Différance and Paranoia

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Abstract

This exploratory essay aims to open *différance* to a form of enquiry it has not seen coming. A consideration of the complex temporality that attends its historical emergence leads to a specifically *différantial* articulation of spatio-temporality. A residual element of spacing before/behind spatiotemporality provokes further consideration. The notion of *verbality* is introduced to provide analytical purchase. Analysis identifies a *fundamental mannerism* in *différance*; a participative and orchestrative *spacance*. *Différance* participates too determinately in this spacing, as this spacing. The paper thus urges *différance* to rewrite this element quasimetaphorically. In the ensuing drama, *différance* can rewrite the metaphor of spacing only by relying again on the spacing of metaphor. Unable to rewrite itself quickly enough, nonetheless compelled, an unexpected dimension opens.

(In)deference.

If one can forgive the conceit of a paper that presumes to begin with time,[i] specifically with what time is or was before or after Derrida, then I will take as an initial coordinate that *point* in time, somewhere between late Heidegger and early Derrida, where the notion of *différance* first emerges. Of course this point, this time, these proper names, arriving late and clumsy, we use only as crude approximations; heuristic devices that allow us to continue to write amidst the painful complexity of it all. We are now mostly well-versed in all of this, rhetoric or otherwise. Largely adept, if never entirely rigorous, in interpreting the flood of points, names, notions, words, as mere secondary effects. Effects, that is to say, of that which emerges from them in supplementary fashion. Just as *différance* emerged, so late in Western thought; the reclusive writer stepping reticently from the wings. All that remains for us, the doubly late children of a lesser age, is to simply deal with this emergence. To get on with it or over it, trying somehow to live up to these texts that have provoked us.

But what writing! What could possibly pass for a fitting response in the face of this call? How can one hope to meet with the summons issued, albeit inadvertently, by the very stature of the work that precedes us? If intentions any longer mattered ours would have been entirely good. Systemically unsure of ourselves, unconvinced by the various emergent directions suggested for 'post-continental' thought, one should not confuse hesitancy for nonchalance. We have barely begun to understand what just happened, but already we are being asked to move along; barely have we begun to read these texts and already it is suggested that the time has come to write about other matters – as though we still knew how. All our words come too quickly; being spent so easily. Breaking tiredly against the flanks of an aposiopesis that implacably demands more, we are persuaded we should never have begun, and thereby fated to continue. One can go no further and do no other than press-on. There is no effort that will not entangle us more, no penance that will expiate nor respite to be won in quietism and restraint, and even in saying this little we have said too much, though none of it new. Such is our luck: a hollow calling; an impotent and unremarkable responsibility. Still one persists. As though this logorrhoealism were itself meaningful, as though notwithstanding everything we have been taught, yet meaning will out; and that this meaning and this 'as though' are not also *only* meaning. It is already too late again; too late for our stumbling prose to recover itself. And so under the impassive weight of this heavy sky we struggle to write without affect or

polemic, fearing that few words are left to us.

A Beginning

Of course *différance* did not really emerge, not as such. It was already there, more or less, in Plato and only ever there more or less in Derrida, as his series of prolific iterations are intended to demonstrate. One might even go so far as to suggest that Derrida's unwavering pursuit (so determinedly playful) across all manner of intellectual and cultural terrain, served only to *betray différance*. Argue, if only for strategic reasons, that Plato, harboring *différance* unthought in his work, was a better Derrida than Derrida. Betraying *différance* by portraying *différance* (to employ for a moment the Levinasian motif), was Derrida's work perhaps less responsible, less true to *différance* than Plato's? But maybe in this strange philosophical environ that's more or less proper, or is that improper? And so on…

None of this will surprise you. Comfortable with the economic logic[ii] of the 'more-or-less' that rigorously orchestrates this *pas de deux*, we now urbanely traverse the hyphenic between arising amidst Heidegger-Derrida—somewhere between *Seyn* with a 'y' and *différance* with an 'a'. This logic would give us to understand the nonappearance of *différance* in Plato as being orchestrated by the trace of its appearance in Derrida. Plato, that is to say, was only able to write by not *writing*. On the other hand (for as we well know *différance* is always at a minimum ambidextrous) its appearance in Derrida is only the trace of its nonappearance elsewhere, which is perhaps why early Derrida could *only* have proceeded by systematically *re*writing the works of Western philosophy. Truthfully, then, neither Plato nor Derrida are the better Derrida because there is no Derrida, only Plato-Derrida. How, then, are we to interpret this hyphen between Plato and Derrida, which like that troublesome 'a' will not have been heard throughout the course of this epoch? Obviously it cannot be the hyphen of a simple temporal transition, *from* Plato *to* Derrida; philosophical poles along the course of a linear history of ideas. And yet *différance* still emerges, at a certain point in time, from a certain place, *relative to* Plato – a time/place called Derrida. We cannot represent this emergence teleologically or consequentially; *différance* cannot be called to account by time, but rather accounts *for* time (as we will shortly reemphasize). This hyphenic between, then, is not governed by temporal progression. Whatever divides and unites Plato and Derrida in our example, whatever *spaces* them, it is not first and foremost time. These effects of time, just like those of the name, ought not to mislead us. The form of the between instituted by the trace "would not be the mixture, the transition between form and the amorphous, presence and absence, [Plato and Derrida] etc, but that which, by eluding this opposition, makes it possible in the irreducibility of its excess." (Derrida, 1982:172 n16. My addition). More precisely, then, there is nothing plenitudinous that unites the more-or-less of the appearance-nonappearance of *différance*, but an excess that orchestrates this economy, and which is once again and 'more originally' *différance*. Or, more properly, *différance* in *différance*.

This hyphenic space, devoid of time, God, Being or desire, lacking purchase, form or foothold, will not yield to philosophy. A meta-aposiopesis; a silencing evocation that leaves us lost for words though mouths still moving; a 'Just because!' that blankly curtails our every *Why*? Having so brilliantly, so busily, and yet so self-effacingly orchestrated all things (now and then and here and there and all points in between) *différance* has certainly secured for us space to read and write. Is there, though, no longer a question one could put *to différance* that is not already formulated from within its own sphere of orchestration – a question that would unsettle rather than reiterate? For whatever we say we seem to say only *différance*, whether indeed we speak or not. With every word, no more nor less, with every offbeat, gap or pause, there *différance* resonates. Could one presume to bring this obdurate aposiopesis to the brink of a question it has not already imagined?

As a preliminary gesture, intended to help articulate the course and character of a certain

philosophical 'project,' I have grown accustomed to juxtaposing two passages: the first of these from Heidegger's *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, where he in turn quotes Aristotle:

> That which has been sought for from of old and now and in the future and constantly, and that on which inquiry founders over and over again, is the problem What is being?
>
> (Aristotle-Heidegger, 1982:15)

The second from *Of Grammatology*:

> One must therefore go by way of the question of being as it is directed by Heidegger and by him alone, at and beyond onto-theology, in order to reach the rigorous thought of that strange nondifference and in order to determine it correctly.
>
> (Derrida, 1976:23)

By way of the *question* of being. *Différance* emerges in this way, as this way and as the wayness of this way (meta-odos). As way and wayness, the emergence of *différance*, I suggest, marks the end of a distinctive questioning comportment, the particularity of which has yet to be foregrounded. Given what has been already said around the subject of time, it is important to clarify the status of this 'emergence' more precisely. For the question of being to which Aristotle-Heidegger refers—an inquiry that points toward the constitution of time even in the context of this simple *re*peated quotation (*fug-unfug*)—is less a question configured in time than it is, *de jure*, configuring *of* time. With its *historical* emergence, that is to say, *différance* repatterns time, realising time in a distribution of time that inaugurates the motif of the *re-*. Clearly, though, one cannot understand this repatterning as part of an unproblematic 'history of ideas,' without simply assuming those very 'metaphysical' formations Heidegger-Derrida calls into question. Thus, the historical repatterning that *takes place* somewhere in the midst of 20th Century continental philosophy, is also a *re*patterning of history that *gives place*; a transcendental *re- re*alized via the supplement of an empirical *re-* which continually thwarts the ambitions of this, now quasi, transcendental. Accordingly, one cannot simply imagine that *différance* emerges *in* time; just in time for Heidegger-Derrida. Earliest of all, *différance* was never timely but remains ever late for itself. On the other hand, while no mere historical object, *différance* undoubtedly emerges in some measure as a response to the demands of this particular question, an answer (of sorts). One must of course be careful not to collapse back into crude, linear explanations here, temporal or otherwise, but equally neither can *différance* disown the traces that constitute its heritage. A more responsible prose would therefore attempt to respect the logic in play with this question-answer we call *différance*: neither strictly configured in time, nor configuring of time, neither passive nor active but middling in between, one might best regard the question of essence-difference as a question configured *over* time. Read this way and that, the ambivalence of this formulation gives to us a question-answer born in time, borne by time, born out of time and before time – configured and configuring, more-or-less. With formulations of this type contemporary thought is able to bear witness to the characteristic complexity of essence-difference across its various fields of possible enquiry.[iii]

Clearly it would be no simple matter to extract from this questioning comportment its *essential* features, each interface with *différance* merely leaving a 'skim' of logic; the perception of a surface glinting in the perpetual withdrawal of *différance* itself. Neither critique nor deconstruction will prove equal to the demands of such an analysis therefore. This impasse (we do not say aporia) will require judicious negotiation of now familiar paths and, if *différance* is to surpass itself, will testify to the continuing glimmer of a certain non-*différantial* waywardness. For if *différance* were indeed the outworking of a particular questioning comportment, then one immediately raises the possibility of other comportments, other logics and other outworkings that can no longer be considered merely *different* comportments, logics or outworkings: modalities of difference rather than modalities in

différance. Rather than being the only question, is the enquiring comportment we know as ontology only a particular question? Being the question it is, being set in its ways, has it merely unfolded time and space in a predeterminedly characteristic manner? Undoubtedly this questioning comportment (*ti esti,* What is?) has exerted enormous influence, for so long orchestrating thought (not only as first philosophy, but in politics, ethics, and aesthetics alike). Might there be ways of thinking the political, though, that are not first onto-political?[iv] Might ethics or art be thought along a course irreducible to an ontological or quasi-ontological mode of enquiry? A preparatory essay is not the place to engage in this level of detail. Nonetheless, my contention is that one might indeed preserve other regions of thought from immediate reduction to ontology, or indeed epistemology; that there are modalities of difference other than the play of essence-difference, and these axiomatically demarcate their own regions of thought.

The course of the question of essence concludes (perhaps unsurprisingly) with essence questioning '*itself*' '*as such*' – questioning the essence of essence. Thus distending the question in portentous ways essence itself never foresaw, yet this question continues in the way of its unfolding, albeit now under the auspices of *différer* rather than *Sein*. Although (late as we are) we failed to realize it for some considerable time, essence only ever was *différance*, just as *différance* is essence and nothing besides. The hyphenated term 'essence-difference' attempts to designate the domain of this questioning comportment. Elsewhere we unpack this formulation a little further and wonder whether there are perhaps comportments of another sort, with another history, another start – like a *Why*? irreducible in its demeanor to a 'What is?' A question that avoids the calmly measured gait of that form of thinking animated by an orchestrative spacing (announcing itself in philosophy's continuing allegiance to categories, dialectics, oppositions and the like). A more desperate, visceral *Why*? torn from Eve's lips and hurled at the darkening sky.[v] To be sure, *différance* edges towards thinking this spacing as *mere* spacing, but in so doing posits spacing as an unsurpassable limit, which within the confines of its particular comportment it surely is. If, therefore, we are correct in suggesting that *différance* is pre-structured or even pre-ordained (such a properly improper suggestion) by a particular questioning comportment, then to evince this it is necessary to demonstrate more adequately and precisely the necessary relationship between *différance* and spacing. The remainder of this essay accordingly attempts to respond, with a writing otherwise than *différance*.

To be clear, we are suggesting that the hyphenic space of the *différantial* between, devoid of plenitude, mere excess, is nonetheless *contoured* by certain 'mannerisms' peculiar to the question of essence as received. These bearings thus facilitate the orchestration of essence-difference in ways peculiar to this one questioning comportment. The essay will later exhort us to think further, harder or faster about the trajectories of this différantial between. To progress to this moment, however, it is necessary to more adequately provoke the issue of the place of *différance*, or the space of *différance*. Better yet, how the place of *différance* as the consummative moment of a Western philosophical programme, is assured by the hyphenic, nonplenitudinous spacance of *différance*. An element of spacing *différance* cannot rewrite without also simply writing it again, this motif of spacing figures for us a *fundamental* catachresis (already properly improper) that both allows access to, and, in some sense, *authorizes* the entire quasi-metaphoric system.

Perhaps we are being overly provocative with our choice of words, and no doubt we ought to display more rigor in our crossing through (as though rigor could save us). Nonetheless, we hope to demonstrate that without this spacing there could be no *différance*, but that *différance* can never rest *with* this element of spacing. And perhaps this is what propels *différance*, lending impetus and allowing, despite everything, for the very directionality of time's dimensions; perhaps this is why *différance* is so edgy, always on the move, always looking for something different? Arguing that this catachresis is internally compelled to unfold out of itself, unfold other than itself, the paper marks the course of this unfolding as *différance*

struggles to surpass itself. Gerundially pressing into each opening dimension in exponential fashion, sliding with *différance*, our analysis will chase (for we can no longer trace) the movement of a failed rewriting in a direction other than that of the *relève*.

Spatio-temporality and quasi-metaphoricity

We begin again, therefore, speaking of time, not directly or literally but textually, in order to rehearse in greater detail the important *différantial* reconfiguration of spatio-temporality. Crudely put, one can identify different ways to enquire of essence *vis a vis* space-time. When asked 'vulgarly,' for instance, essence works out spatially (in terms of substantiality or extension, say), and spatiality subordinates temporality; when asked 'primordially' essence works out temporally (in terms of *Existenz*), and temporality subordinates spatiality—as for the Heidegger of *Being and Time* who famously argues that the priority given to "spatial representation" in the philosophical history of time, is attributable to the fact that "Temporality is essentially falling, and it loses itself in making present" (Heidegger 1962:421). Later, of course, he corrects himself, admitting that "[s]pace is fundamentally different to time. […] There is no reason to trace it back to 'time,' because the re-presenting of space is a temporalizing. […] only by virtue of this utmost difference do they refer to their origin, time-space [Zeit-Raum]" (Heidegger, 1999:263). With this hyphenic play of space and time, a proto-*différance*, we arrive, albeit before time, at a much more Derridean conception of spatio-temporality, where again the silent hyphen bears the weight of a trace gesturing toward a *différantial* constitution.[vi] When asked *textually*, therefore, essence works out (provisionally, before working itself out in essence-difference) in a spatio-temporal manner (and here, imperceptible, the emphatic hyphen already foregrounds the *différantial* between). Hyphenic spatio-temporality neither subordinates spatiality to temporality nor visa versa. Textually, that is to say, spatiality and temporality are originally complicit, united by their differences: the spacing of temporality and the temporalising of spatiality. This reasonably well-rehearsed philosophical discussion regarding the nature of space-time, thus brings one to the quasi-metaphoric articulation of spatio-temporality.

For is it the case that with this spatio-temporal weave we are promised an understanding of what space and time literally *are*? By no means! That which we have always referred to as spatiality or temporality, is itself only a *metaphor* for the (finitely) infinite differing-deferring, without which not. The characteristic *mouvance* of the re-, if you will, given spatio-temporal clothes. Spatio-temporality does not give us this hyphenic *différancing in itself*. Rather, it is as though we merely 'felt its effect' in the plenitudinous metaphoric externalization we call spatio-temporality - an 'experience' (experience as such) that gives itself to us only through the remarkable concrescence of difference into effects of essence; simultaneously the dissemination of essence in difference. A metaphoric experience, therefore, neither giving itself properly, fully, literally, nor as such. As we know, such metaphoricity can no longer be conceptualized by a philosophy that has the metaphor unfailingly return to the concept. We do not literally 'feel the effect' of this differing-deferring as one would feel the warmth of the sensory sun; there is no *in itself* to difference; we effect we feel is only the effect of an effect, etc. This 'in itself' to which essence-difference turns and returns must, in itself, be understood quasi-metaphorically, as if all there were were metaphor.

In this way *différance* is figured as the (quasi-metaphoric) movement that assembles spatio-temporality, but which assembles it: i) dissemblingly (assembles it in such a way as to prevent there ever being things *in themselves* called 'time' or 'space'), and; ii) supplementarily (in such a way as to disallow the gesture that would return spatio-temporality to *différance* as its proper, literal meaning). The best we can hope for is a metaphoric understanding of this differing-deferring where, methodologically, our metaphors return metaphorically, not properly; *la différance - relève de la métaphore*, one might remark. The metaphoric return of the *relève* preventing us from understanding this metaphoricity conceptually, our

understanding of the *What is…?* is reorganized accordingly; that is, quasi-metaphorically. Should we find cause to resist the properly heliotropic return of a speculative *Aufhebung* (or, indeed, of a progressively more primordial hermeneutic disclosiveness), we can yet do no better than to hope for a metaphorical return, a *relève* of the heliotrope that gives us space and time only on the basis of a catachrestic improperly proper meaning (a metaphoric metaphor), and potentially unfolds time and any discourse on time metaphorically without limit.

Two related issues arise, the first concerning a largely untapped quasi-phenomenology of time that the *différantial élan* frees-up in releasing depictions of time from the dominant spatio-structural proclivities of an overly formalistic philosophy. Repeating Heidegger's complaint regarding spatial representation in philosophical accounts of time, but without accepting that one might yet speak of time directly or authentically, such a *différantial* phenomenology would seek to distend time through a non-spatial quasi-metaphorics; a 'poetics of time' that in fact serves to challenge the traditional association of the question of being with interpretations of space-time. The spatial metaphor that philosophy has mined for so long in its explication of time would have no greater literal truth than any other metaphor: time *could* just as well grumble as circle, could just as much horror as go-by. Perhaps time really could heal, fly, or drowsy, without this being immediately reducible to a spatially-temporal description of the various *passages* of time; no longer an *articulation* of what time *is*, in essence (or, equally, in difference), but a celebration of the multiplicit verbal richness of time's timing. Being's explication of time, that is to argue, with its distinctive conjugation of temporality in the patterning of its verb, was ever and already supplementary—in as much as one never simply just 'was' or 'is,' etc., but only ever 'was…' or 'is….' To allow this one verb (*be*) a privileged explication of time, therefore, unduly favors the supplement. Although one may not wish to go as far as a Nietzschean inversion, which would almost wish to expunge this particular verb altogether, still it is possible to enquire of the interpretation of time educed by other verbs, as they engage with time in the peculiarity of their specific quasi-metaphoric ambiances. In this way a non-hierarchical, quasi-phenomenological poetics of time would lend itself to an appreciation of time beyond ontology.

In as much as *différance* provides space for a project of this sort, however, revealing the pretensions of presumed authentic singular depictions of time, it also lends space – the spacing of metaphoricity. Such a quasi-phenomenology of time, intent on freeing itself from spatial representation while still relying on the orchestrative force of *différantial* metaphorics, would thus prove itself ultimately insincere. Owing to its methodological reliance on the continued spacing of the quasi-metaphor it would remain only adverbial in nature, modifying a master verb (whether *Sein* or *différer* seems unimportant) that remains *structurally uncontaminated* notwithstanding its supplementary status. The second issue, therefore, concerns not simply the implicit dependence upon spacing that would authorize a reinvigorated quasi-phenomenology, but more seriously already points toward the continuing role of the spatial metaphor in *différance* itself. On the face of it something quite rudimentary links ontology to spacing. So trivial the observation, one wonders whether any sort of thinking would be at all possible without spacing in some form. No doubt, as Heidegger indicates, the consideration of time is historically something of a privileged example, but in fact the dialectics of points, lines and planes, the horizontal and transverse intentionalities of Husserl, the thrown forethrow and horizonal circlings of primordial temporality, testify to a methodological necessity that underlies the ontological project more generally. Here, in the spacance of quasi-metaphoricity also, we suspect that this necessity continues to work itself out. Is it not the case that far from escaping the dominance of the spatial, quasi-metaphoricity in fact repeats this dominance (so traditional) in the spacing movement of metaphor. If quasi-metaphoricity figures the truth of spatio-temporality, and in this manner panics the concept, it also firmly *repeats* the traditional reliance upon the privileged spatial metaphor.

What is the status of this repetition, not straightforwardly a *re*petition? What is the relationship between this repetition and the *relève*? How are we to understand the spacing

movement of metaphor? Without wishing to labor an analysis with which most are familiar, it is not just the *concept* of metaphor as properly understood by philosophy that relies on such thematics. Even quasi-metaphoricity, even that differing-deferring, neither active nor passive, seemingly rests upon some form of movement tied up in turn with the dominance of a spatial articulation. Can quasi-metaphoricity metaphorize this reliance? Can it re-write the element of spacing that continues unperturbed through each articulation of *différance*? Or is it the case that quasi-metaphoricity, whilst seeking to disturb the order of the proper, reaffirms that order in its insistent reliance upon not just any metaphor but the dominant philosophical metaphor, *the non-metaphoric ground of metaphor*? If one could show the spacing and accordant movement of quasi-metaphoricity to be in some sense proper or essential *to* quasi-metaphoricity,[vii] would one have then confirmed such a reli*ance*, no longer a *re*liance?

To disturb the dominance of this catachrestic metaphor, therefore, how carefully one would have to choose one's metaphors! To avoid any reliance upon the spacing of metaphor these metaphors ought not even to be metaphoric; not different metaphors, but different *than* metaphor. Differing and deferring to the *brink of their own expulsion* from the *différantial* order, they would struggle to be other than metaphoric in order to metaphorize their reliance upon the element of spacing. Sliding ever faster, these metaphors would feel themselves compelled to found an entirely new catachresis: a *way of meaning*, that is to say, that could no longer be understood from a quasi-metaphoric vantage. At this point, where fractious *différance* struggles to differentiate itself, is never fast enough and can no longer keep up with itself, we believe it prepares for a paratactical interjection.[viii] If, however, we intend to expose possibilities for meaning beyond both the semantical and the syntactical, beyond essence-difference, it will be necessary to develop a form of analysis appropriate to the task: an analysis that will keep pace with *différance*; exponential rather than existential. Reconfiguring the question of essence for purposes of alignment, we here introduce, as a first step in this exponential analysis, the term *verbality*.

Verbality

We do not deploy this term to denote the *use* of verbs; this is not a linguistic analysis, if indeed there remains any point in marking a distinction. Still quasi-ontological in character, verbality is intended, if you will, to bring us to the 'verbing' of the verb.[ix] Verbality allows one to think that verbing whilst avoiding, for instance, the temporalizations particular to any one verb. From the previous consideration we recognize that space and time work out quasi-metaphorically; a metaphoricity that then disallows any privilege or authorial status to be granted to one particular verb (the verb *be*, say) and opens the field to metaphors of all sorts. Verbs, that is to say, unfold or explicate time in and of themselves, without reliance upon an orchestrating master verb. Far from recognizing its supplementarity, however, philosophy has typically favored the verb *be* in its understanding of time, such that time might well *seem* to fly, drag, or drowsy, *but only on the basis of time's essential connection with being*. On such an account temporalization, whether vulgar or primordial, is what the *be* does, and all other verbs only become operative through participation in this verb; no one would argue this point more earnestly than early Heidegger. Accordingly, the peculiar appreciations of time suggested by other verbs are only conceivable as *adverbial modifications* of this primordial verb 'be' that in *its* verbing makes all other verbs possible.

With early Heidegger, moreover, the temporal character of the verb *be*, and thus the *true* temporal character of time, is to be discovered in this verb's dealing with a nullity that remains more or less external (rather than an internal differentiation/alterity, for example). By contrast, that which opens the *spatial* dimension of the verb *be*, distending the nominal realm of the object in the present of the *Gegenwart*, aligns itself with the motif of *Verfallen* and the untruth of time. Thus, maintaining the priority of the verb *be* while expanding its explication across its entire verbal range on the one hand, and authentically articulating this verb in

purview of its negative on the other hand, it will have been predictable that Heidegger would be led toward a congruent and horizonal temporality (mobilized in its entire possibility through running-up against the 'never' of the nothing); the infinitive 'to be' is explicated to the limit of its tenses under the watch of the finite 'not to be,' and together this produces the orchestrative whole of *Sein und Zeit*.

If one were simply to repeat the analysis of Being and Time (i.e. restrict ourselves to the explication of this one master verb) verbality would of course amount to nothing more than another name for Being; a synonym for the orchestrative verbing typical of this particular, but primordial, verb *be*. Following the lead others have made,[x] though, if primordial temporality is taken *less* 'primordially' (i.e. considered merely an *instance* of temporalisation, reflecting the congruence of time) and if its opposition to vulgar temporality (the *fall* from utterly congruent time to a more disjointed time) is negotiated in a less metaphysical way (which may arguably have been early Heidegger's intention anyway), then one might indeed agree that prior to the *congruent-disjointedness* of time there remains a *différance* of time. The point is that although one is no longer dealing with a plenitudinous phenomena here, nor with a word nor a concept, one might yet address the *verbality,* or verb-nouning, of this new verb-noun; namely, the characteristic orchestrative tendencies of *différance*. Thus, to reiterate for the sake of clarity, spatio-temporality (distinguished from primordial temporality) is structured non-horizonally and non-congruently, there remaining an excess of time between *fug* and *unfug* that can never be reduced to time, or resolved in time. This excess is not something other than time. It is only in differingly-deferring from itself that time gives rise to *différance*, as *différance* gives rise to time. One cannot separate them out. Non-plenitudinous 'in itself,' there remains a co-dependency between *différance* and plenitudinous space-time that undermines any traditional opposition and thus any 'in itself.'[xi] Supplementarity demands this thoroughly complex co-dependent weave of plenitude and non-plenitude that serves to renegotiate even this first or final opposition. Hence, the apparent structuring of spatio-temporality as congruent incongruence is merely characteristic of this complexity, and reflects (as does the apparent structuring of all things) this complexity in its complexity.

With the emphatically hyphenated term "spatio-temporality" denying early Heidegger the privilege he arguably assigns to the truth of time, the complexity of the *différantial* system declares itself characteristically in the clamor of the verb *be* and the silence of its offbeat. Clearly there can be no prior performance, or plenitudinous point of simplicity, that serves to structure this complexity in the manner declared. Notwithstanding, in view of this reconfiguration of the question of essence one already begins to notice a surprising conjunction of verb and noun attending these two most influential words of 20th Century philosophy: the verbal substantive *Sein* and the deverbal noun *différance*. Is this mere coincidence; an accident of history; of marginal significance?[xii] Verbality is not intended metaphysically – identifying some hidden plenitude behind plenitude, an ethereal potential of the verb that enlivens the body of the noun, for instance. Nonetheless, as an analytical tool it does possess the facility of extension beyond the phenomenal, beyond plenitudinous space-time. For it seems important today to find a way to enquire responsibly of *différance*; to understand better the peculiar characteristics of the verb and its deverbal suffix, and of what (in the language of essence-difference) would properly be considered the pre-pre-originary interaction of the two. Obviously such an analysis does not attempt to identify what *différance is* or what it is made of. Rather, it is a case of asking 'how goes it with *différance*? How does *différance* peculiarly *re*solve the aporia of time? Without doubt, the excess of this "*re-*" must be given due regard if our question is to be heard correctly. The *re-* and the *-solve* inaugurate a complexity that can never be resolved in time, for the "re-" is that which solves the aporia; *it is the way of the aporia, the way of having no way*. So it is that with this perhaps ungainly neologism, 'verbality,' we nonetheless believe one finds space to inquire of the characteristics of the root verb and of the role played by its deverbal, middle voiced suffixation; the first stage of the exponential analysis of *différance*.

How *goes it* with *différance*? How is it that, *différer* 'ances,' and in so doing orchestrates even plenitude and non-plenitude as their excess? *Verbality* figures an attempt to distil from the hyphenic complexity of the participial between, that which does not seemingly succumb to such complexity: verbality as the *structure of* this complexity. An analytical device extending beyond plenitudinous space-time to embrace even time's excess, at first *verbality* merely reiterates the mechanisms of *différance*. But by examining how verbal and nominal effects issue in a participative explication, one is able to eventually 'get a handle' on *différance*; one is able to observe the characteristic spacance of the *différantial* system. No matter how middle-voiced it may be (for the middle-voice is not nothing), the 'ance' of *différance* is as participial as its more active and passive cousins. Indeed, given the form of participation proper to the middle-voice one might regard it as the participative par excellence. This participial "ance," in the smooth spreadliness of its middle-voice, lends to the deverbal noun its element of orchestrative spacing, as the verb lends its peculiar complexity, impetus and paths. In the simplest terms, we ask whether *différance*, so busy, so brilliant, is yet safe in assuming this spacing, or whether – notwithstanding its undeniable complexity, its escape from plenitude and its middling-voice – it still ought rather to attempt to *rewrite* such spacing.

Différer 'ances.' With this description we do not presume any apriority for the verb and the suffix, and say nothing more than '*différance.*' The participative moment does not precede *différance*, in such a way as to suggest that one might uncover a more originary opposition that would thus set deconstruction on its way once more. *Différance* is not simply a noun. Neither can it be simply a verb, a pure becoming, which is why there is no pure *différance* either way, no "difference in itself."[xiii] Nonetheless, the orchestrated spacing that exemplifies the order of the verb-noun testifies to, and is demanding of, the particular 'ancing' of *différance*'s peculiar verb. So emerges the choreography characteristic of the nonidentical same, a choreography with which, in the way that it goes, we express only agreement and respect; a thoroughly complex 'ancing' (a 'différer-ancing') structuring the question of essence received from the tradition in its particular way. We do not attempt to distend this question further, acknowledging the brilliance of its delimitation.

The axiomatic realization of the participial is an inauguration, the inauguration a regional orchestration. Do our descriptions here attempt to account for *différance*? By no means. One cannot *account* for this deverbal noun: as though we might uncover an unlimited profit, an essence behind essence-difference, laid-up in some ontotheological vault where moth and rust do not corrupt. Such accounting remains within the limits of the question of essence. The participial is neither empirical nor transcendental but precisely that which organizes this difference. The question of being is neither temporal nor metaphysical but accounts for these parameters, and the challenge is to think the question accordingly. One cannot 'crack-open' *différance* to reveal another *What is*? behind the scenes. Situated at the very limits of the ontological, implacable *différance* will not succumb to such a mode of enquiry and if we wish to press this element of spacing further we cannot simply *re*peat our question over and over. If *différance* describes the limits of the question of essence then any question aimed at *différance* from within those limits will break harmlessly against its flanks.

Accordingly, it is not my intention to account for *différance* but rather to spur *différance* to account. If with the notion of verbality one is able to acquire a certain analytical purchase on *différance*, therefore, it is still important to develop forms of 'critique' suitable to the continuation of the analysis. Although initially adopting a deconstructive stance, the enquiry must explore other ways in which to press this unaccountable element of spacing; a *spacance* that, despite everything, returns each time the same. We urge *différance* to engage with this portentous metaphoric spacing (both the spacing of metaphor and the metaphor of space), in an exponential self-analysis; to ask itself whether its spacing *comes too soon*. If so, then the potency of its own issue will be at issue, threatening a suspension of the movement of the orchestrative 're-.' For certainly this could not be any sort of plenitudinous spacing, it could

not be spacing *as such*. So presumably *différance* will be able to rewrite its quasi-dependency. Like the circling logic of addiction, however, in rewriting this spacing *différance* only catches itself again, relying on that very same element.

Paranoia

Spacing comes too soon. *Différance* participates too readily, too determinately, *in* this spacing *as* this spacing. The economies that characterize the *différantial* system cannot account for such a moment, for its necessity or its persistence. The *relève* does not give rise to this element of spacing but relies on it before ever the complex dimensionality of the 're-' is augured. This realization, in no way a *re*alization, a reliance before any *re*liance, preludes and institutes all balancing of profit and loss. Beyond all play of proper and improper, beyond all rhetorical flourishes, scare-quotes and caveats, this internal, middle-voiced spacing appears in some sense *proper to the différantial system*. Of course this 'properly' could never be a proper 'proper.' Or, rather, we must strive to understand this propriety beyond the play of proper and improper proper to quasiontology. Indeed, we must constantly maintain the highest regard for *différance* in all of our dealings, and if we oppose verb and suffix it is not in an attempt to illustrate what remains metaphysical in the grammatical system in which this deverbal noun is undeniably inscribed. To avoid the repetitive banality of such a demonstration, however, it will be necessary to develop a method (of sorts) suitable to the task. *One's analysis must slide with différance*, applying itself to the between just *as différance* differentiates between; an 'as' more acute than any plenitudinous 'now'; the 'as' of the hyphenic dimension of *différer's* 'ancing.' In this way the analysis applies itself to *différance in différance*: before *différance* is able to issue in space and time; before the 'ance' is able to accomplish the non-plenitudinous spacance upon which the 're-' of the *relève* relies. Pursuing *différance différantially*, pressed up against *différance's* hyphenic '*ancing.*' Imposing itself on the between at that very moment when *différance* tries to 'give us the slip,' the analysis applies itself to *différance* just as *différance* secretes itself from plenitude.

It is in this aspect that verbality does not simply reiterate but will start, by way of the exponential analysis, toward a paraphrastic account of *différance*. For, if *différance* is constrained to rewrite itself other than itself, if this element of spacing is to unfold quasi-metaphorically, *and if this very quasi-metaphoric unfolding unavoidably ascribes to this elemental spacing in its spacing*, then mere rewriting will prove inadequate to itself. Differing and deferring faster and faster without ever quite coming to the issue, breathless *différance* will be constrained to an internal dimension. Through the paranoia of a compulsive re-writing it can never write off, *différance's* self-affliction will mark the curve of an exponential textual slippage; a parataxis *différance* cannot contextualize, not even via the motif of the 're-'. This transversal curve (*sinus*) marking a dimension of exponential slippage in the interstices of *différance*, insinuates a parallelism. Ontologically this insinuation makes no sense at all. If formally one can speak of a para-noia that panics even quasi-ontological concepts, empirically one would refer to the startle as the delimitation of all empiricism, phenomenological or otherwise (Love, 2008). If, however, one is able to find a way to paraphrase this insinuation, then one raises the possibility of non-ontological modalities of meaning that remain irreducible to the hither and thither of onto-logics.

Within *différance* one begins to witness the distension of an ir*re*solvable direction, an *indifference* that nonetheless troubles *différance*, a resonant modulation that does not direct itself along the path of the *relève*. *Différance* sets about the task of rewriting with consummate tenacity; a speed and rigor unmatched by plenitudinous forms of analysis, only *différance* could be this fast. But harrying the *relève*, interrupting its moment of issue, the analysis directs the dissolute wayward trace into a nonplenitudinous interstice torn in the fabric of the text. Never *re*solving the matter, never coming to the point, *différance* subjects itself to a spur that even the future perfect fails to reach or gloss (a dimensionality it will not

have assumed via *re*petition). The exponential exposition thus slices through the ligamentatious traces and chases *différance* into a narrow, internal dimension. Along the coursing of this resonant trajectory there is insinuated a certain parallelism of regions. Despite its constantly being-on-the-go, *différance* cannot straddle the indifference of paranoia, and so a non-*différantial* relation emerges between *différance* and that which is 'beyond the text'. The para-noia that afflicts *différance* thus points toward a potential set of conditions of possibility of meaning that are irreducible to essence-difference; conditions of possibility that avoid syntactical (and thus semantical) classification.

A resonant trajectory, then, imploding along the course of exponential slippage that marks the disruption of the trace in its movement of tracing, the analysis takes the form of a compulsive re-writing of the element of spacing – a compulsion that seeks something different to writing, but that can only ever succeed in writing differently. This indifference denies *différance* the relief of the *relève*. Unable to disseminate its element of spacing, *différance* plays with itself, putting itself on hold. Constraining itself for fear of coming too quickly, an internal drama arrests the issue of spacing – *différance* being unable to make its spacing an issue. For it is this element that inoculates *différance* against the imperative and absolute "*Différer*!" Without this participial spreadliness, all would collapse into absolute presence and death. Like some mysterious quintessence, as ephemeral as *différance*, nothing apart from *différance*, this element stubbornly remains, striating its own failed rewriting. The trace thrown off the scent, *différance* thus loses its way, engrossed in an internal audit it can never 'sign off;' struggling to balance an unaccountable profit, a debt it can neither *re*negotiate nor write off. With this, *différance* forbids itself any orchestrative *re*turn. Held back from the *relève*, just going through the motions yet for all that unable to resist the spur, fractious *différance* presses into this strange spaceless place.

Différance simply cannot rewrite itself fast enough to rewrite itself. Scratching away in irritation, a form of textual para-noia[xiv] interjects in the busy orchestrations of *différance*. There will be no time for etymology or difference here; the equivocal senses of the 'para-' can no longer be figured *différantially* – our context destroys context. The paranoia that afflicts *différance* is not governed by the *relève*. On the contrary, paranoia is the inability of the *relève* to relieve. Paranoia is utterly indifferent to our paranoia. It has no reason, no illumination, no end in sight: there is no aposiopesis for the paranoid. Progeny of the question 'Why?', there is no 'What?' to appease paranoia. Collapsingly maintaining itself, maintaining spacing in rewriting spacing, like Oedipus fleeing fate, *différance* unravels in the paragraphia of a writing without difference. There is no deferment here, no delay: *différance* startled; thought thinking everything together and at once. Paranoia does not move us on in an orderly orchestration, giving one time and space for *re*flection. Nothing comes since nothing 'to comes'; everything crowding in, jostling, preventing progression or *différantiation*. Tumbling gerundially, *différance* collapses toward an acuity opened in the domain of the verb-noun. And yet this curve insinuates other potentialities for meaning. Cutting across the threads of syntactical sense, paranoia alludes to a meaning that *différance* will never get. This allusion, occurring at the point at which the exponential analysis converges with its insinuation, the point at which the parallel meet and *différance* surpasses itself, suggests not only the delimitation of the (quasi)ontological comportment but, with its utter indifference to *différance*, promises also other modulations and other questions.

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Notes

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[i] Most acutely, perhaps, the conceit that time might give itself to writing at all. That it might bend this way or that before our prose; that one might have time, when in fact for so very long we have all been had by time.

[ii] A difficult word, 'logic,' but then all words are difficult. Better yet, all words are (im)possible, there no longer being such things as words. A mere glimmering skin of meaning made possible by the unending reflective play of *différance*, words fail us when faced with this aposiopesis. Whilst this essay is littered with all sorts of impossible words ('logic,' 'element,' 'structure') most of all there is no such thing as the word *différance*, which fact would seem to challenge the very basis of our later analysis. Notwithstanding, while reason might not be able to encapsulate *différance*, it can nonetheless travel its traces; the traces, for instance, that connect the word *différance* to its conditions of (im)possibility. Thus although on the one hand there are no words, and while on the other hand every word more or less says *différance*, yet there is still a propriety to words, an improperly proper way to speak of *différance*, a propriety the word 'word,' for instance, more or less lacks. The ensuing analysis of *différance* is accordingly concerned less with the *word différance* than it is with the traces that slip away in constituting this word, and yet do so *différantially*. Said differently, in as much as the word *différance* can be considered an empirical supplement that completes the quasi-transcendentality of *différance*, one is compelled to shift the analysis, more or less, to the latter word *différance*, now *re*written. Whichever way it goes, our analysis attempts to keep pace, pursuing *différance* this way and that way and once more in between, pressing *différance* to surpass itself.

[iii] If *différance* is indeed on its way toward a consummate modality of ontological difference, it is precisely because it does justice to this complexity, spreading itself impartially and equanimously 'between' in a way that difference *qua* contradiction and 'difference in itself' do not. This tendency toward utter description (description to the point of nihilism) characterizes both the ontological and, to a lesser degree, the epistemological trajectories of philosophical inquiry, but it is the questioning comportment specific to ontology that remains our primary focus in relation to Derrida; not to ontologize being, after all, still to ontologize (c.f. Derrida, 1978, p. 152).

[iv] Despite the proscription of the naturalistic fallacy, ontopolitics persists with the belief that essence-difference can somehow produce a properly aligned and ontologically founded political ethic—a description of prescription. The ontological question thus remains the determining question for political philosophy, and both metaethics and politics only seem thinkable from out of this (quasi)ontology. What we elsewhere attempt to think is a way of formulating an alternate question (of sorts), a non-ontological question, which for this reason could not simply be a different question. Levinas encourages us in this respect when he broaches, perhaps for the first time in the history of Western thought, a question of *quisnity* not thought from the basis of *quiddity* (Levinas, 1998, p23ff; Levinas 1978, p. 43ff). To this point, to read Levinas seriously has been to read him ontologically; which is already to say, *différantially*. *Autrement q'être* notwithstanding, this is because Levinas *writes* ontologically, at least in the extended sense we now wish to ascribe to that word (a question of essence that also questions essence). This said, the possibility of a non-ontological reading remains.

[v] We have in mind Masaccio's Eve (*Expulsion from Paradise*). Beyond the (un)concealing play of her hands – which simple gestures establish the economies of essence-difference across ethics, politics, theology, demanding a reading longer than we can provide here – it is her face that sets another trajectory for enquiry. Hollowed by the desperation of a question that history has been unable to satisfy, surely this is a face that exceeds the play of essence-difference, if not for the reasons preferred by obvious others.

[vi] This is not simply to note the importance of Heidegger's ontological difference for Derrida's development of *différance*, although obviously this fact is not merely incidental. Rather, this multivocal formulation attempts to capture the demands supplementarity places on *différance*.

[vii] Essential to *différance*! It is hard to imagine a more properly inappropriate expression (unless perhaps it is the equally telling phrase 'difference in itself,' which also more than adequately articulates the parameters of the comportment 'essence-difference'). Such 'essentiality,' then, could no longer be thought in opposition to difference, it will not be the *essence* of *différance* in this sense, all of which demands that we rigorously negotiate the complexity of non-identical sameness in our efforts to appreciate the orchestration of plenitude and non-plenitude through the verb *différer*. In order to appear less abruptly antagonistic, however, one might favor the phrase *'structurally indispensable,'* but truthfully the difference will prove inconsequential. From out of the negotiation will arise certain corollaries we believe to be applicable to any *différantial* system.

[viii] A forthcoming work will explain how one might employ the notion of parataxis in an attempt to step axiomatically beyond the orchestrations of essence-difference Taken in a certain way, this instance of acute parataxis will assist in an exposition of the surpassing of metaphor in indifference and the appellation of other modalities of meaning.

[ix] We use this term for the sake of accessibility. To be rigorous one would have to complicate this formulation a little, referring more precisely to the 'verb-nouning' of the verb-noun. For there is no pure verb. The verb – we argue in familiar terms – can only verb, is only able to *participate*, through explication and explication requires the

nominal in some affixation or another. Verbality as orchestration implicates both verb and noun. Nouns verb as space times, and even that most verbal of verbs (should such a designation now remain appropriate) was given to us substantively with *Sein*. Ontologically, that is to say, the verb already nouns, establishing the participial between of essence-difference. This introductory piece attempts to set course toward an appreciation of the explication of the noun-verb *différance*. The term *verbality* will first find a degree of precision for itself in relation to this suffixial explication; an explication which is simultaneously an orchestration; an explicative orchestration that inaugurates the irreducibly complex spacing of the *différantial* in the participial spreadliness characteristic of the 'ance.' In truth, if one could contrive to read the root noun of this term *verbality* (i.e. the noun 'verb') verbally, or, by comparison, if one were able to summon with the adjective of this de-adjectival noun a sense of the verbing of the verb, then the complicity of, and necessity of both, verb and noun becomes apparent enough in this more convenient term. Verbality, that is to say less painfully, refers to neither the verb nor the noun in a straightforward way, but to the deconstruction this opposition invites (and here one might compare the opposition/deconstruction Heidegger establishes/invites with his *Existenz* and *Realität*), but to a deconstruction that is itself once again orchestrated by this verbality. Why, in an already overdetermined field, do we insist on redrawing this opposition between *Existenz* and *Realität* in terms of verb and noun? It may well be that, notwithstanding the potential misunderstandings we risk, our two terms do reconfigure the Heideggerian opposition in an interesting manner, but why not simply proceed to a deconstruction of this opposition (in such a way as to reaffirm the irreducibly aporetic nature of time)? Why take the time, why take the risk? Precisely because we believe that this aporia, whilst no doubt avoiding the temporalisation of the excess of time, nonetheless *orchestrates* time, and that this orchestration is performed by the explication of the verb *différer* in the deverbal noun *différance*. Our reconfiguration of this opposition provides a way to examine the orchestration of this verb, which as supplemental is only every other verb in *différance*. Hence, the verbality of the verb. Thus, whilst initially merely repeating these well-known motifs, we will not rest with them. Neither verb nor noun, neither *Existenz* nor *Realität*, but more than this, *neither either nor both* – neither either nor the difference between the two – the tumbling of the *gerund* will aspire to dramatize (without orchestrating) an *occurrence* elsewhere.

[x] See in particular Derrida's (1982) *White Mythology*.

[xi] That plenitudinous thing we refer to as time, just as for any plenitude, is, one might say, "the trace of the erasure of the trace" of *différance* (Derrida, 1982:66). As we know, these traces cannot bear the weight of metaphysics, they do not refer to any presence, and yet they do bear the weight of reason, more or less. Thought *travels* these hyphenic traces that link essence and *différance* in *différance*.

[xii] There is perhaps no longer any such thing as the purely accidental, at least not for essence-difference, where every path has already been broken before ever it is traversed.

[xiii] Here of course we gesture again toward the Deleuzean formulation, a pure becoming that nonetheless requires nodes of being, a deterritorialisation that can seemingly only live with itself in reterritorialisation. A forthcoming work deals more respectfully and sensitively with the specific modality of difference proper to both Nietzsche and Deleuze, but concludes nonetheless that ontologically speaking differance is definitive. Political ontologies such as these result in metaphysics, precisely owing to their prescriptive tendency disguised as a descriptive function.

[xiv] Resembling thought but not quite a thought, a thought too fast for ontology, as a philosophical practice, to apprehend. Somehow alongside or parallel to received ontological thought. An abnormal or defective philosophical ontology, a para-dox, opposed to thought or beyond (*para*) thought; opposed to thought beyond any opposition to thought. Perhaps even a preparation (*parare*) for thought. A preparation and defence (*parare*) against ontology's tendency to run up against predetermined axiomatic limits.