Creative Difference: Whitehead and Derrida

by Travis DiRuzza, December 2012.

–Bach, *Goldberg Variations*

Language has preserved for us the inner living history of man's soul. It reveals the evolution of consciousness. –Owen Barfield[1]

I am afraid we are not rid of God because we still have faith in grammar.
–Friedrich Nietzsche[2]

The limits of my language means the limits of my world. –Ludwig Wittgenstein[3]

As the language goes, so goes the world view—and vice versa. –Richard Tarnas[4]

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[1] *History in English Words,* 14.
[2] *Twilight of the Idols,* in *The Portable Nietzsche*, 483.
[3] *Tractatus-Logico Philosophicus,* 88.
[4] *Passion of the Western Mind,* 492.

Words reflect the world. Or a stronger claim: *words create worlds*. In either case, language and metaphysics have something to say to one another. Whitehead states, "Every science must devise its own instruments. The tool required for philosophy is language. Thus philosophy redesigns language in the same way that, in a physical science, pre-existing appliances are redesigned."[5] This alone would make the conceptual-linguistic innovations and analyses of Jacques Derrida pertinent to metaphysics. But additionally, I concur with Joseph Bracken that Derrida "is setting forth inadvertently a new metaphysics of becoming."[6] This essay aims to elucidate a metaphysical kinship between Whitehead and Derrida. Several parallels are examined in the following areas: (**1**) epistemological critique of calcified thought-structures; (**2**) ontological critique of substance metaphysics; (**3**) a new ontological proposition espousing a dynamic "ground,"[7] made possible and implied by (1) and (2); (**4**) consequences and fruits of this new proposition, including the non-closure of systems, the provisional nature of ideas, and the generative tension of polarity; and (**5**) conclusion and suggestions as to a way forward in philosophical thought and cosmological outlook, centering upon interstices, adventure and play. In the postscript I will briefly address how the thought of Owen Barfield may be incorporated into this material. I will also address imagination and the aesthetic sensibility, suggesting that Derridean language-play allows a Whiteheadian "leap of the imagination"[8] precisely through its novel linguistic approach, helping to create new worlds.

If the reader has lingering objections to the effect that Derrida operates in a purely linguistic field, cut off from reality, consider Derrida's reply: "I never cease to be surprised by critics who see my work as a declaration that there is nothing beyond

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[5] *Process and Reality (PR),* 11.
[6] *Process and Difference (PD),* 100.
[7] Throughout I use the term "dynamic ground" to refer to the anterior ontological possibility permitting dynamic process, with allusion to Catherine Keller's distinction: "To *ground* is not to *found*. Our constructions do not need to turn the dense ecology of that which precedes and supports us into a substructure, substratum, and substance." "Process and Chaosmos," in PD, 68.
[8] PR, 13.

language, that we are imprisoned in language; it is, in fact, saying the exact opposite. The critique of logocentrism is above all else the search for the "other" and the "other of language."[9] I propose to read the "other of language" as world, obscured by the lens of logocentrism, but recoverable in part via deconstruction.

(1) Epistemological critique of calcified structures of thought:

Whitehead defines the Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness as "the accidental error of mistaking the abstract for the concrete."[10] The mechanistic scientific scheme of the 17th century and its concept of simple location are two examples of this fallacy offered in *Science and the Modern World*. These examples lead to the bifurcation of nature, a hard ontological division between primary and secondary qualities, by which "modern philosophy has been ruined"[11] and nature has become "a dull affair, soundless, scentless, colourless; merely the hurrying of material, endlessly, meaninglessly."[12] Whitehead invokes the fallacy in an effort to evade these troublesome implications and understand the world otherwise. The goal is not to abolish abstraction in favor of the concrete: "You cannot think without abstractions; accordingly, it is of the utmost importance to be vigilant in critically revising your modes of abstraction."[13] By recasting abstraction we may *understand* and even *be* in the world differently (In section (2) we will examine how the fallacy facilitates an ontological critique of substance and quality in general).

Derrida's practice of deconstruction overturns traditional binary oppositions (e.g. signified/signifier; intelligible/sensible; speech/writing) and undermines forms of structuralism. Similar to Whitehead on abstraction and thought, Derrida grants that structure is essential in order to create meaning. However, binaries tend to privilege one of their terms, often in an insidiously veiled fashion. This is called logocentrism.[14] The

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[9] "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," in *Politics, Theory and Contemporary Culture, 197-235.*
[10] *Science and the Modern World* (SMW), 51.
[11] SMW, 55.
[12] SMW, 54.
[13] SMW, 59.
[14] *Deconstruction: A Reader* (DR), 10.

Logos depends on difference and hierarchy to create meaning (in Saussurian terms, the differential between arbitrary signifiers in a system is what creates meaning, rather than some inherent, present value in the signifier itself). But the Logos does not depend on just any hierarchy, for logocentrism often masks structures of injustice in its privileging of terms—necessitating its critique.

Though we will have more to say about it in the third section, let us introduce Derrida's term *différance,*[15] the movement of difference or condition for the possibility of any difference. The letter "a," which is visibly written but inaudible in the spoken word (pronounced the same way as *différence*), allows the term to inhabit a space between writing and speech. It both breaks down the binary and announces a dynamic space[16] that is the precondition for any difference, and hence any meaning at all. *Différance* shows that no final privileging of terms is justifiable, and that signification actually arises from the play of difference between terms in a binary or larger structural network. In its double meaning of differing and deferring, *différance* shows that terms like intelligible/sensible not only differ, but are also the same through a deferment. The intelligible *is* the sensible after the latter has taken a certain detour. The intelligible is a kind of non-identical repetition of the sensible. But the sensible too is affected by the intelligible, as suggested at the outset by the active relation of language toward the world. "One could consider all the pairs of opposites on which philosophy is constructed and on which our discourse lives, not in order to see opposition erase itself but to see what indicates that each of the terms must appear as the *différance* of the other, as the other different and deferred in the economy of the same."[17]

In his deconstruction of binary opposition, Derrida admirably enacts Whitehead's casting of philosophy as "the critic of abstraction."[18] The classic objection to Derrida and

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[15] *Margins of Philosophy* (MP), 5.
[16] The "*ance*" of *différance* more properly indicates a space between passivity and activity, by reference to words like "resonance" or "dissonance."
[17] MP, 17.
[18] SMW, 87.

deconstruction is that nothing is left standing, all meaning is deconstructed and we are hopelessly led into nihilism. We have already seen that Derrida accepts the necessity of structure in order to create meaning. Indeed the project is "to deconstruct the metaphysical and rhetorical schema at work… not in order to reject and discard them but to reinscribe them otherwise."[19] Whitehead is engaging in a similar project. Both thinkers launch an epistemological critique (deconstruction of logocentric binaries; fallacy of misplaced concreteness), which leads to an ontological critique (section 2), clearing the way for a new ontological proposition (section 3).

(2) Ontological critique of substance metaphysics and the metaphysics of presence:

As mentioned above, Whitehead applies the fallacy of misplaced concreteness to substance and quality, noting their affinity with subject-predicate thinking. His alternative "philosophy of organism" involves: "the abandonment of the subject-predicate forms of thought, so far as concerns the presupposition that this form is a direct embodiment of the most ultimate characterization of fact. The result is that the 'substance-quality' concept is avoided; and that morphological description is replaced by description of dynamic process."[20] The underlying condition for this "dynamic process" (*creativity*) will be discussed in section (3). For now, let us note how Whitehead brings the epistemological critique of subject-predicate forms of thought to bear on the ontology of substance and quality: "The subject-predicate form of proposition is concerned with high abstractions… [and] is rarely relevant to metaphysical description… The evil produced by the Aristotelian 'primary substance' is exactly this habit of metaphysical emphasis upon the 'subject-predicate' form of proposition."[21]

For Whitehead, "dynamic process" will replace the abstraction of substance, while Derrida sees the movement of *différance* as anterior to the conceptual oppositions

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[19] MP, 215.
[20] PR, 7.
[21] PR, 30.

of metaphysics and the *presence* they privilege. Derrida uses his epistemological critique of binary opposition to illustrate a more fundamental ontological critique of *presence*:

> At the point at which the concept of *différance*, and the chain attached to it, intervenes, all the conceptual oppositions of metaphysics—to the extent that they ultimately refer to the presence of something present (for example, in the form of the identity of the subject who is present for all his operations, present beneath every accident or event, self-present in its "living speech," in its enunciations, in the present objects and acts of its language, etc.)—become non pertinent. They all amount, at one moment or another, to a subordination of the movement of *différance* in favor of the presence of a value or a meaning supposedly antecedent to *différance*, more original than it, exceeding and governing it in the last analysis. This is still the presence of… the 'transcendental signified.'[22]

This "transcendental signified" refers to the individual subject as much as it does to linguistic meaning. Here the critique of epistemology and ontology bleed into one another; linguistic analysis becomes metaphysics. The *différance* that conditions meaning and knowledge also conditions being: "Being must be conceived as presence or absence on the basis of the possibility of play and not the other way around."[23] While Derrida at times overstates his case, I wish to illustrate that being conceived on the basis of the possibility of play is more like a becoming. This play of *différance* undermines static notions of identity. The ontological isolation of a subject or substance is put into question by its inscription in the "chain" of *différance*, which is the precondition for any meaning or identity. Whitehead says, "The concrete finality of the individual is nothing else than a decision referent beyond itself. The 'perpetual perishing' of individual absoluteness is thus foredoomed."[24] "Completion is the perishing of immediacy: 'It never really is.'"[25] It never really is because it is perpetually becoming. And it never really is itself in an isolated sense because it defines what is "beyond itself" and is defined by that beyond: "The organic starting point is from the analysis of process as the realization of events disposed in an interlocked community."[26]

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[22]"Interview with Julia Kristeva," in *Positions,* 28-30.
[23] "Structure, Sign and Play," in *Writing and Difference* (WD), 292.
[24] PR, 60.
[25] PR, 85.
[26] SMW, 152.

We can compare this last statement of Whitehead's to Derrida's often misunderstood, *il n'y a pas hors-texte*. This does not mean that there is nothing outside of language, but that "there is nothing outside of context,"[27]—that nothing can truly be considered in isolation. "We can call 'context' the entire 'real-history-of-the-world,' if you like."[28] Or again: "the authority of final jurisdiction is neither rhetorical nor linguistic, nor even discursive. The notion of trace or of text is introduced to mark the limits of the linguistic turn. This is one more reason why I prefer to speak of 'mark' rather than of language. In the first place the mark is not anthropological; it is prelinguistic; it is the possibility of language, and it is everywhere there is a relation to another thing or relation to an other. For such relations, the mark has no need of language."[29] This broad sense of mark, text and context show how what initially seem to be linguistic and epistemological analyses ultimately break through into ontology. Whitehead's "interlocked communities" resemble Derrida's text: "a woven texture… a web enveloping a web… reconstituting it too as an organism." What is suggested is that the conditions of possibility for meaning, knowledge and becoming may be the same dynamic "ground" (this will also be considered in section 3).

We have seen how both thinkers are critiquing a naïve metaphysics that does not adequately acknowledge the abstracted or conceptually constructed nature of a *present substance*. Epistemologically, this metaphysics does not acknowledge the interpretive contribution of naïve thought in shaping ontology. For example, Whitehead says: "there are no brute, self-contained matters of fact, capable of being understood apart from interpretation as an element in a system… When thought comes upon the scene, it finds the interpretations as matters of practice. Philosophy does not initiate interpretations."[30] In the present case, the nature of that interpretive contribution is precisely a calcified notion of a fixed substance or subject. What this abstraction hides is a more primordial

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[27] "Afterword", in *Limited Inc.,* 136.
[28] *Ibid.*
[29] *A Taste for the Secret,* 76.
[30] PR, 14.

interplay and interconnectedness, "grounded" in *différance* and *creativity*. Catherine Keller's comparison of process thought and postmodernisms is an apt summation of the foregoing discussion: "Chiefly they overlap in their critique of any fixed, self-identical essence of being or corollary habit of substantialism. Positively they share the assertion of a fluid nexus of mutually constitutive events, always already perspectival."[31]

(3) New ontological proposition of dynamic "ground": creativity and *différance*:

If any doubt remains that *différance* is a metaphysical concept, consider Derrida's own proclamations that, "For us, *différance* remains a metaphysical name,"[32] and that "*différance* is older than Being itself."[33] Certainly Derrida is suspicious of the metaphysics of presence that tries to pin down the fecundity of *différance*, and the perpetual recontexualization it implies. But as suggested, *différance* too is susceptible to its own recontextualization[34] in a metaphysics of becoming.

Whitehead defines creativity as "the pure notion of the activity conditioned by…the actual world… Creativity is without a character of its own… It is that ultimate notion of the highest generality at the base of actuality. It cannot be characterized, because all characters are more special than itself. But creativity is always found under conditions, and described as conditioned."[35] It is that principle "by which the many, which are the universe disjunctively, become the one actual occasion, which is the universe conjunctively. It lies in the nature of things to enter into complex unity."[36] Following Bracken[37], let us compare Derrida's explanation "*that différance is not*, does not exist, is not a present-being in any form… it has neither existence nor essence. It derives from no category of being, whether present or absent… *Différance* is the…

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[31] PD, 56.
[32] MP, 26.
[33] MP, 67.
[34] The notion that the non-closure of systems espoused by both thinkers must be applied to the thinkers' ideas themselves will be again taken up in section 4.
[35] PR, 31.
[36] PR, 21.
[37] PD, 92.

structured and differentiating origin of differences."[38] "Such a play [of differences],

différance, is thus no longer simply a concept, but rather the possibility of conceptuality,

of a conceptual process and systems in general."[39] Thus neither creativity nor *différance*

is an entity or being, but a principle of activity that permits entities to become themselves

by entering into relationship with one another. Clearly the tone of each author is at

variance, but if we remember that each actual occasion is a combination of positive and

negative prehensions[40], then the importance of the differential in constituting uniqueness

is highlighted. A single Saussurian signifier presupposes the whole system to achieve

meaning—it implicitly contains the whole. We can read "complex unity" as the

systematic cohesion made possible by differences.

        In this regard, it is important to point out that the play of *différance* is *not* an

"anything goes" game. Keeping in mind our broad sense of the text as *the whole world*

as it contextually presents itself for interpretation, Derrida's imperative is instructive:

Any approach to the text "must be rigorously prescribed, but by the necessities of a *game,*

by the logic of *play,* signs to which the system of all textual powers must be accorded and

attuned."[41] Though Derrida would surely object to the terms, I believe this logic may

approach Whitehead's "divine ordering," "the primordial nature of God."[42] However

such speculations are beyond our scope. For our present purposes, let us conclude that

creativity and *différance* are not the actuality of the dynamic process of becoming, but

rather its ontological possibility[43] or "ground."

(4) Consequences and fruits of a metaphysics of becoming:

[38] MP, 6. It would be unfair to Derrida not to include the sentence that follows, though the question of origins is not our main concern here: "Thus the name "origin" no longer suits it."
[39] MP, 11.
[40] PR, 23.
[41] "Plato's Pharmacy," in *Dissemination,* 64.
[42] PR, 31.
[43] PD, 96.

The interconnectedness and unfolding novelty in a metaphysics of becoming suggests that no system is finally closed—neither mathematics, history, living societies, language, nor metaphysics itself. Whitehead learned this lesson early, when he attempted to write the *Principia Mathematica* with Russell (which was foiled by Godel's theorem). As regards history, Bracken notes: "Whitehead like Derrida is opposed on principle to the teleological mind-set of classical metaphysics, which subtly undercuts any real possibility of evolution in the sense of unplanned change." But perhaps more central to our concerns in this essay, both writers acknowledge a future moment when their own propositions must be surpassed. Whitehead declares, "Metaphysics is nothing but the description of generalities which apply to all the details of practice. No metaphysical system can hope entirely to satisfy these pragmatic tests. At the best such a system will remain only an approximation to the general truths which are sought."[44] If true novelty and evolution are possible and metaphysics is meant explain "all the details of practice," then clearly it too must continue to evolve. Derrida concurs: "I wish to underline that the efficacity [sic] of the thematic of *différance* may very well, indeed must, one day be superseded, lending itself if not to its own replacement, at least to enmeshing itself in a chain that in truth it never will have governed."[45] Here we catch a glimpse of Derrida's constructive side; *nothing* is discarded, but rather is linked to the historic chain of reference. Now as concerns living societies and language, one may object that it is the positive and negative prehensions of the *whole*, the Saussurian differential created by the *entire* language system, that is central and suggests closure. I will not attempt to deal with this objection thoroughly but let us offer two rejoinders in passing: (1) that the whole of reality is prehended in each actual occasion seems not to be evident in the everyday experience that Whitehead so highly valued for informing his metaphysics; (2) the metaphorical use of language gives rise to a virtually infinite chain of signification, as Derrida knew and demonstrated.

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[44] PR, 13.
[45] MP, 7.

More interesting than these quibbles-on-truth (remember Whitehead's declaration about a proposition) is the way that Whitehead and Derrida both carry a kind of polar tension in their thought—which seems to echo their dynamic metaphysics. Whitehead champions an interminable dialectic of rationalism and empiricism. "Rationalism is an adventure in the clarification of thought, progressive and never final."[46] Rationalism must always return to the empiric for verification. "The true method of discovery is like the flight of an aeroplane. It starts from the ground of particular observation; it makes a flight in the thin air of imaginative generalization; and it again lands for renewed observation rendered acute by rational interpretation."[47] It seems to be just this tension in Whitehead's thought that makes it so generative.

A fine illustration of the tension in Derrida's thought is offered in the essay "God is not *Différance*" by John Caputo.[48] In the discussion following the presentation of the famous paper '*Différance,*' an exasperated interlocutor finally shouted: "it [*différance*] is the source of everything and one cannot know it: it is the God of negative theology." In his characteristic style, Derrida answered, "It is and it is not." Yes and no. As Caputo explains, negative theology tends towards a "hyperessentiality," suggesting something that is so real that we are not satisfied to call it merely real. *Différance* by contrast is less than real; it is anterior to being and never achieves the status of entity or presence. The affirmative case about the God of negative theology is harder to make but I agree with Caputo that Derrida's work has been "thoroughly misunderstood." In its defense he states:

> Deconstruction is so deeply and abidingly affirmative—of something new, of something coming—that it finally breaks out in a vast and sweeping amen, a great *oui, oui—à l'impossible*, in a great burst of passion for the impossible… Deconstruction desires what

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[46] PR, 9.
[47] PR, 5.
[48] DR, 458-460.

negative theology desires and it shares the passion of negative theology—for the impossible.[49]

It is in this sense that Derrida's project is Nietzschean—a going under *and* a celebration. Derrida distinguishes this affirmation from a "Rousseauistic" saddened nostalgia for a lost origin, presence or center. Derrida asks: "Can one not affirm the nonreferral to the center, rather than bemoan the absence of the center?... Is not the center, the absence of play and difference another name for death?"[50] Can one not embrace the "Nietzschean *affirmation*, that is the joyous affirmation of the play of the world and of the innocence of becoming, the affirmation of a world…which is offered to an active interpretation [?] *This affirmation then determines the noncenter otherwise than as loss of center*. And it plays without security…[This is] the seminal adventure of the trace."[51] Of course Derrida does not think it is a simple matter of choosing between Rousseau and Nietzsche, but of trying to "conceive of the common ground, and the *différance* of this irreducible difference."[52] Yes and no. Whether as a result of unjust criticism or through fault of his own, this generative tension in Derrida seems to be overlooked. The "adventure" and risk involved in "play without security" lead us back to Whitehead and our final considerations about the way forward.

(5) Conclusion and suggestions as to a way forward in philosophical thought and cosmological outlook:

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[49] DR, 460.
[50] "Ellipsis," in WD, 297.
[51] "Structure, Sign and Play," in WD, 292.
[52] *Ibid*., 293.

Philosophy and worldviews tend to get stuck in ruts at times. Copernicus and his comrades faced enormous opposition when championing the heliocentric model. Kant was convinced that Newton had gotten it right and could never have imagined an Einstein. Einstein committed the blunder of introducing a cosmological constant. And in philosophy the Kantian roadblock still seems imposingly wide. I have tried to show how the Whiteheadian and Derridean critiques of calcified thought structures (epistemology) and the substance metaphysics of presence (ontology) open new avenues of dynamic thinking and being (process and deconstruction; creativity and *différance*). The emphasis on adventure and play in both philosophers offers a remedy to the ruts of thinking and being—one of which is precisely a breaking down of the "watertight compartments"[53] that divide the two. Both encourage us to think on the edge. Whitehead says: "Life lurks in the interstices of each living cell, and in the interstices of the brain."[54] The volume that contains Derrida's essay "*Différance*" is called *Margins of Philosophy*. Indeed, Whitehead affirms: "if there is to be progress beyond limited ideals, the course of history by way of escape must venture along the borders of chaos in its substitution of higher for lower types of order." But as Thomas Kuhn has illustrated, the progress of a discipline is no mere phallic ascent, but requires crises and breakdowns in order to then ascend higher. I have tried to show some of the ways that Derrida's thought can both enact this dissolution and carry the promise of a "*conception, formation, gestation*, and *labor* we are only catching a glimpse of today."[55] Thinking the deconstructive and reconstructive forces of Derrida and Whitehead together may offer the generative tension so sorely needed in our time.

Postscript: The aesthetic sensibility, imagination and incorporating Barfield:

Part of Whitehead's project is to create a place for aesthetic value in metaphysics and underline the importance of imagination. Many Derridean neologisms accomplish

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[53] PR, 10.
[54] PR, 105-6.
[55] WD, 293.

this in a novel way, employing imaginative language-play to allow us to think new thoughts. *Différance* is the classical example, discussed at some length already. Many of these neologisms will inhabit binary oppositions in an effort to resist them, while still maintaining the tension (not collapsing into a third mediating term à la Hegelian speculative dialectics). In the following examples these neologisms refer to both terms of the binary while being neither: *pharmakon* - remedy/poison; *supplément* - missing part of a whole/extra or extraneous part; *usure* - using up/usury (too much acquisition). In this way Derrida resists the bifurcation of thought in a way analogous to the bifurcation of nature. For in fact, doesn't the non-closure of Whitehead's scheme imply that we are still, and perhaps always will be, wrestling with some piece of the Kantian roadblock?: "Philosophy is the self-correction by conscious of its own initial subjectivity."[56] If no metaphysics is ever final, won't some shred of subjectivity always remain? In this regard, Derrida offers fresh, aesthetic solutions for carrying the generative tension of bifurcation and unification, of identity and difference.

While it is certainly beyond our scope to orchestrate a full incorporation of Barfield, let us offer a few general remarks for future research (with reference to the section numerals used above). Idolatry is Barfield's term for both (1) a calcified structure of thought and (2) an erroneous substance metaphysics. It is both of these because his treatment of the relation between alpha-thinking and figuration shows how participation can bridge the epistemological-ontological divide—a divide which is perhaps the result of lost participation. Final participation through imagination allows a renewed interpenetration of these realms, demonstrating (3) a dynamic ground of interconnectedness relating the subject as organic part with the world-whole. Barfield accepts the Kantian premise only to push it to its extreme edge (5); in this way he maintains (4) the generative tension of identity and difference.

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[56] PR, 15.

In closing let me welcome Derrida into the circle of aesthetic images introduced in my last paper, *The Rainbow and the Sunset*. Barfield's rainbow holds the tension between perceiver and perceived while allowing a dynamic interplay through participation. The human's new "directionally creator"[57] role suggests an aesthetic imperative: make rainbows in your life!

For Whitehead the vivid aesthetic value of the sunset is in the same boat with the scientific molecules. But considering the Kantian nuance of the bifurcation of nature discussed above, we might rather emphasize that the sunset and I are in the same boat. I constitute the sunset and the sunset constitutes me; and it is an adventure in ideas that brings us back to this dynamic interrelation.

Derrida has a chapter in "White Mythology" called *Ellipse du Soleil*[58] (translated as "Ellipsis of the Sun"). I offer this as another example of generative word play that additionally crosses into the realm of image—spinning new imaginative webs by allowing us to *think* and *see* multiple things at once. The French title is an obvious play on *eclipse du soleil* (solar eclipse), and can refer to the loss of center discussed above. However, thought more closely, an eclipse suggests a presence in absence, for the sun has not wholly disappeared. From our situated perspective it has been brought into dynamic relation with the lunar principle. Taken as "Ellipsis of the Sun" we see a similar gesture. The written ellipsis suggests the sun as omitted: a loss of center. But the spoken ellipsis suggests more of a pregnant silence, a meaning conferred by context without being said. In this sense of speaking without speaking, we again see the play of presence and absence. Finally, the French *ellipse* both means ellipsis and ellipse, an oval shape. As we know from Kepler's crucial insight, planetary orbits, such as that of the earth, trace an ellipse around the Sun. As the chapter in question notes the history of the earth/sun relationship in our system of perception, I see a plausible illustration of the decentering caused by the Copernican revolution and all it entails cosmologically and philosophically.

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[57] *Saving the Appearances*, 132.
[58] MP, 230.

Additionally, we know that an ellipse has two foci. In the case of a planetary orbit, the sun occupies one while the other is empty: another image of presence and absence, with our wandering rock maintaining the tension, playing out a dynamic adventure around the two.

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