Speaking about Derrida's "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" on Reversing Negative Theology in Heidegger's *Being and Time*

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Abstract: This paper attempts to read Derrida's dense and slightly bewildering piece, "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials." (Coward and Forshay 1992) The aim is to show how deconstruction resembles but ultimately differs at the deepest levels from any positive or negative theology. Yet, even that statement must be qualified. For, Derrida's response to those who may see similarities is itself the subject of critique so that any conflation of deconstruction with negative theology becomes impossible. The logic of an aporia dictates this outcome. By returning to key terms that Derrida puts to innovative use in his powerful critique of the history of metaphysics, religions, and their onto-theological interrelations, namely 'différance,' we explore various possibilities as to why the 'avoidance of speaking' (Coward and Forshay 1992) even occurs. This framing sets up a chance to revisit Heidegger's intriguing confession about whether and if he were to write a theology in the future, he would avoid using the word 'Being.' (Coward and Forshay 1992, 126-127) We argue that to truly probe the depths of this confession, we would have to return to the deepest moments of *Being and Time* ([1927] 1962). The goal is to understand why Heidegger's attempt to articulate the possibility of fundamental ontology departs from not only theology, but any traditional deployment of phenomenology in its engagement with theology. The effect of this development is not a minimal defense of dogmatic atheism, particularly on how philosophy can engage fruitfully with questions of time, death, transcendence, and finitude. The paper concludes with the consequences of comparing and contrasting Derrida and Heidegger on the relation between phenomenology and theology for continental philosophy's future in general.

Keywords: deconstruction, Jacques Derrida, Martin Heidegger, negative theology, phenomenology.

Introduction:

This paper will explore Derrida's reading of Heidegger in his 1987 essay, "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials." (Coward and Forshay 1992) However uncharacteristic it may be of academic scholarly exegesis in general, we will have to start from the end of Derrida's text or section C (Coward and Forshay 1992, 122), where he engages Heidegger directly. The focus of that part is how Derrida considers the 'avoidance of speaking.' However, the act of avoidance is not an intentional act of deflection or turning away from something. Decisively or inadvertently, it does not lead to a negative theology of any world religion, and in this particular context

Christian mysticism, in relation to Heidegger's ambiguous destruction of the onto-theological nature of Western metaphysics; the latter is distinct from all theologies or the God of 'revelation.' (Coward and Forshay 1992, 123-124) Counterintuitively, keeping silent in prayer or taking a vow of silence for religious purposes will not be the aim of this discussion on the relation of phenomenology and theology.

The paper elaborates a threefold distinction in types of avoidance when encountering both theology and metaphysics in general, let alone their relations: A.) negative theology's avoidance of producing a metaphysical conception of God with positive content accessed through the senses i.e. symbol, idol, or icon, or non-vocal manifestations, for example silent prayer; B.) the later Heidegger's avoidance of utilizing the word – 'Being' – in contemplating the possibility of writing a post-metaphysical theology (Coward and Forshay 1992, 126-127) not grounded in any particular world religion ; C.) Derrida's deconstruction of both while avoiding any commitment for or against both A.) and B.). We will then work our way backwards to see how far we can get in Derrida's lengthy text before reaching its beginning. At stake is a renewed understanding of phenomenology and theology. But such an understanding would engender a peculiar relation in so far as it would not collapse back into positive theologies focused on the content of the human relation to God grounded in experiential faith or negative theologies that attest to the impossibility of that content in terms of a being or entity, even the name or mystical intuition of an ineffable deity. In short, one is not deciding for or against either positive revelation or negative theological withdrawal at the same time. We hypothesize a double movement at work in Derrida's text against both possibilities.

Specifically, we will attend to a distinction between negative theology as a form of theological attestation within dogmatic religions, for example different Christian traditions, and Derrida's and Heidegger's differing attempts to critique the Western metaphysical tradition and its onto-theological dimensions (i.e. ground, first cause, the highest concept conceptualizing itself equated with an anonymous notion of the Divine, etc.); that latter would have to include the history of negative theological conceptions, and in particular Western and Eastern Christian traditions, that appear to go against metaphysical concepts. The Western metaphysical tradition descends from Aristotle to Aquinas. In terms of negative theology, Pseudo-Dionysus the Areopagite and Meister Eckhart stand out in Derrida's text (Coward and Forshay 1992, 77-78).

Ancient 'Western' Christianity, which relates to the earliest, wider Christian formations, now Middle Eastern regions (Egypt, Syria, Turkey, Israel-Palestine), the metaphysical entwinement of being with truth culminating in revelation as an actualized reality can be contrasted from the following: 1.) a phenomenological deconstruction of traditions of negative theology; and 2.) a critique of attempts to negate theology outright, critiques which lead to either atheism or a spiritual vacuum. Instead, Derrida's remarkable reflections on the later Heidegger's thinking points to another possibility, and another horizon for a Western

experience of the religious: one that is an open question, whereby the space of thinking becomes an event of transcendence as taking the place of the religious, as in taking its place and taking place in its space. This points to a complex, non-revelatory event in the heart of the deconstructive enterprise.

The paradoxical question before us is this: how does a truly authentic religious experience occur in trying to take the place of the religious mystic, who avoids speaking, within a specific religious context or system built on spoken and scriptural proclamations? One can ask whether the opposite of speech is not just writing, but a silent speech, a contradiction in terms. We would have to return to Derrida's critique of Western metaphysics on how the very distinction between speech and writing prioritizes the former over the latter when centering the living, self-same presence of the speaking subject (1974). This is distinct from a religious experience of the question of being finite in relation to the infinite, i.e. traditional theology as either apophatic or cataphatic. This also circumvents an entire modern tradition trying to furnish philosophical proofs of the existence of God given our finite, imperfect, deceivable – prone nature – at least since the time of Descartes's famous *Meditations* ([1641] 2008, 32).

The question, for Derrida, is why a whole other phenomenological orientation into the question of theology, irreducible to any extant world religion, becomes possible. It operates in the aporetic knots of the later Heidegger's post-Christian claim of "writing a theology that would mean avoiding using the word being." (Coward and Forshay 1992, 128) But this other theology without conceptualizing being as an entity, yet still referring to a name like 'God,' becomes an open question. For there is no theology about anti-theological or non-theological matters. There are theologies about an absent God, but no theologies of the absence of theologies. The relation between phenomenology and an-other theology pushes the limits of language to describe what is even being discussed. Perhaps, theological inscription, be it speech or writing, reveals not so much the content of an external divinity, outside the scope of human beings, their histories, traditions, languages, and experiences. Rather, it points to the question that stands outside any definition of the human being in relation to the divine because it calls us humans back to any uncanny threshold as to how the compulsion for the theological even began. This crossed-out origin haunts us. Hence, this is not about isolating an empirical origin in history, for example the seminal events of antiquity that would eventually give birth to today's world religions, namely Moses, Confucius, Buddha, Jesus, and the Prophet Mohammad. The question of origin (of anything) is dismissed from the outset.

We will draw out the philosophical implications of this work by Derrida within his larger corpus. Specifically, how this approach and method to thought, given the heavy influence of the later Heidegger, can be distinguished from previous relations between phenomenology and theology, such as the early Heidegger period of the 1920s, or later phenomenological infusion into (Christian) theology, like the works of Jean Luc-Marion or Michel Henry. The contemporary

period subtends the history of Christian philosophy itself, from early Church fathers to the medieval era, most notably Aquinas, to the current era of Christian philosophers, who may or may not be involved in espousing Christian theology as proclamations of dogmatic faith given the focus on philosophical matters alone.

The relation between phenomenology and theology, today, is distinct from the predominantly atheistic nature of twentieth-century continental philosophy, for example, structuralism, critical theory, Marxist thought, and psychoanalytic theory (West 2010), on the one hand, and today's analytic philosophical treatments of religion on the other, which are supportive of faith, for example Plantinga's work (1993, 2000). Derrida's and Heidegger's thinking point beyond traditional discussions on theodicy about the existence of good, evil, and free-will or whether beliefs in God are rational and justifiable irrespective of the possibility or impossibility of proof (Hume [1779] 1998). Rather, their works open an uncanny space of how post-Christian thinking in the West relates thinking itself to an internal deconstruction of Christian dogma within its own *New Testament* textuality. Derrida's and Heidegger's thinking have profoundly altered how we can think of the relations between time, death, finitude, and transcendence in strange and new ways.

As Derrida says in another text, *Of Spirit* ([1987] 1989), the other Christianity, other to Christianity could announce itself. This is so because the very denial of Christian metaphysics, particularly the idea of the spirit (resurrected or not), is part of a singular critique of Christian metaphysics, which Heidegger, like Nietzsche before him, undertakes throughout their thinking without accounting for what motivates the critique itself. But, for Derrida, this very critique suggests that which cannot be completely vanquished in an attempt to imagine an-other beginning to Western metaphysics, and this is itself something that eludes full comprehension, namely the trace of spirit, not an aufheben of the negation of negation, but the spirit that was almost destroyed in the twentieth century. The question is about remaining, not evaporating. Neither eternal nor finite, some trace remains, which is temporalized differently.

In short, a fruitful interaction between phenomenology and theology may or may not serve the purposes of theology itself; but it can open horizons, which heretofore have not been possible within continental philosophy. The continental philosophical relation to theology is irreducible to the history of concepts and presuppositions in both fields in isolation, even though they have had mutual effect on each other. Paradoxically, both fields are drawn to one another through their innate distance; for sure, they can both attest to something that is not immediately present like a physical or empirical object of the senses.

In terms of the mutual effect of both fields on one another, one clear example is Heidegger's immersion in Bultmann's theological circles in Marburg in the early 1920s prior to writing *Being and Time*. Inversely, Heidegger taught those who would become great systematic theologians in their own traditions, for example Tillich in Protestantism and Rahner in Catholicism (Van Buren 1994;

Macquerrie 1994; Crowe 2006). To achieve that aim, we will attend to a close reading of Derrida's text while keeping Heidegger's works in the background. The legacy of Heidegger's thought points to many permutations, such as an uncanny relation between continental philosophy and theology irreducible to both. For example, one can think of a back-and-forth movement between reappropriating primal Christian possibilities in their non-empirical historicity irreducible to *New Testament* and Church history's Trinitarian proclamations and a post-metaphysical theology not grounded in an identifiable element of Christianity, including its spectrum from the orthodox to the heterodox. Even if Heidegger's actual intentions are forever irrecoverable, they are no less spellbinding.

The Basic Elements in Derrida's "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials": The Self-Erasure of Negative Theology Itself

We can now turn to Derrida's text to initiate certain gestures in our investigation. If negative theology respects the secret of theology to adhere to that which can exceed all human knowledge or language about the divine, then it is more theological in nature than any positive theology that tries to name or conceptualize God as any figure. If the goal is to keep God pure and untouched from any human comportment through intuition, language, institution, or system, then that speaks to the buried presupposition of why and how an entity requires pure detachment to ensure not only its holiness but the strength of a belief system. For such dogmatic systems of belief need constant validation to be secure in themselves: As the apostle Paul said to humankind, "who art thou that repliest against God?" (KJV, Romans, ch. 9, n.d.) Letting the silent word 'God' speak for itself by concealing itself from human comprehension and language but letting the facticity of that withdrawal be the ground for all positive faith, perhaps that is one way to understand the performative dimension of negative theology. Again, negative theology is not the absence of theology, but an ever more strenuous effort to attest to faith.

Deconstruction, however, does not have something more to give than itself in terms of quantitative or qualitative addition, and, therefore, is distinct from and irreducible to any kind of negative theology as either additive or subtractive. Deconstruction is not about the excess or subtraction of anything, but how texts reveal hidden possibilities and entwinements, whether intended or not by authors who can no longer attest to the meaning of their works. For Derrida, there are no hidden traces already there, waiting to be discovered, since "trace is neither presence nor absence," and "trace as difference is other than presence or absence." (Derrida [1972] 1982, 65) This means the entire text of Western metaphysics, religions, and their ontotheological entwinements, is not simply there for the taking. Truth is neither in existence waiting to be discovered nor fashioned by human minds. The 'trace' of this tradition is "produced through its own erasure" and hence the "trace of the trace has disappeared." (Derrida [1972] 1982, 65-66)

Similarly, the question is not to ask what is negative about theology or the role of the negative in theology; it is certainly not the negation of theology proper, the self-erasure of theology's content for theology to be genuinely impending; and lastly it is definitely not the negation of theology in order to build an absence of theology in any spiritual sense before one crosses the threshold into full-blown atheism. In some senses, without atheism, theology could not grow stronger. This is not the place to get into a-theological conversations about how atheism ensures theology's greatest reason to exist to ensure its own self-defense. Furthermore, we need to avoid temptations to play around, dialectically, between relations and differences of atheism and theology. Plenty of those debates abound (Dawkins 2016).

This is the working hypothesis we will keep in mind before entering Derrida's text. Deconstruction does not presuppose any object before it begins its work as a kind of movement of thinking and tracing, not just reading or writing. Certainly, we cannot reduce this 'movement' to some kind of presence, either movement of something in and for itself or the detection of motion as a phenomenon, i.e. physics. It does not even presuppose any immediate intuitions of what the word 'theology' connotes, if we assume, traditionally, that the theology tries to produce knowledge of some absolute form of transcendence, for example an idea of God as an entity beyond all beings, even the being of any intuition of what an 'entity' can possibly connote. The logos – 'reason or word' – of theos, or 'God,' as the work of cataphatic or apophatic theology is not considered. Neither are we engaged with religious considerations of the 'soul' and its movement towards or away from God or any other deity. In short, the phenomenological exposition of what is bracketed, indicated, intended, or 'projected upon' to use Heideggerian language ([1927] 1962, 371) of the terms 'negative' and 'theological,' and all interrelations therein, must be explicated first.

Going back to Husserl, phenomenology suspends any immediate intuition of the physical-natural world or internal, psychic mental processes as received by the senses to engage in a description of the essential structures of how anything can be given to consciousness. Phenomenology, therefore, is the "science of essence – as an 'apriori,' or we also say, an eidetic science." (Husserl [1913] 1983, xxii) Even the first activation of thought does not stem from a prior origin in linear flowing time, for which a thought can be said to have begun to go back to Derrida's first work, *Introduction to Husserl's Origin of Geometry* ([1962] 1989). We will have to contrast all considerations of temporality, meaning, and indication as they differ in Derrida's and Heidegger's works apart from the Husserlian heritage before we critically question how a phenomenological approach impacts their respective movements of thought, namely 'deconstruction' for Derrida ([1972] 1982, xiv) and 'destruction' for Heidegger ([1927] 1962, 41).

As early as footnote 2 of his essay on "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials," Derrida makes sure to distinguish his central indicator of the work of deconstruction, namely the term 'différance,' as distinguishable from any negative

theology. In that footnote, he quotes from his earlier essay, 'Différance,' (1968) which was republished later in his 1972 work, *Margins of Philosophy* ([1972] 1982):

> And yet those aspects of différance which are thereby delineated are not theology, not even in the order of most negative of negative theologies, which as one knows are always concerned with disengaging hyperessentiality beyond the finite categories of essence and existence, that is, of presence, and always hastening to recall that God is refused the predicate of existence, only in order to acknowledge His superior, inconceivable, and ineffable mode of Being. (Coward and Forshay 1992, 132)

As for Heidegger, at the very outset of *Being and Time* in its Introduction, he is keen to differentiate the 'Dasein-analytic,' as the preparatory step to engage in fundamental ontology in trying to answer the question of the meaning of Being, from any positive, ontic science about nature, human beings, and even transcendental Being, such as the so-called 'object' of theology. We quote a few passages from the very end to Part II of the Introduction:

> Regarding its subject-matter, phenomenology is the science of the Being of entities-ontology. In explaining the tasks of ontology we found it necessary that there should be a fundamental ontology taking as its theme that entity which is ontologico-ontically distinctive, Dasein, in order to confront the cardinal problem-the question of the meaning of Being in general. (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 61)

As one can see, there is much preparatory work to be done in just engaging these two sets of quoted passages by Derrida and Heidegger in attempting a comparison and contrast. We will have to isolate specifically major differences but potential resemblances between the two classic motifs in Derrida's and Heidegger's thought, namely 'différance' (Coward and Forshay 1992, 132) and the 'ontological-ontic difference.' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 61) Work on this is not insignificant but also not vast (Sallis 1989; Clark 1992; Krell 2023). In contrast to the mainstream, we are taking a step back to revisit the relation and differences between Derrida and Heidegger in general so we can see how both differ from negative theology in different ways, and what that means for a renewed understanding of phenomenology and theology today.

We must isolate questions of 'avoidance' and even deflection or turning away something or oneself from something. Or we can think of 'avoiding' as knowing something is out there, but one perceives it as harmful and, therefore, tries to avoid it, for example sugary sweets. Then only can we have a chance to work our way through Derrida's text, "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials." (Coward and Forshay 1992) That text presupposes familiarity with not only *Being and Time* but major works from his later period, namely *Identity and Difference* (1969), as cited by Derrida (Coward and Forshay 1992, 141). In this context, Derrida's footnotes to the last section of his essay, namely section C, refers to Heidegger's works on Hegel, Schelling, and Nietzsche (Coward and Forshay 1992, 139). One

can interpret those nineteenth-century giants of German philosophy as either post-Christian or the most rigorous philosophical interpreters of the stakes involved in critiquing Christianity and reckoning what could be other to it. The anti-Christian attests to the possibility of Christianity as beyond any content produced by Christianity in its very historicity.

To state a profound limit to our own undertaking, we will not be able to attend to the vast corpus of either the early Heidegger up to *Being and Time* (1927) and the years that just followed its appearance or the later full-blown period beginning with the mid-1930s, particularly the *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1959). Furthermore, any serious undertaking of Heidegger's views on theology cannot ignore the brief lecture given right after *Being and Time* was published, namely "Phenomenology and Theology." (1927) We will keep that text in the background, which requires a separate investigation.

To attempt a close reading of section C is to see how Derrida analyzes Heidegger, where Derrida discusses the aporias, enigmas, and buried possibilities of one of the later Heidegger's confessions. Derrida wants to see how Heidegger erases the word 'Being' in the form of a 'crossing out (kreuzweise Durschstreihung)' (Coward and Forshay 1992, 125) in what could have been an attempt to "write a theology without using the word Being." (Coward and Forshay 1992, 126-127) Heidegger never wrote, or, rather, ended up 'avoiding' writing that theology. The meaning of this 'avoidance' is what intrigues Derrida (Coward and Forshay 1992, 124). Heidegger could not or would write a theology with the word 'Being'; but this indication of a delay or postponement that will never be fulfilled is as interesting as any intent to have wanted to write a theology. Heidegger is not a mystic who does not want to speak, but rather one who speaks about avoiding speaking using a specific word. If it were written without the word, perhaps, such a theology would and could be such a monstrous othering of the reception of Christian revelation, that it could be an antithetical inscription already within Christian proclamation but withheld eternally from any articulation. Instead of the "Word become Flesh," (KJV, John, ch. 1, n.d.) a word is not even used. The other inside Christianity is neither the Christian messianic future of the parousia in a Second Coming; nor the kairological fulfillment that is already attested to in the *New Testament*, particularly the Gospel accounts of Jesus's life. Heidegger's cryptic confession is irreducible to negative theology that resides strictly within the Christian proclamation and a commitment to its uniquely configured Triune God.

Presumably, negative theology avoids assigning positive metaphysical content to the conception of God, even the Triune God of Christianity which eludes a simple representation of 3 Persons = 1 God. If that is so, then the avoidance of writing theology in relation to what is at stake for theology itself is something other than negative theological injunctions against naming or conceptualizing in general. In the vein of Derrida, once the speech-as-presence and writing-as-absence hierarchy in Western metaphysics is inverted, or rather deconstructed,

then writing or difference as 'tracing' could be other than presence or absence (Derrida [1972] 1982, 65). That would be buried possibilities that are present in Christian heritage but absent in its recorded history. We assume that a careful investigation of Derrida's and Heidegger's presuppositions has significant consequences for a renewed understanding of phenomenology and theology and what those terms even mean in relation and difference, a relation of difference.

Let us start with the Derrida passage. We must attend to the distinction or difference, so to speak, between A.) différance – as beyond or neither presence nor absence – which cannot be reduced to being or 'is' even when saying that différance 'is' the 'movement' (Derrida [1972] 1982, 6) of differentiating and deferring and postponing the arrival of meaning or the completion of a task, and B.) all the registers that typically define negative theology in the passage.

Detour into Différance:

We can turn to the actual full passage in the essay, 'Différance,' in *Margins of Philosophy* ([1972] 1982), a portion of which is quoted in "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials." (Coward and Forshay 1992, 132) When one writes, one does not speak, and this formulation seems simple to understand. But why one writes and does not speak or cannot speak is another matter, especially if one writes about not being able to speak, then text – writing – seems to speak about not speaking. When writing, one creates a non-speaking self as other to the usual self that tries to speak with or without writing; or literally if one speaks aloud while writing as if conducting a transcription, then the gap between speech and writing seems to collapse into something else. If writing does not speak, then neither does reading; nothing happens – in terms of speech – when one writes, reads, reads about writing, writing as one reads, ad infinitum. But we pretend something is happening in all these registers; that is the point. Yet, this pretense itself can be deconstructed, further broken down into what it fails to reveal in our normal intuitions. For example, as incredulous as it sounds, writing, when it occurs (never isolated to a present or presence), may be completely detached from mind and body even when fingers on a keyboard or oral transcription to an automated system are at work; that is, temporalizing the event of writing when it occurs is itself concealed when an inscription becomes physically present as it becomes present. Writing is not simply the teleportation of thoughts on consciousness in the human mind to an external paper or screen. It is something other to itself, which means so is its temporalization, which is not the ordinary understanding of an irreversible, flowing time on clocks and calendars.

These roundabout gestures are necessary to understand the deepest motivations in Derrida's text on negative theology by taking a deeper dive into his earlier philosophical innovations within the heart of continental philosophy in the 1960s (Gasché 1988). Here is the full quote of the text from his essay, 'Différance' originally published in French in 1968:

> So much so that the detours, locutions, and syntax in which I will often have to take recourse will resemble those of negative theology, occasionally even to the point of being indistinguishable from negative theology. Already we have had to delineate *that différance is not*, does not exist, is not a present-being (*on*) in any form; and we will be led to delineate also everything *that* it *is not*, that is, *everything*; and consequently that it has neither existence nor essence. It derives from no category of being, whether present or absent. And yet those aspects of différance which are thereby delineated are not theology, not even in the order of most negative of negative theologies, which as one knows are always concerned with disengaging hyperessentiality beyond the finite categories of essence and existence, that is, of presence, and always hastening to recall that God is refused the predicate of existence, only in order to acknowledge His superior, inconceivable, and ineffable mode of being. Such a development is not in question here, and this will be confirmed progressively. *Différance* is not only irreducible to any ontological or theological–ontotheological–reappropriation, but as the very opening of the space in which ontotheology–philosophy–produces its system and its history, it includes ontotheology, inscribing it and exceeding it without return. (Derrida [1972] 1982, 6)

This larger passage will occupy us for some time. Derrida quickly admits a potential 'indistinguishability' between 'différance' and negative theology. Yet the 'resemblance' is not what it seems; in fact, seeing resemblances between family members who share no single trait or feature together in Wittgenstein's thought experiment (1986, 36) is not meant here. But even Derrida's initial assumption, which he will quickly deconstruct and critique, carries its own presuppositions. Not to be distinguished is to say one does not stand out alone, incomparable, or at the highest level; also, one is not distinct from another, which does not mean also that one is with the other or as the other or in the other as in you cannot tell something apart from another, say identical twins born from a single embryo. The fact that Derrida thinks some may read his novel attempts to define why 'différance,' which is neither 'word nor concept,' (Derrida [1972] 1982, 3) in terms of a negative theology is telling. To repeat from the previous passage, he defines negative theology as something different from différance:

> always concerned with disengaging hyperessentiality beyond the finite categories of essence and existence, that is, of presence, and always hastening to recall that God is refused the predicate of existence, only in order to acknowledge His superior, inconceivable, and ineffable mode of being. (Derrida [1972] 1982, 6)

Derrida does not define 'hyperessentiality' (1982, 6) further or deconstruct the history of its connotations in Western Christian thought, for example the hypostatic substance (both divine and human) in the Second Person of the Son in the Triune Christian God. The more the meaning of the Cross withdraws from absolute mastery in human comprehension, the more we are drawn into the infinite love that is God the Father's sacrifice of the Son who took upon Himself God's 'wrath' in our place through his 'free acceptance and transcendent mercy.' (Barth 2009, 145) All these terms and their relations, namely 'wrath, free

acceptance, transcendent mercy,' (Barth 2009, 145) recoil in an infinite void so that no super synthesis as a philosophical concept – devoid of love and faith – can emerge. This guarantees that the holiness of the Godhead remains pure, as a being beyond beings, which is 'superior, inconceivable, and ineffable mode of being.' (Derrida [1972] 1982, 6) God's love can never be reduced to a concept or object.

One can say all the Abrahamic monotheistic faiths have this potential for negative theology, which remains deactivated; that is, in the utter divide in our ability to name or conceptualize the absolutely other and transcendent One, other than the words 'God' or 'Lord' (for example Elohim or Adonai in the Hebrew Bible or theos or kyrios in the New Testament Greek). Already built into religions is a safety catch, one can say, that allows something to hide or stay away even in the names that become substitutes for other names that can never be known or pronounced. The negative is already inscribed in the positive, which could take us back into Hegelian problems. But immediately, Derrida begins to take apart this 'indistinguishability,' which would threaten to submerge 'différance' in these aporias between positive and negative theologies built into religions, and in these cases, monotheistic religions.

As for 'différance,' Derrida has to state emphatically that:

> Already we have had to delineate *that différance is not*, does not exist, is not a present-being (*on*) in any form; and we will be led to delineate also everything *that* it *is not*, that is, *everything*; and consequently that it has neither existence nor essence. It derives from no category of being, whether present or absent. And yet those aspects of différance which are thereby delineated are not theology…([1972] 1982, 6)

In writing or tracing, this sense of 'non-existence' does not mean absence, for even in negative theology, God can be absent, away, or hidden by essence and nature or existence. The more this occurs infinitely, the more guarantees the believer gets in terms of the deity's radical alterity and transcendence. Derrida, of course, does not mean that. What is other than presence or absence, the event of differentiation cannot be decided upon as an event in time, presumably a now that is present even if something becomes absent or completely vanishes. Derridean terms would not have either presence or absence, or what is other to both or neither-nor. (Literally, one does not have presence, absence, their binary in an either-or, or something other in the neither-nor.) There literally is no 'word or concept' for it (Derrida [1972] 1982, 3) other than a 'movement' as 'temporization' of 'differing and deferring.' (Derrida [1972] 1982, 7-8) Yet this 'temporization' (Derrida [1972] 1982, 8) remains under-theorized. We will come back to this point when we return to Heidegger.

To be more specific, one does not assume any mastery or self-containment of the gestures intimated in the term 'différance' given the impossible duality of its senses as 'suspension' (Derrida [1972] 1982, 8) of the ability 'to fulfill itself' as anything, and therefore a 'detour.' (Derrida [1972] 1982, 8) But, also, it 'is,' while crossing out any 'being-present' of any 'is,' (Derrida [1972] 1982, 6) other, not to

itself, but other to any distinction between self and other. The most incomprehensible would be a 'fourth side,' (Derrida [1972] 1981, 25) which eludes the dialectics of a.) self, b.) other, c.) self as other of the other in taking its three moments into a new synthesis.

Or what one might assume as the ordinary meaning of difference, without relapsing into simple dialectics as a linear progression: "to be not identical, to be other, discernible, etc." (Derrida [1972] 1982, 8) That would be the increasing distance between two things somehow resisting relationality, yet sharing the same (non-present) space, so the exact difference between them cannot be pinned down. Only 'différance' can be both senses of differing and deferring, not 'différence (with an e).' (Derrida [1972] 1982, 8) The latter is the event of differentiating identity into two, splitting apart, the fundamental and irreducible incomparability and inequality between two things, etc. However, this is not to say that simultaneity of both senses cannot be questioned. We do not want to accuse Derrida of smuggling in an 'ontotheological' (Derrida [1972] 1982, 6) concept, or that which is philosophical and theological, in so far as he claims différance is not (Derrida [1972] 1982, 6). To repeat from the quoted passage earlier, "*différance is not*, does not exist, is not a present-being (*on*) in any form; and we will be led to delineate also everything *that* it *is not*, that is, *everything.*" (Derrida [1972] 1982, 6) What sounds circular rings true: everything that is not is everything that is.

A few paragraphs later he states emphatically that 'différance' is not of any extent field or name: "I wish to underline that the efficacity of the thematic of différance may very well, indeed must, one day be superseded, lending itself if not to its own replacement, at least to enmeshing itself in a chain that in truth it never will have governed. Whereby, once again, it is not theological." (Derrida [1972] 1982, 7) Anti-eschatological and anti-messianic, even as a critique of what is expected as an end that has yet to be fulfilled, difference as something entirely other in itself, certainly never settled on a present signified, but a kind of movement – 'temporization,' (Derrida [1972] 1982, 8) which can never be spatialized in or as historical time. This would include soteriological and eschatological time in history too. Even a notion of 'end' is a paradoxical form of metaphysical non-historicity in so far as it is imagined as a future version of the lived present. Derrida says this in his essay of the early 1990s, *The Gift of Death* ([1992] 1995, 5).

Let us try to gather up all the possible senses of 'différance' and how it can be disengaged from various possible understandings of negative theology while giving the latter due respect for its own complexity. The different senses within 'différance' can be brought into dialogue with multiplying differential senses in negative theology. This then impacts what Derrida says in the last sentences of the paragraph about the 'irreducibility' (Derrida [1972] 1982, 6) of deconstruction to any 'ontotheology-philosophy' (Derrida [1972] 1982, 6) and therefore the relation between ontotheology and any negative theology. A triple destruction of 'ontotheology,' (Derrida [1972] 1982, 6) religion with positive content (say the

life of Jesus in Christianity's *New Testament*), and negative theology is at work, but in different ways. And then we can move to comparing Derrida and Heidegger. We can see how both claim an irreducible quality of their thought to negative theology, let alone any positive theology of identifiable religions, of which they do not prescribe or proscribe.

If we consider both the simultaneity and non-simultaneity of the two senses of 'différance' – 'differing and deferring' in its Latin roots (Derrida [1972] 1982, 7) – we run into various complications as we think about the different temporalizations involved in each of the senses. This is to say nothing of the complexity of the temporal horizon by which we understand all the differences between the two senses built into the single term – 'différance.' When encountering anything and everything, the first reduction, even in the encounter itself, is to suspend from happening any understanding of two things, let alone their encounter; this is what delaying means, to make sure something that what is supposed to happen does not happen, and therefore the spacing between what should happen now but is not and what still remains to be done, but also not present, is neither of the order of present nor future. Simply put, the 'delay' is never in a present and therefore a future of that present. Delay also is not a stretch between two events, say a potential waiting to happen at a certain time and it not happening at that time with a presumptive assumption that it will happen at some time. For example, the train is late.

One could be tempted to speculate about a non-happening in the kernel of what is supposed to happen. If the non-fulfillment of what is supposed to happen is likened to anti-eschatology, then the deferral inherent in 'différance' is distinct from the delay or deferral inherent for example in the idea of a Second Coming, or the eschatological parousia in Christianity. One can say the negative moment in the relation between the kairos (the fulfillment of time in the birth, life, and death of the Incarnation) and the return or coming again of that figure is also a kind of delay. The negative theological component would be the withdrawal of any kind of presencing, happening, representation of not only the Second Coming, whose essence is that which is to be expected, and the First coming, which is always recalled in the birth, death, and resurrection and the repetitive eucharistic memorial. The unity of kairos and parousia as a type of temporalization is distinct from any immediate event happening within our historical time flowing, as in a literal divine being entering our historical present now distinct from the Incarnation that took place over two thousand years ago in ancient Roman-occupied Palestine.

For Derrida's 'différance,' however, the non-simultaneity of its two senses means we cannot collapse the temporal uncertainty of 'delay,' which is a never present now yet to be fulfilled when the future now arrives to take its place or the creation of a past by letting the present that should be fulfilled slip away and therefore missing the time or deadline in which something must have occurred. For example, as stated earlier, différance would be incompatible with a dogmatic

sense of the Christian past of the historical Jesus and a futuristic Second Coming of his return. As never 'theological,' (Derrida [1972] 1982, 7) this contrasts with the proclaimed dogma of faith, say the Nicene creed of "He will come again in glory" (USCCB, Nicene Creed, n.d.), or the negative theological temptation to think even beyond this stated expectation. One example of a negative is the possibility of super-synthesis of kairos and parousia of First and Second Comings in a concept that can never be revealed. Or, as Hegel says at the end of the penultimate chapter – 'Revealed Religion' – of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807):

> What enters its consciousness as the in-itself, or the side of pure mediation, is a reconciliation that lies in the beyond: but what enters it as present, as the side of immediacy and existence, is the world which has still to await its transfiguration. The world is indeed implicitly reconciled with the divine Being; and regarding the divine Being it is known, of course, that it recognizes the object as no longer alienated from it but as identical with it in its love. But for self-consciousness, this immediate presence still has not the shape of Spirit. (Hegel [1807] 1977, 478)

If you wanted to simplify this passage, then one can say the following: the Incarnation of the Preexistent Logos (Prologue to the Gospel of John as the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as The Second Person in the Son of the Triune God) (KJV, John, ch. 1, n.d.) is the reconciliation of God and human as love, truth, and grace; but what still awaits a final eschatological transformation is the parousia or the Second Coming whose full content is still unknown. How the temporal-eternal synthesis of the Incarnation becomes other to itself in a 'new creation' (KJV, Revelation, ch. 21, n.d.) defies any prior human metaphysical speculation. Moreover, how the temporal spit is overcome and conceptualized in speculative metaphysical terms as the aufheben of the religious truth would mark the passage from the penultimate chapter of 'Revealed Religion' to the last chapter of 'Absolute Knowing' in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. No other to time, eternity, their distinction, their unity, eternity in time and time in eternity, has ever been conceptualized in Western metaphysics, which for Hegel, still must undergo one more transformation to achieve the 'the shape of Spirit.' (Hegel [1807] 1977, 478) Yet, this is not the place to go into Hegel.

Rather, to move deeper into the temporal mysteries buried in both 'différance' and negative theology, we now turn to Derrida's reading of Heidegger in "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials." (Coward and Forshay 1992, 122) However, to examine Derrida's analysis of Heidegger's confession of "not being able to write a theology using the word Being," (Coward and Forshay 1992, 126-127) we should introduce Heidegger's own avoidance already announced in the Introduction to *Being and Time*. For Heidegger, one is not going to answer the same question of Being, even time as being or being as time, when traversing the history of metaphysics starting with Plato and Aristotle up to Kant and Hegel (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 21, 31, 43, 45). Nor is Heidegger grounding the answer to the 'question of the meaning of Being with time as the horizon of the question' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 7) for the purpose of theology. For theology, the issue is

"seeking a more primordial interpretation of man's Being towards God, prescribed by the meaning of faith itself and remaining within it." (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 30) Heidegger will not concern himself with either the relation of 'man's Being towards God' or the 'meaning of faith itself.' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 30) Rather, he will introduce a whole other set of terms and relations, which will not simply resume the question of Being forged in the history of metaphysics or the Christian response, across traditions, to that history via theological exposition, namely the revelation of the Triune God. There is nothing negative about a Heideggerian conception of theology, which has never been intended or come into existence.

Let us recall in his great treatise, *Being and Time*, he does not answer the 'question of the meaning of Being' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 7) in which "time is the transcendental horizon of the question of Being." (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 7) Not only is the negative already inscribed at the outset of the work, it does not introduce, in a wholly other way, a relation between time and being; that is, in which time is not the naturalized, spatialized flowing time of clocks and calendars or time as Kantian schematism (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 45), which includes permanence as substance, or that which does not change for change to take place within it; and he does not reduce Being to beings as extant 'ready-to-hand' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 98) or 'present-at-hand,' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 100) and therefore, time, too, cannot be among those beings that exist. We now turn to *Being and Time* before returning to Derrida on Heidegger within his own separation of 'différance' from negative theology.

The Ghost of Heidegger's *Being and Time* or that which Derrida Avoids in Deconstructing Negative Theology:

Let us reintroduce the long quote from the Introduction to Heidegger's *Being and Time*. The purpose is to try to understand in summary fashion the scope of the entire of work and what is at stake in the investigation:

> With regard to its subject-matter, phenomenology is the science of the Being of entities-ontology. In explaining the tasks of ontology we found it necessary that there should be a fundamental ontology taking as its theme that entity which is ontologico-ontically distinctive, Dasein, in order to confront the cardinal problem-the question of the meaning of Being in general. (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 61)
>
> And finally, to the extent that Dasein, as an entity with the possibility of existence, has ontological priority over every other entity, 'hermeneutic,' as an interpretation of Dasein's Being, has the third and specific sense of an analytic of the existentiality of existence; and this is the sense which is philosophically primary. (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 62)

First off, it is good to note that Heidegger does take from Husserl's initial investigation of what is most primordially given in general beyond psychic and natural entities. Even if the essential is neither material nor mental, presumably it

still is and therefore has some unquestioned relation to being, which does not become a question. But instead of focusing on 'eidetic science as the a priori science of essences' (Husserl [1913] 1983, xxii) in what is given to consciousness, Heidegger redefines phenomenology. In a different turn, he takes a reconceived version of phenomenology into the realm of ontology in terms of the 'science of Being,' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 61) but with a radical twist. No longer, an issue of simply providing a metaphysical concept to answer the question of Being, something else takes place. A massive event proffers itself.

He introduces the "ontologico-ontically distinctive entity that is Dasein." (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 61) This is prior to any attempt whatsoever to get at not so much the question of Being (as answered variously in the history of Western metaphysics) but a true probing of the architecture of the very 'question of the meaning of Being.' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 61) There are no simple predicates to Heidegger's question about the meaning of Being. And it turns out that Dasein, unlike any other ontic entity in the world or universe, such as the self, consciousness, nature, etc., is that 'entity' which will 'inquire' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 27) into such a question of meaning, which in turn makes it distinctive among all entities in that it is 'ontological.' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 31) Turning to metaphysical or religious conceptions of a bodiless 'soul' is not what Heidegger seeks in his quest for an 'ontological clarification.' ([1927] 1962, 34) Even if we can credit Aristotle, and then Aquinas, for seeking that which transcends the physical body, and, perhaps, goes on after physical perishing, as an organizing force that can gather up entities, then the idea of the 'soul' exceeds simple religious or dogmatic conceptions. And yet, this metaphysical tradition built on the pillars of these two great figures in Western history never raised the ontological question that Heidegger is posing ([1927] 1962, 34) in his 1920s context. In short, Heidegger's question is not whether the soul exists or not. It is hard to imagine any positive or negative theology without a concept of the soul.

Furthermore, from a later moment in the Introduction, the "meaning of Dasein's Being is temporality." (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 38) To recall, built into "Dasein's Being is an understanding of Being," (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 32) in so far as "Dasein, in its Being, has relationship towards that Being – a relationship which itself is one of Being." (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 32) As an 'inquirer into the question of Being,' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 27) but a peculiar inquirer, which is never a present entity, we know that "time is the horizon for the question of Being" (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 7) and the "meaning of Dasein's Being is temporality." (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 38) But there is no 'circularity' here. Instead, we find a 'remarkable relatedness backward and forward.' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 28) Since Heidegger is interested in the "explicating primordially time as the horizon for understanding Being" (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 39) and "in terms of temporality as the Being of Dasein, which understands Being," (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 39) then we are forced to acknowledge certain deductions. On the surface, these deductions seem more obfuscating than clarifying. Unfortunately, a simple

idea of a biologically living human being who flows and ages within chronological time while accumulating experiences through life's vicissitudes and gaining some wisdom is not the baseline. Something prior and more primordial makes that sense of a human being and their meaningful dealing with time possible.

Dasein is the "entity that inquires" into the question of Being (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 27) and is itself a 'relationship of Being.' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 32) Yet, if this is not 'circular' but a movement that is a 'remarkable relatedness backward and forward,' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 28) then "time as the horizon for understanding Being" (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 39) must be imbricated in a movement, which is non-circular and non-linear. As a non-spatialized 'relatedness,' such ontological movement 'is' not the relation between two things like a Cartesian subject-object split. It is not rectilinear with two fixed points on a line, a beginning and end, and constant movement back and forth. And this movement, as an event, is not within chronological clock or calendar time. For now, we can separate it from all mystical temporalities in the Western metaphysical and religious traditions, which also presuppose human subjects.

Time is not present as a being but can be construed as a complex movement-relation-event happening. Therefore, time is not related to change, movement, and objects in or as space if one were to revisit Aristotle's *Physics* even in the most reductive manner. Lastly, to reiterate constantly, it is not the human measurement of time through seasons, clocks, and calendars, whether time is thought to be external to us in nature (i.e. gravitationally warped Einsteinian unified space-time) or internal to us in terms of our apperception of ourselves in relation to anything else, including ourselves, i.e. Kant. We will develop this further, but, for now, we need to keep all these introductory formulations and their interrelations in the background as we proceed further down the path of the larger paragraph on 'existence.' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 62)

Continuing with Heidegger, one must focus on 'existence as a possibility of Dasein,' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 61) but this is not arbitrary. And do not think of the term 'existence' as that which merely exists as an entity in space or time or space and time. For example, the earth exists in the solar system and revolves around the sun. Rather, the very 'possibility of existence' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 61) is grounded, non-spatially, in the 'finitude of temporality,' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 438) which can be contrasted with the temporality of a finite mortal being with a birth and death in calendar time. Furthermore, finitude is irreducible to any bounded present now, even if that now marks the beginning of one now (a future arriving) and the end of another now (in becoming a past) to go back to Aristotle's *Physics* (2008, 112). Finitude does not contain linear time or is contained by it, but, paradoxically, it is not part of a floating eternity either. Recall, the "meaning of Dasein's Being is temporality," (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 38) which is linked with this problem of the 'finitude of temporality.' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 438)

If fundamental ontology must answer the question of the meaning of Being, then we must attend to the meaning of that question (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 19).

But that presupposes an entity that must inquire into the question. If the meaning of the question is itself a question, then the question (of what Being means) cannot be predetermined beforehand. Therefore, for any fundamental ontology to discover the meaning of Being in general that grounds all other ontologies of being, for example in all other physical, social, or human sciences, including theology, we need to take a step back. Heidegger states: "Therefore fundamental ontology, from which alone all other ontologies can take their rise, must be sought in the existential analytic of Dasein." (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 34)

This is not like any other analytic in the history of philosophy, most notably the analytic developed in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, namely 'Division One: Transcendental analytic of the Second Part: Transcendental logic of I. Transcendental Doctrine of Elements.' (Kant [1781] 1998, 86) There are reasons for this, which Heidegger tries to elaborate throughout *Being and Time*, and most notably in the 1927 lecture on the *Phenomenological Interpretation of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* ([1977] 1997) and his 1929 monograph, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* ([1929] 1997). We will have to return to these works in future investigation.

Furthermore, phenomenology is not an intellectual movement descending from Husserl, although he was its founder in terms of a method of philosophical investigation. Phenomenology does not have a definitional content that is fixed from the start. Even attempting to understand phenomenology requires that we "seize the possibility" (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 63) of grasping what phenomenology even means. However influential Husserl's teaching and mentoring of Heidegger may have been, the more mature philosophical works of Heidegger, *Being and Time* being paramount among them, is irreducible to purely Husserlian discourse, questions, and issues (Marion [1989] 1998; Crowell 2013). All one has to do is read *Being and Time* next to Husserl's major works which appeared before it, *Logical Investigations* (1900-1901), *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy – First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology* (1913), *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* (1893-1917), which Heidegger helped edit, to see the marked differences between the two thinkers.

For now, we can continue with the subsequent paragraphs to ones just analyzed at the end of the Introduction to *Being and Time*. Heidegger states:

> Being, as the basic theme of philosophy, is no class or genus of entities; yet it pertains to every entity. Its 'universality' is to be sought higher up. Being and the structure of Being lie beyond every entity and every possible character which an entity may possess. Being is the transcendens pure and simple. 1 And the transcendence of Dasein's Being is distinctive in that it implies the possibility and the necessity of the most radical individuation. Every disclosure of Being as the transcendens is transcendental knowledge. Phenomenological truth (the disclosedness of Being) is veritas transcendentalis.
>
> Ontology and phenomenology are not two distinct philosophical disciplines among others. These terms characterize philosophy itself with regard to its

> object and its way of treating that object. Philosophy is universal phenomenological ontology, and takes its departure from the hermeneutic of Dasein, which, as an analytic of existence, has made fast the guiding-line for all philosophical inquiry at the point where it arises and to which it returns. (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 62)

To get to a remote sense of 'Being as beyond every entity,' we would have to include every possible meaning of how Being can pertain to any entity construed as a being. And such beings do not have to be physically real or empirical. They can be imaginary and fictive and have no basis in any observable reality, such as a flying pig; the latter is still an imagined entity, however unreal, and can be pictographically represented. The pictograph of the unreal is no less real than any real thing; it just means something different from an actual real thing independent of a pictograph. Even when Heidegger flat-out states that "Being is transcendence pure and simple," ([1927] 1962, 62) the question of the status of 'is' in a seemingly sound subject-predicate relation, the relation of 'Being' to 'transcendens' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 62) is in question. The possibility for any quick causal connection to emerge is dismissed as part of a radical reduction and bracketing to use phenomenological language. The relation is in question, which is irreducible to any entity that can occupy the 'is.' The 'beyond' *is* even beyond the 'is.' The 'is' is hollowed out in a positivity, not a negative theological vacuum, which is stretched out in the very constitution of the question of the meaning of Being, which is preliminarily understood as the meaning of 'transcendens.' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 62)

In place of the history of metaphysics, positive, and negative theologies, we want to question how the relation of 'Being' to 'transcendens' is rooted in the problem of movement, even if not explicitly stated in this passage. There is no need for a present or absent God/gods in this undertaking. We can then link it up to all the heretofore questions that arise in the difference between Derridean 'différance' and negative theology, and how that could differ from what Heidegger states in the Introduction to *Being and Time*. There is a double difference at stake, which could then put into question Derrida's reading of Heidegger's 'avoidance' of the term 'Being' if Heidegger would have written a theology (Coward and Forshay 1992, 126-127).

We see several linkages between 'Being as transcendens' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 62) but approached from this uncanny perspective. This intention is not a location or position in space and time even if the latter are a priori intuitions by human subjectivity and not things in themselves to use Kantian language. Let us, therefore, not attribute any kind of human subjectivity to the following statement by Heidegger: "And the transcendence of Dasein's Being is distinctive in that it implies the possibility and the necessity of the most radical individuation." (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 62)

By 'distinctive' and the 'possibility of the most radical individuation,' one cannot assume a unique individual in historical terms so different from any other

human being in history, for example a scientific genius or the inventor of something. Nor should we contemplate a unique entity with a uniquely divine substance, say the Christian God-human hypostatic substance, which one does not find in the history of all other extant world religions. Finally, we are not pondering imaginary creations that take a fictional naturally born human being, which is then endowed miraculously with unique superhuman powers through bizarre scientific admixtures that seem plausible (spiderman, the hulk, the flash, etc.). Let us put aside the examples of a real historical unprecedented genius who thought something that no one did before or after them, say Einstein. And there is no point in discussing imaginary figures if no human being can relate to them or assume their superhero powers.

Turning to Christianity, for example, the Chalcedonian formulation of Jesus having two natures – God and human – as "unmixed, inseparable, where one nature does not change or divide the other" (The Westminster Standard, The Chalcedonian Creed, n.d.) is ripe for comparison. Even more complex for faith, which can never be a logical synthesis in a single metaphysical concept, but only a matter of belief and hope, is the further entanglements stated in the Creed: "the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same." (The Westminster Standard, The Chalcedonian Creed, n.d.) There is no point in trying to understand 2 = 1. Thinking of the 'non-annulment of the distinction by the union' as a 'preservation and coming together' to "form one person and subsistence, not two persons parted" (The Westminster Standard, The Chalcedonian Creed, n.d.) brings us closer to Hegel's ambitious attempt to overcome such mysteries in 'Revealed Religion' of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* to its ultimate aufheben in the last chapter of that great work, namely 'Absolute Knowing.' (Hegel [1807] 1977) Hegel thought he could conceptualize what neither (Christian) religion nor the history of metaphysics (the Pre-Socratics to Schelling) before him could.

Coming back to Heidegger, the point is not so much a negative theological exploration of these Chalcedonian mysteries of the hypostatic substance, whether through the history of Christian mysticism (both Western and Eastern Church Fathers) or through the speculative metaphysics of Hegel on the one hand or Schelling on the other, most notably in his *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809). As exciting as those vistas of German Idealism tend to be, to go with the philosophical angle, they belong to a whole other category of analysis, which Heidegger could question as still ontic in nature. For Heidegger, the ontological difference (the irreducibility of Being to any being even as intuition, imagination, or concept based on the present now) is not even considered, and the ordinary notion of time is assumed, even if imagined in the most 'radical way,' for example in Hegel's formulations (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 480).

The obvious question, then, his how can Heidegger differentiate his undertaking from both the history of metaphysics, with its ontotheological foundations, which extends from Plato and Aristotle up to Kant, Hegel, and Schelling, the architects of German Idealism, and negative theology on the other, for example an internal deconstruction of the aporetic knots of the Chalcedonian formulation? How else can we understand this all-important set of formulations at the end of the Introduction to *Being and Time*? That is all before Heidegger makes his ultimate conceptualizations of "philosophy as universal phenomenological ontology arising from and returning to the hermeneutic of Dasein as an analytic of existence." (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 62)

We could depart from a threefold possibility of the history of metaphysics, the history of negative theology on the paradoxes of Christian revelation, and Derridrean 'difference,' as briefly examined in the prior sections of our analysis, in a set of new hypotheses. This endeavor constitutes a fourth possibility. The way into this possibility is through various interrelations of movement as a complex event to what Heidegger defines 'Being as transcendence' beyond all entities rooted in a 'radical individuation.' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 62) Ultimately, to explore this interrelations-movement-event, we cannot lose sight of the starting assumptions regarding 'temporality as the meaning of the Being of Dasein.' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 38) By deduction, the 'Being as transcendens' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 62) beyond (as a peculiar type of movement) every possible entity (including movable ones and ones in motion) in a phenomenological-ontological exposition would also be rooted in the 'analytic of existence.' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 62) And this analytic is rooted in the Being of Dasein whose "meaning is temporality." (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 38) Primordial temporality as movement is linked with an event as 'radical individuation,' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 62) which lies at the basis of 'Being as transcendens' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 62) – or the beyond of any metaphysical or religious conception of the beyond. And this temporalization-interrelations-movement-event would constitute the alpha of our own investigation. The difference beyond all differences, which takes over and fates itself against all that has been thought as a calling back to go where no one has gone, is not the work of a human being or an arriving or fleeing god. This could mean a radical departure from Heidegger himself, and therefore any critiques of Heidegger too, for example in the writings of Derrida.

Taken as whole, we can now try to show why this fundamental interrelation of Being, transcendence, and temporality points to a passage to another-side; one which is irreducible to the history of metaphysics; any relation between metaphysical concepts or their impossibility in any negative theology as the evacuation of any logos, being, or symbol that stands for God; and the Derridean register of 'différence,' which is neither absence nor presence but a duplicitous differentiating and deferring, which can never be pinned down to lived speech or any presence for that matter (Derrida [1972] 1982, 6-8). Simply stated, the Derridean perspective on Heidegger's limits put forward in "How to Avoid

Speaking: Denials" (Coward and Forshay 1992) may not apply to *Being and Time*; the latter, arguably, is not only the central text in his vast corpus, but simply *unavoidable* if one wants to reckon anything in Heidegger's thought in general.

Our hypothesis begins with the idea that movement does not have to be circular, linear (with a starting point and irreversible, endless, one-directionality), or rectilinear (with a beginning and end and infinite movement between them). It would be other to all these and hence would be hard to conceive unless we do not begin with ideas of an origin and end, and quite frankly, no origin and no end; for the latter, movement would not exist at all or exist or in some spatialized version of an Aristotelian circle where beginning and end cross each other out infinitely in a closed motion. Even these do not do justice to the irreducible complexity and ingenuity at work in Aristotle's *De Anima, Physics*, *and Metaphysics*. And questioning time as three aspects, past, present, and future, in any spatialized configuration of movement through shapes, such as circles and lines, essentially resurrects the old ancient ontologies of Xeno, Plato, and Aristotle. Indeed, Heidegger seeks to 'destroy' ([1927] 1962, 43) the tradition in confronting its 'limits to appropriate positively' their questions in one's own way of reckoning them ([1927] 1962, 473).

Conclusion

This article began with the concluding moments of Derrida's intriguing essay, "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials." (Coward and Forshay 1992) Derrida tried to differentiate one of his key innovations in all his philosophical undertakings, namely 'différance,' from traditional senses of negative theology in the Western tradition. The beginning part of our analysis took us into the sinews of his articulations on the term 'différance' and the complications it engenders regarding a non-commitment to either positive or negative theology. This background sets up our chance to question Derrida's own attempt to question Heidegger's philosophy in general.

For Derrida, the later Heidegger's thought, which abandoned pure fundamental ontology (in trying to answer the question of the meaning of Being once and for all), contains a strange confession. The unfulfilled possibility of a theology other to Christian dogma haunted the later Heidegger. Indeed, as Heidegger says, he was tempted to write a theology in the future, but if he were to do so, then he could not use the word 'Being.' (Coward and Forshay 1992, 126-127) This written theology never happened. If Derrida tries to make clear his separation of the philosophical problematic of 'différance' from all and any negative theologies, he does so by insinuating a potential affinity or proximity between the later Heidegger's thought and the trace of something vaguely religious. But in the form of an unfulfilled future promise of writing a theology, which Derrida ascribes to Heidegger, there is theology, whether positive or negative, of this promise.

We attempted to question this Derridean gesture by returning to Heidegger's *Being and Time*. This monumental work is at once the greatest framing of the possibility of fundamental ontology but also its undecided suspension (Braver 2015). Our thesis is specific: buried in the heart of *Being and Time* is neither a new positive nor negative theology within the Christian tradition. Rather, there is something so radically Other that it brings us to the greatest possible critique and appropriation of that Western tradition into a realm that cannot be considered theological or metaphysical; at least, when using the concepts and terminology of the Western tradition of ontology and various Christian traditions. Our essay concludes with prospect of a four-dimensional temporalization-interrelations-movement event to understand what Heidegger meant by the phrase 'Being as transcendens' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 62) as rooted in a 'radical individuation.' (Heidegger [1927] 1962, 62) But this non-singularity (not a single individual) does not begin or end with a human subject. As far as we can reckon, this has never been attempted by a Western thinker since the inception of philosophy with the pre-Socratics.

We chose to examine the figures of Heidegger and Derrida because they represent, arguably, two of the most influential philosophers in the twentieth century. Both were heavily influenced by phenomenology, and in the context of the texts examined in this essay, both had something to say about theology. Our hope is that deconstruction at work in Derrida's texts and 'destruction' for Heidegger ([1927] 1962, 44) can shed light on new relations between phenomenology and theology. The aim, however, is not to attack or dismiss an existing world religion, for example Christianity. But, rather, we wish to engage more deeply with their traditions and texts to enliven what remains as transcendent mysteries within them, even if it means going against dogma, faith, and belief.

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