On Rorty on Derrida on Heidegger on Representation with a Parable on Sending by Kafka

MOSHE RON

The proper task of this paper, in compliance with the Editor's kind mandate, is to represent to the readers the "philosophical background of the modern concept of representation as developed by Derrida, Rorty, Foucault and others." To do so in full might very well amount to rehearsing or rewriting the entire history of Western philosophy, which is surely more than I can deliver or you wish to be burdened with. A background, however, cannot maintain its proper rear or marginal position without the foregrounded contour, at least, of a central figure, here that "concept of representation" itself as "developed by Derrida . . . and others." The title I chose represents the centrality of these figures to my present concern. It also represents some mediations, antecedents and detours with regard to these central figures and the original assignment, as well abstensions and omissions (but can omissions be represented ?)

Thus it is not the false modesty conventionally required in alluding to one's own contribution which prevents me from adding my own name at the head (actually the chronological tail) of the list heading my title. You will by now of course have begun reading Ron on Rorty and so on (a rather alluring alliteration), but convention dictates that this fact should be indicated by the signature of the undersigned (or someone else's attribution of authorship) which belongs at the bottom of the text and outside of it rather than in the title. If this is so it is perhaps because a title, presumed to be provided by the author, counts as an integral part of the text, whose purpose is to name its theme or present its contents. This consideration already lets loose a hornets' nest of Derridean questions. Is it

J. C. L. A. Vol. X: Nos : 1-2: 1987

true that signatures are extraneous to the texts to which they must be appended ? For what reason, under what conditions and what sanctions must the trace of the signatory be effaced from the text proper ? Are titles really names, or are they to be construed differently ? And if, as I have pretended to have complacently assumed above, they are integral to the text which they name and head, then why should a text name itself ? Why should it in addition to naming (describing, representing etc.) its object, also double itself within itself with a suspended name ? How does the extra spacing which keeps the title hovering over the actual body of the text make this doubling possible or perhaps necessary ? And if the title is not integral to the text proper, why should it be odd for the author's name to figure in it ? Are signatures and titles then two different modes of externality ? of integrality ? Of liminality ? How different ? And what of forewords, prefaces, footnotes, appendices, editor's notes, blurbs, epigraphs, quotations, plagiarisms, marginalia, epilogues, codas, *envpois* ? What of potential items witheld but actually discussed in the text itself by way of digression ?

If the concept of title can give us so much trouble, (as it should, if we are as serious as Derrida about what is at stake in the integrity of the text), then what can we make of the concept of representation, the modern one, specifically ? What ultimately (but is that really the end ?) of the concept of concept ? This would raise the specter of Hegel, and if my head list does not extend further ahead, from Heidegger back to him, it is not merely because he is too heavy a figure for the alliterative symmetry to be in good taste. And it is not because of *false* modesty or even just lack of space that I fail to survey not only Hegel but also Kant, Descartes, Aristotle and Plato on representation, to name but the principal parties to the adventures of representation in the West. Apart from any question of competence to take on this formidable tradition, it would be merely following Derrida's example to ask what guarantee we might have for there being such a thing as *a* concept of representation, whether ancient or modern, for all or some of these authors to have written on. For if such a concept there be, must if not be a *unitary* one ? Should it not maintain a certain essence, ground or core, its own fixed identity, through thick and thin, Greek and Latin, French and German, ordinary and philosophical usage ? This type of problem, though phrased with less rhetorical *elan*, would undoubtedly seem more familiar to readers of recent English philosophy than quibbling about titles.

Somewhat surprisingly, although finally not quite unexpectedly, we have been witnessing especially during the past decade an interesting convergence between some radical trends Anglo-American philosophy and equally radical outgrowths of the Continental European tradition. There exists by now a whole mini-tradition of attempts at a *rapprochement* between the later Wittgenstein and Derrida.[1] Particulary effective in bringing Derrida's impact into line with current philosophical concerns in the English-writing world has been Richard Rorty, who identifies himself as a Wittgensteinian and a Pregmatist.[2]

In his major book to date, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: University Press 1979), Rorty set out to debunk the claim of mainstream "normal" philosophy, especially since Kant, to be the foundational discipline adjudicating the claims to knowledge of all branches of cultural activity. According to this view, says Rorty, "to know is to represent accurately what is outside the mind; so to understand the possibility and nature of knowledge is to understand the way in which the mind is able to construct such representations. Philosophy's central concern is to be a general theory of repesentation, a theory which will divide c ulture into the areas which represent reality well, those which represent it less well, and those which do not represent it at all (despite their pretense to do so.)"[3] The "analytic" philosophy stemming from Frege and Russell is, in this respect, one more varient of Kantian philosophy, "a variant marked principally by thinking of representation as linguistic rather than mental." [4] The hyperdevelopment of Anglo-American philosophy of langu ge in our century has led in fact to a growing segregation of philosophy as a specialized academic discipline. Much the same fate befell the attempt of Husserl's phenomenology to ground the study of the mind in equally procedures (with possibly the exception of Ingarden's application to literary theory, which has been found useful by a number of literary theorists). "The result was," says Rorty, "that the more 'scientific' and 'rigorous' philosophy became, the less it had to do with the rest of culture and the more absurd its traditional pretensions seemed."[5] The Law was being laid where those for whose sake it was presumably necessary could not gain access to it.

What is to blame for this situation is the notion, prevalent at least since Descartes, that a set of presuppositions determining the nature of the knowing subject is discoverable *a priori*. This assumption is what gives

rise to the search for a general theory of representation, "*all* representation, in familiar vocabularies and those not yet dreamed of, "emphasizes Rorty.[6] Carried one step further towards the absurd one might say that the theoretical project of systematic philosophy amounts to a desire to discover "representations which cannot be gainsaid," a single vocabulary which would definitively wear its truth- value on its sleeve. To go beyond what Rorty has chosen to make explicit, the mainstream search for a general theory of representation may thus seem as not so remote from the wacky attempts at constructing a foolproof universal language.

Over against this conception of philosophy Rorty sets the example of what may seem at first a rather odd threesome of major figures: "If we have a Doweyan conception of knowledge, as what we are justified in believing, then we will not imagine that there are enduring constraints on what can count as knowledge, since will see 'justification' as a social phenomenon rather than a transaction between 'the knowing subject' and 'reality.' If we have a Wittgensteinian notion of language as a tool rather than a mirror, we will not look for necessary conditions of the possibility of linguistic representation. If we have a Heideggerian conception of philosophy, we will see the attempt to make the nature of the knowing subject a source of necessary truths as one more self-deceptive attempt to substitute a 'technical' and determinate question for that openness to strangeness which initially tempted us to begin thinking."[7]

In the concluding section of his book Rorty sets out to restore dignity to this type of anti-philosophical philospher by introducing a distinction between two kinds of philosophers, "mainstream" or "systematic" on the one hand and "peripheral" or "edifying" on the other. This is how the latter kind are characterized: "These peripheral, pragmatic philosophers are skeptical primarily *about systematic philosophy*, about the whole project of universal commensuration. In our time Dewey, Wittgenstein and Heidegger are the great edifying, peripheral thinkers. All three make it as possible to take their thought as expressing views on traditional philosophical problems (....). They make fun the classic picture of man, picture which contains systematic philcsophy, the search for universal commensuration in a final vocabulary. They hammer away at the holistic point that words take their meaning from other words rather than by virtue of their representative character, and the corrolary that vocabularies acquire their privilege from the men who use them rather than from their transparency to the real."[8]

Derrida clearly belongs in Rorty's class of "peripheral" philosophers. an epithet he would most likely not be inclined to disown, even though not always for the same reasons. He is perhaps the most prominent such philosopher currently active on the Continental scene. It comes as no surprise then to learn that his views on representation (insofar as they entitle him to have anything called 'views') are intensely critical, not to say heretical. There is hardly an item in his already-voluminous production which does not in some way bear upon the problem(s) of representation and related notions, the most important of which, in the present context, will be those of translation and communication. Simplified in the extreme on the classic concept of representation his position might be summarily presented as follows: to represent is to make present again, i. e. restore a lost presence; repersentation is nothing if not adequate to its object; the possibility of adequate representation depends on the accurate, safe and permanent encapsulation of a word, an idea or a thing, it is in this that their ideality consists and only this can guarantee the possibility of their retrieval; translation is the transfer of a retrievable presence from verbal representatien into another, from one language into another, from one medium to another; communication is the succesful sending and receiving of properly encapsulated presences (=messages) by subjects competent to pack and unpack them. BUT. argues Derrida, again, this ideal encapssulation *never takes place,* is impossible, inconceivable. Hence an utterly reductive hypersimplification of his stance might say bluntly: no representation, no translation, no communication. Not really. That is to say, not ideally.

But this is a gross misrepresentation, for reductive simplification and bluntness are utterly foreign to Derrida's temperament as a writer. The truth of this statement will be borne out by a reading of any of his exemplary texts. For starters (for further reading) one might suggest "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Philosophical Text"[9] or "The Double Session,"[10] whose richness and subtlety defy any attempt at summary presentation. More conveniently to our purpose is a more recent text entitled in its abbreviated English translation (the text was curtailed; the title actually got expanded) "Sending: On Representation."[11] This was delivered as the opening paper in a congress of French-language philosophical societies held at Strasbourg in 1980 and devoted to the theme of representation. It is entirely characteristic of Darrida's procedure to take in as the legitimate scope of his address the entire history of

Western philosophy as well as the actual circumstances of its delivery, Typically, again, he begins his sliding attack on the topic with a truncated quote (but can a quote be whole?), this time from "the French philosopher Henri Bergson" dated 1901: '"Our word[12] representation is an equivocal word which ought never, according to its etymology, to designate an intellectual object presented to the mind for the first time. It ought to be reserved . . .' etc."[13] Reserving further commentary much further in his presentation, Derrida thus somewhat ironically introduces the most original motif of his early philosophical work, the insistence on the non-originality of all that counts as origin in Western philosophical systems. Already in his first book he challenged Husserl's principle of the privilege of the present moment, a major premise of the latter's phenomenology, by arguing that "the presence of the present is derived from repetition and not the reverse."[14] This, as Edward Casey reminds us, "derives from the rules that 'absolute ideality is the correlate of indefinite repetition." "Intellectual objects presented to the mind for the first time" would be among the easier casualities of Derrida's general offensive against the singularity, simplicity, indivisibility etc. of origins (provided, of course, that this offensive is judged to be succesful).

One the one hand, then, Derrida insists that repetitions doubling is always insidiously at work in the heart of the same. On the otherhand, however, he no less insidiously insinuates that the same in its absolute ideality is never quite reproducible. The principle invoked here is that no word, concept or thing ever makes its appearance except in an absolutely different context which no description can exhaust nor any code fully determine.[15] Thus from the early stages of his address he introduces the word 'representation' and its grammatical derivatives in a variety of idiomatic uses whose nuances defy translateability (certainly, on some occasions, the generally able translators of this particular text). The semantic unity of the concept thus put in jeopardy might seem to be in some part saved by the orderly distribution of themes among sections of the congress proposed by the organizers in order "to avoid too great a dispersion." But here Derrida reminds his colleagues of a standard by which this orderly division is already judged fatal to any genuine philosophical pretension. ' You must imagine Socrates arriving in the early dawn of this Symposium, tipsy, late and asking: 'You tell me that there is aesthetic, political, metaphysical, historic, religious and epistemological representation (. . .), but in the end (. . .), you have not answered

the question: what is representation in itself and in general ? What makes all these representations representations called by the same name ? What is the *eidos* of representation, the being representation of repesentation ?" Having said this Derrida pulls the ground from under the platonic question by commenting that "Socrates would never have been able to ask this kind of qestion about the word representation" because this word "translates no Greek word in any obvious way, leaving nothing aside." A metaphysical sommersault is completed with the very next sentence declaring that "this is not one problem of translation among others, it is the problem of translation itself ."[16]

It would seem then to be Derrida's standard procedure in addressing a congress of French-language philosophical societies, whether in Strasbourg or Montreal, to chip away at the ideality of the proposed theme concept by attacking its semantic unity and stability, while at the same time multiplying references to the actual context in which the discourse is being uttered. Thus in addition to the cognitive sense of representation, which is the one that usually gets discussed in philosophical gatherings, he strategically highlights another important sense of this word, a legal or political one: "We are mandated, in one way or another, under some degree of legitimacy, to represent those [philosophical] societies here. We may be considered more or less explicitly instructed representatives, delegates, ambassadors, emissaries, I prefer to say envoys."[17] He goes on to recall that "the event takes place in a city which, while it does not, as it once very symbolically did, lie outside of France, is nevertheless not just an French city. This frontier city is a place of passage and of translation . . ." Is this a gratuitous historical or geographical digression ? No, it leads right back to the big two-hearted river which is the subject itself (actually more Heraclitus' than Hemingway's): "It will be neither possible nor legitimate to overlook the enormous historical stake in this question of Latino-Germanic translation and of the relation between *representation* and the *Stellen* of *Vorstellung* or *Darstellung*. For some centuries it has been the case that as soon as a philysopher, of no matter what linguistic habits, engaged in an inquiry into *represeantatio*, *Vor-* or *Darstellen*, he finds himself on both sides of the frontier, on both banks of the Rhine. . ."[18] Part of the trouble seems to reside in the prefix which provoked Bergson's condemnation (and which Derrida submits to a subtler and more learned discussion than can be reproduced here) : "As represen-

tation,' in the philosophical code or in ordinary language, *Vorstellen* seems to mean simply, as Heidegger embhasizes, to place, to dispose before oneself, a sort of theme or thesis. But this sense of being-before is already at work in 'present.' *Praesentatio* signifies the fact of presenting and *repraesentatio* that or *rendering* present, of summoning as a power-of-bringing-back-to-presence."[19]

An implication of the prefix is the only thing which prevents Heidegger from figuring as the unqualified hero of Derrida's "Envoi." It is out of the latter's essay "The Age of the world Picture"[20] that he "lifts out," as he says, the "most palpable articulation" of the problem(s) of representation and the history of philosophy: "the Greek world did not have a relation to what-is as to a conceived image or a representation (here *Bild*). There what-is is presence; and this did not, at first, derive from the fact that man would look at what-is and have what we call a representation (*Vorstellung*) of it as the mode of preception of a subject. In a similar way, in another age (and it is about this sequence of ages or epochs, *Zeitalter*, arranged to be sure in a nonteleological fashion but grouped under the unity of a destiny of Being as fate [*envoi*]. *Geschick*, that I would like to raise the question later on), the Middle Ages related itself essentially to what-is as to an *ens creatum*. 'To be something that-is' ('etre-*un-etant*') means to belong to the created order; this thus corresponds to God according to the analogy of what-is (*analogia entis*), but, says Heidegger, the being of what-is never consists in an object (*Gegenstand*) brought before man, fixed, stopped, available for the human subject who would possess a representation of it. This will be the mark of modernity. 'That what-is should become what-is in representation (literally in the being-represented, in der *Vorgestelltheit*), this is what makes the epoch (*Zeitalter*) which gets to this point a new epoch in relation to the preceding one.' It is thus only in the modern period (Cartesian or post-Cartesian) that what-is is determined as an ob-ject present *before* and *for* a subject in the form of *repraesentatio* or *Vorstellen*."[21]

Taking a deep breath after this lengthy quote we might pause to note that the modern conception of representation was, according to this view, the work of men like Descartes and his rationalist and empiricist followers during the 17th and 18th centuries. Rather than seek to modernize it even further, or replace it with a better, updated concept of representation, men like Heidegger, Derrida or Rorty propose to deconstruct it as thoroughly and as definitively as they can.

But has Heidegger's epochal model done the job for representation in all its senses without residue ? Derrida seems to adhere to this model so closely that he feels inclined to apologize to his colleagues and compatriots for his quasi-reverential treatment of Heidegger. He notes approvingly that the latter does not view the modern reign of representation as a mere accident in the history of the West, and he warns against the illusion that undermining the authority of representation might or should accomplish "some rehabilitation of immediacy, of orinigal simplicity, of presence without repetition or delgation."[22] And yet if neither by accident nor by teleological design, how could the modern age arise ? "Now if for the Greeks, according to Heidegger, the world is not essentially a *Bild*, an available image, a spectacular form offered to the gaze or to the preception of a subject; if the world was first of all presence (*Anwesen*) which seizes man or attaches itself to him rather than being seen, intuited (*angeschaut*) by him, if it is rather man who is taken over and regarded by what-is, it was nevertheless for the world as *Bild*, and then as representation, to declare itself among the Greeks, and this was nothing less than Platonism."[23] "The world of Platonism would thus have given the send-off for the reign of representation, it would have destined it without itself being subjected to it."[24]

It is thus through this original rending of the seamless web of *Awesenheit* by the Platonic idea that Derrida's critique of Heidegger begins to emerge. Only such a reading of Platonism, he seems to suggest, enables Heidegger to detach the modern age and single it out from the Greek and yet keep them, however secretly, still unified. Heidegger is thus seen to maintain the restitutive value of the *re-* of representation, which thus tempts one to say, as Derrida puts it, that "it is itself detached, sent, delegated, taking the place of what in it dissembles itself, suspends itself, reserves itself, retreats and retires there, namely *Anwesenheit* or even presence."[25] But Derrida, as Edward Casey notes helpfully in this connection, does *not* view representation as any mode of restoration of the same at all: "As repetition is the production of difference within the same—and not at all a return to the strictly self-identical—the 'originary' activity of representation qua representation is disseminative rather than gathering or unifying. With this programmatic point in hand, Derrida can add that Heidegger's epochal interpretation of the age or representation as derivative from the era of Greek presence—however admirably indirect

this derivation may be — itself depends on an unanalyzed model of representation as delegation-of-power."

Derrida summarizes this epigramatically by writing that "everything begins by referring back (*par le renvoi*), that is to say, does not begin."[26] One consequence is that "we shall not be able to assign periods or have some period of representation follow upon these *renvois*. As soon as there are *renvois*, and it is always already, something like representation no longer waits and we must perhaps arrange to tell this story differently ...."[27] But according to what other narrative paradigm, what law ? And can the law itself be represented, or is it irrepresentable, the product of what is not representable in the endless back-referencing of back references or its cause through the prohibition of representation ? With such formulations Derrida place himself in the vicinity of questions long debated in the Judaic tradition, and he finds/no better way to slide to a stop then by summarizing his reading of Kafka's parable from *The Trial*, "Before the Law" "The guardian of the law and the man from the country are 'before the law,' *Vor dem Gesetz*, says Kafka's title, only at the cost of never coming to see it, never being able to arrive at it. It is neither presentable nor representable, and the 'entry' into it, according to an order which the man from the country interiorizes and gives himself, is put off until death."[28]

I have now successfully concluded my refutation of Derrida on representation (communication and translation). If you now for sure know what his views on this subject are, then they must have been translated, represented and communicated to you through the agency of my reference-studded text. There is, of course, the alternative possibility that you have no clear and distinct idea of Derrida on representation. But then I would ask you to take my text as the illustration of a succesful act of communication Derrida's success in communicating to me his convictions about irrepresentability, his skepticism, his mannered obscurity perhaps, a success which his views (if they did not rule out his having something called 'views') presumably rule out, So, if I have abused of the Editor's kind mandate. I shall not continue to do so by pressing any further the ludicrous claim to have been in any sense duly delegated to represent before you the truth on Rorty on Derrida on Heidegger.

As to the parable on sending by Kafka, it is to be introduced by a brief narrative: in May 1983 Derrida visited Jerusalem and read at the Van Leer Institute a text entitled "Before the Law," Called upon the next day

as one of four commentators to comment on Derrida's commentary of Kafka's parable gave a representation, which is hereby reproduced: knowing I was to speak last, and knowing that by then, that is now, all relevant comments will have been made, I decided simply to repeat to you Derrida's message so as to offer my own insignificant refutation of it. What I have in mind is not only the message contained in the speech he uttered last night in that other auditorium with the spacious and loftily-mounting open staircases (I mean at the Van Leer Institute, of course), but also, if possible, the message he has been whispering to me personally over some years, on several occasions when I saw him in 'live' performance as well as many others when his masterly presence had to be pupplemented as best it could by written texts.

Yet sitting at my desk by the window, as this beautiful Jerusalem evening was falling (but this is perfectly ordinary in this town). I had great difficulty figuring out that message to myself. I also had to figure out a way of representing it to you, which would be both appropriate for the occasion and, at the same time, fail entirely, if possible, to disfigure the message brought us by our distinguished visitor from another country.

It occurred to me at last, that since Derrida has told me time and time again, that a message cannot ever simply be figured out and represented in the original splendor of its ideal identity, I simply could not tell you WHAT he said (in any event I suppose that you have hard *that* as well as I did). But this does not mean that he is utterly immune to any form of repetition.

To show that one has grasped Derrida's meaning, I thought, one would have to *do*, however humbly, what he did, for instance last night. So instead of presuming to speak about something I decided to present you with another text, my own message.

That I cannot do so *properly*, of this I am sorely aware. For if I wished to do it properly, for instance, cater to the special communicative needs of a privileged addressee, our guest then I would have had to whisper his message back to him in his own (or his mother's) tongue, in this case "the language of Racine." But in French I would necessarily have been, in the words of King James (*Exodus:* 6;30), "of uncircumcized lips" (although true to my name). En plus, plusieurs des spectateurs assembles dans cette belle sale spacieuse sans murs en serait reduits, pour citer les mots

qui ne figurent pas dans la traduction de King James (*Exodus*: 20:18), a "voir les voix" sans les entendre.

שזה מה שהיה קורה לוירה עצמו אילו חחבקשחי עכשיו
לדבר דווקא עברית. אני חושב

As soon as I reached the decision thus to proceed, my worst problem became a terible sense of insecurity. This led me to cast about for authorities to protect this poor miserable brainchild of mine, my little public oration on ideal representation. I was quite ready to give up in despair when an old friend of mine, an ex-con of hispanic (some say Jewish) origin (and this information rules out pierre Menard) gave me the common-sense advice to go ahead and dream up my authorities, if I found their presumed protection so necessary.

The reality principle then directed me to the work of Jacques Lacan, an authority if there ever was one, because I thought I could sniff out. in last night's address, especially around the hairy spots, some traces of his "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter' " — Poe's, that is. But there again, the way was blocked as far as this short short-notice Presentation was concerned, for I know – having helped to carry over to America "The Purveyor of Truth" and being dimly aware of Barbara Johnson's contribution to this subject – I know, alas, that, to do that properly I would have to fight my way through a huge crowd of arguments, crammed to bursting with their own refuse.

Having thus broached my message the back way, as it were, I can finally place it before you. It is an imperial message, Kafka's imperial message, it starts out as an event incontestable in its eventness, taking its origin in a bed before being carried up through loftily-mounted staircase, it is seen but not heard, repeated but most likely not understood, its content is irretrievable although its context is as transparent as the space of this auditorium, its signatory becomes dead upon sending it off, its addressee would be dead if it could ever reach him, out there, in the country, where he cowers in deference to a word which is law. To conclude, let me point out that Kafka's "Imperial Message"reproduces rigorously the problematic of an earlier paper of Derrida's, a paper entitled "Signature evenement contexte," which shares with last night's address the

common feature of having been produced for a foreign audience on a foreign continent, where to all intents and purposes the Anglo-American mode of philosophizing is
law. You may overhear now, as Kafka's message is being whispered back to Derrida.

AN IMPERIAL MESSAGE

The Emperor, so it runs, has sent message to you the humble subject, the insignificant shadow cawering in the remotest distance before the imperial sun; the Emperor from his deathbed has sent a message to you alone. He has commanded the messenger to kneel down by the bed, and has whispered the message to him; so much store did he lay on it that he ordered the messenger to whisper it back into his ear again. Then by a nod of the head he has confirmed that it is right. Yes, before the assembled spectators of his death—all the obstructing walls have been broken down, and on the spacious and loftily-mounting open staircases stand in a ring the great princes of the Empire·before all these he has delivered his message. The messenger immediately sets out on his journey; a powerful,an indefatigable man; now pushing with his right arm, now with his left, he cleaves a way for himself through the throng; if he encounters resistance he points to his breast, where the symbol of the sun glitters; the way, too, is made easier for him than it would be for any other man. But the multitudes are so vast: their numbers have no end. If he could reach the open fields how fast he would fly, and soon doubtless you would hear the welcome hammering of his fists on your door. But instead how vainly does he wear out his strength; still he is only making his way through the chambers of the innermost palace; never will he get to the end of them; and if he succeeded in that

nothing would be gained; he must fight his way next down the stair; and if he succeeded in that nothing would be gained; the courts would still have to be crossed; and after the courts the second outer palace; and once more stairs and courts; and once more another palace; and so on for thousands of years; and if at last he should burst through the outermost gate—but never, never can that happen —the imperial capital would lie before him, the center of the world, crammed to bursting with its own refuse. Nobody could fight his way through here, least of all one with a message from a dead man—But you sit at your window when evening falls and dream it to yourself.

Notes and References

1. Of. Newton Carver's preface to *Speech and Phenomena Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press. 1973): Marjorie Greene, "Life, Death and Language: Some Thoughts on Wittgenstein and Derrida," "*Partisan Review* 43 (1976), pp. 265-279; Joseph Margolis, "vs. (Wittgenstein, Derrida," which the author has kindly allowed me to see in manuscript.
2. He has written three essays on Derrida: "Derrida on Language Being and Abnormal Philosophy, "*The Journal of Philosophy* 74 (1977), pp. 673-681: "Philosophy as a kind of Writing: An Essay on Derrida, "in *The Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press,1982); "Deconstruction and Circumvention," forthcoming in *Critical Inquiry*, which he has kindly permitted me to read prior to publication.
3. *Mirror of Nature*, P. 3.
4. *Ibid.*, P. 8.
5. *Ibid.*, P. 5.
6. *Ibid.*, P. 9.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, P. 368.
9. In *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: Chicago

University Press, 1982), pp. 207-271.

10. In *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago; Chicago University Press 1981) pp. 173-285.
11. Trans. Peter and Marry Ann Caws, *Social Research* 49 (1982) 294-326. The full original text is "Envoi," *Actes du XVIIIe congres des societes de philosophie de langue francaise* (Paris: Vrin, 1982) pp. 5-22. I am grateful to Tom Paper of Yale University for making available to me this hard-to-get publication.
12. That is to say, *their* word *'representation'* Could the same be said of *ours* ?
13. "Sending," p. 295.
14. *Speech and Phenomena*, p. 52. This quotation with Casey's comment come from the latter's unpublished paper "Origin(s) in/of Heidegger/Derrida," which he has graciously let me read.
15. In Derrida's first period the ambivalent status of representation within the metaphysics of presence was paradigmatically represented by the "classical concept of writing." In "Signature Event Context" (*Margins*, pp. 307-330) he enumerates three "essential predicates in a minimal determination of this concept": "1. A written sign, in the usual sense of the word, is therefore a mark which remains, which is not exhausted in the present of its inscription, and which can give rise to an iteration both in the absence of and beyond the presence of the empirically determined subject who, in a given context, has emitted or produced it (. . .). 2. By the same token, a written sign carries with it a force of breaking with its context, that is, the set of presences which organize the moment of its inscription. This force of breaking is not an accidental predicate, but the very structure of the written. (. . .). No context can enclose it. Nor can any code (. . .). 3, This force of rupture is due to the spacing which constitutes the written sign: the spacing which separates it from other elements of the internal contextual chain (. . .) but also from all the forms of a present referent (. . .) that is objective or subjective" (p. 317). The text from which this passage is extracted was originally (?) in its own (?) words, "A communication to the Congres international des Sccietes de philosophie de langue francaise, Montreal, August 1971. The theme of the calloquium was 'Communica-

tion'." Delivered in this bilingual city, Derrida's address began by an attack on the supposed unity of the meeting's theme concept, and then went on to engage a radical thinker from the other side of the Channel (J. L. Austin).

16. "Sending," p. 302.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 296.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 297.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 307.

20. In *The Question of Technology and Other Essays*, trans: Willeam Lovitt (New York. Harper, 1971). pp. 115-154.

21. "Sending," pp. 306-7:

22. *Ibid.*, p. 311.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 312.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 313.

25. *Ibid.*, p 322.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 324.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 325.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 328.

Received February 1985
Deptt. of Comparative Literature
The Hebrew University of Jerusalum
Mount Seopus, Israel