

**Towards a Theoretical Research:
Autobiographical in Theory**

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Kültürel İncelemeler Yüksek Lisans Programı**

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2010

**Towards a Theoretical Research:
Autobiographical in Theory**

**Teorik Bir Araştırmaya Doğru:
Teoride Otobiyografik Olan**

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Onay Tarihi: 15.03.2010

Toplam Sayfa Sayısı: 58

Anahtar Kelimeler (Türkçe) Anahtar Kelimeler (İngilizce)

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1) Otobiyografik olan | 1) Autobiographical |
| 2) Felsefe | 2) Philosophy |
| 3) Metinsellik | 3) Textuality |
| 4) Eleştiri | 4) Criticism |
| 5) Jacques Derrida | 5) Jacques Derrida |

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to present my gratitude to many people who generously enabled me to follow the paths this work required. First of all, I should humbly admit that Istanbul Bilgi University has become a home, an intellectual and academic shelter for me over the period of this study and I would like to thank all of the members of this community. I was privileged to the extent that I had chance to study with Nazan Aksoy, Ferhat Kentel, Bülent Somay and Ferda Keskin. My instructor and advisor Professor Halil Nalçaoğlu always stood by me all the way with his supportive and helpful discussions. I am grateful to him for sharing his invaluable ideas and enthusiasm. I would also like to thank my beloved friends, Üner, Senem, Tuğba, İlkem and Canan for they were always there, ready to share and give. I know that it is impossible for me to express my gratitude to my family. I would definitely be somewhere else, but not here without them.

ABSTRACT

The following study tries to develop a new perspective on the readings of philosophical texts that are based on the auto/biographies of the philosophers. In this path this study takes philosophy not an objective representation of truth but a writing as Jacques Derrida does. In this picture, philosopher is not a demigod telling the reader a sublime truth but is a writer. This means putting the life, chance and contingency to a philosophical text. In this manner, this study tries to exceed the limits and the boundaries of life and text, which are guarded by institutions such as self, authorship, unity of the book, philosophy, academy and so on. By way of this, this study tries to find the ways to read the philosophical text considering the concept of auto/biographical which dwells on the boundaries between life and text.

ÖZET

Aşağıdaki çalışma filozofların oto/biyografileri üzerinden temellenen, felsefi metin okumalarına ilişkin olarak yeni bir perspektif geliştirmeyi hedeflemektedir. Bu bakımdan, bu çalışma felsefeyi hakikatin objektif bir temsili olarak değil, Jacques Derrida gibi bir yazı olarak ele almaktadır. Bu resimde filozof da okura yüce hakikati anlatan bir yarı-tanrı değil, bir yazardır. Bu, felsefi metne yaşamı, şansı ve olumsuzluğu katmak anlamına gelir. Bu anlamda, elinizdeki çalışma kendilik, yazarlık, kitabın birliği, felsefe, akademi vb kurumlar tarafından korunan, yaşam ve metin arasındaki sınırları aşmaya çalışmaktadır. Bu şekilde, yaşam ve metnin sınırlarında ikamet eden felsefi metni, oto/biyografik olanı hesaba katarak okumanın yollarını aramaktadır.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction: and Beginnings

Although an introduction is the ‘beginning’ of a text, a body of texts or a book, it is symptomatically much easier for some to write the introduction part after the end of the writing process. Indeed, it would be reasonable to assume that the ‘thing’ which will be introduced is supposed to be existent and known before the introduction. Main *corpus* is pre-introduction in this sense, and the grasp of the main corpus would serve as a measurement for the success of the introduction. The writer should be able to finalize the main corpus to introduce it, and in a circular fashion, the introduction would become a conclusion at the *same time*.

The preface would announce in the future tense (‘this is what you are going to read’) the conceptual content or significance ... of what will already have been written. (Derrida 1981)

Alongside the emphasis on the conception of *time* in the text, Jacques Derrida also points out another function of introduction, which is the *placement* of text among the others. In this manner, delimiting the time and place of the text in a logic with margins, borders and limits, the *book* works in this basic order that also serves as a basic formula. In this ‘*rational*’ order of timeline and placement, any writing should consist of an introduction, main corpus and a conclusion. To constitute the economy and watch over the strategy of writing which will guarantee a *fair* exchange of texts, there should always be an absolute beginning and an end of writing and it should also be incarnated in the form of book’s material, physical being. The “unity of book,”(Derrida 1981)

however, also risks to reduce ‘writing’ to a mere graphical operation and a kind of representation of *truth* in a rational, measured and organized fashion. Hence, this rationality proper to writer-subject requires a *self-limitation* which doubly binds *him* with the internal necessities of his subjectivity and author-ity as well as *outer* necessities of his subject-object.

The idea of the book is the idea of totality, finite or infinite, of the signifier; this totality of the signifier cannot be a totality, unless a totality constituted by the signified preexists it, supervises its inscriptions and its signs, and is independent of it in its ideality. The idea of the book, which always refers to a natural totality, is profoundly alien to the sense of writing.(Derrida 1998, 18)

Here, one should at least recall “the necessity of those ‘blank spaces’ which we know, at least since Mallarmé, ‘take on importance’ in every text.” (Derrida 1981, 3) As to this writing, the following study, in a broad sense, is dedicated to reflect on those “blank spaces” from a point of view of the autobiography of the thinker/philosopher as a writer. In this manner, the relationship between life and work of the writer would be put into question from different perspectives. Yet, one of the most common reactions to the problem of life/work is a general and unquestioned admittance of the *influence* of the personal life of the writer on the text. This is not a genuine effort to question the mentioned problem, but a desperate attempt to close the gap and to fill in the blank spaces with the personal life of the writer in a generality. This extended generality works with some different “non-synonymous supplements” which attach the work an *auto-biographical a priori* with recourse to “the unity of the subject.”

In this sense, the question is typically deferred or found *unsubstantial*, since the possible answers are self-evident and risky. It risks considering a fragmented subject, resistant to over-determination, and a text which cannot be a book in its disunity. “If I distinguish the text from the book, I shall say that the destruction of the book as it is now under way in all domains, denudes the surface of the text.” (Derrida 1998, 18) This study, however, tries to take the risk and to guarantee itself at the same time, with its direct and indirect references to Jacques Derrida. Though it is not and cannot be an *appropriate, proper* scholarship of one philosopher, since Derrida himself takes the philosophy as a writing which is “delimited, as is any literary genre, not by form or matter, but by tradition - a family romance involving, e.g., Father Parmenides, honest old uncle Kant, and bad brother Derrida.” (Rorty 1978, 143)

Therefore, I do not speak about a philosopher -a concept which should also be questioned in terms of law of genre, gender, institutional affiliations and so on- or his views, but his words, signatures and proper names. If the signatures and proper names are so-called *outside* markers of the text, the question of life/work in “theory” or philosophy requires considering philosophy as writing. For Rorty, whereas the tradition of Western metaphysics assumes a competency of the philosopher for a better representation of the represented, Derrida considers philosophy as a kind of writing, a genre “defined by neither subject nor method nor institutional affiliation, but only by an enumeration of the mighty dead.” (Rorty 1977, 679) Thus, the text you read cannot be a representation of the truth of the life/work, but the writing just after

the reading of some philosopher/writers such as Jacques Derrida, Richard Rorty and so on.

Then, the chance is also at work in the work of philosophy; a chance which escapes from calculation and over-determination under the names of singularity, contingency and subjectivity against the aim of ‘objective’ representation of theory. For that reason, any autobiographical impulse in the account of philosophical text is proscribed, since it risks the subject, the method and the institution of philosophy itself. The bold limits surrounding the life with subjectivity and identification, and the work with the unity of the book tries to keep safe *a* philosophy which denies its textuality. The limits and borders between the life/text of the philosopher and the work/text of philosophy guard the security of the standards of a proper philosophy.

As Derrida points out in *The Ear of the Other*, however, there are some names and signatures, like Nietzsche’s, which blur the distinction of life/work, signifying not the one or the other, but two sides at the same time, the side of life and the side of writing. In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche speaks about the life, even the “monstrous” future life of his name and work in this sense. Hence, there is the life of the text and a life in the text as well as a textuality in/of life qua *autobiography*. Autobiography, here, is not a finite graphical process, but an *auto/oto* writing in the face and the ear of the other.

Before following this path and reflecting on what I would like to call *the auto/biographical* in the future of this study, let me try to speak about my beginning(s), *my chances* (Derrida 2007, 344) for this writing have begun long before the introduction, at some time which I cannot detect, but only trace with

a recourse to my *memory*. Nonetheless, remembering Freud, one should also recall that the past memories are both constituted and subject to change by the present which is in turn somehow constituted by memory. In this sense, this is nothing but a story, in one way or another, a narrative what one may naively call the life story of this study: “whose unfinished movement assigns itself no absolute beginning, and which, although it is entirely consumed by the reading of the other texts, in a certain fashion refers only to its own writing.” (Derrida 1981, 3)

In a lecture held in Istanbul, in which I had the *chance* to participate, Gayatri C. Spivak stressed the autobiographical aspect of Edward Said’s monumental work *Orientalism* and thus, offered the reader that one should read this piece not as a universal text applicable anywhere and anytime to all conditions, but as a particular view of Said towards the world, and of the East and West. (Spivak 2007) In her reading, Spivak tends to interpret *Orientalism* not as an uncontroversial masterpiece but as an immigrant young man’s academic efforts to define and understand the world and his self. By this reading, Spivak does not undervalue Said’s *Orientalism*, but she implies a more refined kind of reading of *Orientalism* including *the autobiographical* accordingly.

As one of my beginnings and chances, this reading/writing of Spivak raises the question of Said’s proper name and signature which is constituted by a certain *biographical a priori*. Not surprisingly, this biography is founded upon the world’s worlding as East and West geographically. In this map, Said’s proper name and signature is written and registered under the grand name of Orient and fixed for many. Nonetheless, it should be emphasized that (I)

there's no *one* signature, but different signatures of Said as well other writers, and (II) a biography is a story which tells only one story in place of another. The proper name *given* to Said reveals how this fixation of interpretation and the claim of unity of the name and signature try to determine the reading and close it as an ideological and political investment.

Here, Said and some other "oriental writers" are subject to a kind of representation that may be called *bio-geo-graphical*, in which one can see the traces of a sort of orientalism. In a possible example of these romantic bio-geographies, the in-between Oriental writer who has a painful and also eccentric life is also a success story:

She is a clear evidence of that if an oriental youngster wants much; she can become an elite member of civilized Western community. They are the bodily evidences of liberal Western world's openness to the others who deserves that by working the Western Canon hard. They are exemplars to all other Oriental students and young writers: perfect degrees at schools, a wonderful CV, a perfect English, an avant-garde style and a brave warrior who temporarily comes back to homeland to oppose the injustices of this economically, culturally, politically and intellectually poor territory. As the story goes, we can see that the heroic oriental intellectual becomes a monumental figure for her successes both in the West and the Orient.

Interestingly, what enables her to act as a champion in the West and a hero in the Orient is nothing but her interesting, traveling biography which allows her to become universal to a certain extent. Turning back to Spivak's intervention, it should be emphasized that Spivak insists not only on Said's

work's autobiographical character, but also the construction of his bio-geographical representation as an object (Spivak 2007, 23). Indeed, seemingly, most of the writers as well as readers are not interested in Said's texts but in this bio-geo-graphical representation which also applies the metaphor-concepts of exile or hybridism quite easily. For Spivak, this is an obstacle for the appreciation of Said's work, because it is directing the reader to both an easy and immediate reading, and a lack of critique that suspends any genuine reading.

Spivak's lecture was delivered to a Turkish audience and her emphasis on the production and circulation of Said's proper name was presented with a certain reference to Said's own emphasis on critique and solidarity. In this sense, the source of my ironic version of Said-like persons' bio-geo-graphical representation has something to do with the tone of her warnings. Certainly, there are many other versions circulating around, using or abusing what Said calls critique or solidarity. Nonetheless, what is at stake here is not only the question of criticism but the bio-geo-graphical account in the reading of Said's text.

Furthermore, it should be admitted that not only Said, but all writers are subject to a biographical representation, if not bio-geo-graphical. One can list some other obvious examples of these popular representations, from Nietzsche to Foucault and from Kant to Wittgenstein, all have a different life-story *seemingly* written by the reader, whether he is a meticulous scholar or a sloppy beginner. The point here is not to offer a better representation or a more refined kind of scholarship but to question how this representation is at work in the reading/writing.

The reading of Spivak allows us to see how a ‘general’ account of the relation of life/work operates in our readings as an attempt to fill in the blank spaces with a life-story or a life-writing. Nonetheless, in what we call “representation of writer,” the *thing*, the object as Spivak offers, which carries out the narration of life is the proper name and signature. In this manner, the *appropriate* life-story would help the reader to fix and stabilize the signature of the writer and assume its unity with a certain reference to the writer’s unite and finite subjectivity. The story written, however, is not written by the reader nor the writer but it is given, since (I) this graph which is attached to the proper name and signature as a biography is not necessarily a graphical operation, not an inscription, and (II) this biographical writing in reading or this biographical reading in writing cannot be directed or regulated by a finite or complete subject.

Indeed, even the writer himself cannot totally control his proper name or signature, and cannot hold its *property properly*, since the proper name is always given to him. As to property and control of the text, although the signature is left in the head of the text to guard the text in the name of the writer, the signature does already belong to the others in its textuality: the text lives its life and dies its death among the others texts. However, this does not mean that there is a *world* of texts which is *pure present*. On the contrary, as it is seen in the example of Said, the proper name and signature, which are assumed extra-textual, live their lives *inside* the text textually.

As Derrida suggests in his reading of Nietzsche (Derrida 1988), proper names do have a nominal effect in the system of writing, although they are supposed to be functioning not only outside the text but also the language.

Nonetheless, the name “Edward Said” does not only refer to his biological self, but also to a biography and *concepts* written and registered graphically and non-graphically. Therefore, the proper name refers to something re-produced again and again, and has a meaning just like described in Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of “conceptual persona”:

The conceptual persona is not the philosopher’s representative, but, rather, the reverse: the philosopher is only the envelop of his principal conceptual persona and of all the other personae who are the intercessors (Fürsprecher/intercesseurs), the real subjects of his philosophy. (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 64)

In this context, let me remind the reader how it was shocking for many, when the proper name of famous Yale critic Paul de Man was necessarily attached to an unexpected biography. Whereas his name refers to Yale, deconstruction, and to a friend and “ally” of Jacques Derrida, after his death, it is discovered that during the World War II de Man wrote some two hundred articles for a pro-Nazi newspaper, some of them explicitly anti-Semitic. Leaving aside the other examples of such scandals regarding the proper names such as Heidegger and Nietzsche, it is to be noted that the scandalous *events* become scandalous also because they were not *predicted* by the textual system.

The scandal, then, is also the failure of this system which cannot achieve to assign a proper biography to proper name. The scandalous event produces a *crisis* of signature and creates a shockwave which disables one to interpret the text after the collapse of the secure relation of biography and proper name. It is because the re-production and circulation of proper names and signatures in the system gives the reader a *prescription* of reading and

interpreting the texts. That prescription offering a *pharmakon* to the reader works against the *monstrosity* of, say, Nietzsche's, Heidegger's and de Man's life/text. Not surprisingly, Derrida discusses the question of *the politics of interpretation* with recourse to these proper names and signatures in his texts.

The decision of interpretation offered by the machine of politics of interpretation, which is authorized by academic and educational institutions, and publishing industry, aims to close the other possible readings or to privilege some of them. In any case, it envisages an *order* which is necessarily political and ideological. The example of Said displays how his texts are being more or less closed to reading by a biographical representation attached to his proper name. Then, it can be said that (I) the biographical is always inside the text via signature and proper name, (II) the proper name and signature which always live longer than the biological self have a nominal effect that *also* works for fixing and stabilizing the *meaning* of the text, and (III) for there is no one signature, one proper name or one biography, the text is always under the risk of being occupied by the unpredictable forces of life/text. All these point out to the worldly character of texts, a world which is not *pure* in any sense.

Texts have ways of existing, both theoretical and practical, that even in their most rarefied form are always enmeshed in circumstance, time, place, and society – in short, they are in world, and hence are worldly. (Said 1975, 4)

Just like the world Said mentioned is *impure* with circumstance and so on, the world of the texts is not a pure world of better and better representations of truth but a system of interrelationships of graphical and non-graphical texts. As the impure world of texts includes what we call 'life in the text,' the graphical and non-graphical texts pertaining to auto-biography work in the text

as another text via the signatures and proper names. Just like Said stresses that the texts are “*enmeshed in* circumstance, time, place, and society,” we saw above how his work is trapped with political and ideological connotations by *his* signatures which carry the attached biographies.

Thus, ‘the life of the text’ comes to term with ‘the life in the text’ in the world of texts. Dwelling in the borderline between life and work, the system of signatures and the proper names constitutes the general economy of exchange and directs the politics of interpretation accordingly. The signature signs a writer, assigns a subject to the text, a subject who is responsible for the text before the law and who has the right to own it, a right to claim that it is a property of someone, a property registered with a proper name. In this sense, signature is constitutive of being-in-the-text institutionally, and it lawfully engages one with a variety of institutions, such as literature, philosophy, university, law and so on. To refer Said’s insights, playfully deforming the Heideggerian concepts, it can be said that being-in-the-text is already subject to the existential conditions of being-in-the-world.

As to Said’s insights, what he calls “being enmeshed in” should also be considered from the viewpoint of representational writing. Why does Said prefer to use such a word with negative connotations while he is claiming the worldly character of text, as if he is mourning for a dream or speaking about unfairness befell to the text unexpectedly? The dream which cannot come true and thus collapses displays an understanding of textuality which considers the duty of the text as truthfully representing the truth via writing. In accordance with this dream or the ideal, in the tradition what Rorty called “Kantian,” philosophy is not understood as a writing, and therefore the philosophical work

should be a minimal text, a text in which the writing should be in its minimum for writing can only be a means for philosophical text. (Rorty 1978)

In this manner, the latest development in Kantian tradition is philosophy of language which aims to “show how the atemporally true can be contained in spatio-temporal vehicle, regularize the relation between man and what man seeks by exhibiting its ‘structure,’ freezing the historical process of successive reinterpretations by exhibiting the structure of all possible interpretation.” (Rorty 1978, 144) Accordingly, the writing should end as soon as possible, when philosopher finished his work in a book in its unity. Although philosophy aims its death in this sense, the philosophical text lives its life and writing would lead to more writing.

Hence, the philosophical text is impure and contaminated by writing, for it is necessarily a text. Philosophical text is enmeshed in the world and in the world of texts by (I) its worldly character, and by (II) its textuality which can neither be utterly limited nor finished by the borders of book’s supposed unity. As to the auto-biographical in theory/philosophy, according to what is offered so far, the life in the text is one of the most resistant forces contaminating philosophical text against its presupposed representational unity. It can be claimed that the life/text of the philosopher lives *a* life in the theoretical/philosophical text and it is at work in the work through the forces of life that are resistant to delimitation of the text in the form of book with a beginning and an end.

In the following chapters, with a certain recourse to differentiation of life/work and the limits and borders which tries to keep safe the purity of philosophical/theoretical work between them. As it is claimed so far, the

worldly and textual character of the philosophical work destabilizes these limits and boundaries of life/work internally. Although these limits are at work, they do not and cannot possibly work properly. In this manner, to show how it is impossible to separate life and work properly as it is prescribed by the tradition of philosophy, I tried to refer to life of the text and life in the text by focusing Derrida's interpretations of Nietzsche's signatures.

As will take the name of "the work of pure reason" in this study, with a reference to Robert Smith's *Derrida and Autobiography* (Smith 1995), and Rorty's articles cited above, I would like to focus more on the differentiation of life/work in the future of this study. Yet, here, in the threshold of the closure of introduction and the beginning of another chapter, let me briefly point how the work of pure reason delimiting life and work -both theoretically and practically- works in our textbooks, in our classrooms or in encyclopedias: (I) On the one hand, we separate life and work of a writer, under the titles of "his/her life" and "his/her works" as complete, unite and different *compartments*, and (II) we combine them with some representations -written by the machinery system of signatures and proper names, and ordered by the institutions of academy, publishing industry and so on- without any rigor or elaboration.

Parasiting Derrida, this is what I tried to describe as (I) a logic fed by denial and ignorance, and *authorized* by constitution and application of the unity of book and subjectivity, which seemingly clear-cut differentiates the life and work, and (II) common non-responses to the question of life/work with a general and unquestioned admittance of the influence of the personal life of the writer in the text. Whereas these borderlines and limits of life/work cannot

work, also the general ideas based on *auto-biographical a priori* violently use, misuse and abuse this polarity. The question of life/work, therefore, is not only a question of good/bad reading but also a pedagogical, ethical and political problem. The modest claim of this study is, at least, not to make as if there is nothing to question in this relation of life/work.

Chapter 2 - Post-Introduction: 'Derrida'

The name 'Derrida' designates an abstruse thinker and incomprehensible writer for many, which seems to be a sort of anti-intellectual insult. He is mostly introduced to the potential reader and students as one of the most complicated writers, if not a semi-intelligible "post-" thinker. In accordance with this general representation, Derrida's "impurity, anomaly and monstrosity" is also registered and publicized by some twenty academics, in what is called the *Cambridge Affair*. (Derrida 1995) In 1992, some philosophers, including Barry Smith and Willard van Orman Quine, tried to stop the granting him of an honorary doctorate by Cambridge University. Below are some sentences taken from their warning letter to *The London Times*:

M. Derrida describes himself as a philosopher, and his writings do indeed bear some of the marks of writings in that discipline. Their influence, however, has been to a striking degree almost entirely in fields outside philosophy -- in departments of film studies, for example, or of French and English literature.... In the eyes of philosophers, and certainly among those working in leading departments of philosophy throughout the world, M. Derrida's work does not meet accepted standards of clarity and rigor.... Academic status based on what seems to us to be little more than semi-intelligible attacks upon the values of reason, truth, and scholarship is not, we submit, sufficient grounds for the awarding of an honorary degree in a distinguished university. (Derrida 1995, 419-421)

Without need to any extra effort for interpretation, these words in their "clarity," give a brief idea about the intolerable crime of transgression committed by Derrida: Although he describes himself as a philosopher, he is not; because his writings' "influence has been to a striking degree almost entirely in fields *outside philosophy*." This influence is the evidence of that he

is outside of the disciplinary borderlines of philosophy which are guarded by the so-called “values of reason, truth, and scholarship.” The other disciplines, however, which are not guarded by the foundations of an acceptable philosophy, are invaded by passion, contingency, singularity, and so on. Indeed, they must have been radically and *originally* different than philosophy. Let alone this clear-cut differentiation of academic disciplines, Derrida claims that “there is nothing outside of the text!”(Derrida 1998, 158). Certainly, this infamous motto does not claim that these separated fields of study are identical, but textuality cannot be reduced in any way. Even life itself is a text *after theory*.

And as you very well know, when I said ‘there is nothing out of the text’ I did not mean the *text* in the sense of what is written in a book; I *first* generalized the concept of text, of trace -‘text’ is not just, say literature or philosophy but life in general. Life after theory is a text.(Derrida 2004, 27)

The *auto/biographical*, in this sense, is a text in a way which is conceptually generalized by Derrida, a life/text living and dying in the text. Despite the efforts to guard the borders of philosophy with standards of purity in general, philosophical text is contaminated by textuality and therefore, by the auto/biographical. In an interview held just a few months after the *affair*, Derrida replied a question regarding the reasons of these attacks. Let me quote his reply which will somehow shape the fate of this study, leaving its marks and traces, from an unclear beginning to an unknown end:

If these blindly passionate and personal attacks are often concentrated on me alone (while sometimes maintaining that it isn't me but those who "follow" or "imitate" me who are being accused--an all too familiar pattern of argument), that's no doubt because "deconstructions" query or put into

question a good many divisions and distinctions, for example the distinction between the pretended neutrality of philosophical discourse, on the one hand, and existential passions and drives on the other, between what is public and what is private, and so on. More and more *I have tried to submit the singularity that is writing, signature, self-presentation, "autobiographical" engagement* (which can also be ethical or political) to the most rigorous--and necessary--philosophical questioning. (Derrida 1995, 410)

In his attacks to the “values of reason, truth, and scholarship,” Derrida’s monstrosity begins with a lack of “clarity and rigor” and causes him to stay out of philosophy. The source of this lack is most of all an “admixture of the elements of the life with those of the work”(Smith 1995, 5), which has much to do with the *monstrosity* both clearly announced and affirmed in Jacques Derrida’s writing. In this manner, let me underline two divisions put into question here by Derrida: (I) “the pretended neutrality of the philosophical discourse, and existential passions and drives on the other,” and (II) “public and private.” In this context, what is unacceptable is the fact that Derrida becomes “the philosopher of philosophy, where philosophy is just the self-consciousness of the play of a certain kind of writing,” (Rorty 1978, 153) and that he tries to “submit the singularity that is writing, signature, self-presentation, ‘autobiographical’ engagement (which can also be ethical or political) to the most rigorous--and necessary--philosophical questioning.”

For that reason, “in the eyes of philosophers, and certainly among those working *in leading departments* of philosophy throughout the world,” what is happening here is much worse than ‘bad’ philosophy or non-philosophy: with literary and autobiographical elements, he *poisons* philosophy. That is, he does not recognize and respect the very distinction

between life and work: He transgresses the borders aggressively and confuses them intentionally. In addition, he is not the only one leaving the standards of a proper philosophy. From Sophistry to philosophy of the dark middle ages and from Oriental philosophy to Nietzsche, there has been a long tradition of poisoned philosophy. Just to mention one, Derrida points out in *Otobiographies* (Derrida 1988), that Nietzsche is the transferential figure “which most complicates the supposed division between life and work.” He is daring to a great degree that he offers that “I do not believe that a ‘drive to knowledge’ is the father of philosophy.” (Nietzsche 2003, 37) Hence, according to the machinery system of proper names, he is deemed as a “crazy philosopher,” a representative of the cliché of “mad, genius philosopher.”

Gradually it has become clear to me what every great philosophy so far has been: namely, the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir; also that the moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy constituted the real germ of life from which the whole plant had grown. (Nietzsche 2003, 37)

The naughty game Derrida played following Nietzsche’s signatures is therefore *at the margins of philosophy*. Indeed, when he titles one of his texts as ‘*Mes chances*’ in French, this word would echo as “*Méchant*” in a playful way (Smith 1995, 37): Being “*méchant*,” i.e., crude, cruel, filthy and malicious, he wanders around the limits and boundaries, gets close to the law, touches and plays with it and gets some kind of pleasure of transgression. One should not forget, however, Freud and the theory of masochism, in which pleasure and punishment somehow goes together, hand in hand. Exposing philosophy to the life, to the personal and contingent, taking his chances, risking the value and

the standard, he follows his *desire* which is towards pleasure and punishment at the same time.

Reminding the sinful origins and the confessional character of autobiography, this writing would turn to itself and takes its revenge against itself, again and again: It would be a self-attack or a suicide by *poisoning*. Let me remind that Derrida speaks about *pharmakon* in his several texts, first of all in “Plato’s Pharmacy” in *Dissemination* (Derrida 1981), which is “neither remedy nor poison, neither good nor evil, neither the inside nor the outside, neither speech nor writing.” (Derrida 1981, 43) In this path, the one poisoning philosophy is neither him nor Nietzsche. Actually, it cannot be someone, but philosophy itself. Indeed, “the project of a pure reason finds itself irremediably poisoned by a foreign body perversely necessary to it, both poison and cure.” (Smith 1995, 7)

This foreign body is the life itself. The indeterminable, immeasurable, ungraspable forces of life take some *forms* which I would like to call *auto/biographical*. One should be careful about using the concept of “form,” since the well-known opposition of form-essence would lead one to reduce these forces of life and to a priori fictions described in chapter I. This slip of tongue, however, is itself symptomatic:

Reading...cannot legitimately transgress the text toward something other than it, toward the referent (a reality that is metaphysical, historical, psychobiographical, etc.) or toward a signifier outside the text, whose content could take place, could have taken place outside of language, that is to say, in the sense that we give here to that word, outside of writing in general. (Derrida 1998, 158)

Like it is described in the account of Said and others, we saw the operations of linking life and work in a loose fashion, referring to biographical details as self-evident referents. Transgressing the text and denying the textual and worldly character of these biographical *data*, textually captured elements of the life of the writer are unquestioningly served to the interpretation of a text, or of a proper name. Moreover, the author-ity regarding this biographical data gives one the *right* to speak of a writer, of a proper name confidently in the conventional realm of academic and publishing industry. In the movie *Derrida* directed by Amy Ziering Kofman and Kirby Dick, Derrida says “that’s why I would say sometimes the one who reads a text by a philosopher, for instance a tiny paragraph, interprets it in a rigorous, inventive and powerfully deciphering fashion is more a real biographer than those who know the whole story.” (Dick and Kofman 2002)

We should not neglect the fact that some biographies by people who have authority in the academy finally invest this authority in a book which for centuries sometimes after the death of an author presents the truth. Someone who is interested in biography writes life and works of Heidegger well-documented, apparently consistent and it is the only one published under the authority of a good press. And then Heidegger’s image, Heidegger’s life image is fixed and stabilized for centuries.(Dick and Kofman 2002)

In a so-called delicate, comprehensive and competent way, some experts have the right to insert what we may call biographical into the reading of the text. Referring to the extra-textual being, to a general and obvious data witnessed and documented, the monopoly of interpretation becomes established. And the legitimate sons and inheritors, authorized distributors possess the right to fix and distribute the interpretation and the image of a

writer (Derrida 1994). The others are bastards. Here, risking *anomaly*, Derrida challenges the reign of the authority of authorized dealers and invites the unauthorized to read and interpret without any fear of authority.

As you know, the traditional philosophy excludes biography, considers biography as something external to philosophy. You remember Heidegger's statement about Aristotle. Heidegger once was, I think, asked "What was the life of Aristotle?" What could be the answer of this question: "What was Aristotle's life?" The answer was simple. Aristotle was a philosopher. The answer comes in one sentence: "He was born, he thought and he died." All the rest is pure anecdote. (Dick and Kofman 2002)

Heidegger tries to strengthen the borders between life/work to ensure a proper reading of the text by leaving the biographical aside and he is distant to biographical representations possibly living in an interpretation of a philosophical text or a philosopher. Nevertheless, for Derrida, it is impossible to distinguish the forces of life and of text. In this manner, neither ignoring the forces of life in the text nor clearing the philosophical text from these forces is impossible.

In this context, the distinction between life and work, the boundaries and the limits of the *two* in *a* relation is to be put into question. If there is a relation, that is, if they are two and one in *a* relation, there is an other who/which always and in many ways exists in that relation. And a law would delineate the legitimate connections and illegitimate transgressions in this relationship. This is *the law of genre* that always keeps an eye on the text, according to which any form of relation would be interpreted to be *constitutive* or *destructive*. "Thus, as soon as genre announces itself, one must respect a norm, one must not cross a line of demarcation, and one must not risk impurity,

anomaly, or monstrosity.” (Derrida and Ronell 1980, 57) Reminding the emphasis above regarding the division between public and private, Derrida would claim:

The whole enigma of genre springs perhaps most closely from within this limit between the two genres of genre which, neither separable nor inseparable, form an odd couple of one without the other in which each evenly serves the other a citation to appear in the figure of the other, simultaneously and indiscernibly saying "I" and "we," me the genre, we genres, without it being possible to think that the "I" is a species of the genre "we." (Derrida and Ronell 1980)

As if it is possible to measure the weight of I and We, of life and work, of auto/biographical *traces* and all-encompassing philosophical truth, the law of genre tries to delimit them and find a way to make the appropriate distinction for the order of the world of the texts. Nonetheless, it is to be emphasized that the law of genre does not only regulate the work, the *main corpus* which gives the genre its name, but almost always to the life/text which complicates the questions of reading. Thus, the reader/writer of the genre tends to read and write at the same time by censoring *his* self, not to censor the truth. In this sense, to limit the self, self-writing, self-account becomes the very condition of telling the truth. Thus, this “dialectics” somehow paradoxically defines a personality and impersonality at the same time, but suppresses “the other” element which is also a requisite to it: the auto/biographical.

The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is “knowing thyself” as a product of historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces without leaving an inventory...therefore it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory. (Gramsci 1971, 323)

Whereas Spivak was pointing out the autobiographical character of Orientalism, Gramsci relates life and work in the context of criticism by a self-consciousness formulated as Ancient Greek dictum “Know Thyself”. This appropriation of knowing one’s self and of an inventory-trace relationship which resembles memory reminds what we call “autobiography”. Actually, in an autobiography the writer (the subject) is the subject of a text, and in a writing moment, a *writing scene*, he remembers himself, his self, with the help of traces he found from his memory and writes the truth of his life *sincerely*. At the Reader’s Digest level, the question of sincerity is one of the most important criteria for the criticism of the autobiography.

In this manner, Gramsci speaks of an autobiographical a priori (“starting point”) for any critical elaboration. Indeed, as it is criticized above, a priori is also at work, life is at work in biographical or bio-geo-graphical accounts and the representations of intellectuals. Here, one of the more elaborated beginning questions appears regarding how life and work relate each other in critical reading. First of all, it is to be seen that there is a differentiation between biography and autobiography. Whereas the *auto* function, the machinery character in autobiography designates self-reflection, self-representation, “self-life-writing,” biography points to an other’s life and the other’s representation. Therefore, just like the bio-geo-graphical representations and readings of “Oriental” intellectuals, any representation of any writer would be biographical. By definition, autobiography is a self-act, a self-activity. Therefore, to be faithful to *the law of genre*, it should be said that any reading operates with a biography, with a text written about the writer by the reader himself.

Returning to Gramsci's words, let me remind the autobiographical a priori. In what Gramsci enunciates as "a critical elaboration," biographical and autobiographical a priori intermingles. Gramsci leads us to *inside* (one's self) in the critical elaboration for it is seen evident that criticism is directed to an *extension*, a being, a text *outside*. At this point, being unfaithful to the law of genre, when we question a logic of origin, of a priori we see how the borders and limits of the biography and autobiography blur. Not only them, also the very question of outside and inside is at stake here. It is elusive how this biography is written and how the autobiography of the critic/reader *determines*, affects the reading/critique.

The problem of sincerity in autobiography is not only putting this question in a very naïve way but it is also symptomatic. The meanings of making or telling the truth mixes and confuses in the question of autobiography: This is nothing but to say there is a truth *outside* of my *inside*. As the writer of autobiography, I objectify *I*, and if I am objective enough, my autobiography will be sincere and honest. In this sense, I should tell the truth as I *see* rather than make the truth, for making means here manipulating the truth out there. Nonetheless, if the truth I search and write is outside, if the truth of my self is other than me, then the circularity of *auto* is broken here and my autobiography has something biographical in itself. It means that I write my self as an other, and my self is other. Also presented as the problematic of the fictional character of autobiography, the distinction between making and telling the truth blurs at this point.

Interestingly, whereas deception and self-deception is the greatest sin, *confession* is not only almost always celebrated for the genre of autobiography

but it is also the beginning of the genre traditionally. Briefly insisting on the beginning, origin, genesis and what Hegel calls “a priori fictions” (Hegel 1981, 29) for now, it is to be emphasized that the reader/writer of the text and the world is also *given* by a theological or mythological (always logical, always with a certain relation *logos*) narration of original sin and of a fate of sin. This also reveals the theological character of the reading/writing subject for this subject acquires a totality and unity be-fore the God.

The radical difference between human and God, whether it takes a form of an acquiescence or opposition, seems to define the subjectivity with a sin or lack and requires a confession in any life-story for this is the original biography of subjectivity. This is what we can call as both graphical and non-graphical writing of subjectivity. Subjectivity is written and given to the extent that it would not give rein to any other self-writing without its mark. Even in the *death of God*, this subjectivity reigns in one way or another, always with a certain reference to a reason and truth, since “what is dead wields a very specific power.” (Derrida 1981, 6)

This given and necessary biography of humanity would go hand in hand in any autobiography of a proper name and turn into a story of personal and *impersonal* sins and confessions eventually. No need to say that being the originary and exemplar work, *Confessions* of Saint Augustine would be an inevitable model and help to constitute *the law of genre*. As Derrida puts it forward quite clearly, any writing would begin with a pledge, a promise:

In place of a constative description, you would then hear a promise, an oath; you would grasp the following respectful commitment: I promise you that I will not mix genres, and, through this act of pledging utter faithfulness to my

commitment, I will be faithful to the law of genre, since, by its very nature, the law invites and commits me in advance not to mix genres. (Derrida and Ronell 1980, 57)

Derrida calls this “cryptopolitics,” through which he designates how intellectuals, academicians and even priests control the writing as an ideological apparatus (Derrida 1979). Within the elliptical approach of this study, this *cryptopolitics*, as *a* beginning where *my* writing begins in an *external* provocation and in an *internal* response at the same time, will be taken into account again and again, as it is anticipated, with Derrida’s concepts of signature and proper name. Before any *dissemination* offered in an oblique manner in which italics and the sign (/) is at work all the time, it is to be admitted that not only the concepts, but also Derrida’s signature and proper name is always at work. Though I tried to refer *spectrality* several times in this sense, let me also underline the transferential character of this writing in which I do not only follow or imitate but *watch* some haunting ghosts.

Representation is death. Which may be immediately transformed into the following proposition: death is (only) representation. But it is bound to life and to the living present which it repeats originarily. A pure representation, a machine, never runs by itself. (Derrida 2001, 227)

Therefore, also keeping in mind the cryptopolitics, let me recall myself and *confess* before you how I several times felt as if there are some ghosts inside the classroom. Like in a Woody Allen movie, some ghosts haunted me when the professor was talking and talking. In the safe and sound environment of the classroom, I, my *self*, was attacked by the words of professor and I began to see ghosts wandering around, between the desks, in front of the blackboard and near me: just to name the two, the *holy* ghosts of

Edward Said and Jacques Derrida were sometimes walking around the classroom.

Writing is unthinkable without repression. The condition for writing is that there be neither a permanent contact nor an absolute break between strata: the vigilance and failure of censorship. It is no accident that the metaphor of censorship should come from the area of politics concerned with the deletions, blanks, and disguises of writing, even if, at the beginning of the *Traumdeutung*, Freud seems to make only a conventional, didactic reference to it. The apparent exteriority of political censorship refers to an essential censorship which binds the writer to his own writing. (Derrida 2001, 285)

At this point, let me send you to Derrida: resembling Freud's transference neurosis, wherein the analyst tries to make the analysand to re-experience the forgotten memory and the analysand displaces onto the analyst feeling connected to someone in the analysand's past, for Derrida, every philosophical text has its transference figures. "There is always someone else, you know. The most private autobiography comes to terms with great transference figures, who are themselves and themselves *plus* someone else." (Derrida 1995, 353) One of these transference figures, as we mentioned before, Nietzsche said "I do not believe that a 'drive to knowledge' is the father of philosophy." (Nietzsche 2003, 37) *Father*. Could there be *the* mother of philosophy? Derrida would reply:

My mother could not be a philosopher. The philosopher could not be my mother. That's a very important point. Because the figure of philosopher is, for me, always a masculine figure. This is one of the reasons why I undertook the deconstruction of philosophy. All the deconstruction of phallogocentrism is the deconstruction of what one calls philosophy, which since its inception has always been linked to a paternal figure. So a philosopher is a father, not a mother. (Dick and Kofman 2002)

When Derrida is asked what he would like to know about the personal lives of some philosophers like Heidegger or Husserl, Derrida responds it by asking a series of questions, also directing us to the cryptopolitics of philosophy: “Why do these philosophers present themselves asexually in their work? Why have they erased their private life from their work? Or never talked about anything personal?” (Dick and Kofman 2002) The promise of this chapter stated above is to take into account some resistance in the philosophy, or more precisely, some resistance in the “project of pure reason” of *some* philosophies to the auto/biography.

Impersonal and a-sexual, non-gendered philosophy assuming itself mother-less, apart from the *living feminine*, (Derrida 1988) also excludes women in philosophy. Jacques Derrida and Avital Ronell discuss this problem in their *The Law of Genre* referring “a biological genre in the sense of gender, or the human genre, a genre of all that is in general.” (Derrida and Ronell 1980, 56) The project of *pure* reason would also exclude sexual difference in its purity. For that matter, for *the other* matters, I feel somewhat obliged to admit that a list of the signatures, the proper names, or any other possible list which can be arranged in this study, almost always share some masculinity.

This symptom of philosophy which this study cannot avoid displays how this writing itself is poisoned and it uses the sources, the origins it tries to escape. Just to respond this internal/external problem of this study, it is a responsibility at least to have a recourse one of *my chances*: Insisting on *le parler femme* (womanspeak) and *écriture féminine* (gendered women's writing), Luce Irigaray herself extends this problem to language and states:

“Now generally language –in any case in the West- is a code elaborated taking into account masculine subjectivity. The linguistic code is not really neutral.” (Irigaray 2002, 79)

The project of pure reason, then, posits a philosophical figure who/which is a) western –as it is described in the introduction to a certain extent, b) a demigod that is non-auto-biographical in the *writing* of philosophy, and c) a male as it is anticipated in its deity. Though this is not a finished and complete description, for the project itself is inherently poisoned by these forces in itself, the discourse followed in this study hopefully allows one to *draw* not a consequence but a sketch of this figure as such. All these figural accounts of the philosopher would send us to the *ends* of philosophy which presents itself explicitly in Kant when it takes the name of “pure reason.” However, the project itself will be first exemplified here in Hegel’s dictum for its purity:

The sole aim of philosophical enquiry is to eliminate *the contingent*. Contingency is the same as *external* necessity, that is, a necessity which *originates* in causes which are themselves no more than external circumstances. (Hegel 1981, 28)

Hegel’s dictum sheds a light on both the definition of philosophy and the question of externality and internality. As one of the most important binary oppositions of Western metaphysics, the “inside/outside” polarity determined and guarded by fixed, stable and decisive limits and boundaries has the function of defining philosophy. The reason behind the elimination of the contingent is nothing but defining philosophy. With a so-called self-evident reference to externality/internality, Hegel tries to define philosophy by

excluding the contingent in a philosophy in the service of the project of pure reason. Nevertheless, Derrida would be suspicious not only about such a definition of philosophy but also about this clear cut differentiation of internality and externality:

The "dialectics" of the same and the other, of outside and inside, of the homogeneous and heterogeneous, are, as you know, among the most contorted ones. The outside can always become again an "object" in the polarity subject/object, or the reassuring reality of what is outside the text; and there is sometimes an "inside" that is as troubling as the outside may be reassuring. This is not to be overlooked in the critique of interiority and subjectivity. (Derrida 1981, 67)

Chapter 3 - The 'Work' of Pure Reason

Originally a phrase by Robert Smith, the work or project of pure reason has been implicitly mentioned with the references of Richard Rorty. With the intervention of Jacques Derrida and Richard Rorty, let me underline what shall and should be done with the work of pure reason in this study: As Jason Powell, the biographer of Jacques Derrida declares, this study tries to share a dream in a deconstructive way:

We could point to a residual trait which is in fact definitive of Derrida's type of reading/criticism, namely that he does not find fault by arguing against or along with the text he reads, but goes for the whole 'world-disclosive' picture set forth in the text, enjoying its poetic power as it were, and taking for granted that it is neither right nor wrong, only then to show that by its *own* standards and its *own* argumentation it cannot work and become a coherent textual artifact. (Powell 2006, 44)

Derrida shows us that the truth about a text is protected by an interior space as it is seen in the ideas of the structure and unity of the book. Alongside that interior space, this truth is also constituted by an extra-linguistic space which is complicated with some references to a constructed place of critical privilege such as the author, his or her biography, the reader or the world, a world as it is read by ignoring the contradiction of system of event. Paradoxically then, "outside" the text is not an exteriority which disperses the meaning of texts, but an interiority which in turn constitutes and protects the truth.

But pure perception does not exist: we are written only as we write, by the agency within us which always already keeps watch over perception, be it internal or external. The "subject" of writing does not exist if we mean by that some sovereign solitude of the author. The subject of writing is a *system* of relations between strata: the Mystic Pad, the psyche, society, the world. Within that scene, on that stage, the punctual simplicity of the classical subject is not to be found. (Derrida 2001, 226)

What I tried to describe here so far, with a reference to the question of life-work, I hope, displays that Derrida does not only insist on the linguistic dimensions of the text, for example, when he refers to play, chance, singularity or when he says “there’s nothing outside the text”. The generalized conception of text which also deconstructs the limits and borderlines of life and text is not a transcendental standpoint that denies the world and history in favor of what Foucault says “a vast sea of signification.”

The concept of appropriation here can be defined at the intersection of the text-appropriating and the world-appropriating acts. Nevertheless, making things one’s own, appropriating the books, texts, names, signatures, does not only read and write the world in the book and the book in the world. One should also consider the life of the text’, ‘the life in the text’ as well as the world of texts. The *auto/biographical*, in this sense, is a text in a way which is conceptually generalized by Derrida, a life/text living and dying in the text.

Reminding the auto/biographical accounts of Oriental intellectuals, and the cryptopolitics in general which is at work in pedagogical and academic institutions, Hegel on the one hand acknowledges *the contingency* (the auto/biographical, in one sense) as an external necessity, but on the other, he defines the sole aim of philosophical enquiry as to eliminate it. The words of Hegel display how philosophy is poisoned by itself, by a *pharmakon* which is both cure and the source of risk for it is both necessity and *non-origin*. For Hegel, the origin is not and cannot be the contingent for it is no more than a

consequence of external circumstances. Nevertheless, the *same* Hegel refers to self-consciousness as an origin, just like Gramsci.

Hegel insists on the necessity of subjective ‘moments’ -such as self-consciousness- on the way to reason, on the way to absolute knowledge, that is, any universal or absolute which attempts to do away with such moments will be unfounded. (Smith 1995, 4)

Actually, it is to be emphasized that *he* is not the same Hegel, since it is the same proper name but *it* is an *other* signature of him, a signature which *originates* within the dynamic border of life/work. *At* this borderline where the end of philosophy is to reach a universal which is only possible through a “pure” reason, the demigod figure of philosopher falls to the world that is bounded with “external circumstances.” Then, it became gradually clear that this universal and pure philosopher can neither be non-western nor feminine, since it presupposes a unity of subjectivity. Indeed, what we learn from “theory” which is at work in the cultural and literary studies is that the “universal subject” who is seemingly neutral is white, male, western and heterosexual implicitly. As it is seen in the *Cambridge Affair* this philosophy would define these studies themselves outside the borders of philosophy. And it defines an idea of canonicity which celebrates *the best* silently by virtue of this ideal neutrality.

The ideal thus seems to reduce the human species to only one gender furthermore to an individual that would become neutral with regard to sexual identity. What is removed, what is denied is difference itself, difference between two genders. (Irigaray 2002, 79)

As it is implied above, the other would only be accepted to the degree of *his* commitment and engagement to a self-acclaimed universality, and with a

condition of inclusion/exclusion in *his* representational biography. Turning back to femininity again, Luce Irigaray would define “the universal for the woman is therefore reduced to a practical *labor* included within the horizon of the universal defined by the man.” (Irigaray 1991, 169) Within this horizon a) the figure of philosopher as a writer/performer, b) the borderline of life and work in the writing of philosophy, and c) the cryptopolitics delimiting and regulating the realms of academic study closes itself to *the other* implicitly. Free-willing others may achieve becoming a universal subject only by registering their *selves* to the idea of great canonicity and to the ideal neutrality.

Accordingly, it is not surprising to find a counter-resistance in cultural, literary, post-colonial and gender studies which transgress the borders, and try to find a room to auto/biography in “theory.” Though the new meaning(s) and place of the word “theory” is apparently in need of further reflection, let me confine myself to point out that it is somewhat a necessary substitution for philosophical thinking in these fields of study. Reminding Cambridge Affair, it should be emphasized again some proper names seem to be more ready for any cooperation with what is called theory.

It is to be emphasized here, there is a certain counter-resistance, critique or deconstruction towards the project of pure reason: I hope that one can sense the ghosts of not only Spivak, Nietzsche and Derrida, but also of Marx, Freud, Levinas, Foucault, and so on, in this study. These proper names do not constitute a list of familial connections as a means of justification, since I find it both unnecessary and reductive. I should cautiously remind how *sur-names* such as “postmodern,” “post-modernity,” “post-modernism” or “post-

structuralism” reduces the works of these names and ignores the singularity demanded for each.

The notion of philosophical legitimacy fuses with that of historical legitimacy, both understood mere in terms of belonging or non-belonging to a tradition, heritage, genealogy or legacy than in terms of an abstract propriety. (Smith 1995, 33)

Reminding philosophy/thinking/theory or the other way around, Spanish writer and philosopher Miguel de Unamuno criticizes the idea of movements, streams or trends in philosophy and directs us to what we described as the compartmental approach to life/work in the education of philosophy: “In most of the histories of philosophy that I know, philosophic systems are presented to us as if growing out of one another spontaneously, and their authors, the philosophers, appear only as mere pretexts. The inner biography of the philosophers, of the men who philosophized, occupies only a secondary place. And yet it is precisely this inner biography that explains for us most things.” (Unamuno 1954, 2) Just from the beginnings of this study, putting this question of secondary-ness forward, we tried to *call* these “most things” which requires a further understanding. Although this *call* is even traced back to the Ancient Greek *origins* of philosophy, the reason (and the chance) behind a continuous reference to Derrida is that, reminding Nietzsche, he transforms this call to a *response*, to a *responsibility*.

Indeed, one can hear this *call* or acceptance from many other philosophers which turns out to be just “an avoidance that states the obvious but leaving it untouched.” (Smith 1995, 6) One of the other citations I would like to make also shows how this “duty” or call is responded by a deferral; a

sending to future like it is seen in the words of Jung above. However one may find some reasonable excuses for Jung, it is interesting that philosophers themselves avoid this problem implicitly. One can easily see this deferral in the words of Schiller: “Philosophy, then, *will* have the duty of tracing out the consequences of personality in all our knowing, because science will not do so.” (Von Schiller 1939, 39) Here, Schiller defines a duty which is shared by philosophy and science, but credits and privileges philosophy within a logic of dichotomy. It is also interesting to see that how he defers this “duty of tracing” with a *will* and posits this duty as a certain necessity that seems almost conditioned with the fate/faith that science will not realize this duty.

According to Robert Smith, these *effects* of the project of pure reason are at work just from the beginning of the threat of Sophists, that is, since the Ancient Greek origins of philosophy. Since philosophy has an irreducibly moralistic or ideological *origin* in its constitution for the good of public, the *rhetorics* as an art pose a risk in the hands of Sophistry. Also explaining the obsession of methodology in modern philosophy, Smith argues that “modernity always has been the property of philosophy for as long as being a science has shaped its ambition.” (Smith 1995, 15) The emphasis of Schiller about the science appears here again: as long as philosophy is formed *scientifically* with its direct recourse to methodology, it would not be appropriate for undertaking that duty. More interestingly, Smith stresses the moralistic constitution of philosophy and combines it with the legislative force acquired by a certain recourse to methodology.

In this manner, Hegel’s sole aim of “eliminating the contingent is probably the most general, the most basic method of method.” (Smith 1995,

16) With its anti-Sophist origins, this contingent would include the literary and rhetorical aspects of the texts philosophy and in some examples it would reduce philosophy itself to a pure logic. The legislative force, the generic law of philosophy is enforced accordingly and it draws the limits of philosophy as well as *authorizes* the figure of philosopher with the right to police the safe area of knowledge. This double logic of science and legislation has two duties to eliminate the contingency: first of all it will clean the area of phenomena from the contingency, and then it will clean itself from contingency.

In this double logic, there is no place for the duty stated by Schiller, for it has to be deferred and deferred for the survival of the universality. Yet, where the pure reason of philosophy is most powerful, the question of auto/biography pops up whether in the form of confession or self-consciousness. Smith asks here: “Why, if the contingent is contingent, does it need to be eliminated? Does it not disqualify itself automatically?” (Smith 1995, 19) The answer is no, because it is the very condition of philosophy.

Also interfering Smith’s statements about Ancient Greek origins of philosophy, let me quote Michael Frede to show how these *origins* themselves include what is defined as contingency: desire, belief, chance and all the other elements of impurity which are assumed too personal, too subjective and too superficial for the philosophical enquiry. Frede speaks about “two crucial features which the notions of reason as conceived of by Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, or the Stoics, all share.”(Frede 2002, 5)

First, it is part of the notion of reason according to these philosophers that reason has its own needs and desires...The assumption is that at least some desires, like the desire to know the truth or to obtain what is thought of as good, are

desires of reason itself, rather than desires reason merely endorses. (Frede 2002, 5-6)

In this path, Frede criticizes the modern over-simplification of reason which reduces reason to a mere calculative faculty or an ability to process data which should be neutral by its nature and origin. As it is seen in the first feature, reason has a desiderative or volutative aspect in its Ancient Greek origins. This desiderative aspect, however, is excluded in modern thought and reason has become to be seen just as a cognitive function. Accordingly, the aim of the cognitive reason becomes to reach a perfect method and to determine the *first* rules as it is seen in the *Rules for the Direction of Mind* of Descartes. Pointing out the later emergence of the notion of will with Cicero, Frede designates how the connection between desire and subjective reason is broken.

In this manner, as the subject of pure reason directs the mind to close itself to the *subjectivity*, it presupposes a subject who acquires the privilege of *knowing* the object. This privilege requires the *sacrifice* of human experience which in turn is reduced to the cognition of things. Reminding *pharmakon*, a new subjectivity is born against itself, minimizing its *subjectivity*, for the sake of its mastery over objects and of objectivity. In these *critiques* (of Descartes, of Hegel or Kant) -which refers to the Ancient Greek word *crisis*, to delimit, to separate and to divide- the subject of cognition should clean itself from itself by a methodology, by eliminating the contingency. In *Signéponge*, as a “non-synonymous supplement,” Derrida refers to the sponge, to the *science sponge* which gets inevitably dirty and impure in its duty of wiping clean. (Derrida 1984) Thus, such a cleanliness-dirtiness, purity-impurity becomes not only the precondition of things, but also of the scientific, methodological project of “pure” reason itself.

Thus, one can see how, under the influence of Christianity, a notion of reason would tend not to be characterized by the two distinctive features of earlier Greek notions of reason: reason would not be constituted at least in part by knowledge about the world, and it would not have desires of its own, its desiderative aspect being absorbed into a doctrine of will.(Frede 2002, 26)

Regarding the doctrine of will, then, there are two attitudes separated with a clear-cut certainty in subjectivity: By the differential critique of “I desire” and “I know,” the source of knowledge has come to be defined with its difference from desire. It is the very condition of cognition as a necessity. Referring his experience of writing, Derrida would interfere here and claim an absolute war between his desire and Necessity:

I write against my desire. I know very well that between my desire and necessity -what I call Necessity with a capital N in *La Carte Postale*, like a character- between my desire and Necessity, and those necessities which dictate to me what I write, there is an absolute war. (Smith 1995, 10)

As it is seen in “the work pure reason,” the necessity of an elimination, methodology, critique and so on should oppose desire and overcome it necessarily. At first sight, Necessity is to be interpreted as the character who/which posits some necessities depicted above, which dictates one what to and not to write. Since it is like a character, Necessity refers to a philosophical figure and points out the performative aspect of writing in general and writing philosophy. Why and how, then, does Derrida claim that he writes against his desire? In another text, however, Derrida reverses his side in the war and states that he also wages a war on the other side: “I would oppose desire to necessity, to Ananke.”(Derrida 1988, 115) Starting with the basic necessities of life, ruling compulsion, constraint, and restraint, Ananke is the deity in Ancient Greek Mythology.

Pointing out the war between desire and necessity at first, what Derrida does is to make the philosophy also a site of desire. For Derrida, however, the Necessity with a capital N, is neither the internal necessity of the work of pure reason nor the external necessity of Hegel. Since, the necessity of methodology requiring an elimination of the contingent and the *realm* of desire in reason, it necessarily behaves as if it finds its *righteous* conditions of necessity to detect and capture the contingency. Nevertheless, since desire is disseminated in the text of philosophy's everywhere and nowhere in its spectrality, Necessity with a capital N itself also becomes an unconditional figure of something more necessary for its incalculability. "Necessity comes, not to say No to desire, but to explain to desire that its condition of impossibility is also condition of its possibility." For Derrida, to write against desire is also to write against philosophy's systemic mastery, since Derrida's Necessity directs him to respond to the other in its unpredictability.

You are the only one to understand why it really was necessary that I write exactly the opposite, as concerns axiomatic, of what I desire, what I know my desire to be, in other words you: living speech, presence itself, proximity, the proper, the guard, etc. I have necessarily written on the other side - and in order to surrender Necessity.(Smith 1995, 11)

Turning back to intervention *beginning* with Frede, what Derrida makes is to claim that when I *write* "I" both desire and know. This is nothing but to affirm that there are no sides in this serious game in which neither desire nor Necessity is reducible. "I try to articulate the Necessity which urges me, compels me to write and to teach what I write, and this articulation means that it is *because* there is no pure presence that I desire it.(Derrida 2004)" And this is not true only for Derrida's writing, but also for other philosophers' texts, since it is impossible to be out of textuality, to remind the infamous motto:

And as you very well know, when I said ‘there is nothing out of the text’ I did not mean the *text* in the sense of what is written in a book; I *first* generalized the concept of text, of trace -‘text’ is not just, say literature or philosophy but life in general. Life after theory is a text.(Derrida 2004, 27)

Since all the divisions and borders which we assign in-to a text are always already overrun by the textuality itself, there is something what a writer desires or intends to control and something which cannot be controlled by *him*. In this sense, the absolute war between Necessity and desire cannot be taken up by any general law whether it is the law of genre or the project of pure reason articulated by any type of philosophy. All these are produced from some other locations inside and outside the text/game, for the text “is always a differential network, a fabric or traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces.” (Derrida 1987, 84) Derrida’s *work* begins with a response to a call mentioned above, a responsibility to “some others who have no identity in this cultural scene.”(Derrida 1995, 352)

As the life/work and the auto/biographical concerned, there is some other place in the philosophical text, some place in the other text and there is an other of the philosophical text. Before the response of Jacques Derrida which shall be discussed later, let us briefly talk about the return of the *original/other* desire, remembering Frede. Indeed, this return would not be a moment of auto/biographical writing in philosophy, for there is no *one* moment, an absolute beginning and an end of writing. For that matter, it will be rather an invasion of philosophy by it as a whole, because this is the return of the ghost, of the dead which is killed by the project of pure reason, but which is still alive in philosophy in its spectrality: “Spectrality is 'anachronistic'. The time -or, more correctly times- of the spectre is always already multiple. Spectrality thus

disrupts all conventional notions of time and presence/absence.”(Wolfreys 1998, 30)

In his *Spectres of Marx*, Derrida defines a work of mourning which is not simply a work among others, but a “work itself.”(Derrida 1994, 97) As referred in the title of this chapter, if there is a “work of pure reason” as a sacrifice, a self-sacrifice, a self-attack, even a self-poisoning for the sake of purity in a paradoxically double logic, the work of mourning would also involve a double logic of remembering and forgetting. The spectral logic, however, requires this response to be made without a detour, for the spectre is not an a priori existent which has been dead but it is also a spirit of *the other* yet to come. The spectre is not a person, since it is already dead and always alive, and its return would therefore be unanticipatable and unpredictable.

For that reason, Hegel’s or Gramsci’s self-consciousness, Kant’s transcendental illusion, or Schiller’s deferral cannot be a response, since they still have to presuppose the auto/biographical as a part of their *critical* subjectivity. Conditioned with a relation of part-whole, and a logic of purity-impurity, the idea of the subject of pure reason assimilated and incorporated in the universal can neither mourn nor welcome its other responsibly. These so-called efforts, then, are nothing but to capture and tame the auto/biographical. Such a ghost-busting, in any sense, is impossible for the ghost haunting is evasive and *non-educable* inevitably. Let me quote here the lyrics of the song appeared in the movie Ghost Busters (Reitman 1984), which can summarize these accounts as well as give me/us the pleasure of impurity.

If there's something strange
in your neighborhood
Who ya gonna call?
GHOSTBUSTERS

If there's something weird
and it don't look good
Who ya gonna call?
GHOSTBUSTERS

If you're seeing things
running through your head
Who can ya call?
GHOSTBUSTERS

An invisible man
sleeping in your bed
Who ya gonna call?
GHOSTBUSTERS

Yet, in his philosophical tribute to Jacques Derrida, which turns out to be a *fabulous* (*fabulosus*, *fabula*, *fable*) interpretation for me, Alain Badiou states that: “Derrida is the opposite of a hunter. A hunter hopes that the *animal* will stop, so that he can shoot. Or so that he can mow down the *animal*’s flight.” (Badiou 2009, 134) Since, the hunter, the logic is hunting the capture and take benefit of the animal, he takes a *distance* to the animal, waits for the right time, and follows it. There are at least two conditions, then: first, as Badiou states a *stop*, a cease in the machine-like action of the animal, and the *distance*. Derrida, however, with no intention to shoot, tries to get as close as possible to *locate*, much closer for a shot.

From the spectre’s haunting to the animal’s machine-like flight, the subject of pure reason is a hunter, a hunter of the other. Whether it is a non-present spectre within/out the text, or the *original* other within/out the nature/culture, the hunting of other begins with a distance: that is a hunting *qua* naming. Since the subject of pure reason is almost always constituted between the animal and god, the animal is the radical other: worldly and *cultural* man

hunts the *natural* animal, from a distance kept by naming at first. This is the violence of naming/hunting the other, for the sake of the constitution of the subject of pure reason. For the subject “I” acquires the necessary totality in its *name*, the auto/biographical animal has to name *the other*. This hunting qua naming does not *aim* the well-being of the human, but it is also the very condition of being of the subject of pure reason.

No text can defend itself without the other first coming to its aid. No text has the necessary solidity, coherence, assurance and systematicity if the response of the other does not come and interrupt it, and by interrupting it, make it resonate.(Smith 1995, 115)

In accordance with the “command” of God, the animal *other* should be sacrificed, for the man who gave the animals their names has right and necessity to do that. From so long now, we sacrifice the animals *to* the God for our salvation. Today, as Derrida points out, in a critical phase of tele-techno-scientific age, for the sake of *Homo Sacer*, for the good and interest of man, for the well-being of human, that is *naming animal* we are sacrificing animals “at a demographic level unknown in the past.” (Derrida 2002, 394) Naming animal names the animal(s) with a vast concept of animality and sacrifices them for the sake of its salvation and/or well-being in the earth: it expels the animals from its ‘world,’ and “does not recognize them as his fellows, his neighbors, or brothers.” (Derrida 2002, 402) The unquestionable right of sacrificial hunting begins with the difference between naming animal and the named animal other. In this sense, for Benjamin, the nature’s sadness or mourning does not result from its muteness, but in the first place the fact of *receiving one’s name*. (Derrida 2002, 389)

“Being called, hearing oneself being named, receiving a name for the first time involves something like the knowledge of being mortal and even the feeling that one is dying. Already dead by virtue of being promised to death: dying.”(Derrida 2002, 389)

Accordingly, the name of the other registered by “I” is always the limit of my name, my desire to escape from death. Naming the other as a self-naming, I say “I” to the other before calling her name: *I name, therefore I am*. With the name of the other, I also define my “self”. This is the condition of my ability to call my self; just after the call of the other, I can say “I”. I separate my self, my body, from the other with a membrane which is called name. Nonetheless, the boundary enabling me to become *one* also limits the other and surrounds and hunts her with another “name”. Within the muddy world of the signified, she can only gain a *presence* with the name given to her. A name gives her a presence, and makes her present-at-hand, ready for any use, techné and/or violence. The operation of naming, disabling her to name her self or resisting her to call her self as “I”, like the animal other, is nothing but the violence of naming the other.

As Derrida experiences in the face of his pussycat, however, the bottomless gaze of the other when the “I” is nude, when I am non-dressed by names which are auto-referential by virtue of techniques, the shame arises and bites my tongue. The shame from the violent difference and at the same time, the shame from the sameness prevents my word temporally in the face of other, until I find a new technique to cover, dress this gap. Yet, the name by virtue of which she is present, hunted, *dead* and then ghost, somehow remains inaccessible and closed to my tongue. In this manner, “the other, as the other than self, the other that opposes self-identity, is not something that can be

detected and disclosed within a philosophical space and with the aid of a philosophical lamp.”(Smith 1995, 108)

Thus, to continue this study’s discourse on the ‘work’ of pure reason, let me propose that philosophy’s lamp is blind, philosophy’s eye is blind, philosophy’s I is blind. Like the eye, it is blind to itself, it cannot see itself. But also it is blind to the other, to its others and to the others in textuality. Indeed, one can offer that one of the essential foundations of our philosophical thinking depends on the act of seeing, noting the words, terms and/or concept/metaphors like: *lethe-aletheia*, *theoria*, enlightenment, perspective, world-view, illusion, evident, evidence, obvious, witness, revealing, revelation, concealing, concealment, appearance, apparent, exposition, exposedness, and so on. Thus, this is not a question of visual perception, for the act of seeing is not taken here as a faculty, or as a “pure” act that can be conceptualized evidently, but as a theme that can be traced textually.

But pure perception does not exist: we are written only as we write, by the agency within us which always already keeps watch over perception, be it internal or external. The “subject” of writing does not exist if we mean by that some sovereign solitude of the author. The subject of writing is a *system* of relations between strata: the Mystic Pad, the psyche, society, the world. Within that scene, on that stage, the punctual simplicity of the classical subject is not to be found.(Derrida 2001, 285)

Let me carry on, then, my discourse from name and naming to eye, seeing, light and, blindness. The eye (I) can see the things, the world, the others, but cannot see itself. The eye is only seen by the others, by another eye (I). Unable to see itself as an ob-ject, the I (eye) seem to announce its subject-ness and risks to see the other I (eye). This leads some problems regarding the seeing the other I (eye) such as thinking/considering/regarding the other I (eye)

as an object. Attributing itself the monopoly authority of seeing and reifying both itself and the other, the eye (I) claims to see the other. This illusion of continuity and subject-ness of *Dasein* in the act of seeing does result from the history of the eye that constitutes the “logic” of seeing by enframing. This logic also is the guardian of continuity of identity, seeing-I (eye) and its grandiose location in the world. Then, one can interpret Cogito, “I think” as “I see”: “I am the same, I think continuously and I see continuously.” The things and the world may change, their appearances may flow but my eyes always already catch and grasp them in my-self.

In this way of seeing/thinking the other, the other I (eye) is bound to remain eye(I)-less and gaze-less. The gaze-less other becomes an object colonized by the eye. As to personal other (l'autrui), a phantasm of seeing the gaze would create an illusion of seeing for the eye (I). Yet, a gaze cannot be seen, but only imagined; eye can only see the eye. Not being able to see itself, its phantasm, the I (eye) imagines that it can see the other through seeing his gaze-eye. Nonetheless, both a reifying, objectifying gaze toward the other and a phantasm of seeing the other's gaze would mean as not accepting the otherness of other. A seeing/thinking that locates the distinction between the visible and invisible in favor of the seer-subject would not be able to see the other, but sentence it to the darkness.

To conclude this discourse of the ‘work’ of pure reason, let me remind the reader the paths we followed in this dark forest. For the sake of eliminating the contingency (Hegel), philosophy would exclude desiderative aspects of reason and make the reason purer and purer by reducing it to a mere calculative

faculty (Frede). However, unable to resist what we call ‘auto/biographical’ which it tries to *desist* (Derrida), the same/other philosophers try to find a way to include it referring to a self, to a consciousness and to a self-consciousness (Gramsci, Hegel). These efforts to bust, grasp and capture the ‘auto/biographical’ in a closed subjectivity are almost always deferred to a future (Unamuno, Schiller). Since, the autobiographical a) is a pharmakon which is both poison and remedy, a) is a spectrality which cannot be regulated by a general law, and c) it always makes the methodological sponge of elimination impure and dirty.

All these operations to include auto/biographical would be inadequate in advance, for the very logic of pure reason cannot escape its traditional customs such as a) violence of naming, and b) the world-disclosive act of seeing. In this path, whenever the project of pure reason tries to include the other and its other, i.e. the auto/biographical (literary, rhetorical, metaphorical and so on), it results as to hunt, to sacrifice and to suppress it. Since the project of pure reason tries to keep safe its pure and perfect subjectivity desperately, the efforts to capture the auto/biographical, the other and the outside come to imprison it again in this presupposed subjectivity. For that reason, philosophy is blind, it is blind to the other, and blind to itself in an inevitable circularity.

Positing an eye (I), a subject of naming and seeing, a subject of enframing, philosophy also presupposes a source of light which appears to be Logos, God, Reason, and so on. Taking this source from *outside*, from God, from the Eternal Light, or Enlightenment, the seer-subject of pure reason seems to consider himself as an “all-seeing eye” ordering and regulating in the world (*inside*). All this results as forgetting the worldliness of the eye (I), the history

and the invented logic of seeing/naming. There is no room here for the desire, for the contingent, for the dark other, and for the shadowy and spectral auto/biography.

Yet, just nearby the borders of the next chapter in which there is a light of hope, I would like to remind a Turkish idiom: “gözün feri-ışığı” which means *the light of the eye*. Connoting the force, the *energeia* and most importantly, the life, the light of the eye referring an *internal* light granting eye *an act* of seeing. Unlike the *external* sources of light such as Sun/God, the light of the eye is only possible with life. In its Turkish implications, the light of the eye does not grant one the *ability* of seeing, but an act of seeing which transcends the opposition of light-dark: life. In this sense, the light of the eye is always shared by the other, even by the animal other. This is the acknowledgement of life which is shared by all. But death is also shared, for when the light of the eye is gone, it means the one has left the life to death: the life-death.

Chapter 4 - Conclusion: the Auto/biographical

To use a word such as auto/biographical may only be justifiable at this point, at the *vanishing point* of this study. As it is repeated several times, the focus of this study was to raise the question of life/work in writing “theory” and philosophy. After referring cryptopolitical investment to the differentiation between life and work, and questioning the borderlines and limits between them, an oblique mark is a common strategy to point the blurring borders. This is also applied to auto/biography for its fictional, mythological and given character, which makes problematic to distinguish representation and self-representation in traditional examples of the genre of autobiography.

Moreover, apart from most of the other scholars who raised this question such as Robert Smith or Joseph Kronick, I preferred to leave the name of the genre autobiography and to use the word “auto/biographical” to indicate the spectral and *the other* character of the elements of *life* in the philosophical work. It was also important to emphasize that philosophy is a writing, and philosopher is a writer. In this manner, the philosopher and philosophical text are bound to *general rules* of textuality, as defined by Jacques Derrida: such as the law of genre, signatures, proper names, the unity of book, performative character of philosopher, cryptopolitics, spectrality and so on.

In this fashion, we can speak of autobiography as a body of writing and as an event or engagement wherein the self, which does not exist, is *given* by writing. (Kronick 2000, 999)

According to my interpretation of Derrida’s work, all these gestures were necessary for there is always the risk of colonizing the auto/biographical as it is seen in the examples above. The reason beyond this was the general use

of autobiography as something synonymous to a self-representative subjectivity. As the name of the genre indicates, in the traditional autobiographies, a representation of the self in its totality and self-identity was almost always given. “The sense of autobiography employed here needs to be set against that which promises the constitution of the subject as self-present being.” (Kronick 2000, 998)

Nevertheless, the auto/biographical is a writing which is not a mere graphical operation, not only a body of writing, but also a practice. This practice is uncontrollable for it is ghostly constitutive in any moment, revealing and concealing at the same time. In any case, unlike the self-identity claim of the autobiographical subject, the auto/biographical refers to a counter-resistance to the subject as a self-present being. For that reason, unlike any account regarding the subjectivity, it is impossible to capture the auto/biographical for it cannot be marked with a letter. The auto/biographical is dispersed throughout the text; more precisely it is dispersed outside/inside the text. And it takes its power from its *non-existence*, from its (dis)appearance like a ghost.

I would like to explain this *non-existence* with the help of Alain Badiou’s *fabulous* interpretation of Derrida, as declared above. Let me begin with Badiou’s quotation from *Internationale*: “We are nothing, let us be all!” In his interpretation of this word, Badiou states that the meaning of “we are *nothing*” does not designate the nothing-ness of those who proclaim it, but it means “they are nothing in the world as it is, when it comes to appear politically.” (Badiou 2009, 131) In this sense, they are nothing from the point of view of their political appearance in *a world*. In this sense, the social and

economic *being* of proletariat is not the question. The question is proletariat's *existence* in the political world.

Making a distinction between being and existence, Badiou states a transcendental relationship between multiplicity and inscription in the world. In this sense, any multiplicity has a degree of existence in the world. "The fact of existing qua appearing in a determinate world, is inevitably associated with a certain degree of appearance in that world, with an intensity of appearance, which we can also call intensity of existence." (Badiou 2009, 128) As the multiplicity has different elements in itself, there is a totality which constitutes its existence in a world. Nonetheless, Badiou stresses the fact that "there is always one component in that multiplicity whose appearance is measured by the lowest degree." (Badiou 2009, 129) In a multiplicity, then, there is at least one element appearing with the minimal existence, which is equivalent to *non-existence*. "From the world's point of view, existing as little as possible is the same as not existing at all." (Badiou 2009, 130)

The auto/biographical is this non-existent element in the project of pure reason, which has the lowest degree of appearance and a minimal existence. I would like to remind you here that the *being* of the auto/biographical is not in doubt for the philosophers of pure reason. Nonetheless, it is inscribed to the philosophical text with a necessary minimal existence for the sake of the purity of reason. For Badiou, "What we call 'life' our 'our life' is often a transition from a world in which we appear with a lower degree of existence to a world in which our degree of existence is much more intense. That is what a moment of life, a lived experience, is." (Badiou 2009, 129) In this sense, there should a transition from the world of personal

experience to the world of philosophy, although an absolute transition is always impossible and it (the auto/biographical) remains in that world as a non-existence. At this point, Badiou claims:

[I]n the sense that Bergson says that philosophers have only one idea, in my view, what is at stake in Derrida's work ... is the inscription of the non-existent. And the recognition, in the work of inscribing the non-existent, that its inscription is, strictly speaking, impossible. What is at stake in Derrida's writing -and here 'writing' designates a thought-act- is the inscription of the impossibility of the non-existence as the form of its inscription. (Badiou 2009, 132)

Accordingly, Derrida is the opposite of a hunter. Derrida's work aims the inscription of the non-existent, also recognizing the fact that it is impossible. And this work is not to be done by grasping or capturing, since grasping it would destroy it. "To be in the world is to be marked by discourses, marked even in our flesh, body, sex and so on. Derrida's thesis, Derrida's conclusion, the source of Derrida's desire is that, whatever form that discursive imposition may take, there is point that escapes that imposition, and that we can call a *vanishing point*." (Badiou 2009, 133) There is, then, a vanishing point which escapes the imposition of eliminating the contingent, the desire, and the auto/biographical. Derrida's work is, as a non-hunter, not to grasp this vanishing point, but to locate it. Like it is tried to be described above regarding the auto/biography as spectrality, vanishing point is "that which, when it is in place, is outside-place." (Badiou 2009, 135) This is also the critique of metaphysics in a very Badiou-Derridean way:

That went against philosophical custom, for which the basis of non-existence is nothingness... That is where the metaphysical error lies, the only metaphysical error that is irremediable. The metaphysical error *par excellence* is to

have identified the non-existent with nothingness. (Badiou 2009, 140)

As to both the auto/biographical and proletariat, the last remark is a hope: “That is why proletarians, who non-exist, can argue on the basis of their being, that ‘We are nothing, let us be all.’ That is the very definition of Revolution: a non-existent uses its being-multiple in order to declare that it will exist in the absolute sense. And for that to happen, we have to change the world of course, change the world’s transcendental.” (Badiou 2009, 141)

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