an immutable entity, a transparent and *sui generis* act of a specific duration, a mental activity undertaken by a single subject, can imagination first be made amenable to reflexive phenomenological observation.[8] The reduction of imagination to imagining is perhaps also the reduction of imagination to a certain frivolous activity, an operation that, in conformity with a generalised philosophical or logocentric assessment of imagination, is of no concern to the serious business of the logos or thought. While Casey seeks, as he states, to provide a counterbalance to the philosophical repression of imagination, his desire for

a certain empirical rigour may be complicit with a logocentric determination of imagination that renders it sufficiently impotent not to have any bearing upon reason and philosophical thinking. Reclaiming for imagination or imagining its rigour is not to defy its logocentric determination; on the contrary, the conception of imagination as an autonomous act, as identifiable in a supposed purity, is to remain complicit with the philosophical desire to segregate and exclude imagination from its own practices. To combat effectively the logocentric determination of imagination, one must recognise its diffuse activity and effects within the allegedly autonomous domain of philosophical thought, the logos, and the prose of thought.

The truth of imagination may not be exhausted by an analysis of imagining. In other words, imagination as a phenomenon may not present or disclose itself entirely in the readily available, simple mental acts to which phenomenologists restrict themselves, as when Sartre at the beginning of *L'Imagination*[9] sets forth his own mental reproduction of a *feuille blanche* as immediately encapsulating the phenomenon of imagination. If the imagination as analysed phenomenologically is incapable of shedding light on its operation in more complex modes of imagination, it is perhaps on account of it being founded on the exclusion or marginalisation of two interrelated facets of imagination; firstly, the object or product of imagination insofar as it exceeds the act or subject and belongs to codes and conventions within which signs and images are invested with meaning, the recognition of which discloses imagination as a dialectic between the act *and* object or product of imagination; secondly, the historical diversity of forms of imagination, a diversity that is disclosed precisely by framing imagination in terms of a dynamism between act and object. To recognise the dynamism of imagination as founded upon a relation between its act and object, or to perceive imaginative creativity as arising from the potentialities opened up by the subject's relation to the conventions of signification and representation, would be to broach a conception of the imagination no longer conceivable as an immutable faculty or structure but whose phenomenality would be irreducibly historically variegated.

In the first place, phenomenology brackets the *object* of imagination insofar as it belongs to complex systems and codes of meaning. Taking the image to be nothing other than a vehicle for the object intended in it (the represented, the referent) or for

an intentional act, the phenomenology of imagination fails to take due account of the fact that the objects intended are mediated and overdetermined by their codification and stylisation. In other words, the phenomenological perspective tends to overlook the dynamic relation between the acts and objects of imagination, the dialectic by which the conditions in which imagination is operative are altered. It may be that the truth of imagination does not lie in those modes of imagining that are most readily available or supposedly given to phenomenological or introspective forms of analysis, but that, on the contrary, their very immediacy to consciousness serves to disguise as much as it reveals, to obfuscate imagination as it reveals itself within a dialectic between the subject and the extant forms and modes of representation. The nature of the images we produce and are confronted with, which constitute the *objects* of imagination, are perhaps as significant in the analysis of imagination as is the psychological *act* of imagination. As we noted, Husserl himself recognises that the noematic essence transcends the noetic act of imagining; but is not this transcendence also precisely the recognition that images, pictures, works of art belong to a complex and culturally-coded system of meanings, to historically particular conventions which a phenomenological analysis of the act of imagination can never exteriorise, reduce, or bracket (according to the phenomenological epoché or the reduction)? Do not images, such as that of a centaur, belong in the first place to an *imaginaire* which conditions and invests them with symbolic meaning, and to which the "imagining subject" is first exposed, such exposure playing a role in the active process by which the subject is "constituted"? Of this, Husserl, certainly in his early work prior to the notion of the *Lebenswelt*, seems only dimly aware. His formation of the concept of the noematic would be responsible in part for the displacement taking place in Sartre's work on the imagination, shifting as it did from the study of the *imagination* to the *imaginaire*. *L'imaginaire* is his translation of the noematic object engaged by the imagination: "Cet ouvrage [*L'Imaginaire: psychologie phénoménologique de l'imagination*] a pour but de décrire la grande fonction 'irréalisante' de la conscience ou 'l'imagination' et son corrélatif noématique."[10] The hermeneutic tradition in Continental philosophy, exemplified by the work of Paul Ricoeur, Jean-Pierre Richard and others,[11] and arising out of certain dissatisfactions with the conventional methodology of phenomenological analysis, attempted to provide a counterbalance to Husserlian phenomenology's inordinate privileging of the noetic act of imagining; hermeneutics shifts the analysis to the devices, codes and conventions by which

meaning is generated and which necessitate the work of interpretation. Imagination is to be studied not only as an act but also in terms of the *imaginaire* and within the context of the historical and cultural accumulation of more or less common meanings and forms of signification (symbolic, metaphorical, etc.). Thus, Ricoeur's work will turn away from eidetic phenomenology toward the analysis of symbol and metaphor. And, in Richard's seminal hermeneutic work *L'Univers imaginaire de Mallarmé*,[12] greater emphasis is placed on the manner in which Mallarmé avails of images, signs and polysemantic terms insofar as they belong to a language and tradition exceeding the individual poet, to a historical and linguistic heritage which, for Mallarmé at least, appears not to be an impediment to imagination, but rather the disclosure of the dynamic field of its endless potentialities.

Such work discloses the possibility of rethinking the imagination in terms of a subject not founded on the basis of the self-presence of intentional acts wholly transparent to consciousness, and other than as a faculty at the disposal of an imagining subject; rather, it perhaps suggests the necessity of rethinking imagination in terms of the subject's relation to the other, to the systems of representations and modes of interpretation by which the subject and meaning are constituted. If imagination is to be conceived as inextricably bound up with creativity, does imagination not amount precisely to the relation between the subject and the other in its most creative, dynamic and inventive form?

This leads us to the second repression integral to a phenomenological conception of imagining. To recognise the dynamism of imagining as relating both to an act and an object, to the reciprocal relation between the subject and a culturally invested codification of meanings, is also to re-open imagination to its historical vicissitudes. It is to recognise a certain ahistorciality in the phenomenological imagination by which it appears as an immutable act perpetrated in a timeless vacuum. A (Husserlian) phenomenological investigation of imagination attains its rigour only by severely delimiting and circumscribing imagination, by reducing it to its more "primitive" modes of activity, and by abstracting it from the cultural and historical context in which it is operative. The stability won by privileging originary forms of imagination can have the effect of casting imagination as a static phenomenon, disguising the fact that it has been reinvented beyond its relation to

reproductive memory, beyond the intra-psychical scene it is assumed to inhabit, and in accordance with the potentialities of historically inflected and culturally differentiated systems and modes of representation. As we will see when we come to examine Hegel's more historicist conception of imagination, the treatment of imagination that reduces it to an empirical faculty recognisable in acts of producing images or in recognising what is represented or depicted in a picture, scarcely appears as exhausting the concept or as capturing its essence; on the contrary, from the perspective afforded by the Hegelian system in which the truth of the phenomenon lies in its historically differentiated moments, imagination in the reductionist and manageable mode that it assumes as an object of phenomenological analysis appears as a primitive or early historical moment of imagination. Rather than being given to self-consciousness in the immediacy of a present mental act, imagining, as the act of mentally reproducing images or recognising the referent of a picture, would be a remnant of imagination in its nascent form. Precisely because such forms of imagining are rudimentary, they close over and blind us to the question of what might have become of imagination—or how it might have generated possibilities for itself—once representation ceased to be restricted to inner visual picturing or the creation of mimetic objects. Since phenomenological analysis restricts itself to the forms of imagination that can be witnessed by a reflexive consciousness, it fails to pose the question of what might have become of imagination beyond its nascent states in forms in which it is not a *sui generis* and punctual act, but in which it is operates in language or in artistic creation, or more generally, in the use of the elements of a conventional system. It prohibits itself from pursuing the notion that imagination becomes the more general negation of sensible materiality that produces nonmimetic signs; it cannot entertain the notion that imagination assumes the more general form of a productive suspension of the given, at least in terms of it being a force that transgresses existing representational conventions. Thus, phenomenology appears to be distinctly impotent in responding to the question of the imaginative origination of linguistic signs or abstract works of art, both of which attest to representation or signification having dispensed with recognisably figurative modes of representation and to it relying on conventions. The imagination that phenomenologists take to lie closest, to be illuminated in the reflexive act of turning inward toward it, would, from a historicist or Hegelian standpoint, be the imagination as it emerged only in the early development of humanity, in a phase Hegel describes as "subjective spirit" when

consciousness was closed in upon itself and had yet to attain to communal forms and objective systems of meaning. Thus, while Husserlian phenomenology encourages us to seek imagination by being more attentive to the inwardness of consciousness, Hegelian "genealogy" directs us to seek imagination in its changing forms as they arise from imagination's relation to its various alterities and to diverse representational objects.

If imagination has come to assume such complex forms as that evinced in eidetic variation in phenomenological analysis, the concept ought to designate the manner in which a number of individuated acts are organised to form a coherent and purposive whole (such as in the complex narrative of the creation of a work of art, or entertaining a hypothesis or, as I will suggest, in the deconstructive reading of a text). And if our creative imaginative capacities are no longer confined to the ability to produce internal, or even external, material images, the concept of imagination ought perhaps to reflect the broadening of our creativity, the complex configurations in which it comes to be operative (within traditions, art forms, and cultural codes). Such developments in the phenomenon of imagination are perhaps already reflected in the breadth of the word's senses extending beyond the capacity to reproduce images or generate representations, beyond the creation of complex artistic and poetic works, toward a general capacity for originality and the transgression of what is given (whether this is what is given sensibly or within the existing epochal conventions).

To be sure, we still possess the capacity to recall and picture images internally; and we have by no means lost the capacity to recognise—in a certain, elementary sense of the words—what is *depicted* or *represented* in pictures. But the notion of imagination is not exhausted by the recollection of images or by the recognition of an intended object in a picture. And such capacities are not impervious to the radical changes that the culture of the image has undergone in western history, and as such cannot be analysed comprehensively in isolation from a historically differentiated "progression" of representation, from the "effects" that the differentiated historical field of pictorial art or literary imagery will have had upon it, or from the increasingly sophisticated symbolic, metaphorical and tropic modes of signification in which images or signs are always already inscribed or embroiled. To dispel the notion that the mimetic resemblance between representation and

represented—and the imagination as the mode of recognising the represented object through such resemblance—remains ever-present, one need only survey the extraordinary diversity manifest in the history of art; while imagination may name a certain capacity that transcends such differences, until the concept is inflected in accordance with such historical and cultural diversity, it will remain an abstraction. Even if, as I later argue, Hegel ultimately remains true to the logocentric thesis that the logos's transcendence of imagination amounts to the end of all variations in imagination, it is in his work that imagination is most promisingly opened up to its differentiated historical forms.

As Sallis says of rejecting a phenomenological approach to imagination, it may lead to a "more differentiated, if less stable, field",[13] to a discourse bereft of the rigour to which an analysis of imagining can lead. But it may also lead to fundamental insights into imagination. For the truth of imagination may lie less in its origination or its originary moments or forms, than in its capacity to reinvent the conditions in which it is itself operating by the nature of what it has created—by the modes of signification or the art forms it ushers into being. Such changes as might have to be taken into account in the vicissitudes of the conditions in which imagination is operative are not only attributable to history, or the history of representation; on the contrary, insofar as one attributes to imagination the creation of modes of signification, as Hegel does, imagination is *itself* implicated in the dynamic alteration of the conditions under which it is itself operating. In, for example, the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* creating a nonmotivated mode of signification and the system of language, it might be supposed that imagination transforms its own potentialities, bringing into being new objects with which it might engage, opening up the conditions in which poetry will emerge. So immense are certain of imagination's creations that it begets a new scene of creativity for itself. But all such considerations of imagination as having evolved in relation to the advent of modes of representation, art forms, writing and so on, remain entirely inadmissible within the constraints that phenomenology imposes upon itself, restricting itself to imagination as it stands in its infancy, before the complexity of its accumulated products obscured its simple, and relatively independent operation.

From a critique of the Husserlian phenomenology of imagination focusing on its ahistoricism and its lack of sophistication with regard to the intersubjective conventions of representation, it can perhaps be seen why a Derridean or deconstructionist position would find it to be historically naïve, and to have invested its faith both in a signified supposed to have transcended the history of its determinations, and in the phenomenon or "thing itself" of imagination as an immutable act. Certainly the phenomenological imagination would fail to provide an adequate response to the postmodern scene of imagination, whether this scene is interpreted as the omnipresent expansion of imagination and its products and/or as its demise in endless reproducibility. A Hegelian (historical, genealogical) phenomenology of imagination offers a basis for considerations of an imagination that can be ascribed to a particular historically embedded consciousness rather than to an individual as a subjective faculty, and to which can be attributed not merely this or that image or work, but the codes and conventions within which creative acts take place.

But prior to investigating the promise that a deconstructive reading of Hegel offers, we must consider a second fundamental obstacle to the notion of a deconstructive imagination. Resemblance appears to play a role in the forms of representation most readily associated with imagination to the exclusion of the nonmotivated mode of signification operative in language. The restriction of imagination to motivated or mimetic modes of representation would render it more or less irrelevant to the creative regeneration of signs and signified meaning as well as to the deconstruction of texts. Deconstruction could only be related to imagination—and imagination to deconstruction—if it should prove to be possible to conceive of imagination as being closely related to the nonmotivated mode of linguistic signification, to signifiers and to the potentialities of a linguistic system rather than being of relevance solely to visual modes of representation. If, as Hegel's work suggests, imagination undergoes a historical and dialectical moment in which it creates a linguistic sign—a sign no longer conforming to the visual or mimetic form of the imagination's conventional objects—the concept of imagination would have to be inflected to take account of this radical overhaul in its constitution, its objects and its products.

(ii) Second Antagonism: Mimetic Resemblance as Delimiting Imagination, and Nonmotivated Signification as its Transcendence

It remains to adumbrate the antagonism between imagination and deconstruction according to which the classical concept of imagination resists being displaced to a textual and linguistic field; while imagination is conventionally associated with or even restricted to mimetic modes of representation, language is understood as functioning by virtue of a nonmotivated and conventional sign. This apparent heterogeneity or incommensurability lies at the heart of the oppositions of imagination/logos, imagination/reason, philosophy/art, and so on. However, classical definitions of the sign and the imagination can be found in which they are both defined in terms of bringing an absent object to presence; while Kant's empirical imagination is defined of in terms of intuiting absent objects, Derrida tells us that the classical sign is defined as the provisional loss of presence within a trajectory of restoring the signified, referent, or thing to presence; as such, imagination and signification bear close relation.[14] Nonetheless, the traditional organisation of the philosophical conceptual field, which differentiates between the mimetic image and the nonmotivated sign, proves resistant to pursuing the interrelations between imagination and the sign; this resistance will become apparent through recounting the logic underlying Plato's hierarchical segregation of the logos and mimesis, or the conventional sign and the figurative representation founded upon resemblance, as well as that underlying Husserl's distinction between imaginative and signitive forms of intentionality. In critiquing both of these models, it will come to light that both Plato and Husserl fail to recognise not only the essential role played by the negation of sensible content in the representational or signifying operation of the image *and* the sign (*seeing-as*), but also the possibility of imagination being conceived on the basis of semiological or representational conventions.

The underlying reason for pursuing a conception of imagination in terms of semiological negativity and conventionality within Hegel's philosophy will also become clear. For in Hegel's notion of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*, it will be possible to discern a radical transgression of the logic by which imagination and the sign are understood to mutually exclude one another; for Hegel attributes to

imagination, as a *Gestalt* of spirit in its nascent state, the creation of the nonmotivated sign, a sign whose sensible content is negated and which gains its sense only by being referred to a conventional signifying system.

(a) Husserlian Phenomenology: Signitive and Imaginative Intentionality

We have seen that for Husserl intentionality is the structure presiding over perception and imagination. In his estimation, the fictionality of the imagined object, rather than drawing into question the intentional structure of consciousness, serves to lay bare its intentional structure; for it identifies consciousness as being object-directed even when the imagined object (e.g. the centaur) does not exist as such. However, Husserl will not restrict intentionality to perception and imagination; he will also include signitive intentionality, or the acts of intending objects through (linguistic) signs, among the intentional acts of consciousness. But this inclusion of signitive acts within the range of intentional forms of consciousness poses a problem with regard to the intuiting of the object intended. As Brian Elliott notes of Husserl: "the act of intention is recognized as having an essential connection to a possible act of intuition whereby the intended object is given to consciousness in direct 'self-presentation'".[15] The nonmotivated signifier or word contains no intuitive content that would relate it to the object signified, even if etymological investigation can serve in detecting its motivated elements. To recognise that, for instance, *tête* derives from a metaphorical transformation of *testa* (pot) serves not to undermine the thesis that linguistic signification functions in a nonmotivated fashion; on the contrary, it merely raises the question of how the question of how such knowledge is incidental to understanding the word *tête* in contemporary French. As Saussure made the point, we need only have a synchronic—and not a diachronic—knowledge o a language to understand it or to be considered "speakers" of it.

In his early thought (in the period of *Ideas*), Husserl will distinguish both signitive and imaginative intentionality from the full presence of the perceptual intuition; in his more technical terminology, there is no "fulfillment" (*Erfüllung*) of the intuition in imagination or signitive intentionality. He thus describes imaginative and signitive intentionality as being "inauthentic" in opposition to the "authentic" (*eigentlich*) intentionality of perception. As such, Husserl recognises a certain affinity

between imagination and the sign, even if only negatively on the basis of their being inauthentic forms of intentionality, or as being other to the "authenticity" of the full intuition provided in perception.[16] They both entail a detour to the intuiting or grasping of an object in its absence. However, Husserl will not overlook the fact that imagination as he defines it bears a closer relation to perception. While imagination may share with signitive acts of consciousness the necessity, or at least the necessary possibility, of an intuition that would fulfill the intention, imagination is more akin to perception in that the intending of an object by means of pictorial resemblance (*Bildähnlichkeit*) also involves sight and perception. Husserl's distinction between signitive and imaginative forms of intentionality presupposes the mimetic resemblance involved in the image or picture; he therefore reaffirms the conventional distinction between imagination and signification. Thus will Brian Elliott, in the course of reading Husserl's attempts to delineate between and grasp the fundamental rapport between perceptual, imaginative and signitive modes of intentionality, note that, for Husserl, "the relation of the sign to the signified is essentially distinct from that of the image to what is imagined".[17]

But Husserl will be forced to recognize a certain implication of imagination within signitive intentionality and language precisely on account of the linguistic signifier not providing the intuitable content relevant to its signified. In his later thought, in contrast to his earlier determination of imagination as "inauthentic", he will describe imagination as providing the "intuitive" fulfillment of intentions:

> It is always the case that the proposition is "possible" if the concrete act of propositional meaning (*Bedeuten*) permits the fulfilling identification with an objectively complete intuition of the same material. Equally, it is irrelevant whether this fulfilling intention is a perception or a mere imaginative formation (*Phantasiebildung*) or something of the kind.[18]

Even if imagination does not provide a *perceptual* intuition, it provides an intuitable content, thereby supplementing the absence of such intuitions in the nonmotivated sign or signitive intentionality. This is of great consequence for propositions with no apparent ontological referent: the proposition "the mountain is gold" is possible or intelligible since I need only have the possibility of imagining such a thing for my intention to be fulfilled. Elliott accordingly recognises that "Husserl's treatment of the imagination wavers in aligning it at times with signification [and] at other times with

perception. Despite such vacillation the overall affinity of imaginative and perceptual presentations as modes of intuition emerges with sufficient clarity."[19] Despite raising the question of the fundamental relation between imagination and the nonmotivated sign, Husserl abides by the more conventional and logocentric tendency to rigorously separate the nonmotivated sign from the representational movement of imagination from an image to what is represented by its resemblance.[20]

However, it may be that this wavering is indicative of a failure to investigate fully the relation between imagination and signification. It could be argued, in the first place, that Husserl's investigations into signitive intentionality are fundamentally defective on account of his failure to address properly questions to linguistic signification's possibility. Husserl will, to be sure, raise the question of the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign, posing the problem in terms of soul and body—an analogy that Saussure describes as "peu satisfaisant". However, despite Husserl recognising that the problem of the two faces presented by the signifier and signified set before phenomenology important problems, the question of how they are related, Derrida notes, "ne sera jamais remise en question".[21] Husserl will devote his investigation into "l'acte pur de l'intention animante et non le corps auquel, de façon mystérieuse, elle s'unit et donne vie. C'est cette unité énigmatique de l'intention informante et de la matière informée que Husserl s'autorise à dissocier au principe. C'est pourquoi [...] il diffère—à tout jamais, semble-t-il—le problème de l'unité des deux faces, le problème de l'union de l'âme et du corps".[22] In effect, Husserl assumes the heterogeneity of the signitive and imaginative modes of intentional consciousness without having fully investigated the conditions of possibility of signitive intentionality or nonmotivated signification, and on the basis of the relation of resemblance in the case of imaginative intentionality.[23] He reaffirms, presupposes or uncritically inherits this opposition of imagination and signification as given by the conceptual field of oppositions (*einbilden/bedeuten*, *Bild/Zeichen*), rather than arriving at it through an investigation of the manner in which signitive intentionality or linguistic signification is in fact possible.[24]

What remains unexplored in Husserl's thinking on the proximity of signitive and imaginative intentionality is the possibility of their being compared in terms of the negation or suspension of perception or the negation of the intuitable materiality

of the sign or images. While this necessity of negativity is obvious in the case of the nonmotivated signifier (the signifier in its materiality "having nothing to do with the signified"), negativity is also evident in the case of pictorial resemblance or *Bildähnlichkeit*. We have seen in Husserl's analysis of *Bildbewusstein* that pictorial likeness is a possibility only for a likeness-constituting consciousness, and that the pictorial object must be recognized as not being one object among others. It must be recognized qua image, just as a sign (word, letter, etc.) must be recognized as such, as belonging to the system of language, which is achieved by its *not* being any other signifier (word, letter, etc.). This recognition is the recognition of the possibility of its negation, of the image or sign being something—a signified, the represented object—*other*, of being irreducible to itself in its material self-identicality. Even though the image bears a likeness to what it represents, it must nonetheless be negated in its materiality for it to perform its representational movement. The image is not the object represented; if for Husserl, as we saw in Chapter II, we behold the flesh-and-blood knight depicted in a picture, it is because we have ceased to view the image qua image, the image as so many lines and colours, and have moved on to deciphering it in terms of what it figures. The mimetic resemblance of an image is thus not without a certain productive negativity that splits the identity of the pictorial representation into image and referent, formal materiality and what is represented.

If both signitive and imaginative intentionality entail a detour from the present fulfillment of a perception of the intended object, it is in part because they entail a negation or suspension of perception, a negation or suspension of the intuitable content of the sign or picture. The negativity of imagination might be described as being the suspension of perception, or the negation of the intuitable content of the image or sign as such, by which the image or sign's capacity to represent something other to itself—whether by mimetic resemblance *or* otherwise—is brought about. Such a conception of imagination would render it relevant not simply to pictorial representation but to signification in general, and would render mimetic representation but one means—among others that would include *langue* or the play of differences necessary to nonmotivated signification—in the generation of a signified.[25]

To entertain such a hypothesis is rendered possible by Hegel's approach to imagination as having been altered in the course of what he understands as the development of spirit or *Geist*. In the case of signitive and imaginative intentionality, they are—assuming imagination not to have been given in the way in which one is endowed with sense faculties—culturally acquired or mutating capacities, the interrelations and differences between them being in part a function of a "historical" broadening of human capacities and forms of representation. The pursuit of such an approach to imagination within the context of Hegelian philosophy is possible not only because of him being the philosopher of negativity par excellence; it is also on account of Hegel recognizing imagination's forms to have been transformed such that the imagination, as the internal recollection of images, as the symbolic generation of universals, as the sign-making imagination, and so on, predominates at particular stages in spirit's development; a new form and product of imagination supersedes its existing modality, rendering the latter if not redundant then of reduced significance, and re-enveloping the existing capacities within its array of potentialities. Thus, for example, reverie may once—at a primitive level of cognitive development—have constituted the highest mode of imagination, and have served to free up representations from being bound to memories and the particularity of such and such an experience and have contributed to the generation of an *imaginaire* or a collective body of symbolic representations from which to draw; but once art has been instituted as a tradition of creating tangible artwork, such reverie amounts to a regression to a less advanced mode of imagination; the private interiority of an undirected entertaining of images falls short of the historically aware consciousness producing work that conforms to or deviates from constituted norms. Such variations in the nature of imaginative negativity as I have attempted to recognise in a pictorial or mimetic and signitive imagination arise at different times in the historical development of representation; within the Hegelian framework, one could hypothesise that the transformation of imaginative negativity takes place such that, in the advent of language, imagination overcomes the apparent necessity of a mimetic resemblance obtaining between signifier as signified. Such progressions from entirely motivated to nonmotivated modes of signification can be recognised in the manner in which hieroglyphic or pictographic characters, through continual use and the forming of habit, lose their ostensible mimetic relation to their signified and become in effect a nonmotivated sign.

The wavering that Elliott detects in Husserl between imagination's proximity to signification and perception arises perhaps from Husserl failing to investigate perceptual, imaginative and signitive intentionality in terms of their genesis, from the more genetic or historicist perspective afforded, for example, by Hegel. The rigour that can be imputed to phenomenological analysis is rooted in its desire to analyse what is given to consciousness and upon the bracketing of such—extraneous—concerns as the historical conventionality or culturally and temporally variegated modes of negating the sensible content of images and signs.[26] However, within Hegelianism, the question of relating what Husserl terms imaginative and signitive intentionality becomes possible on the basis of their being moments in the development of humanity at an early stage of its development, between which a certain continuity and discontinuity can be recognised: the continuity would be recognisable in the operation of negativity, in the operation of the sign (intuition) pointing away from itself in both the image *and* the sign, while the discontinuity would manifest itself in the variation between the mimetic mode of signification evident in the visual image and the nonmotivated or conventional form of signification evident in the linguistic sign. If, in the development of spirit, imagination begins as differentiating itself from perception such that it intuits an absent object by virtue of an image or a mimetic picture, it could also be said that imagination remains at the heart of the presencing of objects through the negation of the intuitable contents of signifiers or words. It is from within the perspective offered by Hegel's philosophy of subjective spirit, in which he treats of the formative stages in the development of human capacity for representation (*Vorstellung*), signification and thought (*Gedanke*), that I will pursue this thesis in Part II.

(b) Plato on Mimesis, Logos and *Phantasia*: Delimiting the Field Proper to Eikastic Imagination

However obvious it may appear that imagination is concerned only with relations of mimetic resemblance, this logic is not natural; it has a history and is itself the product of a conventional determination of meaning and of the concept of imagination. One can find instances of imagination being opposed to nonmotivated signification at a stage in which the founding oppositions of western thought were being instituted. It is

well-known that Plato erects the distinction between the logos and the mimetic arts, between philosophical dialogue and those—degenerate—forms of representation more readily identifiable with the creative activity of imagination; but what has perhaps yet to be sufficiently recognised is the significant role that Plato's semiological determination of the word as a nonmimetic and *conventional* signifier in the *Cratylus* plays in the formation of the opposition of the logos and the imagination. Plato's differentiation of the conventionality of the linguistic sign from the mimetic nature of other forms of representation establishes the autonomy of the logos, delimits the field of the concept of imagination, and safeguards the logos from its deleterious effects. This originary delimitation of imagination can be observed if we analyse, firstly, the cave allegory of the *Republic* and Plato's concept of the eikastic imagination as the turning away from the sensible (the illusory simulacra presented to the senses) toward the originals (the Ideas or Forms) in whose image they are fashioned, and thus towards the intelligible; secondly, the imagination creative of allegory of which Plato avails, and which produces what constitutes for Plato an ideal *self-erasing* allegorical signifier productive of an abstract intelligible meaning; and thirdly, the transcendence of imagination in the conventional linguistic sign, the sign proper to the logos in which the philosophical signifier erases itself entirely in the operation of signifying the ideal metaphysical entities posited by Plato. The conventional sign effectively erases itself and any trace of a mimetic relation. My analysis is in effect retracing the Platonist concept of imagination from its initial form in which it initiates the metaphysical ascent, its most exalted form in the mimetic production of an abstract allegorical sense, to the point at which imagination is transcended in the logos. But if imagination is understood as operating within the conventionality of linguistic signs rather than as confined to the field of mimetic representation, its activity within the logos can be recognised.

The eikastic imagination—"eikasia" deriving from *eikon*, meaning "image" or "copy", and from *eiko* meaning "to be like"—penetrates through the image (*imago* or copy) to the original; in seeing through the image to the original reality underlying it, it sets in motion the metaphysical turn away from the immediacy of sensible presence. While the eikastic imagination is necessary to the metaphysical ascent toward the Ideas, the phantastic imagination is its corrupt imitation, embodied in the figures of the artist and the sophist; it is the imagination that produces simulacra, images of

images, images twice removed from the original or Idea. In its phantastic form, imagination poses the ineradicable threat of breaking open a pathway (to sophistry, to mimetic representations) no longer oriented toward the telos of intellection of the Platonic Ideas. *Eikasia* is thus the proper representation of the original, the presentation in an image of the original that brings it to light or into view, while *phantasia* is the errant simulation of this operation, the creation of a simulacrum or phantasm twice removed from an original whose "authority" it is in danger of effacing and undermining.[27]

The ambiguity of the imagination for Platonist metaphysics, by which it assumes wholly different forms and values in its eikastic and phantastic forms, can be grasped by discerning the essential, liberating role it plays in the philosopher's ascent toward the Ideas that it also threatens to frustrate and derail. The cave allegory in the *Republic* charts the metaphysical ascent by which the would-be philosopher is to emerge from the play of reflections within the shadowy cavernous underworld and ascend toward the immutable Ideas or Forms which can be grasped only in the element of the logos. The Forms are thus represented in the allegory by the world of objects amenable to the senses and that are illuminated by the Sun—by the absolute form of the Good beyond being (*epekeina tes ousia*)—by what, in a literal sense, they are absolutely not, by the phenomenal objects of the world that are mere copies of the Ideas or Forms within Plato's ontology. If Plato must represent man's congenital circumstance as being condemned to gaze upon shadowy reflections within a cave, it is because the sensible things ordinarily available to perception are themselves illusory to the extent that they are but faded reflections of the Ideas. The reflections seen by the prisoners born into bondage are already images caught up within a play of simulacra; for Plato, the human condition is such that we are born unwittingly gazing upon simulacra. As Richard Kearney notes in the course of reading Plato's conception of the objects of perception, the "most dangerous type of imagining is that which does not openly proclaim that it is imagining—thus allowing it to be mistaken for reality."[28] Just as the prisoner's gaze is innately fastened onto reflections, so the human subject finds itself thrust into the world in a state of imaginative or imaginary illusion.

But within this scene, imagination can name not only the state of illusion in which man congenitally finds himself; it also names—in its eikastic form—the possibility of man initiating his liberation, of discerning in images the originals that lie behind them, and of distinguishing between the faithful image (*eikon*) and the phantasm. The eikastic imagination passes from the imitation to the imitated, facilitates seeing the image as something other to itself (an image *of* an original), thus responding to the predicament posed by the originary presentation to perception of simulacra. As a form of what Sallis calls "double-seeing",[29] eikastic imagination is necessary to the ascent from the cave in that it enables a humanity enfettered in the illusory play of simulacra to ascend to the level at which the sensible things of this world can be seen to be but copies of the timeless Ideas or Forms (*dianoia*), and ultimately to the logos in which discourse and dialogue permit their contemplation. The distinction between *eikasia* and *phantasia* lies, as Sallis has pointed out, in a duplicity in the image itself, between, on the one hand, its power to reveal itself as a copy of an original, to let the original present itself within the image; and on the other hand, its power to distort the original or simulate its faithful image, to generate images of images that, far from acknowledging or betraying their status as such, pass themselves off as faithful images. Imagination in its phantastic form destines those seduced by it to wander in the midst of simulacra, of images of images, without ever emerging from the proliferation of images begetting yet more images into the illumination provided by transcendent Ideas: the sophist, the poet and the painter are among those who revel in this mode of imagination for its own sake, and who, like a counterfeiter, peddle simulacra that have lost their power to shed light on the original from which they issue.[30]

Imagination does not, then, come to be founded on a certain equivocal evaluation, or on a certain splitting of its powers that would befall its originary and unitary form or source. It is in and of itself, or from the outset, eikastic and phantastic, both interior and exterior to the metaphysical path or ascent (perhaps constituting this path's very relation to an outside), both the momentum toward the Ideas and the straying away from them into simulacra; imagination as metaphysically determined is, as Derrida had explicitly asserted both of it and of writing, in "La Pharmacie du Platon, in a word, a *pharmakon*. Writing within the context of Sallis's work, Derrida explains:

If in its Platonic moment the imagination already "both empowers and inhibits the metaphysical drive to presence" [Sallis, *Delimitations*, p. 7], and if, in consequence, metaphysics is at one and the same time to appropriate imagination to itself and disabuse itself it, this trait remains unchanged in Pico della Mirandola. [...] In the Platonic text, the imagination would have a double effect: capacitating (*habiliter*, "empowering") *and* inhibiting, debilitating, or incapacitating the drive to presence.[31]

Despite the risk posed by the phantastic imagination that haunts all images, Plato will, in composing the cave allegory and other forays into mythical schemas, and perhaps in constructing every dialogue, permit himself to put the eikastic imagination to work. It is at the least paradoxical that Plato's allegorical expression of the metaphysical ascent, in which visual imagery, mythical narrative and the imagination are to be overcome, entails drawing upon what in the ascent is to be transcended. To question the way Plato's use of allegory could be justifiable within philosophical discourse is in effect to ask, firstly, how his generation of allegorical imagery constitutes an eikastic rather than phantastic mode of imagination; and, secondly, what renders allegory a proper substitute for what might have been expressed in the conceptual terms of the logos. The answer to both questions lies in the manner in which the eikastic production of allegory *effaces* its own imagery in the production of an abstract and ideal content, thus rendering itself close in nature to the nonmotivated mode of signification characteristic of the logos, and heterogeneous to the play of simulacra or the perpetual oscillation in a mimetic representation between the image and the original.[32] Let us analyse firstly the allegorical mode of signification with regard to the self-effacing nature of its imagery, before examining in the *Cratylus* the self-effacement of the nonmotivated linguistic sign that amounts to a yet more perfect mode of signification that renders ontological discourse possible.

Why in the first place is recourse to allegory necessary at all? Firstly, since one cannot enter into the philosophical domain in which the logos beholds the *eidos* (*idea*) without having undertaken the stages necessary to such an attainment, Plato must avail of a didactic, maieutic mode of communication so as to express in an accessible medium the path leading toward the logos and the Ideas. And secondly, since the *transition* from the sensible to the intelligible is not in itself *entirely* sensible, since, by definition, the meta-physical (*meta physis*) transition escapes the order of the sensible, it must be figured, signified or allegorised by a transition *within*

the order of the sensible, from one sensible element to another, from, as Plato's allegory has it, a cavernous underworld to a world beyond it illuminated by the sun.

Allegory is for Plato a product of the eikastic imagination since it amounts to a sensuous evocation, a fantastic creation, an illustrative narrative and mimetic expression of an abstract content. Its product is not in the final analysis, when the operation of allegorical transposition or translation has been performed, a co-ordinated imagery and narrative; it is rather the ideality of a meaning, an original in whose image the allegory will have been created. Determined according to an idealism or *préformationisme* whereby it serves an illustrative or pedagogical rather than heuristic or aesthetic function, allegory occupies the role of a provisional embodiment of an idea that is anterior and superior to the visual, mimetic and figurative mode of its expression. As such, it takes its place within the system of mimesis that, according to Derrida, Plato determines "comme système de l'*illustration*".[33] Plato's philosophical employment of imagination and a mimetic mode of allegorical representation can be defended on the grounds that the allegorical image is a mimetic but self-erasing signifier productive of a pre-ordained ideal and abstract content. Operating in much the same way as the geometrical image that merely serves to indicate an ideal entity, but in contrast to the phantastic image that begets or defers to another image, the allegorical image effaces itself in its signifying operation. As Richard Kearney summarises Plato's justification of the philosopher's use of imagery: "[T]eachers of truth redeploy images to point *beyond themselves* to essences that ultimately transcend figurative embodiment. The image here cancels itself out".[34] Allegory operates—ideally, for Plato—in such a way as to efface its own particular sensible content in the course of its signifying operation. This is not an accident to befall the allegorical imagery but the very nature of its signifying operation. For Plato, what is created in allegory is imagery that does not prove to be of inexhaustible aesthetic or semantic richness in itself, but that is given to its transcendence. Allegorical imagery is useful and justifiable only if it does *not* survive the operation of its interpretation. Plato takes the operation of the image or sign cancelling itself out *to be* precisely the "pointing beyond", to be the transcending operation of the signification of an abstract content. The initially useful but ultimately peripheral content of the allegory becomes the waste-matter of a process whose signifying accomplishment will have rendered it defunct. Plato's determination of

allegory is a *self-erasing* product of imagination by which the idea re-emerges from its sensible and illustrative detour to present itself in its naked intelligible truth. Only under certain semiological conditions by which it immediately sets in motion the process of its transformation qua imagery, its abstraction, its allegorical translation, can the risk of a didactic employment of the currency of the phantastic imagination be taken, and the regression from the logos to a prior stage in the philosopher's ascent be justified. The allegorical imagination is thus subject to the paradox that only by its destruction does it redeem itself. Dispensing with itself by fulfilling its function, the imagination creative of allegory is the self-negating imagination, whereby the imagination is to efface its own trace, to bequeath a signified in which no trace of imagination lingers.

In the cave-allegory, in particular, this negation of the allegorical signifier or imagery is redoubled; for the lesson to be gleaned from the cave allegory—its signified content—includes that of the possibility of the *transcendence of allegory* (of imagery and narrative, of those determining features of sophistry and attic tragedy). As an allegory that points the way beyond the domain in which allegory is pertinent, it is the ultimate allegory, the allegory of allegory, the allegory to end and transcend all allegory. It is, at least for Plato, the self-negating but infinitely productive allegory.

And, yet, even if allegory as determined according to such an idealism represents the pinnacle of (the eikastic) imagination, it does not represent the highest mode of signification; for it remains haunted by the possibility of its imagery exceeding its remit and distorting the idea it was charged with illustrating, by the phantastic appropriation of images that refers them not to a signified but to the play of images within an unbounded network. Even if not seduced by the deviations into the dissemination of images, the eikastic imagination is alone or in itself insufficient with regard to the contemplation of the Ideas,[35] which, being supersensible, do not admit of being represented or comprehended mimetically. Although no sensible, allegorical figure can adequately represent the transcendent domain of the Ideas or Forms, it can for Plato be achieved in a *nonmimetic* mode of signification, in the pure—philosophical—signifier/signified relation that, founded on a conventional relation in which the absolute self-negation of the linguistic signifier is achieved, forms the semiological basis of ontological discourse. Allegory may be the ideal form of

mimesis in that it erases the signifier (imagery) while producing an abstract content; but it is in the nonmotivated sign, the nonmimetic and conventional signifier, that a yet more ideal form of signification is generated.

This is at the heart of the complex thesis Plato sets forth in the *Cratylus*. The dialogue sets in conflict positions which might be termed as naturalist (the theory that words are related to their meanings by their etymological origins and through motivated or mimetic relations) and conventionalist (the viewpoint that asserts the necessity of a conventional bond obtaining between word and meaning irrespective of whatever motivated aspects can be discerned between words and their meanings). After lengthy ironic detours in which Socrates *appears* to empathise with Cratylus's naturalism, the conclusion of the dialogue turns to the task of demonstrating the necessity of custom, habit and conventionality in the linguistic sign. Plato's insight would be akin to Saussure's recognition of the fact that one need not be in possession of a diachronic knowledge of a language in order to understand or speak it; on the contrary, one need only have synchronic knowledge of its *langue*. Critical to Plato's demonstration is that words do not rely upon mimesis.[36] Whereas the mimetic image leaves itself open to the perpetual oscillation between image and represented object, the conventional linguistic signifier, in coming to operate independently of whatever inner connections might bind the signifier to the signified, detaches itself from it completely; the signified attains an autonomy in virtue of the self-effacement of the nonmotivated signifier. The eikastic imagination and the mimetic, allegorical signifier are for Plato surpassed by the conventional nature of linguistic signification; not being founded on a mimetic basis, the negation of its own signifier is effectively achieved by the mode in which the conventional linguistic sign functions.

While language may assume or incorporate mimetic forms (in literature, in poetic imagery), the operation of signification in its prosaic purity is nonmotivated and conventional; this for Plato is what renders language intrinsically disposed toward grasping the truth of the Ideas and constitutes it as the ideal form of ontological discourse. Although Plato recognises the conventional relation to leave the signifier/signified relation open to fluctuations brought about by the continually differing use of words and of language (a point stressed by John Joseph in a lengthy study of the *Cratylus*[37]), it is language which alone opens up the possibility of

ontologically referring to the fixed and stable essences of the Ideas. The logos, the rational spoken discourse epitomised by philosophy, differentiated from all other forms of representation by virtue of the *nonmimetic* relation between signifier and signified, is the immediate and faithful image of the *eidos* or of the Ideas; it alone grants the possibility of an ontology in accordance with Plato's postulation of the Forms beyond Heraclitean flux,[38] a doctrine in which reality is devoid of stable essences, which for Plato amounts not to a rival ontology but to the dissolution of its possibility.

But on the conventional and nonmimetic signifier rests not only the possibility of ontological reference—the name or noun grasping the Ideas or Forms—but also the possibility of restricting imagination to the domain of mimesis or motivated forms of representation. Plato's co-ordination of a semiology of the conventional linguistic sign and an idealist ontology is pivotal to the restriction of the western concept of imagination to the domain of mimesis as itself a supplement to the logos, and to the representation of the images, copies and simulacra of the Ideas. Even though, as Plato recognises, meanings in language are subject to alteration, to fluctuations brought about by virtue of being conventional in nature, and despite the necessity of 'seeing' in the word something entirely other to it, Plato excludes eikastic double-seeing from the domain of the logos. In Plato, in a gesture of great consequence for western thought, imagination ends where the relation between the signifier and the signified becomes a matter of convention, where the signifier and signified bear no resemblance to one another. Whether in the case of the allegorical imagery deemed to consign itself to irrelevance in the production of an ideal or intelligible content, or in the nonmotivated linguistic sign that negates itself by virtue of being "unrelated" to the signified, the ideal sign is the passive self-erasing signifier that serves to stand in for an already constituted meaning, to name a pre-existing essence, an essence merely awaiting its name. And the ideal imagination is that which creates a self-effacing signifier, an imagination that produces a representation that annihilates its own materiality in the process of producing an autonomous meaning.

Plato's organisation of the conceptual field and of oppositions crucial to subsequent western thought raises concerns similar to those I outlined in addressing Husserl's opposition of imaginative and signitive intentionality. Beyond recognising

the opposition of imagination and the logos to originate in the very determined framework of Plato's philosophy or metaphysics, several questions present themselves. Can the conventionality of linguistic signification, or indeed of mimetic representation in all its artistic and historical diversity, simply be opposed to imagination? Is not Plato's recognition of the continually differing use to which the meanings of a conventional mode of signification can be put the recognition not only of chance being at play within the vicissitudes of linguistic meaning, but the possibility of a purposive creativity and reinvention of meanings deserving of the name of imagination? To employ the notion of imagination in this context is not to imply that every shift is meaning is attributable to a subjective intentionality of a prior design, or that a consciousness or telos supervises from a transcendent position the dissemination of meanings; but nor must every such displacement in meaning be attributed to the play of chance in the exchange between *parole* and *langue*; on the contrary, to employ the notion of imagination within this context would be to recognise that meanings are influenced by their—innovative and imaginative—use (*parole*), that the productive and creative negativity of imagination is capable of functioning other than by means of mimetic resemblance in accordance with the pure single and unadulterated aim of representing an object. Beyond such a function, imagination might be accredited with employing words or creating works in such a way that they do not merely passively draw from existing conventions but reconfigure them. It may be that imagination operates in all domains in which there is a relation between the elements (words, works) and the signifying or representational conventions, between the subject and the conventions (the *langue*) that exceed it but that also, particularly in the case of language, contains infinite potentialities and the resources to reconfigure it. This interplay between use and convention, *parole* and *langue*, will be central to my discussions of imagination in the origination of language as a nonmotivated mode of signification. But the interplay in question would not be exclusive to nonmotivated modes of signification. We might wonder, in fact, if the opposition between the mimetic representation and the conventional sign is not in fact misleading; for the mimetic representation functions not on the basis of *pure* resemblance,[39] and it demonstrates, by the extent to which it varies historically and culturally, the degree to which semiological conventionalisation is also operative in its field. The negation of the linguistic signifier in the signifying operation need not necessarily be taken to be the elision of imagination; on the contrary, the fact that the

signifier negates its own nonmimetic content in the signifying operation, and operates in the absence of a mimetic resemblance binding it to a signified, bespeaks the necessity of it being referred to the conventions that render it meaningful; it is to the creative negativity of imagination that I will suggest this power can be attributed, whether in the reproductive form by which it merely iterates the signified associated with the sign, or avails of it in a more productive and innovative fashion.

In this chapter, the two fundamental forms of antagonism appearing to preclude the possibility of a fruitful dialectic between imagination and deconstruction have been seen to issue from a conception of imagination founded on two restrictions; this concept of imagination is restricted, in the first place, to being the punctual act of a more or less autonomous subject, and in the second, to the creation of visual and mimetic modes of representation. Both forms of restriction are evident in definitions of the imagination that describe it in terms of the psychological act of (re)producing visual images.

The concept of imagination as grounded in such delimitations opens up an apparently unbridgeable chasm between the classical concept of imagination and Derridean notions of textual creativity. In contrast to the metaphysics of the text or work that conceives of the ideality of its meaning as the product of an authorial presence exterior or anterior to the work, Derrida has emphasised creation and creativity to issue from the linguistic and textual conditions from which meaning arises. In other words, those pillars on which the concept of imagination rested—a textually transcendent meaning and author—have been overthrown by insights into the nature of linguistic functioning. Creativity has come to be seen as a function of the potentialities of systems of representation. The context delimiting the intelligibility of the concept of imagination has, at least in Derrida's work, been surpassed by the recognition that textual meaning emanates from a system of *langue* woven of differences, or from a complex of textual and disciplinary conventions and potentialities. In the course of an essay on Derrida's *La Voix et le phénomène* that captures the spirit animating the textual or deconstructive imagination, John D. Caputo demonstrates an understanding of the problem that stands in the way of reconceiving the concept of imagination in the light of Derrida's conception of textual creativity:

> Signifiers are magical performatives which produce a staggering array of amazing results: science, art, outright fictions, graffiti, metaphysical systems, ethical exhortations, mythologies, scriptures, insults [...]. We can liken this productivity to the power of the "imagination" in German Idealism. For here, too, we have to do with *Ein-bildungs-kraft:* with an inexhaustible power to engender form, to produce formed effects. This is not to say that the power of differance is a subjective faculty. The energy in question is not the energy of a subject but the power of the differential system to generate new effects indefinitely.[40]

It is to the system of language, the system founded upon differential relations between signifiers, upon differential relations that indefinitely defer reduction to a stagnant unity, that Caputo attributes an inexhaustible power once assigned to an innate subjective faculty. In speaking of the performative power of language (the power unleashed in speech acts that bring about what they speak of, such as in the case of promising), Caputo steers us away from an understanding of language that reduces it to its signifying or constative function. To appreciate that words and language bring about effects is to bring into question the customary manner in which doing and speaking are opposed to one another. If, as Derrida says of the Kantian imagination, it is "la liberté qui ne se montre que dans ses œuvres",[41] the textual or linguistic imagination might be said to manifest itself in language's capacity to produce effects through its performances. Imagination would thus be the creative freedom that betrays itself not only in fiction but in all language's effects or its products; as such, it would not amount simply to a *sui generis* psychological act to which consciousness would have privileged access. But it remains the case, as Caputo notes, that the power of a textual imagination to produce effects does not simply issue from a subjective faculty. Such forms of presence or self-presence as a classically conceived author, or a subject with a faculty of imagination at his disposal, or meaning as the ideality of a signified independent of the operation of signification, are incompatible with Derrida's thinking on the power of the text to "produce formed effects". If we were to define imagination within the context of Derrida's understanding of language's productivity, would we therefore be left with imagination determined as the property of a conventional system, as an imagination belonging to everyone and no-one, as the anonymous creativity of a nonmotivated sign that owes its existence to arbitrary pairings of signifier and signified rather than to the calculated design we associate with truly imaginative creations? If imagination must be identified with this inexhaustible capacity of the network of signifiers, with the performative power of the

system of language, is not the displacement whereby the imaginative power to beget is assigned not to a subject but to a system of signifiers, not an illegitimate, metaphorical transposition from the soul to the lifeless signs that fall beyond it?

The situation, however, may not be quite so desperate. In critiquing the twofold restriction of imagination to visual imagining, it has become apparent that the restriction of the imagination to the psychological scene of a punctual act and to a visual and mimetic mode of imagination are mutually interdependent. I have sought to bring to light the extent to which this privileging fails to take account of the historically determinate representational or semiological conventions that exceed yet constitute the subject's creativity, the necessity and objectivity of such semiological conventions being exemplified by, but by no means being exclusive to, language as a nonmotivated mode of signification unable to rely on mimetic resemblance as the agent binding signifier to signified. From this perspective, the classical imagination is determined on the basis of the exclusion of the subject as being always already engaged with its other, and on the necessity of representations and signs belonging to an objective system of *langue* for their meaning. That the forms of resistance to a textual and deconstructive concept of imagination have a common root is perhaps also an indication that overcoming them might be accomplished though the "single" displacement of the object or product of imagination, that is, by its reinscription within the conventionalities of *langue* or an *imaginaire*.

For, in the first place, recognising the "objectivity", intersubjectivity and alterity of semiological conventions to the subject overcomes the notion of a self-enclosed consciousness, of consciousness as turned inward upon itself. Language or *langue*, for Derrida, is less the means at the disposal of an subject or author that enables him or her to express a pre-conceived intention or *vouloir-dire* than the system that has always already orchestrated his or her understanding of the world and which institutes the subject within a network of representation: thus it is that for him the subject needs to be comprehended on the basis of the text, conventionality, and the play of signification—in a word, the other—rather than conceiving of the subject or consciousness on the basis of its self-presence or independence from this other. But to recognise the subject as being always already related to an other is not to imagine the subject's constitution to be a *fait accompli*; it is rather, given the undiscovered

representational potentialities belonging to any semiological system, to recognise the dynamic relation constitutive of the subject as a representational, creating, imaginative being. In the second place, the problematic relation of imagination to the nonmotivated sign begins to unravel if we recognise that a nonmotivated system of language requires the system of *langue* to be other to this or that individual subject, to exist intersubjectively. In the absence of a mimetic relation binding signifier to signified, the nonmotivated mode of linguistic signification requires the semiological conventions and the play of differences binding signifier to signified to exceed this or that particular subject. Thus, by pursuing the notion of *langue* as a conventional semiological system that exceeds yet conditions the subject qua representational, signifying and imaginative subject, imagination can be redefined such that it is as relevant to language as much if not more so than any—mimetic—system of representation. Such a concept of imagination would thus depend upon a semiological system set over against the subject which includes both mimetic and nonmimetic forms of representation, and perhaps most importantly, those complex forms in which both modes of signification are interwoven (poetry, literary fiction, a philosophical discourse mindful of the etymological and metaphorical substrata of its own discourse, etc.).

Deconstructing imagination would amount to negating the repression of its relation to the other. The apparent impediments to conceiving of a textual imagination would thus amount to indices of the shifts that their deconstruction would need to bring about. It would, in other words, only be by ridding ourselves of the notion of a work having its origin in a subjective consciousness (in the identifiable proper name of an author or artist) that the concept of imagination could be reborn. The task presented by imagination at the closure of metaphysics may be less to rediscover a place for the psychological imagination within the postmodern proliferation or the parodying iteration of images, than to reassess imagination as having always been sustained by the relation to the other, and to detect its variations in the semiological operation and historical dissemination of systems of representation. One would have to think the subject on the basis of its constitutive relation to the other and imagination on the basis of the dynamic and evolving relation between the subject and its other, and in terms of the freedom to recreate or deconstruct existing conventions of meaning.

The possibility of reconceiving of imagination as the creativity that can inhere in and reinvent this relation is one I seek to explore in the remainder of this thesis. Indeed, it is in pursuing Hegel's notion of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*, or, more precisely, an imagination that creates a sign whose very possibility lies in exploiting the potentiality of conventionality, that imagination might be conceivable as such a dynamic relation.

Notes to Chapter III

[1] I treat of the specific question of conceiving of deconstruction as a concerted and "methodological" set of strategies the coordination of which can be grasped as a more or less formalised and objective mode of imagination in the final chapter.

[2] "Les Fins de l'homme" in *MP*, pp. 129-164; all the following quotations taken from pp. 162-3.

[3] *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy—First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology,* trans. F. Kersten, The Hague: Nijhoff 1982, and *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy—Second Book: Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, trans. R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989.

[4] *Poetics of Imagining: Modern and Postmodern*, Edinburgh University Press, and New York: Fordham University Press, 1998. Kearney's approach to the phenomenological imagination (in his *Poetics of Imagining*) concentrates on this double implication of imagination at a theoretical and practical level, that is, at the level at which imagination is an object investigated by phenomenology and at the level at which it is integral to any such phenomenological investigation. But Kearney does not question, as Sallis does, the consequences for Husserlian phenomenology of its own employment of (a sophisticated mode of imagination irreducible to the production or reproduction of images) imagination escaping the scope of its analysis of imagination (which phenomenological analysis tends to reduce to the relatively simple operation of mentally reproducing images).

[5] *FoI*, pp. 14-15.

[6] Casey, Edward, *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976 (hereafter *IPA*).

[7] *IPA*, p. 119.

[8] As such, Casey ignores the warning Aristotle issues that we ought not to essentialise imagination and treat it as an abstraction independent of the co-ordinated movement of mental operations, a warning that, as we will see, Hegel heeds in critiquing Kant's conception of imagination as a faculty.

[9] Sartre, J-P., *L'Imagination*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2003, pp. 1-2.

[10] Sartre, J-P., *L'Imaginaire: psychologie phénoménologique de l'imagination*, Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1986, p. 13.

[11] See, as an example of a hermeneutic analysis of imagination, Durant, Gilbert, *L'Imagination symbolique*, Paris: Quadrige/Presses Universitaires de France, 2003.

[12] Richard, J-P., *L'Univers imaginaire de Mallarmé,* Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1961.

[13] *FoI*, p.11.

[14] I omit discussion of the parallels between classical notions of signification and Kant's empirical imagination. For Derrida on the classical sign as bringing the absent to presence, cf. *Diff* in *MP*, pp. 9-10; *PP* in *MP*, p. 82. For Kant on the empirical imagination, cf. *CPR*, B151. Rodolphe Gasché has commented on the link between the Kantian imagination and the operation of signification: "Kant's discussion of symbolic cognition and of language rests on the assumption not only that imagination is a presentative power, but that such presentation is a function of signs. [...] Imagination must be in its most essential core, a faculty of designating, of signaling, such that intuitions point at other intuitions... Most fundamentally, then, imagination is this: the power to make intuitions point away from themselves, and there must be such pointing away before imagination can divide into its various employments. [...] [A]s such a power, imagination cannot but help point away from itself as well" ("Leaps of Imagination" in *PAT*, pp. 35-48, p. 46). What underlies imagination is its power to make intuitions signify, to make signs out of intuitions, but not necessarily by means of one intuition resembling another. Moreover, if this power to overdetermine intuitions such that they signify something other to them discloses immense potentialities for human

representation, then, one can expect to rediscover imagination wherever intuitions point away from themselves, wherever there are signs. Gasché takes this power that can be attributed to imagination to begin to explain the "abysmality" of imagination in Kant—the extraordinary and ultimately unmanageable dissemination of versions of the concept appearing across Kant's corpus. If recognised as the power by which intuitable content points away from itself to something other, the horizon that unfolds before imagination extends to the domain of signification and representation, naming the magical moment when what is "perceived" turns out to be a relation between a word and a meaning, a picture and what is pictured, a souvenir and what is recollected. See also Hermann Mörchen's *Die Einbildungskraft bei Kant* (Tübingen: Niemeyer Verlag, 1970, p. 16), which describes imagination in terms of creating signs out of intuitions, a notion that, as we shall see, is also evident in Hegel.

[15] Elliott, B., *Phenomenology and Imagination in Husserl and Heidegger*, London and New York: Routledge, 2005, p, 34 (hereafter *Pihh*).

[16] As Elliott has noted with regard to the absence of a present intuition in imagination, this "opposition of imagination and perception leads Husserl, despite his insistence upon their essential affinity, to group imaginative presentations together with signitive acts, thereby indicating the inauthenticity of the former" *Pihh*, p. 33.

[17] *Pihh*, p. 10.

[18] *Logical Investigations*, trans, J.N. Findlay, London: Routledge, 1973, p. 115. Husserl puts the same point in the following terms: "'Inner' perception or imagination can also [...] function as fulfilling intuition" (*Logical Investigations*, p. 72). For Hegel, as we will see, spirit reaches a certain point in its development at which it no longer requires the intuition to "fulfill" the representation, since the image of the object is already "endued with externality". Consciousness requires the fulfillment of an intuition only during a certain primitive moment of its development; to *think* is to have passed beyond the need for such intuitions, and to have moved to a point at which the mind deals with its own representations, which have already been determined as referring to objectively existing things (or indeed, to things such as centaurs deemed not to exist). The word no longer even needs the supplementation of a visual image; I need not picture or imagine a lion, Hegel points out, in order to understand the word. The more genetic or genealogical standpoint that Hegel adopts in approaching the question of whether intentions need to be fulfilled in intuition stands in contrast to Husserl's approach; for while Husserl may allow for imagination fulfilling intuitions, his more empirical standpoint, and his concern for the ideal scientific conditions for truth, will condition his overriding belief that the intuited rather than imagined object amounts to the ultimate fulfillment of an intention. What for Husserl amounts to a condition of assured and verified truth is for Hegel an impediment to thought's liberation from the empirical.

[19] *Pihh*, p. 35.

[20] One could explore the relation between imagination and the sign through the question Derrida pursues in *La Voix et le phénomène*, that of the manner in which Husserl seeks to exclude the sign from being operative within the interiority of the voice, of thought, of soliloquy (of *s'entendre-parler*), thereby preserving the self-presence of meaning that the sign would disrupt. Essentially, Derrida argues that Husserl reduces the sign as it is used by the thinking subject to being imagined, to existing apart from its empirical reality. For Husserl in soliloquy, "[u]n signe verbal, parlé et imprimé, est évoqué dans notre imagination, en vérité il n'existe pas du tout..." (*VP*, p. 52). And: "Dans le monologue intérieur, le mot serait donc seulement représenté. Son lieu peut être l'imaginaire (*Phantasie*). Nous nous contentons d'imaginer le mot dont l'existence est ainsi neutralisée. Dans cette imagination du mot, dans cette représentation imaginaire du mot (*Phantasievorstellung*), nous n'avons plus besoin de l'événement empirique du mot. Son existence ou sa non-existence nous sont indifférentes. Car si nous avons alors besoin de l'*imagination* du mot, du même coup nous nous passons du mot *imaginé*. L'imagination du mot, l'imaginé, l'être-imaginé du mot, son 'image' n'est pas le mot (imaginé). De même que la perception du mot, le mot (perçu ou apparaissant) qui est 'dans le monde' appartient à un ordre radicalement hétérogène à celui de l'imagination du mot. Cette différence, à la fois simple et subtile, fait apparaître la spécificité irréductible de la

phénoménalité et l'on ne peut rien entendre à la phénoménologie si l'on n'y prête une attention constante et vigilante" (*VP*, p. 48).

[21] "La Forme et le vouloir-dire: Note sur la phénoménologie du langage" in *MP*, pp. 185-208, p. 193.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 193.

[23] Husserl differentiates between, on the one hand, the lack of an intrinsic relation between signifier and signified, and on the other, and the inner connections (*Zusammenhörigkeiten*) between the various aspects of a thing given to perception and the thing perceived as a whole: "While sign and signified 'have nothing to do with one another', there obtain between adumbrations [*Abschattungen*: aspects or profiles of the perceived object] – whether they be of a perceptual or imaginative nature – and the thing itself inner connections" (*Logical Investigations*, op. cit., p. 59).

[24] Kearney suggests that the supposed incommensurabilty of imagination and signification is an inheritance of the phenomenological tradition: " [...] Sartre, like Husserl before him, fails to adequately grasp the fact that signification and imagination are not two opposed modes of intentionality but are inextricably related through their common belonging to language" (*On Paul Ricoeur: The Owl of Minerva*, p. 45).

[25] Negativity would also, as we have seen, be pertinent to the neutralisation of the posited existence of the sign or image's referent; the signification of the linguistic sign is inherently "fictional" inasmuch as, before being inserted within any propositions seeking to state a truth, it is indifferent to the veracity of its object, whence the possibility of *words* such as "centaur". Thus when Derrida says that "[t]here is no literature without a suspended relation to meaning and reference" ("This Strange Institution Called Literature: An Interview with Jacques Derrida" in *Acts of Literature*, ed. Attridge, D. London: Routledge, 1992, p. 48), he is indicating that this suspension does not supervene upon language; rather, such a suspended state of linguistic reference describes the initial or primary state of the sign as it exists within *langue*. Imaginative negativity, as the negation of the intuitable content of the sign or of the image, is thus evident in the operations both of linguistic signification and of pictorial representation.

[26] Casey articulates phenomenology's understandable desire to avoid the speculative excesses of metaphysics, but he incorrectly envisages an ahistoricism or non-genetic analysis as being the only way to circumventing such dangers: "[P]henomenology places special stress on firsthand or direct description, thereby minimizing recourse to the highly mediated constructions of metaphysics, natural science, and other theory-saturated disciplines. What is sought in the implementation of such a method is an accurate description of a given phenomenon as it presents itself in one's own experience, not an explanation of its genesis through reference to antecedent causal factors. The phenomenologist's basic attitude is: no matter how something came to be in the first place, what is of crucial concern is the detailed description of the phenomenon *as it now appears*" (*Imagining: A Phenomenological Study*, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000, second edition; p. 9; hereafter *Imagining*). On the tensions between genetic and non-genetic phenomenological analysis in Husserl, see Derrida, *Le problème de la genèse dans la philosophie de Husserl*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990.

[27] Both Derrida and Sallis draw our attention to a central distinction of Plato's between *eikasia* and *phantasia* as it arises in the discussion of the sophist's "imitative art of reasoning". In the *Sophist*, Derrida shows the eponymous figure to be elusive because he confuses or conflates *eikasia* and *phantasia*, passing the simulacrum off as the faithful eikastic image: "[T]out près d'être capturé, le sophiste échappe encore à la prise, par la division supplémentaire, vers un point de fuite, entre deux formes de mimétique (235d), l'*eikastique* qui reproduit fidèlement, et la *fantastique* qui simule l'eikastique, fait semblant de simuler fidèlement, et trompe l'œil dans le simulacre (*phantasme*) qui constitue une 'part très large de la peinture (*zôgraphia*) et de la mimétique en son ensemble'" ("La Double Séance" in *Diss*, p. 229).

[28] Kearney, Richard, *The Wake of Imagination: Toward a Postmodern Culture*, London: Routledge Press, 1998, p. 100 (hereafter *WoI*).

[29] "In order that the prisoner's condition be disrupted, in order that the prisoner escape this bondage to images, a kind of double seeing must come into play: the prisoner must no longer see the images on the wall but must come also to see them precisely *as images* of other things, of those objects (all sorts of objects and artifacts and statues of various creatures) being conveyed along the prisoner's back, those objects to which, as the ascent begins, the prisoner will turn" (*FoI*, p. 49).

[30] The cave allegory's emphasis on simulacra, on images that have wandered from their origin and refer only to other images in a play of unremitting allusion, and on the yearning that can be sparked for an (absolute) original, could lead to it being read not simply as the didactics of a classical ontology; it lends itself to being read in the light of the postmodern landscape of an interminable chain of images and simulacra, and of the despair that is occasioned by simulacra that offer no hope of being retraced to an original. Derrida writes the following in "Hors Livre" (in *Diss*, p. 55): "Imaginez que les miroirs (ombres, reflets, phantasmes, etc.) ne soient plus *compris* dans la structure de l'ontologie et du mythe de la caverne – qui situe aussi l'écran et le miroir – mais l'enveloppent en totalité, en produisant ici ou là l'effet particulier, très détérminé." However, whatever context might impose itself in the course of re-reading or re-interpreting Plato's cave allegory today, it can be inferred from his metaphysics that the intention animating Plato's composition lies in providing an illustration of a metaphysical, intellectual and ethical ascent that is to lead *beyond* a network of images in which images refer only to one another.

[31] "Tense" in *PAT*, p. 58-9.

[32] See Derrida's analysis of the logic of mimesis in "La Double Séance" in *Diss*, fn. 8, p. 228, and p. 237-8. Very briefly, this logic is that by which the mimetic representation or image is a threat to the privileged status of the original insofar as it *either* resembles it perfectly and thus occludes the distinguishability of the image and the original *or* fails to represent the original inadequately, and is therefore deficient and worthless. In either case, whether mimetic representation is defective or perfect, it is culpable. This will not prevent Plato from lamenting the absence of a mimetic relation in the ideal mode of nonmotivated (and convectional) signification that characterises philosophical language. Despite having reservations concerning the arbitrary or nonmotivated nature of the relation between the linguistic sign and signified, and the fluctuating nature of such conventionally constructed meanings, Plato will nonetheless insist on the naturalness of the linguistic sign for philosophical or ontological discourse.

[33] *Diss*, p. 225.

[34] *WoI*, p. 100.

[35] As Sallis remarks in his discussion of the eikastic imagination: "Double seeing is not, however, the only force required for the ascent. For precisely at the point where the transition would be made from sensible to intelligible, there is within vision a certain coming to rest in the visible, that is, a collapse of double seeing into a simple vision of what is present. The transition to διανοια [*dianoia*, reasoning and argument the form of knowledge beneath that of *noésis*—immediate apprehension of the ideas or forms] requires therefore, that another moment come into play so as to impel a dianoetic leap. This other moment is λογος [logos], and thus at this point the *Republic* reaffirms the decisive connection posited autobiographically in the *Phaedo* (99d-e) between a turn to λογος and the beginning of philosophy" (*FoI*, p. 49-50).

[36] The vital moment at which the word is distinguished from the mimetic image is to be found in the *Cratylus* (Plato, *Collected Dialogues*, ed. E. Hamilton et al., New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 464 (430b-c). Socrates' demonstration of the conventionality of names reaches its conclusion at 435a-e. See also Plato's important argument on the necessity of the sign not resembling the signified to the point that they are indistinguishable (432b-e).

[37] Joseph, John, *Limiting the Arbitrary: Linguistic Naturalism and its Opposites in Plato's Cratylus and Modern Theories of Language*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co.,

2000). Joseph argues that Plato shows signs of anxiety in asserting the priority of a nonmimetic mode of signification, that is, one that has departed from a motivated relation and left to the uncontrollable forces of convention: for Plato, "[l]anguage operates ideally by *physis*, actually by *nomos*, and the philosopher's goal should be to make the actual approximate to the ideal" (p. 75).

[38] Plato's opposition to the Heraclitean "ontology", which he associates with the naturalist position or etymologism, is unveiled at the end of the dialogue: *Cratylus*, 439d-440e. See also Plato's professed preference for the study of things rather than names (439b-d), a thesis that will be echoed in Aristotle. What makes possible ontology as the study of things or beings as opposed to the words representing them is, in principle, the discontinuity between the nonmotivated signifier and signified, or perhaps rather, a certain interpretation of this discontinuity. We will see that Hegel makes similar points with regard to the name in positing nonmotivated signification as the ideal and sole possible form of philosophical and conceptual thought.

[39] See the *Cratylus* (432b-e) for Plato's recognition of this necessity, and note 32 above, for the manner in which it figures in Derrida's adumbration of the logic of mimesis.

[40] Caputo, John D., "The Economy of Signs in Husserl and Derrida: From Uselessness to Full Employment" in *Deconstruction and Philosophy*: *The Texts of Jacques Derrida*, ed. John Sallis, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987, pp. 99-113; p. 107.

[41] "Force et Signification" in *ED*, p. 16.

Part II: Deconstructing Hegel's *Zeichen machende Phantasie*

Que reste-t-il du savoir absolu?
Derrida, *Glas*

Chapter IV: Contextualising the *Zeichen Machende Phantasie*

(i) The Dialectical Moments of Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit as Culminating in the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*

In locating the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* within Hegel's work, we find it not in his earliest works, written in the shadow of Fichte and Schelling, in which imagination had as a theme figured prominently.[1] Indeed, to study the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*, one need be directly concerned neither with the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) as the seminal work of the young Hegel that would dominate his work's reception in France in the first half of the twentieth century, nor with the *Science of Logic* (1816); rather, my project takes as its focus Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* (various versions published in 1817, 1827 and 1830), which sought to articulate and realise the scientific (*wissenschaftliche*) system that, for Hegel, the *Phenomenology* had disclosed and made possible through its labour of recollecting the dialectical moments that made manifest the order, meaning and purpose underlying spirit's becoming in an otherwise ostensibly disjointed and tumultuous history. The system of the *Encyclopaedia* provides an over-arching architectonic structure to his work on Logic (the Philosophy of the Idea), the Philosophy of Nature, and—as will be of greatest concern—the Philosophy of Spirit. Let us note, in the midst of this rapid sketch, that spirit (*Geist*, mind), at the broadest point at which it can be grasped in Hegel's architectonics, amounts to the dialectical resolution of nature and the idea, to the idea unfolding and realising itself in (self-)consciousness as it emerges from the space, time and materiality that it requires for its formation and within which its dialectical striving and self-overcoming in history is played out.

Hegel's treatment of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* appears within the first part of his Philosophy of Spirit, within subjective spirit, which, within the rubric of the *Encyclopaedia*'s system, precedes the philosophies of objective spirit (with which Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* is synonymous), and absolute spirit (Hegel's aesthetics and poetics, his theology and *Religionsphilosophie*, and his determination of philosophy itself). Hegel differentiates between subjective, objective and absolute spirit, according to which, respectively, spirit is faced with "*finding* a world before it as a presupposed world, *generating* a world as posited by itself, and gaining freedom from it and in it".[2] If spirit is the return of the idea from out of its otherness in nature, then, it is born initially in the form of subjective spirit.

The Philosophy of Subjective Spirit has largely been overlooked or neglected within Hegelian scholarship owing in part to the incomplete, unpublished and fragmentary nature of the material. I make use of the 1830 edition of the *Encyclopaedia* and its so-called *Zusätse* (Boumann's editorial additions made to Hegel's lecture notes), as well as of the invaluable recently discovered Erdmann transcripts of lectures Hegel delivered in 1827-8.[3]

The central divisions and successive phases of study in Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit are those of the anthropology (the study of man as embedded in nature), the phenomenology (the study of the emergence of consciousness through awareness of an other), and psychology (the study of the mind determining itself as its own object). It is the psychology with which we will be concerned, for within it, Hegel studies the imagination (*Einbildungskraft* and *Phantasie*) as moments within representation (*Vorstellung*) and, as it relates to the sign, speech and writing, as Derrida has brought to our attention in "Le Puits et la pyramide". Within the rubric of his psychology, Hegel studies spirit not in its unity with nature (the anthropological soul), or its initial differentiation from nature that produces consciousness (phenomenological consciousness as an awareness of the self *through* the other on which it thus depends); rather, spirit is studied as a unity which contains within itself the opposition between the anthropological and phenomenological forms of spirit] in a sublated [*aufgehoben*] form. The form of spirit studied by Hegel's psychology knows itself "as that which *mediates itself with itself (sich-mit-sich-selbst-Vermittelnde*), as that which withdraws from its Other [nature] into itself, as *unity* of

the *subjective* and the *objective*".[4] In psychology, the mind thus takes *itself* as its internally differentiated object (as consisting of different moments—as intuition, as recollection, as memory, as thought, etc.). When emptied of the particularity of its content, the mind gives itself to be studied by psychology since it lays bare its fundamental powers and its abstract form.[5] Thus does psychology amount to the mind folding back upon its own composition and its genesis. As such, what Hegel calls a psychology amounts within his dialectic of spirit to a speculative genealogical and dialectical reconstruction of a particular phase of psychical development, and of this development insofar as the mind contains among its functions or capacities representation and imagination.[6] Let us note that we are concerned solely with theoretical spirit rather than practical spirit; whereas the latter takes the will as its point of departure, theoretical spirit is concerned with the capacity to intuit, recollect, represent, imagine, symbolise, signify and think, and with the manner in which such potentialities emerged from the cumulative development of the mind.

For Hegel, psychology is the study of various moments from intuition and representation to the sign and thought *insofar as* this progression is oriented by the movement from subjective to objective spirit; that is, from the inwardness cultivated by the mind, rather than intuiting the pre-posited (*Vorausgesetzt*) other of nature, coming to entertain its own inner images (*Vorstellung*), to language that facilitates spirit existing objectively and on the basis of the mind's relation to an other *of its own* cultivation. What the various dialectical moments analysed in the psychology enable us to grasp, for Hegel, is subjective spirit's eventual transcendence of itself in objectivity, its reproducing and expressing itself in a world that is thereby rendered cultural or spiritual: this expression spirit achieves in language, in political organisation and institutions, in artworks (the first fine art form, for Hegel, being *symbolic* and the first works those of architecture). This world, now irreducible to nature, is one in which spirit comes to recognise *itself*, this self-recognition, by that very fact, bringing spirit into objective existence. The *Zeichen machende Phantasie* constitutes the culmination of the moments studied by the psychology in that it produces the objective linguistic sign that brings about thought in the form of a subjective expression of an objective, communicable content. The creation of nonmotivated and objective signs gives to the interior subjectivity of spirit as a

concrete and communal existence, and opens up the cultural potentialities that come with spoken and alphabetic-phonetic communicative systems.

However, for subjective spirit to realise itself objectively and as thought, what must first be engendered is the subjective interiority beyond intuition's immersion in the field of nature's outer objects. The increasing profundity of the mind's interiority manifests itself in (re)producing stored up images, in symbolic representations of abstract universals generated subjectively, and so on, before this interiority is, for Hegel, reproduced as the unity of subjective and objective expression in the linguistic sign. It is within this phase of spirit that, for Hegel, imagination, in a variety of forms from the reproductive to the productive, and from *Einbildungskraft* to *Phantasie*, redetermines intuitions as images, images as universals, and—with the use of images and phonic materiality—universals as the content of symbolic images and of linguistic signs.

It is the formative stages in the psychology, culminating in and necessary to the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* forging the unity of exteriorised or voiced intuitions (words, signs) with existing universal meanings, which must first be analysed. I provide a cursory and rapid summary of the stages in the development of Hegel's psychology up to the point at which the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* brings about the linguistic sign; the key forms of imagination within this development include the imagination that spontaneously (re)produces images, the associative imagination that produces universals, and the symbolic imagination that gives the universal a determinate representing image. Within his psychology, rather than equating imagination with this or that (immutable) power or capacity to (re)produce visual images, and in opposition to Kant's positing of *co-existing* but insufficiently co-ordinated empirical and transcendental forms of imagination,[7] Hegel attributes to the *changing* forms of imagination a variety of functions that account *for the mind's progression* from mere intuition to the sign-memory (*Gedächtnis*) that underlies and makes possible thought in its nascent form. For Hegel, imagination is not, in the first place, a stagnant and singular capacity that enables us to picture things or to create artworks, but a dynamically evolving agency reworking the conditions in which imagination *itself* operates at the heart of the mind's development. Unlike what he calls faculty psychology, Hegel seeks to take into account the *difference made* to the

mind's *progression* by the emergence of a new capacities or forms of imagination; as such, he differentiates his approach from traditional psychology which remains "unconscious of the fact that the *expression* of what the soul *is* posits in its concept [in its *Begriff*, the idea that organises its unfolding] this very thing *for the soul itself*, and [that] the soul thereby has acquired a higher determination".[8] Hegel stops short of developing the concept of imagination as the agency that perpetually makes this difference to the mind's progression, limiting it to *a particular series* of new mental activities or capacities (reproducing images, creating symbols, etc.) that produce its advancement.

But it is Hegel's "historicisation" of imagination—his dialectical rendering of its distinct moments and of the contributions it makes to the mind and representation's development—that creates the conditions conducive to him taking the unorthodox step of attributing to *Phantasie* the creation of the nonmotivated sign. Imagination is less one faculty among others than the play between them, the agency that repeatedly re-encounters whatever new and strange form of object imagination itself will have created, be it the image, the symbol or the sign.

Beyond recounting the moments within which the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* figures and suggesting factors within Hegel's general dialectical approach that lead him to formulate a sign-making imagination, I suggest certain criticisms that might be made of his account of language's origination in the light of the post-Saussurean and Derridean semiology of language analysed in Part I. Such a critique might serve in overcoming certain contradictions to which, I suggest, Hegel's philosophy of imagination falls prey; despite his historical and dialectical pluralisation of imagination, whereby in its early forms it continually creates objects with which it re-engages, and which leads him to positing *Phantasie* as creating the linguistic sign, Hegel ultimately posits the nonmotivated sign as amounting in effect to the *discontinuation* of imagination playing any significant role in language, in its creativity or its development. In short, his radically non-logocentric gesture of formulating a *sign-making* imagination is ultimately hauled back within a conservative and orthodox segregation of imagination and the sign on the basis of their supposed incommensurability. This tension, contradiction and failure to conceive of the sign's origination in a viable concept of imagination, I argue,

necessitates a study that returns to and ultimately re-conceptualises the scene of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*'s creative moment in terms of *parole* and *langue*. In the next chapter, I begin this deconstructive process by critiquing Hegel's understanding of the differences between the symbol and the sign (with regard to the phonic, nonmotivated and objective qualities of the latter) and the forms of imagination that create them.

In Hegel's understanding of intuition (*Anschauung*), to which the sense of sight is proper, attention is directed immediately outward to an object (*Gegenstand*, ob-ject) set over against the subject; it thus amounts to a relinquishment of subjectivity. In *Erinnerung*, however, intuitions are interiorised and dispatched to a dark pit or nightlike mine (*als nächtlichen Schacht*[9]) in which they are stored up (*aufbewahrt*) out of consciousness. In the operation of *Erinnerung* (Hegel often availing of the play between its literal sense of "interiorisation" and the more conventional sense of "recollection"), the subject/object relation that had characterised intuition is taken up and interiorised *within* the mind; as such, the division *Erinnerung* introduces in the mind (intuition/recollection, consciousness/ unconscious pit) is central to the formation of ipseity. From the creation of this subjective inwardness, and the storehouse from which material can be recalled and reworked, intelligence in the form of imagination will eventually produce universal representations, symbols and signs.

If *Erinnerung* is decisive, it is because it differentiates the subject from itself *within itself*, the mind thereby becoming, beyond the exterior immediacy of intuition, a *representing subject*: *representing* because the subject is preoccupied by its *own* inner images, and a *subject* because ipseity is founded upon the *Schacht*'s network of images (stored up intuitions and experiences), which *Phantasie* (the symbol- and sign-making imagination) will avail of: "representation (*Vorstellung*) is the general name for the fact that the object is mine, in my possession, and that I am the subject of the object".[10] This is borne out, according to Hegel, by the auxiliary verb of the *Perfekt* tense (*haben* in *Ich habe es gesehen*), the equivalent verb being used, by no means incidentally, in the present perfect tense in English and in the *passé composé* in French.[11]

The negativity at work in *Erinnerung* divides not only the mind within itself; it also ruptures the intuition into, on the one hand, the intuition *qua* designating an external object already intuited, and on the other, an inner representation or *image extricated* and freed from the (spatial and temporal) particularity of its reception in experience. Thus, the image becomes available to *reproduktiv Einbildungskraft*, to the capacity to (re)produce images or intuitions as images, Hegel positing that this first takes place only by virtue of a related, triggering intuition, but eventually spontaneously at the subject's behest. This latter capacity constitutes a significant advance for Hegel, since the *material* of intuition or the network of images within the *Schacht* is, as a result of being produced in relative isolation from its original intuiting experience, further freed up from the givenness of experience and laid before the imagination that will create universals, devise symbols and create signs from it. Being in possession of representations freed up from intuition, of intuitions freed from their determinacy and particularity as recollections of particular subjective experience, discloses the possibility of redetermining images such that they come to signify much more than past experiences or memories.

In fact, for Hegel, being in possession of the intuition as an image that can be beheld "in itself" apart from its status as a memory, brings into being the *Schacht* as a network of images in which the identity of any given image is as much a function of the images' *interrelation* as it is of their origin in intuition: "Imagination brings the preserved images and representations into a manifold connection with one another which differs from that which they had as intuitions."[12] This liberation marks, for Hegel, not only the possibility of the image representing something other than itself (a universal, a symbol, a sign) but also the emergence of imagination in its autonomy: "In so far as I now have before me the representation as *different* from the intuition, this is imagination."[13] For Hegel, the potentiality for the intuition to be a sign of something other than itself, or, we might say, *seeing-as* as a function of eikastic imagination, comes into being, at the very moment imagination arises. (But equally, let it be noted, the phantastic reproduction of an image, as divorced from its original, has emerged within the images' interrelations.)

To this development of a network of more or less autonomous images corresponds an alteration in the functioning and role of imagination: "A higher

activity than mere reproducing is the *relating* of images *to one another*".[14] The interrelations between images make possible the work of the associative imagination, which, through the capacity for treating what is merely similar as identical, creates abstract universal representations. Since images are inscribed within a network under the control of intelligence, the possibility arises of universals being abstracted from the play of similarity and dissimilarity between images.[15] Hegel defines the connecting link between images as the universal, which in essence is the destruction, or as Hegel literally says, the death or killing of the images of intuition (*Tötung des Bildes der Anschauung*).[16] In the operation of the "*superimposition* of many *similar* images upon one another" "a force of abstraction must be assumed [...] which at the same time would be the negative power of rubbing off their remaining unlikenesses against each other."[17] At this stage, "[t]he image buried in the pit of my consciousness is the universal image in contrast to the immediate image, the intuition as such."[18] The image I have of a flower refers not simply to the original scene in which I saw such and such a particular flower; rather, it takes on the status of being a sign for any flower; it is, as Mallarmé would put it, "l'absente de tous bouquets".[19]

There arises, for Hegel, precisely on account of a universal being created and grasped above and beyond particular images, a fundamental lack of synchronicity between the universal and the individual image. For they are each, according to Hegel, one-sided: while the universal, produced within and by the subjective operation of abstraction,[20] lacks the pictorial vivacity of an objective, external sign to represent it, the individual image refers to the particularity of an external object rather than to the universal (signified). These symmetrical deficiencies will be rectified by a dialectic that Hegel describes as the "*imaging of the universal* and the *universalisation of the image*".[21] On the one hand, this process amounts to the image being "reduced to a sign of the represented content" or to "the *intuited external* content" being "subjugated to the *represented* content which has been raised to *universality*"; and, on the other hand, in the imaging of the universal, "the represented [universal] content is [...] made *objective*, external, is rendered imageable [*verbildlicht*]".[22] Whereas the universalisation of the image consists in imposing upon what is experienced or intuited in its particularity the form of universality, the imaging of the universal constitutes the symbolic imagination, the selection of an image to represent a universal content.

What takes place in the universalisation of the image is that, once universals have been abstracted and created, they envelop and condition sensation, perception and experience such that they assume a universal form; consequently, we see the world in terms not of this or that unique thing or as successive sensations but as populated by things of such and such a general type: it thus comes to be the case that "sensation has the character of recollection throughout".[23] For Hegel, rather than attributing the coherence of empirical experience to an *a priori* transcendental imagination, as Kant had done, it is the storehouse, pit or mine (*Schacht*) of universal representations as worked over in accumulated historical experience that provides the regulating schemas to be projected upon all new experience in order to render it coherent, familiar and recognisable. Hegel stops short of specifying it to be imagination that brings the order (it has) imposed upon the past, on received intuitions rendered universalisable, to bear on what has yet to be experienced.

The symbolic imagination, rather than eliciting what in intuition or the image gives itself to be apprehended as universal, provides the abstract universal representation with a concrete image that represents it in intuitable form. This is possible and necessary, for the newly-formed universal as abstracted in inner subjectivity lacks an objective, communicable manifestation, a particular image to represent it, or, in other words, a sign: it "lacks externality, pictorial vivacity" and so needs an intuition to represent itself.[24] (As such, the Hegelian symbolic imagination plays a role not dissimilar to that which Kant's transcendental imagination plays in schematising the categories). The response to this demand is the symbol that acts as a pictorial representation of an existing universal, and that thus grants to it a universally accessible form: "Symbolising imagination selects for the expression of its universal representations only that sensory material whose *independent* meaning *corresponds* to the determinate content of the universal to be imaged. Thus, for example, the strength of Jupiter is displayed by the eagle because this is regarded as being strong."[25] In the symbolic imagination, abstract universal representations are given fresh, concrete visual signifiers: "[I]ntelligence identifies its *universal* representations with the *particularity* of the image and so gives them a *pictorial* reality."[26] More broadly, the reserve of images and universals serves to provide material for the allegorising or symbolic imagination and—in the sole, cursory mention it receives within Hegel's

psychology—for the poetic imagination: "the intelligence as productive imagination [*Phantasie*] [...] is the power over this stuff, this material, this storehouse of representations and images. This possession the intelligence can use according to its own proper determination and through this material it can make its own representations knowable, impressionable [*vorstellig machen*]."[27]

The poetic imagination, which as Hegel understands it within his aesthetics (and thus as figuring within *absolute* rather than subjective spirit), is the imagination of imagination, the imagination that, rather than engaging outer aesthetic and less *ideell* materiality (stone, paint, the musical note) as is required in the other fine arts, reflexively folds back upon its own intuitions, images and signs to produce from within the poem that stands as a spiritual expression of this more profound interiority.[28] Hegel's conception of the poetic imagination, formulated with little explicit reference to the sign's nonmotivated character—or to its overcoming of the "problematic" that a sign divested of any aesthetic relation to its object poses it—has, at least for him, little relevance to the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*. However, Hegel's conception of the symbolic imagination does bear resemblance to the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*, the former is itself already a *sign-making* imagination, an imagination charged with providing an intuitive signifier for a universal content (signified); similarly, the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* has as its function to provide the existing universals housed within inner subjectivity with the intuitable, material and thus objective form of a spoken sign.

The universals created by abstraction from the network and storehouse of images supply the fund of signifieds to which *Zeichen machende Phantasie* will attach objective arbitrary (phonic) signifiers in the construction of words. The *Zeichen machende Phantasie* performs a function of exteriorisation similar to that of the symbolic imagination, but with the inestimably significant difference that it does so in the medium of sound *without* any motivated relation obtaining between signifier and signified (such as obtains between the eagle and strength or Jupiter) being required. It produces what Hegel calls the arbitrary (*willkürlich*) sign. In Hegel's account of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*, the production of the nonmotivated sign entails an initial movement exteriorising the intuitable content of the sign; in this, its newfound objectivity, the sign re-presents the universal beyond the scene of its generation

performed by the work of abstraction in inner subjectivity. Beyond the subjective attempt to represent universals in private symbolic images, sign-making intelligence seeks to reify its intuitions so that they function as intersubjective signifiers bearing communal meanings. Hegel supposes that, in a secondary movement that consolidates the precarious, newly formed nonmotivated signifier/signified relation (an "*individual* transient production"), the sign-memory of *Gedächtnis* re-interiorises or appropriates it as a unity: "The name, as the connection between the intuition produced by intelligence and its meaning, is initially an *individual* transient production, and the connection of the inner representation with the external intuition is itself *external*. The recollection (*Erinnerung*, interiorisation) of this externality is *memory* (*Gedächtnis*)."[29]

In contemplating *Gedächtnis*, Hegel will wonder at how the *mechanical* operation of the sign's recollection in *Gedächtnis* can possibly underlie the extraordinary liberation provided by a sign related only arbitrarily to its signified. *Gedächtnis* is essential to the study of Hegel's account of the sign-making imagination, for having it will come to usurp the role played by the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*, rendering the *concept* of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* inessential, and its phenomenon, if it ever existed, a unique and past dialectical moment of no further significance to language. I shall in more detailed analyses return to this and to other potentially contentious points arising in Hegel's account; however, it may already be sensed that a concept designating *langue* is conspicuously absent within Hegel's account.

For Hegel, what is most significant is that the mind or thought's independence from the signifier-intuition becomes absolute in the case of the nonmotivated signifier; for the sensory content of the latter is negated in its production and signification of the signified content or meaning. Having no role in the generation of the specific content of the signified, the specific intuitable content of the nonmotivated signifier serves only to provide the signifier with the repeatability necessary to it as such. With a body of linguistic signs in place that can be mechanically recollected from or by the power of *Gedächtnis*, thought, in its nascent form but nonetheless in possession of objective, communally-valid meanings, has come into being, and subjective spirit will have overcome its own self-enclosedness,

in a progression he summarises thus: "First, intelligence has an *immediate* object [in intuition], then, secondly, a *recollected* material *reflected into itself* [in *Vorstellung*], thirdly and finally, an object *subjective* and *objective* alike [in thought]."[30]

(ii) An Aporia in Hegel's Philosophy of Imagination: The Demise of an Imagination that Reinvents Itself

In this section, after having taken stock the fundamental displacement in the concept of imagination that Hegel introduces by pluralising and historicising it according to differentiated moments, and after noting the advance it marks upon Husserl and upon Kant's restriction of (the empirical) imagination to the intuition, I suggest that a certain tension arises in Hegel's thought on the origination of the nonmotivated sign. On the one hand, Hegel's dialectical historicisation of imagination leads him to posit imagination and language's histories as intersecting in the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*, and on the other, he posits in a more orthodox fashion the nonmotivated sign as amounting to the demise of imagination within language. Ultimately, in Hegel's account, the concept of imagination no longer arises once it has generated the words that make possible the mechanical recollection necessary to language and thought, or to language as thought. This is surprising to the extent that Hegel had worked on the premise that imagination incessantly renewed itself; it is this tension in Hegel, and the question to which it leads—does imagination efface its own conditions of operation in creating the nonmotivated sign?—that I attempt to formulate more precisely in this section.

Hegel's dialectic of imagination suggests that its changing roles and functions transcend and usurp one another in terms of the sophistication of their product, their relevance to psychical development and the extent to which they define the mind's primary or predominant activity. Two fundamental ways in which Hegel's effects a certain historicisation of imagination are evident; firstly, in relation to the continual transcendence of the material of intuition to the point that it serves in language, and secondly, the distinction implicit in Hegel's psychology between, on the one hand, the *more or less* unchanging capacity of imagination as a particular moment (reproducing images), and on the other, its function (the role it played at a particular juncture within the historically specific configuration of the mind and representation at the time).

Vorstellung, which is nothing other than imagination in its various forms as *Einbildungskraft* and as *Phantasie*, entails a series of dialectical forms of negativity

that suppress and raise intuition up to the point at which it serves as a sign, this dialectical negativity binding together imagination in the diversity of its moments. Imagination, Hegel tells us, "is, *in general*, the *determinant* of images",[31] image being understood less as a specifically visual representation than as a stored content of intuition, and thus as phonic, visual, or, in general, sensory in nature. This negativity is evident in the continual redetermination by which the intuition becomes an image, then the abstracted content of a universal, then the content of an image representing that universal (a symbol), before, in the end, becoming the phonic intuitable content of a spoken sign: "The content that is elevated to intuitions is *its* sensations; similarly, it is *its* intuitions that are transformed into representations, and its representations that are transformed again into thoughts, etc."[32] In the course of the progression, what is in the first place given or found (*das Gefundene*), is increasingly freely posited, set forth and redetermined by the mind or imagination in a greater exhibition and creation of its autonomy. Imagination thus redetermines the content of intuition in the variety of its forms in a process that liberates the representing mind from intuition right up the point at which the content of intuition in the nonmotivated sign is negated. Short of being able to think without any material form expressing it—an absurdity according to Hegel—this negation is absolute or the most complete possible. As such, although Hegel specifies the image as the object that imagination determines, his philosophy of imagination as a whole implies that imagination continually redetermines intuitions or the content of intuition.[33] Such a modification would be significant, particularly when the question of an artistic imagination arises in which it is intuitable *external* materiality that is its object; and it is decisive also with regard to whether imagination is to be attributed with the creation of a nonmotivated sign, and thus without any mimetic or figurative relation between signifier and signified immediately qualifying it as such.

In the path from *Erinnerung* to spontaneous imagination and to the creation of the sign, intuition or *the* particular intuition is repeatedly *aufgehoben*; which is to say—according to the uncanny logic reflected in the word's plural and apparently contradictory senses—that it is negated yet conserved, raised to a higher status than it initially held but also subordinated to that which has superseded and transformed it. This is not to say, then, that intuition, as a capacity to sense, engage and attend to outer objects, is nullified or simply disappears, even if the universalisation of the

image radically transforms it: "Representational mind has intuition; intuition is *sublated* in mind, not vanished, not merely passed away."[34] The content of intuition is evident in its preserved and deadened form, and one might say in every word we utter and hear and every text we read, poetry or the poetic being that which reawakens us to language's fundamental (aesthetic and semantic, prosodic and rhetorical) possibilities.

In addition to the dialectical pluralisation of imagination, Hegel's inscription of imagination as playing a certain determinate role or function at a specific juncture in the evolution of intelligence constitutes a radical departure from classical conceptions of imagination focused exclusively on imagination as a certain capacity (faculty or power) made available to the mind. While the *capacity*—for example—to reproduce images spontaneously marks a certain moment of progression in imagination's development, the *role* played by imagination in this form in the historical advancement of cognition and representation generally—that of liberating intuitions such that they become a fund or reservoir for more advanced forms of creativity (creating universals, symbols and signs)—is very different. Reverie, in which we reproduce images spontaneously and entertain them in a stream of consciousness, may ordinarily be understood to be divested of any purpose other than the intrinsic enjoyment it provides or as a means of provisionally fulfilling desires (in the mode of primary wish-fulfilment, as Freud would say). But as we have seen in the Hegelian framework, the activity of freely entertaining images (as liberated from intuition) assumes the vital if concealed function of freeing stored up intuitions from their inception in specific experiences for use by subsequent moments of imagination as semiological materiality. In generating the interconnections within the network of images, reverie consolidates and reaffirms the network of images' autonomy or its independence from intuition, thus facilitating the associative imagination that will later produce abstract universals. That reverie is not undertaken with such purposes in mind in no way diminishes the beneficial effects it will have produced. The capacity to spontaneously reproduce images is, therefore, not *merely* the presenting of an object in its absence; to grasp the (dialectical) *truth* of this phenomenon, Hegel believes that it must be understood within the psychical progression that ensues following the attainment of the productive imagination's capacity.

Within Hegel's system, a particular capacity of imagination is only truly known when one can establish not only its differentiated moments but recognise the effects it produces, the role it plays in psychical development or the new potentialities opened up by it. This is not to say that the particular capacity of a form of imagination cannot be retained without it continuing to serve (the same or indeed any specific function). On the contrary, it is to recognise that certain capacities are preserved essentially as abstracted from the specific role they once played. Thus does reverie, at a stage in psychical development when it has been surpassed by symbolisation, the advent of language and art, etc., amount to a regression to a former stage of mind. Hegel notes this possibility when treating of the dreaming soul (*die traümende Seele*), in the anthropology; rather contentiously, he describes madness as being such a regression.[35] As Hegel often suggests, the stages that spirit or mind will have traversed in its becoming or education are those through which the child's mind rapidly progresses in its own becoming.

These facets of Hegel's philosophy of imagination—the continual action of negating and raising up intuition according to its possibilities, and the historical inscription of imagination as playing a developmentally specific role, and one it may outlive—are significant in that they suggest imagination to consist in more than simply its differentiated moments or in immutable capacities. They suggest what might be called imagination's self-replenishing dialectic. This dialectic, which Hegel never explicitly designates as such, but which is implicit in its successive development, is that by which it not only (re)determines intuitions, images, or signs, but is also in turn challenged, redetermined, or is forced to redetermine itself by its products. Imagination is opened up to, or opens up for itself, new horizons of possibility by virtue of its own creations or products. The imagination's creation of an image independent of intuition, and of an autonomous network of images, discloses the possibility of the associative imagination creating universals, which in turn discloses further possibilities and forms of imagination (symbolic, sign-making, artistic, poetic forms of imagination). In this way, imagination reinvents its own conditions of operation, renews and broadens its potentialities by its own hand. As a phenomenon conceived as a whole, it consists not simply in its differentiated moments, but describes the continuity by which in its evolving forms it is continually called upon to broaden spirit's semiological and cognitive horizons, and by which it

proceeds or fails to explore new (representational or post-representational) potentialities.

It is essential to set out the dialectic of imagination underlying Hegel's psychology if we are to grasp the reason underlying his extension of *Phantasie* to include the sign among its creations; it also raises the question, as we will see, of why Hegel should effectively renege upon the notion of imagination being involved in the creation of the nonmotivated sign as soon as he posits *Gedächtnis*, the mechanical iteration of the sign, as underlying the possibility of thought.

Before formulating such questions precisely, it must be recognised that what I am calling Hegel's dialectic of imagination is significant not only for recognising the factors leading him to the radically subversive act of formulating a specific form of imagination responsible for the creation of the nonmotivated sign. The differentiated moments traversed by imagination within its dialectic are also significant inasmuch as they suggest a radical departure from the classical determination of imagination's relation to intuition. This can be illustrated by differentiating Hegel from Husserl's understanding and from Kant's notion of the imagination, particularly in its empirical form.

We have seen that Hegel takes the differentiation of the image from the intuition to be vital to the development of representation; this stands in opposition to the emphasis that Husserl lays on grounding images in concrete intuitions. In my earlier treatment of Husserl it was seen that, although Husserl eventually accepts that imagination has a capacity of sorts to fulfil an intention, he will never regard the imaginative fulfilment (*Erfüllung*) of an intention as rivalling the intuitive fulfilment necessitated by scientific practise and rigour. In contrast to Husserl, Hegel emphasises the immense value that *not* needing to fulfil the intention has within psychical development of representation. In other words, to the extent that the inner representation *could* be verified by recourse to experience, it need in fact *not* be verified; such authentication or confirmation is but a *necessary possibility* of the image or the sign. Hegel posits that since the image *could always* be referred to *some* originary intuition that would authenticate the imagined object's existence, it therefore *need not* be actively or actually confirmed through referral to a specific

intuition in experience or to intuition itself. The image is already determined as having an external, intuitable referent, and as such, the performance of relating the image to an intuition is only a necessary possibility, a *supplément* lying in the space between being essential and auxiliary. Language, as the possibility of a nonmotivated sign-system and as not requiring immediate conjuring of an image in order to apprehend a signified, and thus as a "convenient" communicational system as well as one in which abstract concepts can be formed, is conditional upon the possibility of suspending the necessity of fulfilling intuitions.[36] While Husserl's thought is indisputably vital in considering the ideal conditions for the possibility of science or scientific language, Hegel's thought provides a more solid basis for determining the concept and nature of imagination.

Imagination has traditionally been determined as a capacity or power (*Kraft*, *Vermögen*, *puissance*, *facultas*). Hegel submitted this empirical "faculty-psychology" of his time to repeated critique in the course of working out a philosophy based on dialectical moments.[37] In defining the empirical imagination, Kant effectively sought to extend the province of intuition to include the capacity of the imagination "to intuit absent objects". However, Hegel lays emphasis on what imagination's redetermination of and liberation from intuition or the intuited object as such facilitates in subsequent psychical development, specifically the formation of symbols and signs. Thus, whereas Kant reduces the empirical imagination to the status of a supplementary power of intuition, Hegel's understanding suggests imagination to come into being only with its redetermination of the intuition as an image. The ramifications of these different determinations of the relation between imagination and intuition are immense: whereas Kant's philosophy effectively casts aside, or in any case, fails to cover the relation between imagination and language or signification, Hegel's dialectic of imagination opens it up to a semiological investigation that enquires into the full range of signs it produces.

We have seen that imagination's capacities can recede into the past or become irrelevant relative to subsequent capacities supervening upon them in the dialectic of imagination. This is the case with the restrictive determination of imagination to the visual image. In focusing exclusively on the power of imagination to (re)produce imagination, Kant's empirical imagination and Husserl's philosophy of imagination

essentially analyse a past moment of imagination in abstraction from the historical role it played in psychical development, and in the absence of any recognition that they do so. Their empirical determinations of imagination fail to recognise the impact that imagination, understood less as one faculty than as a dynamically evolving agency, has at each stage in advancement of representation. Hegel in effect, I am suggesting, effectively refutes Kant and Husserl on this issue by issuing a warning originally delivered by Aristotle, namely that faculties of the mind should not be reified but grasped according to the mind's dynamic unfolding.

Conventional determinations of imagination as the capacity to reproduce images, or to generate an intuition of an absent object, would, I suggest, prove to be deficient within Hegel's system not simply because the capacities of imagination are multiple, but because the attempt to provide a definition of imagination as an immutable capacity condemns one to overlook its historical self-differentiation. Such attempts fail to recognise imagination as a becoming of interrelated moments that, in the mind in its advanced forms, have come to exist as capacities and fossilised moments layered or superimposed upon one another. Capacities picked up along the way in spirit's development may have survived and remain available to the subject, without playing the specific role they once did in the mind's development. The restriction of the concept of imagination to inner visual imagination precludes it from referring to imagination in the forms it assumes in subsequent, complex, contemporary moments beyond the advent of language, and thus within the various conventional and historical systems of signification and representation within which it comes to be inscribed.

Neither Husserl nor Kant conceived of imagination's relation to intuition as a dynamic one, necessarily founded upon a continual redetermination of the material of imagination; as a consequence, their determinations of imagination show little of the promise offered by Hegel's concept for a concept of imagination whose coherency lies in its moments' continuity, and in the possibility of differentiating them according to diverse semiological forms of representation, and according to the possibility of engaging images, signs, the materiality of pictorial images or plastic artworks generally. Indeed, I will suggest, in a move that pushes Hegel's insight beyond anything Hegel actually said, that imagination ultimately comes to takes as its object

signs and images, artworks and texts *insofar as* they have been determined within or by historically produced conventional systems and traditions. Recognising imagination as evolving to the point that it engages the material of intuition as determined by language will in any case be essential to overcoming certain problems that arise in Hegel's account of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*.

It is precisely to the scene of *Phantasie*'s creation of language as Hegel describes it that we must return; for it must be recognised that, while Hegel's dialectic of imagination provides a certain ground upon which Hegel is compelled to posit imagination as redetermining the material of intuition such that it is operative in signs, he also suggests imagination to meet with a certain irrevocable demise in the nonmotivated sign and in thought comprehended on the basis of this mode of signification. This can be inferred not only from the fact that Hegel no longer mentions the sign-making imagination beyond the psychology, and that he forms no other equivalent concepts to account for the development of language beyond its nascent state; it is also manifest in the fact that Hegel ultimately attributes to *Gedächtnis* the creative role played by the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*.

There remains, then, a fundamental tension within Hegel's thought on the question of sign-making. On the one hand, Hegel historicises imagination such that it becomes a series of dialectical moments, a continual redetermination of intuition that leads to a point at which *Phantasie* is attributed with creating the linguistic sign; but, on the other hand, Hegel reaffirms the logocentric tenet that imagination meets with its death in the arbitrary sign, that it is discontinued by the system of language that it creates which, Hegel effectively assumes, requires only *Gedächtnis*. The suggestion of a contradiction in Hegel's thought arises, for imagination and the sign both must and must not be related: Hegel will at once relate them (*Phantasie* creates the sign) but also radically exclude them (*Phantasie* plays no role in the creation of a sign necessarily absorbed within the domain of memory, that is, within the pure mechanical reproduction that underlies the freedom of thought, a freedom gained through the nonmotivated sign's detachment from the sensibility of the sign). This indecisiveness at the level of description might be said to emerge from a fundamental and time-honoured prescription in philosophy: imagination must be excluded from the domain and operation of the ideally iterable sign; for if it is not, language and

philosophical conceptuality would be subject to the fundamental possibility of being continually redetermined.

I devote several sections to considering the issues raised by this strain in Hegel's thought. It may serve some purpose if I map out several of the issues to be addressed, and give some indication of the way in which deconstructing Hegel's concept of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* is to lead to a revised notion of the imagination as it is operative in language, conceptuality and thought.

Despite a radical dialectical historicisation of imagination's moments that proves conducive to relating imagination to the creation of the sign, or even renders it logically necessary to recognise the continuity of imagination as a phenomenon, Hegel implicitly posits their fundamental incommensurability on the basis of the well-established incompatibility of imagination and thought. There is much to be said for the position that Hegel ultimately adopts. Insofar as the single event of imagination creating the sign is necessarily eclipsed by an iterable sign, by the sign being a reproducible component stored in memory, the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*'s sudden rise and fall may be considered to be entirely justifiable and indeed inevitable. Hegel might be adjudged to have overstepped the limit of imagination by inscribing imagination within a context in which mimetic or figurative relation is no longer operative; accordingly, the concept of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* rests on a fundamental contradiction that seals its fate. What is certain is that, although Hegel redefines imagination as a progressive redetermination of intuitions and images to the point that they serve as arbitrary signifiers within the mechanical operation constitutive of thought and cognition, he deems this unfolding to be supervised by a rational telos or goal, by the goal of rationality, rather than to be the open-ended adventure of imagination and language, conceptuality and thought opening up their own dialectic.

However, Hegel's effective curtailment or restriction of the dialectic between the nonmotivated sign and imagination might be considered to harbour a teleological mode of reasoning; he makes judgements about past developments on the basis of a certain understanding of the present, or of the past as necessarily unfolding toward it; more specifically, since he predetermines the unfolding of history to be oriented by

the goal of rationality, by the attainment of the logos, and characterises modernity as the age of the "prose of thought", as the age in which *Wissenschaft* can be realised, he interprets the overcoming of imagination as a moment necessarily taking place within that history. The imagination's creation of the sign that appears to consign imagination to the past certainly conforms to such an integral and necessary moment.

However, it is possible to pose the question of imagination's involvement in the creation of the nonmotivated sign outside of Hegel's positing of nonmotivated signification, in its ideal form as realised in prose and thought, as the telos of history. Indeed, if, as Hegel suggests, imagination consists in the perpetual semiological redetermination of intuitions, the question arises of whether the manner in which the materiality of words is brought into conventional and differential relations in *langue* does not constitute a certain mode of imagination. Does the nonmotivated sign constitute the first object created by imagination with which, on account of the absence of a mimetic or figurative relation, it cannot re-engage? Or, are we required to rethink imagination—its concept and its phenomenon, if such a distinction can be made—in the light of it creating not simply the sign, but an objective system (the differential system of *langue*) within which nonmotivated signs are possible?

What is ultimately at stake in the question of whether imagination is responsible for the creation of language consists in the dialectical moments of a linguistic imagination that could be supposed to succeed the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*. Such moments and forms of imagination would not be exhausted by poetry or poetic imagery, but would play a part in the development of the nonmotivated sign, language and conceptuality. Hegel's philosophy of imagination logically leads to pursuing such moments beyond the advent of the nonmotivated sign; in other words, having transgressed the supposed exclusion of imagination and a nonmotivated sign, he might have studied imagination insofar as it arises in other related forms that account for essential developments in language. In this regard, it must be noted in advance of a reading I undertake, that Hegel, in the course of rejecting Leibniz's proposed hieroglyphic form of script, describes the nonmotivated sign as essential and integral to philosophical thought *not* because it provides a stable form for immutable signified meanings; he does so, rather, on account of *the interdependency* of nonmotivated conceptual signs making it possible for philosophical thought to

reconfigure its conceptuality. What Hegel implicitly suggests with regard to nonmotivated signified meaning not only implies the differential constitution of nonmotivated signification, it also implies the work of an imagination at the very heart of philosophical thought and progress.

It is on the basis of this reading that I will return to the original scene of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* and to Hegel's account of the origination of the nonmotivated sign. As a whole, Hegel's model of the creation or origination of language rests on a naïve semiology or at least one that has not available to it the Saussurean distinction between *parole* and *langue*, or the notion of semiological difference as the condition of the possibility of arbitrary signs. It rests on the supposed ideality of the linguistic signified, on the pre-existence of signified meaning (universals) to which intuitions need only be joined, rather than on the conventionality of the differentially constituted system of signs without which nonmotivated linguistic and conceptual signified meaning could neither emerge nor be subject to the dynamism to which the history of language attests. Hegel's notion of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*, I argue, fails to be founded upon a resolution to the problematic of nonmotivated signs that Saussurean terminology affords us: how can *parole* and *langue* give rise to one another, given that neither exists before language is brought into being. Without being founded upon a response to this question, the notion of a sign-making imagination lacks the substantive content or explanatory power to justify itself. Through submitting Hegel's model of the origination of language to Saussurean linguistics and Derrida's semiology of *écriture* or grammatology, I will propose an alternative and reconstructed concept of the sign-making imagination. But in the first place, it is necessary to critique Hegel's conception of the arbitrary or nonmotivated sign as it is founded on its distinction from the symbol; I undertake this critique with a view to demonstrating that Hegel failed to recognise the irreducible alterity and differential functioning of an objective body of signs (*langue*) that is necessary to the possibility of nonmotivated signification, and that must constitute the product the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* is attributed with having created.

Notes to Chapter IV

[1] For a recent study of imagination as it figures within Hegel's early work, see the opening chapters of Jennifer Bates's work, *Hegel's Theory of Imagination*, Albany: State University of New York, 2004. Cf. note 15, Chapter VI.

[2] *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans. William Wallace with the *Zusätze* or additions trans. by A. V. Miller; revisions and Commentary by Michael Inwood, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971; §386, p. 22. Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit (in its three parts: subjective, objective, absolute) corresponds to Volume 10 in Hegel's Collected Works, Volumes 8-10 comprising the Encyclopaedia project as a whole: *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, Werke in zwanzig Bänden, Bde. 8-10, Frankfurt-am-Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970. See note 3 below.

[3] I concentrate on two sources in my reading of Hegel's psychology in his Philosophy of Subjective Spirit: (i) the 1830 edition of the Encyclopaedia, the psychology appearing in Bde. 10, cited in note two above; and (ii) the Erdmann transcripts of lectures delivered by Hegel in 1827-8: *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie des Geistes Berlin 1927/28* (ed. Franz Hespe & B. Tuschling), Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1994; *Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit 1827-8*, trans. Robert R. Williams, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. I refer to the two sources as *1830* and *1827-8*, followed by section number (§) where relevant, and page numbers, given first in English and then in the original German. A section reference followed by "r" indicates that the cited text derives from a so-called "remark" made after the Section; since Hegel wrote the actual sections or lecture notes in his characteristically dense and cryptic style, the remarks—usually students' more prosaic renderings based on Hegel extemporising during his lectures—were added to the relevant section in the editorial process. References to sections followed by "z" designate that the text refers to Boumann's *Zusätze*; these additions were made from a variety of sources by Boumann in his capacity as editor of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* in the first editions of what was an incomplete project published following Hegel's death in 1831. My focus is on the sections devoted to Theoretical Spirit (§§440-469, in the 1830 *Encyclopaedia*). See Robert Williams' introduction for the circumstances in which the Erdmann manuscripts came to light, and on the relative neglect of Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit (*1827-8*, pp. 1-56).

[4] *1830*, §445z, p. 175; 243.

[5] "Psychology accordingly studies the faculties or universal modes of activity of the *mind as such*, intuition, representing, recollecting, etc. desires, etc. disregarding both the *content*, which in *appearance* is found in empirical representation, in thinking also and in desire and will, *and* the forms in which the content occurs, in the soul as a natural determination, and in consciousness itself as an object of consciousness that is itself present for itself. This however is not an arbitrary abstraction. Mind itself is this elevation above nature and natural determinacy [...]" (*1830*, §440z, p. 185; 230).

[6] *Vorstellung* (representation) gives itself on occasion to be translated as *imagination*; but this would prove confusing to the extent that *Einbildungskraft* and *Phantasie* constitute in Hegel's psychology various *modes* of *Vorstellung*.

[7] See my discussion of Gasché's notion of the abysmality of imagination in Kant in the second antagonism above.

[8] *1830*, §387r, p. 25; 39. Having described memory as "the transformation of representation", Hegel says: "We consider all these activities not as they proceed outwardly, influencing this or that, but as moments directed toward each other, such that the development of spirit passes over from activity to another, and so that an as yet unfree immediate activity is raised to a higher level of freedom" (*1827-8*, 203; 183).

[9] *1830*, §453r, p. 187; 260.

[10] *1827-8*, p. 221; 205.

[11] Cf. *1830* §450z, p. 184; 256-7 and *1827-8*, p. 217; 201.

[12] Hegel, G.W.F., *The Philosophical Propaedeutic*, trans A. V. Miller, Oxford: Blackwell, 1986, p. 153 hereafter *Prop*).
[13] *Prop*, p. 153.
[14] *1830*, §455z, p. 190; 265.
[15] Propelled by the drive within itself to master the content of the network of images that now expands within it, spirit in the form of imagination gives its own subjective images the form of universality: "Spirit connects the images, brings them under its determinations, gives them an inner soul, so that the content of this representation no longer has the concrete [*das Konkrete*] in the immediacy of intuition, but rather the content belongs to spirit" (*1827-8*, p. 205; 186).
[16] *1827-8,* p. 221; 205.
[17] *1830*, §455r, p. 189; 263-4.
[18] *1827-8*, p. 217; 200.
[19] "Crise de vers" in *Oeuvres complètes* (ed. H. Mondor & G. Jean-Aubry), Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Paris : Gallimard, 1945; p. 360.
[20] Cf. *1827-8*, p. 219; 203.
[21] *1830*, §456z, p. 192; 267. "*Abstract representations* [...] In the subjective sphere, which we now occupy, the *universal* representation is the *internal*, whereas the image is the *external*. These two mutually opposed determinations initially still fall apart, but in their separation, each is one-sided. The representation lacks externality, pictorial vivacity, [while] the image foregoes elevation to the expression of a determinate universal. The truth of these two sides is, therefore, their unity" (*1830*, p. 191-2; 266).
[22] *1830*, §451z, p. 185; 258.
[23] *1830*, §448z, p. 179; 250. "[T]he cultivated human being finds nothing new; it is only a recollection, a point of view that he already knows and possesses; it has only been connected with a new relation" (*1827-8*, p. 217-8; 201).
[24] *1830*, §456z, p. 192; 267. Cf. *1827-8*, p. 223;
[25] *1830*, §457z, p. 193; 269.
[26] *1830*, §455z, p. 190; 264.
[27] *1827-8*, p. 221; 205. Cf. *1830*, §456, p. 191; 265.
[28] Cf. *ILA II*, p. 964ff.
[29] *1830*, §460. P. 198; 277.
[30] *1830*, §445z, p. 176; 245.
[31] *1830*, §455z, p. 190; 264.
[32] *1830*, §440r, p. 165; 230. This is in accordance with Hegel's notion of the development of spirit or mind: "The progress of spirit is development. Development is different from alteration or change. In change something disappears; an other is posited in its place, and both elements are opposed to each other. In contrast, spirit develops itself, and in this development, nothing alien enters. [...] [S]pirit itself does not change when it advances, but preserves itself in the process. Spirit is the activity of producing, and what it posits is its own" (*1827-8*, p. 201;180). Cf. note 8 above.
[33] That the imagination redetermines intuition or intuitions rather than simply images can be inferred from the summary Hegel gives of theoretical spirit, in particular what he says of productive imagination (*Phantasie*): "The intelligence active in the image and in possession of the image, is imagination (*Einbildungskraft*). There are three determinations in the imagination: (1) The reproduction of images. (2) This connection is a connection posited by the imagination; it transforms the content that is first given to it into a proper idea or a representation; this is the productive imagination (*Phantasie*) in general. (3) Productive imagination gives the content the capacity to be intuited. It posits the completion of the process as intuitable, and transforms imagination (*macht sie: Phantasie*) into a sign-inventing intelligence" (*1827-8*, p. 218; 202).
[34] *1830*, §451z, p. 184; 256.
[35] Cf. *1827-8*, pp. 124-157; 88-132.

[36] On the superfluity of the imagination's external reference in virtue of the mere possibility of it being confirmed through recollection as true, cf. *1827-8*, p. 218; 201-2, and *1830*, §454, p. 187-8; 261.

[37] For Hegel's critique of so-called faculty psychology, cf. *1827-8*; 203; 183; and in *1830*, §445 in its entirety (pp. 173-175; 261-2), and his critique of Condillac's mode of accounting for the genesis of mind through faculties (*1830*, §442, pp. 168-169; 234-5).

Chapter V: From the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* to *Parole* as a Creative Performance: Hegel on the Precipice of a Philosophical Imagination

> We shall, therefore, permit the name Aesthetic to stand, because it is nothing but a name (*Namen*), and so is indifferent to us (*für uns gleichgültig*), and, moreover, has up to a certain point passed into common language. As a name, therefore, it may be retained.
> Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*

(i) Hegel on the Transition from Symbol to Sign: Reinterpreting the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* as Creating *Langue*

For Hegel, the creation of the sign entails, as we have seen, an initial operation of exteriorisation (performed by the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*) and of reinteriorisation (*Gedächtnis*). In this section, I take up the initial movement of objectivisation that defines the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*; in Chapter VI, I address the manner in which, for Hegel, *Gedächtnis* and thought envelop and consign to the past any lingering trace of imagination's creativity in the nonmotivated sign. But before outlining the stages involved in Hegel's account of *Zeichen machende Phantasie*'s objectivisation of the nonmotivated relation between word and meaning, it is necessary to identify what exactly he takes the linguistic sign, as the product of *Phantasie*, to be. This can be best achieved by recognising the manner in which he differentiates the nonmotivated linguistic sign from the symbol, from what is a visual, motivated, and (in its inception) a non-linguistic sign. The operation of linguistic signification resembles that of the symbolic imagination, it will be recalled, since it gives intuitable form to a universal but without any motivated relation obtaining between them. Hegel interprets the arbitrariness inhering between the linguistic signifier and signified as being indicative of a newfound freedom, the linguistic sign thus amounting to a liberation from the symbol, a liberation of signification from its immersion in the sensuousness that Hegel deems to be inimical to thought proper.

I begin with an outline and brief critique of a certain dualism that dominates Hegel's semiology of the symbol, in which he posits the symbolic signifier's extrinsic

and inferior position relative to what is symbolised, or to the signified designated by the symbol. One could take up three points at which Hegel understands the linguistic sign to distinguish itself, and elevate itself above, the symbol: firstly, in terms of its nonmotivated status; secondly, in terms of its phonic materiality, sound, for Hegel, being the ideal (*ideell*) semiological medium on account of it being temporal rather than spatial (as in writing); and lastly, on the basis of the first two features, in terms of the sign's objectivity as a communally shared meaning in contradistinction to the symbol's inner subjectivity. I must restrict myself to analysis of the first and last of these features, setting aside the significant advance that the *phonic* sign makes over the inner non-linguistic symbol, as an *objective* medium in contrast to the inner image.[1] The sign's nonmotivated and phonic status renders the signified, according to Hegel, autonomous, immediate and objective. But it is the last of these features—the objectivisation of the linguistic sign—that brings us within sight of what, for Hegel, constitutes the essential operation of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*; its work, in accordance with the classical motif of imagination as exteriorising, projecting and expressing, is for Hegel, that of reproducing universals outside of themselves and of the mind's inchoate subjective interiority, in an immediately intuitable form (in the arbitrary sound). Although Hegel accepts that the symbol rendered in the form of material exteriority constitutes the dawn of fine art—the *symbolic* work of architecture designating for him fine art's coming into being—neither the symbolic artwork nor the inner, private and subjective pictorial symbol is capable of attaining to the same determinacy and objectivity of meaning as the linguistic sign. In the course of articulating the distinguishing features of the sign, I argue that, although spoken language undoubtedly comes into being prior to alphabetic-phonetic writing, what a sign-making imagination must be considered as producing, *as a whole*, is *langue*: for it is only on the basis of such a differential system, or at least of a system with the power to authorise and validate the signifier/signified relation, that the nonmotivated sign, whether spoken or written, can come into being.

Rather than casting the objectivising operation of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* in terms of supplying phonic intuitions with universals that were formed prior to the emergence of language, it must, I suggest, be conceived of as generating a framework (*langue*) within which the semiological differences necessary to the possibility of nonmotivated signification can be received and supported. Semiological

difference facilitates the differentiation of signs irrespective of their materiality, be they phonic or written. What the sign-making imagination must be conceived of as creating, I argue, is a conventional system within which interrelations between signs enable language not only to come into being as a fundamentally nonmotivated system, *but also* as a semiological and historical system that admits of progressive redetermination and development. Such a reconceived notion of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* has the advantage of being better able to account not only for the origination of language, but also for the dynamism of linguistic meaning that itself suggests imagination to continue to rewrite linguistic meaning or conceptual frameworks such as they are, at any given time, conventionally instituted.

Hegel maintains a strict separation or dualism between the signifying symbol and the symbolised signified; he determines this relation within a hierarchy such that "[t]here is a dual content (1) the significance, the sense, the substantial and essential; (2) what has no sense for itself, what should only give the significance, and is used only for the explication of the significance, namely the symbolising imagination."[2] The delimitation of the symbolic imagination whereby it bears upon only the symbolic signifier will be applicable also in the case of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* and the signifier. Taking his favoured example, he writes: "the soul of this intuition is strength; the eagle is merely an example [*Beispiel*], a by-play [*Beiherspielendes*]. (This expression is connected to the disposition of the German language towards thinking). The immediate intuition is used only as material. The intuition is only the housing for the psychic sense, the inner".[3]

Hegel tells us that the symbol is an "example", a *Beispiel*, one of many possible signs that could be used to represent the general or universal, and thus merely serves in the presentation of the symbolised or symbolic signified; the symbol, which is only ever an illustrative example, is, as he moves along a chain within the German *langue* from *Beispiel* to *Beiherspielende*, an insignificant, secondary, derivative by-play. I shall come to the problematic dualism in Hegel's semiology of the symbol presently. But first, it is his comments on the etymological composition of the German words of which he takes note, and which thus relate to *the way* he wishes to argue this dualist semiology that demand attention. What Hegel ostensibly seeks to

say as regards the symbol is that it constitutes merely the passive material employed in designating the symbolised. This notion of the passive role played by the signifier that effaces itself upon evoking its signified will be carried over to the nonmotivated sign, which, since it is unmediated or in any case not mediated by any form of resemblance, achieves it all the more perfectly; moreover, the linguistic signified will be deemed to exist in the interiority of the mind, that is, in the inner objectivity of thought in opposition to the external housing or pyramid of the sign. But in the course of asserting this thesis, he implies something radically different. Tellingly, in a manner that demonstrates a discrepancy between what is taking place at the level of his signifying operation and that of the signified, what he actually performs or demonstrates in the course of articulating this semiological dualism of the symbol is the insuperable, enduring or the ineradicable potential relevance of the signifier, or at least of its etymological composition, to the signified meaning generated.

What we find juxtaposed here is, on the one hand, Hegel's reduction of the import of the motivated symbol with, on the other, the manner in which he finds particular German words to express, or be instructive, with regard to the relation between the symbol and symbolised. While Hegel reduces the import of the symbol by declaring it to be but an example, to be "used only as material", to be an external material to house the "inner" signified, in parenthetical comments made in the course of this reduction, he fortuitously finds his thinking on the symbol reflected in the constitution of the words "Beispiel" and "Beiherspielende". Drawing on the component parts of linguistic signs that serve to articulate his thought in anything but a strictly nonmotivated way, he seeks to prove or justify the thesis that in the symbol, the symbolic signifier is of little import. One would thus, if one were to deduce Hegel's general position from this one case, be led to believe that the symbol's status as dispensable signifying material stands at odds with the word, whose etymological resources can prove to be instructive, and to inform and nourish thinking.

And yet, Hegel posits no such thesis as to the fundamentally motivated relation between word and meaning; indeed, on the contrary, the linguistic sign marks for Hegel an advance upon the symbol precisely on account of it ridding itself of any intuitable, motivated mediating element. As we will see, he stipulates that the name need not and must not provide the signified's definition, that the signifier's lack of

any mediating or motivated element generate the signified meaning immediately or in the form of presence.

It is Hegel's recourse to the composite elements of the words above that contradicts the rigorous distinction he upholds in the main between the nonmotivated linguistic sign and the motivated symbolic signifier; his allusion to the etymological constitution of these words, and the assumption underlying it that, within a particular language, names or nouns can be given to thinking, amounts to a startling contravention of his general thesis that the linguistic sign *qua nonmotivated sign* is ideally suited for the purpose of thought. Whereas Hegel's thought time and again takes it as a given that the nonmotivated name represents the ideal form of signification, and that the immediate presencing of meaning is produced by being evoked by a signifier indifferent to that meaning, he will allow himself, when the constitution of the signifier so allows it, to draw upon words' roots, thereby asserting the dependence of thought on a particular language ("the disposition of the German language to thought"), and the aptness of a signifier's motivated elements and its constituent parts to lay bare the sense of its signified concept. Elsewhere, again in contradistinction to the guiding thrust of his valorisation of the nonmotivated sign, he will describe thinking as naturally seeking in the sign a rational connection with its meaning. (We have already seen that Plato, in a similar fashion, hesitates before affirming unconditionally the loss of a mimetic relation between the word and its meaning.) How can the purity of nonmotivated signification stand as an ideal of philosophical thought, on the one hand, while the motivated elements within signs dispose certain languages to thinking, on the other? Hegel's text, by dint of its own "performative" contradictions in which his actions betray his more or less stated thesis, unwittingly demonstrates that thinking operates on the basis of signifying operations that contain *both* motivated and nonmotivated elements. In using words, we draw both from their etymological composition and from their conventional sense (from their identity as determined by their relation with other concepts, and by meaning what other related concepts do *not* mean). Hegel's inadvertent demonstration of the variety of sources within *langue* from which we draw in determining words' meanings undermines the ground on which he seeks to exclude imagination from thought; for Hegel will effectively declare imagination to play no part in language on account of the purely nonmotivated nature of language's signifying operation.

If we set aside the manner in which Hegel's text deconstructs itself by its performance being at odds with its constative utterances, at odds with the distinction between the sign and the symbol that he founds on the basis of the distinction between the arbitrary and the non-arbitrary, we are returned to what amounts to his declared and explicit thesis in the citation above; namely, to a reductive semiology of the symbol that determines it as a passive signifier fundamentally extricable from its signified. This understanding of the symbol is inherently problematic. For the symbol depends upon a certain interplay or oscillation between its literal and symbolic senses, supposing these senses to be rigorously distinguishable. Contrary to Hegel's strict dualism, neither the eagle in its universality as the literal signified, nor the strength of Jupiter as the symbolic signified, remains unaffected by the fact that the eagle (rather than any number of other possible symbolic signifiers) is selected as, and comes to be, a conventional signifier for Jupiter.[4]

In contrast to the notion that the symbol disappears upon its signified appearing without contributing to the signified's determination or amounting to its determinant, the symbolic signifier, as Ricoeur puts it, *donne à penser*; that is, it sets itself forth to be contemplated in the course of determining or grasping the symbolic signified. Rather than serving in a signifying operation that is curtailed or exhausted by the simple presentation of the signified, the symbol draws thought towards the symbol/symbolised relation as an enigmatic, composite and constructed unity. Ricoeur's formulation serves not merely to enlighten us as to the nature of the symbol; it redefines our conception of thought inasmuch as thinking the symbol/symbolised relation does not allow itself to operate at the level of an autonomous signified, but includes within itself a reflexive turn towards the signifying or symbolising operation constitutive of its possibility. The implication is thus that thought worthy of the name is thought that attends to its signifying operation, that takes account of the conventionality of its procedures. This critique of Hegel's semiology of the symbol is by no means inapplicable to his understanding of the nonmotivated sign. We shall see that this reflexive structure of thought attending to its signifying operation is relevant in the case of the linguistic or supposedly nonmotivated sign, as indeed Hegel demonstrates in an exemplary fashion above. Indeed, thought, in being reflexively drawn toward the nonmotivated sign, even if it

encounters no motivated element in the sign, no etymologically buried metaphor or symbolic sense underlying it, is drawn toward the *langue* from which the nonmotivated signifier gains its sense.

Within the context of Hegel's analysis of subjective spirit, the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* is defined by its distinction from the motivated symbolic imagination that precedes it, and from the mechanical operation of the sign-memory that consolidates what for Hegel would otherwise be its production of transient, arbitrarily related signifier/signified relations. But within the more immediate context of the origination of language, it is determined by the nature of its product (the linguistic sign), which, in turn, is conditioned by the manner in which it is differentiated from the symbol. Three substantive and interrelated ways in which the sign is distinguished from the symbol can be discerned in Hegel's analysis, all of which are central to qualifying it as a decisive advance made upon the symbolic stage of private *Vorstellung*, whereby an objective and communal system of signification is brought into existence. In the course of elucidating the features that for Hegel render the symbol qualitatively superior to the linguistic sign, I begin the critical work of indicating those points at which Hegel's accounts remains blind to the Saussurean and Derridean insights into the nature and possibility of nonmotivated signification.

(a) The Nonmotivated Nature of the Sign as distinct from the Motivated Symbol

The symbol, as we have seen, supplies the universal with an intuitable and objective form within the inner subjectivity of the mind; it is not, as such, at least at this stage in the development of mind, objectively available as a communally validated sense. One could doubtless represent Jupiter or strength by symbolic signifiers other than the eagle (even if, as I have argued, this would not be without consequence); and although the eagle could be put to work as a symbolic sign of something other than the strength of Jupiter, it can serve as a sign of this particular universal only because it is considered to share a certain quality with its signified. The motivated symbol is thus, for Hegel, still conditioned, still dependent on the given content of the intuition; it still requires resemblance to (be perceived to) obtain between the signifier and signified.

It is this dependence that, for Hegel, the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* overcomes by availing of an intuition, a phonic fragment that can be arbitrarily yet more or less permanently ascribed to a particular signified. While a certain, limited arbitrariness prevails in whatever pictorial signifier is chosen to designate the symbolic signified, in the nonmotivated sign, this arbitrariness is in a sense total, however much etymological and metaphorical elements may lie latently within the constitution of signifiers. The linguistic sign is for Hegel an intuition, a fragment of intuition as *such and such* a sound or *Wortkläng* (word-sound); the intuitable content is put to work as the formal material of thought in the word. Addressing the issue of the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign, or what we have come to call its nonmotivated nature, in terms of a meaning that is *alien* to the signifier, Hegel writes:

> The sign must be proclaimed a great accomplishment. When the intelligence has designated something, then *it has finished with* [my emphasis] the content of intuition and has given the sensory material an *alien* meaning (fremde *Bedeutung*) as its soul. So for example, a cockade or a *flag,* or a *tomb-stone* remains something entirely different from what it immediately indicates. The arbitrariness (*Willkürlichkeit*), emerging here, of the combination of the sensory material with a universal representation has the necessary consequence that the meaning of the sign must first be learned. This is especially true of linguistic signs (*Sprachzeichen*).[5]

The sign must be learned, in contrast to the symbol which, apparently for Hegel, does not since it already gives some indication of its meaning. In neither case, for Hegel, is it a matter of a lifelong learning in which the extent to which one knows one's culture's symbols or one's language is measured by degrees: one knows the meaning or the sign or symbol, or one does not. While this necessity of learning signs will represent a deficiency in the case of the immense number of ideograms that Chinese script demands of the writer/reader, in the case of spoken language, Hegel deems the lack of any natural resemblance not to detract from it.

Hegel expresses what contemporary linguists describe as the nonmotivated nature of the linguistic sign in a number of ways. He speaks of the sensory material of the sign being given a meaning *alien* to it, a meaning that is "arbitrarily connected by the intelligence with a representation".[6] "[T]he intuition's own content and the content of which it is a sign [...] have nothing to do with each other."[7] Elsewhere, he speaks of the sign as the unity of an "*independent representation* and an *intuition*" in which "the intuition does not count as positive or as representing itself, but as

representing *something else*. It is an image that has received into itself as its soul an *independent* representation of the intelligence, its *meaning*. This intuition is the *sign*".[8] And in a more metaphorical and symbolic register, which reminds us of the distinction he makes between the symbolic work of art and the sign, he writes in his psychology: "The *sign* is some immediate intuition, which represents a *wholly* different content from the content that it has for itself;—the pyramid into which an alien soul is transferred and preserved."[9] And elsewhere, he interprets the arbitrariness or nonmotivatedness of the sign as the signified's "indifference" to the signifier. But in whatever manner he phrases it, what he takes the nonmotivated nature of the linguistic to be tantamount to is the independence of the signified; in so doing, he appears to overlook that the indifference or alienation is founded upon the interrelations and interdependence of signs, both at the level of the signifier and signified.

In accordance with a broader tendency in western philosophy whose presence we have detected in Plato, the nonmotivated nature of the sign is, for Hegel, not merely a description but a normative ideal; linguistic signification is the manner of conceptual and philosophical signification, and philosophical prose must guard against every incursion of motivated forms of signification (metaphor, symbols, rhetorical figures in general). Nonmotivated signification is the ideal form of signification, and he rigorously and at every opportunity defends the integrity of the signifier that in its composition is unmotivated or in itself meaningless. Hegel will castigate those who seek to find in the name a motivated element (even if this desire is not "irrational") or, worse, a definition of the thing: "This drive to discover such a nomenclature comes from the fact that one has forgotten what a name is. The name is precisely this, that the sign has no relation to the content."[10] The necessity of the name remaining a nonmotivated element is required so as to preserve the supposedly inherent superiority of alphabetic-phonetic writing over hieroglyphics. Hegel, equating hieroglyphics with motivated and symbolic forms of signification despite having referred us to the phonetic dimension of hieroglyphics' mode of signification that came to be recognised during the course of the Rosetta Stone's translation, understands the word to be the essential and ideal component of language: "[t]he analytical designation of representations in hieroglyphic script", that is, the possibility of analysing and breaking down the signifier into component parts that relate the

signified to motivated elements in the signifier, "contradicts the fundamental need of language, the name, to have for the immediate representation (which, whatever riches may be comprehended in its intrinsic content, is for the mind simple in the name) a simple immediate sign as well, which as a being for itself provokes no thought, having only the determination of sensorily representing and meaning the simple representation as such."[11] The sign is to give to thought the signified, not to give itself or the signifier as material for thought to work through, which would amount to thought at the most inopportune moment having to reflexively turn inward toward its signifying operation. Hieroglyphics, and attempts made to seek definitions in a name, plunge us back into a motivated form of signification, just as mnemonics, in which images serve as signs, represents a "reversion from memory to imagination",[12] from unthinking or mechanical reproducibility or iterability to the detour of imagination. Elsewhere, remarking upon the metaphors that underlie concepts and that reveal motivated constructions within the diachronic history of words and meaning (e.g. *greifen* in *begreifen*), Hegel will immediately interpret the *usure*, wearing away and effacement of the metaphors that make possible abstract concepts as being necessary and essential to the development of thought.[13] Even though he will attribute the creation of the sign to imagination, the implication is clear that the nonmotivated signifying operation designates the operation of thought and rids itself of any lingering trace or residual possibility of imagination or creativity. What imagination creates in the sign, it withdraws from, thereby bringing to the point of stagnation the dialectic in which imagination had continually re-engaged with its own creations and products. In a bitterly ironic twist in which the fate of the concept of imagination is encapsulated, it renders itself obsolete by the perfection of its creation of the nonmotivated sign.

And yet, as we shall see, his extolling of the nonmotivated sign will not prevent Hegel from recognising that the nonmotivated sign, in spiritual matters or in terms of abstract concepts, is not without its advantages; for the very blankness of the name permits the possibility of redefinition, of reconfiguring the conceptual network in accordance with greater insight, which has in turn the effect of altering our understanding of the nature of the thing signified. Even if he does not explicitly thematise the notion of semiological difference and the interdependent relations between concepts within a conceptual field, Hegel is, as we shall see, by no means

unaware of the potentialities that nonmotivated signification understood as such, or in terms of interrelations, opens up for the philosophical redetermination of meaning.

Hegel deems it possible for the sign's content of intuition "to be finished with", which is to say that it allows itself to be negated, and to open up a space which signified meaning immediately fills, a space that belongs no longer to sensibility but to intelligibility: "[I]ntelligence deletes [the sign, or the intuition's] immediate and peculiar content, and gives it another content as its meaning and soul."[14] Indeed, for Hegel, the sign is superior to the symbol because, once learned, it offers the immediacy of present meaning that is lacking in the sensibly motivated and obtrusively mediated symbol. Despite recognising the "indifference" of signifier to signified, Hegel's understanding of the nonmotivated sign is governed by the paradoxical notion that the alien nature of the signified to the signifier amounts to the overcoming of the necessity of any mediating agency between them, and allows for their absolute unity: if the nonmotivated linguistic sign is both what it is (a signifier) *and* what it is not (a signified), so his reasoning proceeds, the signifier, in contrast to the symbol which is an image irreducible to the symbolic signified, *is* nothing in itself, and therefore is *nothing but* the signified.

Hegel submits the problematic conception of the signifier and signified's nonrelation amounting to the unity of the sign or to the immediacy of meaning to the general form of the *Aufhebung*. As Derrida puts it: "Hegel en réduit [...] la portée [l'opération du signe] en l'incluant aussitôt dans le mouvement et la structure d'une dialectique qui la comprend."[15] He immediately interprets the deletion or negation of the intuitive content of the nonmotivated sign as the raising up of the signifier to the "second existence" of an intelligible presence, as the elevation of intuition to meaning, and of the self-same to the other. All the opposites between which the sign is to mediate (sensible/intelligible, intuition/meaning, same/other, etc.) are those also relevant to imagination as a point of mediation, a medium through which opposites interact, a *Mittelpunkt*. In contradistinction to Hegel's stance, it might be thought that, on account of the sign and the imagination occupying such an essential position, and rather than the *Aufhebung* explaining or shedding light on the operation of the sign and imagination, that the sign and imagination bring the *Aufhebung* and dialectics into question. The sign and the imagination thus interpreted would not be limited to the

domain of the sensible; they would not be transient elements in the path toward signified meaning that renders them redundant, but would extend into and contaminate the remotest nook and cranny of Hegel's dialectical enterprise; they would, as Derrida puts, "étendre infiniment [leur] champ".

Referring to the operation of the *Aufhebung* is not sufficient to explain the inner workings of nonmotivated signification, however much the plural sense of this word condenses within itself the double motion of a negation and a raising up of the sensible to the intelligible. The question is precisely how, if we wish to pose it in terms of the *Aufhebung*—and Derrida would reinscribe it in terms of *différance*—this movement from the cancelled-out signifier to the signified is possible. If the intuitable content of the signifier plays no role in the determinate content of the signified, but only in ensuring the iterability of the sign, how then is nonmotivated signification possible? And this question, even if it must take into account the objectivisation of the sign and the role played by memory, does not admit of a satisfactory response without specific recourse to the notion of semiological difference and *langue*. If signs qualify themselves as such by their relation to one another within a more or less objective system, both at the level of the signifier and the signified, then immediacy cannot be ascribed to the signifier/signified relation. By recognising the ineluctable necessity of the signifier and the signified being mediated by an objective set of differences in *langue*, the negation of the intuitable content of the signifier need not be interpreted as equating to or producing an ideal signified as an immediate presence. The lack of an apparent form of mediation—or this form of mediation's unobtrusiveness or the capacity of semiological difference to resist appearing on the scene of meaning as such—does not amount to the presentation of the signified in its immediacy. Nonmotivated signification, far from giving rise to the possibility of a stable, ideally iterable signified in the absence of any stabilising motivated relation, can be understood to be shaped by a range of hidden determinants lurking between signifier and signified, in a passage that is not mapped out and traversed by consciousness on every occasion of the sign's utterance.

(b) The Objectivity of the Sign as distinct from the Subjective Symbol

Let us move on to the third distinctive feature of the linguistic sign in Hegel's semiology, that of its objective validity in contradistinction to the merely inner subjective validity the symbol enjoys at the psychological stage of spirit's development. This will take us within sight of the pivotal action performed by the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*, that of exteriorising intuitions or objectifying signs such that they re-present the previously generated inner abstract universals in an accessible and communal form. The ascent to the objectivity of a communal system of meaning realised by the advent of the linguistic sign represents, for Hegel, the culmination and self-transcendence of subjective spirit. But if, within Hegel's hierarchical semiology, the nonmotivated linguistic sign represents a more immediate advance upon, and a liberation from, the symbol, he nonetheless specifies that this form of sign can emerge only following the generation of symbolic meaning; the sign-making imagination differs from the production of symbols, after all, only in attributing to the universal a nonmotivated and external intuition rather than a private image. More precisely, Hegel understands this progression as constituting a movement from the symbolic image subjectively invested with meaning to the sign in objective circulation, and from mediated meaning to the immediate presentation of meaning. The activity of *Zeichen machende Phantasie* consists, for Hegel, in the exteriorisation of the universal signified, and in its attachment to a fragment of phonic intuition that *ipso facto* becomes a word. In a *Zusatz* to §457 of the 1830 edition, we read:

> [I]ntelligence necessarily progresses from the *subjective* proof present in the symbol and *mediated* by the image, to the *objective* proof [*Bewährung*, validation, guarantee] of the universal representation, a proof that *is in and for itself*. For since the content of the universal representation to be proved *joins together with itself* in the content of the image serving as a symbol, this *mediated* form of the proof, of this unity of the subjective and the objective, turns into the form of *immediacy*. By this dialectical movement, the universal representation reaches the point where it no longer needs the content of the image for its proof, but is proved in and for its own self, is, therefore, immediately valid. Now the universal representation, liberated from the content of the image, makes itself into something intuitable in an external material *wilfully* [*willkürlich*, arbitrarily] chosen by itself, and thus produces what has to be called, in definite contrast to the symbol, a *sign*.[16]

What Hegel appears to have in mind when describing the movement from the symbol to the nonmotivated sign is a process similar to that observable in the development of

pictographic or ideogrammatic forms of writing; in a process that might be labelled the "demotivation" of the written sign, characters that once maintained some iconic and figurative resemblance to their signified, are—through a certain carelessness in their drawing (calligraphy), through a certain simplification and reduction to the barest essentials, or through an abstracting force produced by iteration and what might be called the conventionalisation of writing—gradually divested of this originary motivated relation. Similarly, the nonmotivated relation between the spoken signifier and signified comes to be "proved" or guaranteed without being dependent on any motivated or mimetic mediation. Rather than becoming meaningless on that account, nonmotivated signifiers, by being objectively instituted through iteration or repeated use, come to be, according to Hegel, immediately associated with their signified. The process of the symbol becoming the linguistic sign constitutes for Hegel a dialectical movement from the subjective and mediated symbol—the symbol that is mediated by the particularity of a motivated image—to the objectivity of a sign that presents its meaning without any such recourse being necessary, or in other words, immediately.

In order to contextualise the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*'s operation of objectivisation within Hegel's broader system, it must be recalled, firstly, within the context of its overcoming subjective *Vorstellung*, and secondly, in terms of the mind or spirit's developmental and dialectical tendency to realise itself subjectively and objectively. The *Zeichen machende Phantasie* achieves the overcoming of (psychological) *Vorstellung*, the phase in spiritual development in which the subject makes its representations its own, and which as a whole characterises *subjective* spirit.

It is not until the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*'s production of the linguistic sign as an exteriority (that is soon re-interiorised as an objective and communal meaning in *Gedächtnis*), and until artistic production of materially objective works, that the mental or spiritual is expressed in an objective form of existence. The *Zeichen machende Phantasie* determines "the content as *being*", makes "intelligence itself *be*, makes itself the thing [*Sache*]"; "The image produced by imagination is only subjectively intuitive; in the *sign* it adds intuitability proper; in *mechanical* memory it completes, inside itself, this form of *being*."[17] By the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* expressing the universal in intuitable form, by it creating the seeming impossibility of

the nonmotivated sign, it does nothing less than reify intelligence, making of it a thing (*Sache*) in the world. It is thus in the individual sign, rather than in any more encompassing system of language, that Hegel finds intelligence to re-present itself objectively as a thing possessing real being. Describing the production of the word on this occasion not as it distinguishes itself from the symbol but as it commences from the generation of abstract universals made from given and contingent material appropriated, Hegel tells us intelligence's "activity as reason (§438) is, from the present point on, to determine as a being what within it has been perfected to concrete self-intuition, i.e. to make itself into a *being*, into the *thing* [*Sache*]. When active in this determination, it is self-*externalising*, *intuition*-producing: sign-making fantasy".[18] The exteriorisation and objective positing of the intuition that transforms it into a sign constitutes the essential action performed by the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*; it is the fulfilment of the precondition necessary to the sign being re-interiorised or reappropriated within *Gedächtnis*, which brings about the ideality of thought as the absolute objectivity of meaning residing within, and lying at the disposal of, inner subjectivity.

The *Zeichen machende Phantasie* thus plays a pivotal role in the more general dialectic that had governed Hegel's retracing of the mind's development, whereby spirit repeatedly appropriates within its subjective self what lies in the other, before seeking to give this inner life real and objective existence: "The principle of free mind is to make the merely given element (*das Seiende*) in consciousness into something mental (*Seelenhaftes*), and conversely to make what is mental into an objectivity."[19] And: "Just as the intelligence is the drive of recollection [*Erinnerung*], it is also the drive of externalisation [*Entäußerung*] that posits the inner as an outer."[20] *Einbildungskraft* and *Phantasie* lie at the point of intersection where this interplay of interiorisation, exteriorisation, and re-interiorisation takes place: "*Phantasie* is the midpoint (*Mittelpunkt*) in which the universal and being, one's own (*das Einige*) and being-found [*Gefundensein*], the inner and the outer, are completely welded into one."[21] The *Zeichen machende Phantasie* has taken what has been contingently found and interiorised—intuitions in the form of sounds—and set them to work in an objective domain such that they take on a certain conventional necessity; the *Wortkläng* or word-sound comes to be indispensable for the signification of a particular sound. It is perhaps for this reason that the creation or generation of

language is worthy of the name of imagination or *Phantasie*; for while there may be no motivated relation involved, imagination has in this case taken the fragmentary phonic intuition, apparently of no use or not disposed to any particular use, and rendered it essential to the working of language, and thus, to the possibility of thought. However, that the concept of imagination can be seen to be relevant to this context only heightens the inexplicability of Hegel reversing his position; for he will effectively downplay the operation of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* by bestowing upon *Gedächtnis* the role of accounting for nonmotivated signification's advent and possibility.

Within the interplay of *Erinnerung* and *Entäußerung*, of interiorisation and exteriorisation, or of appropriation and self-objectification, from the perspective of Hegel's retrospective speculation, the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*'s role is that of having prepared the way toward the "complete totality of inwardness and externality" that was lacking in the symbol but that is realised in thought: "This requires that the externalisation sharpen this fantasy image to the immediacy of existence of the intuition, in the mode and form of something immediately present at hand. This is the intelligence as productive imagination [*produktive Phantasie*], which proceeds to these formulations [*Formellen*] [so as] to give this inwardness existence, so that its constructs [*Gebilde*] have the form of immediate existence. Here we have come to signs, which are connected with language, the intelligence as self-expression."[22] The dialectical pattern of interiorisation, exteriorisation and re-appropriation will lead Hegel to speak of intelligence in the form of the linguistic sign as "*implicitly* returning to identical self-relation as immediacy".[23] "Names are not images yet we have the entire content while we have the name before us" and "in the name the intelligence has the content *immediately*" (my emphasis) in an external form: in signs, in other words, the objective content is immediately available and available in its totality.[24] The immediacy of the sign's meaning to consciousness is rivalled only by the immediacy of the meaning's relation to the thing itself: "Intelligence therefore, in filling itself with the word, receives into itself the nature of the thing."[25] The existence of the sign beyond the symbol constitutes the return to the immediacy characteristic of intuition or the intuited object, the object "immediately present at hand" that, since it was there for the taking, could be intuited and *erinnert*. This should not be in the least surprising given that Hegel is wont to call what would most likely be exclusively

called today by the name of a signifier an intuition. Intuition has been *aufgehoben* to the point that it serves as the reproducible material of signs. But Hegel's notion of the immediacy of both the signifier and the signified lays itself to open the charge of a certain idealism; let us take the case of the supposed immediacy of the signifier first, with a view to recognising that the elusive and mediated nature of the signifier in actual fact causes signified meaning to be anything but ready to hand.

Certainly, our pre-reflective experience of language, insofar as it is valid to judge by such an impression, is of signs as ready to hand, of meanings as readily at one's disposal as are objects to sight or perception. No doubt, the efficacy of language as the mode of signification constituting thought and quotidian communication lies in its materiality's effacement appearing to summon forth instantaneously a signified meaning. The automatic or *unthinking* use of language's signifying elements is constitutive of the possibility of thought itself. Hegel may remind us by speaking of signs as intuitions in a somewhat anachronistic fashion that that is what signifiers are ("Das Zeichen ist eine Anschauung"[26]); but they are only signifiers, that is, they belong to the more complex whole of a signifier/signified relation, only because of a system of *langue* that is anything but immediately present in the manner of an intuition or intuited object. The elusive and somewhat necessarily nebulous entity of the sign can conform to the ambiguous logic of being not what it is and what it is not only because of a code, or codified and conventionalised system, that scrambles the delineation between simple absence and immediate presence. Hegel's reduction of the signifier/signified relation to a more or less independent entity detached from the vast machinery of *langue* and from sign-to-sign relations, ineluctably leads him to conclude that the sign and signified meaning assume the form of immediacy or presence. He interprets the absence of a motivated relation as the immediacy of the presence of the signified, rather than as the necessity of the mediation of a radical non-presence, of an objective system of conventions belonging to everyone and no-one in particular. And rather than understanding the negativity of the signifier's materiality as its referral and deferral to a body of conventions within which it attains its identity as a member of the system, he interprets it as the non-mediated presencing of meaning.

In Hegel's semiology of language, the immediacy of the sign as intuition is matched by the immediacy, passivity and stasis of signified meaning. For Hegel, the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* merely ascribes an intuitable form to the existing universal sense in the same way as the symbolic imagination had before it ascribed an image to a universal. Hegel deems the signified to be fundamentally inner not only because it is the mind that must grasp meaning or because thought takes place "within" the mind, but also because, as we have seen, he understands the abstract universals constituting signified meaning to have been formed through abstracting from the network of images. Hegel's analysis thus assumes the symbolic and sign-making forms of imagination to play no role in the creation of meaning or in the construction of the signified; the extent of their influence extends only to the type of passive and self-erasing signifier they create. Rather than emerging as a function of the linguistic system, Hegel supposes signified meaning to precede the signifier, to be constituted prior to the process of signification, to be formed anterior to the development of the signifying system; he presupposes that meaning lies awaiting its expression in a signifier-intuition, that the meaning that is solely to be communicated or transported by language has already been created prior to its formulation in linguistic terms. Hegel adjudges linguistic meaning, which exists in the form of abstract universals, not to arise from the system by which nonmotivated signification is made possible, that is, from the interplay between *parole* and *langue*, but as standing ready-made merely awaiting an intuitable signifier to convey it. In effect, he reduces linguistic meaning to universals, a reduction no doubt in keeping with his reduction of language to the name or noun, to what Derrida has called "une *linguistique du mot* et singulièrement du *nom*".[27] But meaning in language extends beyond the noun or name to all parts of speech, and becomes a function of syntax rather than of independent entities or unities; meaning has in any case to be analysed at various different levels (the word, the syntagm, the proposition, etc.)

In underestimating language's capacity to generate meaning, and to amount to a dynamic system capable of producing meaning in forms other than universals, Hegel reduces language to the solitary function of communication. This reductionist thesis, as we will see, forms the basis for Hegel's critique of Leibniz; in effect, he criticizes the Leibnizian project of creating a hieroglyphic script for the use of international scholars for failing to take into account the fact that language does not

merely communicate or convey meanings, but effects alterations in the constitution of its own conventionalised meanings, alterations that hieroglyphics can reflect only in the material composition of its signifiers. Rather than passively bearing meanings or intentions upon which it has no effect, the creative use of language provided for by its system's potentialities—as when a term is redefined or when a metaphorical or symbolic sense sheds new light on a word's literal sense—affects its constituent meanings as they stand within the system. The communicative function of language may no doubt predominate in language's use; but it is constitutively impossible for this function to eclipse entirely the performative effects that language can have upon its own system, effects that, from any historical vantage point, are manifest in the dynamic alterations to which a language's signifiers and signifieds are subject.

If we recall that *langue* does not merely produce the formal conditions in which the nonmotivated signifier operates, but erects the differential relations between signifieds by which they define themselves as much by their limits relative to other related meanings, Hegel's account can be seen to amount to a radical idealism or *préformationisme*. His semiology overlooks the effect that the differential constitution of language has upon the meaning created, and upon the signified's supposed immediate availability. It overlooks a central fact of *langue*: that it is constructed neither as an ontological mapping of reality, nor as a system consciously generated to resemble or reassemble universals as they arose within the mind, but is formed rather, in its inception, in such a way as to facilitate the possibility of nonmotivated signification. The creation of language requires not a taxonomic labelling either of the things of the world or of universals already generated within the mind performed by assigning to them intuitions that, *ipso facto*, become signifiers. On the contrary, it requires a system of differences capable of producing all the parts of speech. Meaning is a function of this system in which interdependent signifieds issue from the differential play, and not merely from the pre-fabricated universals to which names are attached. Linguistic meaning is formed by the system of signifying contrasts within which the sign as a whole is embedded, contrasts which are fundamentally liable to shifts. Universals, which no doubt contribute to the linguistic meanings formed, do not survive the process of being integrated within the linguistic system unchanged, but are rather inscribed within the differential and dynamic

interrelations that enable nonmotivated signification, and that account for alterations in meaning in the life of a language or different meanings across different languages.

Notwithstanding the echoes of the immediate presence of intuitions to which the sign may give rise, and however much the universals that already existed within the individual mind pre-determine linguistic meaning, the creation of language marks, for Hegel, a pivotal point in the mind acquiring for itself a presence beyond its interiority; the coming into being of language is an objectification of the mind at once more subtle and substantial than its rival form of spiritual self-expression, exteriorisation, and objectification, the artwork. Commenting on passages such as those cited above in which Hegel speaks of the sign-making fantasy reifying intelligence in the sign, Derrida invites us to note that, as described by Hegel, "la production créatrice du signe se réduit à une simple extériorisation, c'est-à-dire à une *expression*, la mise au-dehors d'un contenu intérieur, avec tout ce que peut commander ce motif très classique."[28] While Hegel's notion of the exteriorising and objectivising operation of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* is problematic given the idealistic framework within which it is inscribed, it must nonetheless be recognised, in the first place, that exteriorisation and projection amount to the classical schema of imagination, and in the second, that objectivisation is essential to the coming into being of the nonmotivated system of language. Let us treat of these two features in turn.

If the motif of the exteriorisation of what is initially conceived within subjective interiority constitutes a classical schema (that of *expression*), and the classical schema of imagination par excellence, it is perhaps because imagination has almost invariably been determined as the act of conceiving of an image, idea or plan spontaneously and internally, within the *innere Werkstätte* as Hegel would say, that is only thereafter projected, realised or implemented. Taking what is given in nature, in experience, in intuition, the imagination within the mind, or mind in the form of imagination, works upon this material and generates what thereafter comes to constitute culture and civilisation. Imagination thus construed attests to the pivotal and decisive role played by the (individual) mind. And the conventional logic the conception of imagination is that of projecting *onto* the world something that does not coincide with its reality (the fantastical, the deviation from perceptual reality), or

projecting *into* the world or objective reality something hitherto not to be found within it (creativity generally, the addition of an original thing). Though these forms of imagination may intersect (e.g. in the genuinely *original* work of literary *fiction*, in the imaginary work that imagines otherwise the presiding conventions of the genre), the fantastical creation of the imagination need not be original, no more than the created object need be a fictional work. In the case of the linguistic sign, the projection clearly qualifies as bringing into the world what had hitherto not existed; but as regards the issue of its fictionality, it depends on the extent to which one believes the signified itself a fiction, an ideality detached from potential referents or an idea thoroughly immersed in the being and form of things. But since language gives rise to literary fiction as well as to ontological discourse, to empirical science and to poetry, it perhaps falls into another category: that of possibilities that defy any simplistic opposition between the real and the fictional.

What is clear is that the motif of projection, exteriorisation and objectivisation is nowhere more pertinent than in the case of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*'s creation of the signifier/signified relation; for objectivisation is essential to realising the possibility of nonmotivated signification, and to the possibility of creating conventional and communal forms of signification. Hegel recognises that the work of objectivising the intuition/universal or signifier/signified relation is itself sufficient for the creation of a functioning nonmotivated sign. For the apparent necessity of a motivated relation between signifier and signified (as in the case of the symbol) can be dispensed with *provided that* the relation between signifier and signified is *objectively instituted* as a conventional bond to be adhered to intersubjectively. Conventions acquire their binding force from the unanimity of their observance. In this way, the act of the sign-making imagination can found itself upon a certain reduction of what in the action of instituting symbols as objective conventional signs (beyond the subjectivity Hegel accords them in his psychology) amounts to two separate ends achieved in the one action: the end, on the one hand, of objectivising the universal in the *intuitable* form of an image, and on the other, of selecting an *appropriate* image to designate the symbolised. Dispensing with the apparent necessity of selecting an appropriate, motivated intuition, the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* operates on the basis that the objectivisation and conventionalisation of an arbitrary signifier/signified relation is *in itself*—in the absence of any motivated

relation—*sufficient* for the establishment of an iterable and intelligible signifier/signified relation. It is necessary only that what Hegel calls the "empty bond" between signifier and signified be tacitly assented to or agreed upon (*convenire*). In recognising the process of "demotivating" the ideogrammatic sign that leads to it becoming more or less purely conventional, we have recognised the phenomenon of the gradual eclipse of the motivating relation by the objectivisation and conventionalisation of the sign.

But while it may readily be conceded that objectivisation and conventionalisation suffice to compensate for the absence of a motivated relation, quite how this is achieved—and achieved by imagination—is another matter still. How can such a state of affairs in which arbitrariness is overcome by general, "universal" and immediate acceptance of a conventional codification come about, if, as Hegel reminds us, no process of deliberation and convention took place in which such matters would be unanimously and simultaneously decided? What precisely the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* must be attributed with having brought into being differs radically depending on what one takes the necessary conditions of linguistic signification to be. The credibility, integrity and substance of the concept of a sign-making or language-creating imagination depends upon, *inter alia*, the way in which we consider this objectivisation and conventionalisation to be achieved, on the form and extent of its rendering language an alterity to the subject, and on the nature of the agency that performs it. It depends upon whether we interpret the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* to produce the intuitable form of sound, or a system of *langue* covering writing and speech irrespective of the signifying material, or both; upon whether we determine it as assigning conventional bonds between signifier and signifieds to be stored within memory or as generating an intersubjective space within which semiological differences maintain the relative but more or less stable relations between signs; upon whether we imagine it to have generated a body of conventions that are more or less established, or that admit of radical redetermination through innovative re-use.

It is on these points surrounding the objectivisation of the nonmotivated relation between signifier and signified that we come to a radical divergence between, on the one hand, the Hegelian conception of imagination's labour of objectivisation

entailing the exteriorisation of a phonic intuition that re-presents an existing universal, and on the other, the model of a textual imagination ushering *langue* into being that can be inferred from the Derridean paradigm of *langue* or *arche-écriture*'s differential and conventional constitution.

We have seen that, for Hegel, the object exteriorised is the intuition (signifier), which serves to objectivise an abstract universal (signified) deemed to be formed independently of the construct or system of language; however, the differential constitution of *langue* renders problematic Hegel's reductive determination of the sign-making imagination to an operation of exteriorisation. If we return to the context in which I attempted to construct the notion of a textual imagination, the question of what the objectivisation performed by the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* must be attributed with having created can be reconsidered, in particular regarding the points at which it differs from the Hegelian model. We have seen that a Derridean approach precludes casting the object of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* simply in the form of an intuition, a sound, or in the general form of immediacy; while part of the ingenuity of the sign-making imagination no doubt consists in making use not of the inner, private, reclusive image, but of sound as the intuitable and accessible form and element of the sign, the use of sound or intuitable immediacy alone fails to explain the possibility of nonmotivated linguistic functioning. The generation of a system of communication that avails of sound as its materiality, with all the advantages this confers in terms of a rapid, accessible means of communication, no doubt contributed to sound being the first medium in which language emanated; but it does not account for the possibility of nonmotivated signification that logically precedes or transcends distinctions between speech and writing.

Since writing is a necessary possibility of speech, since, that is, the logical possibility of writing already inheres within spoken *language*, what the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* must be conceived as having generated is not a *spoken langue*, but the system capable of supporting or receiving differences between signs that renders both speech and writing possible. Objectivisation is necessary so as to allow semiological difference to grant to a nonmotivated signifier a more or less stable identity that admits of being iterated, and of being differentiated from other signs, thereby attaining a unique identity within the system. The signifier can represent

something else, a signified, only if in the first place it does not amount to being any other signifier within a system to which signs belong as such; this is the condition of it possessing an identity within the semiological system of *langue* that permits it to be endowed with a signified. The mutual relations by which signs constitute one another as members of the system amount to the mediation that enables a nonmotivated signifier and signified to be conventionally bound to one another. The generation of a network in which signs stand in relation to one another as the constituent elements of the system is necessary for them to be differentiated from one another.

As such, the signifier must exist in *some* material form; but, as writing demonstrates, and as Hegel implicitly acknowledges by recognising reading to decipher words visually in the manner of "hieroglyphics", this form of materiality need not be phonic, even if speech doubtless precedes the emergence of alphabetic-phonetic writing. The objectivisation of the sign pertains not simply to the sound or the intuition or even to the material of the sign in general, but to the capacity of signs' materiality to serve to differentiate one sign from another; it pertains to the framework in which signifier-intuitions can be received and mutually differentiated from one another. Since the signifier/signified relation functions by virtue of sign-to-sign relations or differentials, the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* cannot be conceived of as an operation of successively labelling one universal with one signifier-intuition; rather it must be conceived of as creating an intersubjective network within which sign-to-sign relations can be forged and formalised.

What the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*'s concept must reflect, and what it must as a mode of imagination be attributed with, is not simply having selected or cultivated sound as the form of the intuitable content of the sign, but with the creation of a *framework facilitating objective differences* into which the exteriorised signifier-intuitions can be received, or into which intuitions can be received as interrelated members of one system, whereupon they assume the status of differential signs. In a sense, the requisite difference between signs generates itself; so long as the elements or members are in fact different (and thus, not homonyms), the elements become constituent, recognised or validated members of the one system. One does not create difference itself; one need only create the framework within which differences between elements stand. What the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* must create for

nonmotivated signification to be possible is a conventional body within which signifier-intuitions become constituent and constituting elements of the system, in which sign-to-sign relations are formally instituted and established. As I later attempt to demonstrate, such a conventional system is irreducible to the subjective interiority of *Gedächtnis*.

To be sure, to characterise the action or activity of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* as creating *langue* resolves certain difficulties only at the cost of raising others; for example, although one need not have a formal grasp of the principle of semiological difference for such a system to operate, it remains difficult to attribute to the imagination as classically conceived the action of bringing *langue* into being without ascribing to a determinate subject a certain degree of precocious consciousness or foreknowledge of what it is bringing into being. It also opens up the problem of the apparent impossibility of bringing *langue* into being other than through *parole*, which, quite apart from not amounting to an act readily identifiable with imagination, would itself appear to require *langue* to be in existence in order to function. These problems remain to be addressed.

However, much will have been gained from a critique of the Hegelian account if the concept of the sign-making imagination is reconceived as a *langue*-creating imagination. And yet, such a critique does not exhaust the Hegelian text. Hegel's explicit theory of the nonmotivated sign, in which the sign is deemed to have been been created by the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*, and which is differentiated from the symbol, is undermined by certain undercurrents within his own text. In isolated, marginal comments on Asian languages and hieroglyphics, in presuppositions underlying the questions of meaning-change in language, Hegel appears to suggest a radical alternative to his own theory. He comes close to identifying difference as the principle underlying nonmotivated signification; he contradicts the general theory of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* he propounds when presupposing a certain creativity in scholarly and philosophical conceptual formation more in keeping with the Derridean model. It is, then, to a deconstructive reading focusing on these moments within Hegel's semiology of language, distinctly at odds with the metaphysics of presence that organises his general semiology of linguistic meaning, that I proceed. In

the course of accentuating these more marginal remarks, it will be possible to further explore the textual imagination already sketched.

(ii) Hegel's Reflections on Conceptual Change: Toward the Concept of a Philosophical Imagination

The radical disparity between the Hegelian and Derridean models of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*'s creation of nonmotivated signification just presented is, as I have suggested, by no means absolute; it admits of certain areas of contamination in which Hegel, as a thinker profoundly attentive to the dynamics of history, appears to advocate or rely upon a semiology of language in which the dynamism, flexibility and malleability of meaning are taken as given. Hegel does in fact formulate vague approximations of fundamental Saussurean and Derridean insights into the functioning of nonmotivated signification, more precisely, into semiological difference and the necessity of *langue* as a body of conventions irreducible to the individual speakers of a language. If we separate by way of abstraction these two elements—the necessity of the convention binding signifier to signified being inscribed within an *intersubjective space*, and *semiological difference* as the principle by which the elements within this space or within *langue* must be organised—it could be demonstrated that Hegel comes within sight of each of them.

For example, Hegel demonstrates, albeit in passing, an awareness that the necessary alterity and objectivity of the nonmotivated sign can lie only in the interrelations *between signs* that bind themselves together beyond the interiority of the ego or memory: "Men's relations to one another are spiritual, and their representations [*Vorstellungen*] are supposed to [*sollen*] *have determinate existence relative to each other* [emphasis added], because they exist for other intelligences."[29] He thus verges upon articulating explicitly that it is the differences or interrelations between signs—rather than simply the intuitions, sounds or words themselves—that must be objectivised in the action performed by the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*. The differences or interrelations must be conventionally instituted beyond merely having an existence within this or that user. Such remarks, appearing in isolated pockets of the text and in contradistinction to his prevailing theory, demonstrate Hegel to be forging an alternative if, as yet, inchoate path toward a conception of *langue* as a body of conventions necessarily exceeding the subject, and toward the necessity of its differential constitution. As such, a tension can be discerned between this alternative

line of reasoning and his more orthodox theory in which the ego or *Gedächtnis*, as the private agency that consolidates the fleeting union of word and meaning, is called upon to account for the possibility of nonmotivated signification. We have already seen in the example of Hegel's reliance on the etymological composition of *Beispiel* that he contravenes in his own practice the ideality of the nonmotivated signified that his semiology of language explicitly posits, thereby opening up the possibility of imagination and creativity being considered as bearing upon the motivated and etymological elements within concepts.

Although Hegel never fully departs from a psychological mode of analysis in which the recollection of signifier/signified relations—rather than imagination—is charged with accounting for the possibility of nonmotivated signification, there are, then, counter examples to the predominant determination of nonmotivated signification in Hegel's text, in texts that, lest we forget, scarcely amounted to more than lecture notes and that, unlike other sections of the 1830 *Encyclopaedia*, were never finalised for publication. Towards the end of identifying and accentuating those points in this text where he comes closest to departing from his explicit theory of nonmotivated signification, and from the concept of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* that proceeds from it, one could take up, in a deconstructive reading rather than in the form of an orthodox critique as was the case in the last section, four indices at which the Hegelian text at the least broaches a *langue*-creating, textual or philosophical imagination, or sets in place foundations for such concepts: allusions he makes to the "free play" of "contingency" in the sign within the context of the fact of there being different languages;[30] secondly, a single reference to a "universal space of names" that represents the closest approximation in Hegel's work to the notions of *langue* or *arche-écriture*;[31] thirdly, intimations of a recognition of semiological difference at the level of the signifier as it is to be discerned in the operation of tonal differentiation in certain oriental languages;[32] lastly, remarks he makes upon the shifting interrelations between nonmotivated signs or philosophical concepts affecting our understanding of the nature of what is signified.

I must forego readings of the first three promising and eminently deconstructible lines of enquiry, and restrict myself to the final case. Hegel, in a brief set of remarks seeking to discredit the Leibnizian project of a hieroglyphic script for

international scholars, almost inadvertently sets forth what I aim to show is nothing less than the conditions in which a philosophical, conceptual, or textual imagination is operative; for, in the course of refuting Leibniz, Hegel's understanding of conceptual change is founded not on his own phonocentric theory of the nonmotivated sign, but on a theory presupposing conceptual meaning to be interdependent, or, in other words, to be inscribed *en différance*. It will be a matter of examining the extent to which this recognition constitutes a radical break from Hegel's orthodox position, the manner in which, as insights breaking new ground, they are closed over by logocentric forces that conspire to impede and arrest their development, and the extent to which they can contribute to the elaboration of the model of imagination to be inferred from Derrida's grammatology and his deconstructive "methodology".

By the end of this analysis, two distinct models of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* or *langue*-creating imagination will have emerged: on the one hand, the orthodox Hegelian model already articulated in terms of its differentiation from the symbolic imagination; and on the other, an alternative model arising from a Derridean semiology that can be elaborated and refined by pursuing the potentiality of those overlooked examples in which Hegel's anomalous and alternative theorising proves fruitful. The deconstructive elaboration of moments in Hegel's text at which it lapses from the more logocentric and phonocentric model are of immense significance given the assistance they provide in rectifying what is more or less absent from the Derridean model: an explicit theory of an imagination of language. Since such inchoate and frustrated developments in Hegel admit of elaboration within a deconstructive reading, and since he explicitly poses the question of the origination of language in terms of imagination, his semiology is essential to the attempt to elucidate the concept of a *langue*-creating imagination. And since Hegel's most promising passages indicate the work of imagination not simply in language, but in the work of philosophical thinking, they are of particular interest to the formation of a concept of a textual and deconstructive imagination.

(a) Intimations in the Hegelian Text of a Conceptual Imagination: The Nonmotivated Sign as Facilitating Progress in the Logos

In remarks he makes about differences between hieroglyphic and alphabetic-phonetic script, Hegel explicitly confronts the work of difference at the level of the signified; or rather, he presupposes it in the course of recognising that conceptual meanings alter and fluctuate in accordance with advances in thinking. Although he mentions neither the notion of (semiological) difference nor imagination, in implying the interrelationships between concepts to constitute both their meaning *and* the possibility of redetermining them, he provides a most explicit description of the work performed by what might be called a conceptual, philosophical or textual imagination. Or, at least, so I wish to argue.

We have glimpsed the manifold consequences that proceed from *langue* being structured according to semiological differences operative between signified meanings.[33] Signifieds are in no way like labels arbitrarily attached to (empirical) things since they must mutually define (and redefine) what each designates within a more or less closed system. That the internal relations between signifieds are constructed through their differences means not only that such relations are subject to change, but also that a change in one term has ramifications for its entire lexical field. Thus, if we take the example of the concept of imagination, a reconception of this particular concept would entail or produce consequences across the field of related terms (perception, memory, fantasy, etc). For example, when Kant asserts, in contradistinction to the customary manner of conceiving of imagination as a supplement to or deviation from perception, that imagination is at work within, or in the formation of, perception, he is neither simply chastising psychologists for having failed to consider this possibility, nor simply opening up his conception of the transcendental imagination;[34] he is, in addition, proposing an alteration of the instituted opposition between imagination and perception *as that opposition is lodged within* language and within a system of conceptual distinctions. Such an example demonstrates how reconsideration of the relationships in concepts at a theoretical level might produce an effect whereby the conventional sense of related terms is undermined and redetermined; it is such cases that Hegel might have had in mind when he attempts to demonstrate the superior capacity of alphabetic writing or a

nonmotivated system of signification, relative to the "hieroglyphic" script that Leibniz had proposed for the work and progress of international scholars, for reflecting or producing changes in conceptual meaning.

It is perhaps not insignificant that when Hegel addresses—fleetingly—the question of difference and alteration at the level of signified meaning, he does so not in the context of a discussion of speech as the fundamental or primary object in an analysis of language, but within a discussion of writing and hieroglyphics, or more accurately, within the context of demonstrating the superiority of alphabetic-phonetic writing over hieroglyphics. The marginal position of Hegel's analysis of writing in his psychology perhaps accounts for the startling assertions in the following citation, which contravene what Hegel, in the main and in the course of distinguishing the sign from the symbol, asserts of nonmotivated signification. In the course of positing alphabetic-phonetic writing as the sole form of writing worthy of being the medium of philosophical thought—what Hegel elsewhere calls the prose of thought—he is compelled to disabuse Leibniz of the misguided faith he shows in the project of creating a hieroglyphic script for communication between international scholars:

> [A] comprehensive, *finished* (*fertige*, completed) hieroglyphic language [such as Leibniz had suggested] is out of the question. Sensory objects no doubt admit of permanent signs, but for signs of spiritual matters the progress in the cultivation of our thoughts, the advance of logical development, *lead to altered views of their internal relationships and thus of their nature* [my italics], so that with this another hieroglyphic determination would emerge. After all, this already happens with sensory objects: their signs in spoken language, their names are frequently changed, as e.g. with chemical and mineralogical names. [...] [W]e have forgotten what names, as such, are, namely intrinsically *senseless externalities* which only have a meaning as *signs*, ever since we require, instead of genuine names [...] the expression of a sort of definition [...].[35]

It is the second sentence, or more precisely, its middle clauses that demand the most unpacking: "for signs of spiritual matters (*für Zeichen vom Geistegem*) the progress in the cultivation in our thoughts (*der Gedankenbildung*, the *Bildung*, cultural advance, genesis or formation of thought), the advance of logical development, lead to altered views of their internal relationships (*inneren Verhältnisse*, inner relations or conditions) and thus of their nature [...]". In this compact and elliptical reasoning is contained an entire framework of presuppositions regarding the dynamism of conceptual meaning and the possibility of thought redetermining meaning that sets

itself at odds with the philosophy of language Hegel explicitly works through in differentiating the sign from the symbol.

The passage as a whole, which is at once Hegel's rebuke of Leibniz's misguided valorisation of motivated "hieroglyphic" signification and a reflection on the manner in which different forms of signification absorb and reflect innovative thinking, is constructed on the basis of several oppositions: hieroglyphic signs/alphabetic (linguistic) signs; signs for spiritual ideas as opposed to those for sensory objects; permanent signs as opposed to signs capable of being altered; language/thinking; changes in thinking reflected in the material composition of the sign and changes reflected in the internal relationships between signs. Even though Hegel will accept that hieroglyphic elements are evident in alphabetic writing (in spacing, punctuation, roman numerals, etc.), that reading alphabetic writing comes to be hieroglyphic rather than a matter of voicing sound, and that hieroglyphics has been demonstrated to contain phonetic elements—in short, that both motivated and nonmotivated elements lie on either side of what is a corrupted or contaminated distinction—he will nonetheless continue to operate as though the distinction between hieroglyphic and alphabetic writing, between the symbolic and the arbitrary sign, were absolute. [36]

What leads Hegel to maintain such a distinction is the manner in which changes in thought and meaning are reflected differently in hieroglyphic and alphabetic writing. What he implicitly opposes is, on the one hand, the motivated relations between signs and signifieds in hieroglyphics in which the material composition of the sign affects, displaces and reinvents the signified, and on the other, the internal relationships between signs within a nonmotivated system that determines from without the "intrinsic" conceptual meaning of any one given sign. The hieroglyphic signifier, lying closer to the order of the symbolic and artistic, reflects changes in how things are viewed by material alterations in its sign, by adjusting the mimetic relationship between signifier and signified. Whereas the hieroglyphic sign undergoes material alterations in reflecting an alteration at the level of signified meaning, alterations in the signified sense of a concept within a nonmotivated system entail a less tangible and more elusive reconfiguration of the network in which the altered conceptual sense figures as an interdependent element. The linguistic signifier,

particularly in the case of the sign of "spiritual matters" may, *in its empirical materiality*, reflect no indication of the alterations that have taken place between it and its signified, no trace of the shifts that have been instigated by *other* concepts related to it being reconceived; I may come to a different understanding or appreciation of what, for example, "language", "art" or "poetry" are, without any of these signifiers reflecting or undergoing changes; inversely, these signifiers may undergo changes (in pronunciation or spelling) without any correlative alteration in the signified sense of the sign taking place. Since the nonmotivated signifier bears no resemblance to the determinate meaning of the signified, its signifier is ill-suited to reflecting changes in its signification by means of material alterations.[37] To be sure, this is neither to say that we do not add suffixes to signs (e.g. "meta") that alter their meaning, nor that composite concepts (such as are abundant in German) or portmanteau words are not possible; but such alterations consist in relating elements that are ultimately nonmotivated. (This would be the case even in Derrida's play on the "a" of *différance*, on an attempt to alter, co-ordinate and play with the senses of *différer* by modifying the signifier.) In nonmotivated signification or in alphabetic writing, change is effected or is registered at the level of the internal relationships between signified meanings, that is, between the concept and its relation to *other* relevant concepts or phenomena. Such reconfigured internal relationships can manifest themselves in the new or refined definition that selects and avails of terms related to the concept being defined, whether these terms are near-synonyms, antonyms, or concepts that combine to comprise another concept (as in the well-known Kantian example of an *analytic* concept whereby "bachelor" draws on and combines the concepts of "unmarried" and "man"). As I will demonstrate presently, Hegel's understanding of the alphabetic sign, particularly in his use of the expression "internal relationships", shows him to presuppose a Saussurean semiology of difference, and to imply philosophical meaning to be inscribed *en différance*.

Hegel's objection to Leibniz's project of a completed hieroglyphic language arises, then, from a reflection on the way in which signs, whether in their material composition or the relationships between them, reflect—or fail to reflect adequately—changes that have arisen in or been produced by thought. A completed hieroglyphic language, he says, does not constitute a viable prospect for philosophical thinking not because it could never be complete (there is no question of a completed alphabetic

language), but because hieroglyphic *signifiers* can and do change their material composition so as to reflect altered views of the things they represent. A finished philosophical conceptuality is likewise an impossibility since progress in thinking impacts upon signs' interrelationships; philosophical or conceptual thinking, far from operating on the basis of a given, completed language, keeps its conceptual network in a state of restless agitation, altering and shifting in accordance with the altered views it reaches. The suggestion Hegel makes is that philosophy lives and thrives upon this constitutive, originary or ineluctable incompleteness of language, upon the ineradicable possibility of inflecting language, conceptuality or *langue* such that the internal relationships between signs reflect alterations or progress made in the cultivation of thought, in *Gedankenbildung*. Hegel thus tacitly accepts that fresh thinking or alterations in our understanding of things impact upon a language whether it is alphabetic or hieroglyphic writing that is in question; he accepts, moreover, that *relations* between conceptual meanings *must* afford the possibility of reflecting progress in thought, of being subject to revision, whence the need to avoid hieroglyphic systems ill-suited to satisfying this philosophical prerequisite.

The alterations to the internal conceptual relations that Hegel has in mind neither are nor should be effected at the level of the material composition of the signifier; rather they are produced in the less tangible interrelations between signs or between signified meanings to which the history of a language, conceptuality or philosophy attests. As such, Hegel not only accepts that the nonmotivated sign or the signified produced by nonmotivated signification, rather than providing an immediately present immutable sense, admits of being altered; he also tacitly accepts that this possibility—provided for by the nature of nonmotivated signification in its dependence on conceptual interrelations—is integral to the very possibility and progress of philosophical thinking. Hegel thus broaches a proposition otherwise unthinkable in his philosophy: the endless deferral of its telos is necessary to (the practice of) philosophy. The amenability of the nonmotivated sign to being amended in the light of shifts in thinking in and through alterations that reconfigure the conceptual network, disposes nonmotivated signification to philosophical thought, or perhaps more accurately, to the ongoing work of philosophical thought; it is the nonmotivated character of the sign, or in other words, the differential relations between concepts, that facilitates philosophy imagining otherwise its conceptuality

and thus the world. The implication of Hegel's thinking is thus that the space between the signifier and signified that constitutes the play of signification is vital to the historical development of philosophical thought; when this space is extinguished, as Hegel understands it would be in Leibniz's hieroglyphic script, thought would be deprived of the imaginative force underlying it.

To use the concept of "imaginative force" or of "imagination" to describe the power underlying *Gedankenbildung*—a use the legitimacy of which I shall attempt to justify presently—is to suggest that imagination exceeds its traditional restriction to motivated forms of signification or representation. It is to suggest that imagination is operative within the motivated or symbolic modes of signification, which alters the signifier to create a new or altered signified sense, has a correlative a form of imagination within the "order" of nonmotivated signification: such an imagination redetermines meaning at the level of the signified by reorganising the internal relationships between conceptual meanings, by producing shifts in *langue*. And it is such a form of imagination that, I will suggest, constitutes the creative force that Hegel implies to be at work within philosophical thinking itself.

In any case, Leibniz's naivety stems, for Hegel, from his failure to recognise that hieroglyphics would deprive philosophical thought of impacting upon language as a constituted system, or perhaps more accurately, upon the internal interrelationships of the conceptual network, by which progress is and can be made. In adopting Leibniz's hieroglyphic script, one would end up not with a conceptuality capable of reflecting alterations in meaning and of opening out onto the possibility of future amendments, but with changes in thought being reflected at the level of the constitution of signs, such as takes place in mineralogical or chemical names. But such alterations, Hegel posits, are not adequate as regards the advances in philosophical thought, or in thinking in which spiritual concepts are at stake. Thus: "A hieroglyphic written language would require a philosophy as stationary as is the civilisation of the Chinese overall".[38]

Leibniz's misunderstanding, Hegel implies, is that he reduces the functions of the written script or of language generally to those of communication and signification, whereas in actual fact, conceptual language has the function not only of

providing intersubjective meanings that can be communicated, but also of reflecting changes instigated by fresh thinking, or by thought that redefines the conventional meanings in use at a given time. As such, Hegel implicitly recognises that language's manifold functions—of communication, signification and of performatively addressing and altering the constitution of language and thus of thought—are simultaneously in play when (a) language is being used or when thinking takes place. Conceptual language is thus by no means simply the passive bearer of signified meanings, but the bearer of changes in thinking, the index of advances made at the level of logic and argumentation; concepts do not merely signify for the purpose of thinking, or bear meaning for the purpose of communicating thoughts, but constitute rather the meanings *at stake* when we think, or put them to work in thinking. Indeed, beyond what Hegel says, one might speculate that the demand for perfect communication, for ideally iterable meanings that remain unaffected by the operation of signification, is intrinsically precluded by the simple fact that language is in an imperceptible but very real state of perpetual flux, by the fact that language is perpetually reworking its own meanings.

In any case, it can perhaps already be glimpsed that, in the light of Hegel's rebuttal of Leibniz being undertaken within the context of a discussion of the phenomenon of semantic change in conceptual meaning, what begins to emerge is a radically different theory of nonmotivated signification compared with the one he expounds when treating of the nonmotivated linguistic sign as such, or as differentiated from the symbol. The passage in question ends with a rebuke of those who would seek in the name a definition, of those who would prefer language or writing to be more akin to hieroglyphics, to contain motivated elements within the signifier that relate it directly to the signified. This rebuke is in itself hardly remarkable; after all, in the theory that Hegel explicitly expounds, the nonmotivated sign is, as we have seen, to be favoured on account of its immediate presencing of meaning, on account of its transcendence of the materiality of the signifier. But what is remarkable is that the indispensability of nonmotivated signification for philosophy is, in this case, invoked for a reason that is not only different from that underlying his stated predilection for the nonmotivated sign, but that manifestly contradicts it.

Whereas he had valorised the nonmotivated sign and the noun or name in virtue of it providing present, immediate meaning, and precisely on the grounds of it precluding variability, in the context of discussing signifying systems' capacity to reflect change, he esteems nonmotivated signification on account of it *facilitating* the philosophically essential possibility of *altering meaning*, of imagining and redetermining conceptual meaning otherwise. The proposition that nonmotivated signification allows for changes to be reflected in its sense, that its meaning is mediated by its internal relationships with other ideas or concepts, is incompatible with the notion that the signifier/signified meaning presents its ideal and autonomous signified meanings in the form of unmediated presence. What remains constant in the midst of Hegel's contradictory determinations of nonmotivated signification's features is his assumption that nonmotivated signification constitutes the sole and essential semiological medium of philosophy. But in this passage, he adjudges philosophy to require a conceptual system founded on nonmotivated signs because such signs reflect alterations in thinking in the relationships upon which they depend for their meaning. Hegel thus presents nothing less than the implicit thesis of the indispensability of nonmotivated signification for philosophical thinking, founded *not* on the basis of the nonmotivated sign's stability or any other of the qualities that Hegel attributes to it when elucidating the nature of nonmotivated signification explicitly or as it is operative in speech; on the contrary, he identifies philosophical thinking with nonmotivated signification on the basis that conceptual meaning is founded upon the "internal relationships" and dynamic interdependence of signified meanings, on account of its essential *instability* and its receptiveness to reflecting changes in meaning brought about by "progress" made in thinking. Consequently, and in contradistinction to his orthodox, phonocentric theory of nonmotivated signification that firmly excludes any question of imagination being at work within language, Hegel's emphasis on the susceptibility of dynamic conceptual relationships to revision discloses a manner in which imagination can be grasped as producing its effects within language, conceptuality and philosophical thinking.

In the light of this contradiction, and given the brevity and terseness of Hegel's reflection on the phenomenon of conceptual change in the nonmotivated linguistic mode of signification, I propose in following sections to elucidate his alternative account in terms of its semiological presuppositions, and then, in terms of

its implications for the notion of a textual and conceptual imagination at work in philosophical thinking. Before attempting to do so, it should be noted that, in interpreting or extrapolating the dense and compact passage in which he criticises Leibniz, we are compelled to rely upon much of which Hegel shows an implicit acceptance but that he does not assert or assent to explicitly elsewhere. That Hegel could inadvertently suggest a radical alternative to his own theory of nonmotivated signification is no doubt due to the indirect manner in which he approaches the issue of alterations in conceptual meaning; he is, after all, addressing this issue only on account of his desire to assert the superiority of alphabetic-phonetic writing over hieroglyphics, and on account of the oversight he—correctly and critically, in my view—identifies to be manifest in Leibniz's presuppositions regarding signification, communication and philosophical thinking. And it is significant, as Derrida would hasten to point out, that Hegel addresses the issue within the context of a discussion of writing, which appears after the supposedly central questions of spoken language have been addressed. It is within the context of writing, and thus within a context more conducive to considerations of temporality on a historical scale, and more likely to occasion reflection on changes in conceptual meaning, that he raises the question of the relation between progress in the philosophical tradition and its nonmotivated mode of signification. But having been raised within the context of writing, whose supplementary status is declared in describing it as a sign of a (spoken) sign, it should come as little surprise that his alternative "theory" remains in the margins of his philosophy. Nonetheless, the potentiality that Hegel has overlooked within his own text, that he has left, as it were, to lie fallow, might yet be drawn from, in particular if we extrapolate the presuppositions he relies upon when adjudging dynamic philosophical thinking to require a nonmotivated sign-system. The task that Hegel's remarks on philosophical progress, conceptual change and the arbitrary sign set before a deconstructive reading, then, is that of articulating explicitly the semiological apparatus that he relies upon in broaching what I am calling a philosophical imagination, beyond the localised or even *ad hoc* role this apparatus plays in refuting Leibniz's proposal of a "hieroglyphic" script.

(b) The Semiology of *Différance* and *Supplémentarité* Underlying Hegel's Reflection on Conceptual Change

In teasing out the implications of the passage containing passage Hegel's refutation of Leibniz, it is my wager that we arrive at the concept of a conceptual, philosophical or textual imagination founded upon a tacit recognition of semiological difference, and even of *différance* as it is operative within conceptuality. My pursuit of the implicit thinking in Hegel's thought concentrates, firstly, on elucidating the semiology of difference within nonmotivated signification that Hegel's refutation of Leibniz presupposes with a view, secondly, to demonstrating how this semiology discloses, or invites one to conceive of, a tenable notion of an imagination at work within the philosophical redetermination of conceptuality. My preliminary aim is to detect the semiology of *différance* and *supplementarité* within Hegel's considerations of change in conceptual meaning, and to demonstrate such conditions to be conducive to the operation of imagination within language's conceptuality. Following this, and in the light of Derrida's genealogical emphasis on the turbulence of philosophical meaning, I seek to formulate the concept of a philosophical imagination.

In analysing the "internal relationships" between conceptual meanings that Hegel suggests are determinative of—or essential to the "re-determinability" of—the meanings of individual concepts, he is broaching, in the first place, the differential constitution of signified meaning; and in the second, given that Hegel takes such a constitution to imply the dynamic and shifting nature of conceptual meaning over time, he is broaching the effects that Derrida attempts to capture in forging the notion of "différance", in the temporising effects of (semiological) difference, division and fragmentation, and of which, as he says with certain caveats in the eponymous essay, is "la possibilité de la conceptualité".[39] It is the movement from the recognition of semiological difference, or the interdependence of conceptual meanings, to the effects in the deferral of pure and autonomous conceptual signified meaning that I wish to retrace in Hegel's reasoning.

In the passage under investigation, Hegel formulates the notion that the relations or contrasts between abstract conceptual signs are not extrinsic to the individual sign's meaning. No doubt, Hegel's awareness can be explained in part by

the fact that the necessity of relationships between concepts creating their relativistically constructed meanings is all the more evident in the case, as Hegel puts it, of "spiritual matters" or ideas; for in the absence of the ostensible intuitable designant or referent that a sensory object provides, the abstract philosophical concept is, to a greater extent, dependent for its meaning not only on the metaphor ineluctably underlying it ("breath"—*anima*—in the case of *animus*, for example), but also on the differential matrix within which it is embedded as one component among others (*animus* within *mens*, *intellectus*, etc.). This no doubt accounts in part for the way in which philosophical conceptuality and discourse has lived upon binary oppositions; signifieds are constructed not simply in themselves but vis-à-vis what constitutes their other. This is particularly evident in those oppositions in which the intelligible is contrasted with the sensible, the metaphysical with the physical, the cultural with the natural, etc. And the greater the level of abstraction in conceptuality, the more reliant the concept is on the internal relationships and binary oppositions, and the more susceptible the conceptual *langue* as a whole is to the ripple effect caused by an alteration commencing in one particular sign or meaning. The construction of a philosophical conceptuality will have required not simply a process of labelling existing ideas or ideas with arbitrary signifier-intuitions, but the construction of an intersubjective conventional differential and oppositional system. Adjustments in conceptual meaning are thus not to be understood necessarily as mere auxiliary or supplementary additions to an existing immutable kernel; neither the signifier/signified relationship nor the signified meaning precedes its generation within the conventional matrix of language; rather, the "internal relationships" are constitutive of each and every "individual" conceptual meaning, constitutive of the meaning of an "independent" and apparently autonomous conceptual signified. While Hegel may not articulate the fact that signs can function in the absence of a nonmotivated basis *only* because they belong to a network of differential and interrelated meanings, he does recognise that the constitution of conceptuality, far from amounting to a stagnant set of fixed determinate internal relations, comprises dynamic, interdependent relations. He thus recognises the effects of semiological difference as they make themselves felt within the field of abstract conceptuality.

In fact, given that Hegel relates this differential constitution to a certain temporal and historical dynamism in conceptual meaning, what he sets before us is

nothing less than the work of *différance* as it organises or disorganises the relation between conceptual meanings, and between language and thought. Derrida has indicated that despite *différance* amounting to a non-dialectical rewriting of the *Aufhebung* such that an ultimate resolution is forever deferred, the notion of *différance* is to be found in all but name in certain passages in Hegel.[40] In tacitly recognising the differential constitution of conceptuality to be essential to the possibility of progress or of alterations being made in thought, Hegel implicitly subscribes to the notion that conceptuality is inscribed *en différance*. Since each conceptual meaning defers to others for its sense, there is an ineradicable *à-venir* to meaning, a space unfolding towards a horizon into which a philosophical imagination can project a reorganisation of conceptual meaning. In the passage in question, Hegel tells us not only that a finished hieroglyphic language amounts to an impossibility, but also that a finished nonmotivated, conceptual language is a priori impossible. A finalised, exhaustive account of conceptual meaning can never be achieved, not only because one must employ the resources of the system that one is investigating in that very endeavour, nor even simply because (a) language lies in a state of unmasterable transformation on account of it being in use; rather, it is impossible *ultimately* because of the very nature of nonmotivated signification, because of the originary lack of any inherent bond between signifier and signified. Since each concept lacks a fundamental, motivated ground that it might otherwise find in its signifier (however fruitful its etymological resources may prove to be in determining its genealogy), and since it must in consequence refer to its position relative to other conceptual meanings—since, that is, there is no transcendental signified that escapes and organises this play from a position of anteriority or superiority—conceptual meanings stand in a relation of mutual dependence, mutually deferring to one another. The mediation between signifier and conceptual signified that therefore lies beyond their immediate relation, is infinite, or infinitely deferred, according to the logic of Derridean *différance*. This is not to say that there is *no* meaning arrived at, but rather that the meaning produced never constitutes the purity of a definitive and independent sense extricable from the conditions of its generation. And, as we have seen, Hegel insists that the structure organising conceptuality, that I am describing in terms of *différance*, far from amounting to an alterity that philosophy can set outside itself, is in fact *necessary* to the possibility of philosophical thought and *Gedankenbildung*.

This constitutive structure that lends itself to being described in terms of *différance* can also be understood in terms of another Derridean motif, that of *supplémentarité*. Aside from the sense in which it is the extraneous, incidental addition to an existing whole upon which it makes no meaningful effect, the *supplément* can also have the sense, as Derrida points out, of an ineluctably necessary addition that responds to a certain lack inhering in that to which it is "added" from the outset. To take an example, supplementary editions of a dictionary arise out of the inevitable alterations and additions made to a lexicon. The nonmotivated sign can be seen to be inscribed within a similar form of *supplémentarité*. The original "deficiency" in the relation between signifier and signified, that is, the constitutive lack of a motivated or mimetic element affixing signifier to signified, necessitates the signifier attaining its sense beyond itself in the mutually defining relations between signs or between signified meanings. The absence of a motivated relation in its inception does not merely necessitate that the relation between signifier and signified be iterated in the *parole* of a living language for the word to be maintained. Rather, the "missing" binding, mimetic relation between signifier and signified, the sign's originary absence of a fixed ground, leaves ajar the possibility of the relationship being redetermined, whether by the more or less conscious attempts made in theoretical analyses to inflect conceptual meanings, or by the more or less unconscious drift meanings undergo as a result of the anonymous and *ad hoc* adaptation of words to particular contexts and needs. That there is no ultimate ground to a conceptual meaning is at one and the same time the fact that an *à-venir* always awaits it; it is in this sense that conceptual meaning is inscribed *en différance* or as intrinsically incapable of extricating itself from *supplementarité*. In the *différance* or *supplémentarité* underlying language and thought lies, perhaps, the freedom and despair of thinking, or in other words, the ineradicable possibility of imagination in thought.

In the passage under discussion, Hegel's response to the fact of language being inscribed *en différance* might described as being, in spirit, unmistakably Derridean or deconstructionist. For he conceives of the *différance* or *supplémentarité* of conceptual meaning less as the abysmal absence of a ground or a telos to conceptual thought than as the possibility of all philosophical "progress" or conceptual development—of any or all progress made thus far, and indeed, of any to

come. Nonmotivated signification, which, as Hegel argues, precludes the possibility of a complete (*perfectus*) language, allows for the space unfolding before a horizon within which philosophy can recreate its language or its *langue*. Consequently, underlying Hegel's assertions is the notion that nonmotivated signification must be preserved as the medium of philosophy so as to ensure the possibility of thought, or to ensure that philosophical thought is inscribed within the movement and possibility of a conceptual, textual or philosophical imagination. Needless to say, the implication of such an imagination radically contests the status that this concept holds in Hegel's psychology and dialectic of spirit; this status is that of imagination as a series of dialectical moments in the becoming of *Vorstellung* (in the psychological becoming of the mind and in the development of art and poetry) that culminates in being, as in the case of art, *irrelevant* upon the formation of a fully developed "prose of thought" in the age of modernity characterised by *Wissenschaft*.

The instability of the field of conceptual meaning might be construed as the gift, the opportunity and the responsibility that language confers upon anyone who would come to recognise it as such. Language and linguistic meaning are of their nature inscribed within unstable, volatile internal relations that, by not admitting of exhaustive determination, ensure the possibility of extensive redetermination. The fact that conceptual meanings are defined by the ineluctably hazy borders where they intersect affords the opportunity for thought to rethink or rewrite its own conceptual terms and frameworks, for it to be, in a certain sense, imaginative. It is this creativity that Hegel brings to light and depends upon in refuting Leibniz, which he posits as being critical to the chosen—nonmotivated—medium of western thought, which might be given the name of a philosophical imagination. It would amount to an imagination that has constantly deconstructed conceptual meaning, and that has as its structure a reflexive turn inward toward conceptual meaning that is founded, as it were, on shifting sands, or that is inscribed within *supplémentarité* and *différance*.

(c) The Textual Imagination of Philosophy Implied by Philosophical Conceptuality as inscribed in *Différance* and *Supplémentarité*

Thus far, I have attempted to demonstrate that conceptuality's semiological conditions of possibility provide a context in which there is a *prima facie* case for speaking of a

textual, philosophical and conceptual imagination. The line of reasoning we have followed in Hegel's text, which stands at odds with his own professed theory but in harmony with a Derridean semiology of language, provides a basis on which to postulate a philosophical imagination in which the interrelations between meanings have been continually suspended, reworked and instituted otherwise; it suggests that imagination is operative within a philosophical discourse that imagines in the processes of (re)conceptualising and arguing for a certain distribution and reorganisation of the terms on which a philosophical discourse lives. If, for Hegel, nonmotivated signification must be preserved as the medium of philosophy so that the work and progress of philosophical thought can be continued, it is because of a certain creativity in philosophical thinking by which it recreates its own conceptuality, whether or not one wishes to extend the concept of imagination to designate it. Such at least is the possibility, that, in a tentative and speculative fashion, I wish to explore further.

In recognising the potential for *parole*, thought or texts not only to reaffirm but also to suspend, contest and redetermine philosophical meaning, we come upon what might be described as the work or potentiality of a textual imagination within philosophy. The aim of my approach is to establish that *parole* or philosophical thinking, or *parole* as philosophical thinking, can and does creatively work upon the conceptuality provided to it in *langue*; this is possible because of a certain "performative" force in *parole* as thought that places the inherited concepts being used at stake. I attempt to demonstrate that *parole*, apart from possessing the tacit power to reaffirm the elements of *langue* such as they exist, can assume the power to contest and suggest alternatives to the existing array of meanings. I treat of the textual, conceptual and philosophical imagination as a performance in which its negativity is evident both in setting a concept or conceptual cluster of related meanings at odds with its predominant conventionalised use, and in suspending the authority of inherited conceptual signified meaning; such actions of suspending and deviating from *langue* pave the way for the reshaping of existing horizons of meaning and the forging of hitherto undisclosed avenues of possibility for conceptual meaning.

Within the context of Derrida's emphasis on a combined mode of genealogical and synchronic analysis of philosophical concepts, I analyse in abstract terms the

relation between the *suspension and reinscription* of philosophical conceptuality, before seeking to ground these performances in the act of definition or redefinition. In the course of setting forth this idea of a philosophical imagination that reengages, contests and rewrites the conceptual system, it will be shown that this notion of a philosophical imagination neither leads necessarily to an abstruse "textualist" imagination cloistered off from the world, nor to a creativity existing apart from conventional philosophical praxis (definition, argumentation); rather, such praxis sets the philosophical conceptuality of which it avails to work otherwise than its conventional use prescribes. Beyond amounting to a merely textual practice, imagination's activity in such acts as redefinition impacts upon language and conceptuality's fashioning of our ontological understanding. Accordingly, I suggest that the notion of a philosophical imagination can be compared with Kant's transcendental imagination; but while Kant's transcendental imagination suggested imagination to predetermine our experience of the empirical or phenomenal world, the notion of an imagination at work in conceptual redetermination, and that accounts for our "altered views" of the internal relations between conceptual meanings, implies imagination to have concretely and continually reshaped our precomprehension of the world *insofar as* it is framed by language. A philosophical imagination can be conceived as producing effects in the space between language or conceptuality and our ontological understanding.[41]

Attributing the shifts brought about in thought to *Gedankenbildung*, as Hegel does, takes little account of the fact that thought, which Hegel accepts as being neither reducible to language nor possible without it, can produce effects on conceptuality or *langue* only because it is itself inherently composed of linguistic elements. But in recognising the effects produced on the altered internal relationships between signs or meanings, Hegel draws our attention to the irreducibility of thought and language to the functions of signification and communication. No doubt, there is in language a communicative function that is closely allied to its signifying function, to the production of the content to be conveyed: one communicates a signified content to oneself or to others. But in raising the question of thought's effects on the dynamic interrelations of conceptuality, Hegel demonstrates the need to recognise the performative effects that the use of language (*parole*) can produce on *langue* or conceptuality, and that the use and the particularity of the contextual deployment of a

certain concept can have in redefining that concept. Hegel's reasoning relies upon the fact that the functioning of conceptuality, beyond its signifying and communicative roles, can also be to produce effects upon itself, upon the concepts in use as they stand in their conventional form. In more Derridean terms, if there is such a thing as an *échange entre parole* et *langue*, then, thought or language, or thought as language, can be in part a performance, a performance made in language upon language. Rather than availing of given meanings guaranteed to remain impervious to whatever use they are put, concepts come to be at stake as soon as they are employed in discourse.[42] *Parole* can be reduced neither to the act of drawing from the system to produce syntactical and grammatical utterances conforming to *langue*'s prescribed possibilities, nor to the act of inserting existing meanings within discursive contexts and putting them to work for communicative ends. Since language is a system of inexhaustible discursive potentialities, *parole*—as speech or as writing—is capable of transgressing existing conventional uses and of reinscribing what it draws from *langue* within new contexts, and thus of opening up hitherto uncountenanced possibilities within *langue*; this can be achieved in conjunction with the rediscovering of possibilities lost in the oblivion of linguistic meaning's history. And if *parole* is capable of producing new possibilities in the system to which it belongs, and does so by drawing upon, recollecting and reinventing its *langue*, its past precedents, or what amounts to a *dictionnaire des idées reçues*, the name of imagination perhaps becomes it.

In elucidating the notion of a philosophical imagination, we are in any case concerned with a certain performance and the effects of the use of concepts upon their status or relative positioning within *langue*, or within a conceptuality as a certain determination of a particular *langue*. If I use the word "performance" to describe the effect that the use of conceptuality can have upon the conventional standing and signification of concepts, it is so as to recognise a certain affinity with the illocutionary performative speech act, with the power of certain speech acts (betting, promising, etc.) to achieve something in opposition to merely asserting something (a constative utterance), or to involve or require a subsequent action or effect. In the course of his debate with John Searle on the subject, Derrida has cast doubt on whether an absolutely rigorous distinction between performative and constative utterances can be made.[43] Constative utterances—those ostensibly having the sole aim

of stating the truth, and apparently restricted to the values of truth or falsity—can always be inscribed within contexts in which the language, terms and concepts they use or set to work are at stake; the performative dimension of constative utterances and the creative performance of philosophical *parole* would thus intersect at a certain point. However, the affinity between the performative speech act and the possibility of *parole* affecting the language it "borrows" from *langue* would only extend so far; the field in which the effects or consequences of this linguistic and imaginative act extend not in any *immediate* way to a subsequent action on the part of the speaker or someone else, but make themselves felt within the field of *langue* or conceptuality such as it is conventionally instituted.

If imagination is implicit as a potentiality within philosophical thinking, it is because at every turn and in its every performance, signified meanings "borrowed" from *langue* can come to be placed in question, either explicitly in the form of doubt being cast upon them (in an explicit critique) and/or implicitly by being employed in innovative and unorthodox ways; in other words, the conventional status of the signified meaning of a particular concept can be placed in question by the particular occasion of its use, by it being set to work in an unconventional way in a novel discursive context or a theoretical framework. That the conventional meaning and prescribed use of a concept is most certainly not always disturbed by its use, that its use may serve—as it no doubt does more often than not—to reaffirm its conventional standing, does not erase the opportunity *parole* occasions to use existing concepts in an innovative and subversive yet consequential and intelligible way. To recognise such a performance within thought and *parole*, and the possibility of the innovative use of concepts affecting their conventional and semantic standing, is to describe in a different terminology what Hegel identifies in asserting a nonmotivated, differential and conventional mode of signification to be essential to the possibility of philosophical thought and progress.

In recognising *parole*'s capacity to take the conceptuality is given by *langue*, to employ it other than it stands, and ultimately to initiate its re-institution, we broach *parole*'s capacity to assume the form of a linguistic or conceptual imagination in the

form of a certain negation of the given and the reinscription of an alternative potentiality. In the case of *parole*, such negativity consists in setting the use of *langue*'s elements at odds with conventional and inherited frameworks. The force of negativity in the conceptual imagination is not simply the semiological negativity that enables the transcendence of the materiality of the signifier (as the phonic sign appears to accomplish by sound's temporal evanescence), but the negativity that sets the signified concept to work in a manner that deviates from its standing such as it is conditioned within *langue* by its internal relationships. Such negativity is evident in the dislocation of concepts from their conventional interrelationships and oppositional frameworks, such as, for example, within syntagms that defy conventional boundaries. Indeed, in seeking an example of such a transgression, we need look no further than the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* attributing to imagination the creation of language. Hegel attributes to imagination the creation of a conventional system rather than an individual work, and a system moreover with which imagination or *Phantasie* has generally been contrasted rather than associated. The meanings of *Phantasie* and *Zeichen* are thrown into question in Hegel's formulation. How must the *Zeichen* be reconceived if it is created by *Phantasie*? And how must *Phantasie* be reconceived if it can count the sign or language among the objects that it creates?

A discordance introduced between *parole* and *langue*, between thought and given conceptuality, between the use of a concept and its past or current acceptation, or between a concept reinscribed within a subversive system and its orthodox definition, can, if it casts sufficient doubt and leads to hesitation or reflection on a concept, amount to a certain suspension of a concept's legitimacy; a suspension, that is, both in the sense of detracting temporarily from the value or authority of a concept, and of the intervening period of undecidability necessary to alterations in the status quo. Such a moment, no doubt nearer or further away at any given moment for a given concept or conceptual network of terms, throws them into doubt or question as a presiding and inherited orthodoxy; it suspends their intelligibility at the risk, to be sure, of a certain provisional unintelligibility, but with a view to a sense yet to be produced in its entirety. (Thus, for example, is Hegel's novel formulation of the concept of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* required to overcome the paradoxes to which it gives rise.) This operation of suspension has as its effect the suspended concept operating only under the debilitating conditions that we have analysed in

deconstruction's manner of placing concepts or oppositions *sous rature*; that is, at once availed of, cited and employed with the caveat that no absolute credence should be invested in them. Concepts and oppositions are employed, within a strategy of *bricolage*, in the sense of the word as used by Lévi-Strauss and modified or deconstructed by Derrida.[44] On account of the suspension of the apparent presence and determinacy of the signified, the historicity of a conventional and historically produced sign unveils itself within a moment that is characterised at once by incertitude and possibility, undecidability and opportunity.

While this formal negativity is to be found as an implicit but intrinsic moment within an operation of redescription or redefinition, it betrays itself in its formal purity within the explicit *critique* of a concept or of a conceptual cluster of terms; the operation of redefinition that we have analysed re-discloses this moment only to quickly pass over it in its positive pursuit of an alternative potentiality. Whether occurring in critique or in redefinition, the moment of suspension remains but an opening onto certain potentialities until the work of forging a coherent sense, of employing the dislocated concept within discourse, is undertaken. Nonetheless, the movement of imagination that transgresses a conceptual system never occurs without a moment of tumult, disorganisation and a certain disintegration in which inherited certainties give way to mere possibilities. Such aporetic moments—moments of apparent impasse—are those sufficiently fascinating for Derrida that, as we have seen, they form an abiding focus for the deconstructive project of revisiting the west's textual history. And if revisiting the inherited textuality of western culture is necessary now more than ever, it is perhaps because the closure of metaphysics constitutes an epoch in which the conceptuality of metaphysics is thrown into a state of suspension, or perhaps, in which moments of imaginative suspension have themselves been suspended, thereby producing an intransigent stagnation in the philosophical network of conceptual oppositions.

Dislocating or decontextualising concepts from their conceptual frameworks or discourses would alone or in itself be ineffectual or merely anarchic. If the erroneous use of concepts cannot qualify in itself as an act of imagination, however much they may produce serendipitous results, it is because the work of reinscribing and determining concepts "merely" imagined otherwise within a new horizon of

meaning is also necessary. The concept of imagination can be justifiably used to describe a semantically innovative performance on the grounds that it discloses an alternative horizon of possible meaning; projecting new potentialities upon this horizon is an ineradicable possibility, for, as we have seen, it is assured by the *supplémentarité*, *différance* and conventionality of nonmotivated meaning. The possibility of initially unintelligible formulations, of concepts that suspend existing conventional interrelations, reinscribing themselves within *langue* arises from the performative force *parole* possesses to reinscribe meaning otherwise. Such a force is evident even in the use of given concepts entirely in accordance with their presiding standing on account of the power of reaffirmation, standardisation, or normalisation that *parole* possesses; the orthodox use of a concept corroborates and consolidates its existing sense. The persuasive force of an argument that legitimates or renders intelligible a new conceptual use or formulation imagined otherwise, or that advocates a new conceptuality on the basis of its unveiled problem-solving capability, cannot, of course, be reduced either to *parole* or imagination; however, it is by the power of such a force, a force of *parole* reliant on the sheer power of repetition, that meanings or uses of a concept once considered unorthodox, unintelligible or deviant can come to stand as a new orthodoxy, as signifieds that can be reproduced with a greater or lesser degree of automaticity.

A cursory genealogy of a philosopheme (for example of *idea*, as *eidos*, *Idée*, etc.[45]) would bear out the historical labour of negation and reinscription in the rewriting of the conceptual *langue*. Derrida's notions of *supplementarité* and *différance* attempt to lay bare the conditions underlying the philosophical (re)generation of conceptual meaning. By being inscribed within the particularity of a historically and culturally specific philosophical system, certain facets of a particular conceptual sense in previous systems are suspended or displaced, while others are introduced within the new philosophical framework or may be recalled, rejuvenated and reintegrated. What can be gleaned from Derrida's mode of structurally and genealogically analysing philosophemes is that a certain "deconstructive" creativity lies at the very heart of the logos, both in the praxis of thought and in the historically diverse formations of the logos. The work of imagination performed by philosophy on its own conceptuality has always been, in a certain sense, deconstructive; for this work has consisted in critiquing, reinventing and redetermining its own conceptuality.

Deconstruction, as a contemporary strategy of reading and interpretation is very much bound up with (the recognition of) this historical phenomenon. Indeed, it is philosophical textuality as the historical field in which the suspension, displacement and rewriting of philosophical conceptuality takes place, that can be identified as the object of deconstructive reading.

The operation or performances of the suspension and reinscription of philosophical conceptuality is apparent in redefinition. The (re)definition of concepts need not occur in the form of a formal definition of a concept or a thing but may take place in the shifts by which a term is used; a certain ambiguity arises here in which (re)definition can refer to the formal act of defining a concept, or the redefinition that takes place in the use of a concept (and which may necessitate a dictionary, for example, reflecting such a change in the formal definition it gives of a term). A definition can have as its function to provide a certain protocol for future use, whether it founds itself upon what constitutes current use (as in a standard dictionary), or, as in an essay arguing for a reconception of a given concept, on a perceived need to deviate from conventional use and to re-institute the term otherwise. Definition is thus not necessarily restricted to capturing an existing sense or use in the language; but even in such a case, it would still amount to a performance of conservative reaffirmation or of re-instituting *langue* such as it is, which can always be of consequence. Whatever the scenario, definition is a case in which the person defining the term seeks to bestow upon his or her *parole* the *de facto* authority of *langue*, or perhaps more accurately, to have retrospectively attributed to it the *de jure* force and authority conferred upon it, if such a thing is possible.

Redefinition can amount either to the case in which an author argues for a certain redetermination of a meaning, or to a given concept or philosopheme being reinserted within a specific conceptual system that implicitly performs or presupposes such a redetermination. No doubt, both of these alternatives can exist simultaneously within the one work. The reinsertion of a given "concept" in multiple systems, such as idea (*eidos*, *idée*, *idea*, *Idee*, etc.) or imagination (*phantasia*, *imaginatio*, *imagination*, *Phantasie*, etc.) in Platonist, Thomist, Cartesian, Hegelian, and other philosophies, produces radically divergent meanings and senses of the concept or the cluster of concepts involved. In tracing such systems, it is not only the "inner kernel" of the

signified that is recreated but the interrelationships of a conceptual matrix. The continual work of decontextualisation and recontextualisation to which such historically differentiated systems attests, to be sure, rarely takes place without attempts being made to justify certain definitions of concepts or to establish an ontological validity for them. At such points, a certain limit of the philosophical imagination in the textual mode I am describing is no doubt reached. However, within a text that amounts to an explicit proposal made for a certain rendering of a concept, a rendering that is argued for at a discursive level, the formal redefinition of the concept amounts to an act irreducible to a descriptive function; for it is, on the contrary, an act that seeks to effect the (re)institution of the concept's meaning. To the extent that a definition almost invariably entails taking a given meaning from a language, a tradition, or a history, and defines or renders it in an alternative way, definition is invariably redefinition; and in cases where this is not the case—in the case perhaps of a pure neologism or a "first" definition—definition amounts to the formal introduction and institution of a novel meaning into a conventional system, a rendering of one term within a system in other terms belonging to that same system, which is itself not without a certain creativity.

Imagination is required within an operation of *bricolage* necessary to the (re)creation of conceptual systems that rely upon conventional interrelationships; it can be said to be in use wherever finite and given resources have to be put to use toward a given end, or toward an end of imagination's own making. This operation of *bricolage* is very much the case in (re)definition, in which one term is to be defined *by others* within the given *langue*. The performances in philosophy and in *parole* that we have recognised, qualify as instances of imagination by virtue of their innovative use of *langue*'s conventionally generated signifier/signified relations. It is in the use to which the conventional elements of a signifying or representational system are put, within *parole* that transgresses and recreates the system, that a philosophical imagination might reveal itself and its inner workings. Since writing or speech avails of and puts to use the conventional elements of *langue*, and since the use to which *langue* is put in *parole* can either amount to being conformist or irregular, reproductive or productive, there remains scope lying immanently within *parole* for more or less imaginative use of the elements and conventions given in *langue*. This should hardly be surprising given that the system of *langue* or language is a code

permitting of inexhaustible potentialities rather than a given or finished set of finite permutations.

To speak of the imagination implied in Hegel's alternative theory of nonmotivated signification as being philosophical or more generally as relating to prose writing, is not, I have indicated, to set at it at odds with the traditional philosophical work of argumentation or discursive reasoning; on the contrary, it is to recognise that in arguing for redefined concepts, or for alterations in a conceptual system such that it might better grasp the designated phenomena, the work of imagining how the world is or the nature of the things in it, is very much operative. Rather than being simply opposed to rational argumentation or attempts to define or redefine the meaning of concepts, imagination might best be thought of as providing their contextualisation, as setting forth the horizon within which redefinition and argumentation acquire their purpose. *Langue* is not a priori structured so as to accord with the ontological framework of reality but rather conditioned and configured in a differential, interdependent manner to facilitate the operation of nonmotivated signification; as such, any attempt to render *langue* or a conceptual and theoretical system such that it conforms more closely with the ontological structuring of reality—what might in traditional terms be called the aspiration toward truth that animates reason—*requires* rather than precludes the work of imagination. More specifically, it requires an imagination that is linguistic or textual in nature, that is immanent in the performance of *parole* and thinking, and that sets to work upon recreating and redetermining the *langue*'s given resources, existing meanings and their interrelations.

Recognising the proximity of the performative conceptual imagination to definition and discursive reasoning should suffice to dispel the potential objection that the imagination in question amounts to an insular, textualist and inconsequential mode of imagination unrelated to the world "beyond" the text. The charge of a "textualist" imagination, of an imagination that redefines conceptual meanings without further impact, would presuppose, firstly, imagination to be concerned solely with the fictional or fantastic and a mere supplement to the other means, faculties or media with which we cognise the world, and secondly, language, conceptuality or *langue* to be utterly inconsequential with regard to the way in which the world is always already constituted as such for us. While the creative work performed by a

philosophical imagination arises within the context of a reflexive operation that turns inward to the conceptuality or *langue* from which thought itself draws, Hegel implicitly but by no means unclearly suggests the creativity concerned to be anything but closed in upon itself. *Gedankenbildung*, he says, leads to altered views of conceptual or spiritual meanings—to which he adds—"and thus of their nature". The expression "their nature" is ambiguous: are we to understand it in terms of the nature of the signified's *meaning*, or, in terms of our view of the *thing* that it signifies, of its referent? Perhaps, since it would be impossible to distinguish in an absolute fashion between these alternatives, the disjunction proves itself erroneous or misleading. For Hegel's point is precisely that the configuration of our conceptuality constitutes the way in which we, or a given historical shape of consciousness (*eine geistige Gestalt*), understand the world, and contributes to the way in which the world is constituted for us as such. Hegel implies that there is a dialectic between thought and language, between logic and *langue* or signification, whereby thought reflects itself in language or in *langue*, and presumably—since he takes certain languages to be disposed to thinking—language is reflected in what is thought. And the way in which we understand the world, and doubtless ourselves, is precisely what is at stake in this dialectic.

Just as Kant's instigation of the transcendental turn in imagination, concomitant with his broader Copernican revolution, redefines imagination in terms of its power to actively form and construct the constitution of the world *as it is apprehended* or perceived empirically, the textual imagination of philosophy can be seen to be a determinant that constructs and reconstructs the world such as we construe it through *langue* and conceptuality. Hegel anticipates a strand of thinking that might be labelled Heideggerian, in which the world has always already been interpreted for us, determined in one possible way rather than another by the conceptual framework that the linguistic subject appropriates. Hegel shows an uncanny awareness similar to that demonstrated in the pithy Heideggerian dictum that it is not man that speaks (about Being) but language. (A) language or conceptual system gives the world to be understood in a particular way; it predetermines the manner in which we understand or, to use the language characteristic of Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit*, *precomprehend* the world. Thus, the stakes brought into play by the philosophical imagination are not lessened by it determining a system seemingly at

one remove from the world itself, but are rather amplified by the manner in which conceptuality predetermines the framework in which thought about the world is conducted.

Having pursued the question of *parole*'s power to reaffirm and contest existing conceptual meanings, we are in position to revisit the scene of language's origination, to work through the circularity presented by *parole* and *langue*, and to identify a certain originary moment in which *parole* is—almost or effectively—indistinguishable from *langue*. In so doing, I will be returning to the origination of language insofar as Hegel casts it as a function of *Gedächtnis* or mechanical iteration; for, as I have touched upon, Hegel drifts away from attributing language's advent to *Phantasie* and towards ascribing *Gedächtnis* the role of generating it.

Notes to Chapter V

[1] As John McCumber puts Hegel's notion of the spoken sign (in his *The Company of Words: Hegel, Language and Systematic Philosophy*, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1993; p. 224): "Spoken words, which die away as they are uttered and thus negate themselves straightaway, are the most appropriate form of the sign, for Hegel." See also Stephen Houlgate (in his *An Introduction to Hegel: Freedom, Truth and History*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005; p. 178): "When an intuited object is made into a sign, the 'sign-making phantasy' or 'productive memory' (*produktives Gedächtnis*) disregards – and thus *negates* – the visible or audible materiality of the object and turns it into a transparent, empty 'housing' or 'shell' (*Gehäuse*) for meaning. In Hegel's view, the material object that is most suited to being a sign is thus one that actually *negates itself* and vanishes as soon as its arises and thereby, as it were, sets itself aside in favour of its assigned meaning. The best example of such an 'object', Hegel tells us, is the fleeting *sound*." See Derrida's critique of Hegel's notion of sound as the *ideell* semiological materiality, within a critique of his phonocentrism and of his hierarchical ordering of the forms of writing, in *PP* in *MP*, pp. 111-127. See also Derrida's related critique of Husserl: *VP*, "Le signe et le clin d'oeil", pp. 67-78. Derrida remarks on the way in which Husserl's interpretation of the non-composite *punctum* of the moment or now in his semiology of the signifying instant (the turn from signifier to signified that takes place in an instant or *Augenblick*) is at odds with his subtle analyses of time in *The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*, in which Husserl recognises the present to be constituted by protensions and retentions.

[2] *1827-8*, p. 222; 206.

[3] *1827-8*, p. 223; 207.

[4] Let us analyse how the particularity of the symbol affects or overdetermines the symbolic signified, before taking stock of the reciprocal effect produced by the symbolic signified on the symbolic signifier, while bearing in mind that such an emphatic division into symbolic signifier and signified is precisely the distinction being cast in doubt. The eagle does not simply stand in as a signifier for strength or the *strength* of Jupiter; it must be considered that the eagle's other features or the connotations that it brings to mind (its surveying from on-high, the panoramic view its all-seeing sight and mountainous vantage point endows it with, its soaring in the heavens and lightning-like swooping on prey, etc.) render it an appropriate, but also complex, signifier for a god and for Jupiter, for Zeus who was the god of the sky and thunder. The symbolic signifier cannot be considered as having, as Hegel puts it, "no sense for itself" or as simply erasing itself in an operation reducible to delivering or designating the signified. The signifier constructs, expands and elaborates upon the designated referent. Representing Jupiter by an eagle *rather than* by another signifier, beyond designating the god, is not without consequence: it casts the god in a certain light, emphases certain of his features over others. Beyond mere designation, the symbolic signifier colours the signified in a particular way; and as such, it taints the supposedly detached purity of the signified.

Let us consider the rebounding effect produced on the signifier of the eagle by it being set to work in symbolising the strength of Jupiter. That the eagle, by being used as a signifier, is effectively incorporated within a symbolic network, comes to affect how that particular bird is generally perceived; the fact of the eagle as a signifier basking in a divine glow generates or consolidates the sense we might already have of it as a majestic or lordly bird of prey. The eagle as a symbol or signifier comes to be overdetermined by it counting among its conventional signifieds no less a god than Jupiter. It comes to reflect the exalted signified it has represented such that it enjoys a certain status in common consciousness, this status being attested to or reaffirmed by its prevalence as a national symbol (often in the form of the spread eagle). It takes up a place within a signifying network or system whereby it assumes its meaning both from its contrasts with other animals' symbolic significations (the fierceness of the lion, etc.) and from other representatives of the gods and of physical

qualities. We are once again broaching the importance of semiological difference, even though the operation of such difference in the case of a motivated symbolic network is not that of the *pure* differences that constitute the signs comprising *langue* within a nonmotivated signifying system. Such systematic differences contribute to the signification of the symbol in concert with the motivated or mimetic bond.

The signified does not emerge from this system of motivated and nonmotivated elements, so to speak, intact or unscathed by the complex web of conventional elements determining it in the operation of signification. Jupiter as referred to by name is not *simply*, in other words, one and the same as the "Jupiter" signified or symbolised by the eagle, at least as Jupiter is beheld by whoever grasps him through the proper name or the symbol of the eagle. The designated referent may be one and the same, but what is signified by the differing signifying operations is not. Signification and symbolisation exceed designation; they create and construct what is signified. And this is the case whether or not we are speaking of a mythical god. In contrast to the Hegelian semiology in which the symbolic signifier is subordinated to a pre-given signified as a mere vehicle serving in its iterable designation, the symbol can be seen both to particularise and overdetermine its signified and to be redetermined by the signifieds it serves to signify. While any number of symbols (examples) may be selected to designate a given symbolic referent (from which we can conclude a certain arbitrariness to reside within symbolic signification), that *one* is selected *over or rather than another*, in an act that summons the power of difference and negativity, is always potentially significant.

[5] *1830,* §457z, p. 193; 269. I have altered the translation of *Willkürlichkeit* from "wilfulness" to "arbitrariness".

[6] *1827-8*, p. 224; 209.

[7] *1830*, §458z, p. 194; 269.

[8] *1830*, §458, p. 194; 269.

[9] *1830*, §458z, p. 194; 269. The citation continues: "The *sign* is different from the *symbol*, from an intuition whose *own* determinacy is, in its essence and concept, more or less the content and the content which it expresses as a symbol; in the sign as such, by contrast, the intuition's own content and the content of which it is a sign, have nothing to do with each other. In *signifying* therefore intelligence displays a freer wilfulness and mastery in the use of intuition that in symbolising." The thrust of Derrida's argument in "Le Puits et la pyramide" revolves around Hegel confusing the question of the motivated/nonmotivated distinction by speaking of the pyramid—his quintessential example of symbolic art—as a metaphor or symbol for the nonmotivated sign, as the tomb into which an alien body is placed. How can the pyramid be both the symbol of the symbol and the symbol of the nonmotivated sign? One might thus doubt whether the sign and the symbol are as clearly distinguishable as Hegel evidently wishes, given that since the symbol, beyond subjective spirit, comes to be a linguistic element, to attach its own power to words.

[10] "[T]he name for itself, so far as it has become a proper name, has no closer connection to the thing itself. Recently it has been demanded that the name have such a connection to the thing, that the name should be a definition [...]. This drive to discover such a nomenclature comes from the fact that one has forgotten what a name is. The name is precisely this, that the sign has no relation to the content. Sulphuric copper is a definition, not a name" (*1827-8*, p. 232; 218). The point is reasserted in the 1830 version: §459r, pp. 197-8; 273-4.

[11] *1830*, §459r, p. 197; 275. For Hegel, the superiority of alphabetic-phonetic writing over all other forms lies in its retention of speech's nonmotivated mode of signification: "Alphabetic writing thereby also retains the advantage of spoken language, that in written as in spoken language representations have genuine names; the name is the simplest sign for the genuine, i.e. *simple* representation, not resolved into its determinations and compounded out of them" (*1830*, §459, p. 197; 275).

[12] *1827-8*, p.230; 215.

[13] Cf. Derrida's analysis of a passage in Hegel describing the wearing away of metaphors to produce abstract concepts in "La Mythologie blanche: La métaphore dans le texte philosophique" in *MP*, pp. 268-270.
[14] *1830*, §458r, p. 194; 270. The citation continues: "The sign-creating activity may be especially named *productive* memory (the initially abstract mnemosyne); since memory, which in ordinary life is often confused with recollection (*Erinnerung*) and used synonymously with it, even with representation and imagination, has in general to do with signs only."
[15] *PP* in *MP*, p. 92.
[16] *1830*, §457z; p. 193; 269.
[17] *1830*, §457r, p. 193; 268. Further on, we read: "Fantasy brings the inner content to the image [in the symbol] and to intuition [in the sign]. And this is expressed by saying that it determines the content as *being*. So we must not find this expression surprising either, that intelligence makes itself *be*, makes itself the *thing* [*Sache*]; for the content of intelligence is intelligence itself, and so is the determination that it gives to this content."
[18] *1830*, §457, p. 192; 267-8.
[19] *1830*, §440z, p. 166; 230-31.
[20] *1827-8*, p. 224; 209.
[21] *1830*, §457r, p. 192; 268. Cf. *1830*, §381.
[22] *1827-8*, p. 224; 208 (translation modified).
[23] *1830*, §457, p. 192; 267.
[24] *1827*, p. 232; 218.
[25] *1830*, §462z, p. 200; 280.
[26] *1827-8*, p. 224; 209.
[27] *PP* in *MP*, p. 112. Derrida, writing of Hegel's semiology and citing from his text, continues: "Le mot, et ce mot par excellence qu'est le nom, avec son catégorème, y fonctionne comme cet élément simple et irréductible, complet, qui porte l'unité, dans la voix, du son et du sens. Grâce à lui on se passe à la fois de l'image et de l'existence sensibles. [...] 'C'est dans les noms que nous pensons.' Or on sait aujourd'hui que le mot n'a plus la dignité linguistique qu'on lui a presque toujours reconnue. C'est une unité relative, empiriquement découpée entre des unités plus grandes ou plus petites. Le privilège irréductible du nom est la clé du voûte de la philosophie hégélienne du langage."
[28] *PP* in *MP*, p. 90.
[29] *1827-8*, p. 230; 215.
[30] "[The] word we call a sign; it is identical with its content. This is an identity of subjectivity and objectivity within the intelligence itself. Here there is an objectivity produced by intelligence in which there is a stuff, a matter—the word comes from the activity of intelligence—but while the word is an expression of the activity of intelligence there is at the same time an indifference of the matter to the meaning. On the one hand it is identical when I reproduce the name; I have the content, the sense but it is an identity encumbered by this distinction of the indifference of the material towards the meaning. It is as if the name has lost its connection with its origin, the intuition, since it has been produced as intuition. As name, this origin has disappeared. It is further reflection, further consideration that again discloses what is elementary in this connection. But the name is in language a more or less dry sign [*trockenes Zeichen*; an arid, inexpressive sign]. In this sphere contingency acquires a great deal of free play. The contingency of the composition of sounds belongs here" (*1827-8*, p. 231; 216-7).
[31] "In so far as the interconnection of names lies in the meaning, the connection of the meaning with their being as names is still a synthesis; and in this its externality the intelligence has not simply returned into itself. But intelligence is the universal: the simple truth of its particular self-externalisations, and the appropriation that it carries out, is the sublation of that distinction between meaning and name. This supreme recollection [*Erinnerung*] of representation is the supreme self-externalisation of intelligence, in which it posits itself as the *being*, as the universal space of names as such, i.e. of senseless words. Ego,

which is this abstract being, is, as subjectivity, at the same time the power over the various names, the empty *bond* which establishes within itself series of them and keeps them in stable order. So far as they just *are*, and intelligence within itself is *subjectivity,—memory*, which, on account of the complete externality in which the members of such series stand to one another, and which is itself this externality, albeit subjective externality, is called *mechanical*" (*1830*, §463, p. 201; 281).

[32] Hegel is aware that in certain Asian languages what might otherwise appear as "words" or unities that are indistinguishable in terms of their sound or pronunciation, are differentiated by marginal differences in the speaker's *intonation*. While such nuanced differences prove difficult for the novice learner to discern, tonal differentiation fulfils the formal necessity of semiological differentiation; it avoids the danger of homonyms, which, if too numerous threaten the distinct identity of the sign within the differential system. After pointing out that words in European languages are differentiated solely by their sound (e.g. the phoneme /bat/ differs from /pat/, etc.) rather than, as in the case of tonal differentiation, by the "one" sound or "word" being inflected tonally to signify one of a number of heterogeneous signifieds, Hegel inaccurately concludes: "the imperfection of the Chinese spoken language is well-known; a mass of its words have several utterly different meanings, as many as ten, or even twenty, so that, in speaking, the distinction is made noticeable merely by stress and intensity, by speaking more softly or by crying out." (*1830*, §459r, p. 196; 274. Cf. *1827-8*, p. 227; 211-12). However, tonal variation in the one "word" is merely a manner of differentiation that operates alongside, or as a supplement to, differentiation between phonemes. Rather than this instructive case serving to enlighten Hegel with regard to the underlying necessity of semiological difference in nonmotivated signification, he takes tonal differentiation to be an indictment of the particular language in which is used; he misconstrues the tonal differentiation evident in oriental languages as an aberration in linguistic signification rather than as an alternative or supplement to phonetic differentiation, and thus as fulfilling a function essential to all nonmotivated forms of signification.

[33] Cf. Part I, Second Affinity.

[34] "That imagination is a necessary ingredient in perception no psychologist has yet to be considered" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A120a).

[35] (*1830*, §459r, p. 196; 272; translation modified). The citation is preceded by the following: "Leibniz allowed himself to be misled by his intellect into believing that a complete written language (*eine vollständige Schriftsprache*) formed in a hieroglyphic manner—which occurs in a partial way even in alphabetic writing (as in our signs for numbers, the planets, the chemical substances, etc.)—would be very desirable as a universal written language for the communication of peoples and especially of scholars. But it may be thought that it was rather the communication of peoples [...] which occasioned the need of alphabetic writing and led to its emergence."

[36] "[*H*]*ieroglyphic script* designates *representations* with spatial figures, whereas alphabetic script designates *sounds* (*Töne*) which are themselves already signs. Alphabetic writing thus consists of signs of signs" (*1830*, §459r, p. 196; 272).

[37] Hegel does not apparently consider that changes in the material composition of nonmotivated linguistic signifiers amount to reflections of changes in thought; thus, the etymological history of a word as apparent in changes in its spelling and pronunciation, is understood not to relate to changes in its signified sense.

[38] *1830*, §459r, pp. 197/8; 276.

[39] *Diff* in *MP*, p.11.

[40] Cf. *Diff* in *MP*, p.14.

[41] In determining the potential benefits of employing the concept of imagination to designate the creativity involved in recreating conceptual interrelationships, it must be recognised that the concept suggests itself within this domain not only on account of abiding features that relate it to creativity and originality within a conventional system of signification; it also suggests itself on account of a certain paucity or a semantic lacuna in the philosophical conceptuality pertaining to conceptual creativity within language. Nonetheless, the work

required in order to render the notion of a philosophical imagination coherent or intelligible would require a immense labour analysing its engagement, one which I cannot undertake here. As such, what I suggest can amount only to tentative steps in the direction of such a notion.

[42] The performance in question is not simply that of *recalling* signs from *langue*, from a language or from one's memory, even though such "recollection" is certainly necessary to speaking, writing or thinking; nor is it that of forming the complex syntactical or grammatical complexes within which signs function in *parole* and which constitute the system of language as an inexhaustible fund of potentialities (an infinite range of possible syntagms, sentences, texts, etc.). (The formation, expansion and reinvention of syntactical and grammatical possibilities can itself only be accounted for by recognising that the development of syntax and grammar arises on account of being caught up within the dynamic creativity of the relation between *parole* and *langue*).

[43] Cf. "Signature Événement Contexte" in *MP*, pp. 365-390. See also this essay as included with Derrida's debate with Searle in *Limited Inc.* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1998) that arises from their contrasting interpretations of Austin's notion of a speech act. In his essay "*Mochlos, or The Conflict of the Faculites*" (in *Logomachia: The Conflict of the Faculties Today*, ed. Richard Rand, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1992, pp. 1-35), Derrida defines the performative or "Austinian notion of a language act [as an utterance] not confined to stating, describing, or saying that which is, but [which is] capable of producing or transforming, into itself alone, under certain conditions, the situation of which it speaks" (p. 20; cf. also p. 25).

[44] Insofar as the work of the *bricoleur* consists in availing of given resources for ends other than that which they were designed, it can be said to require imagination: for instance, it takes imagination to use a coin as a screwdriver, to *see* the coin *as* what it is not, as other to itself in the mode that it is given. I take up Derrida's reading of *bricolage* in the second section of the final chapter. Suffice it to say for now that *bricolage*, as Lévi-Strauss employed the notion (in opposition to the custom-made language of the *ingénieur*, refers to the continued use of *discredited* conceptual oppositions with a critical awareness that such devaluation has occurred. Derrida's deconstruction of Lévi-Strauss consists in demonstrating that *bricolage* extends to our use of all language, and not just to specifically critical discourses, and as such constitutes the history of language in the absence of any language created by an *ingénieur*. Insofar as it is a finite (lexical) resource, we always have to make do with *langue*; but it is precisely this finitude that begets the operation of imagination within language.

[45] Certain of the pivotal moments in the philosopheme *idea* and its various cognates might be sketched in the following way: the *eidos* that had for Plato designated a transcendent and immutable objective Form but became in Aristotle more or less immanent in the form of an empirical object, was reinscribed within the Cartesian subjectivist turn inward, whereby it became a mental representation; the inwardness of the idea as a mental representation would, in Hegel, be retained while at once reinstituting the sense of an objectivity that supervised the unfolding of the object in its potentiality. Derrida outlines his procedure for the genealogical analysis of concepts in the following way: "Pour marquer *effectivement* les déplacements des lieux d'inscription conceptuelle, il faut articuler les chaînes systématiques du mouvement selon leurs généralités et leurs propres périodes, selon leurs décalages, leurs inégalités de développement, les figures complexes de leurs inclusions, implications, exclusions, etc. Ce qui est tout autre chose que de reconduire à l'origine ou au sol fondateur d'un concept, comme si quelque chose de tel existait, comme si telle limite inaugurale et imaginaire ne réveillait pas le mythe rassurant d'un signifié transcendental, archéologie à la veille de toute trace et de toute différence" (*PP* in *MP*, p. 83). But such a mode of analysis must strike a balance between genealogy and the concepts' synchronic or systematic determinants: "En rappelant ici l'histoire du signifiant 'idée' il ne s'agit pas de céder à l'étymologisme [...]. Tout en reconnaissant la fonction spécifique d'un terme à l'intérieur de son système, nous ne devons pourtant pas tenir le signifiant pour parfaitement conventionnel. Sans doute l'Idée de Hegel, par exemple, n'est-elle pas l'Idée de Platon; sans doute les effets de système sont-ils

ici irréductibles et doivent-ils être lus comme tells. Mais le mot *Idée* n'est pas un X arbitraire et il importe une charge traditionnelle qui continue le système de Platon dans le système de Hegel et doit aussi être interrogée comme elle, selon une lecture stratifiée: ni étymologie ni origine pure, ni continuum homogène, ni synchronisme absolu ou intériorité simple d'un système à lui-même" ("La Mythologie blanche: La Métaphore dans le texte philosophique", in *MP*, pp. 247-307; p. 304).

Chapter VI: *Gedächtnis,* Iterability and the Creation of Language: The Originary Performances of *Parole*

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy.
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet.
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name;
And for that name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.
Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* (II, ii, 1-12)

Through a deconstructive reading of Hegel's psychology focusing on the presuppositions and implications of a passing refutation of Leibniz, I have attempted to develop a nascent and inchoate strand in Hegel's thinking on the relationship between imagination and the conceptual dynamism of meaning. Developing Hegel's more marginal or overlooked insights into a conceptual imagination within a Derridean understanding of creativity, textuality and conceptuality brings them to the point that they contest the predominantly phonocentric and logocentric tendencies of Hegel's own explicitly professed theory. It remains to relate Hegelian thought insofar as it suggests the essential labour of a textual imagination in devising and revising philosophical conceptuality, to the scene in which the concept of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* arises, that of the advent of language.

Having examined the phenomenon of conceptual reconfiguration within the dynamic system of *langue*, and deduced that a certain textual or philosophical imagination can be formulated so as to account for it, we are in a position to revisit and illuminate two fundamental problems already broached but held in abeyance while reading, extrapolating and contrasting Hegel's orthodox and alternative models of the relation between language and imagination; one, in relation to the nature of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* or the *langue*-creating imagination; the other in relation to specifying the nature of the deconstructive imagination as it relates to and distinguishes itself from the philosophical imagination that will have produced effects within the conceptuality and oppositions of western philosophy. The phenomenon of

the imagination as it is manifest in the power of *parole* to reinstitute meanings can shed light not only the nature of the textual imagination of deconstruction, but also on the advent of language, on the problematic of conceiving of *parole* bringing *langue* into being. The questions pertaining to the textual and deconstructive imagination, which return us to the original affinities between deconstruction and imagination investigated at the outset, I will pursue in a concluding chapter.

It remains in the first place to recognise how the imaginative performance of *parole*'s capacity to reaffirm or reconfigure *langue* also sheds light on the sign- or *langue*-creating imagination. Recognising the *échange entre parole and langue* that underlies the dynamics of conceptual meaning puts us in a position to enquire into the origin of language in a way that Hegel neglected or was unable to do; instead of re-placing the onus onto *Gedächtnis* as accounting for the origination of a nonmotivated mode of signification, as Hegel did, I intend to provide a modified theory focusing on the capacity of certain originary performances in *parole*.

In essence I will present two theories of the creation of language, one in which *Phantasie* and an other in which *Gedächtnis* is accorded the central role in accounting for the creation and institution of *langue*. The latter, in which Hegel appears to eclipse the role he had earlier attributed to *Phantasie*, stands as Hegel's eventual and orthodox position. In the course of the texts comprising his psychology, he effectively shifts the burden of explaining the origination of a nonmotivated signifying system onto memory, and onto the re-interiorisation of the arbitrary relations between signifiers and signifieds within the ego. In so doing, he passes over the opportunity to formulate the problematic of which one might, in a post-Saussurean age, be more acutely aware—that of how *parole* can bring *langue* into existence when *parole*'s very possibility appears to require *langue* to be already in existence. Instead of pursuing this problematic, the resolution to which would give real substance to the concept of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*, Hegel moves on to the question of how the mechanical reproducibility of *Gedächtnis* can underlie the freedom of thought. I will suggest that, had he recognised the presence and effect of imagination within language in its inception, Hegel would not end up characterising thought in such a way that it appears incapable of reorganising or imagining otherwise its own conceptuality.

The alternative theory I propose relies upon on certain conclusions already reached, namely, that the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* must be accredited with objectivising a *langue* capable of receiving and maintaining differential sign-to-sign relations; and that *parole* exceeds any pure reduction to its signifying function on account of its capacity to reaffirm *or* to contest existing protocol laid down in *langue*, by availing of and deploying existing conceptual resources, respectively, in either an orthodox or innovative way. I argue that the central problematic posed by the question of language's advent can be resolved on the basis of recognising a resemblance between, on the one hand, the power of *parole* to reaffirm existing elements in language, and on the other, the originary reaffirmation of signifier/signified relations that will have been necessary to forging nonmotivated signs.

The power in *parole* to reaffirm existing signs passively simply by availing of them in an orthodox fashion is the key to resolving the circularity besetting our grasp of language's advent; this power of *parole* is in evidence originarily, that is, within the scene of the advent of the nonmotivated sign, in consolidating signifier/signified relations initially posited in a performance that merely sets forth the purely arbitrary signifier/signified relation as a *potential* relation or sign. Thus, whereas an originary performance of *parole* in effect *proposes* a particular nonmotivated signifier/signified relation, a subsequent or secondary performance *consolidates* or reaffirms the relation forged simply by using it to signify, or in other words, by recognising the originary performance as having set a *precedent*, thereby conferring upon it the authority of *langue* in a *de facto* form. As we will see, since the act of setting forth a purely arbitrary relation between a signifier and signified operates without a signifier/signified relation having been established, it must rely on the nonmotivated signifier being related to the signified *by some other means*, whether it is by indexically relating a signifier to a referent, or through drawing on other modes of signification (drawing a picture of the a signified, etc.); thus can the signifier/signified relation be instituted as an iterable operation functioning ultimately in the absence of any mimetic or indexical relation.

Having presented these alternative theories, I identify the bifurcating paths to which they lead: whereas Hegel's account leads him to focus on the question of

Gedächtnis and thought and to consign the question of imagination's role in nonmotivated signification to the past, the notion of originary performances of *parole* instituting *langue* through the power of reaffirmation leads to the recognition of *parole*'s power to transgress *langue* in its existing form, the power that we have identified in the philosophical imagination.

(i) Hegel on *Gedächtnis*: Memory at the Origin of Language

In Hegel's retracing of the dialectical movement through the moments of *Phantasie*, *Gedächtnis* and *Gedenken*, *Phantasie* recedes into the background by virtue of the sign becoming a matter of mechanical reproduction in memory; thought or *denken* thus comes to operate at the level of the independent signified. Hegel describes the passage from the transitory and precarious unity of the signifier as first produced, to its re-interiorisation, consolidation and reaffirmation within *Gedächtnis*. If the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* is charged with exteriorising the signifier/signified relation, *Gedächtnis* undertakes the role of consolidating the nonmotivated sign as meaningful. As such, the signifier, rather than amounting to a dynamic component within a differential system, is nothing but a mechanically reproducible intuition serving only to evoke the signified, which thereby predominates in the mind and gives to thought its substantial content.

What for Hegel ensues upon the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*'s exteriorisation and reification of the intuition as a sign is an operation of reappropriation. In order for the nonmotivated signifier and signified to become meaningful and be maintained as a unity, it must be appropriated by memory. By being interiorised within the mind, "the indifference between the [word and meaning] is suspended [*aufgehoben*]".[1] The labour performed by *Gedächtnis* is that of taking "the connection which the sign is, into its possession", and "by this recollection [it] elevates the *individual* connection to a universal, i.e., permanent, connection, in which name and meaning are for it objectively combined".[2] In *Gedächtnis*, spirit consolidates and "makes this relative unity into an absolute unity in itself, into an abstract unity; it immediately subjects this word, this intuition, to itself so that the meaning itself becomes the thing [*Sache*, the matter at hand]".[3] Hegel goes on to identify *Gedächtnis* as making possible the

duality of an inner meaning and an external, objective sign. Signified meaning gains its independence from a signifier that need only be mechanically reproduced. The contingency that had characterised the exteriorised signifier/signified relation, or that determined the nonmotivated relation as having merely been happened upon (as *das Gefundene*), is overcome by the signifier being interiorised within a sign-memory that contains not merely subjective images, as in the case of the *Schacht*, but communally validated conventional signifier/signified relations.[4] The signifier/signified relation comes to be imbued with a certain necessity, albeit of a contrived or conventional variety: "As mechanical memory, intelligence is at once that external objectivity itself [of the sign, word, or signifier] and the *meaning*."[5] As such, the interiorisation of the signifier/signified relation within *Gedächtnis* amounts to the reappropriation of signified meaning in its independence from the signifier or from any sensory interference. In other words, for Hegel, as is indicated in the etymological relations between the cognate terms (*Gedächtnis*, *gedenken* and *Gedanke;* "memory", "to remember" and "thought"), memory makes thought possible.[6]

The mechanical repeatability of the sign constitutes the possibility of thought, understood as the ideal objectivity of meaning achieved in an inner subjective expression: "the intelligence posits itself as objective, as the external in itself, [so that] in its highest inwardness it is mechanical, related to itself as this space in which stands a series of signs that are merely juxtaposed or entirely meaningless. Therein the transition to thought is expressed."[7] In the sign being interiorised within *Gedächtnis*, the signifier is effectively negated by assuming a mechanical form, which has the effect of liberating the signified. But this operation of interiorisation and appropriation does not consist in a reversion to subjectivity such as it existed in symbolic representation or in the mind as populated by universals generated in the subjective production of universals; for words are not private representations but retain rather a certain objectivity insofar as their meanings are "*distinct* from our *inwardness*".[8] Through the appropriation of objective meaning within inner subjectivity, "a unity of the subjective and objective is produced which forms the transition to *thinking as such*".[9] The signified existing immediately within the subject's grasp does not preclude the ideal union of objective meaning residing within the inner subjectivity of thought. On the contrary, thought stands as "an inwardness that in itself is externality";[10] the mind has been self-externalised within itself,

Gedächtnis having made possible an internal subjective mode of expression that nonetheless conducts itself in an objective and universally accessible medium.

As we will see, Hegel appears to harbour doubts with regard to the conclusion that he reaches; for he will himself wonder at the fact that thought appears to be underpinned by a *mechanical* operation, that, besides appearing to make possible the freedom of thought (from the signifier), the presence of a certain mindless (*geistlos*) mechanical operation within the mind implies a certain constitutive self-alienation of the subject. In conceiving of thought operating solely on the basis of the mechanical signifying operation, without the capacity for imaginatively engaging with signs and signified meaning, I will suggest that Hegel condemns himself to an account incapable of accounting for the dynamism that prevents the thought/language relation from stagnating.

What if anything remains of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* within this movement of transcendence to thought, which amounts to the culmination of Hegel's philosophy of subjective spirit? Apart from isolated comments suggesting the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* to have created a body of conventions irreducible to a sign-memory—one intriguing mention of a "universal space of names"—Hegel's programme is to exclude the material signifier from the subjective operation of thought in which signified meaning has been interiorised. He wants, on the one hand, to restrict to an absolute minimum the perilous moment of the newly forged signifier/signified relation remaining an alterity to the conscious mind, while on the other, to retain the apparent objectivity that the sign's extra-subjective existence affords it. Indeed, Hegel goes so far, both in the 1827-8 lectures and in the 1830 edition of the *Encyclopaedia*, to transfer the sign-making function of *Phantasie* to what he calls productive memory (*das produktive Gedächtnis*): "The sign-creating activity may be especially named *productive* memory (the initially abstract *Mnemosyne*)".[11] In so doing, he effectively reverts to the account of the origin of language he had given in the *Philosophical Propadeutic* (1809-11) in which only the concept of productive memory—and not that of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*—had appeared. Hegel attributes to memory what he had in earlier sections of his psychology attributed to *Phantasie*, which thereby envelops imagination and extinguishes any trace of it. In collapsing the distinction between them, he appears to

conflate the moments in the creation of language that he had earlier distinguished: the production (exteriorisation) and the re-interiorisation or appropriation of signs; or in other words, he confuses the operation of creating a nonmotivated signifying system with the learning of an existing language.

Gedächtnis will thus not only be pressed into bearing the burden of accounting for nonmotivated signification, it will also cast the operation of signification and thought in terms of mechanical iterability. Hegel defines the mechanical in terms of "the members of [...] series [of names]" as standing to one another in relations of "complete externality".[12] The interdependence of conceptual meaning upon which philosophical discourse relies and which Hegel had recognised at the level of the signified in his refutation of Leibniz, he thus overlooks at the level of the signifier or at that of the conditions of possibility of language in general.

In the position he ultimately adopts, Hegel explicitly sets *Gedächtnis* above *Phantasie* within a hierarchical relation. He derides those who would reduce *Gedächtnis*, as the ground of thought, to the level of *Phantasie* or *Einbildungskraft*. Those who would employ mnemonics, for example, are complicit with a "reversion of memory to imagination", and of words to images.[13] The implication in Hegel's text is that, rather than any form of imagination continuing to be active within the linguistic system, *Gedächtnis* is not only sufficient for the maintenance of language once the sign-system of language has been created; it alone is also sufficient to account for its creation.

Michael Inwood, in his commentary on the text of the 1830 *Encyclopaedia*, recognises Hegel's prevarication or change of mind with regard to attributing the creation of language to *Gedächtnis* rather than *Phantasie*: "Why does [Hegel] make memory responsible for signs rather than simply for their retention and recall?"[14] Founded on the assertion that there is "nothing to imagine in a sign", Inwood offers a brief but telling defence of the manner in which Hegel drifts away from his initial decision to attribute the sign's creation to *Phantasie*. The etymological reduction (of imagination to "image" or Ein*bild*ungskraft to *Bild*) upon which Inwood relies in supporting this assertion, as well as the reduction of sign-creating to the aleatory assignation to signifiers to existing signifieds that it implies, can both be contested.

Inwood has recourse to the concept of imagination's etymological link to "image" or *Einbildungskraft* to *Bild* not merely as one indication among others in determining its general sense, but as a primordial and prescriptive *delimitation* of its possible sense(s). However, such a restriction would erase the overdetermination of an abstract or philosophical concept by which it exceeds its reducibility to its signifier's etymological components, and gains what Hegel calls a spiritual sense; the concept of imagination has in its long and varied history come to assume senses in which it exceeds its relation to a psychological, mimetic or visual image. To reduce the concept to its etymology would at a stroke do away with it being intelligibly employed—to name but a few examples—in speaking of the creativity in arts that are not primarily mimetic (architecture, music), in poetic devices (rhyme and prosody), and in more philosophical determinations (as the mediating agency between the sense and the intellect). In any case, in the case of the concept of imagination, defining it purely by its etymology depends on how far one wishes to delve into its origins; for in recovering the roots of *imago* and *imitari*, one would rediscover an emphasis placed less on the specifically *visual* image than on the copying or the process of iterating central to imagination—an operation that, as we have seen, is central to the originary performances of *parole* generating *langue*.

Inwood's defence is telling because it reminds us that Hegel's theory would be less prone to the reductive etymologism that restricts imagination to the sole object of the visual image, if, rather than offering a definition of the imagination as the "determinant of images", he had spoken of imagination as encompassing the capacity to redetermine *intuitions* in general. Such a definition, as I mentioned, would be more in keeping with his dialectic of imagination in which it redetermines interiorised intuitions as images, symbols and signs, and thereafter, redetermines the external materiality of form in art and poetry. Indeed, had he specified imagination as the—potentially endless—redetermination of intuition and of semiological materiality, Hegel would have opened imagination up, beyond its restriction to motivated modes of representation, to its operation within both motivated *and* nonmotivated systems, within systems such as language in which both modes of signification intermingle (perhaps most notably in metaphor).

Despite his reliance on a totalising etymologism in reconstructing the sense of *Einbildungskraft* or imagination, Inwood will define the sign in general as being the random pairing of two elements, "as any old intuition harnessed to a representation". This is objectionable on a number of grounds. In the first place, Inwood manifestly contradicts himself. For he cannot, on the one hand, rely on a definition of the sign as being fundamentally arbitrary or nonmotivated, and on the other, reduce the concept of imagination to its base etymological element. Abstract concepts, as we have seen, almost invariably remain in the space between their complex etymological elements and the ways in which they have been overdetermined in *langue*, in discourses and theoretical frameworks. In the second place, Inwood's assumption that sign-making consists in randomly assigning a signifier with a signified rules out the concept of imagination being applied to it *only* if we equate imagination with what does indeed amount to that from which it must be opposed: the random and arbitrary pairing of elements. However, we have already seen that the question of a *langue*-creating imagination consists in the objectivisation of the conventional framework within which such arbitrariness is overcome or put to use. Imagination's role in sign-creation need not be reduced to the aleatory assignation that is opposed to it; on the contrary, it but must be identified with the capacity to integrate and make use of this arbitrariness within the semiological system it devises.

Indeed, the notion of putting negativity, contingency and difference to productive use is one that is central to Hegel's conception of spirit in the *Phenomenology*. In well-known lines from the *Preface* to that work, in which he speaks of spirit not shrinking from the negative but winning its truth in its dismemberment and in embracing the negative, Hegel may not mention the concept of imagination; but the notion that spirit, when it sets negativity, arbitrariness and contingency to work in a mode of signification, assumes the form of imagination, does not, I wager, betray Hegel's purposes. Spirit, Hegel tells us, is the power [*Macht*] it is, because it looks the negative in the eye and tarries with it, this tarrying with the negative "being the magical power [*Zauberkraft*] that transforms [*umkehrt*] it [the negative, spirit, or spirit as the negative] into being".[15] In devising the system of *langue* from the tentative and exploratory or originary forms of *parole*, spirit, it seems to me, does precisely what Hegel describes in these nebulous but richly evocative lines: it faces the negativity and contingency in the arbitrary relations between

signifiers and signifieds, and envelops them within a system in which negativity—in the purest form of the negative relation or nonrelation between signifier and signified—is set to work, in which arbitrariness is overcome within a relation of conventional and spiritual necessity. The form that spirit assumes in this creative operation, a form that lies among the possibilities open to it, is one that might be called imagination.

In moving hastily from the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* to *Gedächtnis* in his psychology, Hegel overlooks questions pertaining to the origination of a nonmotivated system of signification, questions that he dismisses by simply referring us to the self-evidently *gradual* formation of language; this gradual formation can, according to Hegel, be inferred from the fact that no convention was held in which to decide upon the arbitrary relations between signifiers and signifieds. But it is precisely at this juncture that Hegel might have addressed the question of how nonmotivated and conventional signs were in fact instituted. While Hegel recognises that there is a certain problem of circularity involved in the origination of language, he does not have at his disposal the opposition of *parole/langue* in which to formulate the paradox of *parole* and *langue* each requiring one another's existence in order to be possible. It is this problematic, or rather its resolution, which ought to define and give real substance to the concept of a sign-making or *langue*-creating imagination. *Gedächtnis*, while indisputably necessary to the functioning and maintenance of nonmotivated signification, provides no decisive insight into this problematic, not least because *langue* or the differential code of language is irreducible to memory as residing within individuals. The key to its resolution, towards which I move in the next section, lies in the *reaffirming* performance of *parole* and its power to institute signifier/signified relations, and thus the sign-to-sign relations of which *langue* is composed.

From Hegel's characterisation of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* effacing itself or any new form of imagination, unnecessary problems appear to arise. Although, as we have seen, the mechanical nature of the sign appears to underpin thought as the subjective expression of an objective content, Hegel seems uneasy at certain implications that arise from this characterisation: "It appears miraculous that the spirit, the essential freedom at home with itself, relates to itself essentially in its

inwardness in an entirely mechanical way."[16] He is concerned with the paradox by which the freedom of thought and the autonomy of signified meaning have as their bases the mechanical or mindless operation of regurgitating conventional signs. What Hegel calls the "torture" of rote memorisation, which is implicit in interiorising the signs understood as operating mechanically rather than within an interdependent system, seems to be utterly foreign to the mind and spirit: "subjectivity, in its distinction from the thing, becomes quite empty, a mindless container of words, it becomes *mechanical memory*. In this way the *excess of the recollection* [*Erinnerung*, interiorisation] of the word veers round, so to speak, into extreme *alienation* of the intelligence."[17] Intelligence, subjectivity and thought is alienated from itself within itself, threatened by the mindlessness of the nonmotivated sign that has deepened the self-relation on which subjective interiority rests. And there is the danger of words becoming, if not meaningless, then bereft of real meaning as they are availed of in a mechanical fashion. Nothing is more common than the unthinking use of language, than the automatic deployment of signs drawn from a conventionalised system. What had thus appeared initially as the freedom of thought from materiality, from the interference of a signifier, can present itself alternatively as the self-alienating agency inhabiting subjective interiority. Were one to amalgamate the two perspectives Hegel provides, then, one might conclude that the nonmotivated nature of the signifier/signified relation constitutes at once the self-alienation of the subject and the freedom of thought.

However, if the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* or *parole* is reconceived as instituting a dynamic system rather than one reducible exclusively to mechanical reproduction, then, neither the problematic of a purely mechanical iterability underlying thought, nor the apparent stagnation to which it thus destines thought, need arise. In other words, if it could be shown that imagination inheres in thought from the outset, inscribes itself in its very operation such that thought retains the capacity to reflect upon and re-institute existing signified meaning, then, the paradoxical notion of thought being founded purely upon a mechanical operation of reproduction of signs is not only attenuated but overcome. But in order to confirm such conclusions, it will be necessary to articulate precisely the role that imagination plays in creating *langue*, and to embed the notion of a *langue*-creating imagination within a resolution to the *parole/langue* problematic; indeed, it will be necessary to

demonstrate that, in bringing forth language, imagination institutes not only *langue*, or the mechanical iteration of signs, but *a dialectic* between *parole* and *langue*, between thought and conceptual meaning. It is to this task of demonstrating the *langue*-creating imagination to produce a system furnishing the possibility of more or less iterable meanings *but without* precluding the possibility of imaginatively redetermining them that I proceed.

(ii) The Originary Performances of *Parole*: The Recognition of Precedents

Hegel does not, as we have noted, formulate the problematic or paradox of the origin of the interplay between *parole* and *langue*, whereby they each appear to require the pre-existence of one another for language as a signifying and communicative system to come into being. The question is not simply that of how a nonmotivated sign-system can function—a question which Saussure's insights into the arbitrary and differential nature of the sign as it is inscribed within *langue* effectively resolves—but of how such a differential system can be brought into being in the first place. If language consists of individual speech acts (*parole*) and a system that gives meaning to these utterances (*langue*), whereby each requires the pre-existence of the other, the question arises of how they bring one another into being. *Parole* requires the existence of *langue* in order to be meaningful, while *langue* requires the accumulation of acts of *parole* in order for it to be conceived other than as having fallen from the sky ready-made. There is an obvious circularity in evidence that renders it difficult to grasp how *parole* or the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*—or a creative, inaugural form of *parole* in the form of a sign-making imagination—might accomplish the task of creating *langue*. It is ultimately the lack of a motivated relation inhering between signifier and signified that lies at root of this circularity and impenetrability; for were there to be even a modicum of resemblance between the signifier and signified, the sign could be integrated or established within the systematic play of differences, and then further determined by differential relations. But motivation to any degree is precisely what the system of language appears to be able to dispense with, at least insofar as a knowledge of motivated or etymological elements within the word need not be known by a speaker of the language for the system to function; or as Saussure puts it, the speaker need only know the synchronic differences within *langue*, and not its diachrony, in order to signify and communicate in the language.

Hegel does not formulate this problematic, ostensibly because he bypasses it in attributing a certain productivity to memory; the problematic in question is not addressed let alone resolved by speaking of the nonmotivated signifier and signified having been conjoined by an arbitrary name-giving act that need only be memorised

and internalised. We have seen that Hegel never fully grasps the principle of semiological difference and the conventional system of *langue* as the keys to articulating the possibility of nonmotivated signification or the arbitrary sign. Consequently, rather than understanding the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* as instituting a conventional system of differences between signs in *langue*, Hegel tends to equate it with the act of name-giving, of arbitrarily ascribing signifier-intuitions to existing signified meanings (universals). If he can reduce the action of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* to name-giving, it is also because the question of how signified *meaning* is generated has, at least for Hegel, already been resolved; it has been produced in the labour of abstraction that, at a earlier stage of spirit's development prior even to the production of the symbol, brought forth universal representations. As such, Hegel takes the signified to precede the signifier, the signifier thus needing only be joined with a signified in the objective medium of sound for the signifier/signified *relation* to be brought into being. If, however, one understands linguistic signified meaning to issue not only from abstract universals, but also to be a function of *langue*'s differential relations, or in other words, for signified meaning to be a function of sign-to-sign relations, then the problematics of how *parole* brings *langue* into being and of how linguistic meaning is generated come into view.

In painting the very literally preposterous (*prae-posterous*) scene of a convention being held in which the arbitrary signifier/signified relations were determined, Hegel tacitly acknowledges the circularity by which a language and *langue* must already be in existence for us to speak. But he delves no further into the circularity obfuscating language's origination, apparently taking this circularity to constitute a purely formal problematic of no relevance to the consideration of *Phantasie*'s role in language's creation; he dismissively refers us to what he takes to be the self-evidently gradual generation of language.[18] The piecemeal formation of language can hardly be doubted; *parole* and *langue* no doubt gradually gave birth to one another, and have augmented each other's possibilities ever since. Their circular relation thus assists us in understanding how *parole*, pressed by the necessity of circumstance, enlarges *langue*'s lexicon, which in turn, lays before *parole* possibilities authorised by their formal integration within *langue*, by the power of iteration conferring upon them a certain standing. But this circularity also impedes our

grasp of the possibility of the *origination* of a nonmotivated and intersubjective signifying system.

It could be argued that *parole* and *langue*'s mutual and "simultaneous" establishment, and ideally a resolution to the formal paradox of the initiation of this productive reciprocity, should be reflected within the concept of a sign-making or *langue*-creating imagination. If the concept of the sign-making or *langue*-creating imagination is to be meaningful, it must shed light on the apparent impossibility of a signifying system operating in the absence of mimetic modes of signification, and thus, on the circularity that enables us to grasp the mutual process of their development, but that renders the opening of their dialectic unfathomable. The originary generation of *langue* is in a sense less a problematic that Hegel overlooks than the magical capacity for which he leaves the puzzling formulation of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* to account. From this perspective, and despite the fact that he later attributes the creation of language to productive memory, Hegel's account of language's origination *necessitates* the notion of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie.* But the problematic that ought to define the concept, or the resolution that ought to shed light on the paradoxical formulation of a *sign*-making *imagination*, is left in abeyance as an enigma inhabiting the concept of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*, enervating it of the explanatory power such an innovative concept and paradoxical formulation requires for its credibility. It is perhaps for this reason, and not solely on account of the texts or lectures in which it appears receiving little attention in Hegelian scholarship, that the concept of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* has in essence disappeared without a trace.

If, as Hegel reminds us, it is absurd to conceive of some convention being held at which language or *langue* was abstractly brought into being by communally deciding upon nonmotivated signifier/signified meanings, and if attributing the creation of language to memory is equally problematic, then it becomes clear that it is in *parole,* and in *Phantasie* in a form beyond its symbol-creating capacity, that the origination of *langue* must be sought. It is the manner in which *parole* brings *langue* into being, in which it invests signifier/signified relations with meaning on which we must concentrate. Although in considering the *conditions for the possibility* of language in general, the notions of *arche-écriture* or *langue* must predominate, when

considering how language was brought into being according to chronological and "linear" sequence, it is to *parole*, determined solely as speech, with which we must be concerned.

Hegel never explores the relation between the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* and speech, treating the former more or less as a *sui generis* act that, as a result, becomes an abstract postulation. But the action of a sign-making imagination, whatever it amounts to, can be undertaken only in the "medium" of *parole*, just as the medium of imagination in any given system of representation is constituted by the manner in which it makes use of a certain form of materiality, and by the manner in which that materiality is conventionally determined in a representational system. The painter's act of imagination is irreducible to picturing an inner image of the object he wishes to paint or of the completed painting; imagination, if it has meaning in the context of such a creative act, relates fundamentally to the manner in which the painter creates an image *from* or *out of* the material of paint, from the given material, in and through the know-how, knowledge and the conventionalised skills that (s)he has interiorised from a tradition. Hegel tells us, as we have seen, that imagination manifests itself insofar as one possesses the image *as distinct* from the intuition, the image that can be a sign of something other than itself, and the intuition that is a trace "affixed" to an original experience; but in the practice of painting, imagination is evident insofar as there is a difference between the given materiality, which in itself represents nothing, and the form that materiality assumes in the painting, in which it contributes to the painting representing something other than itself, in it giving itself to be *seen as* its referent. Similarly, the sign-making imagination must be considered, in the first instance, as a manner in which the potentialities of intuition—in this case, that of *sound*—are explored, and explored beyond the possibilities of mimesis, with what conventionalisation in a certain—hitherto inconceivable—linguistic form makes possible.

I have attempted to demonstrate that the conceptual imagination operates immanently within *parole* as an event capable of productively transgressing the existing conventionality of *langue*. *Parole* does not invariably or as a whole merely passively draw from *langue*, in which case it would be reducible to its signifying function, and be limited to the capacity to reaffirm existing meanings; rather, on any

given occasion, an intelligible utterance in *parole* necessarily and implicitly either reaffirms or contests the existing conventional determination of the signs it avails of in *langue*. Meanings will have been at stake when we use them or set them to work, even if the impact *parole* proves to have upon them consists in nothing but the reaffirmation of their existing sense. *Parole* is, under certain conditions, capable, by dint of a reflexive performance that impacts upon *langue* and thus upon *parole* in the future, of (re)instituting meaning and the conventional relations (between signs and between signifier and signifieds). The reciprocity between *parole* and *langue* is such that *parole* is capable of instituting "new" signifier/signified relations, and *langue* flexible enough to receive and determine them.

In the light of this characterisation of *parole* as being irreducible to a signifying intention or performance, and as the form in which imagination can be said to be operative in *language*, we are better able to understand the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* or the *langue*-creating imagination's objectivisation of *langue*; we are in a position to address the question of how *parole* sets in place an intersubjective framework within which differences and contrasts can be received and maintained. I have suggested that nonmotivated signification needs to be grasped in terms of *supplementarité*; the initial lack of a motivated relation in the sign, and the inevitably tenuous relation between signifier and signified achieved extrinsically through a differential system that exceeds any single given sign, constitutively subjects the sign to the possibility of redetermination.

But there remains a fundamental difference between, on the one hand, the instance of *parole* that deviates in an intelligible way from *langue* as it exists, and which perhaps sets in motion the reinstitution of a word or the expansion of its senses, and on the other, the instant of *parole* as a performance that institutes *hitherto nonexistent* signifier/signified relations such as we might surmise was necessary for the originary creation of language. In the case of the former, the deviation from customary meaning can summon the resources of *langue*, of syntax, of contextually specific use, in order for its transgressive or subversive utterance to retain a modicum of intelligibility. Its creativity is possible on the basis that it works *within and against* tradition or an existing protocol. In introducing a new sense of a word to the existing lexicon of a *langue*, it is often the case that existing signifying elements (suffixes and

etymologies) or elements meaningful in other languages are drawn upon. *Langue* permits sufficient flexibility and potentialities in *parole* for it to challenge and subvert the *langue* an intelligible way.

However, in the case of the instance of *parole* that originarily institutes the hitherto nonexisting signifier/signified relations that first constitute a *langue*, what is lacking is precisely any existing *langue* on which to draw. The mediation of *langue* that renders the signifier/signified relation possible is precisely what must first be brought into being by the instance of *parole* that assumes the mantle of creating signs. How are we to conceive of a *parole* that does not alter sign-to-sign or signifier/signified relations, but that is somehow vested, rather, with the power to institute iterable signifier/signified relations prior to any *langue* being in place?

In order to penetrate the circularity inimical to penetrating the origination of language, we must suppose in the originary performance of *parole* that institutes a signifier/signified relation the positing of a potential signifier/signified relation; consequently, we must suppose a radical *separation* of the functions that are otherwise inextricably intertwined within *parole* in the life of language: the functions that, in an abstract fashion, can be distinguished as, on the one hand, the performance that (re)affirms or transgresses signifier/signified relations within *langue*, and on the other, the signifying/communicative function. Such a distinction relies on an abstraction, for *parole*'s transgressive performance consists in essence in *signifying otherwise* than in accordance with *langue*'s prescribed meanings. However, whereas there can be no question of rigorously distinguishing between these functions in the case of *parole* transgressing and reinventing *langue* such as it exists, in the case of the originary performance of *parole* that institutes *langue*, we are compelled to consider the purity of a performance that institutes a signifier/signified relation without *parole* itself, or the act of uttering sounds, fulfilling the signifying function. For the originary performance of *parole* cannot signify precisely because it cannot draw from a *langue* or from signifier/signified relations that it has yet to bring into being; its sole function is to tentatively propose a signifier/signified relation, to suggest this relation as being valid not only for the speaker but for others, for potential interlocutors. In other words, this originary performance of "*parole*" has as its task setting in motion the procedure by which nonmotivated signifier/signified relations and *langue* are

objectivised. The act in which the possibility of a nonmotivated signifier/signified relation is effectively explored or hypothesised, entails *seeing* something *as* something else or as what it is not, in seeing what will become the signifier *as* its signified; and this act is undertaken to objectivise the determinate relation between signifier and signified. The originary performance manifests a certain anticipation, however vague, of the possibility of the relation it posits becoming an iterable relation.

Moreover—and in this we recognise further features that qualify the originary performance as an act that must be qualified as imaginative—the originary performance of *parole* posits a signifier/signified relation *as though* there already existed a *langue* within which such relations could be formed and integrated; it posits the signifier/signified relation *in advance of* the existence of a system in which nonmotivated signs could in actual fact be absorbed. But in operating under the rubric of this fiction or this yet-to-be-realised system, in working on the basis that a nonmotivated signifier/signified relation *could* function or *might* be possible, the originary performance of *parole* effectively brings into being what it presupposes—a conventionalised system; for the signifier/signified relation that is posited *presupposes or requires such a system in order to come into existence*. It does not create a fully-fledged language replete with differential relations between existing signs; it creates a signifier/signified relation that necessitates the objectivity and authorising force of *langue* coming into being. The positing of a hitherto nonexistent signifier/signified relation calls forth its iteration. (As we will see, the iterability of the sign is achieved through what I will call the secondary performance of *parole*, which reaffirms the posited signifier/signified relation and retrospectively realises the possibility of the originary performance.) What can be recognised for now is that in proposing a potential signifier/signified relation or a single, particular sign, the originary performance of *parole* operates as a form of imagination; for the various features that can be recognised in it—the expression and objectivisation of what had been merely subjective and interior, *seeing-as* in a radical mode that is performed even in the absence of any mimetic creation, acting *as though* a *langue* were already in place on the basis of an anticipated future—are all intimately related to orthodox determinations of imagination.

I will come to how a secondary performance of *parole* realises the originary performance's potentiality by reaffirming the newly posited signifier/signified relation; but before doing so, the manner in which the originary performance of *parole* can determine a signified to which its arbitrary signifier refers must be clarified. If we postulate a mode of originary *parole* in which the signifier/signified relation is posited and instituted in the form of iterability, in which arbitrary relations are set forth as potentially conventionally binding relations, it must be recognised that the task of providing a signified for an arbitrary signifier or an as yet meaningless intuition is fulfilled by other means, by some existing mode of signification.

In fact, given that no *langue* that would mediate between signifier and signified pre-exists the act of originary *parole*, and that the signifier contains no figurative indication of a signified or its signified, we must suppose that the originary performance of *parole* instituting an iterable signifier/signified relation is supplemented by a mimetic or indexical mode of representation. In the originary instance of *parole* relating a signifier to a signified, the signified must be indicated through, to use a Peircian term, an *indexical* mode of signification (e.g. manually pointing), or in conjunction with a mimetic operation (pointing to or drawing a likeness of the object to be signified.) Such a mode of signification would have as its role—provisionally, and until such a time as the signifier/signified relation could be iterated in the absence of any supplementary mode of signification—performing the signifying operation of which the originary performance of *parole* alone is incapable. The signifier/signified relation erected in the originary performance of *parole* would thus be motivated, inasmuch as it was accompanied by an indexical signifying operation, a mimetic sign or visual image, yet also nonmotivated, inasmuch as the signifier would possess nothing to relate it intrinsically to the signified.

The necessity of postulating such an indexical or mimetic supplement to originary *parole* can be inferred from those cases in which nonmotivated signs arise from hitherto motivated forms, as in the case of ideogrammatic signs that are gradually divested of the ostensible mimetic relation of resemblance they once enjoyed with their signified; this can occur only because a motivated relation once existed, which, through the repetition of the signifier/signified relation and readers' familiarity with it, no longer requires resemblance to obtain between signifier and

signified. In such a case, there is no one, definitive moment in which the signifier ceases being a motivated sign and can be declared purely nonmotivated; rather, there is a gradual erosion of the signifier *qua* purely mimetic signifier, and a process by which it becomes an iterable and, to all intents and purposes, a nonmotivated signifier. Upon reaching such a point, its motivated elements remain buried within the sign's history, within its history qua signifier, but are inessential to the effective performance of its signifying operation. While this passage from the motivated to the nonmotivated in ideogrammatic writing must no doubt be distinguished from the originary performance of *parole* instituting a nonmotivated spoken word, it is nonetheless instructive with regard the necessity of positing at the origin of nonmotivated spoken signs a complex phase in which a motivated or indexical mode of signification functions alongside nonmotivated iterability.

As such, language must be conceived not simply as the emergence of an unadulterated signifier/signified relation, or as a simple and immediate rupture with past modes of representation, but rather as emerging from developments already made in representation and signification. In its entirety, the originary performance of *parole* would be that of an affirmation that inscribes the signifier/signified relation as an iterable relation, accompanied by a provisional indexical or mimetic representation that would eventually be dispensed with by the very iterability of the sign in whose institution it participates.

What must now be analysed is the manner in which the operations of an indexical mode of signification and of instituting the iterability of the sign co-exist until such a point that the indexical gesture is no longer required. What in fact must be presupposed is a *secondary* performance of *parole*, which constitutes nothing other than the first occasion on which the indexical or mimetic gesture is dispensed with, and in which the potential iterability and conventionality of the signifier/signified relation is seized upon and realised. The secondary iteration can be as simple as one interlocutor repeating the signifier/signified relation that the first interlocutor effectively proposes, but with the significant difference that no motivated or indexical mode of signification is called upon or required for it to constitute a signifying operation. In the originary, composite performances of the *langue*-creating imagination, we must therefore presuppose an originary performance of *parole* that

sets forth a signifier/signified relation by recourse to an indexical mode of signification, and a secondary performance which iterates the first, and which, relying upon the originary performance as a *precedent*, can perform the signifying operation in the absence of any indexical gesture or mimetic relationship.

The originary performance of *parole* that effectively proposes a signifier/signified relation calls for its reaffirmation in a second or subsequent performance. In discussing Derrida's reflections on the event of invention, it was seen that an invention only becomes what is—comes to stand as an invention that ushers something lasting and innovative into being—by being repeated, conserved and taken up within the iterability of a conventionalised system. What is true of the event of invention is equally applicable to the originary performance of *parole*. The first event in *parole*'s combined originary performances institutes nothing but the possibility of the signifier/signified relation being repeated independently of the motivated or indexical relation that first sustained the proposed signifier/signified relation. What the originary performance of *parole* provides is the possibility of the nonmotivated signifier/signified relation it sets forth being *cited*. In recognising the *écriture dans la parole*, it was necessary to grasp that, since meaningful utterances draw from *langue*, they must be citable or re-citable in the absence of any particular person saying them. For what I say to be comprehensible, it must be possible to understand it without it issuing from any particular speaker. It is this citability or iterability that the originary performance of *parole* institutes, insofar as it can, in a single act or event. In effect, in relating a signifier to a signified, it sets forth a citable instance or precedent. The first performance is thus largely blind to its own potentiality; it amounts to the setting forth of a citable relation in advance of there being anything to cite, or to the inscription of a citable relation that can only be realised as such upon being iterated. The originary performance of *parole* prepares the nonmotivated signifier/signified relation for its iteration, for a citation and iteration that will institute it as an iterable sign, and render it a conventionality that will already have been availed of and set to work. As such, the originary performance of *parole* is nothing if it does not invite its citation, summon forth its iteration as an iterable and conventional relation, and make provision for a subsequent reaffirmation in which the motivated or indexical relation is not immediately present.

The secondary performance's iteration that "repeats" the initial originary non-signifying performance of *parole* is not strictly speaking an identical repetition; whereas in the first instance, the act of *parole* is non-signifying and sets forth a potential signifier/signified relation by recourse to a motivated or indexical mode of signification, in the subsequent act of *parole*, it draws if not strictly speaking from *langue*, then at least on an established and citable signifier/signified relation. The secondary or subsequent performance of *parole*, which amounts to the first occasion on which signifier "x" is used to signify signified "y" in a nonmotivated fashion, draws its authority *not* from the motivated or indexical trace, but from the instituting potentiality of the first performance; what, in other words, mediates between signifier and signified in *parole*'s secondary performance is not the originary mimetic or indexical relation, but the originary performance itself (insofar as they can be distinguished). Since the secondary reaffirming act draws upon a precedent, the originary act of *parole* can, at least for the subsequent act of reaffirmation and institution, be said to assume the function that will later be played by *langue*, that of authorising the iterability of signs, thereby instituting in an inchoate form the dialectic between *parole* and *langue*.

In the secondary performance citing the first as a precedent, in recognising it as authorising the use of the signifier/signified relation, it thereby establishes it as such. Authority, after all and in general, only becomes itself, only realises itself as such, upon being recognised. By signifying signified "y" by signifier "x", the secondary iterative performance of *parole* plays the role of reaffirming the originary institution of "x" and "y" as signifier and signified. The secondary performance signifies while also performing the affirmation of the nonmotivated relation, treating of it not as an arbitrarily concocted relation but as the relation of conventional necessity, which, by its very action, is the status it bestows upon it. The potential of the first performance is realised in the secondary performance availing of the signifier/signified relation in an actual signifying operation, thereby opening up between itself and the first performance a certain interplay equivalent to that between *parole* and *langue*, between *parole* as a unique signifying operation, and *langue* as the authorising agency. The secondary performance fulfils the function of reaffirming, consolidating and preserving a nonmotivated relation for which a precedent has been established. It realises what was but the potentiality of a conventionally instituted

relation between signifier and signified. And, of course, the secondary performance itself serves as a precedent for all subsequent use.[19]

In the ensuing iteration that I am calling the secondary performance of *parole*, *parole* begins to assume a form close to the manner in which it operates within an established language, the form that I attempted to articulate in which it at once signifies *and* produces effects upon the *langue* from which it draws. To be sure, there is no question of transgression in the secondary performance; the function or effect of the secondary performance of *parole* is that of reaffirming the precarious nonmotivated relation between signifier and signified posited in the originary performance: it simply reaffirms *that* signifier "x" and signified "y" are related to one another, that the sign is available, in its action of *using* the particular sign. What the secondary act negates or suspends is the initial dependence of the original performance upon an indexical or mimetic relation. The moment of dependence on a motivated or indexical signification has become a mere trace, overcome by the power of iteration. As a whole, the originary performances of *parole* or the *langue*-creating imagination suspend the monopoly of the indexical or mimetic mode of signification of which they avail, to explore the potentiality of iterable signs.

The originary relation between *parole* and *langue* will not have been that between an utterance and an apparently atemporal, formalised and codified *langue,* but a temporal relation between instances of what I am calling originary and secondary *parole*. Such a temporal relation never entirely dissipates in the play between *parole* and *langue* in language, since *parole*'s future utterances can always lead to the reorganisation and redetermination of *langue* as it will have come to exist. The *parole/langue* is initially a relation firmly based upon precedents laid down that justify the iteration, and institute the iterability, of nonmotivated signifier/signified relations. The originary performance of *parole* constitutes at once an instance of non-signifying *parole* and an *ad hoc* form of *langue* produced for a possible iteration. In responding to the problematic of the circularity of *parole* and *langue*, it should not be surprising that we find an originary instance in which they are all but indistinguishable.

The *langue*-creating imagination thus comes to stand as an originary performance, vested with the *de facto* power to institute iterable signs. Of course, once the operation of instituting one nonmotivated sign has taken place, it provides the precedent or authorisation for the creation of other nonmotivated signs in the same fashion, the creation of the signs that will be integrated within the differential relations of *langue*. Beyond the interdependent originary performances of *parole*, then, the formation of the properly differential system *langue* comes into view. The nonmotivated signifier/signified relation that, at first, relies on an indexical mode of signification, and that then depends upon a secondary iteration in which only a trace of this indexicality remains, eventually comes to be differentiated from other nonmotivated signifier/signified relations within *langue*. With the cumulative generation of different signs, *langue* thus becomes an intersubjectively accessible system to which other such nonmotivated signs can be added, and within which, in time, signifieds will come to relate to one another within a burgeoning play of differences.

In the movement from the originary to the reaffirmative act of *parole*, the institution of what Hegel calls *Gedächtnis* can be said to take place. *Gedächtnis* is perhaps, as Hegel appears to suggest, a product born of (the need) of nonmotivated signification rather than a faculty naturally bestowed upon the individual. We know from psychological investigation and at a neurophysiological level that memory is a differentiated rather a singular power; for Hegel, the power of *Gedächtnis* is irreducible to *Erinnerung*'s capacity to store up and recall intuitions out of consciousness. It is not untrue to say, as Hegel suggests, that the nonmotivated sign introduces a certain form of memory on which this mode of signification depends, or that language or thought have as their basis a certain form of rote memorisation; but it is perhaps more accurate to speak of the iterability and conventionalisation of the nonmotivated sign as bringing *langue* and *Gedächtnis* into being. *Gedächtnis* would thus be as much an effect as a cause of language. If it is inadvisable to speak of memory in this context, it is because it remains a psychological concept designating a private capacity, and language requires an intersubjective basis in order to be realised as the communicative system it comes to be (as opposed to some merely private language). The movement from the originary to the reaffirming performance of *parole* is ideally performed by different subjects, and thus predicated on an

intersubjective basis. Nonetheless, *langue* is, in a sense, nothing but the collective memory of language; but beyond this, it consists of the diachronic instances of *parole*, or more accurately of those instances which possess a certain force authorising or prohibiting certain uses of language's elements.

While the concept of memory or *Gedächtnis* is incapable of describing or accounting for the origination of language, the concept of imagination as determined in accordance with an idealist notion of subjective creativity may appear no more suited to designating the originary performances of *parole* described above. In identifying an interrelated series of actions performed by different individuals that brings language and nonmotivated signification into being, I am no doubt operating with, to borrow a Freudian expression, a heuristic fiction: language's origin is doubtless not a question of enumerable actions. What I am describing as originary and secondary performances must be understood not as reified actions but as describing a chronologically complex and non-linear *relation* between two kinds of actions necessary to account for language's origination. In peering into language's origination and development, we must fathom the notion of innumerable actions that, in themselves, singularly or in isolation, amount to very little or almost nothing, but that, as a whole, coalesce to produce an immense shift in the history of signification. As such, conceiving of the origin and development of language makes demands upon us similar to those made by a Darwinian grasp of evolution, whereby we must think of change, development and mutation on the basis of innumerable infinitesimal modifications producing qualitative shifts. The origination of language perhaps compels us to contemplate legions of instances in *parole* coalescing to produce shifts that are formalised at the level of *langue*. But it is within this immense interplay that language lays itself bare as a field within which not only mindless, unoriented drifts in meaning become possible, but also an imagination capable of more or less concerted and co-ordinated attempts to influence and redetermine meaning.

The originary performances that I am designating by the name of the *langue*-creating imagination contradict idealist, expressionist and "*préformationiste*" notions of creativity and the concept of imagination as construed on such a basis. To attribute the origination of language or any potential product to imagination would, within an idealist determination of the concept, ordinarily entail ascribing to it the prescience of

an idea recognised in the fullness of its potentiality prior to its institution or execution. In such a model, the idea that imagination is said to come upon or forge is a mental potentiality whose entire material unfolding is implicitly contained within it, a germ present to consciousness *in advance of* its realisation, implementation or expression. But the notion of imagination as implying extensive forethought, or exhaustive conscious planning and design equal to its product, is nowhere to be found in the piecemeal origination of language or in the pre-linguistic in a mode of consciousness yet to articulate itself linguistically. While a certain mode of anticipating the possibility of an iterable sign functioning in the absence of a motivated relation must have been required, the idea of language did not in a luminous moment pass through someone's head; no-one, one fine day, came upon the idea that differential functioning would enable the remarkable system of signification that we have come to know as language, or that a secondary reaffirmation might realise the possibility of the nonmotivated sign being instituted in an originary performance. This should hardly be surprising, for the formal principles that make language possible as a nonmotivated signifying system need not be known for it to function as a viable system of communication.

The imagination of language can no more be reduced to the simple punctuality of a subjective origin than *différance,* as describing the self-differing movement of meaning in a differential *langue,* can be ascribed to a singular causal agent. Positing imagination, in an idealist determination of the concept, as the origin of the linguistic system of differences would court the risk of determining it as a transcendental ground that eludes the play it seeks to describe; one would thereby fall prey to the metaphysical ruse of absolute points of origination. Derrida has warned that, despite it being entirely necessary to conceive of *différance* or semiological difference as "*effets produits*" rather than as having fallen from the sky ready-made, we can neither submit the "concept" of *différance* to an idealist model, nor substantialise *différance* such that it becomes the cause or transcendental ground of the play of differing and deferring differences.[20] But the concept of a *langue*-creating imagination, insofar as it consists in complex interrelations between plural and innumerable performances (that, simplistically, but for the sake of clarity I reduce to two types), and that describes a tentative, piecemeal and exploratory mode of creativity, avoids such an idealist conception. The origin of language is a divided origin, split between one act that may

amount to nothing (the originary performance), and the act it requires in order to be realised (the secondary, reaffirming performance) *as* a founding act.

Given that the scene of language's origin amounts to diffuse yet somehow co-ordinated actions, one can identify other features of the *langue*-creating imagination that defy an idealist determination of imagination. It is not sufficient to stipulate that the originary performances of *parole* amount to a collaborative enterprise; for, rather than amounting to a concerted series of actions possessed of a predefined goal, *parole*'s originary performances take place in such a way that actions become meaningful or consequential only insofar as they are realised by others—by other actions and other individuals—in the fullness of time. As we have seen, the latent potentiality of *parole*'s originary performance is realised as a meaningful act only by a secondary performance, by a delayed effect (*Nachträglichkeit*).[21] The notion of a delayed effect that activates the potentiality of *parole*'s originary performance *après-coup* implied here is incomprehensible within the idealist grammar and chronological logic of imagination, according to which a specific subject spontaneously and punctually grasps in advance the potentiality of a certain idea in the fullness of its material unfolding. Hegel's retrospective account of the dialectical moments leading up to the advent of language is no doubt necessary with regard to recognising the accumulation of conditions that make language's coming-into-being possible; however, it must be recognised that the process of generating language is one in which individuals are *caught up*, making contributions to a "project" the ramifications of which must never have been entirely present to consciousness. Indeed, since language comes about not as a vehicle generated for a single, accomplishable purpose, but is set to work in accordance with numerous goals or in the light of certain "benefits" (communication, philosophical enlightenment, poetic pleasure, etc.), we remain caught up within its *différance*, within the interplay between *parole* and *langue*, between conventions and their use, within a creative "act" that is never finished or fully realised, and whose horizon remains elusive.

The notion of *parole*'s originary performances cumulatively leading to the generation of *langue* leads us away from an idealist conception of creativity towards a more materialist understanding, toward imagination as the exploration of the potentialities, in this case, of sound and of the voice. The piecemeal generation of

language must be grasped in terms of a continual *realisation*—in every sense of the word—of the potentialities of materiality, of sound as it realises itself in the form of signs woven of differences within a body of semiological conventions. Rather than attributing a precocious prescience or foresight to those undertaking the originary performances of *parole*, the performances must be grasped in terms of the event of happening upon the potentialities of phonic materiality as that materiality is integrated within a conventional network. As such, imagination gives itself to be understood as a process that is characterised less by an exhaustive design in which the full scope of an "idea's" potentiality is recognised from the outset, than by an operation in which a certain amount of fumbling about in the face of the unknown is punctuated by momentary or retrospective illumination as to how and why such and such a configuration can function or be productive and useful. In other words, a credible future concept of imagination may have to be reconciled with the notion that serendipity—and thus the absence of the full presence of the imagination's idea to consciousness—and the act that becomes innovative only *après-coup* and after a considerable delay play some part in humanity coming upon such inventive possibilities as language. The element of contingency that enshrouds the nonmotivated sign—evident in our having come upon the possibility of *langue* overcoming otherwise contingent and unreproducible relations between signs—is never abolished. Despite Hegel's often convincing retrospective reconstruction of the linguistic sign's emergence, in which it becomes clear that it was preceded by other creations and innovations in *Vorstellung* necessary to its emergence, there can be no question of dispelling a certain contingency in its origination; and this cannot but impact upon any concept of imagination extended to include among its objects the nonmotivated sign and forged so as to account for its origination.

To apply the concept of imagination as determined in an idealist fashion to the *langue*-creating imagination would re-envelop it within the metaphysics from which it suggests a certain point of exit. We thus find ourselves in a metaphysical circle in which the concepts that present themselves to be used in elaborating issues of creation and origination would reappropriate and frustrate any post-metaphysical insight, subduing its force of interruption and subversion. And yet, such indices of problems for the *langue*-creating imagination might be considered rather as indications of how

the concept of imagination—or any relevant concept of imagination in the future—might in general need to be reconceived outside of the metaphysics of presence and the ruse of absolute origins.

Neither the concept of imagination nor that of memory in their classical psychological formulations is equipped to describe a creative process entailing an intersubjective collaboration and a piecemeal operation irreducible to a single act. If the conceptual field at our disposal for describing creativity and originality consists of imagination and memory, this field is perhaps capable of accounting for only a very narrow range of products. Were we to exclude from the field of products to be attributed to imagination every invention in which there was an element of serendipity, every artwork for which an exhaustive design did not precede its materialisation, every creation to which the "intentional fallacy" did not have some relevance, very few objects would remain; in other words, the concept of imagination such as it stands would describe a more or less chimerical act, a fictive projection upon imagination and creation. If memory cannot reasonably be described as being inventive, and the concept of imagination poses problems with regard to its restriction to motivated relations, what is indicated is a certain semantic lacuna or *lacune lexicale* (to borrow Ricoeur's expression), a space that opens up which must be covered by the existing resources of language. Rather than foisting the notion of inventiveness on memory, it might perhaps be better to enlist and cultivate the less prominent resources of the concept of imagination in order to respond to this lacuna. The incapacity of *Phantasie* to account for the origin of language lies perhaps not so much in its concept, however considerable the obstacles it presents may be, but rather in Hegel's failure to identify and work through the problematics that obstruct our understanding of language's origination, and as a result, to amend the concept of *Phantasie* in the light of a feasible resolution.

(iii) The Production of the Iterable Sign in Imagination's Self-Effacement: Imagination's Repeated Deaths as the Life of Culture

Thus far, I have analysed alternative theories explicating the origin of language, one which follows Hegel's account particularly insofar as he shifts the onus of accounting for its origin and possibility from *Phantasie* to *Gedächtnis*; and another which suggests imagination to assume the form of a nascent and inchoate mode of *parole*. It remains to trace the consequences that unfold from reconceiving of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* or the *langue*-creating imagination on the basis of the originary performances of *parole* such as I have outlined them; indeed, it remains to articulate the originary performances to the creation of an iterable sign to *Gedächtnis* that, as I have already suggested, is brought into being by its fulfilment of demands placed upon it by the nonmotivated sign.[22]

The *Zeichen machende Phantasie* is, for Hegel, effaced by the nature of what it produces, by the iterable and reproducible nature of the sign, which becomes as a result a function of *Gedächtnis*. The conditions in which iterable signs produce ideal meanings amount precisely to the conditions in which, for Hegel, thought usurps imagination. It would be unreasonable to suggest that language and thought do not depend in large part upon iterable signs that, to all intents and purposes, dispense with imaginative creativity; on the contrary, that we need not spontaneously create the signs of which we avail in our everyday use of language is constitutive of language's efficiency and objectivity as a communicative system. As such, it must be conceded that the sign-making imagination institutes what at least appears to be diametrically opposed to itself *qua* imagination, not only because what it generates in the nonmotivated sign is an image-less intuition, a non-visual creation, but also because the sign's iterability is opposed to the singularity of the productive imaginative act or its character as an *événement*.

However, it might be recognised that such iterability and the communicative system of language functioning in such a fashion stands as the *accomplishment* of the *langue*-creating imagination. The sign-making imagination's creativity and ingenuity lies in part *in its effacement of itself as a singular event*, this self-effacement being

essential to it bringing forth an iterable and reproducible sign. The originary performances of *parole*, as I seek to show, institute the iterability of the sign in a single iteration, in the single iteration of the secondary performance of *parole*. The imaginative act that institutes the sign in its conventionality, if it is to be successful, effaces itself as an operation of imagination; what it produces no longer appears as imaginative, but is rather reproductive and reproducible, and becomes the automated mechanism by which we avail of *langue*'s resources. This self-concealment or subterfuge essential to an imagination operating within the domain of conventionality should not take us by surprise; for conventions owe the power they exert to repetition and iterability, to their apparent irreducibility to a single event of invention or foundation.

I argue in this section, then, that rather than manifesting the nonmotivated sign to amount to imagination's demise, as Hegel leaves us to think, the *langue*-creating imagination can be seen to transform imagination and the conditions under which it is operative; this transformation, pursuing Hegel's dialectic of imagination beyond its supposed exhaustion, is that which sees it re-emerge within the conventionality of motivated and nonmotivated modes of signification. Rather than interpreting the advent of language as the death or transcendence of imagination, and the sign-making imagination as dealing to itself its own irreversible demise, the textual imagination might be seen as having disclosed—in the single most audacious manoeuvre in the dialectic of imagination—the possibility of *parole* in the power of its innovative formulations contesting, transgressing and deconstructing the conventionalities of *langue* such as they exist at any given time.

In exploring the transformation imagination undergoes in creating language, and thus in continuing Hegel's dialectic of imagination beyond its supposed exhaustion in the creation of the non-mimetic relations predominant in *Gedächtnis* and thought, I attempt to clarify the relation between the textual or conceptual imagination and the *langue*-creating imagination. In order to establish the continuity between these forms of imagination, it is essential to identify the *langue*-creating imagination *not only* as setting in place the conditions in which language comes into being as a more or less stable communicative system, *but also* as generating

conditions conducive to *parole* being capable of reinventing the *langue* from which it draws its meaning. I argue that the philosophical imagination retains a trace of the spirit that animates *parole* in the originary performances in which, inevitably, it fumbled at potential objectively iterable meanings. I suggest that, given its origination in a form of imagination that institutes iterability and the differential system of *langue*, we might conceive of language in terms of imagination *and* memory, iterability *and* the suspension of iterability that re-institutes signified meaning. In reviewing the textual imagination of philosophy in the light the question of the origin of language, the way for returning to questions pertaining to the deconstructive imagination in a final chapter will have been paved.

Hegel is doubtless correct to posit *Gedächtnis* as the dialectical moment succeeding the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*, and to emphasise a certain "mechanicity", automaticity and iterability at the heart of linguistic functioning once it is established. Articulating our thoughts entails an operation of recollecting signs that, in a language one knows well, comes to be performed more or less automatically and without conscious exertion. It thus seems incontestable that language, for the most part, depends upon *Gedächtnis* for its functioning, upon the iterability of signifier/signified relations, and upon availing of *langue* as a resource replete with more or less communally shared elements; correlatively, our capacity for rote memorisation, for recollecting that between which there may be no intrinsic or mimetic relation, is no doubt augmented or perhaps even initiated by the requirement nonmotivated signification sets before the mind.[23] Language, *insofar as* it is reducible to *Gedächtnis* or to reproducible and automated operations that take place without the need for full conscious supervision, does indeed give the appearance of effacing whatever role the singular event of imagination might have played in its instauration or institution, and the innumerable acts of imagination that will have contributed to a language arriving at its current configuration or state.

Hegel's characterisation of language thus seems to lead him inexorably to infer that imagination, in the form of a singular, productive act or event must become, or give way to, a reproductive process for it to become the extraordinarily "convenient", efficient and rapid communicative sign-system that it is; imagination must be eclipsed by the unconscious iterability of signifier/signified relations for

langue to amount to a repository of intersubjective and reproducible meanings lying at the disposal of interlocutors, and which they bring to bear on no doubt unique but more or less familiar circumstances. The singular event of imaginative creation is precisely what is dispensed with in a system replete with reproducible meanings; one need not imagine or create a sign on each occasion one seeks to signify or communicate. Indeed, not only does *langue* not need to be rewritten on each occasion one seeks to signify, communicate or express oneself; it *must* not be for language to remain the more or less objective and stable system of communication that it is, and for it to avoid being thrust into a state of perpetual turmoil. (However, as we have already had cause to recognise, the amenability of linguistic meaning to being suspended and undermined is not without its value for the development of language and thought.) It is the lack of creativity, singularity and spontaneity at the level of the operation of linguistic signification that allows us to communicate with a certain ease and rapidity, and that furnishes (a) language with its objectivity and (potentially) universal communicability. The reproducibility of signified meaning amounts, in other words, to a valuable non-productivity that allows multiple individuals recourse to more or less stable, familiar and communicable meanings.

Moreover, the absence of a certain spontaneity required at the level of the reproducibility of the sign appears, in addition, to make possible the spontaneity and freedom characteristic of thought and its expression. It is because the operations of linguistic signification assume a certain mechanical form that their appropriation—learning them—entails what Hegel calls the "torture" of rote memorisation, the necessity of submitting oneself to the meaninglessness of arbitrary relations within language; but, by the same token, the fact that language is characterised by such arbitrariness is the condition of the possibility of the automaticity or non-conscious functioning that frees up the spontaneity of thought for expressing the meaning it seeks to convey or produce. As we have seen, Hegel concludes that a certain mechanical operation of recollection lies at the heart of our capacity to articulate our thoughts with what at least appears to be a great deal of freedom. For Hegel, we might conclude, thought rather than imagination constitutes the singular event or the spontaneous; for him, it is the nonmotivated sign's independence from the signifier that manifests our freedom[24] rather than our capacity to initiate the reconfiguration of the *langue* from which we draw.

However, Hegel's reasoning can, I believe, be seen as valid only to a certain extent, or with caveats that effectively cast in an entirely different light the role played by imagination and the nature of signified meaning. We shall have to consider, in the first place, whether the *langue*-creating imagination's creativity does not in fact consist in part in it effacing *itself* as a singular event in its creative operation, in instituting the iterability of the sign in a single iteration; and, in the second, whether the *langue*-creating imagination does not in fact generate—along with a *parole/langue* relation capable of functioning for the most part on the basis of iterability—more dynamic potentialities for this relationship, which can assist us in accounting for the semantic creativity that the reduction of language to *Gedächtnis* fails to recognise; namely, for the manner in which language is brought into being, and for the fact that language and thought, for all of language's iterability and automaticity, remain intrinsically subject to upheavals brought about by what I have called the conceptual or philosophical imagination. While imagination effaces itself in instituting the conventionality necessary to nonmotivated signification, in creating the reproducible from the singular event, the possibility for further revisions, for reinstituting signified meaning in the form of an equally and *apparently* robust, iterable sign, can never be precluded; for the iterability of the sign it produces is provisional rather than inscribed once and for all, and is perennially subject to being reinstituted otherwise in a form that retains its iterability but with its meaning having been displaced or its senses expanded. In other words, the *supplémentarité* underlying the nonmotivated sign is indomitable; linguistic meaning is perpetually amenable to the imagination that suspends, rewrites and deconstructs it.

As a first step towards countering Hegel's positing of the relation between imagination and *Gedächtnis* as a stagnant, hierarchical relation, or as one in which the latter transcends and expels the other from language, we might pose the question of whether *Gedächtnis* eclipses imagination, or whether, in fact, it is not imagination that effaces itself in bringing forth *Gedächtnis* as a function of nonmotivated signification. We must return to the movement from the originary to the secondary performance of *langue* in order to demonstrate, firstly, that this movement or transition prompts *Gedächtnis* into being by generating the conditions which necessitate its invention or advent, and secondly, that the transition amounts to imagination instituting the

iterability that lifts the *langue*-creating imagination itself beyond its status as a singular and inconsequential or unproductive event. In other words, it remains to show that the *langue*-creating imagination's success consists in large part in effacing itself as a singular event, and in re-producing itself as an iterable or reproducible operation of signification. Following this demonstration, I will be in a position to suggest that what the *langue*-creating imagination initiates is not merely *langue* as a system of iterable nonmotivated signs, but rather a *langue* perennially subject to modes of *parole* in which its validity is suspended, and its meanings subject to revision.

In the movement from the originary to the secondary performance of *parole*, it will be recalled, the iterability of the nonmotivated sign is generated by the signifier/signified relation being repeated in a single instance and in the absence of the provisional indexical or mimetic relation. *Gedächtnis* is given birth to in the movement from the originary to the secondary performance of *parole*, in the retention of the arbitrary relation between signifier and signified, or in what amounts to the abstraction of the relation from the immanent presence of the motivated or indexical relation that binds them in the originary performance. The originary performance of the *langue*-creating imagination calls forth and necessitates *Gedächtnis*; it demands the capacity or possibility of recollecting a signifier/signified relation in the absence of the indexical or mimetic connection that supplemented the proposal to relate such and such a signifier to a certain signified. The secondary performance of *parole* functions on account of the recollection of the originary act relating a signifier to a signified; it thereby confers upon the originary performance the status of the *langue* from which it gains its authority. The coming into being of *Gedächtnis* is thus prompted by the need for a nonmotivated signifier/signified relation, by the conditions laid down by an imaginative leap into the domain of purely conventional relations. Consequently, the specific function of a sign-memory must be considered less as the cause than as an effect of the generation of nonmotivated signs, or perhaps, more accurately, as having been ushered into being by the requirements of the nonmotivated sign originally set forth by imagination.

In recognising imagination to bring *Gedächtnis* into being, it can be deduced that imagination effectively effaces itself as it is a singular act in the course of bringing about the conditions in which iterable, nonmotivated signs operate. The danger befalling the act of imagination instituting a nonmotivated signifier/signified relation is that, as a singular performance, it will amount to an event of no lasting consequence, be productive of nothing beyond itself, and be reducible to nothing more than the one occasion on which a particular sound or "signifier" was related to a signified. The achievement lying at the heart of the originary and secondary performances of *parole* is that, from a *single* iteration of the signifier/signified relation, the sign is instituted in its *iterability*. In the "singular" performance of the secondary act of *parole*, in, that is, the originary iteration and first use of the newly-forged nonmotivated sign, imagination gives rise to or institutes what is entirely opposed to it: pure reproducibility, or more precisely, the reproducibility and iterability of the nonmotivated sign that acquires the force of an instituted convention. As such, the imagination overcomes its potential ephemerality. Let us analyse in greater detail how this achieved.

In the movement from the originary citable instance to the secondary, citing instance that institutes the signifier/signified relation as an iterable sign by deploying it for the first time, imagination erases itself as a unique event. From the singularity of an instance in which the arbitrary signifier/signified relation is cited, the iterability of the nonmotivated is instituted. In other words, in the movement from the originary performance that sets forth a potential precedent to the reaffirming recognition of that precedent, what imagination achieves is the institution of the proposed signifier/signified relation in a reproducible sign. The secondary performance of *parole* has not the status of a single iteration; on the contrary, as a case of *parole* availing of a sign and as an iteration of that sign, it fulfils the function of *parole* and *langue*, of signifying in a particular case and of authorising in advance its future use. As such, it erases itself as a single iteration and institutes the iterability that is opposed precisely to the spontaneity and singularity of the originary performance of *parole* that merely proposed a signifier/signified relation.

The secondary, citing instance, retrospectively or *après coup*, rids *parole*'s originary performance of its status as operating outside of (a) convention or existing

conventionality, as a merely arbitrary pairing of a signifier and signified; this was implicit in recognising that the first citable instance or precedent comes to function as the *de facto langue* and authoritative force sanctioning *parole*'s secondary performance; but the secondary performance sanctions all subsequent uses of the signifier/signified relation by effectively treating of the signifier/signified relation as existing within *langue*. *Langue*, as we have seen, exceeds its reducibility to a mere diachrony of instances of *parole*, to mere precedents or precedence by virtue of the force it acquires as a body of legitimating conventions with the power to prescribe and to determine utterances as illegitimate.

The transformation of the singular event of a sign-making imagination into a reproducible signifier/signified relation is thus accomplished within the movement from the originary to the secondary performance of *parole* that, as a whole, might be said to comprise the *langue*-creating imagination. As soon as there is one nonmotivated sign, the precedent has been set for creating others. The instituted signs come to stand in differential relations with existing signs; or rather, the differentiality between signs is a condition of their admittance into the system of *langue*. The *langue*-creating imagination is an imagination that creates the conditions in which a genuinely imaginative act is not necessary on each occasion that a nonmotivated sign is used; it thus achieves its death but also its "immortalisation" in the reproducibility that facilitates a linguistic system that constitutes everyday speech, in the virtually unconscious and non-spontaneous functioning of a *reproducible* operation of imagination. The productivity of the sign-making imagination would have to be thought therefore, not, as in the case of Hume and Kant's determination of the empirical imagination, in which productivity or creativity succeeds the capacity to reproduce images, in terms of a productivity that generates objectively reproducible linguistic signs.

It is in thinking through the possibility of a sign-making imagination that a response might be made to a question posed by Derrida, a question that bears on the issues Hegel raises when he considers the relation between *Gedächtnis* and thought, between the mechanical reproducibility of linguistic meaning and the spontaneity of expression:

> Will we one day be able, and in a single gesture, to join the thinking of the event to the thinking of the machine? Will we be able to think, what is called thinking, at one and the same time, both what is happening (we call that an event) and the calculable programming of an automatic repetition (we call that a machine). For that, it would be necessary in the future (but there will be no future except on this condition) to think both the event and the machine as two compatible or even in-dissociable concepts. Today they appear to us to be antinomic.[25]

Derrida goes on to describe the stakes of this question as bearing upon much recent thought: "To give up neither the event nor the machine, to subordinate neither one to the other, neither to reduce one to the other: this is perhaps a concern of thinking that has kept a certain number of 'us' working for the last few decades".[26] What Derrida has called for—thinking the mutual implications of the singular event and of repetition—appears to be implicated in the attempt to grasp the *langue*-creating imagination's institution of the sign in its iterability. The singularity of the event and machine-like repetition can be contemplated as being in a sense united in an imagination that, in a single iteration, in the event of opening up the nonmotivated sign, institutes the sign in its iterability. The event of the sign's invention amounts to it emerging in the form of iterability from the singularity of the imaginative event, from an event that is effaced or obfuscated as such by the automaticity of the repetition instituted.

It should hardly be surprising that the imagination inaugurating the conventional system of language should actively erase itself in its founding act. The power of a convention is proportionate to the degree that it resists being retraced to a single instance authorising or founding it; the process by which a convention is "naturalised" relies on the pure power or authority exerted by repetition and precedents.[27] Conventions or conventional relations, such as those obtaining between the nonmotivated signifier and signified or in the sign-to-sign relations of *langue*, must, in order to be valid, obfuscate their circumstantial or happenstance origination or the moment of imaginative spontaneity that brought them into being. *Langue* must (appear to) be *irreducible* to mere preceding instances or events of *parole*; it must assume the form and force of authority, of a legislating body of conventions. It is for this reason that the origination of an act instituting itself as a convention must efface itself as such in order for the system it brings into being to function. This obfuscation takes place not only in the founding acts of *parole* themselves, but in the oblivion of collective memory; the specificity of the founding and instituting event giving rise to a signifier/signified relation becomes lost to itself in the passage of time and in the life

of a language. The originary event in which the signifier/signified relation is forged is consigned to oblivion once the relation is intersubjectively interiorised and disseminated, given its anonymous imprimatur by the "they say", the "on dit" or "ça se dit", the "Man sagt", etc., and repeated without reference to a founding event.

That the original acts of imagination lost to time come to form the unconscious, iterable operations of semiological systems and artistic traditions is not the death of culture, tradition, and history, but rather, at least in the first place, their fundamental condition of possibility. Within the domain of conventionality, supposing it were possible to demarcate such a realm, imagination disguises itself in the form of reproducibility so as to produce its effects. The repetition of imagination reinventing signs as they are conventionally instituted is offset by language amounting to a reliable system of communication grounded in more or less objective meanings. The erasure of the trace of imagination in an iterable convention is essential to the life of what it creates and sets forth. While Hegel was no stranger to the notion of death and negativity inhabiting or punctuating the life of spirit, he did not explicitly relate the notion of imagination to the *repeated* effacement of itself in the innovative production of iterable operations and conventions; but that such a process constitutes the rhythm and life of culture is by no means foreign to his dialectic and thought.

With the suggestion that imagination, operating within the domain of semiological conventionality, is a repeated operation, a recurring moment of interruption in instituted conventions, we move to the second fundamental point to be demonstrated. It is one thing to recognise a certain effacement of the sign-making imagination necessary to language's formation, but quite another to suggest that this mechanicity of language amounts to the absolute extirpation of imagination within language, or that language is but a mechanical operation of memory that, once generated and established, no longer admits of being reinvented. To conclude from imagination's self-effacement in the reproducibility of its creation that language is thereafter bereft of or immune to imaginative recreation or redetermination would require language to remain a perennially stable system comprised of immutable meanings; as such, the notion that language or linguistic meaning remains impervious

to, or transcends, imagination rests on or implies an implausible conception of linguistic meaning.

An accurate and tenable conception of semiological iterability's operation in language must be founded on the historicity and variability that linguistic and conceptual meaning manifests on even the most cursory genealogical inspection. As such, linguistic meaning must be construed not only as affording a hitherto unprecedented degree of semiological stability (which affords the "possibility" of communication, science, conceptual discourse, and so on) *but also* as being amenable to imagination's deconstructive effects, a potentiality that, as we have seen, is no less necessary to the progress of "science" or philosophical thought. Hegel recognised that the destabilisation to which non-mimetic and interrelated signs are susceptible is essential to the possibility of philosophical thinking amending the language in which it expresses itself; but he took stock of this fact only in passing rather than making of it a cornerstone in his conception of the relations between imagination, memory and language. We might surmise that he was beguiled for the most part by the unattainable ideal or telos of prose operating solely in a nonmotivated system of immutable signified meanings.

Thus far, I have concentrated on the fact that, rather than it being the case that *Gedächtnis* institutes language and thereby consigns imagination to the past, imagination erases itself insofar as it amounts to a singular event in order to bring forth language. The difference between these interpretations makes all the difference when we come to consider whether imagination is excluded from the system it institutes. A radical alternative in our appraisal of the legacy of Hegel's reflections on imagination and language arises if the self-effacing nature of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* is reconceived; and reconceived it may be, if we take the sign-making or *langue*-creating imagination to usher into being the conditions that *not only* facilitate reproducible meaning within language as a communicable system, but that *also* foster the dynamic interplay of *parole* and *langue* constitutive of an imagination I have loosely termed textual, conceptual or philosophical. Rather than assuming the *langue*-creating imagination to be simply or definitively effaced by the pure iterability of ideal signifieds, its mode of effacing itself in iterability must be appraised on the basis

of *langue* affording a certain iterability but also as allowing—under certain conditions—for the suspension and re-institution of this iterability.

The *langue*-creating imagination does not institute a system that sets itself forth once and for all as a finite and fixed set of permutations for *parole* to merely draw upon; it does not erect a system to the exclusion of the possibility of *parole* undertaking to reconfigure the *langue* from which it draws its meaning. While imagination may efface itself on those occasions in which it succeeds in instituting a reproducible, conventional relation between a signifier and signified, it does not prohibit the possibility of either recovering and reactivating this moment of suspension and reinvention, or of reinventing, re-instituting and re-negotiating the constituted relation between a signifier and signified. (Let us note in advance of a discussion in my final chapter that the recovery of this moment of suspension bears upon the procedures adopted in deconstructive reading seeking to reinstitute meanings, and as such unites the two possibilities here.) The sign-making imagination cannot preclude the possibility of the singular event of imagination taking place once more, in which a constituted and determined signifier/signified relation is lingered upon, suspended in its unquestioned validity, and re-opened to its status as a convention. It is, in other words, always possible for the signifier/signified relation or the sign-to-sign relations in which it is inscribed to be re-negotiated; it is an ineradicable potentiality within a conventional signifying system that the innovative act of *parole* may institute another possible sense in a single iteration. The *langue-creating* imagination can no more prevent the possibility of the return of the singular event of imagination than a *coup de dés* can abolish *le hasard*.

What the *langue*-creating imagination institutes is not only a form of *Gedächtnis*, a set of reproducible meanings and a *langue* that requires for the most part the suppression of imagination in the form of a singular interruptive event; it also institutes the dynamic relation between *parole* and *langue* with which nonmotivated, conventional signification begins. That the sign-making imagination sets in play the relation between *parole* and *langue* is evident in the very nature of the relation between the originary performances of *parole*; for the originary performance functions as a *de facto*, and *ad hoc* form of *langue* for the subsequent iteration. As I have attempted to demonstrate in a speculative reconstruction, language as a

nonmotivated system begins with the interplay between an inchoate form of *langue* consisting in a single, tentative setting forth of an objective nonmotivated signifier/signified relation, and an act of *parole* that affirms the relation's objectivity through abiding by it. In the originary iteration or the secondary performance, *parole* and *langue* are inextricably interwoven. This play between an originary, citable and secondary, citing instances of *parole*, in which *parole* functions as a makeshift form of *langue* for the first iteration, and *langue* exists immanently in instances of *parole*, is evident in a not dissimilar form in those creative moments of the philosophical imagination; for the trangressive act of *parole* in the philosophical imagination seeks to act as a precedent for future use, to deploy language in such a way that particular events of *parole* will gather sufficient momentum to eventually acquire the *de jure* force of *langue*.

What the *langue*-creating imagination institutes, then, is not just the iterability that will efface it, but, more accurately, the play between *parole* and *langue* that characterises linguistic meaning in its synchronic stability and its diachronic volatility. It brings into play not only a sign-memory, iterability and the differential system of *langue* as a fund of available signs, but also a dynamic interplay between imagination and memory, between reproducible meanings and the productive transgression of existing meanings. It creates the conditions in which a dialectic arises between, on the one hand, the reproducibility of meanings that underlies language as a communicative system, and on the other, the possibility of the suspension of the conventional signifier/signified relations undertaken for the purpose of their displacement and reinvention. It sets forth a system in which the advantages of iterable meanings for a stable communicative system stand alongside the possibility for innovation. The *échange entre parole et langue* invites us to think the relation between a sign-making imagination—an imagination inhabiting language's very inception—as reverberating in the philosophical imagination and thus within the logos, that renders the sign-system's susceptibility to imaginative redetermination a prerequisite of philosophical thought. From its very inception, and as structured by *supplémentarité*, it may be that language is an interplay between the productive and reproductive, between memory and imagination; between setting iterability to work as the basis of conventionalised signs and suspending this iteration in the re-institution of conventionalised senses.

The most obvious difference between the *langue*-creating imagination productive of linguistic signification and the textual imagination operative within a constituted tradition lies in their operations of productive negativity, in what they suspend, dispense with or transgress. Whereas in the *langue*-creating imagination, what is negated is the original mimetic or indexical operation concomitant with *parole*'s originary performance, in the case of the textual imagination at work in conceptualisation, what is negated or suspended is the existing conventional relationship between signifier and signified. Let us take each of these modes of negativity in turn with a view to understanding certain of the displacements that imagination undergoes with the advent of language as a conventional system.

The secondary performance of *parole* or the originary iteration is restricted to the *affirmation* of the originary act's relating a particular signifier to a signified; but the negativity of imagination is also evident in the suspension and transcendence of the mimetic or the indexical that is achieved in the movement from the originary to the secondary performance. The signifier/signified relation is repeated in the absence of any mimetic relation; it is jettisoned once it has served its purpose in the originary performance of relating the signifier to the signified, and in the process of instituting the sign's iterability. The signified object is still brought to presence in its absence but without the need for an image to reproduce it. In the transition from the originary to the secondary performances of *parole*, then, imagination is displaced from operating within a domain in which a mimetic image or a psychical image is required, to a domain that is characterised by iterability and conventionality. (This is not to say that the mimetic modes of representation are dispensed with or henceforth excluded from operating in conjunction with linguistic signs; within language, although one need not summon an image of object for a word to be intelligible, as Hegel reminds us, the image will be availed of, in textual or poetic imagery, in metaphor and symbol. As we will see, imagination is reborn within a conventional domain in which both motivated and nonmotivated modes of signification and representation are intertwined.)

The productive negativity of imagination apparent within the domain of a conventional operation is, however, directed neither at a mimetic relation between signifier and signified nor at the materiality of the signifier; its role or effect is

confined to the semiological operation of seeing the signifier as its signified. Rather than negating the materiality of the signifier to realise the signified, the negativity or *bricolage* of the textual imagination makes itself apparent in seeing the signifier/signified relation *as other to itself*, as something other to what it previously constituted or in terms of its alternative potentialities. The difference lies in the semiological negativity of seeing-as that is necessary to representation and signification, and the negativity necessary to the suspension, critique and rewriting of an existing meaning. The philosophical imagination suspends, places *sous rature* and transgresses existing conventionalised meanings. The imaginative instance of *parole* introduces a potentially productive discordance between itself and *langue*, between itself as a singular event and the prescribed rule. The imaginative event of *parole* is capable of availing of an element of *langue* in which it deviates from its orthodox employment, but in such a way that it retains a certain intelligibility. *Parole* has shown itself to be capable of defying or expanding the existing *langue*, of setting itself forth as a new precedent that may come to be repeated and *formalised* within *langue*. Or, in other words, by its proposal of an alternative use or sense, the creative imagination operative in the form of *parole* effectively interrupts the simple and identical iterability of the instituted signifier/signified relation.

To be sure, one can conceive of cases in which the negativity, or a specifically transgressive intent, is to the fore to a greater or lesser degree, in which the critique of a particular concept is explicitly undertaken, or in which negativity is implicit in the creative alternative entertained. The power of this productive negativity is harnessed in modes of formalised critique, in modes of critically engaging with what stands as given. While formalised modes of critique are doubtless not reducible to alterations made in previous conceptual frameworks, they invariably entail a redistribution or reorganisation of the terms within such frameworks. As such, they count among their objects existing conventionally instituted meanings. It is in recognising this form of critical negativity that a relation between the textual and deconstructive imagination is broached.

In the transition from the negativity of the *langue*-creating imagination to that of the textual imagination, imagination is initiated into the intersubjectivity of conventional systems of representation, in the creation of which it will have played a

fundamental role. Rather than signalling a certain withdrawal of imagination from the system it brings into being, the advent of nonmotivated signification discloses new potentialities for an imagination to be considered not purely in terms of visual images but in terms of the power of iterability and conventionality.

The advent of language may not, then, as Hegel tends to suggest, amount to the passage from the primacy of the signifier to the independence of the signified, or to the disappearance of imagination from language until such a time as a poetic imagination re-engages with it and expresses itself in it. Rather, imagination comes to operate within systems of representation and signification in which the productive imagination's occurrence is not evident in every iteration of a sign, but only on those occasions in which meaning is suspended and disclosed to another potentiality. Imagination comes to exist in a form that is less recognisable than in the psychological mode of (re)producing images. And while it may be prone to periods of dormancy within a stable or staid configuration of meanings, or to being suppressed by the force of iterability and of conventionality, it nonetheless betrays itself in the those moments in which conventionalised meaning is destabilised and reinstituted.

To interpret the transformation that imagination undergoes in the creation of language as ushering in the development of semiological conventionality is not to suggest that the visual image, whether as existing in psychological interiority or in a material form, is somehow excluded from systems of representation, or that imagination no longer manifests itself in mimesis. Rather, it is to suggest that both motivated and nonmotivated modes of signification and representation are ultimately brought within the domain of an imagination capable of contesting and reinventing the existing conventional order. The negativity of imagination is manifest, as we have seen, not only in the effacement of the materiality of the image that brings before us its object or referent, but as it exists immanently in the original image or artwork that defies and reinvents the existing conventions of visual or artistic representation. As such, imagination is structurally equivalent to the sign being used in an alternative way from its acceptation in *langue*. The productive negativity of imagination that is manifest in suspending and re-instituting conventions comes to be relevant to images *and* signs, to language *and* artworks.[28]

What remains to be addressed, having briefly related the *langue*-creating imagination to the textual, conceptual or philosophical imagination, is the relation of the latter to the deconstructive imagination. In a concluding chapter, I seek to do precisely this within the context of reassessing the way in which the original impediments or inimical factors to conceiving of the textual imagination of deconstruction have, in the programme I have followed, been surmounted through the deconstruction of Hegel's concept of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*; that is, through pursuing the portal to a relationship between imagination and language that Hegel disclosed, but whose threshold he preliminarily crossed and from which he withdrew, though not without leaving the bare outline of a beckoning footprint.

Notes to Chapter VI

[1] *1827-8*, p. 229; 215.
[2] *1830*, §461, p. 198; 277-8.
[3] *1827-8*, p. 205; 186.
[4] "Since spirit is that which gives itself objectivity, considered formally, this means that the determinations lose their one-sidedness as spirit's own, but also their status as accidental determinations is equally superseded" (*1827-8*, p. 203; 183-4.)
[5] *1830*, §464, p. 201; 282.
[6] "Our language already assigns memory (*Gedächtnis*) [...] the high position of immediate affinity with thought (*Gedanke*)" (*1830*, §464r, p. 202; 282).
[7] *1827-8*, p. 234; 221.
[8] *1830*, §462z, p. 200; 280.
[9] *1830*, §451z, p. 186; 258.
[10] *1827-8*, p. 235; 223.
[11] *1830*, §458r, p. 194; 270-1. Cf. also *1827-8*, p. 224; 208.
[12] *1830*, §463, p. 201; 281. Cf. also 1827-8, p. 233; Hegel's analogy of the relations between words in a language amounting to those between a house of stones would, I think, compare unfavourably with Saussure's nuanced and sophisticated analogy of the relations between signs as neighbouring holes in a net delimited by one another.
[13] *1827-8*, p. 230; 215. Cf. also p. 235; 222 and *1830*, §462r, p. 199; 279.
[14] Inwood's extensive section-by-section commentary on the *Philosophy of Mind* appears in the edition from which I am citing (*1830*, pp. 279-664). Having reminded us that "[t]hinking is, for Hegel, pretty much detached from sensory material", Inwood responds to the question of Hegel's apparent prevarication, and reconstructs its logic: "[S]ince we already have a decent word [*Erinnerung*, "recollection" and literally "internalisation"] for the memory of things other than signs, why not use *Gedächtnis* for another purpose? Once *Gedächtnis* is reserved for signs, it is then natural to attribute to it the invention of signs as well as their retention and retrieval. 'Productive' imagination or fantasy is [for Hegel] responsible for symbols. So why not attribute to it the production of signs? After all, it is far easier to regard imagination as 'productive' than 'memory'. Memory is usually conceived as simply reproductive; if it is productive in the way imagination is, it amounts to misremembering, to 'imaging things'. But in inventing signs, memory is not imagining things. There is nothing to imagine in a sign. A sign is just any old intuition harnessed to a representation, whereas imagination, *Ein*bild*ungskraft*, is irretrievably "pictorial" (*bildlich*). Sign-creation calls for inventiveness, but not for imagination, at least not for the type of imagination required for the creation of symbols, allegories, and metaphors. So memory, or rather *Gedächtnis*, takes the task of sign-creation" (*1830*, note to §458, p. 496).
[15] *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977; p. 19. The passage to which I am referring concludes: "[T]he life of spirit is not the life that shrinks from death [from the negative] and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that abides and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment [*Zerissenheit*], it finds itself. It is this power [*Macht*], not as something positive that closes its eyes to the negative as when we say of something that it is nothing or is false, and then having done with it, turn away and pass on to something else; on the contrary, spirit is this power only by looking the negative in the face, and tarrying with it. This tarrying with the negative is the magical power [*Zauberkraft*] that transforms [*umkehrt*] it into being." On the curious absence of imagination from the *Phenomenology* but the potential for interpreting its dialectic of spirit's history to as imply the labour of imagination, see Jennifer Bates's *Hegel's Theory of Imagination*, cited in note 1, Chapter IV.
[16] *1827-8*, p. 233; 219-20.
[17] *1830*, §462z, p. 200; 280.

[18] "The unity [of word and meaning within *Gedächtnis*] thus becomes the content of intelligence, and the intelligence has to make it its own, to know it. This does not imply an agreement, as though humans had a discussion and agreed that they wanted to use this expression for that idea. That would be arbitrary, and in order for such a discussion to occur, language would have to be already in existence. That language is gradually formed and developed is self-evident. But this does not concern the inner necessity in the advance of the intelligence of itself" (*1827-8*, p. 229, 214). No equivalent passage is to be found in the 1830 edition.

[19] This might be clearer if we formalise the operation in terms of the signifier as x and the signified as y. If the originary performance consists of the utterance "Let x be y", or more accurately, "Let x be y on all future occasions", the subsequent utterance of "x is y" presupposes, acts upon, and realises the first affirmation. The power of asserting "let x be y" lies in the fact that, upon x being iterated, it thereby has the capacity to signify y; but beyond signifying in the absence of a mimetic or indexical relation, the iteration of the x/y relation and its use as a signifier/signified relationship have the effect of reaffirming, consolidating and corroborating its existence as a conventional and enduring unity, rather than as a provisional unity valid only on a single occasion. The transition from the arbitrary to the nonmotivated relation of conventional necessity will have been achieved by the secondary performance of *parole*.

[20] "Or, puisque la langue, dont Saussure dit qu'elle est une classification n'est pas tombée du ciel, les différences on été produites, elles sont des effets produits, mais des effets qui n'ont pas pour cause un sujet ou une substance, une chose en général, un étant quelque part présent et échappant lui-même au jeu de la différance. Si une telle présence était impliquée, le plus classiquement du monde, dans le concept du cause en général, il faudrait donc parler d'effet sans cause, qui conduirait plus vite à ne plus parler d'effet" (*Diff* in *MP*, p. 12). Derrida goes on to say that what applies to the schema of cause/effect can also be said of *différance* as the *origin* of the play of differences. There is no simple, punctual, discernible point of origin to the play of difference, or to *différance*; nor, for that matter, is *différance* the origin of this play. For *différance* does not precede the differences or their effects "dans un présent simple et en soi immodifié, in-différent". "Ce qui s'écrit *différance*, ce sera donc le mouvement du jeu qui 'produit', par ce qui n'est pas simplement une activité, ces différences, ces effets de différence. Cela ne veut dire pas que la différance qui produit les différences soit avant elles, dans un présent simple et en soi immodifié, in-différent. La différance est l' 'origine' structurée et différante des différences. Le nom d''origine' ne lui convient donc plus" (*Diff* in *MP*, p. 12). The dangers relevant to misconceiving *différance* that Derrida points out—conceiving it as an origin to which the play of differences could be traced, as a causal agent that produces the play of difference as it effects, or as emerging in the self-presence of a subject that devised it—are also those which haunt conceiving of a textual imagination.

[21] Cf. Derrida on Freud in "Freud et la scène de l'écriture" in *MP*, pp. 293-340.

[22] I have omitted a chapter that assesses the import of my reading of the imagination in the psychology for Hegel's determination of imagination in his aesthetics and poetics. I make some reference to it in revisiting the first affinity in the final chapter.

[23] This mechanicity is apparent also in the grammatical and syntactical form that furnishes rules by which intelligible utterances can be formulated in specific utterances; even if the protocol of syntax and grammar affords us the possibility of formulating intelligible syntagms and sentences never before received or generated, this more or less infinite or inexhaustible array of possibilities arises from a finite and rule governed system. In operating on the basis of iterable signs, more or less ideally reproducible meanings, and rule-based procedures permitting of their syntagmatic (re)formation, language becomes the extraordinary, convenient, reliable system of signification and expression with which we are familiar in speech and writing.

[24] "In *signifying* [als *bezeichnend*] therefore intelligence displays a freer wilfulness and mastery in the use of intuition than in symbolising" (*1830*, §458r, p. 194; 270).

[25] In "Typewriter Ribbon" in *Without Alibi*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, Evanston: Stanford University Press, 2002; p. 72.

[26] *Without Alibi*, p. 74.

[27] Thus are conventions in general and not specifically those facilitating signifier/signified relations most powerful when they operate beyond conscious recognition, outside of explicit scrutiny, and without the contingency of their origination being examined. To recognise a convention *as such*, to pose the question of its origination or its validation, is to begin to disempower it, and to wrest oneself from the hold it exerts over oneself or another. To accord with a convention—and a convention is nothing until its is recognised in this sense—is to treat it *other than* as originating in a singular event, other than as the self-founding or self-instituting or signifier/signified relations in imagination. Conventionality relies precisely upon the effacement of its singular, particular origination, and on the power that repetition exerts.

[28] While I have delimited my concern as lying with the sign insofar as it is nonmotivated, thereby setting aside the question of imagination as it related to the poetic or to questions of visual imagery, I permit myself to suggest that the textual imagination such as I have described it could be developed in terms of the role played by imagery within the text. I have argued that to determine the presence of a visual image as a *conditio sine qua non* of employing the concept of imagination is to restrict the concept to its earliest forms. In contemplating the relation between the earlier dialectical moments of imagination and the forms of the linguistic imagination I have proposed, it is important to recall a valuable lesson arising from Hegel's dialectic of imagination; imagination is not only differentiated according to historical moments in which it assumes new forms; rather these differentiated moments co-exist in certain form of simultaneity; that is, imagination, at any given stage in spirit's development, consists in the accumulation of its past moments. While they may exist in a fossilised form, "former" moments or the capacities and functions associated with them are nonetheless not simply or as a whole simply relinquished but rather retained in the mind's composition. As such, the question following the recognition of the imagination assuming a form within conventionalised and objective systems of representation would be that of how motivated and nonmotivated modes of signification are intertwined, how the visual image is re-integrated within language. All the earlier forms of imagination Hegel had treated of in the psychology are given new life with the emergence of language; this would be manifest in the symbol assuming a form within the word; in metaphor as a mode of imagination in which the transgression of existing literal sense of a sign is coupled with the poetic or textual evocation of imagery; in the metaphoricity lying within the etymology of abstract concepts. Indeed, the question of the poetic imagination, and of the (prosodic and rhetorical) devices it generates, would arise, and perhaps be best approached, precisely from the point of view of questioning the extent to which the relative aesthetic impoverishment of the nonmotivated word is explored. The examination of such questions, which could be profitably pursued within a deconstruction of Hegel's aesthetics and poetics, I must leave to another occasion.

Chapter VII: The Textual and Deconstructive Imagination: A Question of Method

> Dans le "Langage" expliquer le Langage, dans son jeu par rapport à l'Esprit, le *démontrer*, sans tirer de conclusions absolues (de l'Esprit).
> Mallarmé, *Notes*

In concluding, I would like to return to the three affinities between imagination and deconstruction in the light of the detour taken through Hegel's work, and in the hope that certain impediments to the notion of a textual imagination of deconstruction have been overcome. In accordance with the deconstructive procedure articulated in the first affinity, I set out to invert and displace the opposition logos/imagination; in concluding, I attempt to gather together exactly what such displacements as a whole suggest for our understanding of imagination, in particular for the imagining subject as classically interpreted. If nonmotivated signification is recognised as being possible only on the basis of objective conventions, the advent of language, or its assimilation within the subject, implies imagination to have been displaced from the site of an inner relationship the subject enjoys with its own images, and to re-emerge as a relation between such interiority and the alterity of a system of meaning in and upon which others produce effects.

With regard to the second affinity, in the light of the three "moments" or variations in the philosophy of a textual imagination I have developed (*langue*-creating; textual, conceptual or philosophical; and deconstructive), I will suggest that Derrida's revised notion of discursive *bricolage* might describe a structure common to them all. Nonetheless, in the light of deconstruction being forged as a response to the closure of metaphysics, certain ways in which it distinguishes itself from amounting to one more instant of conceptual *bricolage* do come to light.

This returns us to the third affinity, to the particular negativity of deconstructive critique as it is operative within the broader process of retrieving overlooked potentialities in the textual history of metaphysics and working through aporetic moments in that tradition. The deconstructive imagination might be said to

takes up instances in philosophical texts in which the attempt to imagine certain possibilities that defied logocentric closure were frustrated.

(i) Revisiting the First Affinity: Tracing the Displacement in the Imagining Subject

In inverting the opposition logos/imagination, and having suspended the violence of the presupposed superiority of the one over the other, we are invited to think imagination and the logos in terms of one another. The appearance of the pure nonmotivated sign, as the ideal of the logos, excluding any suggestion of imagination being at work within it, begins to dissipate once we posit the field of representation or signification as providing a common ground underlying both imagination and the logos. In the creation of the nonmotivated sign, and in the creativity identified within conceptual formation and redetermination, points of mutual concern or intersection between the imagination and the logos were identified. It was in light of this formal procedure of identifying promising points of intersection in which imagination was implicated in the dynamics of linguistic signification that I undertook readings of instances at which imagination's relation to the sign had been taken up by Plato, Husserl and Hegel. Having undertaken these readings, and attempted to describe imagination as it is operative in the origination of language and in conceptual creativity, it remains to clarify the nature of the displacement effected in the underlying common ground of the opposition. For the displacement performed in this process, if it is to be effectual, must take hold not of one or other of the concepts in isolation, nor even of the opposition in question; it must produce a fundamental destabilisation of the ground on which they were opposed, or in other words, it must reverberate within the co-ordinated network of oppositions that condition the opposition in question, in this case, that of logos/imagination. What, displacement, then has been effected by conceiving of imagination as lying at the origin of language, in the first place, in the underlying ground of signification or representation common to imagination and the logos, and in the second, in the co-ordinated network of oppositions concomitant with the hierarchical privileging of the logos over imagination?

Let us leave in abeyance the question of signification, and take up the question of the network of oppositions within which logos/imagination is inscribed. In the course of suggesting that imagination plays a role in creating an iterable sign and in recreating signified meanings, I have attempted to sketch, without, to be sure, doing justice to them, several displacements in the concept of imagination: from psychological interiority to "objective" conventionality; from the inner image or mimetic image to the communal, iterable sign; from imagination as a stable or immutable personal faculty to it figuring as a dynamic force within a variegated and diffuse history of representation; from imagination as engaging with semiological materiality to it engaging the conventions determining semiological materiality; from the single, spontaneous, punctual *sui generis* act of an individual to a potentially collaborative, temporally extended, differentiated but coordinated series of performances; from the creation of a localized, present and identifiable thing ("this" artwork) to the creation of systems of signification and representation (*langue* and semiological conventions) as they deviate from and augment existing forms of signification. By a "displacement" in the concept, I do not mean an irrevocable shift, by which the concept is permanently uprooted and then replanted within a terrain that, initially, must necessarily appear relatively alien to it. On the contrary, what these various displacements of the concept of imagination disclose is the possibility of expanding and enlarging the province of the concept; such a broadening of its field, it seems to me, would be essential to the concept becoming pertinent to contemporary conceptions of creativity, and to the textual creativity brought to light in deconstructive reading.

How then, should we interpret the displacement in the concept of imagination as it affects the ground underlying the opposition imagination/logos? I have essentially taken signification or representation as the underlying ground in which the difference between the imagination and the logos expresses itself; the difference or incommensurability between imagination and the logos articulated itself in the nonmotivated nature of the linguistic sign standing in opposition to the figurative or mimetic determination of imagination. But there are other possible oppositions with which imagination/logos is coordinated, other oppositions whose dividing line effectively repeats that separating the logos from imagination. Indeed, the opposition subjective/objective presents itself if we recognise, as was evinced in the concept of

langue, that the nonmotivated sign is in effect possible on the basis of a system of objective conventions, a system that must exceed any individual subject for language to function as it does. What rendered imagination and the logos incommensurable is the chasm separating the *subjective* interiority of imagination in opposition to the *objectivity* of the nonmotivated sign, of signified conceptual meaning and the logos. The mutual preclusion of imagination and the logos, resting on a time-honoured distinction in the field of representation, implies or is rooted in a distinction at the level of subjectivity and objectivity. However, in recognising the linguistic sign's possibility to rest on the basis of an intersubjective body of conventions, and in acknowledging the dynamism of linguistic meaning, the notion of the imagining subject or of subjective creativity as consisting in an enclosed and given or reflexive interiority comes under suspicion. In founding a notion of imaginative subjectivity on the inner image to the exclusion of the objective system of the sign and *langue*, what tends to get overlooked is the effect that the introduction or assimilation of the sign will have had upon the imagining subject.

Having concentrated in this thesis, in the main, on the question of imagination and signification, I would like to explore briefly the displacement brought about in the imagining subject once imagination is understood in accordance with differentiated historical moments and as evolving *up to and beyond* the point at which it brings the nonmotivated and conventional sign-system into being. The question that arises, then, is: what becomes of the imagining subject beyond the advent of the sign and *langue*, insofar as can be deduced from the effects that the advent of language will have wrought upon subjectivity and the potentialities for creativity?

The imagining subject that reproduces images, or in which the (re)production of images represents the sole or highest capacity attained by imagination, cannot be equated with the form of subjectivity following the generation of language as a conventional system. Imaginative subjectivity as understood on the basis of the inner image cannot be considered in isolation from the impact that the coming-into-being of a nonmotivated and conventional system has upon it, or from the effects that the assimilation of language has upon a subjectivity thrust into a world always already interpreted for one by (a) language. The subject or, as Hegel might prefer to phrase it, the particular historical shape of consciousness, is fundamentally displaced by the

creation of an objective system of communication; and with this, the form the imagination assumed is dislodged from its enclosed reflexive interiority. This is what Hegel might have been prompted to think had he considered imagination in the passage from subjective to objective spirit to which, as we have seen for Hegel, the creation of language is critical. Beyond language's advent, there is an "objective" form of subjectivity, a form of subjectivity dwelling in the field of the other, that is opened up to a certain dynamism and to history. (For, Hegel, the sphere of objective spirit amounted to a domain that he treated of in his philosophy of law and right [*Rechts*]; as such, it amounted to a discourse in which the appearance of the notion of imagination would have been most irregular). But Hegel did not contemplate the imagining subject such as it might have come to exist in the wake of language's advent. The creation of language, of a nonmotivated mode of signification and of writing, is also the inauguration of the historicity of conventionality, which cannot but have reconstituted the imagining subject. Without writing, or without a sense of history, as Hegel puts it, there is no history. But if the import of such lessons has been absorbed in the sustained critique and reforming of the notion of subjectivity in poststructuralist thought, such lessons have perhaps yet to be taken account in the deconstruction of the concept of imagination.

I suggested that the classical notions of the imagining subject as founded on a reflexive interiority, on a relationship with inner images, unwittingly refer us to the subject and imagination only in its earlier dialectical moments as they are described in Hegel's psychology; they return us to moments prior to the subject and imagination's transformation in and through linguistic conventionality, or they focus upon the retained capacities of (re)producing images in isolation from the alterations subjectivity and imagination will, in the meantime, have undergone. Insofar as we interpret the concept of imagination to be founded upon a notion of insular or reflexive subjectivity, it remains problematic to reconceive imagination in terms of conventional systems of representation that, on the one hand, have always already interpreted the world for us, and that, on the other, give themselves to be reinterpreted or imagined otherwise. As such, imagination cannot be exhaustively defined in terms of unilateral acts of spontaneous creativity since such creativity is limited by the otherness of a particular, given historical configuration of representational conventions.

It could be demonstrated that Hegel's treatment of imagination in his aesthetics and his poetics fails to take into account the radical changes that both the institution of language, and the initiation of subjectivity into a relationship with the objective other of representational conventions, will have effected on imagination or the imagining subject. Although Hegel's aesthetics and poetics are founded on a radical historicisation of the forms of art, he nonetheless treats of the artistic imagination from a decidedly psychological perspective[1] as an *innere Werkschaft*; and in his conception of the poetic imagination, which stands as the ultimate form of imagination, he treats of it as the poet drawing upon his *own* inner images and words rather than as creating and recreating the—prosodic, and rhetorical, thematic and formal—conventions of poetry.[2] This is not to say that Hegel does not treat of the objective prosodic and poetic devices that are produced by a poetic imagination, but that his articulation of the poetic *imagination* is concluded by the time he takes up the distinguishing characteristics of poetry. Hegel understands the inner reflexive form of the poetic imagination in romanticism as anticipating the ideal reflexive interiority of the modern reflective thinking subject, which expresses itself in the "prose of thought". As such, poetry's interiority, and its lack of spiritual expression in a form of material otherness—in the material exteriority characteristic of architecture and sculpture but that, for Hegel, is present in an *ideell* manner in the romantic arts of painting and music—compromises art to the point that it becomes essentially irrelevant in modernity; this is Hegel's well-known thesis of the *Vergangenescharakter* of art. Had he conceived of imagination as a dynamic relation between the subject and the historical conventionality of art and poetry, he might not have arrived at the conclusion that art or poetry's dismal fate had already been sealed.

However, the project Hegel sets forth in his psychology of relating imagination to the various inner forms of intuitions, images, and symbols and to the exterior form of the spoken and written sign, gives itself to be pursued beyond the advent of language; it gives itself to be thought other than as the imagination is formulated in his aesthetics and poetics, and, to be sure, outside of imagination being understood to develop or unfold within the teleological horizon of the "prose of thought" that Hegel understands as amounting to imagination's absolute transcendence. To pursue this Hegelian project beyond the advent of language, it

appears to me, would redress the philosophy of imagination's fundamental neglect of imagination as it has functioned within the historical conventionality of representational and signifying systems.

In what follows, what I say in delineating the lineaments of an imagining subject conceived beyond the advent of language should be understood to amount to speculation on but a few of its rudimentary pillars. Following the advent of a conventional system, and of language in particular, one would have to think the subject on the basis of its constitutive relation to the other (the system of language as a differential system of endless potentialities), and imagination on the basis of this relation. What the advent of language, the subject's assimilation of language might be understood as producing the splitting of the subject, the splitting by which the subject must thereafter be construed as dynamically "constituted" by its relation to the other of a linguistic signifying system and a language. Such a "disintegrated" relational mode of subjectivity does not, as Hegel's notion of absolute spirit supposes, permit of being reinteriorised within an ideal form of rational subjectivity, in the inner life being mediated by the form of an absolutely objectivity. On the contrary, the subjective reflexivity of imagination is rather forever deferred by its relation to alterity, to the alterity of *langue* that is constitutively subject to alteration and to the vicissitudes of history. The splitting that the introduction of a system reliant on objective conventions effects in the subject displaces indefinitely the inner reflexivity characteristic of the classical imagining subject, reinscribing subjectivity within a relation between *parole* and *langue*, between representational conventions and the use to which they are put; such a form of subjectivity would have to be thought as residing between, on the one hand, interiorised images and personal experiences or representations, and, on the other, the conventionalised modes through which such images, experiences representations are interpreted, processed and rendered significant.

This "intercession" on the part of the other within the inner reflexivity of imagination is not bad news for imagination; the advent of a sign failing to bear a mimetic relation to the signified, or of a sign that gains its meaning by being inscribed within a dynamic system, does not inflict upon subjective interiority its closure, or amount to its stagnation. On the contrary, even if the alterity of conventionality must

be recognised as setting a limit on imagination's spontaneity, or setting before it certain intransigent structures, the relation with a dynamic other constitutes imagination's possibility within conventional systems of representation. For this relation installs the conditions in which imagination's innovations can be iterated and absorbed within presiding systems of signification and representation, and produce enduring—if more anonymous and untraceable—objective effects. Imagination would thus manifest itself in a dynamic relation between the subject and the semiological and aesthetic conventions of systems of representation; more specifically, it would manifest itself whenever this relationship—a relationship that casts the subject both as writer and reader, as the first interpreter of the texts it authors—is realised in its most creative forms. In light of the transformation in subjectivity effected by language's advent, the concept of imagination must be redetermined in terms of it designating a certain relation the subject enjoys with materiality in different forms, with conventional systems, and indeed, with the historicity of representational conventionality, this last relationship being of particular significance to a hermeneutic or deconstructive understanding.

The intersubjective, collaborative, and interconnected series of performances in the originary acts necessary to generating the *parole/langue* dialectic perhaps indicates, or anticipates features of, the forms imagination will assume beyond the reflexive psychological interiority of an imagination that (re)produces images. Given that the subject's initiation into linguistic conventionality must produce effects upon the form subjectivity assumes, one would have to conceive the imagining subject as having been *thrown* into conventional systems (in the Heideggerian sense of *Geworfenheit*, the subject's existential "thrownness" into being); we find ourselves always already existing within a relation between existing practices and the use of the conventions of a system, born into the particularity of a language at a determinate point of its history and as members of a speaking community. And as such, we can only become imagining subjects—or artists, poets and writers—*within and against* a tradition. The subject is thrown into systems replete with immense potentiality, systems yet to be exhaustively determined or given to be redetermined, deconstructed and rewritten. The imagining subject is always already inscribed within a dynamic system to be taken up, a dynamic relation whose possibilities he or she may ignore, in which case, imagination is disguised in mere reproducibility, but which also present

themselves as a field to be explored. In other words, beyond designating the reproduction or the passive interiorisation of those conventions that render us representational subjects, imagination is also the possibility of those conventions' productive "deconstruction".

While objective semiological systems or modes of signification necessarily exceed being created by a single individual, they do not, on that account, preclude being modified, reinvented or imagined otherwise; indeed, in such phenomena as metaphor, language can be seen to furnish conventionalised tools in which the creative subversion and expansion of the system and of meaning can be effected in a legitimate fashion. In recognising nonmotivated signification to be possible only on the basis of intersubjective conventions, on the basis of a *langue* irreducible to the subject's appropriation of it, it becomes possible to conceive of the textual imagination as predicated on the subject's dynamic relation to an other that exceeds yet constitutes it, and the "speaking" and imagining subject on the basis of a relation forged with an intersubjective and historical body of conventions. That *langue* is constructed so as to make nonmotivated signification possible, rather than so as to provide or accord with a given ontological ordering of the world, is the possibility and necessity of imagining the meanings of a *langue* otherwise. Or, in other words, the absence of a transcendental signified escaping the interrelated play of signs perpetually gives us to imagine the world once more.

Within a system such as *langue*, which formalises potentialities that exceed past or present possibilities actually explored, creativity amounts in a sense to discovery or re-discovery, to the un-covering of what the system of language is already capable. As such, it lends to subjectivity the possibility of creativity only on the basis of the subject being initiated within its structures and its predeterminations. The freedom that the nonmotivated sign confers upon it consists, then, not in the arbitrariness that detaches signified meaning from its materiality, as Hegel suggested, but in the fact that signs and meanings' conventionality afford us the possibility of suspending them as they are given, and of deconstructing and of realising them anew. In the critical, questioning and imaginative projection of alternative possibilities other than those constitutive of the subject, the subject might be said to come into its own.

(ii) Revisiting the Second Affinity: The *Bricolage* of the Textual Imagination

In attempting to explore the notion of a textual imagination suggested by Derrida's grammatological and reading practises, I have conceived of and proposed three doubtless inchoate, variant forms of a linguistic imagination: the *langue*-creating imagination, the textual, conceptual or philosophical imagination, and the deconstructive imagination. I will further clarify the relation between the latter two presently. Such proposed conceptual formulations perhaps make a start in the work of devising and retracing a dialectical history of an imagination of language, or of articulating its forms within a disseminatory history understood in terms of *différance*. Needless to say, they amount to a paltry offering in the infinitely more differentiated field of the "history" of imagination's operation and effects in language. There can be no question of reducing the history of language to such a meagre series, nor of supposing the philosophical imagination to exist in the monolithic form I have, in broaching such a paradoxical notion, had to frame it. It would be desirable that such a notion have a merely provisional status, and be differentiated according to the fluctuations in which imagination has been subject. Moreover, in concentrating on the philosophical imagination's effects on its own conceptuality essentially from a semiological perspective, the danger remains of it being (mis)interpreted as an arid textual concept to the extent that it remains disconnected from imagination such as it shapes our horizons, and as it forms the world such as we inhabit it in our experience.

Nonetheless, I believe that, in venturing to pursue such a notion, some service might have been rendered if it enables us, firstly, to overcome the potentially crippling paradoxes that cause us, on an apparently intuitive level—but no doubt in reality as a result of a long and tortuous history and a certain entrenchment of these and other terms—to balk at conceiving of imagination in terms of nonmotivated signification; and secondly, if it proves conducive to recognising the logos and conceptuality not to amount to a sterile mode of expressing ourselves, but one in which we are afforded the opportunity to re-negotiate the world as it is given to us to understand. From an, admittedly, entirely personal perspective, I have always found disagreeable the notion that in proceeding to think, or in attempting to philosophise,

that one should have to suspend or dispense within imagination, or that setting imagination aside was a condition of possibility of thinking. It seemed to me rather, that what Kant says of imagination—namely, that in what we call beautiful, intelligence is at the service of the imagination, and the latter is not at the service of intelligence—might be reformulated. In what we call thinking, and given the impossibility of an absolute subordination to an ontology of truth, is not our thinking oriented within projects or within a projection in which a labour of imagination has been undertaken?

Despite in this work having bracketed questions of imagination as it operates in poetry for the purpose of attempting to conceive of imagination's operation in the logocentric ideal of a purely nonmotivated sign, I maintain the hope that eroding our hesitancy to recognise imagination as being operative in nonmotivated signification might assist in attempts to reconceive the poetic imagination; the poetic and philosophical do not, after all, admit of an absolute distinction, for both "instincts" can dwell within one and the same person; there exists within us, perhaps, equally fervent but contradictory desires, on the one hand, for signs which betray their origination, which remain rooted in their signifier, which maintain a visceral relation between signifier and signified, as well as, on the other, for the autonomy of signified meaning, for meaning's detachment from a signifier, which allows us to believe we have *grasped* the sense and brought it to the immediacy of presence.

It remains, in any case, to take up the question of the way in which the deconstructive imagination distinguished itself from the philosophical. In attempting to discern between, on the one hand, the extent and manner in which deconstruction emanates from the imagination it perhaps "finds" to be operative within the texts of philosophy, and on the other, the extent to which a deconstructive imagination marks a radical break from imagination in such forms, we might first take up what Derrida says of Lévi-Strauss's notion of *bricolage*.[3]

Having laid out the circularity in which we remain on account of receiving our language, terms and oppositions from a metaphysical history, Derrida analyses the precautionary theoretical steps Lévi-Strauss takes upon recognising the incest taboo to defy the pivotal ethnological and philosophical distinction of nature/culture. Universal

and natural, the incest taboo is also a cultural norm of prohibition, and thus, a natural law without being a law of nature. Lévi-Strauss takes the existence of an anomaly defying the distinction to amount to "un scandale" since it appears to rob the distinction of its pertinence, validity or truth. And yet, Lévi-Strauss affirms the distinction's indispensability, and recognises that it must continue to be employed and availed of, albeit with certain caveats; as Derrida describes his strategy, Lévi-Strauss conserves "comme instrument ce dont il critique la valeur de vérité".[4] It is within this context that Lévi-Strauss describes his own discursive strategy of proceeding with flawed concepts or methodological oppositions as one of *bricolage*. As such, Lévi-Strauss contrasts the *bricolage* of availing of what comes to hand and adapting it to a purpose for it was not intended or designed, with the work of the *ingénieur*, that is, with custom-made instruments designed for the task at hand or with the purpose they serve in mind. It is at this point that Derrida intervenes: "Si l'on appelle bricolage la nécessité d'emprunter ses concepts au texte d'un héritage plus ou moins cohérent ou ruiné, on doit dire que tout discours est bricoleur."[5] The distinction *bricoleur/ingénieur* rests on the fallacy that discourse or language could ever operate in the manner that the *ingénieur* works. As such, the language of the *ingénieur*, which Derrida describes as a *mythe*, is as fanciful as a discourse utterly devoid of textual imagination.

One should doubtless be mindful of the pitfall to which Lévi-Strauss succumbs when attempting to distinguish between a deconstructive and philosophical or textual imagination. The imagination of the *bricoleur*, which adapts what is merely found or what gives itself in its contingency to the demands of specific situation or task, describes not an imagination operative solely within a critical or deconstructive discourse, but within discourse as it has always functioned. Language never gives itself as a series of ready-made tools designed for a specific discourse, whether for a discourse manifesting a critical awareness of its own discourse, or one naïve to such critical reflexivity. That *langue* does not give itself to specific discursive aims constitutes it "applicability" to an infinite potentiality of discourse, providing we "possess" the imagination to set langue to work in productive ways; but this infinite potentiality comes at the cost of compromising the specificity of linguistic meaning, of depriving it of the possibility of being forged in the manner of the *ingénieur*. The manner in which we operate with a more or less given set of concepts means that

discourse always amounts to a certain form of *bricolage*; and deconstructive discourse or a discourse attentive to the historical baggage of its conceptuality remains within the purview of *bricolage* or a conceptual imagination.

Nonetheless, it cannot be said that the specific procedures of deconstructive *bricolage* or of a deconstructive imagination constitute it as simply one more instance of *bricolage* among others. For Derrida's almost instinctive reflex—a reflex no doubt honed by Heideggerian hermeneutics and Foucauldian genealogy before him—has been to return to the texts of the tradition, to cultivate a mode of writing that barely differs from what is called "close reading". Such a gesture cannot be understood as a mere preamble to writing his "own" philosophy; rather it amounts to writing within the interstices of the texts that constitute the tradition received, to engaging with the conceptuality currently available by immersing itself in the texts in which that conceptuality reveals its formation, its genealogical composition, its moments of transformation, and so on. The voice of deconstruction is never truly heard in itself, but only through the "mediating" voice of an other text, in what it almost said, or came close to saying. Derrida has described deconstruction as being parasitical, inasmuch has it feeds off other texts; but imagination is equally so in that it necessarily draws from existing stored, archived, recollected material.

But beyond this return to texts, deconstruction consists in returning to the aporetic moments within in a textual history, to formal paradoxes as they appear within texts being studied, whether to aporias that halt the author's argument and of which he is conscious or into which he strays unwittingly. These features—the retrieval of overlooked potentialities, a concentration on the aporias that reveal, and the critical negativity needed to work upon their errant presuppositions—return us to the third affinity, and it is within this context that I seek to articulate the differences and the relationship between the textual and deconstructive imagination.

(iii) Revisiting the Third Affinity: Imagination and the Deconstructive Turn to the Aporetic Moments of the Tradition

Deconstruction and imagination were seen to entail a certain operation of negativity brought to the past or to the given, within a more encompassing operation of productivity, creativity and a relation to the *à-venir*. Derrida's mode of writing as reading betrays an attempt to broaden and expand the field of what tradition bequeaths, to make the textual history of metaphysics available to itself as a resource, not as a history merely to be interpreted, but from which concealed potentialities emerge as a result of the work of interpretation. It is perhaps, firstly, in deconstruction's extension or broadening of the field of its recollection, and secondly, in the manner in which it has formalised certain critical strategies to be brought to bear on the past-as-recollected, that it sets itself apart most noticeably from previous modes of the textual imagination. The negativity in deconstruction's genealogical return to the textual field is evident in it bringing arguments to the point of aporia, in the critique of the presuppositions that lead to aporias, or, as Derrida says, "dans le moment où le crédit d'un axiome est suspendu par la déconstruction".[6] Indeed, deconstruction is concerned with the genealogical retracing of aporetic moments, as Derrida has explicitly said. While speaking of the aporias that arise in the course of deconstructive reading (those in the relation between law and justice on this particular occasion), he says that deconstruction finds

> son site où plutôt son instabilité privilégiée. En général la déconstruction se pratique selon deux voies ou deux styles, que le plus souvent elle greffe l'un sous l'autre. L'un prend l'allure démonstrative et apparemment non-historique de paradoxes logico-formels. L'autre, plus historique ou plus anamnésique, semble procéder par lectures de textes, interprétations minutieuses et généalogies.[7]

In grafting one onto the other, deconstruction might be described as the genealogical attempt to uncover and work through aporetic moments in the western philosophical tradition and conceptuality. But beyond simply returning to such moments, it seeks to pursue them beyond the logocentric, phonocentric or metaphysical presuppositions from which they arise; such in any case, has been my procedure in returning to Hegel's sign-making imagination.

It is in the grafting of these procedures onto one another, or in their co-ordination and concerted employment that, I believe, Derrida most forcefully opens up the notion of conceiving of deconstruction as a particular, more or less objectivised, temporally protracted and meticulous mode of imagination. For in the genealogical return to texts, deconstruction bears comparison to the initial movement of imagination toward the given or the recollected, towards existing archived material; and in critically negating the presuppositions underlying logico-formal paradoxes it finds therein, in working through logico-formal paradoxes or aporetic moments it comes upon, it bears comparison with the productive imagination's negation of the given as such. Before expanding on both of these strands of a deconstructive imagination, let me anticipate the resistance to such a comparison—beyond the resistance it would meet with from the supposed mutual exclusivity of imagination and the text—that emanates from classical features of the concept of imagination.

If deconstruction can be described as a labour of imagination, as imagination brought to a particular, objective form and strategy, it is only on the understanding that imagination can amount to a painstaking, laborious and meticulous process; as such, the notion of a multi-phased deconstructive operation, however seamless the combined operations of recollection and critical negativity may be, defies our notions of imagination as a spontaneous or punctual act. While Husserl accepted the necessity of imagination being operative within eidetic phenomenology and in the phenomenological reduction or epoché, imagination figured within such procedures only as the initial act in a broader and an ideally reproducible scientific procedure. In the case of deconstruction, imagination would, in contrast, describe the trajectory of its movement as a whole from the past to the *à-venir*. Even if deconstruction is a necessarily singular operation irreducible to a rigorously formalisable and repeatable procedure, as Derrida advocates it must be, it should, for it to amount to anything worthwhile, amount at the least to a set of available strategies that, for all their versatility, can in an organised fashion be brought to bear on a unique text and set of circumstances. It is in attempting to grasp deconstruction as a procedure of sorts, as a protracted operation taking time, as a certain manner in which reading and writing are organised according to concerted and coordinated phases, that imagination arises as a concept shedding light upon it; for imagination, understood as a laborious procedure,

might best capture the way in which the strands and phases in a deconstructive operation, in its reliance on both genealogy and critique, are organised. Or, one might at the least say that the "successful" operation of deconstruction proves to be imaginative.

The feasibility of the concept of a deconstructive imagination depends, perhaps, not only on a certain displacement from imagination as operating within the interiority of memory to memory in a culturally objective form, as the recollection brought to bear on a textual archive; it also depends on displacing the notion of imagination as a spontaneous, undifferentiated act. But such a redetermination seems already achieved in its incorporation within the field of aesthetics, in which, to speak of an artist creating by virtue of his imagination, is not a punctual act reducible to a determinable instant. Imagination may be a singular event and a composite undertaking without being a punctual act. Even in the simplest operation of imagination that takes what is given and seeks to productively rework it, does not take place in an instant, in a punctual act; it requires the labour of time. Why should imagination, if it designates human creativity in its breadth and as it actually exists, be limited to spontaneous acts of creativity performed by a single individual? In the presupposition questioned here, we might detect a certain metaphysics of presence, a reduction of temporal complexity to the "now", to the form of the present that overlooks its status as a trace.

I am suggesting, then, that while deconstruction is by no means the first to do so, it has given to imagination a certain conventionalised form, has set it forth in a more or less determinate manner which can be taken up if not simply reproduced. In deconstruction, the movement of imagination is formalised in the work of genealogical critique, within which logico-formal paradoxes are addressed and worked through to produce new post-logocentric possibilities, thus constituting it as a historically reflexive form of the philosophical imagination. Is not deconstruction an instance, one among many no doubt, in which processes of creativity have been formalised and conventionalised such that by learning, assimilating, and undertaking them, we become imagining, creative and productive subjects? Deconstructive procedures suggest a certain strategy and a versatile method (a *meta-hodos*, the

development of a way) no longer oriented simply by truth but a way of imagining a beyond the closure in which our epoch finds itself.

It is with these questions and considerations pertaining to a certain deconstructive method of imagination in mind that I turn toward the genealogical and critical dimensions of the deconstructive enterprise, particularly insofar as they constitute moments in a process of imagination and distinguish it from a more general textual or philosophical imagination. I attempt to outline certain methodological stages in the operation of a deconstructive imagination, as I understand it, and to note how they have informed and organised the procedure I have adopted in this work. My interest lies not in recapitulating stages in my argument, but in demonstrating a certain methodological conformity between, on the one hand, the stages my project has traversed, and on the other, deconstruction as understood in terms of a methodological formalisation of imagination consisting of genealogical and critical moments. I focus, firstly, on the genealogical dimension insofar as deconstruction seeks to reopen the texts of the metaphysical tradition to the imagination operative but suppressed within them; secondly, on the critical negativity necessary to re-opening the texts of metaphysics to their suppressed potentialities; and finally, on the question of working through the logico-formal paradoxes within such texts that will have been reopened by being conceived other than on the basis of logocentric presuppositions.

Deconstruction can, as a contemporary movement, be construed as entailing a genealogical interest in a certain work of "deconstruction" that has perennially been at work in the conceptual history of metaphysics. The senses of the notion of deconstruction we come upon here are instructive in attempting to distinguish between the deconstructive and the more general textual imagination. Deconstruction in its contemporary form distinguishes itself by its historical reflexivity, by its immersive re-engagement with the texts of the tradition as a whole whose rereading constitutes its almost infinite detour. In contrast, the "deconstruction" operative within conceptual discourse for as long as it has existed, constitutes the labour of the textual imagination that has been obfuscated by logocentric tendencies. The logocentric ideal, as we have seen for Plato and Hegel, and despite their emphasis on imagination being essential to philosophical progress or the philosopher's progression, entail the eventual overcoming of imagination; such a requirement no

doubt reflects the high logocentric valuation placed on creating the stable conditions of a conceptual and oppositional system in which an absolute science could be expressed—as is Hegel's ultimate aim in the project of the *Encyclopaedia*. However, what metaphysics in fact produced did not simply accord with such an aim; rather, it effected a certain suppression of imagination, of the conventionality of its own discourse, with which one might identify the stagnation reached in the closure of metaphysics. This closure suggests the possibility of rereading the texts of the tradition outside the suppression of their innermost creativity and semantic dynamism.

Deconstruction as a response to this closure has entailed re-opening the philosophical text to its conventionality, and the tradition to the work of imagination that will have been active but impeded within it. Derrida's mode of reading has attempted to take up the works of the metaphysical tradition, among others, insofar as they are products of imagination rather than expressions of the logos, conventional constructs rather than assertions of ontological truths. Its mode of reading approaches the text insofar as every text performs a renegotiation of the relation between *parole* and the contemporary *langue*, between the received philosophical conceptuality and its possibilities; approached in this way, the text discloses itself as the performance of a textual imagination, as an author availing of the given resources in the manner of the *bricoleur* as, for example, is the case with Plato attempting to assess writing in terms of the *pharmakon*. One way in which deconstruction, as a contemporary movement, distinguishes itself from the textual and historical phenomenon of deconstruction, then, is in its insistent mode of revisiting pivotal moments when this textual imagination betrayed itself, when disturbances in philosophical conceptuality threw their meanings into disarray and opened them up to the possibility of change. Deconstruction thus seeks, in response to the closure of metaphysics, to set in motion a textual imagination, but within a radically historicist consciousness or in conjunction with an immense labour of recollection.

The project of deconstructing imagination, as I have undertaken it, has entailed a genealogical engagement with those aporetic moments in which imagination's confrontation with language was played out—both those moments at which the *concept* of imagination confronted the nonmotivated sign (the moment of its *eikastic* imagination encountering the logos; Husserl's recoiling from the parallels

between imagination and signification; and Hegel's *Zeichen machende Phantasie*); and, those moments at which the *phenomenon* of imagination encounters language in the advent of the nonmotivated sign and in philosophical practices. In both cases, I have sought out points at which the possibility of developing imagination and signification in terms of one another arose, but which were ultimately, to varying extents, passed over. While Hegel formulated—in what amounted to a subversive and imaginative gesture—the notion of an imagination productive of the sign, it amounted, as we have seen, to an arrested gesture. This brings us to the question of deconstructive and critical negativity and logico-formal problematics, or to the necessity of dislodging the metaphysical presuppositions that underlie problematics to which logocentrism gives rise.

Derrida's writings have shown him to be fascinated by those moments in the logocentric tradition at which it might have taken another direction; such moments or opportunities are not irretrievable; even if they cannot be returned to presence, they remain as moments of opportunity which can be taken up once again. They constitute overlooked potentialities that remain to be pursued in the reconstruction of an *à-venir*. Such moments are revealed in aporia, in the logical impasses at which thought encounters intractable problematics or falls prey to contradictions that result from its own erroneous presuppositions. Derrida's work manifested a concern both with moments of aporia in which a text finds itself unbeknownst to the author, as well as with aporias that constituted a text's formal thematic. Derrida's strategy owes much to Hegel's return to dialectical moments of antagonism in the past. But whereas Hegel sought in the negativity of spirit's history the dialectical process leading towards absolute spirit as it was concretely realised in modernity, Derrida seizes upon aporetic moments in the textual history of the past with a view to imagining a beyond to the closure of metaphysics.

If it is to be described as a form of imagination that is not merely reproductive, and that responds in some way to the closure of metaphysics, deconstruction must consist in more than a genealogical recollection of turbulent moments in the history of philosophical conceptuality. As with imagination, what is essential to its productivity is the manner in which it negates and transforms the given material. The point is not *simply* to make explicit, for example, conventions of the text such as the preface,[8] or

the conventionality and deconstructibility of meaning, however valuable such analyses may be; it is to recognise the contradictions or tacit admissions regarding the limitations of writing and philosophy underlying such conventions, and to tease out their implications with a view to learning how to write in a mode that does not ensnare itself in logocentric pretensions to a truth beyond the play of signification or imagination. A deconstructive reading that merely brings a philosopher's text to a point of irresolvable contradiction will have failed as such.

It was necessary, in the course of my project, to critique both Husserl and Plato's determination of the relation between language and imagination in order to establish a certain logocentric delimitation of the concept. But such a critique was essential in the case of Hegel in order to pursue his prematurely truncated reflection on the *Zeichen machende Phantasie*. For while Hegel had begun the work of deconstructing imagination by suspending or placing the conventional notion of imagination *sous rature*, by transgressing its exclusion from the linguistic sign, and by historicising it as a phenomenon and withdrawing from it a certain ontological fixity in its determination as a faculty, his philosophy as a whole relegated the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* to a moment no longer of significance or of no lasting significance; despite being involved in the creation of the element of the logos, the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* was, for Hegel, effaced and transcended by its integration into the progression towards the logos, in which it had, ironically played a significant role. In order to pursue the strand of thinking within Hegel that posited imagination as being involved in language's advent, and that provides a context in which to pursue the notion of linguistic meaning being redefined by a textual imagination, it was essential to debunk, firstly, his more orthodox determination of imagination as an *innere Werkshaft*, and secondly, his idealist and phonocentric semiology of nonmotivated signification. Only through such a critique could the contradiction within Hegel's thought with regard to imagination's relation to language amount to a moment of opportunity occasioning the possibility of dislodging the notion of the *Zeichen machende Phantasie* from a system that covered over its own breakthrough.

Beyond the question of critique, we move to the issues of logico-formal paradoxes or aporetic moments in the text. If Derrida speaks of "l'allure [...]

apparemment non-historique de paradoxes logico-formels" (my emphasis), it is perhaps because philosophical problematics are rarely if ever entirely resolved; more often than not, they are merely reformulated in a manner that sheds new light on them. We can exult in our apparent triumphs only momentarily before a new problematic is disclosed by what we have unearthed. Logico-formal paradoxes have a history, and that history is manifest in the manner in which we conceptualise and reconceptualise them. Nonetheless, deconstruction, beyond the work of critical negativity, if it is to amount to a truly productive enterprise, must construct anew by working through the aporias it uncovers, however much it recognises such constructions to be ruins in advance of themselves. Only by working through such aporetic moments can the suppressed potentialities of a text be truly realised. For my part, beyond the critique of Hegel, I have sought to bring Saussure and Derrida's semiological and grammatological resolution of the question of the *possibility* of nonmotivated signification, as that resolution is implicit in the notions of difference and *différance*, *parole* and *langue*, to bear in resolving the circularity that impedes our understanding of the *origination* of language and of its conditions of possibility. A resolution of some description to this formal paradox is necessary to the production of a tenable concept of a *langue*-creating imagination.

In deconstruction assuming the explicit form of a genealogical working through of problematics and of logical aporias, the deconstructive operation of imagination can be differentiated to a certain extent from the textual or philosophical imagination. Deconstruction might be better understood as a mode of imagination that engages not only contemporary conventionality, but hat turns back toward the conventions and *langues* comprising western philosophy and representation more generally, with a view to reinterpreting the past such that it refashions the future otherwise than it would have unfolded from a logocentric past. This is the decisive intervention that Derrida's work seeks to effect.

The aim of devising more or less formalisable procedures for extricating philosophy from metaphysical patterns of thought that lead inexorably to flawed conclusions may appear to some the abstruse concern of those preoccupied with metaphysics and its history; it is perhaps for this reason that Derrida's early work has appeared to many as being obscure or idiosyncratic. In his later work, he moves

beyond the more formal questions of avoiding the metaphysical pitfalls to which those he admired had fallen victim. Despite Derrida having affirmed a constant engagement with pressing questions of a political and ethical nature, there can be little doubt, as Simon Critchley has demonstrated, that his intense and prolonged engagement with Levinas—with the latter's ethics of the other—would mark his writing, displace its emphasis, and call for a style that, despite the amiable lucidity of his early writing, was more direct and confessional if no less playful. In recognising that Derrida developed an ethics of the other in parallel with Levinas, and that he did so through exploring themes such as the gift, hospitality, political foundation, friendship and Marxism, one might in fact be setting out a response to the question of *what* in fact Derrida imagined. Beyond the work of formalising a more or less repeatable mode of deconstructing metaphysics in an event of imagination, the later Derrida set out a concrete vision of the ethical beyond the repression of the other, Levinas having given us to think this repression as the hallmark of western metaphysics. As such, Derrida's career might be construed as having shifted its emphasis from the moment of critical negativity in deconstructive imagination, to laying out the fruits of that earlier labour as it would take shape in the sphere of individuals existing within communities and in social institutions. If what the earlier work has to teach us amounts to how it might be possible to imagine from within the closure of metaphysics a certain beyond to that closure, the later work spells out the content of what Derrida himself imagined and posited, naturally, in a more confessional style and with greater emphasis on political issues and ethical themes.

Such a suggestion lies beyond the scope of my work's questioning. My concern has been to point out that deconstructive *reading* concerns itself with what—almost—did not take place in the texts it reads, with what took place but only just, or at least with what did not fully come to pass; and that deconstructive *writing* amounts to inscriptions in the margins of a text, in the interstices in or between the books we have read. What deconstruction concerns itself with is what did not take place in the text being read but may yet take place in the texts we write.

As such, deconstruction does not differ entirely from what we do on every occasion we write. The possibility of imagining something worthwhile may, then, also lie nearer to hand than we think, elusive not because it lies far off, but because it

lies barely veiled over as a potentiality in the movement from reading to writing, from the past to the future, between what we write and what is to become of our writing; imagining something enduring is a possibility always already "there" in the texts we read, an opportunity there for the taking as soon as we take up a book and give ourselves a chance to set pen to paper.

Notes to Chapter VII

[1] *ILA I*, pp. 280-291.
[2] *ILA II*, pp. 959-1039, especially, pp. 945-5.
[3] The particular train of argument with which we are concerned lies in *SSJ* in *ED*, pp. 413-420.
[4] *SSJ* in *ED*, p. 417.
[5] *SSJ* in *ED*, p. 418.
[6] *Force de loi: Le "fondement mystique de l'autorité"*, 11 Cardozo Law Review, pp. 919-1045 (1990), (hereafter *FdL*), p. 954.
[7] *FdL*, p. 958.
[8] Derrida analyses the textual convention of the preface in "Hors Livre" in *La Dissémination*. He does so in the course of analysing Hegel's double gesture whereby, on the one hand, he endlessly rewrites the prefaces to his works, and, on the other, he dismisses the value, necessity or substance of prefaces; this duplicity betrays, for Derrida, a tacit recognition of the impossibility of the closure or definitive exhaustion of a text. The preface adds an extra determinant to the text that is to accompany yet stand outside it; but far from determining the text exhaustively from a point of transcendental exteriority, the preface betrays a secret or tacit acknowledgment that the text is necessarily incomplete or that it suffers from a deficit from the outset. The text is inscribed within *supplémentarité* and *différance*; but the preface, as a text about a text, does not exit the order of textuality. With the writing of a preface, (the necessity of and endless process of) interpretation has already begun. Beyond alerting us to a certain *mauvaise foi* in writing a preface as a final arbitration, what emerges from Derrida's discussion of this textual convention is that one must devise a mode of writing which—rather than covering over its susceptibility to *supplémentarité*—must somehow take it into account and be seen to do so. This impossible task is one which has led Derrida to unconventional textual arrangements and gestures (in the parallel texts of *Glas*, for example).

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