

Mark Tansey — Derrida Queries de Man. *Application to Derrida's Questioning of Hermeneutics*

This paper endeavours to point towards the direction of an answer to the problem whether or not philosophical hermeneutics is post-metaphysical. Starting from Derrida's critique of hermeneutics, the author argues that this problem reduces itself to the question: "is hermeneutics a violent form of thought?" Through a reinterpretation of Gadamer's concept of "living language of dialogue" starting from the point of view upon the history of the concept of language offered by *Truth and Method* and on the basis of the similitude between language and art the answer to this latter question is given in the negative.

The question which we would like to deal with in the following pages concerns the point up to which Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics can be considered a post-metaphysical endeavour. Taken in itself, such a question does not reveal its answer too easily. For this reason, in order to avoid an endless discussion or a discussion that does not reach a meaningful conclusion, a possible way to approach the matter would be that of comparing Gadamer's hermeneutics against Derrida's deconstruction considering this latter philosophical endeavour to be a "model" of resistance to metaphysics.

Of course, such a strategy cannot be but useful. But, for there is a *but*, are we able at this point to offer a clear definition of deconstruction? The fact that Derrida talks sometimes about deconstructions (in the plural) shows clearly that we are not dealing here with a completed philosophical corpus, or with something which could be, in a way or another, defined,

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delimited... Deconstruction, as movements of deconstruction, always in act, is endless. This does not mean though that it cannot be caught in the unity of a perspective which could be used as canon for judging the claim of philosophical hermeneutics to break through from metaphysics. In our view, the best example for such a unity of perspective upon deconstruction would be Mark Tansey's painting – *Derrida Queries de Man*¹.

We see in this picture Derrida dancing with Paul de Man on a mountain of texts. The top of the mountain cannot be seen. We do not have perspective upon the entire mountain, the picture itself being deprived of perspective. This is the reason why I believe Mark Tansey's work to be the example par excellence, to be exemplary for Derrida's thought. For, it grasps the meaning of Derrida's deconstruction in the unity of a perspective starting precisely from the lack of perspective. What this lack of perspective signifies is that *one cannot take distance from deconstruction*. Derrida says it straightforwardly: "... deconstruction takes place everywhere it takes place where there is something..."²

In my opinion though, this lack of perspective, the fact that the peak of the mountain cannot be seen, is also meaningful in a completely different direction. In a painting exists only what can be seen, and can be seen only what exists. The fact that the peak of the mountain cannot be seen and that its wall that can be seen is almost perpendicular, pushes us towards the conclusion that such a peak does not even exist. As far as we can tell, this mountain of texts does not have an end, is infinite. That is to say: Western culture and philosophy does not have an end; the mechanisms which have ensured their perpetuation throughout time will work for *infinity*. We should be very attentive at this infinity of Western metaphysics for it is not Hegel's "good infinity". Rather, it seems to be the "bad infinity" understood as an "indefinite limited by its very essence".

The mountain of texts of Western culture has a margin. This is precisely the place in which Derrida situates himself. The truth of this affirmation is underpinned by Derrida's work too: "I try to keep myself at the limit of philosophical dis-

course."³ Or: "[deconstruction] interrogates philosophy beyond its meaning, treating it not only as a discourse but as a determined text inscribed in a general text, enclosed in the representation of its own margin."⁴

Another thing imposing itself upon us in this image is the fact that Derrida's face is barely sketched and the eyes are not drawn at all. This means: the activity of deconstruction does not involve also the soul, or the individuality of the deconstructor, for in Derrida's view the eyes are the mirrors of the soul.

This thing can be also underpinned through recourse to Derrida's texts, for here is what the philosopher tells us in *Positions*: "Such a symptom [of privileging presence – my note] is necessarily and structurally dissimulated for reasons and on paths which I try to analyze. And, if it is discovered today, this is not in any way due to a more or less clever invention whose initiative, here or elsewhere, can be taken by *somebody*."⁵ (italics are mine)

The final thing we should observe in connection with this unitary perspective upon deconstruction is that offered by the foreground of the painting – the fact that deconstruction takes place as dance. Not few are Derrida's interpreters affirming that, if deconstruction cannot be defined, the only thing one can say about it is that it is a "discipline of rigour". We do not intend to refute this thesis, for we think it cannot be refuted, on condition that we make a small correction to it. We can speak about "rigour" in the proper sense of the term in technical matters, in science, in the case of those philosophical doctrines which are systematically elaborated... Fichte, Schelling, Kant may be considered rigorous philosophers; but in the case of a thinker such as Derrida, we believe the most appropriate word to characterize his thought would be "grace", for its authentic specificity resides in the fact that he manages to combine (as nobody else except, maybe, Paul de Man) so perfectly the vivacity and the harmony. Due to the numerous interstitials which mark his texts, to the anticipation – that is, the hurrying toward conclusions – and the clarifying tarrying upon the different thesis of the questioned authors, due to the constant coming back to its premises, when

is on the move, Derrida's thought looks exactly like a dance. We might recall Derrida's *attention* for the other in general and for the text of the other in particular.

Thus, in front of Mark Tansey's painting we understand that the question from which we have started must be reformulated. (Though it does not become simpler.) For, in order to say whether or not Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is a post-metaphysical endeavour we should ask ourselves up to what point is this endeavour as gracious and attentive to alterity as Derrida's deconstruction. That is, can Gadamer waltz? Does he manage to rise up to Derrida's expectations in the art of dance? If we listen to the voice of hermeneutics (and here we have in mind the entire hermeneutic tradition) the answer seems to be in the affirmative. Although it never defined itself explicitly in this way, hermeneutics has always understood itself as a kind of "science of the other".

Derrida though shows some reserves in this regard. The central question addressed to Gadamer when they met in 1981 in Paris, a question for the entire hermeneutic tradition sounds as follows: "Whether one speaks of consensus or of misunderstanding (as is Schleiermacher), one needs to ask whether the precondition for *Verstehen*, far from being the continuity of *rapport* (as it was described yesterday evening), is not rather the interruption of *rapport*, a certain *rapport* of interruption, the suspending of all mediation?"⁶

For the entire hermeneutic tradition reading was thought to be the fundamental and also the minimal *rapport* presupposed by any attempt at understanding. Derrida knows this very well. An interruption of *rapport*, a *rapport* of interruption would be, in this case, nothing but the interruption of the act of reading; and this, as paradoxically as it may sound, out of the desire to understand the text as other.

In Derrida's view, the problematical point in the hermeneutic tradition is the concept of mediation presupposed by understanding. Mediation, as a condition for understanding, seems rather to estrange us from understanding. Any mediation, inasmuch as it begins from the self (and from where should it begin if not from the self?), forces the other as other to fit in the clothes of the other of the self. It transforms radi-

cal alterity, violating it, in the alterity of the self. Understanding, just like the sacred, is founded on violence⁷.

With all these things in mind, we are pushed towards a different perspective upon the history of hermeneutics, a perspective which depicts it as a violent form of thought. For, by centring the task of understanding on the idea of *Besserverstehen*, would it not be possible that Schleiermacher's dialectics was nothing but a form of the dialectics between master and slave identified by Hegel as the fundamental step on the path of a better self-knowing of the absolute Spirit?

A predisposition for violence can be found in Dilthey's thought too. For what else is the idea of transcending the horizon of subjectivity towards that of objectivity through the reconstruction in the field of social sciences of a methodology similar to that of the natural sciences? So, it is not surprising that both Schleiermacher and Dilthey propose occasionally love as the basis of comprehension⁸. As it is well known, *all is fair in love and war*.

Considering his thorough attention to interrogating his hermeneutical situation and to preventing the perversion of his philosophical project by popular conceptions, can we consider Heidegger's thought to be a violent one as well? We would be tempted to answer: all the more. Here is what the philosopher tells us in *Being and Time*: "Truth (discoveredness) must always first be *wrested* from beings."⁹ (italics are mine)

For Heidegger, this path towards truth is not one easier than another seemingly more difficult, but the only one possible for in its being the Dasein itself is violent. "Man, in *one* word, is *deinotaton*, the strangest. This word encompasses the extreme limits and abrupt abysses of his being. [...] Man is *to deinotaton*, the strangest of the strange. Here we must anticipate an explanation of the Greek word *deinon* and of our translation. [...] On the one hand *deinon* means the terrible, but not in the sense of petty terrors, and above all not in the decadent, insipid, and useless sense that the word has taken today, in such locutions as <<terribly cute>>. The *deinon* is the terrible in the sense of the overpowering power which compels panic fear, true fear; and in equal measure it is the

collected, silent awe that vibrates with its own rhythm. [...] But on the other hand *deinon* means the powerful in the sense of one who uses power, who not only disposes of power <Gewalt> but is violent <gewalt-tätig> insofar as the use of power is the basic trait not only of his action but also of his being-there.”¹⁰

Thus, Dasein’s relationship to beings, the essent¹¹, is violent in an eminent way: “The essent as a whole, seen as power, is the overpowering, *deinon* in the first sense. Man is *deinon*, first because he remains exposed within this overpowering power, because by his essence he belongs to being. But at the same time man is *deinon* because he is the violent one in the sense designated above. (He gathers the power and brings it to manifestness.) Man is the violent one, not aside from or along with other attributes but solely in the sense that in his fundamental violence <Gewalt-tätigkeit> he uses power <Gewalt> against the overpowering <Über-wältigende>. Because he is twice *deinon* in a sense that is originally one, he is *to deinotaton*, the most powerful: violent in the midst of the overpowering.”¹²

We should keep in mind Heidegger’s identification of the terrible and the “strange” manifested by the essent, by beings in general, with the fundamental violence <Gewalt-tätigkeit> performed by the human Dasein.

Considering all these, the situation of Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics seems to be sealed. Due to the fact that it carries on the hermeneutic tradition of Schleiermacher and Dilthey, on the one hand, and due to Gadamer’s scholarship to Heidegger’s fundamental ontology, on the other, it seems to have little chances to be considered a non-violent thought. This assumption is strengthened if we think of the fact that Gadamer himself centres the task of hermeneutics on the tension between familiarity and strangeness. For Gadamer, any act of understanding starts from the fore-understanding given by the traditional prejudices upon the matter at hand of the hermeneutic “object”. But, what brings about such an act is the “pulling up short” of these prejudices (and this at the level of language as well as at that of the content), a pulling up short which appears due to the strangeness of the text.

In front of this pulling up short, that is to say, in front of the violence brought along by beings, for Gadamer, inasmuch as it wants to understand, the interpreter must approach the text interrogatively. He must question the text which has already put in question his understanding of the world. But, “To ask a question means to bring into the open. [...] When a question arises, it breaks open the being of the object, as it were.”¹³

Thus it might seem that in Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics things stand precisely as in Heidegger’s fundamental ontology. The essent addresses us, presents itself to us as strange, it encounters us with violence and we, in our turn, answer this address with a fundamental violence <Gewalt-tätigkeit> by questioning it and thus breaking up the being of the essent. In this case, no wonder that Derrida refused Gadamer’s invitation to dance in 1981 in Paris inasmuch as this invitation took the form of an invitation to dialogue.

But, does this description justice to Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics? Does “strangeness” in Gadamer really mean *deinon*? And, would it not be possible to understand “strangeness” otherwise than as “the terrible” and “fundamental violence”? In order to answer these questions let us take a closer and more thorough look at Gadamer’s description of the phenomenon of understanding.

“Everything presupposed in hermeneutics is but language.” – This sentence uttered by Schleiermacher is the motto of the third part of *Truth and Method*. Not without reason, for Gadamer’s endeavour in this context is to show that: “the fusion of horizons that takes place in understanding is actually the achievement of language”¹⁴. This is because language (*Sprachlichkeit*) is the fundamental determination of both the hermeneutic object and the hermeneutic act. Why language is a fundamental determination of the hermeneutic act we have already mentioned: the putting in question of the view upon the world of the interpreter by the text to be interpreted presupposes from the part of the interpreter a putting in question of the text’s claim to truth which takes place *dialogically*, i.e. through language.

But why is language a fundamental determination of the hermeneutic act? Are we to assume that the only possible hermeneutic “objects” are the texts and the discourse of the other? Of course not: monuments and historical events, works of art – either transitive or reproductive – are hermeneutic “objects” as well, for they can always be translated into language. And, inasmuch as the necessity of their understanding appears, they must be translated into the “living language of dialogue” just like the texts. For writing, as the “ideality” of language, is “self-alienation”¹⁵.

At this point we would like to open a parenthesis in order to prevent a possible objection or, better put, to show that we are perfectly aware of it. The task of this paper is to show that Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics, despite the burden of the tradition in which it is inscribed, is a non-violent thought. Through this we try to defend its post-metaphysical character. Our discussion up to now has led us to speak about writing as “self-alienation” and about the “living language of dialogue” as the basis of comprehension. Anyone who is familiar with Derrida’s deconstruction or with post-modern philosophy in general might think that our argumentation has actually reached a dead-end, for concepts such as these are the clear sign of logocentrism and metaphysics. In principle, we do not refute this verdict inasmuch as the “living language of dialogue” in relation to which writing is “self-alienation” means simply speaking, the words that can be (or could be) heard. For only them can certify the presence of the consciousness to itself and can sustain the metaphysics of presence. But, we think that in Gadamer this expression – the “living language of dialogue” – sends to something completely different, and this thing becomes manifest in *Truth and Method* in the discussion of “The development of the concept of language in Western thought”.

This chapter, in our opinion, represents a key point of *Truth and Method* for, on the one hand, it ensures the coherence and the unity of Gadamer’s hermeneutic project and delimits it clearly from that of the German historicism. And, on the other, it clarifies why language has the ontological significance it has. (In Gadamer, as in Heidegger, a language is a

world, it being the sole capable of rising man above the surrounding world.)

The fundamental axiom guiding German historicism is the idea that each epoch must be understood, beyond all prejudices, staring from itself. Such an axiom though is nothing but a prejudicing of the past, for it imposes upon the past concepts that do not necessarily suit it. Historicism did not understand that the very demarcation of different epochs belonged to the epochs themselves only inasmuch as it belonged to the hermeneutical situation out of which they were studied. Precisely because of this historicism could not say why antiquity lasts from that to that moment, or why modernity has begun with Descartes and does not seem to have an end. The inquiry concerning the development of the concept of language in *Truth and Method* tries to avoid this minus or lack by bringing to light the meaning of the concept of language alongside the prejudices determining it. It tries to show what language is starting from the different ways to understand language put forward in history.

Thus, Gadamer begins his investigation from the very first work dealing with the problem of language in the history of Western thought – Plato’s *Cratylus*. As it is well known, the discussion in this work revolves around the truth-claim of the *conventionalist* and the *similarity* theories of language concerning the relationship between word and thing. Like all the other dialogues of Plato from the same period the discussion is left open. Considering the example of the christening of a slave whose name tied him of a certain life and a certain dignity Plato’s Socrates refutes the conventionalist theory. On the other hand, by pushing the hypothesis of the natural similitude between word and thing to the level of the letters, Socrates brings to light the etymological delirium one has to embrace along with the similarity theory. But a close reading of the dialogue shows us that the possibility of these refutations is given by two presuppositions which are not brought into discussion and are not shared by all the interlocutors. Socrates’ entire argumentation is based, on the one hand, on Plato’s cosmology that distinguishes between the realm of Idea and the terrestrial world and, on the other, on the episte-

mological principle according to which the Ideas can be known only by a thought free of words.

For Gadamer though, aside these presuppositions we understand that the two theories of language are extreme points of view that do not necessarily contradict each other and can be true at the same time. It is clear that every word is the result of a convention, but this is not to say that it is completely arbitrary. For, the institution of every word already presupposes the word. (We will get back to this matter shortly.) On the other hand, even though we cannot accept the idea of a natural bond between word and object, we still must accept that every word *fits* the thing to which it applies. Inasmuch as a word manages to send to a thing, it belongs to its being exactly like a representation, as the representation of a model, belongs to its model. We should be very careful at this point, for although the word represents a thing, is something like an *image* of a thing, its ontological status is not at all that of a *copy*. Its relationship with the thing it represents is not the same as that between a bed made by a craftsman and the Idea of Bed. As Gadamer shows, “a word names an object in a far more inward or intellectual way for the question of the degree of similarity [*Ähnlichkeitsabstand*] to be appropriate here.”¹⁶ Inasmuch as a word is fit, it is *perfectly fit*. We could say that every word has a “complete spirituality” and because of this we have every right to speak about its “truth” in a strong sense of the word.

This spirituality though, should be understood in what it tries to say. We must not understand that the relation between meaning and the sound is similar to that between spirit and matter. Meaning is not *superimposed* on the sound that makes it apparent, but appears along with it. As Günter Figal says, “Meaning is not <<beyond>> the words, but rather just what happens when speaking in words is performed. Meaning, however, is not thereby simply equivalent to the word, for a meaning can be expressed variously in words. Although meaning and word must be distinguished, they must be considered to belong together such that neither can be thought without the other.”¹⁷

This, to put it this way, “indistinct distinction” of word and meaning surpasses the conceptual possibilities of Greek philosophy. So, it was approached as a problem only in medieval thought.

Medieval thought has approached the problem of language only indirectly, with the view of finding here an interpretive solution for the mystery of trinity. It is true, just as meaning is completely distinct from the word and can still become meaning only through it, precisely in the same manner God the Son is different from God the Father, without being God in a lesser extent.

In order to approach this problem, medieval thought, through Saint Augustine, distinguishes between the *outer word* (and the outer word reproduced inwardly), understood as the word of man, and the *inner word* and focuses its attention only on the last one. For medieval thought, the word of God can be exteriorized in all languages and, precisely because of this, it does not have a special relationship with any of them. The *inner word* is the “language of reason”; it is the “speaking to oneself” characterized by a specific processual element. This processual element thought, is not the temporization of thought, but rather with a “thinking through to the end” (*Zuendedenken*) which does not pass from one thing to another successively. Rather, this “thinking through to the end” is an interweaving of these things starting from what it is already known. For Gadamer, this “thinking through to the end” must be understood as *emanation* in a neo-Platonic sense. For, “In the process of emanation, that from which something flows, the One, is not deprived or depleted.”¹⁸

Saint Thomas, who carries on Augustine’s investigation, identifies some fundamental differences between the inner and the outer word. Two of them are important in the context of our discussion. First of all, the word of man, in contrast to the divine word, is necessary imperfect because it does not manage to express our mind completely. This imperfection though, is not due to the word itself, but rather to *our finitude*. “The word reflects completely what the mind is

thinking. Rather, the imperfection of the human mind consists in its never being completely present to itself but in being dispersed into thinking this or that.”¹⁹

And, second of all, due to imperfection of our mind, there is a multiplicity of outer words, whereas the inner word is just one.

Our finitude forces the mind to let itself be guided only by accidents, and not by substance or essence. Because of this the sight of whoever contemplates an object will be so caught up by its particularity that this will also be transparent in speaking. No one can disagree that to speak means to subsume a particular to a general, to a concept. But, inasmuch as the concept is applied to a particular situation it becomes itself enriched and better specified. Thus, the formation of concepts presupposes the transference of meaning from a situation to another. What makes this transference possible in the end is not the generality of the concept but the particularity of the situation brought to light by language. If we transpose this at the level of language we understand that the process of word formation presupposes nothing else but the word itself, for the formation of words does not transcend the boundaries of language in any way.

In Gadamer’s view, the negative aspects of the relationship between the inner and the outer word as seen by medieval thought is surpassed by two absolutely important positive aspects. Firstly, the fact that man needs more than one word makes apparent the *infinity of the human mind* which can always renew its projects by engaging itself in thinking other things. Secondly, we have to understand that the word of man is not entirely separated from the word of God. In fact, there is a true dialectical relation between them. The word of God, as one, needs to be constantly told anew in sermon, that is, in the multiplicity of outer words. And the sermon, which announces the resurrection of God in the multiplicity of words, does in fact nothing else but to affirm the unity of the word.

From the point of view of hermeneutics, what this theological thesis is telling us is that inasmuch as every outer word is formed from another word (through transference of

meaning) it has a relationship with the totality of the outer words. By depicting the peculiarity of the thing it sends to, the outer word depicts also its being just like the inner word. The outer word always carries along with it the inner word.

In my opinion the “living language of dialogue” is precisely this - *the language of the inner word*. This language is living not because it is spoken, not because in speaking the meaning is present to the consciousness certifying in this way also the presence of the consciousness to itself. But because of the fact that in the application of the word upon a particular situation, the meaning of the word is precisely alienated from itself, because this way the play of meaning engaging the totality of what can be meant is opened. That is, because the outer word engages the inner word which, in its turn, expresses or, better put, depicts²⁰ being. Precisely because of this Gadamer can tell us without contradiction that writing is both the “self-alienation” and the “ideality” of language. For, in itself, a text can say anything - we can recall in this context Derrida’s discussion upon Nietzsche’s note “today I forgot my umbrella”²¹ -, the play of its meaning is completely open, but inasmuch as it is not translated into dialogue this play is not played.

So, how much metaphysics is in this understanding of the “living language of dialogue”? Does this have anything in common with the other doctrines of meaning and signification already formulated by the philosophical tradition? The answer is clearly NO.

Now, let us go back to the problem of the violent character of hermeneutics. From all what has been said the *inner word* looks very much as, if not it straightforwardly *is*, something like a *work of art*. For all the traits identified above are also identified by Gadamer in *The Relevance of Beautiful* as the fundamental traits of the work of art.

A painting, a portrait for example, or a theatrical representation, relates to its model precisely in the way the inner word relates to the thing to which it sends. In this case too we can speak of a *perfect fitness* and a “complete spirituality”. Because of this it seems right to speak of the truth of arts well. We have to assume that the mimesis is the essence

of the work of art but, against Plato's critique, we have to assume also that here we cannot speak of a degree of similarity as that existing between the Idea of bed and the bed made by the craftsmen either. The fundamental proof in this sense is that in a portrait we do not see a man like all the others, but Prince Charles or the Queen of England ... And even if we do not know the man in the portrait, the portrait itself offers us knowledge of him as person. His posture in the portrait lets us understand whether he was good or bad, happy or miserable, etc. In the case of theatre things stand just the same. In a theatrical performance we do not see this or that man playing Oedipus, but Oedipus himself. What we witness there is Oedipus' sufferings and not the make-pretence of the actor.

Secondly, like the word, the work of art makes possible this recognition by presenting precisely the particularities. In Dürer self-portrait we see the painter as a young man, but the portrait gives us an image of Dürer as such. Oedipus' tragedy is played on a certain scene, with certain costumes and in a certain décor. But we recognize him in agora.

Thirdly, the peculiar temporality presupposed by the "thinking through to the end", which is not the same with the temporality of thinking, has the same structure as the temporality of the aesthetical. As Gadamer shows, the time of the work of art cannot be identified with the ordinary linear time; the participation in a work of art transforms the moment into an absolute moment and thus time is invaded by eternity. The time of the work of art is Kierkegaard's "synchrony". This is why (if we truly understand art) in a museum or a gallery time always flies by without us noticing it!

But, how come that we recognize in a work of art things we did not previously know? How come we see Oedipus in the actor on stage if we did not ever meet Oedipus and have not seen a picture of him? How can we be sure that the inner word we recognize behind the outer words really is what the text tries to convey.

Gadamer's answer to this question, an answer that is merely sketched, is the following: "... the work of art presupposes a sort of self-certification (*Selbstbeglaubigung*), just like

myths, for that matter, in which we "do not believe", but find ourselves in the power of their being."²²

In what resides this self-certification? In two words, in the fact that the work of art, just as the inner word, does not present again the being which has been, but institute it in the authentic sense of the word. As Gadamer says: "Word and image are not mere imitative illustrations, but allow what they present to be for the first time fully what it is."²³

In the case of painting this thing is absolutely clear for would the painted model have been model if it were not for the painting itself?

The final truth Gadamer's hermeneutics offers us is that "It is only us those who have to accomplish what has to be."²⁴

Considering all these, can we still say that Gadamer centres understanding on the concept of mediation? Is Gadamer's thought a violent thought? How can one mediate between the hermeneutic "object" and his or hers thought is the first does not yet exist, but has to be brought into being? The exemplary model for understanding in general is the peculiar type of understanding presupposed by the poetic text which is text in the eminent sense. In this case understanding and interpretation means "co-speaking"²⁵ with the text. But in this case how can we speak about violence?

In the end, it becomes clear that Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is a post-metaphysical thought as radical as that of Derrida. If not more radical for, due to our finitude and the keen relationship between the inner and the outer word, every word becomes a sort of *différance*.

Notes:

¹ A copy of this painting is available online at <http://www.artchive.com/artchive/T/tansey/derrida.jpg.html>

² Jacques Derrida, "Letter to a Japanese Friend" in Peggy Kanuf (Ed.), *A Derrida Reader. Between the Blinds*, Columbia University Press, New York, Chichester (West Sussex), 1991, p. 274

³ Jacques Derrida, *Positions. Entretiens avec Henri Ronse, Julia Kristeva, Jean-Louis Houbedine, Guy Scarpetta*, Les Éditions de minuit, 1972, p. 14 (my translation)

⁴ Jacques Derrida, "Introduction" to *Margins: Of Philosophy* in Peggy Kanuf (Ed.), *A Derrida Reader. Between the Blinds*, p. 162

⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, p. 15 (my translation)

⁶ Jacques Derrida, "Three Questions to Hans-Georg Gadamer" in Diane Michelfelder and Richard Palmer (Eds.), *Dialogue and Deconstruction. The Gadamer-Derrida Encounter*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1989, p. 53

⁷ See René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979, Translated by Patrick Gregory

⁸ Wilhelm Dilthey who follows closely the guiding lines of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics, at one point notes: "... Schleiermacher has observed that if sympathy is the basis of all understanding, then the highest understanding requires love." See Wilhelm Dilthey, *On Understanding and Hermeneutics: Student Lecture Notes (1867-68)* in *Selected Works. Volume IV. Hermeneutics and the Study of History*, Princeton University Press, Princeton New Jersey, 1996, Edited, with an Introduction, by Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi, p. 230

⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1996, Translated by Joan Stambaugh, p. [222]/204

¹⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1959, Translated by Ralph Manheim, pp. 149-150

¹¹ "Seiende" is usually rendered into English through "beings". Ralph Manheim though translates it through "essent".

¹² Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 150

¹³ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Continuum, London and New York, 2004, Translation revised by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, p. 357 and 356

¹⁴ Idem, p. 370

¹⁵ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 392

¹⁶ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 410

¹⁷ Günter Figal, "The Doing of the Thing Itself: Gadamer's Hermeneutic Ontology of Language" in Robert J. Dostal (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, p. 113

¹⁸ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 422

¹⁹ Idem, p. 424

²⁰ Why "depicts" is a more suitable word will become clear shortly.

²¹ See Jacques Derrida, *Éperons. Les styles de Nietzsche*, Flammarion, 1978

²² Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Intuitie și plasticitate" [Intuition and Plasticity] in *Actualitatea frumosului* [The Relevance of Beautiful], Polirom, Iași, 2000, Translated by Val. Panaitescu, p. 164

²³ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 137

²⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Despre caracterul festiv al teatrului" [The Festive Character of Theatre] in *Actualitatea frumosului* [The Relevance of Beautiful], p. 186

²⁵ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Text and Interpretation* in Diane Michelfelder and Richard Palmer (Eds.), *Dialogue and Deconstruction. The Gadamer-Derrida Encounter*, p. 46