FINDING A SYSTEMATIC BASE
FOR DERRIDA'S WORK

DINO GALETTI

University of the Witwatersrand

Abstract. Derrida became increasingly overt in later years in suggesting that his work displays a rigour, and even a 'logic'. Further, it is becoming accepted that deconstruction arose in dialogue with Husserl. In support of these views, this article points out that in 1990 Derrida told us that his first work of 1954 reveals a 'law' which guides his career, and that some responses had already arisen there. The work of 1954 is examined, and an interrelated 'system' developed by which the responses relate to the law, to help find a common, early and systematic base to apply to Derrida's oeuvre as it develops. Brief examples will be pointed to in closing to show that this basis subsists, at least in part, in later work.

There has been increasing agreement in recent years that Derrida's work contains one overarching system, buoyed by Derrida's own insistence on the issue. In 1993, for example, he pointed across sixteen of his works and noted that 'a plural logic' (Derrida 1993, pp. 13-16) takes shape.[1] Suggestions for such a system have been set out (cf. Hurst 2004, 2008), although none go as far back as Derrida's first work of 1954. Separate approaches have also been undertaken to track Derrida's 'logic' as it emerged from his engagement with Husserl, between 1954 and 1967 (cf. Lawlor 2002, Kamei 2005). As far as I am aware, no framework to extend from 1954 to the later work has been provided. To further these aims, this article points out that Derrida tells us in 1990 that there is one 'law' which impelled his career since his first work of 1954, and that some of his mature responses had already arisen there. Re-introducing that student essay, *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy* (Derrida 2003)*,* he tells us that it "refers to

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[1] Bennington, for example, suggests Derrida's thinking on politics is "a rigorous consequence of [. . .] difference" (Bennington 2001, p.202).

a sort of law [and] *since then, even in its literal formulation,* this law will not have stopped commanding everything I have tried to prove" (Derrida 2003, p. xiv, Derrida's emphasis).

Assuming that Derrida is not leading us astray, this becomes important. He then relates this to his term 'contamination'[2] (employed once in 1954 at p. xl), and insists it is already entwined with this issue, asking: "why the very word 'contamination' has not stopped imposing itself on me from thence forward" (Derrida 2003, p. XV).

It follows that working out some relations of contamination, in regard to this 'law', could provide one base to apply to Derrida's oeuvre. I hope the potential benefit is apparent – a common ground which could develop into Derrida's many later interests, without privileging any school, simply as this work came first, and Derrida *tells us* there is a pole around which his development gravitates. Moreover (here is my difference from Lawlor, whom I will address in closing), one could track this by its 'internal' reasoning. Indeed, this student Derrida displays none of the later guardedness, revealing his own interests and criteria clearly, even mechanically.[3] I have thus suggested an interconnected, systematic and predictable basis.

As one might expect, this imposes some methodical requirements. Principally I aim to avoid *anachronism*, and only draw what is nascent forward, where required. For example, Derrida has not yet developed his own 'logic', but employs only a simple inside-outside reasoning,[4] nor has he problematised hermeneutics. Hence this article sets out conventional bases: what 'Derrida' wishes answered, without critique of the language which might limit this. The aim is to allow a simple basis which can develop as Derrida does. I have also laid out only a minimum of Husserl's work – with respect – where necessary. This is intended as a protection, for as we will see, this young Derrida is no friend of descriptive phenomenology. He relentlessly demands exactly what Husserl excluded since 1907 (Husserl 1964, p. 7): absolute justification of the object despite the reduction. This article, then, will be *very* simple. As it sets forward mechanics, it is also reductionist; but this does not necessarily mean individual examples are treated unfairly, but rather that they are treated for their commonality.

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[2] Cf. Derrida 1976, pp. 30, 34; 1973, pp. 20, 22; 1978, p. 128; 2002, p. 274; 1993, p. 7.

[3] Derrida uses the term 'machine' to describe a 'logic' in 'The Double Session', and 'The Typewriter Ribbon' (cf. Hobson 2004, p.53). The 'machine' reappears later as a means of entertaining consistency in a 'logic' (Derrida 2000, pp. 72-3).

[4] Elsewhere, I have suggested some issues which a propositional logic might face in systematising Derrida (Galetti 2010) but here I feel this is premature.

I. THE INITIAL PLATFORM

Husserl's *oeuvre* had several aims – not exhaustively: tabulating the elements of consciousness, situating the regions of different sciences (as they are constituted in consciousness) upon a rigorous systematic basis, and accounting for the problems of classical epistemology. All of these occur in a process of constitution via the flux of the mind's intentionality, in synthesis. Derrida explains his 'law' above thus: " . . . the question that governs the whole trajectory [of his *oeuvre*] is already: 'How can the originarity of a foundation be an a priori synthesis? How can everything start with a *complication*?" (Derrida 2003, p. xv, quoting p. xxv, my emphasis)

    While in Husserl, as in Kant, the constituted object is intuited in consciousness in an a priori synthesis, for Derrida, *synthesis does not succeed*. The key is the criterion he sets. In re-introducing this work, Derrida tells us that what seemed 'most curious' in it is his 'concern for knowledge' (Derrida 2003, p. xiv). Put differently, Derrida's oeuvre begins with the demand to determine the object absolutely. One might demarcate this from the 'presence-seeking' which Derrida later attributes to the history of metaphysics, and also his later approach: a more typical epistemology (cf. Condillac, the 'inheritor of Locke' (Derrida 1987, p. 29)), seeks to determine the object, upon the understanding that it could be found. This early Derrida seeks absolute knowledge on the understanding that determination is *not* found. The Derrida of 1967 recognises that even 'it is not found' is undecidable.

The basic elements

This section thus sets out his interrelated parameters, the first instances being italicised. First, Derrida has a *demand* for *absolute* solution. As a result, he sets *'either/or limits'*: 'yes or no', 'true or false' outcomes. This is bivalent, thus the limits apply to an object reasoned about: either it is absolutely *present* or not. The limits will no longer be accepted by 1964, but for now the '*problem*' is that the *origin* of the object is unaccounted for, leaving the demand for absolute solution unmet.

    The primary impediment to solving the problem – as Lawlor agrees – is that any intended object was *'always already'* (henceforth *'already'*) there to be found (cf. Derrida 1976, p. 73).

    Thus the problem has a mechanical relation to presence. Amazingly, Derrida began with this issue in 1954. For a thought of an object "will always have to be *already there,* in front of a passive consciousness whose

presence remains accessory or accidental" (Derrida 2003, p. 21, my emphases).

Hence, "in order to give a 'unity of sense' to this [original] genesis and to its objective product, it has to be *supposed present,* and autonomous, before the multiplicity of acts of consciousness" (Derrida 2003, p. 21, my emphasis).

If one is to unify (identify, in *a priori* synthesis) the given object, the 'already' means one must 'suppose' – affirm – its presence. Given a demand for absolute solution, this is not acceptable.

Shortfall and the inside-outside

However, I add a second and related mechanism, not yet included by other readers. A systematic interaction is deemed to fail absolutely if it does not interact with origin. But the 'already' means each interaction cannot find origin. Thus: *intra-systematic interactions fail to absolutely solve the problem.*

Derrida often uses this kind of reasoning. When the system interacts only with itself "we remain on *this side* [*en deçu*] of *absolute originarity*" (Derrida 2003, p. 137, my emphasis). This will be called *'shortfall'*, drawn from 'Speech and Phenomena' (Derrida 1967), where "presence had *already* from the start [from its origin] *fallen short* of itself" (Derrida 1973, p. 87, my emphases; cf. also 1976, pp. 47, 55).[5]

I will set out the relations via Derrida's own terms – nearly universal in systematic readings of his work[6] – of the 'inside' and 'outside' (Derrida 2003, p. 93; cf. 1976, pp. 35, 41; 1973, pp. 30-1). The 'already' means that "pregiven [objects] have only external relations" (Derrida 2003, p. 112).

Their relations do not relate 'inside'. Oppositely, objects already here remain 'on this side' of the external origin (Derrida 2003, p. 137). These can be united so: shortfall is a judicative consequence of the inside-outside criterion. If the origin remains outside, it is judged that the system does not meet the demand for absolute solution.

Hence it is the *demand* to solve the problem that is not met; the problem is not that the object is not there, but that its origin is not accounted for. This will lead to the failure of affirmation and denial in closing. A me-

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[5] '[L]a présence avait déjà commence à se manquer à elle-même.' (Derrida, 1967, p. 97). A lack (manque) is also a falling short.
[6] Caputo (1987, p. 247) pointed out that the major structural readings of Derrida of 1986 (Gasché, Harvey, Llewellyn) had all been based upon Derrida's work as 'neither inside nor outside'.

chanical relation with presence is thus set out: the demand to affirm origin finds, on its 'inside', the presence of an object which must be absolutely accounted for, but shortfall means this is a problem. As can be seen, any term here can be related to any other.

II. THE SPATIAL AND ITS JOINTS

It must be noted that these are Derrida's own concerns. From the start, Derrida never believes that Husserl's reductions provide exemption from the 'problem'. For example: "once the transcendental reduction has been carried out [. . .] Husserl seems, implicitly [. . .] to put passive synthesis, pure and as such, in its turn into brackets" (Derrida 2003, p. 142).

Husserl takes a reduction as sufficient to avoid the need to account for what has been passively constituted. Indeed, phenomenology is supposed to begin when a reduction allows the appearing of this object (cf. Husserl 1964, p. 7). But for Derrida the passive content still requires a justification, as it falls short of its origin. He demands that phenomenology answer his own problem. Hence, *none* of what follows is actually about Husserl's phenomenology. *In this sense, Derrida never was Husserlian*. He admits this in 1959:

> [the reduction] brings eidetic forms once again to light, that is the 'structural a prioris'. . . in Husserl's mind, at least, there never was a 'structure-genesis' problem. Phenomenology, in the clarity of its intention, would be offended, then, by my preliminary question (Derrida 1978, p. 156).

This is unacknowledged in 1954. But in 1959 he goes on: "having taken these precautions as concerns Husserl's aim, I must now confess my own" (Derrida 1978, p. 156). This aim is

> to reconcile the *structuralist* demand (which leads to the comprehensive description of a totality, of a form or function organised according to *an internal legality* [. . .] with the *genetic demand* (that is, the search for the *origin* and foundation of the structure) [which is outside] (Derrida 1978, p. 157, my emphasis last).

Integrating systematic *shortfall* with origin remains Derrida's central concern. To do so, he tracks through Husserl's work chronologically; I will begin with the *Ideas 1* of 1913.[7] There, within a reduction, Husserl divides

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[7] It is notable that Derrida only glosses Husserl's *Logical Investigations* (first of 1901) here. He omits *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (1929), suggesting his argument against

intentional being into the material (hyletic) and noetic phases (Husserl 1952, §85). The latter are the intentional processes which constitute essence without material input from the *hylē*. The *noema* is the 'intentional content' which corresponds to such a noetic process: "corresponding to all points to the manifold data of the real noetic content, there is a variety of data displayable in really pure intuition, and in a correlative 'noematic content', or briefly 'noema'" (Husserl 1952*, §88*).

But the 'noema' is not a real object (Husserl 1952*, §88*), for which latter Husserl reserves his own term '*reell'*. One can understand this via Husserl's early example: the *imagination* of a centaur is not real, while the imagined centaur is a real (*reell*) part of thought, but the centaur need not exist in reality (*Realität*). But the noema *is* intentional, as it is constituted in consciousness. On the other axis, the *hylē*, which is supposed to supply 'sensible' material, is real (*reell*), yet *not* intentional (Husserl 1952*, §85*). But then how could a noematic intention interact with it? Derrida applies the 'already'. For it is "because [hyletic material] appears as *already constituted* in its very being, *prior to* any noematic synthesis, that consciousness can experience *originary* constitution" (Derrida 2003, p. 63, my emphases).

The noema cannot interact with the outside. Indeed, Derrida takes the *Ideas* back to the *natural* inside-outside sense. For, Derrida feels, by containing sensible matter, the *hylē* also claims to convey what is *outside* itself: "does [Husserl] not reintroduce, in the form of a 'hyletic datum', passively received, the transcendent object that he claimed to exclude [. . .]?" (Derrida 2003, p. 63).

Again, the reduction is rejected. The outside remains problematic. The *hylē,* as the 'already constituted' is also aligned with what is 'passively' constituted (outside), and Derrida applies this across Husserl's works: "as soon as the pure content of sensation is admitted [then is] not the theme of passive genesis, taken up fifteen years later by Husserl, already announced?" (Derrida 2003, p. 63; also cf. p. 143).

Derrida is quite happy to simplify Husserl's work across four decades to his own system. One recognises his commitment to his own demand.

Pure logical grammar as conventional basis

Now a basic Husserlian distinction is required. Husserl aims to provide a systematic basis for thinking, thus his analysis sets out some of its ba-

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Experience and Judgment (begun from 1918-9) applies. I will not address Derrida's address to Husserl's years from 1891 to 1900, or after 1931.

sic components. His 'pure logical grammar' (Husserl LI 4, §14) sets out a *formal* interaction amongst judgment, logic and 'ontology'. The latter are, simply, constituted relations of essences which arise from an intention directed at an 'object'. Setting aside 'form' until below: 'apophansis' is 'judgment in the logical sense' (Husserl 1969, p.70; 1952, p.371). A correspondence between apophansis and ontology is made as thought (intentionality) has a universal logical underpinning (Husserl 1952, p. 409). To show their basic interlinking: Husserl employs a fundamental proposition of the form '*S* is *P*' (cf. Husserl 2000, Vol. 1, p. 18). In brief, one predicates[8] *P* of the subject *S*. The latter, in turn, is the object of ontology. Judgment then follows from the logical predication about this 'object'. One might think of apophansis simply as 'judgment', logic as 'what one uses to judge with', and ontology as 'what is judged of'. While Husserl thought these overlapped, Derrida is interested in their shortfall.

First, he addresses ontology. In brief, after a reduction, intentionality no longer addresses a natural object, and the general essence (*eidos*) is constituted instead of the natural world. From this, eidetic ontologies arise, which do correlate to a 'world'. Derrida summarises: "the existence of the world is the correlate of certain experience-patterns marked out by certain essential formations" (Derrida 2003, p. 79).

For Derrida this supposes what is *already given* even as an essence: "*always* and essentially, eidetic reflection will presuppose an *already* constituted *ontology*" (Derrida 2003, p. 140, my emphases).

The groupings of essences which demarcate how the world appears find that their existence depends upon a problematic outside. For Derrida, eidetic phenomenology itself fails because of his simple criterion.

The shortfall of judgment

This is apparent in Derrida's analysis of apophansis in *Experience and Judgment* (Husserl 1973(b), §1-16). There, Husserl deems that the 'world' is a horizon of possible judgments, which appear as believed evidence. Apophansis needs no reduction for judgment does not, ostensibly, deal with external objects. However, active judgment still judges of passive 'substrates' of judgments. These, Husserl says, are antepredicative: *already there*. Derrida suspects that Husserl re-creates an inside-outside, thus a problem of origin. Second, this work inaugurates Husserl's turn to

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[8] I use 'predicates' instead of 'asserts', to avoid confusion with the 'affirmation' of a judgment.

'genetic phenomenology'. The object, Husserl says, contains a sedimented history of past judgments. These are 'evident' to active judgment. Phenomenological analysis, from within the horizon of possible judgments, can then strip off prior judgments *in regressus* to explicate the object *in progressus*. This project, were it completed, would reveal the original judgment in its life-world.

Derrida now turns to arguing that Husserl's own address to the problem of origin does not succeed. The problem is that Husserl deems the origin is pre-given (Husserl 1973(b), §10). First, Derrida counters that predication of a 'history' falls short, as any regression through sedimentations finds the object was already given, thus there *may* always be a further term and "it is not known whether the regression that has to be effected to return to antepredicative existence has to end in a sensuous reality or in an absolute indetermination" (Derrida 2003, p. 114).

Note, a fortiori, that this is *indeterminate,* and *not* false. For Derrida, judgment can neither *affirm nor deny* the outcome of a predication. This will be furthered below. Here, it undermines the entire genetic project. The 'passive' substrate of judgments – what one actively judges 'of', just as one judges of ontological objects – simply reproduces the most basic problem. It is "a genesis that itself took evidence for granted, and which *could easily be assimilated to a simple empirical genesis*" (Derrida 2003, p. 109, my emphasis).

Again, Derrida is willing to devolve Husserl's work over two decades to the simplest inside-outside criterion. As a measure of their divergence, Husserl deems that the precedence of the passive is the *solution* for phenomenological appearance: "anything built by activity necessarily presupposes, as the lowest level, a passivity that gives something beforehand" (Husserl 1960, §38; in Derrida 2003, p. 141).

For Derrida, who does not accept the reductions, this is the 'problem'.

The 'joint' – a mechanical model to understand Derrida

Thus at this divergence, Derrida's system will be clarified. As he does not problematise metaphor until 1964 (cf. Derrida 1978, p. 84), I will import a term from *Of Grammatology* – the 'joint' (*brisure*: also 'break', 'hinge' etc.),[9] which, we are told, underpins the way all metaphysics – bound to inside-outside criteria – can be thought. The joint "marks the impossibility

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[9] Or in other metaphors in 1967, as a 'fissure', and 'interval' in thought (Derrida 1976, p. 200). Derrida returns to it as a hinge (*charnière*) later (cf. 1994, p.78).

that a sign [can] be produced within the plenitude of a present" (Derrida 1976, p. 69).

The concept 'joint' indicates *both* a separation and a connection. For now it is seen for its separation. Every object or structure has an inside and an outside, between which lies a 'joint'. Thus, in a mechanical model, there are at least five directions to query: outside to its outside, outside to inside, inside to outside, inside to its own inside, and overall shortfall (everything to its outside). When one pole on any joint is taken as a locus from which to question (that is, as a hypothetical starting-point), then the other side is unjustifiable because of shortfall, thus *problematic.*

Every one of Derrida's arguments above, and below, can be treated as a direction upon a joint.

I will show this in Derrida's analysis of active and passive synthesis, which becomes the 'final stage' (Derrida 2003, p. 153) in his research.

First, the outside cannot certify its outside

The passive constitution outside cannot justify its presence from out-side. That is, the *already* constituted is outside its own constitution. Thus (a problem of simple idealism) the passive cannot justify its presence: "the supposed transcendental passivity is thus not absolutely originary here and refers me to a preceding moment of constitution" (Derrida 2003, p. 118).

'Preceding' here does not necessarily mean 'temporal' (for one cannot determine that an outside will be temporal (Derrida 2003, p. 86)), rather 'outside', as 'already' there.

Second, the inside cannot interact with the outside

Moving further 'inward', the active inside cannot connect with a passive outside for "the active synthesis that inaugurates the possibility of a piece of eidetic research is *always preceded by* a passive synthesis" (Derrida 2003, p. 144, my emphasis).

The passive synthesis is already there.

Third, the outside cannot interact with the inside

Nor can the passive synthesis interact with the active inside. For example, Husserl says that the passively constituted is 'not intentional'. The active itself constitutes the passive. But "is that not precisely to include formally

in the activity what is really and 'in itself' foreign to the constituting inten-
tionality?" (Derrida 2003, p. 142)

The passive is 'foreign' because – for Derrida – it is outside constitu-
tion.

Fourth, the system cannot reach its outside

Next, there is overall shortfall. Husserl *also* says there is something of the
active in the passive (Derrida 2003, p. 118, cf. 1973(b) §23a). But, assum-
ing the active is intentional and the passive is not, then the active could not
be truly met with in passivity: "to say, as Husserl does [. . .] that passivity
is a moment of activity is to make use of an abstract concept of activity"
(Derrida 2003, p. 142 cons.).

Thus the activity in passivity remains outside genuine contact with the
active. However, even if there *were* a real moment of the active in the pas-
sive (which Derrida would not accept), then the passive would no longer
be passive: "the passive synthesis [. . .] is thus a constituting [active] mo-
ment of the unity of intuition" (Derrida 2003, p. 143).

Even if the active does interact with the passive – as an entire systemat-
ic unity – the system still falls short. Derrida summarises: "Why does
any constitution start with a synthesis of passivity and activity? [. . .] These
questions, which were being posed from the very first moments of phe-
nomenology, are still without an answer" (Derrida 2003, p. 118).

As a result Derrida determines that, overall, 'genesis is never met'
(Derrida 2003, p. 118).

Fifth, the inside cannot justify the inside – form

Given this shortfall, the 'outside' is constituted inside only as *formal*. In
an insistence on active and intentional constitution phenomenology itself
creates a formal idealism. But in this phenomenology, even form is a prob-
lem as it *cannot appear.* It could only do so as an essence, but then the
form which allows that essence to appear remains outside. For, given the
'already', "if passivity [as form] is placed *inside* a constituting sphere of
activity, the problem is only pushed one stage further back [outside]" (Der-
rida 2003, p. 64, my emphasis).

Not even form can account for its origin, it is the innermost problem.
Form in any judgment, logic, or ontology is problematised. Thus formal
idealism is created from the *Ideas* to the *Cartesian Meditations* (Derrida
2003, pp. 107, 138, 142, 236). Alternatively, if form *were* somehow given

from outside, then "genesis does not start off [. . .] from an essence, from a *predicate*, but from [a passively constituted] antepredicative reality [and] one would have to admit that knowledge has *made a jump*, from the evidence of the given to the [. . .] judgment" (Derrida 2003, p. 107, my emphases).

To allow judgment of a predicate (outside), the latter needs to 'jump' inward (across a joint). Neither solves the problem.

Parenthesis: the method

This approach to directions upon joints creates a method. An either-or choice sets the limits, in accord with a demand for absolute solution. This is applied to the outcome: it must be *affirmed* as absolutely true or false that objects which are predicated of are present or absent. Then Derrida poses a *conditional*; for example, 'Suppose there were a completed passive synthesis' is the antecedent, followed by 'then the outside would not be able to interact with it'. But the ontological element in the antecedent would not be acceptable in the first place. Moreover, neither would its 'opposite', 'Suppose there were a completed active synthesis'. Thirdly, even were the interactions to unify an object, the system would still fall short.

Neither side in itself, or in interaction, solves the problem of origin, and each is precluded in advance by the same problem, thus each side is posed hypothetically.

Even in this first work (cf. Derrida 2003, p. 68), Derrida calls some of the problems he finds 'aporias' (I will touch on his later use below). As he came to reflect upon his early use of the term, he drew it from Aristotle's '*diaporeō*', as a situation where "'I'm stuck, I cannot get out, I'm helpless" (Derrida 1993, p. 13).

Derrida has brought himself close to this point in 1954. At every turn, he has posed an either-or choice requiring absolute *distinction* of an object in active and passive constitution, when Husserl clearly means an interweaving constitution within the reduction. Derrida notes: "Husserl [. . .] merely indicates the impossibility of a 'language' that would distinguish strictly between passivity and activity" (Derrida 2003, p. 118).

Derrida's method arises from his own demand.

III. TEMPORISING AND THE JOINTS

The spatial elements now set out, we come to time, the seat of Husserl's constitution (cf. Husserl 1964(b), §§16-17; Derrida 2003, p. 92). Here Derrida applies *shortfall*. In Husserl, the 'presentification' represents a memory, which is no longer immediately within sense-perception, thus cannot be indubitable. However, the retention, for Husserl, is a part of primary perception, *indubitable* as it restores immediate evidence (Husserl, 1964(b) §16, 17; I §78). But for Derrida, retention is shielded by the reductions from needing to answer origin. He begins: "it is an *a priori* necessity of the perception of time and the time of perception that an originary impression have some temporal density" (Derrida 2003, p. 62).

Derrida insists on some natural time. He does not accept Husserl's temporal reduction. Thus he rapidly simmers protention and retention down to his joints.

Retentions and protentions cannot justify the outside

To answer the problem, retention would need to present a real impression. Husserl does *not* require this: "Husserl does not present the *a priori* necessity of this synthesis [retention and originary impression] as ontological – and especially not real – but as phenomenological" (Derrida 2003, p. 62, Husserl 1964(b), §12).

For Husserl, pure phenomenological processes have a special status as intentional but not real (cf. the noema, above). But Derrida especially needs them to be real. He goes on: "but so that this originary impression may be intentional [. . .] must it not as such 'announce' a real object that is constituted in the same way since it is aimed at it originarily?" (Derrida 2003, p. 62)

Even *assuming* that a process were a real object, retentions fall short of the outside as "retention [. . .] implies a synthesis or a passive genesis of a new 'now', [but if] the constitution and retention of the past were active, they would, like any pure activity, *shut themselves up* in the actuality of an originary now" (Derrida 2003, p. 93, my emphasis).

That is, shut themselves up 'inside'.

Time account for its outside

The joint is applied to temporal predication too. Given that pure logical grammar fuses logic and ontology (above), as absolute time is 'outside'

the ontological, this holds also of what can be predicated of it. The objective time is thus *antepredicative*. By Husserl's insistence, this is 'passively received by consciousness' (Derrida 2003, p. 119). But this passivity – as ontological substrate or received prior judgments – does not allow for predication of its outside: "antepredicative time [. . .] is still the foundation of absolute temporality, but this latter involving the coupling activity/passivity, it is not known what is the first condition of its constitution" (Derrida 2003, p. 119).

Predication falls short of original time.

Space cannot account for time inside

Now – to unite the sections on space and time above – nor can space/time *interaction* account for origin (a systematic shortfall). If time is indeed fundamental, then spatial elements should devolve to original time inside themselves. Husserl 'does not ask himself' (Derrida 2003, p. 92) this, and for Derrida, "at *the interior* [the inside] of the spatial *hylē* [. . .], the problem of the constituting becoming is still being posed" (Derrida 2003, p. 92, my emphasis).

Note, for now, the word 'becoming'. Time as becoming is *not denied*, but is a *problem*. For similarly, fixing upon an object in time precludes its realisation, as one has only a "suite of [moments of] objective time, whose genesis is already completed" (Derrida 2003, p. 120).

That is, has already become. This is a problem because, to be seen, an object or essence needs to be *fixed,* atemporal. It halts the sequence of time it should fit into: "the temporality described is fixed; it interrupts the whole movement of constitution at a certain moment" (Derrida 2003, pp. 120-121).

In effect, space in constitution – as a cessation of time – is *outside* temporal movement. As Derrida explains in 1967: "space is 'in' time [yet it] opens up as pure 'outside' 'within' the movement of temporalisation" (Derrida 1973, p. 86).

Secondly, time as become can only be found outside its own movement, hence is not itself. Similarly, time cannot be objectified (spatialised) *into* itself (what Derrida calls 'irreducibility' below). It is always outside its origin. As, for Husserl, space and time allow *a priori* synthesis, then synthesis is jointed in three directions: space is outside time, time is outside space, and the living now is outside time. *Synthesis is not simple*. This is arrived at mechanically: becoming is outside the temporal (living) intention which would fix its origin, and the having-become is outside its temporal origin.

Thus Derrida says in *Of Grammatology*, spacing sets out "the *becoming-space* of time and the *becoming-time* of space" (Derrida 1978, p. 68, my emphases).

The problem of 'becoming' also arises from the earliest bases.

IV. FORWARD AND BACKWARD

This leads to a model which this article will explain via the terms 'forward' and 'backward'. For as time cannot justify its outside, it cannot account for its temporal progress:

> [h]ow can it be affirmed of a reality [. . .] that it is lived *before* being intentional if absolute evidence is made into an intentional act? One has the right to determine the *hylē* as lived *only from* that moment when an intentional morphe has come to animate it (Derrida 2003, p. 86).

The outside is beyond determination of either space or time. The origin of what comes from the 'back' (earlier in time) is a problem. As will be seen, it cannot even be distinguished from what came from the 'front' (a *telos* which appears).

The *telos* as problem forward

Derrida sets this out in three areas – science, history, and explication of the object. In the *Cartesian Meditations* of 1931, Husserl introduces the notion that there is a 'teleological ideal' of an ultimate science, explicated in phenomenology. Thus the *telos* is something that would need to be achieved by an intentional object moving 'forward' in time. But if an object

> managed to [achieve its *telos*], on the one hand, the sense that it would thus produce would not have its foundation in any existence, on the other, it would mark the end of its own becoming: two mythical or metaphysical consequences that would suspend the originary intentionality and temporality of lived experience (Derrida 2003, pp. 142-143).

If the object *had* become, it would be divorced from its origin (foundation) in time. Time – posed hypothetically – remains outside the joint, thus 'metaphysical'. But if the object were determined, it would no longer be becoming, and its undeniable temporality would be outside, thus again metaphysical. The joint 'forward' to the *telos* could be crossed only if time is set aside.

Explicating the object as problem forward

Just so for the structure of adumbrating an object (a 'thing', for Husserl, is a kind of essence (cf. Husserl 1952, §15). For Husserl, a phenomenological object is given 'in itself', even if only partially, and then adumbrated forward in the service of knowing it completely (cf. Husserl LI 6, §14(b); I §142). But determination always remains outside. As Derrida notes of *Experience and Judgment*: "intentional referrals are in principle infinite and, to that degree, never take on the absolute of their sense" (Derrida 2003, p. 144).

There is always shortfall. *These arguments thus apply to any intentional object, iterated toward its completion.* Explication will never reach the outside.[10]

History as problem forward

The problem of 'history' – in theory, 'backward' – is then set on this base. Regression toward the life-world should unpack a history, but the latter ends up being inside, as intentional alone: "history will thus be only the intentional chain of meanings" (Derrida 2003, p. 144).

As intentions are explicated forward, in the living present, then regression and explication, *in progressus* and *in regressus*, become indistinguishable. For, "this infinite totality of sedimentations is an idea: the idea of an absolute and completed history or of a teleology constituting all the moments of history" (Derrida 2003, p. 108).

History is also a *telos*. Seeking for genesis in history and *telos* in ideal science become one structure in that they are teleologised moments, explicating in inner time, with an undecidable object always outside. The teleological ideal already 'precedes' the historical object: "teleology could not be given to a concrete subject in an originary clear evidence. To be faithful to its mission, *it had to precede any active constitution*" (Derrida 2003, p. 153, my emphasis).

There is undecidability at front and back, 'indefinite in its past and in its future' (Derrida 2003, p. 143). What would come from outside – in the genetic, scientific or epistemological projects – cannot even be affirmed as 'in front' or 'behind'. That a temporised consciousness cannot distinguish

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[10] Derrida later points out that Husserl insists on this inevitable shortfall himself (cf. Derrida 1973, p. 101). In 1954, this is Derrida's own demand.

between origin at front and back is still emphasised in *Specters of Marx* (Derrida 1995): "what stands in front of it must always precede it, like its origin: before it" (Derrida 1994, p. xix).

At least one part of the model of spectrality is already set out in the 1950's.

Ego and object differ from identity

This loss of the object applies just as much to the ego as object. In the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl wishes the 'transcendental ego' to provide a basis for synthesis, by positing only what it already knows in 'self-constitution'. But to do so, "the transcendental ego [. . .] is what it is solely in relation to intentional objectivities" (Husserl 1960, p. 31).

However (from inside to outside) Husserl makes the transcendental ego an *eidos* (Husserl 1960, p. 34). How then can it have intentionality to relate to existence? For "in *separating* the transcendental from pure existence, a constituted '*eidos*' is made out of the first" (Derrida 2003, p. 137, my emphasis).

The transcendental ego falls short of the outside. Secondly (from inside to its inside), the actively constituting ego could only be constituted by an ego which is already there (Derrida 2003, p. 141). The active, Derrida decides, has an 'irreducible passivity' inside it (Derrida 2003, p. 141). All the problems of active-passive interactions return, and Derrida concludes that "we remain *on this side of* absolute originarity" (Derrida 2003, p. 137, my emphasis).

The ego cannot *affirm* itself as it *falls short* of its *object*. This is a base for 1967, where an Ego posits its own absence (death) by asserting its presence: "my death is structurally necessary to the pronouncing of the I" (Derrida 1973, p. 96). For, "what can look at itself is not one" (Derrida 1976, p. 36).

As noted, Derrida arrives at this reasoning by pointing to a 'joint' in pure logical grammar, between what is intended and what can be judged as found: "we draw this conclusion, then, from the idea of a pure logical grammar, from the *sharp distinction* [joint] between the meaning-intention [permitting apophansis] and its 'eventual' fulfilment by the intuition of the object" (Derrida 2003, p. 97, cf. 1973, p. 57).

At this point – in both ordinary object (ontologically outside) and ego as object – there is a structure of a *differing in identity, in synthesis, which resists affirmation of identity*. This mechanic becomes fundamental for Der-

rida in later years,[11] as it is the ultimate source where both a problematised subjectivism and objectivism become indistinguishable. All of this follows from the bases above.

V. SYNTHESIS AND CONTAMINATION

We can now draw the above toward the basic 'law' with which we began. The divorce from original certainty is a problem of identification. But the latter is the basic form of *synthesis*: "the fundamental form of synthesis [is] identification" (Derrida 2003, p.135).

Were an intentional object identified, it would be determined, in a priori synthesis in an intuition. From the above – inside-outside and forward-backward joints – it is now clear that this synthesis will not occur. *The 'already' prevents basic identification.* Positing identity misses 'authentic genesis' (Derrida 2003, p. 143). Synthesis and identity – intuition – thus becomes the locus of a *problem*.

But at this seeming death of all identity, I come to the next, crucial aspect.

In no instance is a joint (a hinge) a pure scission.

It would also be a connection. Indeed, Derrida does *not deny that there is* a basis upon the given in synthesis. When Husserl's phenomenology, in 1931, becomes the ego explicating itself, Derrida says "there is the risk of transforming the passive synthesis, *the only foundation of objectivity so far, the only access to being as being*, into a pure activity of the subject" (Derrida 2003, p. 144, my emphasis).

It is undeniable, for Derrida, that there is being. As a result, the inside-outside is not simply a judicative criterion which insists upon failure of the given, but upon failure of the *perfectly* given, thus one cannot deny *dependency*. For example, it is only "because [hyletic material] appears as already constituted in its very being [. . .] that consciousness *can experience* originary constitution" (Derrida 2003, p. 63, my emphasis).

Derrida never denies the experience. Just so, the sedimented history of an object, depends upon what must already have been given. Thus Derrida goes on that "phenomenological history presupposes real history" (Derrida 2003, p. 143).

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[11] Cf. in *Aporias*, '[a]s soon as these totalities are overdetermined, or rather contaminated […] they are no longer identical to themselves, hence no longer simply identifiable and to that extent no longer determinable' (Derrida, 1993, p. 7).

History itself is *never independent of* what was already given from the 'outside'. Just so for time – Derrida insisted, above, that inner temporality does not escape natural (or psychologistic) time, for after a reduction "the autonomy it seems to have acquired is only a modality *of its dependence*" (Derrida 2003, p. 108, my emphasis).

Insofar as phenomenology is based on time, then the problem of origin is one of unsolved dependence. Hence this applies to every major relation. *Shortfall is just as much a dependence as a failure of relation.*

This points to the methodical aspect of the problem: it is not *givenness* that fails. Rather, *explanation* of givenness fails. Instead of Derrida the anomist, one finds the most frustrated idealist, demanding an absolute solution without success, thus bound within his system.

'Logic' as pointing to the problem

This system, thus, cannot determine (affirm) solution either way. Indeed although Derrida only aligns his work with the word 'logic' later,[12] and does not assess alternatives, his basis does lead to one criterion: "in all good logic, the absolute antepredicative must not receive *any determination*" (Derrida 2003, p. 112, my emphasis).

Husserl – who allows the antepredicative (*outside*) to be a substrate of judgment – does not use a 'good' logic. The word 'determination' already appears, as a caveat against careless affirmation of the outside, for the "determinations, [. . .] referring to a pregiven *with which they have only external [outside] relations*, are then perforce *conventional*" (Derrida 2003, p. 112, my emphases).

Logic should not determine what is outside, on pain of being 'conventional'. Derrida already takes an 'unconventional' stance toward judgment. First, his either/or limit allows only affirmation or denial. But when he seeks to affirm an identity, an outside prevents determination. Further, when he attempts to *deny* the outcome, he is reminded of the dependency. Apophantically, one cannot affirm or deny that an ontological object is present or absent. For whenever one wishes to 'respect originarity', thus 'refuse' to determine the sense of an object, one finds that 'it is not so easy': "by trying to strip it out absolutely, one even more nearly runs the risk of contamination" (Derrida 2003, p. xxxiii).

This is Derrida's use of the term contamination in 1954 (he reminds us of this in 1990 (Derrida 2003, p. xv). The *joint*, which arose from either-

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[12] Cf. Derrida 1981, pp. 196-7, in Hobson, 2004.

or limits, does not permit denial either. This is reflected in 'Différance' in 1967, when Derrida says

> [i]n this way we question the authority of presence or its simple symmetrical contrary, absence or lack. We thus interrogate the [either-or] limit that has always constrained us [. . .] to form the sense of being in general as [ontological] presence or absence (Derrida 1973, p. 139).

This applies from 1954, to every aspect of the problem of origin.

Return to the basic 'law': synthesis and contamination

We can now see, in a basic fashion, why Derrida names the question which imposes itself on his oeuvre: 'How can everything begin with a complication?' (Derrida 2003, pp. xv, xxv, above). When there is no 'pointlike' synthesis, then there is a scission preventing its affirmation. The problem of the 'already' is unsolved. But this does not mean that one can insist on (affirm) even the non-pointlike, for synthesis is not a separation. Thus it is a 'complication'.

This allows us to go back to the beginning to see how contamination impacts on synthesis:

> [a]ll the [either-or] limits on which phenomenological discourse is constructed are examined from the standpoint of the fatal necessity of a 'contamination' ('unperceived entailment or dissimulated contamination') between the two edges of the opposition: transcendental/'worldly', eidetic/empirical, intentional /nonintentional, active/passive, present/non-present, pointlike/nonpointlike, originary/derived, pure/impure etc.)... (Derrida 2003, p. xv).

Every element can be explained by the process above. First, the transcendental is not real, thus predication 'falls short' of a real world. Second, Husserl's eidetic explication is 'outside' the empirical basis, to which it is nevertheless connected. Third, the nonintentional *hylē* remains outside the intentional noema, preventing material data from entering pure phenomenology. Fourth, the passive, made nonintentional, severs affirmation across the 'joint' to the active, without allowing denial. Fifth, the essence ends up being a formal constitution without passive empirical givenness; hence the indeterminacy which prevents pointlike synthesis of reality (sixth). Thus, non-presence can neither be affirmed nor denied, and so on.

Second, any major term in this system can also be reached from any other. For example, the 'eidetic' – second, above – ends up being an active constitution without affirmable link across the joint to a passive outside, the

indeterminacy which arises thereby prevents pointlike synthesis of reality
– sixth – and so on. In every case, *there is a complication of synthesis.*

This sets out the basic interaction by which contamination interacts
with Derrida's 'law', which has guided this article. For Derrida contin-
ues: "the quaking of each border com[es] to propagate itself onto all the
others." (Derrida 2003, p. xv, cons.)

Thus contamination is not merely a simple opposition of two limits
which fails because they interpenetrate one another. Contamination is sys-
tematic. This can be understood by distinguishing outset from outcome.
The problem is first *posed* within absolute – thus oppositional – either-or
limits. Only then does the simple opposition fail.[13] Consequently, when
there is contamination this would be because *all* of the options – logical,
ontological, apophantic, eidetic, intentional etc. – have a mutual inability
either to be separated from or to solve the problem of origin. Contamina-
tion is a shared 'relation' of every term via the problem of origin, as an
'unperceived entailment' (Derrida 2003, p. xv). The unperceived would be
separation, the entailment would be inseparable relation.

Contamination as prison

It now becomes clearer how difficult, even claustrophobic, the 'problem'
is for one who demands solution. It is plangent that the young Derrida thus
finds only a 'prison' (Derrida 2003, p. 107, cf. 142). For Derrida had "tried
to define in this way the [either-or] *limits* of the *inescapable* idealism of
any philosophy" (Derrida 2003, p. 138, my emphases)

However, the "race toward the originary is permanently and essentially
condemned to failure" (Derrida 2003, p. 122).

Derrida has revealed his own critical system clearly.

Derrida's early affirmation

However, note that Derrida *affirms* the conclusion of idealism (thus *de-*
termining the problem). His early work has not yet applied its reasoning
consistently. Hence this early Derrida does allow a further 'answer' – 'dia-
lectic'. It is applied to all of philosophy: "any reflection must begin by as-
suming this idealism [which ignores the 'already']. It is this which autho-

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[13] It is often noted that the later Derrida seeks to avoid either-or oppositional logic
(cf. Hobson 2004, pp. 57-59). But here, Derrida first *imposes* it in order to refuse its deter-
mination.

rises us to speak of a dialectic philosophy as the only possible philosophy of genesis" (Derrida 2003, p. 138).

Lawlor has already pointed out well how the ontological side of this outcome arises from Cavaillès and Tran-Duc-Thao (Lawlor 2002, pp. 47-66). My point is that Derrida arrives at this via reasoning upon the joints: when there is a concern for knowledge, leading to either-or choice, an (undeniable) base upon time, and inability to affirm or deny of a joint, then dialectic follows.

That said, Derrida has not yet recognised that the system which traps him in iterated inability to affirm or deny could offer some relief by refusing the affirmation in the first place. Thus he comments of the passage from 1954 to 1967 that "through these moments, configurations, effects of *this law* [the] 'contamination' of the origin receives a philosophical name we have had to give up: 'dialectic'" (Derrida 2003, p. xv, my emphasis).

Dialectic is 'given up' – at least – because the absolute either/or choice which impels it (in apophansis, ontology, logic and method) will no longer be accepted.

Summary

I pointed out the relations in regard to particular content (eidetic/empirical etc.), above, but the system is more general, allowing application elsewhere. Derrida begins with a demand for absolute solution to the origin of the object. But the object is already there, thus never originally affirmable. Hence relations fall short, which gives rise to the 'problem'. The absolute either-or framework then sets the 'limits', requiring affirmation or denial from apophansis, and full presence or absence from ontology. This interaction creates an 'inside-outside' distinction with an absolute criterion: only if the outside is solved is there knowledge. But as the 'already' prevents such determined presence, this leads to a method: 'either' one element 'or' the other are options, but neither may be determined in the first place (each is predicated *hypothetically*), nor an overall outcome determined anyway. Now, as constitution is the ground of the problem, this leads to (at least) three interdependent models: spatial elements fail to answer the problem of origin, as each element is beset by an inside-outside problem (a joint), the temporal model replicates the problems, and 'becoming' keeps the inside across the joint from its outside. Front and back (*telos* or origin) become indistinguishable, as modification forward or backward (of history, genetic project, object) does not attain the outside. Ego and object become indistinguishable as problems by the same mechanism. These results, as

egoic and apophantic inability to affirm (cross the joint), lead to the op-posite side of the problem – presence cannot be excluded. Each joint is a dependency as much as a scission. Apophansis thus *cannot affirm, nor deny* of the logical predicate, hence ontological presence/absence cannot be dismissed. Method thus can find no either-or outcome of an identity or presence. This creates the 'law' that drives Derrida's system: constitution never leads to 'simple' synthesis (in any either-or limit). Rather, each ele-ment has a shared locus through the problem of origin, allowing each to depend upon the others but be separated from them. This interweaving is the system of *contamination*.

Again, any term in the above can be reached from any other. One can understand Derrida when he says later that, when différance becomes a term substituted for the problem of origin, it "can refer to the whole com-plex of its meanings at once" (Derrida 1973, p. 137).

Contextualisation

I can now briefly contextualise this. No thinkers, as far as I am aware, have mentioned the law, thus they could not relate it to contamination, system-atically, nor suggest it could extend into Derrida's later work. As to the early years, Leonard Lawlor (2002) has provided the first thorough reading of Derrida's path from 1954 to 1967. I point out only elements which my approach adds, without impugning Lawlor's study, or suggesting I cover all of his ground. In choosing not to mention the 'law', Lawlor does not seek an intra-systematic approach. This arises from a difference in empha-sis – Lawlor tracks Derrida's growth into awareness of a system. Thus he suggests Derrida only developed a 'logic' in 1962, and even then, Derrida had not understood contamination (Lawlor, 2002, pp. 138, 141). I track Derrida's system before – as he tells us in 1990 – he knew he had one. Lawlor thus relays a series of cogent points as a 'narrative' (Lawlor 2002, p. 7), while pointing to Derrida's external influences. I follow how the work revolves around its 'internal' imperatives. Hence while Lawlor wishes to show Derrida's work is 'continuous' (Lawlor 2002, p. 11) with phenom-enology, I focus on Derrida's having internal aims from the first. I thus include his *demand*, as driving all, and the interactions of judgment with the system. Hence shortfall, the directions, joints, their predictable interactions, method, inability to affirm or deny, the system itself, are, I believe, new.

Of course, contextual readings remain crucial: Derrida is neither robot nor island. This article simply follows Derrida's internal law, as the 'road-map' (Derrida 2003, p. xiv) which he pointed us to.

In regard to readers of Derrida's subsequent work, that he does not choose from the inside-outside division has always been accepted.[14] Relating this to contamination and 'logic' is becoming frequent.[15] Many still connect this to Kant, and a developmental account could help to situate this.[16] As to his 'method', Hurst suggests Derrida arrives at his 'aporias' as two propositions leading to insoluble either-or dilemma (Hurst 2004; 2008b, p. 9). While I caution that Derrida's method may develop after 1954 (cf. Galetti 2010), I have suggested a basis arises in 1954, where each proposition is posed hypothetically, in ongoing directions via joints.

CONCLUSION

In support of these projects, I point first to an early application. In *Of Grammatology*, turning to question language, Derrida investigates whether speech can avoid 'contamination' by writing (Derrida 1976, p. 30, 34, 41), that is, whether the latter can be kept outside, as Saussure (1983, p. 46) wishes. Here, Derrida no longer 'make[s] a choice' (apophantically), as a 'Yes' or a 'No' (bivalent) outcome, of a presence or absence (Derrida 1976, p. 62, cf. 1978, p. 64). The either-or *outcome* has been let go. But Derrida still *poses* either-or choices on consecutive *joints*. For example, Saussure wishes to keep language outside the phonic – but then "'the thing that constitutes language' is [. . .] unrelated to [outside] the phonic character of the linguistic sign'" (Derrida 1976, p. 43).

Again, Saussure wishes to keep the written word 'outside' the natural relation to speech (Derrida 1976, p. 35), but the *grammē* and *phonē* (essential units of possible writing and speech) become inseparable. Derrida interweaves hypothetical problems upon the joint. He makes this interweaving clear, as "the outside bears with the inside a relationship that is, as usual, anything but simple exteriority. The meaning of the outside was always [already] present within the inside, imprisoned outside the outside, and vice versa." (Derrida 1976, p. 35)

Thus 'there is no longer a simple origin' (Derrida 1976, p. 37). I will take the 'trace' to be a name for the undeniable but unaffirmable origin; and even now, this "*thought of the trace can no more break with a transcendental phenomenology than be reduced to it*" (Derrida 1976, p. 62, author's emphasis).

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[14] See footnote vi.
[15] Cf. Leavey (in Derrida 1978b, pp. 5); Hurst (2004, 2008), Hobson (2004).
[16] Cf. Hart (2007).

But the *demand* for solution remains: "the grammatologist least of all can avoid questioning himself about the *essence* of his object in the form of the *question of origin*: 'What is writing?' means 'where and when does writing begin?'" (Derrida 1976, p. 28, my emphasis, cf. 142, 143).[17]

The basis still applies in the transition to Derrida's linguistic work. As to what will change by 1967 (and still needs to be shown): Derrida, I suggest, will recognise that the 'problem' implies that external relation – *even that there is* an inside-outside – cannot be affirmed (cf. Derrida 1973, pp. 107-128). Thus he will reassess *even whether one can affirm* an either-or binary. As he says in *Of Grammatology:* "the outside is the inside" (Derrida 1976, p. 44).

Erasure is well-known. My point is that its impetus could arise from a 'law' in 1954. Finally, I look ahead once, to Derrida's first justice-law aporia of 1990, where "to be just, the decision of a judge, for example, must not only follow a rule of law or a general law, but must also assume it [. . .] by a reinstituting act of interpretation (Derrida 2001, p. 251).

A judge – or better, a *judgment* must be made of an object, the general law. But from inside to outside: if the judgment is made 'after' the law, the origin of the law outside (before) is unaccounted for. Alternatively, if the judgment is made inside, the origin of the law inside its 're-instituting' act is unaccounted for. The judgment can be neither affirmed nor denied as just. Again, Derrida requires absolute solution, while each either-or term is posed hypothetically. I point this out *not* to reduce the complexity of the later work, but to indicate the hard path that leads there – through the years rather than by generalisation, given that bases in the past remain. Hence the above is *only* introductory, but perhaps it can help to find an early platform for approach to Derrida.

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[17] As Derrida later says in the work: '[o]ne cannot help wishing to master absence and yet we must always let it go.' (Derrida 1976, p. 142). He also calls this the 'desire of presence' of différance (Derrida 1976, p. 143).

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