

INTERTWINEMENT: THE MODALITIES OF THE UNGRASPABLE*

Alzbeta KUCHTOVA**

ABSTRACT. The aim of this paper is to accentuate the distinction between the ineffable, the unrepeatable and the conceptually ungraspable. These are to be considered as three modalities of the ungraspable language that enable us to understand Derrida's attitude to negative theology. While he distanced himself from an apophysis of negative theology *Comment ne pas parler. Dénégations*, in *Différance* he stated that *différance* is not a concept, not a word – it is an inexpressible. Therefore, there are at least three modalities of “ungraspable” language: “inexpressible,” “conceptually ungraspable,” “unrepeatable” as non-iterable.

Keywords: Jacques Derrida, Conceptually Ungraspable, Inexpressible, Ungraspable, Iterability, Intertwinement, Deconstruction of Negative Theology

Introduction

In this text, I would like to retrace the possibility to distinguish between different modalities of what I call the ungraspable. My inspiration comes from Jacques Derrida and his position towards negative theology, which can be clearly linked to a form of the ungraspable. Indeed, Derrida has often been taken for a modern successor of negative theology,¹ but he works with a different type of ungraspable than the negative theology, his approach emphasizes the importance

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** PhD, Researcher, Institute of Philosophy, Slovak Academy of Sciences, P.O. Box 3364 Klemensova 19 813 64 Bratislava, Slovakia, alzbet.kuchtova@gmail.com

¹ Cf. Dominique Janicaud, *La phénoménologie éclatée*, Paris: Éditions de l'éclat 1998, p. 25.



of the inscription of the ineffable and he also emphasizes the impossibility to separate the ungraspable from the graspable (which is not true for negative theology). Presently, Derrida's position with respect to negative theology is a subject of discussion.² As I will show it in the conclusion of this paper, Derrida's approach is different from the approach of negative theology because he has a different conception of the ungraspable, which will serve as a source of inspiration for distinguishing between the different modalities of the ungraspable and for describing the relationship between oppositions that are related to these modalities.

Derrida does not use the word *ineffable* or *ungraspable* systematically as philosophical concepts. Yet in the following passage he speaks about the ineffable:

Deconstruction does not consist in passing from one concept to another, but in overturning and displacing a conceptual order as well as the nonconceptual order with which the conceptual order is articulated.³

By ungraspable I mean something that, in principle, cannot be grasped by any concept. The adverb 'in principle' is used to distinguish the radical ungraspability, different from the trivial ungraspability.

The case of trivial ungraspability occurs, for example, when we are unable to express something due to a lack of time or lack of capacities.⁴ In this text, my reflection on ungraspable and graspable will be focusing only on the language and conceptuality, whose possibility is exactly *différance* as something non-conceptual.⁵ It is possible that the relations between ungraspable and graspable that will be more clearly defined in the conclusion of this paper, are applicable more generally and therefore concern also the ungraspable that is outside of the sphere of the language.

I will try to answer the following question: Is it true that, when Derrida mentions the overturning of the conceptual order, he means that in deconstruction, he wishes to go beyond concepts in order to reach the ineffable? We should not forget that we are dealing here with a philosopher who once and for all condemned the metaphysics of presence: metaphysics of presence so full that it would not need any writing, neither speaking to supplements and substitute them. We could argue

² François Dastur, *Déconstruction et la phénoménologie*, Paris: Hermann 2016.

³ Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, p. 329.

⁴ Definition of ungraspable based on the radical character of ungraspable is compatible with what Derrida says in a different text about another substantial concept of deconstruction – about the *différance*. It is the ungraspable par excellence: "But we 'already know' that if it is unnameable, it is not provisionally so, not because our language has not yet found or received this name, or because we would have to seek it in another language, outside the finite system of our own." *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

that the sentence “There is nothing outside the text”⁶ which we can find in Derrida’s first book *Of Grammatology*, says that there is no ineffable and no ungraspable. Can the ungraspable incorporate the thesis *There is nothing outside the text* or not? If yes, what is the nature of this ungraspable?

Difference is ungraspable

In this part of my paper, I will focus on the ungraspable in Derrida. My main subject will be *differance* understood as ungraspable, as something non-conceptual. *Differance* is a condition of appearance of any elements in general.⁷ This means that the *differance* is a condition of possibility of everything and it produces *differences*. We have to note that the word *differance* has common characteristics with the normal concept of writing.⁸ Derrida compares *differance* to writing symbolically in order to highlight the importance of something that was seen as inferior and as an substitute. In *Of Grammatology*, he claims that in the history of western philosophy speech was given priority over writing, because it was seen as something that is closer to the soul, the continuity of consciousness.

However, Derrida compares *differance* to the notion of writing in a specific way: according to him, both phenomena have in common that they are composed of repeatable elements, which is their main characteristics. This means that they could not be characterized by continuity. This becomes clear when we realize that the meaning of the word ‘difference’ from which this concept is derived. In the end, it is the main characteristic of *differance*: it is difference, the opposite of continuity; it reveals the discontinuity and the rupture.

At the same time, *differentiation* is the condition of possibility of any system. It is the origin of everything, but it is derivated and secondary. In this respect, it is also the origin of oppositions. It is not, however, a positively defined origin, which would mean it is full of the presence of being, because difference could be the origin on the condition that there is no origin defined by interiority or presence. This also underlines the ungraspable character of the *differance* as origin: although it is an origin, it is impossible to define it as such. Despite this, Derrida does not

⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press 2016, p. 177.

⁷ Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie*, Paris: Minuit 1967, p.70.

⁸ By normal concept of writing, I mean the writing as inscription and representation of the speech. It is a possibility to repeatedly inscribe and repeat the speech and distribute it. Normal concept of writing presupposes the concept of sign composed from signified and signifier.

claim that by postulating such an origin, we can go beyond metaphysics absolutely - he does, however, claim that *différance* precedes, and therefore exceeds metaphysics, because it is impossible to express *différance* by metaphysical concepts (and therefore by any concept), "because the force and form of its disruption explode the semantic horizon."⁹

When Derrida says that it is not even possible to grasp the word 'difference' exactly, he refers to the fact that it is a neographism created from the commonly used word 'difference'. In this way, he uses writing as a mean to grasp the difference that is ungraspable when it is pronounced, in speaking. We cannot doubt it is a word play: "The a of *différance*, thus, is not heard; it remains silent, secret and discreet as a tomb..."¹⁰ but the idea that this wordplay expresses remains valid. The *différance* is not a concept and in a certain sense, it is not a word either:

This is precisely because I would like to attempt, to a certain extent, and even though, in principle and in the analysis it is impossible, and impossible for essential reasons, to reassemble and a *sheaf* the different directions in which I have been able to utilize what I would call provisionally the word or concept of *différance*, or rather to let it impose itself on me in its neo-graphism, although as we shall see, *différance* is literally neither a word nor a concept.¹¹

Very often, it is assumed that the sentence composed of a subject and of a predicate is the most common form of a definition of a concept, as an answer to the question: *What is x?* The *x* is the notion we want to define, and the predicate is an order of words that we do not need to explain and these are not, at the same time, synonymous with the notion we want to explain. Derrida refuses this form of subject-predicate writing:

"...if we accepted the form of the question, in its meaning and syntax ('what is,' 'who is,' 'who is that'...), we would have to conclude that *différance* has been derived, has happened, is to be mastered and governed on the basis of the point of a present being, which itself could be some thing, a form, a state, a power in the world to which all kinds of names might be given, a *what* or a present being as *subject*, a *who*."¹²

⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. by Alan Bass, Chicago: Chicago University Press 1981, p. 45.

¹⁰ Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, p. 4.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

The question *What is...?* is then according to Derrida an ontological question, it concerns the presence and the essence of *différance*. This question presupposes that its object can be given as a thing that exists; but *différance* has no essence in the sense of the metaphysics of presence, it represents the absence. Indeed, Derrida does not want to ask the question *What is x?*; and he does not want to answer it either, reacts to it with his theory of *différance*.

Therefore, the question *What is x?* presupposes some particular conception of the sign which is, according to Derrida, the most common in the history of philosophy: the sign is composed of the signified and of the signifier, while the signifier is subordinated to the signified. The signifier is only a supplement, a substitute and a complement of the signified as something that can appear in the mind or in the consciousness without any writing or any speaking. The possibility of providing a definition composed of subject and predicate presupposes that we are able to determine the object of the definition as it really is, separated from the predicate that describes it.

However, Derrida is convinced that it is impossible to separate the signifier and the signified. Thus he rejects definitions composed of a subject and a predicate, and he wishes to speak about *différance* only vaguely. If you are looking for Derrida's explanation of the word 'difference', you will understand that he only refers to another word that is, in some ways, its synonym, doing so on 'ad infinitum,' never putting an end to the chain of meanings by some final concept that would clarify it exactly and whose essence he would show, because he in fact never answering the question: *What is x?*

Denials of the Ungraspable

Now, I will analyze a sentence that could be identified as a denial of the aforementioned and it could support the thesis that Derrida denies any form of the ungraspable. It is the sentence "There is nothing outside the text"¹³. It is important to emphasize that this sentence also means that the opposition *outside/inside* cannot be applied on *différance*. The word 'outside [dehors]' refers to something inauthentic in the Western tradition: *outside* is derived from *inside* which is its origin and source. The *outside* is only a substitute for the *inside*, knowing that it is possible to separate the *outside* and *inside* from each other; the inside can be purified from the outside.

¹³ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press 2016, p. 177.

The opposition *outside/inside* is important in the context of *Of Grammatology*: Derrida refuses the superiority of speaking over writing, he refuses that writing would be derived from speech as from its *inside*. This sentence means that the opposition *derived/non-derived*, linked to the opposition *outside/inside*, cannot be related to the origin of everything, to *differance*.

Differance is the spacing of everything, which means that everything is differentiated and therefore it is iterable; it follows that by the phrase "There is nothing outside the text", Derrida apparently refuses the existence of a non-derived sphere of *difference*, and therefore he refuses the non-iterable. Iterability means

"The possibility of repeating and therefore of identifying, marks is implied in any code, making of it a communicable, transmittable, decipherable grid that is iterable for a third party, and thus for any possible user in general."¹⁴

Indeed, according to Derrida, nothing is such that it would be impossible to iterate it in a system.

If it were true that by the sentence "There is no outside text" Derrida refuses the ineffable, it would be necessary to identify the non-iterable (which is linked with, for example, the inexpressible as something that cannot be repeated in any language) with the ineffable. Indeed, it would seem that the sentence implies the following conclusion: if the sphere of non-iterable entities is impossible, it will be impossible to speak of the sphere of the ineffable as such. What is important, however, is to distinguish between iterability or repeatability and the possibility of grasping something by concepts. This will make it possible to determine whether, by the sentence "There is nothing outside the text", Derrida really refuses the ineffable.

Deconstruction of Negative Theology

In the following, I will examine Derrida's position in regards to negative theology, but also the position of negative theology in regards to the ineffable. My aim is not to analyze Derrida's deconstruction of negative theology from a historical point of view, but rather to draw attention to his approach to the ungraspable, which he intends to be different from the approach of a negative theology. Although

¹⁴ Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, p. 315.

there is not one unified position of negative theology,¹⁵ Derrida aims to define some of its characteristics: the creation of a circle of insiders, of an isolated community, the concept of absolute secret as its leitmotif, the order or the imperative to do not speak of God because he is ungraspable. According to Derrida, negative theology insists on these points because negative theologians want to guarantee an access to something that is even more encompassing than being, to something that reaches beyond being in its totality. Indeed, in relation to the hyperessentiality of God every predicate, every predicative language, remains inadequate.

The main reason Derrida refuses to identify his position with the position of negative theology is that he refuses the category of being/non-being as such, that he does not want to think being, not even in its negative form as non-being.¹⁶ But first of all, Derrida does not want to navigate his readers to any higher position in the hierarchy than is the position of the being/non-being opposition. Negative theology also wishes to remain outside the category of being/non-being, wishing to go beyond it. Maximus the Confessor¹⁷ says in his commentary on the treatise *On the Divine Names* of Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite that one would not know what God is or in what way he exists, because it is impossible to describe him. God is also the Cause of Nothing, because everything exists only after him, he is the cause of being and non-being. Maximus the Confessor adds, however, that non-being or nothingness is the absence of something. But the non-being is also derived from God, because the notion of non-being already implies the idea of being and the idea of the beyond being (beyond God). God is everywhere whilst he is not a person and he surpasses everything, he is beyond everything and he is beyond essence.

However, by postulating *différance* Derrida does not want to reach beyond being, nor to any higher hierarchical position. On the contrary, by postulating *différance*, he wants to underline the unjustified character of the conceptual hierarchies and

¹⁵ Cf. Jean-Luc Marion, *Figures de phénoménologie*, Paris: Vrin 2015. Jean-Luc Marion corrects Derrida by saying that negative theology is only an invention of modern, positive theology, knowing that, in his opinion, Derrida misinterprets it in his text *How to Avoid Speaking: Denials* by saying that it belongs to the metaphysics of the presence. See Jacques Derrida, "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials", in *Psyche. Inventions of the Other II.*, trans. by Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University, California: Stanford University Press 2008, pp.143-196.

¹⁶ "What 'difference', 'trace', and so on, 'mean-to-say' - which consequently does not mean to say anything - would be 'something' 'before' the concept, the name, the word, that would be nothing, that would no longer pertain to being, to presence or to the presence of the present, or even to absence, and even less to some hyperessentiality." Derrida, "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials", p. 148.

¹⁷ Dionýz Areopagita, *O mystické teologii. O božských jménech. S komentáři Sv. Maxima Vyznavače*, transl. by A. Černohous, Praha: Dybbuk 2003, p. 108.

the instability of concepts. Even if it was a hierarchy of the presence that would like to be the absence, because 'not being' would mean 'higher' and 'closer' to the authenticity or to the origin.

The second reason why Derrida does not want to be considered a negative theologian follows from the fact that in negative theology, there is a modality of an isolated place where God resides, whose presence is translated into the most divine and highest objects of contemplation and understanding which, nevertheless, are only hypothetical notions and 'subcategories' of God because divine goodness cannot be brought "down (since it is present both above and below), but we ourselves are raised up toward the most sublime splendors of its brilliantly lit rays."¹⁸ Here it is necessary first of all to underline that there is thesis on separation of the what we can say from the ineffable, and subsequently the separation of the graspable from the ungraspable.

Although Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite claims that the divine is present in the whole of being, the fact remains that the whole of being is not present in the divine. We can approach the divine by prayer, but the place where the divine resides is not determined by local movement, i.e. God does not move from one place to another. The divine is not exhaustively defined by its presence in the whole of being. Derrida says that access to the sphere of the apophatic is limited and guaranteed by a group of initiates and by the correct type of prayer that is like "brilliantly lit cord, suspended from the highest heaven and brought down to us."¹⁹ While we are praying, we rise to God who, however, does not approach us, remaining as an immovable rock: we approach God by praying, but he does not approach us. Although Derrida accepts that there are things that can never be named, he would never agree with the postulation of the separation of the graspable from the ungraspable. In negative theology, there is a thesis on the dependence of the graspable on the ungraspable,²⁰ on the independence of the divine from the mystical writings.

The third point Derrida makes his position towards negative theology even more firm leads him to claim that the absolute ungraspable (secret) is impossible. In his view, the very texts of negative theology postulating the ungraspable make it clear. Derrida observes that negative theology works in a double register, the secret,

¹⁸ Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite, *The Divine Names and Mystical Theology*, transl. by John D. Jones, Milwaukee Wisconsin: Marquette University Press 1999, p. 129.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ "The sacred writings do not only celebrate God as logos because it is the provider of logos, intellect, and wisdom. They also celebrate it as logos because it has uniformly anticipated in itself the causes of all, because it goes through all extending (as the writings say) to the end of all, and because before these the divine logos is simplified beyond every simplicity and is absolved from all: beyond all as beyond being." Ibid., p. 180.

the community and the religious order on the one hand and the philosophical, the exposition and the argumentation on the other. To what extent are these two registers linked, what is their relationship? Negative theologians admit themselves that, to a certain extent, they need rhetorical compositions as tools to show the divine to the most holy ones. Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite recognizes that the ineffable is intertwined with the said; it is possible, and at the same time impossible, to participate in the divinity.

Nevertheless, Derrida reveals what he believes negative theology itself would not wish to acknowledge: apophatic discourse must be articulated in some way, we could even say it should be convincing, in order to prove that thanks to it we gain privileged access to God. To reach God, we need an intermediary, such as prayer. However, according to Derrida, prayer is not just a complement, a supplement (as, in his opinion, the negative theologians claim so, recognizing at the same time its necessity), but a fundamental moment of transition towards the emptiness that God would represent. For Derrida, prayer is characterized first of all by two things: firstly by the fact that in prayer, we turn towards the other who is God and secondly, the performativity of the act of prayer which is not a constative statement.²¹

Prayer is nothing else than worshiping or calling upon the presence of the Other, but it is a calling that is outside the category of asking and giving; because the worshipper cannot expect a reply from God, and so, in a sense, he cannot ask for anything at all. However, for the apophatic initiates, the prayer (ὑμνεῖν) replaces speaking. But if prayer is fundamental for us in order to be able to reach God and at the same time it is speaking, how could it be the absolute apophasis? Because although prayer is not a constative statement, at the same it remains to be a statement. If it is true that Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite distinguishes the Christian prayer from any other kind of prayer which is considered by him to be only an act of worship and not the true dialogue with God, is this not then an establishment of the hierarchy and distinction between good²² (Christian) and bad (non-Christian) prayer - and therefore the determination of the possibility to reach God that should have remained negative? Master Eckhart, for example, claims that reason is the temple of God, while being is only an entrance of this temple:

²¹ Derrida refers to the division between constative and performative statements, the performative ones acquiring no truth value and being uttered with the aim of provoking a certain effect, whereas the constative acquire a truth value. For a more precise definition of this division (that is surely questionable, but it has a some affirmative value in my opinion) see John L. Austin, *How To Do Things with Words*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1962.

²² "Thus the early leaders of our divine wisdom of God, who are dying every day on behalf of the truth, testify as is natural and by every word and deed to the single knowledge of the truth of the Christians: that it is simpler and more divine than all and, indeed, that it is the abiding, true, one, and single knowledge of God." Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Divine Names and Mystical Theology*, p. 180.

When we grasp God in being, we apprehend him in his antechamber [vorburge], for being is the antechamber in which he dwells [wonet]. Where is he then in his temple, in which he shines as holy [heilic]? Intellect [vernunfticheit rationality] is the temple of God.²³

Would not the most rigorous apophasis imply we should stay in the entrance, in the zone of silent being? But the temple of God is situated in reason: on the one hand, we want to enter the temple of God, which equals entering the reason, on the other hand we command silence. Derrida asks: and even if prayer would give us access to the pure experience, would negative or positive theology be then still needed? And how would theology be possible without iterability and without *différance*, even if theology wants to do without it? There are reasons, why we should to ask these kinds of questions.

The main thesis of the text *How to Avoid Speaking: Denials* can be summarized in a following way: the absolute ungraspable does not exist. Nothing is possible without *différance*, the absolute in-différance as the non-iterable and the absolute ungraspable is not possible.

Conclusion

Derrida cannot be considered to be a thinker of the absolute ungraspable, however, this does not mean that deconstruction does not work with some kind of ungraspable. It is therefore right that he cannot be considered to a *silent* meditative philosopher. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, Derrida does not want to focus on the fullness of non-being that could be contemplated only in the silence of the soul and impossible to describe by language, which would remain a poor tool; he refuses the absolute ineffable and the absolute non-iterable as the absolute unrepeatable. Secondly, he does not agree with the thesis according to which the ungraspable is situated in a well-guarded sphere which is especially well separated from the words. So how can Derrida be a thinker of the ungraspable, but not of the absolute ungraspable? How can he claim that *différance* is ungraspable and that it is iterability and repetition of the word at the same time? The question about the relation between the graspable and the ungraspable can be answered by distinguishing between the absolute ungraspable, the ungraspable and the non-iterable.

²³ Eckhart, (Q. 150; 257), quoted by Derrida, *Psyche. Inventions of the Other II.*, p. 186.

The absolute ungraspable would be that something that is absolutely impossible to express in any language - which means that it is something that we cannot describe. Any conceptual description is absolutely inadequate for it in this context, it does not contribute to any better knowledge of the absolute ungraspable (ineffable).²⁴ It would be impossible to speak about it - and it would probably makes no sense to approach it with words either. Yet, whenever we speak of the ungraspable, we do not necessarily mean this kind of the absolute ungraspable. For Derrida, the ungraspable is not absolute; because otherwise any conceptual description of *the difference* would be undesirable, inadequate.²⁵

Derrida conceptualizes *différance* in language many times, while claiming that it is neither a concept nor a word. The description of *différance* is also designated as inadequate, but it is crucial precisely because of its incompleteness - it should draw our attention to a certain radical incompleteness in the conceptual sphere. Indeed, Derrida wants to deconstruct the conceptual systems from the inside, while considering as incorrect the tendencies leading towards the absolute absence of the conceptual systems. In his opinion, it is necessary to use the paleonymy, which means a strategy consisting in reusing the old concepts that had a stable position in a system and attribute them a new and old role, showing that the limits between graspable and ungraspable are not so stable, only in appearance.

²⁴ As Pseudo-Dionysius says: "Necessarily the Outlines of Theology and the unfolding of the Divine Names are more briefly spoken than the Symbolic Theology; for the higher we ascend the more our language becomes restricted by the more synoptic view of what is intelligible. Now, however, that we are to enter the darkness beyond intellect, you will not find a brief discourse but a complete absence of discourse and intelligibility." Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Divine Names and Mystical Theology*, p. 217.

²⁵ Lets notice that Marion's reasoning does not escape this ruse of the ungraspable either, because he writes:

It is not a question, for the "theologian," of reaching that which his discourse speaks (well or poorly - what does it finally matter, for what norm in this world would decide?) of God, but of abandoning his discourse and every linguistic initiative to the Word, in order to let himself be said by the Word, as the Word lets himself be said by the Father-him, and in him, us also... We can therefore only speak of God thanks to God himself who is the only one who understands himself. Our words about God are then always inadequate to God himself, their source is in God who speaks in a completely different way than us and who teaches us to speak his language. Marion's God is indeed a crossed out God, but the crossing out only leads to an even more authentic theology that nevertheless also postulates the independence of divine word and writing from human word; and Marion therefore postulates a separation and superiority of God who is intertwined with us, because he teaches us, but he does not completely mix with us, because he also stays enclosed in himself. However, Derrida's *différance* never stays enclosed up in itself in this a way. See Jean-Luc Marion, *God Without Being: Hors-Texte*, trans. by Thomas A. Carlson, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 2012, p. 144.

We can thus see that if Derrida condemns the absolute ungraspable as impossible, while at the same time speaking of the ungraspability of *difference*, he does not necessarily contradict himself in a trivial way, because he is speaking about two different modalities of the ungraspable: about the ungraspable as distinguished from the absolute ineffable. The ineffable or the absolute ungraspable is a subject for negative theology or for anyone who would want to claim that language is an obstacle if we want to reach the ineffable. This presupposes that it is possible to separate the language from the ineffable, which is its opposition. The absolute ungraspable is linked to the ineffable, to the pure unsayable. Indeed, as soon as, following the example of Dionysius, we postulate the separation of the conceptual and the non-conceptual meaning that these two domains can be separated from each other, we reach the ineffable, the absolute silence, the absolute ungraspable. And in this absolute silence reigns the hierarchy: it is the reign of the absolute ungraspable which is defined as something higher the graspable, of which it is necessary to get rid of, because it is only a substitute. The third modality is the non-iterable or the irrepeatable, while this concept is even broader than the two preceding ones, because it does not only concern language, but repetition in general: the non-iterable would be something that can never be repeated. Of course, Derrida denies the possibility of the absolute non-iterable in language, and I can only agree with this position (How would even the absolute irrepeatable in language look like?).

Indeed, there is an intertwinement of the graspable with the ungraspable. The intertwining excludes the absoluteness, provided we exclude the possibility of synthesis in the form of a third element, which would again be hierarchically higher than the two members of the opposition. There is not the interweaving of two separated spheres, but of the interweaving of the two spheres in each concept. As Derrida writes in the preface to the book *Dissemination*, no concept escapes deconstruction, and this is so in two ways: the first characteristic of the concept is that it remains within the conceptual system, its second characteristic is its exteriority to this deconstructed system. Derrida claims that negative theology could go on ad infinitum and that it forgets that it does not take position in relation to a solid system of concepts, but that some instability already exists inside the system of concepts. Derrida postulates the irreducibility of language, and thus of grasping. And although any expression of words is always imperfect, we cannot do anything without it. The absolute silence claimed by negative theology is therefore impossible.

All we have is an incomplete system of categories; Derrida tries to show its incompleteness. Take notice that the characteristics of these concepts: we are unable to determine exactly and clearly the set of all concepts in such a way that nothing would remain non-determined in principle, with respect to the object of

this sphere. However, the unspeakable does not represent a layer succeeding the sphere of concepts as something that is absolutely excluded from it; on the contrary, it is the indispensable intertwining of the conceptual with the non-conceptual in every concept. It is the same for grasping on the level of sensible experience, as for example seeing or touching. What the hand grasps is not separated from what it can no longer grasp; the ungraspable is given in as mixed and in the heart of the grasp.

In each concept, we see that it continues towards the ineffable. We can see it in every movement of the body, that it is extended towards the ungraspable. In this way, the ungraspable something that the dissemination, the dispersion of the sense, shows and thanks to it, the sense becomes irreducible to the concepts, to the grasped. From this point of view, Derrida's deconstructive effort is that he is trying to attribute a philosophical importance to everything is not of the conceptual order - which should not, however, lead to any total abandonment of language, which is encouraged by negative theologians.

