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A Question of Writing Time as Philosophy's Other

Daniel Alipaz

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Daniel Alipaz

University College Falmouth

What remains to be explored, and I cannot undertake this here, is the proximity of Derrida's notion of deconstruction as writing practice and Bergson's keen analysis of the limits of language in the face of time, as well as a comparative analysis of the writing strategies of Derrida and Bergson, given that both share a common lucidity as to the ideological pressures of language.

– Suzanne Guerlac¹

Introduction: Derrida's Bergson

An attempt to subvert the Hegelian dialectic by favoring positive creation over negation lies at the heart of many poststructural discourses. Following the introduction of Hegel by Kojève, Derrida, along with key post-structural figures such as Deleuze, drew upon specific philosophical lineages which helped provide the necessary concepts or *ways of writing* that boasted this positivity. According to both Patton and Protevi in *Between Deleuze and Derrida* (2003), Derrida followed Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger in a way that Deleuze never did. Contrary to this, Deleuze championed Lucretius, Nietzsche, Spinoza, Hume and Bergson, whereas Derrida hardly gives mention to any of these thinkers,² apart from Nietzsche for whom he devotes his work, *Éperons Les Styles de Nietzsche* (1978). For Derrida, it is possibly this philosophical lineage that helped to provide the tools in his aim to usher in a so-called anti-traditional mode of expression that helped to characterize the “linguistic turn,”³ where issues were elaborated in semiological terms that became a predominant mode of analysis. Undoubtedly, Derrida's work is very characteristic of such frameworks of analysis and ways of writing, while Bergson's is clearly not. But such a distinction between the two thinkers or modes of writing certainly does not devalue Bergson's thought within a poststructural context. As Suzanne Guerlac writes, “Bergson enables us to return to questions associated with temporality, affect, agency, and embodiment that were bracketed within the

structuralist/post-structuralist context. He invites, as one critic puts it, 'a return to process before signification or coding.'⁴ Indeed, if we consider Deleuze's rewriting of Bergson's discourse in a poststructural idiom, then we find that Derrida and Bergson share a close affinity with regard to their perspectives of language in the face of time as a double movement. That is, both thinkers operate with the understanding of a particular rupture in the full presence of the present, an expansion of consciousness as a "now" to include a constant deferral to memory. In so doing, I will embark upon an analysis instigated by Suzanne Guerlac in *Thinking in Time: An Introduction to Henri Bergson* (2006) and show that, while this overlap establishes an affinity, it simultaneously marks a point of diffraction with regard to how both seek to embody such a concept of time.

Given the ideological pressures of language, in the face of time as *durée*, prevalent throughout the Bergsonian discourse, it is unclear as to why a comparative analysis with Derrida has not been undertaken.⁵ In Guerlac's excellent analysis of Bergsonian theory, she answers the call by Merleau-Ponty to reject the "clichéd Bergson [...], when the philosopher's thought, processed through various Bergsonisms, had become superficial and banal" and "return to the old Bergson, the audacious one."⁶ In so doing, Guerlac finds that because of Deleuze's reinvigoration of Bergson in *Le Bergsonisme* (1966), readers begin to associate Bergson with particular thinkers such as Nietzsche and Leibniz as an "anti-philosopher," in that he sought a (non)system predicated upon viewing difference as affirmation/creation, rather than negation. As such, Bergson becomes easily re-contextualized within a poststructural France characterized by various responses to Hegel, most notably those from Deleuze and Derrida. Similarly, in *Crisis in Modernism: Bergson and the Vitalist Controversy* (1992), Paul Douglass develops this re-contextualisation in his essay entitled, "Deleuze's Bergson: Bergs on redux," in which he traces Deleuze's profound interest in Bergson and redefines, from his 1986 work *Bergson, Eliot & American Literature*, how Bergson can be read as a pre-cursor to poststructural thought. Douglass shows that Deleuze categorizes Bergson, alongside thinkers such as Spinoza, Nietzsche and Lucretius, as one who is able to escape from the history of philosophy,⁷ an escape which represents, for Douglass, the poststructural turn in that it is "philosophy turning its own powers back on itself, reflecting upon its own flaws, gaps, and limitations – philosophy as an act of self-consciousness."⁸ Moreover, by the mere fact that Deleuze, a key figure in the poststructural era, draws so heavily upon Bergson, he inevitably merges Bergsonism to poststructural doctrine, most notably his systemization of Bergson's method of "*intuition philosophique*," which Douglass feels operates in a very similar way to Derrida's program of "deconstruction" in the sense that it destabilizes the absolutist terms which create "false problems" and "composites."⁹

Noting Douglass' argument, Guerlac asks: "why, if Deleuze could rewrite Bergson in a post-structuralist idiom, do we hear no more about Bergson in the context of post-structuralism? Why is he not taken up in this context as, for example, Levinas¹⁰ was taken up by Derrida and Blanchot?"¹¹ Moreover, why do Bergson's ideas today "escape the critique Derrida carried out so effectively against Husserl?" when, writes Guerlac, "[Derrida] deconstructs Husserl from a vantage point that, to [her] mind, is very close to Bergson's perspective: a critique of Western metaphysics for its suppression of time, a suppression reinforced by discursive language."¹² Indeed, it is intriguing, Guerlac notes, that contemporary works such as John Mullarkey's *The New Bergson* (2006), "where it is ostensibly a question of considering Bergson in relation to contemporary issues of philosophy, no mention is made of Derrida, even when the two philosophers share fundamental concerns in relation to time and writing."¹³ Perhaps it is because Bergson, as Guerlac suggests, "has been dismissed in the poststructuralist context as a phenomenologist"¹⁴ for both his apparent appeal to immediate experience along with his attempts in *Matière et mémoire* (1896) and his 1903 essay *Introduction à la métaphysique* to depart from traditional metaphysical ways of thinking in a similar way to Husserl. Such an endeavor would alarm Derrida, as he believed it to be a paradoxical intention "to restore the original and nonderivative character of signs, in opposition to classical metaphysics, is, [...] at the same time to eliminate a concept of signs whose whole history and meaning belong to the adventure of the metaphysics of presence."¹⁵ That is, such an attempt to dispense with metaphysical presuppositions is, in itself, a metaphysical act, which ultimately exposes how metaphysical doctrines are entrenched in the philosophy and history of the West.

However, following the 1988 English translation of *Le Bergsonisme* [*Bergsonism*], many contemporary thinkers, such as Leonard Lawlor in *The Challenge of Bergsonism* (2002), argue the converse: that Bergsonism is, in fact, a "challenge to phenomenology"¹⁶ for its primacy of memory over perception. Moreover, it seems tenuous to categorize Bergson alongside Husserl, as he never explicitly rejects metaphysical thought, but rather attempts, in *Introduction à la métaphysique*, to define a new metaphysics predicated on a concept of time as constant movement or qualitative change. If such new understandings of Bergson have arisen today, then we are possibly led to believe that Derrida operated in a field where, as Merleau-Ponty puts it, a "latter Bergson,"¹⁷ who was clichéd and conventionalized, dominated. It would be difficult, however, to assume that Derrida was swayed by conventional understandings of Bergsonian theory, as he was certainly aware, if not appreciative, of Bergson's attention to philosophical writing. In *L'Écriture et Différance* (1967), *De la Grammatologie* (1967), *Le toucher*, Jean-Luc Nancy (2000) and his essay, "La mythologie blanche" (1971), he turns to Bergson when contemplating how to express time as a double movement. It is, in fact, an interesting dichotomy – on the one hand, Derrida

couples Bergson within the metaphysical and/or phenomenological paradigms that are contaminated by a conception of presence; on the other hand, he seems to place Bergson alongside writers such as Nietzsche who are not only aware of this particular contamination but also produce a stylized form of writing which attempts to neutralize it. Regardless of the ambiguity surrounding Derrida's understanding of Bergson, there is an unquestionable overlap between their two discourses, most prominently exemplified, as I will show in the following section, by paralleling Derrida's critique of Husserlian presence in *La Voix et le phénomène* (1967) with Bergson's dualistic perspective of mind and matter in *Matière et Mémoire* (1896).

The Point of Diffraction

According to Richard Rorty in *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1982), Derrida is an "emblematic figure who not only [does] not solve problems, [he does] not have arguments or theses";¹⁸ his sole aim, throughout his entire discourse, is to expose "philosophy as a kind of writing,"¹⁹ using his program of "deconstruction" to expose select discourses to their reliance on logocentrism. In *La Voix et le phénomène*, Derrida exploits Husserl's prejudice towards an epistemological and metaphysical value of presence. As Husserl's phenomenology aims to develop a philosophical method (almost scientific in nature) that would yield truth by perceiving particular phenomena, he is aware that he must form a direct and/or causal link between what is intended in an "interior monologue," where "intuition and intention are melted together" (*eine innig verschmolzene Einheit*),²⁰ and what is actually "expressed"²¹ in order to confirm a "logical meaning" (*Bedeutung*)²² about what is perceived. However, as Derrida will show, time intrudes on, or more specifically, within, this operation and defers perception towards the past. For this reason, Derrida's critique of Husserl can be reduced to a question of time; any epistemology which views lived experience in terms of instants, "no matter what their angle, relies heavily on the dominance of the 'now.'"²³ And phenomenology, in confronting the problem of the idea as representation, is, in essence, confronting the concept of time. Throughout this critique, Derrida's aim is not necessarily to present a new conception of time, but rather to carve out a hole, as it were, to show that previous concepts of time fail to fit. In other words, Derrida's goal is not necessarily to destabilize the phenomenological project, but rather to show, by using Husserl as an example, that the philosophy of the West is an industry of writing that is impregnated with a historicity of ideas, most notably in this case, with a metaphysical concept of presence, which Derrida feels that Husserl only garnishes with a new twist. It is as if Derrida's program of deconstruction is alarmed to find that any particular discourse relies quite significantly on an absolute term to create a sense of order and logic. Derrida aims to show this by example, given that he not only avoids the trap of logocentric thought by steering clear of "argument or theses" in his own

discourse, but also by exposing any discourses which are conventionally assimilated as logically stable and understandable.

In the case of his reading of Husserl, Derrida is troubled by an overwhelming privilege given to presence as a “now.” And because Husserl relies quite heavily on a static conception of presence to link intentionality with expression in order to purify empirical phenomena and draw out knowledge of the thing itself, Derrida feels that there is simply not enough analysis devoted to what “presence” actually is. Rather, he shows that Husserl accepts a metaphysical presupposition of presence that proselytizes the existence of an ideality,²⁴ which is capable of repetition or re-presentation. By accepting such a concept that almost neatly completes the phenomenological project, Derrida is compelled to ask: “Is not the idea of knowledge and of the theory of knowledge in itself metaphysical? [...] do not the phenomenological necessity, the rigor and subtlety of Husserl’s analysis [...] nonetheless conceal a metaphysical presupposition?”²⁵ Derrida is simply curious as to where Husserl’s concept of ideality comes from; it simply cannot be, for Derrida, a “non-worldliness”:

[...] an existent that has fallen from the sky; its origin will always be the possible repetition of a productive act. In order that the possibility of its repetition may be open, *ideally* to an infinity, one ideal form must assure this unity of the *indefinite* and the *ideal*: this is the present, or rather the presence of the *living present*. The ultimate form of ideality, the ideality of ideality, that in which in the last instance one may anticipate or recall all repetition, is the *living present*.²⁶

In other words, Derrida understands Husserl’s ideality as the “very form in which the presence of an object in general may be indefinitely repeated as the *same*.”²⁷ In this respect, meaning-expression, for Husserl, would be intertwined with ideality, which is to say, the said (expression) and the wanting-to-say (intention) would be inextricably linked, which would therefore fulfill the phenomenological aim of saying or writing what one truthfully perceives. However, Derrida contests this on the grounds that Husserl’s ideality, which underpins his entire philosophy, cannot ever be a pure ideality as it is “always already” a “re-presentation” (*Vergegenwärtigung*)²⁸ to consciousness. For Husserl’s “ideality-as-presence” to exist, Derrida argues, lived experience must be treated or reduced to an instant or instants of arrested time. Derrida writes:

If the punctuality of the instant is a myth, a spatial or mechanical metaphor, an inherited metaphysical concept, or all that at once, and if the present of self-presence is not simple, if it is constituted in a premordial and irreducible

synthesis, then the whole of Husserl's argumentation is threatened in its very principle.²⁹

Derrida simply introduces what Husserl had already considered but subsequently dismissed in *The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*: "what is ultimately at stake, what is at bottom decisive: the concept of time."³⁰ That is, Derrida shows that by Husserl asserting that, "it is an absurdity to speak of a content of which we are 'unconscious,'"³¹ only "demonstrates and confirms throughout the irreducibility of re-presentation to presentative perception [...] the re-produced now to the perceived or retained actual now" – that the "punctuality of the instant" is always already fused with what came before. In this way, Derrida only exposes a Husserlian concept of time, similar to time as Bergsonian *durée*, buried beneath metaphysical presuppositions. Husserl effectively avoids adopting such an understanding of time – the "now" as a multiplicity – as it would clearly disarm his entire philosophy. "Undoubtedly," Derrida writes, "no now can be isolated as a pure instant, a pure punctuality. Not only does Husserl recognize this, but his whole description is incomparably well adapted to the original modifications of this irreducible spreading-out."³² In this respect, Derrida gives credit to the radical nature of Husserl's thinking, as to a certain extent, he exposes the double deferral that Derrida expounds upon in *De la Grammatologie*, but almost laments his lack of "follow through" in that he avoids an engagement with this "spreading-out" given that it would force Husserl to turn his gaze to understandings of temporality that subverts immediate conscious perception. That is to say, Husserl's "spread is nonetheless thought and described on the basis of the self-identity of the now as point, as a 'source-point.'"³³ On the one hand, Husserl, recognizes that time is "not severable into parts which could be by themselves, nor divisible into phases, points of the continuity";³⁴ on the other hand, at the nucleus of this indivisibility of temporality, there is a constant, "non-displaceable center" or an "actual now [...] that persists through continuous change of matter."³⁵ It is, indeed, a contradiction that Derrida exploits: how can this "source point," as an actual "now," be conceived given that time, which constitutes this "now," cannot be divided into "phases," "points" or "parts"?

Husserl, however, upon considering this, chooses to ignore it as this "source-point" is integral given that it "defines the very element of philosophical thought [...] and governs every possible concept of truth and sense"³⁶ within his discourse; it is, according to Derrida, the "punctual now as "primal form" (Urform) of consciousness (*Ideals I*)"³⁷ – *presence-to-consciousness*. By giving an overwhelming privilege to this, in turn, Derrida feels that Husserl uncovers a very unique conflict or rift in philosophy:

This conflict, necessarily unlike any other, is between philosophy, which is always a philosophy of presence, and a meditation on nonpresence – which is not perforce

its contrary, or necessarily a meditation on a negative absence, or a theory of nonpresence *qua* unconsciousness³⁸

With this distinction between philosophy, as a belief in presence-to-consciousness, and a “meditation” on non-consciousness, which has inscribed a perspective of time as nonpresence, there is a clear overlap with the Bergsonian discourse. Such an overlap marks a point of diffraction between the two thinkers and can, perhaps, shed a clearer understanding of Derrida’s exposure of time in Husserlian phenomenology. As Guerlac aptly puts it, “Derrida deconstructs Husserl by showing that time cuts into the attempt to establish self-presence, the presence of consciousness itself”;³⁹ it is this cutting as an operation of memory that Bergson presents, and to a certain extent, provides a richer understanding of how the nature of time as *durée* complicates, first and foremost, phenomenology, but secondly our processes of understanding in general. For Guerlac, Bergson shares a close affinity to Derrida, a common understanding, which sees a “critique of Western metaphysics for its suppression of time, a suppression reinforced by discursive language.”⁴⁰ Similarly, in *The Challenge of Bergsonism* (2003), Leonard Lawlor shows that “Bergsonism is, first, a challenge to phenomenology”⁴¹ given the privilege of memory over perception. But, paradoxically, it is because Bergson has been branded a phenomenologist that he has never been considered in relation to Derrida’s critique of Husserl. “At a conference on *Tel Quel*, at the University of London,” Guerlac writes, “I tried to introduce Bergson into the discussion. This intervention was summarily dismissed – Bergson, everyone agreed, was a phenomenologist, in other words, of no interest.”⁴² As Lawlor shows, however, despite the fact that Bergson’s philosophy appeals to immediate experience, he is clearly not a phenomenologist given that he feels consciousness constitutes only half of our being-in-time; the other half survives in the past, as memories, and impregnates Husserl’s “source-point.” Such a perspective effectively expands the Husserlian “now” into a double movement – towards matter and towards memory.

Following Derrida’s critique of Husserl, “presence-to-consciousness” becomes a phrase that is synonymous with the phenomenological project. Because of this, Lawlor argues that Bergson avoids the category of phenomenology on the basis of his conception of presence, an understanding that, for Lawlor, is predicated upon Derrida’s critique of Husserl:

We must here take advantage of Derrida’s remarkable clarification of the phenomenological concept of presence. In *Voice and Phenomena*,⁴³ Derrida has established that presence in phenomenology is always defined as [...] presence *to* consciousness.⁴⁴

Based on this declaration, “we have to say that phenomenological presence is equivalent to what Bergson calls representation,”⁴⁵ which is preceded by Bergson’s understanding of presence, as “image” (a term which I will explore later) and not consciousness. As phenomenology always seeks to link intentionality to a logical meaning (*Bedeutung*), it reduces consciousness to the consciousness of something. This, in turn, enables representations to occur, that is, phenomenology asserts that the “thing” is perceived and then represented to our consciousness. Such an understanding gives priority to perception, where there is a movement of excitation starting from the “thing” to consciousness, and then to memory. Bergson reverses this order⁴⁶ by giving a primacy to memory rather than perception on the grounds that “things” or matter do not have a “hidden power”⁴⁷ to create representations in us. Conversely, he asserts that memory actualizes our perception of matter, creating a constant movement between our memory, as an absolute past, and matter, as extension. For this reason, there is never a “thing” that is represented to our consciousness within the Bergsonian discourse, instead consciousness becomes something in itself. It is this something which significantly differentiates Bergsonism from phenomenology, and which Derrida feels that Husserl recognizes but avoids: to put it conventionally, it is a concept of time that is qualitative and indivisible rather than quantitative and static. Merleau-Ponty refers to this “something” in *Signes* (1960) as a rather complex “circuit”⁴⁸ of continuous movement between the self, as an ontology of memory, and matter, as extension or objectivity - a process of being where our bodies (more specifically our brain) as “centers of action,”⁴⁹ act as “zones of indeterminacy”⁵⁰ that only serve to complicate this movement by allowing for a delay or a momentary hesitation.

To understand this process more clearly, Bergson introduces the image or the metaphor of a “main telephonic exchange”⁵¹ to describe the role of the brain/body, and in so doing, represents the body as sort of machine. Like a telephonic exchange, “its office is to allow communication or delay it,”⁵² that is, a telephonic desk receives signals with the intention to connect them to the correct party but with a degree of delay [*écart*]. This delay, for Bergson, results from the complexity of the human brain, which allows for memory to intrude and complicate our imminent action; it allows us to choose, with a certain degree of indeterminacy, the best course of action. Importantly, the telephonic exchange, “adds nothing to what it receives,”⁵³ but only allows for a complication to occur in the form of memory. Therefore, Bergson suggests that the brain only “appears to us to be an instrument of analysis with regard to the movement received and an instrument of selection in regard to the movement executed,”⁵⁴ which is paramount to saying that the brain is incapable of producing representations. In this respect, every perception, in the form of movement received, would be soldered to the various memories accumulated over time. Perception, then, cannot solely constitute consciousness as it is always already deferred to the past. In saying this, Bergson effectively breaks the synonymy between consciousness

and existence by extending consciousness out to include, what he terms, “pure perception”⁵⁵ and memory.⁵⁶ Bergson writes:

How is it that this perception is consciousness, and why does everything happen *as if* this consciousness were born of the internal movement of the cerebral substance? [...] In fact, there is no perception which is not full of memories. With the immediate and present data of our senses, we mingle a thousand details out of our past experience.⁵⁷

Memory becomes so important for Bergson that he is able to state in *Matter and Memory* that “every perception is already memory [...] we perceive, practically only the past.”⁵⁸ It is in this way that the consciousness presented by Husserl would be considered by Bergson only a portion of existence. Like Derrida, he seems to view the Husserlian instant-as-presence-to-consciousness as a constant deferral to the past, and in so doing, suggests that the past survives as a swelling or an exponentially creative growth.

To view consciousness in this way, however, according to Husserl, is “absurd” in that “retention of a content of which we are not conscious is impossible.”⁵⁹ However, as stated above, Derrida shows that Husserl, in *The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness (1893–1917)*, contradicts himself as he puts forth that consciousness can be, “continuously compounded with a nonpresence and nonperception, with primary memory and expectation (retention and protention).”⁶⁰ Like Bergsonian consciousness, these “nonperceptions are neither added to, nor do they *occasionally* accompany, the actually perceived now; they are essentially and indispensably involved in its possibility.”⁶¹ That is, perception is not bound within consciousness, but rather with memory; without memory, there would be no perception. Derrida points out that Husserl, in an “absolutely unique case,” admits this, in that “retention is still a perception”⁶²: “[...] if we call perception *the act in which all “origination” lies, which constitutes originarily, then primary remembrance is perception.*”⁶³ It is, however, a concession, as if Husserl is saying, “I must concede that there is the possibility that consciousness contains retention as well as perception, but as this cannot be empirically understood or immediately grasped, it is not worth exploring.” In other words, if Husserl cannot describe the nature of this nonpresence, then it is simply because it is an impossibility. In effect, Derrida shows that Husserl is limited by language as a system, given that, at its root, there is a logocentric reliance on presence and consequently his concept of time cannot subvert it. Husserl, in fact, writes, “*In an ideal sense, then, perception would be the phase of consciousness which constitutes the pure now, and memory*” (my emphasis), but, importantly, he considers such a perspective as an, “*ideal limit, something abstract which can be nothing for itself.*”⁶⁴ He is, in fact, right. Nonpresence, in this Husserlian sense, is not something that can be thought conventionally or empirically, or, from a Bergsonian sense, spatially. Derrida, understanding this, only presents this idealistic other

through negation. On the same page of *La Voix et le Phénomène* where Derrida uncovers this contradiction, he uses eight negations to reference an Husserlian “opposite” to presence, including the terms “non-now,” “nonperception,” “nonpresence,” and “nonevidence.”⁶⁵ “The fact that nonpresence and otherness,” Derrida writes, “are internal to presence strikes at the very root of the argument for the *uselessness* of signs in the self-relation.”⁶⁶ That is to say that any sign will be ineffective in defining what can only be understood in terms of negation.

Bergson accepts this from the outset when he asserts that the sign is spatial in nature. In *Le Pensée et le Mouvant* (1934), he writes:

no matter what name you give to the “thing itself,” whether you make of it the substance of Spinoza, the Ego of Fichte, the Absolute of Schelling, the Idea of Hegel, or the Will of Schopenhauer, it will be *useless* for the word to present itself with its well-defined signification: it will lose it; it will be emptied of all meaning from the moment it is applied to the totality of things.⁶⁷

As Husserl asserts, such a concept of time can only be grasped idealistically as an ideal limit, that is, abstractly or non-empirically. And, “despite the immense problems [this] poses,” Derrida writes that there is a “necessity of taking [it] into account.”⁶⁸ It is as if Derrida suggests that these “ideal” concepts, however abstract or incorporeal, must be tested in order to push language beyond its logocentric roots. However, as stated above, Derrida does not offer a new concept of time, but rather opens the possibilities of new understandings of time in the face of Husserlian phenomenology. Perhaps, as Derrida suggests, the word “time” in itself is problematic as it brings with it an understanding of static linearity and, in so doing, puts forth that we must find a new term: “But what we are calling time must be given a different name – for ‘time’ has always designated a movement conceived in terms of the present, and can mean nothing else.”⁶⁹ Bergson echoes this idea by asserting that the thinker must not rely on solidified concepts for meaning, but rather accept that particular terms can and will change. He calls this movement, “thinking in duration”⁷⁰ which suggests that all philosophical terminology, including his own of “*durée*,” “multiplicity” and so on will be subjected to change. This is an understanding that Bergson presents in *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (1889), seventy-eight years before Derrida published *La Voix et le Phénomène*, introducing the term *durée* in place of conventional understandings of time in an attempt to encapsulate, explore or reflect what Derrida effectively uncovers in Husserlian Phenomenology. The difference, however, is that Derrida approaches this issue semiologically, as if to concede that the spatiality of language is insurmountable. Bergson, on the other hand, injects a level of performativity into his discourse through the use of artifice, as if he urges

the reader to perform a philosophical thought experiment, which may subsequently transform, over time, the spatiality of verbal communication.

Philosophy's Other: Writing Consciousness as Nonconsciousness

At the core of the conflict that Derrida uncovers in Husserl's discourse is a generalization about philosophy as the "history of philosophy," as the history of particular commentaries on other commentaries, deriving from Plato, punctuated here by Husserl and defined by a concept of presence. Richard Rorty refers to it as a "family romance involving, e.g., Father Parmenides, honest old Uncle Kant, and bad brother Derrida."⁷¹ Derrida refers to this recognition in *L'Écriture et Différance* as an "event" or a "rupture"⁷² in the structure of philosophical thought and comes to characterize Derrida's discourse as extremely unique, while simultaneously making his work, or the writing of his work, nearly impossible to categorize. In this regard, Derrida feels that he becomes a thorn for the entire business of philosophy. It is a perspective or treatment of thinking that Derrida, towards the end of his career, felt was "tolerated [by] academic philosophers,"⁷³ who felt that those who chose to consider philosophy as a kind of writing were no longer dealing with the pursuit of truth.

It is by no coincidence that Bergson also found himself as the focus of so many recriminations, given that he avoided writing in a philosophically traditional way that relies on syllogistic constructions, which convey a clear and logical thesis. G.R. Dodson, for example, confessed in 1913 that Bergson defied even friendly attempts at categorization, for he was "neither an idealist, realist, pragmatist, nor eclectic."⁷⁴ Others, such as Isaiah Berlin, accused Bergson for the "abandonment of rigorous critical standards and the substitution in their place of casual emotional responses."⁷⁵ Famously, Bertrand Russell writes of Bergson:

Of course a large part of Bergson's philosophy, probably the part to which most of its popularity is due, does not depend upon argument, and cannot be upset by argument. His imaginative picture of the world, regarded as a poetic effort, is in the main not capable of either proof or disproof.⁷⁶

However, "Truth," Derrida writes in *A Taste for The Secret* (2002), "is not a value one can renounce."⁷⁷ Indeed, Derrida it would seem, in his deconstruction of Husserl, not only attempts to recondition how Husserl establishes truth, but also how the whole of philosophy has done so by redirecting an understanding of reality from what we receive through conscious perception to that of a nonconscious perception. In its definition, this is paradoxical given that the language at our disposal is saturated with the philosophical heritage that operates in opposition to this non-

consciousness, and is constitutive of time. To write of nonconsciousness or nonperception, then, according to Derrida, is to write un-philosophically, that is, writing with the understanding that signs come inscribed with a Western philosophical tradition of presence which must somehow be subverted. Writing in such a way is exactly what characterizes the Bergsonian discourse, while simultaneously giving credence to critics such as Russell, who struggle to locate provable theses given that Bergson attempts to rid his discourse from the ready-made concepts that revolve around an ontotheological belief in the *logos*. Consequently, both Bergson and Derrida share common ground with regard to their writing strategies. It is not enough for them to *write about* how one should write, but rather *to write in a way where they enact damage against conventional uses of language*. It is not uncommon, for example, to come across constructions in Derrida's writing such as "truth as non-truth" or "presence as absence" and so on. Much of what Derrida attempts to establish can be reduced to saying that truth is a paradox, which is what he attempts to show in many of the thinkers that he deconstructs, but only a paradox insofar that its understanding is germinated within a system of language that limits understanding in itself, hence the reliance on paradoxical constructions. Derrida, however, is quick to understand that philosophy's other cannot be stated in a simple process of negation, that is, nonpresence cannot be simply stated in contrary terms to presence, negative absence or as an unconscious perception of nonpresence – it is something else entirely.

In the same year of his critique of Husserl, Derrida published *De la grammatologie* (1967), where, according to Guerlac, he attempts to elaborate this issue of time, "in terms of the difference between speech and writing, that is, in a philosophy of difference that will become known as grammatology."⁷⁸ It is in this work that Derrida fashions a philosophy of time in semiological terms and asserts that "writing inscribes temporality – *l'enjeu véritable* [what is really at stake] – as difference (or *différance*)."⁷⁹ By the second section of Part I, "*Linguistics and Grammatology*," Derrida reduces his deconstruction of Saussure's structural linguistics to a question of time. Like Husserl, Saussure recognizes but avoids a digression on time, as his goal within the field of linguistics is to make language the object of science, and not metaphysics. In his deconstruction, Derrida exploits a contradiction, referring to Saussure's declaration about the nature of language, to show that writing has a concept of time/space (*différance*/trace) inscribed within it: "we can say that *what is natural to mankind is not spoken language* but the faculty of constructing a language: i.e., a system of distinct signs corresponding to distinct ideas."⁸⁰ In a similar vein to Bergson, Derrida asserts that a correspondence of distinct signs to distinct ideas occurs through a process of forming relationships between the sensory impressions [*apparaissant*] and its lived experience [*apparaître*] (or mental imprint), which becomes a question of a duration in time, or, more specifically, a question of matter moving through time; a process of hearing and forming phonic

structures based on a faculty of construction. This faculty of construction, for all intents and purposes, is the nonconscious perception of time elaborated in his critique of Husserl: "Such a complication, which is in effect the same that Husserl described, abides, in spite of an audacious phenomenological reduction, by the evidence and presence of linear, objective, and mundane model."⁸¹

As a departure from *La Voix et le Phénomène*, Derrida attempts to embody, through writing, an understanding of this concept of time as trace, and, in so doing, attempts to avoid negative constructions, such as "nonconscious." As such, he clearly struggles to elaborate positively upon this conception of time (*trace*) that he feels "complicates" both the Husserlian and Saussurean project:

Since past has always signified present-past, the absolute past that is retained in the trace *no longer rigorously merits the name "past."* Another name to erase [...] With the same precaution and under the same erasure, it *may be said* that its passivity is also its relationship with the "future." The concepts of *present, past, and future*, everything in the concepts of time and history which implies evidence of them - the metaphysical concept of time in general - cannot adequately describe the structure of the trace.⁸²

Derrida is, to a great extent, at a loss, confessing that a phenomenological engagement with this problem will either lead to a "modification" of the "mundane linear structure" already in place, or that the engagement itself will always already be a moot point given that the "phenomenological model itself [is] constituted, as a warp of language, [...] upon a woof that is not its own."⁸³ It would seem that it is by no coincidence that on the same page Derrida turns to Bergson, in one of the very few references throughout all his discourse, to consult methodological approaches to this problem: "Since there is no nonmetaphoric language to oppose to metaphors here, one must, as Bergson wished, multiply antagonistic metaphors."⁸⁴ By nonmetaphoric, Derrida means that language as a starting point will always be problematic, given that every sign used to express sensory contents is already removed from what it expresses. He develops this idea further in his essay, "La mythologie blanche," where he puts forth that every sign is metaphorical, since our languages of the West are engendered with metaphysics and "therefore enveloped in the field that a general metaphorology of philosophy would seek to dominate."⁸⁵ In short, the "metaphor remains, in all its essential characteristics, a classical philosopheme, a metaphysical concept."⁸⁶ As a result, Derrida believes that one cannot escape the use of metaphor in philosophical writing, insofar as one cannot escape the history that engenders their medium of expression, therefore the philosophical writer must seek to "neutralize"⁸⁷ the effect of metaphor through a sense of play. To explore such a methodology,

according to Derrida, “would require [an] examination of the texts of Renan and Nietzsche, as well as those of Freud, Bergson, and Lenin.”⁸⁸

Indeed, if we look at the first chapter of *Matter and Memory*, Bergson bids to redefine a new metaphysics that avoids representationalism, or, from a Husserlian perspective, to articulate the opposite of consciousness.⁸⁹ Like Derrida, Bergson knows that he cannot literally escape the commentaries that come to define the philosophies of the West, specifically metaphysics; he accepts that metaphysical doctrine is bound within his language, and that, any attempt to reject metaphysical definitions will only result in “modifying” or supplementing the ready-made concepts on which Husserl ultimately relies. That is why Bergson never fully rejects a concept of presence but simply seeks to adjust a prejudice towards one that is already there. To do this, he introduces his philosophy as, what Leonard Lawlor terms, an “artifice,” that is, he essentially starts with a “fiction”:

Nous allons feindre pour un instant que nous ne connaissons rien des theories de la Matière et des theories de l’esprit, rien des discussions sur la réalité ou l’idéalité du monde extérieur.⁹⁰ [Let us feign for an instant that we know nothing of the theories of matter and nothing of the theories of spirit, nothing of the discussions on reality or ideality of the exterior world.]

The word *feindre* [feign], can be translated as: “pretend,” “mould” or “contrive.”⁹¹ In the 2005 English edition of *Matter and Memory*, N. M. Paul and W. S. Palmer use the word “assume,” which literally means to “accept as true without proof” or “pretend to have.”⁹² Each translation asserts that Bergson believes that, while accepting that we cannot forget previous theories, we are to pretend as if we do. He effectively constructs his philosophy on a metaphorical basis that subsequently “antagonizes” our frameworks of knowledge in order to test particular theories.⁹³ In other words, it is as if he throws a hypotheses into particular conceptual understandings in order to disrupt the habitual use of ready-made concepts and present, what Husserl terms “the ideal limit,” therefore exposing how language and/or the writing of these concepts has come to engender certain understandings of reality. As a result, he is more easily able to avoid negative constructions given that there is nothing there to oppose. He creates his fiction, or what Russell defines as his “imaginative picture of the world” as a device where there is no need for negation.⁹⁴ He is then able to use positively written constructions that come to reflect the positive qualitative change that defines *durée* and subsequently inflects Bergson’s writing with a certain degree of performativity.

By avoiding such terms as “ideality,” “reality” and “things,” Bergson becomes free to think in “ideal” ways about his perception of the world. In their place, he introduces the term “images,” which becomes the fulcrum for

the entire book. Every subsequent assertion is predicated upon this term, which, in its definition, is extremely enigmatic given that its purpose is to subvert conventional metaphysical ways of thinking. Indeed, in the 1908 edition, Bergson includes an introduction to clarify his use of images, writing that by image, “we mean a certain existence which is more than that which the idealist calls a *representation*, but less than that which the realist calls a *thing* – an existence placed halfway between the ‘thing’ and the ‘representation.’”⁹⁵ By starting with such a proclamation, Bergson brushes aside the two extremes of idealism and realism, discourses which he feels have been constructed around particular terms that are conventionally assimilated. With regard to realism, for example, Bergson feels that the term “thing” plays too central of a role and therefore dictates much of our understanding of consciousness and perception. As with Derrida’s critique of Husserl, Bergson is alarmed by the privilege given to one term, which he feels reduces extension to that which produces representations in us thereby giving matter a “hidden” and “mysterious power” to produce these representations. Bergson writes:

The truth is that there is one, and only one, method of refuting materialism: it is to show that matter is precisely that which it appears to be. Thereby we eliminate all virtuality, all hidden power, from matter and establish the phenomena of spirit as an independent reality.⁹⁶

By establishing the “spirit as an independent reality,” Bergson effectively puts forth that our perception of matter is an actualization of the image. In other words, upon encountering an image in the extended world, we call upon our memories to effectively understand how a particular image is useful. It is in this way that the actualization of an image is a utilitarian act – we take only from the image what is useful in the context of encountering that image. In this respect, Bergson reverses the materialist perspective insofar as the process of perceiving the image is an act of “diminution”⁹⁷ and not representation. Perhaps Merleau-Ponty states this more clearly in *Signes*: “it is as if my vision developed in them rather than in me, as if their being seen were only a degradation of their eminent being.”⁹⁸ Bergson renders the term “things” inoperable by seeing it as a presence that works in opposition to *durée* as constant movement. Conversely, “images” are presence; they are exactly what they appear to be in relation to them.

However, such a perspective would lead one to believe that Bergson is an idealist. Indeed, Bergson terms such a perspective a “concession to idealism” in that, “every reality has a kinship [or] a relationship with consciousness,”⁹⁹ but, as stated above, it is “consciousness” itself that Bergson extends to include memory (*l’esprit*), and this provides the significant distinction between idealism and Bergsonism. It is important to understand that Bergsonian presence does not suggest a “now” in the traditionally metaphysical or Husserlian sense; it is more an appearing-to-

be, in that there is a constant “circuit” of movement between the image and memory. Given that the image is in constant movement itself, there is never a pure representation of the image to our consciousness in an idealist sense. That is, the re-presentation of the image is never a pure copy of the image; it is only ever a partial one and thus a “diminution” of the whole moving image. Therefore, the image acts as a point of contact between idealist and realist ways of seeing; they are neither constructed by our minds as an idealist representation of our subjective reality, nor are they purely “things” which are derived from perception.

What is important is that Bergson’s writing of images, as an artifice or a hypothesis, allows him to push the boundaries of our habitual and conventional ways of thinking – to highlight the fact that we approach any new understandings with the entirety of both our memories and the collective historicity of particular language frameworks in tow. As such, his writing strategy is simple: he aims not to present an expression of any intuitive understanding of the world, but rather, through artifice, to create a new “thing” that disrupts our habitual frameworks and subsequently begins to form a new historicity of terms, ones that encompass a perspective of time as a double movement. It is in this way that Bergson aims, through his writing, not to fall into a game of dialectic refutation, but rather to create; like all art, Bergson seeks to create a new “thing” to be intuited by the reader, which, in turn, will become part of them, part of their memory framework and will affect subsequent understandings of reality.

Similarly, Derrida posits that a sense of creation works in opposition to every thought, structure, context or any other conceptual development; it is simply *l’avenir* or what-is-to-come and cannot be predicted, measured or calculated. Towards the end of his life, Derrida seems to speak increasingly about this concept. In the opening of the documentary entitled, *Derrida*, released in 2002, two years before his death, he states:

In general, I try to distinguish between the “future” and “*l’avenir*.” The future is what tomorrow, later, the next century will become – what “is” will “become.” There’s a future which is programmed, predictable – all that is somehow scheduled, perhaps... that is, predictable. But there’s a future, which I prefer to call “*l’avenir*,” to come since it refers to someone or something that will come and which, as it “comes,” arrives, is not predictable. For me that is the real future – that which is unpredictable.¹⁰⁰

In the same year, *The Taste for the Secret* was published, and once again, Derrida expounds upon this “real future” [*l’avenir*], relating it to the context of an author’s work: “The future is *not present*, but *there is* an opening onto it; and because *there is* a future [*il y a de l’avenir*], a context is always open.”¹⁰¹ This Derridean future is a constantly unfolding one, a movement that defies

understanding at its very root, but simultaneously, like Bergsonian *durée*, is creative. It is perhaps with this in mind that Derrida presents particular writings such as *Glas* or *Cinders* as an attempt to convey a sense of creation and a type of expression that is more artifice than philosophy - it conveys a sense of philosophy's other.

It is unquestionable that not only is it difficult to think in such ways, but also equally difficult to reflect, through writing, this creative future. To think from a perspective of time is to operate with the understanding that our writing comes with a pattern - a habit - which must be continually broken in order to usher in the qualitative change that characterizes both *durée* and Derrida's *l'avenir*. In so doing, we must endeavor to push our systems of language to the limit and challenge the institutions that cement select methods of expression. It is simply not enough to write philosophically about time, nor is it enough to use literary technique to express philosophical concepts of time. In this respect, it is understandable that Bergson was, at one time, cast aside as a "spiritualist." How else could he articulate what cannot be articulated, unless this independent-*l'esprit*-as-memory must always remain as an incorporeal ideal? Similarly, Derrida's program of deconstruction has shaken the very roots of expression at the institutional level; the limits of what we can say about time lie not within philosophy, but on the margins of philosophy. To inhabit this "Tympanum" or nowhere place is seemingly to be recriminated and unaccepted, but an attempt to express this constantly creative future will only thicken an ever broadening present to include contextual change. Perhaps, paradoxically, in looking back towards such models of writing will we understand the present's unfolding future as an articulation of philosophy's other.

¹ Suzanne Guerlac, *Thinking in Time: An Introduction to Henri Bergson* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 186.

² Paul Patton and John Protevi, *Between Deleuze and Derrida* (London, New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2003), 6-7.

³ Although many associate this phrase with Richard Rorty's 1967 anthology *The Linguistic Turn*, he himself claims the term originated from the Australian philosopher Gustav Bergmann. Nevertheless, I take an understanding of the term based on Rorty's reduction of the 20th century "philosophical revolution" to that of "linguistic philosophy." He writes, "I shall mean by 'linguistic philosophy' the view that philosophical problems are problems which may be solved (or dissolved) either

by reforming language, or by understanding more about the language we presently use.” Richard Rorty, *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 3.

⁴ Quote taken from Brian Massumi’s *Parables of the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*, 7. Cited in Suzanne Guerlac’s *Thinking in Time*, 4.

⁵ Following Bergson’s recent return and revitalization, there are to date no studies that provide an intimate examination of the two discourses. Throughout my own research, I have come across only three texts that briefly parallel Bergsonian and Derridean theories for which I give mention in this paper: Leonard Lawlor’s *The Challenge of Bergsonism* (2003), Suzanne Guerlac’s *Thinking in Time: An Introduction to Henri Bergson* (2006) and Paul Douglass’ *Bergson, Eliot & American Literature* (1986). There are, of course, a host of texts which give mention to both Bergson and Derrida: Clayton Crockett’s *Theology of the Sublime* (2000), John Llewelyn’s *Margins of Religion: between Kierkegaard and Derrida* (2009), Joseph Claude Evans’ *Derrida and Phenomenology* (1995). If we were to consider them together, Lawlor’s three texts, *Derrida and Husserl: The Basic Problem of Phenomenology* (2002), *Thinking through French Philosophy: The Being of the Question* (2003) and *The Challenge of Bergsonism* provide the closest parallel of the two discourses, but in each text, such a comparative analysis is never the central focus. Valentine Moulard-Leonard’s *Bergson-Deleuze Encounters: Transcendental Experience and the Thought of the Virtual* (2008) provides a brief footnote which parallels the two thinkers by drawing upon Lawlor’s perspectives of Bergsonian and Derridean presence in *The Challenge of Bergsonism*, but avoids a more in depth examination as it would deter him from the focus of his text.

⁶ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 182.

⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Dialogues II*, 2nd ed. (London: Continuum, 2006), 15.

⁸ Frederick Burwick and Paul Douglass, *The Crisis in Modernism: Bergson and the Vitalist Controversy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 377.

⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 13-36.

¹⁰ In “Wandering Among Shadows: the Discordance of Time in Levinas and Bergson” published in *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 48, no. 4 (Dec. 2010), Robin Durie shows how much of Levinas’ understanding of time is indebted to Bergson. In this instance, it is strange that Derrida would take up Levinas without giving mention to any parallels with Bergsonism.

¹¹ Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, 182.

¹² Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, 185.

¹³ Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, 186-7.

¹⁴ Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, 185.

¹⁵ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 51.

¹⁶ Leonard Lawlor, *The Challenge of Bergsonism* (London: Continuum International, 2003), ix.

¹⁷ Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, 182.

¹⁸ Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism: Essays, 1972-1980* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 93.

¹⁹ Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, 91.

²⁰ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 92.

²¹ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 31.

²² Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 20.

²³ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 63.

²⁴ For Derrida, ideality as pure “form,” *eidōs* or *idea* in Western thought, takes on an almost theological status that underpins all systems of thought. Borrowing from Heidegger, Derrida brands this perspective as an “ontotheological” belief in, what he terms, the “Transcendental Signified.” See *Of Grammatology*, 20.

- ²⁵ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 4.
- ²⁶ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 6. Emphasis in original.
- ²⁷ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 9. Emphasis in original.
- ²⁸ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 7.
- ²⁹ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 61.
- ³⁰ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 63.
- ³¹ Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*, Appendix IX; cited in *Speech and Phenomena*, 63.
- ³² Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 61.
- ³³ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 61.
- ³⁴ Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, ed. Martin Heidegger, trans. James S. Churchill, et al. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), 10.
- ³⁵ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 62; Edmund Husserl, *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1980), 81. Emphasis in original.
- ³⁶ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 62.
- ³⁷ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 63.
- ³⁸ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 63.
- ³⁹ Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, 185.
- ⁴⁰ Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, 185.
- ⁴¹ Lawlor, *The Challenge of Bergsonism*, ix.

⁴² Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, 185.

⁴³ Lawlor translates *La Voix et le Phénomène* more accurately as *Voice and Phenomena*, rather than *Speech and Phenomena*, given Derrida's significant analysis of "auto-affection" in Husserlian phenomenology. Speaking to oneself in an "interior monologue" would not be considered "speech," but rather a voice. Derrida's emphasis on "voice" as opposed to "speech" is important throughout his discourse.

⁴⁴ Lawlor, *The Challenge of Bergsonism*, 27. Emphasis in original.

⁴⁵ Lawlor, *The Challenge of Bergsonism*, 27.

⁴⁶ Heidegger critiqued Bergson on the grounds that he simply reverses Platonism. While Heidegger saw the current metaphysical sense of being that stems from Plato concealing a true sense of time, he argued that one must "twist free." Lawlor argues against Heidegger's proclamation in that Bergsonism is "more than a mere reversal [in that] [his] is not a philosophy that defines being as conscious presence." See *Challenge of Bergsonism*, 57.

⁴⁷ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory* (New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007), 80.

⁴⁸ Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, 185.

⁴⁹ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 5.

⁵⁰ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 23.

⁵¹ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 30. Lawlor astutely notes that we must not compare a "telephonic exchange" with that of modern technology (internet, modem, etc.). The "telephonic exchange" suggests a delay in receiving and emitting, opposed to the seemingly infinite speeds of modern computing.

⁵² Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 30.

⁵³ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 30.

⁵⁴ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 30.

⁵⁵ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 33.

⁵⁶ The two forms of memory, expounded upon in *Matter and Memory*, provide an understanding of how time cuts into the movement of consciousness. The first form of memory, “prolongation” or “habit” memory contracts habits of action geared towards the future; this form of memory is for utility and relies on a process of repetition. Learning to walk, for example, is a process a repeating particular actions until each memory of learning to walk is contracted into a habit, whereby one does not have recollect a “memory-image” of one learning to walk in order to do so. The second form, “recollection memory” recalls particular “memory-images” and is incapable of being repeated, that is, every process by which we recall a particular memory-image, we, effectively, create a new memory, which begins to swell our collection of memories. The second form of memory is useless, in a utilitarian sense, insofar, that one could recall the image of learning to walk, but would not affects one’s ability to commit this action. Bergson considers the memory-images that occur during “recollection memory” as representations, given that we re-present memory-images to ourselves. Importantly, this “re-presentation” differs from the pure perception of matter or the “image” in consciousness. Conversely, Husserlian phenomenology holds that we re-present an image of the “thing” to our consciousness. Leonard Lawlor’s examination of this expansion in light of Husserlian phenomenology, in *The Challenge of Bergsonism* is extensive. See chapter two, entitled, “The Concept of Memory: Ontology.” For a deeper understanding of Bergson’s “virtual memory,” Keith Ansell-Pearson’s *Philosophy and the Adventure of the Virtual: Bergson and the Time of Life* (2002) is very extensive.

⁵⁷ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 33.

⁵⁸ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 150.

⁵⁹ Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*, appendix IX, 63; cited in *La Voix et le Phénomène*.

⁶⁰ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 64. Emphasis in original.

⁶¹ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 64. Emphasis in original.

⁶² Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 64.

⁶³ Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*, 17; cited in *La Voix et le Phénomène*, 64.

⁶⁴ Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*, 16; cited in *La Voix et le Phénomène*, 65. Emphasis mine.

⁶⁵ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 65.

⁶⁶ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 66. Emphasis mine.

⁶⁷ Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics* (New York: Dover, 2007), 48. Emphasis mine.

⁶⁸ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 65.

⁶⁹ Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 68.

⁷⁰ Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, 35-9.

⁷¹ Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism*, 91.

⁷² Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 2nd ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 351.

⁷³ Jacques Derrida and Maurizio Ferraris, *A Taste for the Secret* (MA: Polity Press, 2002), 9.

⁷⁴ George Dodson, *Bergson and the Modern Spirit* (London: The Lindsey Press, 1914), 23-24.

⁷⁵ Isaiah Berlin, "Impressionist Philosophy," *London Mercury* 32 (191) (1935): 489 - 90; cited in John Mullarkey's *The New Bergson* (Manchester University Press, 1999).

⁷⁶ Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2004), 722.

⁷⁷ Derrida and Ferraris, *A Taste for the Secret*, 9.

⁷⁸ Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, 185.

⁷⁹ Guerlac, *Thinking in Time*, 185.

⁸⁰ Jacques Derrida and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 66. Emphasis in original.

⁸¹ Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 67.

⁸² Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 66-67. Emphasis mine.

⁸³ Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 67.

⁸⁴ Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 67.

⁸⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, 1st ed. (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1984), 219.

⁸⁶ Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, 219.

⁸⁷ Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, 214.

⁸⁸ Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, 214.

⁸⁹ It is important to note that the opposite of consciousness, in this sense, should not be considered unconsciousness in a Freudian sense. While Bergson shares, as Frédéric Worms writes, “an epistemological field with Freud,” Freud asserts that all mental processes, including memory operation, are a function of the brain. Indeed, Freud believed that the mind was a function of the brain, which marks a significant departure from Bergsonism. Because of this, Freud characterizes the unconscious from a materialist perspective in that one’s accumulative memories would be stored in the brain.

⁹⁰ Henri Bergson, *Matière et mémoire: Essai sur La Relation du Corps À L’Esprit* (Paris: Quadrige, 2007), 11. Translation mine.

⁹¹ Catherine Soanes, ed., *English Oxford Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2002), 400.

⁹² In *The Challenge of Bergsonism*, Lawlor defines the English “feign” as “to fashion or to shape” (Lawlor, 2).

⁹³ In a two part lecture delivered at Oxford University in 1911, “The Perception of Change,” Bergson employs a similar strategy. He states, “I am going to ask you to make a strenuous effort to put aside some of the artificial schema we interpose unknowingly between reality and us” (Creative Mind, 142).

⁹⁴ It is on this basis, however, that many criticize Bergson. In his *Twentieth Century French Philosophy*, for example, Eric Mathews notes that describing this non-presence as a constant survival of the past is “merely playing with words,” emphasising or re-appropriating Bergson’s philosophy as a fiction as opposed to an empirical exploration of Being, in a traditional philosophical sense.

⁹⁵ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 9.

⁹⁶ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 72.

⁹⁷ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 52.

⁹⁸ Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, 185.

⁹⁹ Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, 229.

¹⁰⁰ Bob Flanagan, *Derrida*, DVD (ICA Projects, 2002), Chapter 1.

¹⁰¹ Derrida and Ferraris, *A Taste for the Secret*, 20. Emphasis in original.