Senatore, Mauro. Teleotheology: Derrida and the Aristotelian Foundations of Structuralism. In *Philosophy Today*, 61: 3, Winter 2019.

TELEOTHEOLOGY

DERRIDA AND THE ARISTOTELIAN FOUNDATIONS OF STRUCTURALISM

> "… to think a writing without presence and without absence, without history without cause, without *archia*, without *telos*, a writing that absolutely upsets all dialectics, all theology, all teleology, all ontology. A writing exceeding everything that the history of metaphysics has comprehended in the form of the Aristotelian *grammē*, in its point, in its line, in its circle, in its time, and in its space." (Derrida 1982, 67)

Abstract: This paper explores the hypothesis formulated by Derrida in his early work that structuralism is Aristotelian in foundation. To this end, it traces Derrida's engagement with Aristotle's *Physics* between the seminal essays "Force and Signification" (1963) and "*Ousia* and *Grammē*" (1968). On the one hand, it demonstrates that Derrida reads Aristotle's concept of time as the presupposition of what he designates as *structuralism*, that is, the teleological understanding of movement from its achieved structure and thus from a theological simultaneity. On the other hand, it shows that Derrida finds in the very text of *Physics* the index (*grammē*) for understanding movement otherwise: as the irreducible articulation of space and time, namely, the trace, inscribed in a non-simultaneous volume.

Keywords: Aristotle, Bergson, Derrida, structuralism, teleology, the living

I.

In the early essay "'Genesis and Structure' and Phenomenology" (first presented in 1959, then published in *Writing and Difference*, in 1967), Derrida argues that, throughout his work, Husserl aims to reconcile the two exigencies of structuralism and geneticism. He describes them respectively as: a) a structuralist exigency, "which leads to the comprehensive description of a totality, of a form or a function organized according to an internal legality in which elements have meaning only in the solidarity of their correlation or their opposition," and b) a genetic (*génétiste*) exigency, "that is the search for the origin and foundation of the structure" (Derrida 1978, 197).

A few years later, in "Force and Signification" (first published in 1963, then included in *Writing and Difference*, 1967), Derrida takes the structuralist exigency at work in the literary criticism of Jean Rousset as the starting point for an interrogation of the traditional presuppositions of the structuralist understanding of the totality in general (from literary to biological totality). He finds these presuppositions in the concept of movement that Aristotle formulates in *Physics III*. According to Derrida, this concept grounds the metaphysics implicit in structuralism in general—that is, the teleological understanding of movement from its achieved structure and thus from a theological simultaneity.

In this essay, Derrida also attempts to reconcile structuralist and genetic exigencies by elaborating another understanding of the totality, that is, as we will see, by understanding it from its undetermined telos and as a trace placed in a non-simultaneous volume of traces. He highlights the index for this other understanding in the very text of Aristotle, where he had uncovered the foundations of structuralism. In his later essay entitled "*Ousia* and *Grammē*" (first published in 1968, then included in *Margins of Philosophy*, 1972), Derrida engages in a close reading of *Physics IV*, Aristotle's so-called treatise on time, where he does not only unfold his earlier hypothesis on the

Aristotelian foundations of structuralist metaphysics. Here, he also draws attention to a feature in Aristotle's text, the written trace (*grammē*), which offers the lever for dissociating the totality from structuralist understanding and thus for thinking of it otherwise, from the non-simultaneous and indefinite referral (*renvoi*) of trace to trace.

In the pages that follow, I weave together the threads of Derrida's reading of structuralism and of his engagement with Aristotle's *Physics III* and *IV*. To this end, I focus on three moments of Derrida's early work (between 1963 and 1968) that I consider the key steps in his reading of the Aristotelian presuppositions of structuralist metaphysics and in his elaboration of a non-structuralist understanding of movement, namely, his thinking of the trace. These moments are: a) the second part of "Force and Signification," where Derrida links structuralism with the Aristotelian definition of movement in *Physics III*; b) §§6/9 from the lecture course on "Heidegger: the Question of Being and the History" (1964-1965), where Derrida focuses on Heidegger's demarcation of the ontological concept of movedness (*Bewegtheit*) from the Aristotelian concept of motion (*Bewegung*) and puts forward the programme for a reading of Aristotle's concept of time; c) "*Ousia* and *Grammē*," where he develops this programme by elaborating an original interpretation of *Physics IV*, which finds in the very text of Aristotle the index for thinking the trace and the non-simultaneous volume of traces.

Derrida scholarship has overlooked the question of the Aristotelian origin of structuralism that draws together the early essays of "Force and Signification" and "*Ousia* and *Grammē*," through the intermediate step of the lecture course on Heidegger.[1] By casting light on this question, this essay aims to focus on the structuralism at work in scientific discourses, as well as on the alternative resources offered by Derrida's thinking of the trace. As this essay develops, it engages with relevant analyses of the texts under scrutiny, such as Rodolphe Gasché's recent interpretation of "Force and

Signification" in his *Deconstruction, Its Force, Its Violence* (2016), and John Protevi's close reading of "*Ousia* and *Grammē*" in *Time and Exteriority: Aristotle, Heidegger, Derrida* (1994).[2]

II.

In Part II of "Force and Signification," Derrida examines the features that structuralism takes on in Rousset's analysis of literary texts (from Corneille to Proust). On the one hand, he traces them to the philosophical and theological foundations of structuralism; on the other hand, he elaborates another understanding of the totality that takes account of the genetic exigency.

This examination starts by pointing out that the recourse to the concept of structure—namely, the structuralist explanation—is metaphorical. It thus carries a risk with itself, Derrida advises: that one forgets its metaphorical sense and takes the morphological or geometric model for sense itself, or for the genetic instance (here determined as non-spatiality and originary spatiality). He writes:

"As long as the metaphorical sense of the notion of structure is not acknowledged as such, that is to say interrogated and even destroyed as concerns its figurative quality so that the nonspatiality or original spatiality designated by it may be revived, one runs the risk, through a kind of sliding as unnoticed as it is efficacious, of confusing meaning with its geometric, morphological, or, in the best of cases, cinematic model." (Derrida 1978, 18)

As Derrida established in the first part of his essay, in the wake of his *Introduction* to Husserl's *Origin of Geometry* (1962), sense is not the unique and identical Book that is prescribed in the understanding of Leibniz's God and thus is expressed in the singular book of each existence. Sense

requires the narrow passageway (*angustia*) of an inscription in order to be constituted and thus differ from itself (precisely as it is sense). "Meaning [*sens*] must await being said or written," Derrida explains, "in order to inhabit itself, and in order to become, by differing from itself, what it is [*ce qu'à différer de soi il est*]: meaning. This is what Husserl teaches us to think in *The Origin of Geometry*" (Derrida 1978, 11).[3] Therefore, by forgetting the metaphorical meaning of structure and taking the latter for sense in general, one conceives of a totality from its achieved structure and thus from the theological Book.

Derrida finds this risk at work in the literary criticism of Rousset, who does not take into account the sense to which the literary structure refers by definition. As he puts it, "despite his stated propositions, and although he calls structure the union of formal structure and intention, Rousset, in his analyses, grants an absolute privilege to spatial models, mathematical functions, lines, and forms" (18). For Derrida, this absolute privilege brings about the reduction of intention (and sense), as well as of time. Time is reduced to the "dimension" or the "milieu" of geometrical and morphological development (29). This hypothesis about the structuralist reduction of time resonates with Bergson's critique of the spatialization of time in *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (1889).[4] A few pages later, Derrida evokes the Bergsonian concept of duration to account for what resists the geometrical and morphological model. However, Derrida's appeal to the reduction of time as well as to duration is not Bergsonian to the extent that, as we will see, for Derrida, Bergson's critique of the spatialization of time ends up sharing the presuppositions of structuralism (that is, Aristotle's conception of movement and time).

Derrida highlights the key features of Rousset's geometrism by discussing his analyses of the work of Corneille. Rousset understands movement, becoming, and work, from their final achievement—that is, from what he considers Corneille's masterwork, the *Polyeucte*. Therefore, a teleology grounds the structuralism of Rousset's analyses of movement in Corneille.

"Not only does the geometric structure of Polyeucte mobilize all the resources and attention of the author, but an entire teleology of Corneille's progress is coordinated to it. Everything transpires as if, until 1643, Corneille had only gotten a glimpse of, or anticipated the design of, *Polyeucte*, which was still in the shadows and which would eventually coincide with the Corneillean design itself, thereby taking on the dignity of an *entelechy* [my emphasis] toward which everything would be in motion. Corneille's work and development [*le devenir et le travail cornéliens*] are put into perspective and interpreted teleologically on the basis of what is considered its destination, its final structure [*comme son point d'arrivée, sa structure achevée*]. *Before Polyeucte* [here Derrida's emphasis highlights the teleological concept of time], everything is but a sketch in which only what is missing is due consideration, those elements which are still shapeless and lacking as concerns the perfection to come, or which only foretell this perfection." (19)

It is not by accident, we will see, that Derrida has recourse to the Aristotelian term of *entelecheia* to designate the concept of achieved structure that grounds Rousset's understanding of movement. Furthermore, at this crucial point of the text, geometrism intersects preformationism. They are the necessary features of the same structuralist exigency that drives all scientific discourses (from literary criticism to biology). Derrida remarks that Rousset analyses the works that precede Corneille's masterwork "in the style of preformationism," that is, "as structural prefigurations" (19). As he explains a few pages later, preformationism is "the well-known biological doctrine, opposed to epigenesis, according to which the totality of hereditary characteristics is enveloped in the germ, and is already in action in reduced dimensions that nevertheless respect the forms and proportions of the future adult" (26).[5] In other words, preformationism consists in the mask that the structuralist exigency takes on in biological discourse—namely, when it wishes to account for living beings or

organisms. The stakes of this reading of structuralism are thus enormous: the understanding of structure in general, including that of the living.[6]

Derrida suggests that what escapes Rousset's literary criticism is precisely what it should aim at: the genetic instance of sense, intention, force, etc. That is also, more generally, what escapes structuralist exigency tout court, throughout its regional vicissitudes. "The force of the work, the force of genius, the force, too, of *that which engenders in general* [my emphasis]," he writes, "is precisely that which resists geometrical metaphorization and is the proper object of literary criticism" (23). In other words, the problem of geometrism and of structuralism in general is that they have never been "corrected" by "an energetics" (18). Here Derrida recalls the critique that Leibniz addresses to Descartes's geometrism (or structuralism) across his work: "that of having explained everything in nature with figures and movements, and of ignoring force by confusing it with the quantity of movement" (18).[7] However, according to Derrida, Leibniz's model for this correction does not provide us with a non-structuralist understanding of movement and becoming.[8] A few pages later, Derrida also recalls that, in the same work, precisely in *Discourse of Metaphysics VI*, Leibniz unfolds a teleological understanding of movement in light of its achieved structure (a line delimited between two extremities). From this perspective, he suggests that Rousset is not merely Cartesian but also Leibnizian as "he seems to think that, confronted with a literary work, one should always be able to find a line, no matter how complex, that accounts for the unity, the totality of its movement, and all the points it must traverse" (21). Finally, there is no correction of structuralism with an energetics (what Leibniz is supposed to do) if that does not tackle a certain (Aristotelian, as we will see) understanding of movement.[9]

There is a moment when Rousset's analysis seems to take the genetic instance seriously, Derrida suggests: when he ascribes the "difference" between two works, *La Galerie du Palais* and the *Cid*, to being "in the quality and inner intensity of the experiences" (20). One may suppose,

Derrida continues, that "the structural metaphor will now be incapable of grasping the play's quality and intensity [*le qualitatif et le intensif*], and that the work of forces will no longer be translated into a difference of form" (20). But, once again, Rousset resorts to a geometric metaphor by turning the difference of tension into a difference of elevation.[10] The structuralist understanding of movement and becoming necessarily rests on the reduction of their genetic instance, of "the qualitative heterogeneity" (23-24, sense, force, duration, etc.) that one can find in them. Here Derrida traces this structuralism back to its philosophical foundations, thus opening up a path that, as this essay attempts to demonstrate, he will push further in his subsequent work. He argues that Rousset's teleological understanding of movement from its achievement presupposes the concept of movement (*kinēsis*) that Aristotle elaborates in *Physics III*. Derrida writes:

"Rousset understands theatrical or novelistic movement as Aristotle understood movement in general: transition to the act, which itself is the repose of the desired form. Everything transpires as if everything within the dynamics of Corneillean meaning, and within each of Corneille's plays, came to life with the aim of final peace, the peace of the structural *energeia*: *Polyeucte*. Outside this peace, before and after it, movement, in its pure duration, in the labor of its organization, can itself be only sketch or debris." (24)

Derrida refers to the definition of movement that Aristotle elaborates in *Physics III* from the dissociation between the concepts of actuality and potentiality. "We have distinguished in respect of each class between what is in fulfilment and what is potentially," Aristotle writes, "thus the fulfilment of what is potentially as such, is motion—e.g. the fulfilment of what is alterable, is alteration …" (201a-201b).[11] Derrida extrapolates from this text the very definition of movement as "a transition to the act," in which he finds the formalization of the structuralist understanding of

movement. Therefore, he suggests that, from this Aristotelian perspective, a desire has always already constituted movement, that is, the desire for its final and teleological achievement (namely, actuality, which Derrida keeps in Greek: *entelecheia* earlier on, and *energeia* in the passage quoted above).[12] It follows that the genetic instance in movement (force, duration, etc.) is forgotten or reduced. Rather, this understanding of movement precisely consists in forgetting or reducing the genetic instance and thus another exigency in understanding movement.

The Aristotelian origin of the structuralist concept of movement uncovers the metaphysical and theological character of structuralism in general. The reduction of genesis and the teleological understanding of becoming from its achieved structure require that sense is prescribed in the understanding of God and thus that the Book circulates and reproduces itself in each singular book. One can recognize here the Leibnizian and classical model of divine creation that Derrida describes in the first part of his essay and that he contrasts with the Husserlian hypothesis of the inscription which constitutes at the same time as defers sense. The metaphysics of structuralism amounts to the presupposition of the theological simultaneity that allows one to understand becoming from its achieved structure. "A structuralist reading," Derrida explains, "by its own activity, always presupposes and appeals to the theological simultaneity of the book, and considers itself deprived of the essential when this simultaneity is not accessible" (Derrida 1978, 28).[13] Furthermore, he adds that this theological simultaneity implies the reduction of time as "irreversible succession" (27). Once again, we may perceive a resonance between these passages and Bergson's critique of spatialization as the reduction of the irreversibility of time to the simultaneity of a spatial representation. However, once again, by having recourse to Bergsonian concepts such as simultaneity and irreversibility, Derrida does not countersign that critique of the spatialization of time. As he makes explicit in "*Ousia* and *Grammē*," he maintains that Bergson's critique, like

structuralism in general, also hinges on the presupposition of the Aristotelian teleology and thus on the metaphysics of theological simultaneity.[14]

Derrida takes the inscription and its irreducible synthesis with sense as a point of departure for freeing movement and becoming from structuralism and teleotheology. He does not think of the inscription as the element of the Book, but as the minimal condition for a non-simultaneous volume, that is, for the twofold movement of the self-differing of sense and of the indefinite referral of inscription to inscription. This text of inscriptions aims to free duration and irreversibility from teleotheology. Derrida writes:

"What is intolerable for structuralism is indeed the richness implied by the volume, every element of signification that cannot be spread out into the simultaneity of a form. But is it by chance that the book is, first and foremost, volume? And that the meaning of meaning (in the general sense of meaning and not in the sense of signalization) is infinite implication, the indefinite referral [*renvoi*] of signifier to signifier? And that its force is a certain pure and infinite equivocality which gives signified meaning no respite, no rest, but engages it in its own *economy* so that it always signifies again and differs?" (29)

In the concluding pages of his essay, Derrida formulates an understanding of the totality in general that aims to reconcile structuralist and geneticist exigencies. Such an understanding cannot merely relate to "an organized totality" (in general) from "its end" (30), as structuralism does. It must conceive of totality in light of sense, that is, of the most undetermined telos, which a totality makes possible and yet defers. "If there are structures," Derrida explains, "they are possible only on the basis of the fundamental structure which permits totality to open and overflow itself such that it takes on meaning by anticipating a telos which here must be understood in its most indeterminate

form" (31).[15] This fundamental structure, this necessary relationship between the totality in general and its genetic instance (namely, sense and the undetermined telos), is precisely what structuralism forgets or reduces. As we have seen in this section, the thinking of the inscription takes account of that necessary relationship and unfolds it as a volume, as the non-simultaneous referral of inscription to inscription.

III.

In "Force and Signification," Derrida limits himself to sketching out his reading of Aristotle's concept of movement. We must wait for "*Ousia* and *Grammē*" for a direct engagement with *Physics IV*, where Aristotle elaborates the concept of time as the number of movement. In this essay, Derrida takes up his earlier hypothesis about the Aristotelian origin of teleological structuralism and develops it through a close reading of Aristotle's text. He sets out the programme for this reading after the publication of "Force and Signification," in the lecture course on Heidegger taught in 1964-1965, which has been published recently.[16] This programme results from Derrida's remarks on §72 of *Being and Time* (1927), where Heidegger detaches from the philosophical concept of movement (*Bewegung*) an ontological concept (*Bewegtheit*) that would account for the very movement of historicity (*Geschehen*).[17]

In §6 of his lecture course, Derrida focuses on the question raised by Heidegger from the outset of *Being and Time* §72. Heidegger opens this section by explaining that there is "no more radical starting point" for his analytics of *Dasein* than "the project of [*Dasein*'s] authentic existence" (Heidegger 1996, 341). To this extent, he wonders:

"Must we not take back our point of departure of temporality as the meaning of being of the totality of Dasein (*Daseinsganzheit*), even though what we addressed as the 'connection' [*Zusammenhang*]

between birth and death is ontologically completely obscure? Or does temporality, as we set it forth, first give the *foundation* on which to provide an unequivocal direction for the existential and ontological question of that 'connection'? Perhaps it is already a gain in the field of this inquiry if we learn not to take these problems too lightly." (342)

Apropos of this point, Derrida remarks that "we encounter again here the necessity of thinking the continuity of life, the *Erstreckung* [*stretching*] or the synthesis that makes of the time of Dasein a history" (Derrida 2016, 98). Heidegger goes on by observing that if we assume this connection as a succession of experiences in time, it happens that "only the experience that is objectively present [*vorhanden*] 'in the actual now' is 'really' 'real'" (Heidegger 1996, 342).[18] The consequence of this assumption, which is never called into question, is that *Dasein* is reduced to this experience: "it is 'real' only in the now" (342). Therefore, philosophy, as the predetermination of being as *Vorhandenheit* (presence), is unable to account for *Dasein*. "So long as one holds onto this *Vorhandenheit*," Derrida points out, "not only … does one have no chance of describing ontologically … the extension of *Dasein* between life and death, but one even has no chance of posing the ontological problem of this extension" (Derrida 2016, 104). For Heidegger, the being of Dasein is constituted as this stretching between life and death. "The 'between' of birth and death already lies 'in the being' of *Dasein*" (Heidegger 1996, 343), Heidegger argues. Derrida reads this moment of the text as Heidegger's "first positive gesture," according to which "the *movement* [my emphasis] of historicity must be recognized in this *in-between*" (Derrida 2016, 104). By having recourse to "movement," Derrida anticipates Heidegger's reference to the stretching of life as the movement of existence (*Bewegtheit*) that cannot be merged with the movement of something present (*Bewegung*), a reference on which he comments further in §9 of his lecture course.

Indeed, in §9, Derrida goes back to the positive moment in *Being and Time* §72 where Heidegger explains that "the movement [*Bewegtheit*] of existence … is determined from the stretching along of Dasein" and thus identifies it "as its *occurrence* [*Geschehen*]" (Heidegger 1996, 344). Derrida reformulates the dissociation of *Bewegtheit* from *Bewegung* by linking the latter to the definition of movement as change of place that Aristotle has in *Physics IV* (208a).[19] "The historical movedness or sequence," Derrida notes, "(the movedness of *historizing*, of historical production: *die Bewegtheit des Geschehens*) … cannot be thought, grasped, on the basis of movement (*Bewegung*) as change of place" (Derrida 2016, 141-42). Furthermore, he suggests that, if the question of historicity is indissociable from that of temporality, one must also interrogate the time of this *Bewegtheit*. Given the difference between *Bewegtheit* and *Bewegung*, this concept of time can no longer be "an Aristotelian-type time" (142). Derrida thus refers to the final pages of *Being and Time* and, especially, to §82—where Heidegger calls into question the Aristotelian determination of time—as to "the most decisive of the book" (142). In particular, he quotes the note of §82 in which Heidegger develops a comparative reading of Hegel and Aristotle. We can find in these remarks Derrida's programme for a future engagement with that note, and thus for a further elaboration of his hypothesis about the Aristotelian genesis of what he had designated earlier on as structuralism.

IV.

In "*Ousia* and *Grammē*," Derrida focuses on the genesis of structuralist metaphysics in *Physics IV*. He highlights in Aristotle's text the key features of this metaphysics: the concept of time as the teleotheological understanding of movement from its achieved structure; and the project of mastering the trace as the minimal condition for the volume, that is, for a non-simultaneous and indefinite referral of trace to trace.

The point of departure for Derrida's essay, as indicated by the subtitle, is the aforementioned note in *Being and Time* §82. Derrida begins by identifying the task of Heidegger's *Being and Time* as that of destructing traditional ontology through the destruction of its concept of time—namely, the vulgar concept of time. He recalls that, for Heidegger, "a certain determination of time has implicitly governed the determination of the meaning of being in the history of philosophy" (Derrida 1982, 31). From the very beginning of *Being and Time*, Heidegger describes this determination as "the treatment of the meaning of Being as *parousia* or *ousia*, which signifies, in ontologico-temporal terms, 'presence' (*Anwesenheit*)" (31).[20] However, according to Derrida, Heidegger responds to his task only in the final pages of *Being and Time*, where he undertakes an explicit analysis of "the genesis of the vulgar concept of time, from Aristotle to Hegel" (32-33). In particular, Heidegger devotes a note of §82—"only a footnote," as Derrida puts it—"to the pertinent traits that assign a Greek, and very precisely an Aristotelian, origin to this concept [the vulgar concept of time]" (33). At this point, Derrida makes explicit the scope of his note on Heidegger's note. Besides rereading Heidegger's destruction of the vulgar concept of time,[21] he aims "to indicate the hidden passageway that makes the problem of presence communicate with the problem of the written trace" (34). In particular, he points to the "reference to the *gramme*" in Aristotle's *Physics IV*, which, he suggests, seems not to be "dominated by the concepts that Heidegger has fixed as the decisive ones in Aristotle's text" (35). As we will see, Derrida uncovers in the very text of Aristotle, in his critique of the spatialization or graphic representation of time (namely, the *grammē*), and, precisely, in the written trace that the Aristotelian determination of time wishes to master, the index for thinking movement and becoming otherwise.

In the first section of the essay ("The Note"), Derrida introduces Heidegger's note by situating it in *Being and Time* and summarizing its key arguments.[22] In particular, he recalls that, for Heidegger, the Hegelian interpretation of the relation between spirit and time hinges on the concept

of time exposed in the "Philosophy of Nature" of the *Encyclopedia*, and that this concept shares the key traits of the concept of time exposed in Aristotle's *Physics*.[23] In the subsequent sections, Derrida reopens the texts of Hegel and Aristotle mentioned in Heidegger's note.

In the pages that follow, we will focus on the close reading of *Physics IV* 218b-220a that Derrida sets out in the section entitled "Gramme and Number."[24] He starts with a question that unveils his interest in Aristotle's text: "how does time *come into line* with the *Physics*?" (57). His reading focuses on the problem of the spatialization or graphic representation of time, which Aristotle addresses as he examines the relationship between time and movement. As we will see, according to Derrida, Aristotle offers a teleotheological solution to this problem, a solution according to which time consists in understanding movement and its graphic representation from their achieved structure and thus from a theological simultaneity. This solution determines the metaphysical concept of time, including Bergson's concept of duration. For Derrida, Bergson's critique of spatialization—what he calls here the "cinematographic concept of time" (57)—and thus his idea of duration reproduce Aristotle's teleotheology.[25]

Aristotle's treatise on time begins by displaying the aporias of time (*chronos*): whether it is among the things that are (*ta onta*) or those that are not (*ta mē onta*, *Physics IV* 217b); and what is its nature (*physis*, 217b). Aristotle develops the second question by taking into consideration the traditional interpretation of time as movement. He rejects this interpretation by having recourse to two arguments: a) movement and change (*metabolē*) are in the things that move or change, while time is in all things (218b); b) the traits of movement (for instance, slowness/fastness) do not determine time and yet are determined by it (218b).[26] As Derrida remarks in his summary of this text, "time makes possible movement, change, their measurement, and differences of speed. Here time is what defines, and not what is defined" (Derrida 1982, 58). On the other hand, Aristotle allows that time is not without movement to the extent that the perception/experience of change and

that of time are mutually related. Every experience of change/movement is also an experience of time, and vice versa (*Physics IV* 218b-219a).[27] Therefore, Aristotle concludes, if time is not movement, it must be something of movement (*tēs kinēseōs ti einai*). The aim of the search thus becomes that of exploring the relation between time and movement or, in Derrida's words, between time and "space"/"changes of places" (Derrida 1982, 58), so long as movement is understood from its spatialization.

A series of steps are required before we get to the determination of the relation between time and movement—that is, the definition of time as the number of movement. First, Aristotle introduces the concept of magnitude, which is continuous and includes the before and the after (*to proteron kai hysteron*), understood as local determinations in light of position (*Physics IV* 219a). As Derrida points out, the continuity of magnitude constitutes "the axiom" (Derrida 1982, 58) of Aristotle's entire discourse, since it governs the relation of time to movement, and the problem of the spatialization of time. Secondly, Aristotle institutes an analogy/correspondence between magnitude and movement (movement "follows" the magnitude), by virtue of which movement too is continuous and has in itself the before and the after (*Physics IV* 219a).[28] Now, thanks to another analogy/correspondence, between movement and time, time too is continuous.[29] Furthermore, when we determine movement in relation to the before and the after we also gain a knowledge of time (219a). Unfolding the analogy between time and movement, Aristotle argues that, when we perceive the before and the after in movement, we perceive the now (*to nūn*) by which time is defined, and we thus perceive time itself (219a). Indeed, he concludes, "this is time: the number [*arithmos*] of movement according to [*kata*] the before and the after" (219b). Therefore, time is not movement, and yet there is time since movement can be numbered according to the before and the after. Furthermore, time itself is numbered (a numbered number) as it is not with time that we numerate movement (219b).[30] Derrida remarks here that time is related to movement and,

consequently, to number, and yet it is neither movement nor number "in the rigorous sense" (Derrida 1982, 59).[31]

At this point, Aristotle goes on by introducing the concept of the point (*stigmē*). He institutes a double correspondence between, on the one hand, the thing that is in motion and the point, and, on the other hand, between that thing and the now. The thing that is in motion, by means of which we know movement and the before and the after, "follows" the point (*Physics IV* 219b). The now, in turn, "follows" that thing, since we can numerate movement according to the before and the after (219b). If time is the number of movement, the now is the unity of this number: time is continuous and divided like movement, and this occurs by virtue of and according to the now (220a).[32]

Here Aristotle raises the question of the graphic representation of time. Given the set of correspondences that he has supposed so far, this representation cannot be simply rejected but is accepted under certain conditions. Indeed, Derrida emphasizes the recourse to those concepts of analogy/correspondence (*akoulouthein*) that ground the text of Aristotle. They presuppose and escape at once the articulation of movement and time and thus the graphic representation of time, which Derrida identifies here with the particle "at the same time" (*ama*, *simul*), or the irreducible synthesis of space and time.[33] "Discreet, advanced without insistence, as if they went without saying, the fundamental categories, here, are those of *analogy* and *correspondence*," he writes. "They lead back, by other names, and barely displacing it," he continues, "to the *enigma* of the 'at the same time,' which both names and evades, states and obscures, the problem" (58). As already observed by Aristotle, the thing that is in motion, and thus the determination of movement itself according to the before and the after, follow the point, which grants to the length its continuity and limit (*Physics IV* 220a). This implies a correspondence between time and the graphic representation of movement. However, as we will see, Aristotle admits this correspondence only in certain conditions, that is, if we consider that graphic representation as a line delimited by two extremities

and not as a series of points. Here, Derrida stops his paraphrasis and draws attention to the restriction that Aristotle establishes for the spatialization and graphic representation of time. He writes:

"One could be led to believe that the now is to time what the point is to the line. And that the essence of time can pass, intact and undamaged, into its linear representation, into the continuous, extended unfolding of punctuality. Aristotle firmly indicates that this is not so. The spatial and linear representation, at least in this form, is inadequate. What is criticized, thereby, is not the relationship of time to movement, nor the numbered or numerable Being of time, but rather time's analogy with a certain structure of the *gramme*." (Derrida 1982, 59)

Aristotle explains that there is no analogy between the point and the thing that is in motion, and thus between the point and the now, if we consider the point as twofold, namely, as an end and a beginning, as a point of necessary arrest (*anankē istasthai*). Indeed, the thing that is in motion and thus the now cannot stop (*Physics IV* 220a).[34] Derrida observes that, here, Aristotle has recourse to a language that is Bergsonian *ante litteram*—"his language is indistinguishable from Bergson" (Derrida 1982, 59)—to the extent that his description of the point as a limit-point resonates with Bergson's description of the numerical synthesis that must be demarcated from duration.[35] Summarizing, the now is the unity of time (qua the number of movement), and yet it is not the limit-point of time. Derrida describes the structure of writing (*grammē*) that Aristotle excludes from the analogy with time, as follows: "What is rejected, then, is not the *gramme* as such, but the *gramme* as a series of points, as a composition of parts each of which would be an arrested limit" (59). He identifies this *grammē* with the trace, that is, with the irreducible articulation of space and time (becoming-space of time and becoming-time of space), which Aristotle wishes to reject as well

as to master through his controlled analogy.[36] This trace constitutes the condition for dissociating movement from any teleotheological horizon of understanding and any structuralism and thinking of it within a non-simultaneous volume.

According to Aristotle, time is the number of movement as the extremities are the number of a line (*Physics IV* 220a). He thus admits the analogy between time and the graphic representation of movement, he admits the spatialization and graphic representation of time, but only if we understand movement as the line marked by its extremities. Derrida suggests that we unpack this conclusion by holding on to the Aristotelian concepts of potentiality and actuality. The line understood from its extremities is the line in act, that is, the achieved structure of what is mere potentiality—namely, movement, the thing that moves, the point. Therefore, Aristotle maintains the analogy between time and the structure of the *grammē* at the condition that we understand movement from its final achievement and thus from a theological simultaneity.[37] We are here at the origins of structuralism, conceived of as the project of reducing the trace and mastering it within a teleotheological framework. The following reading of Aristotle's text unfolds the interpretation of the Aristotelian foundations of structuralism that we have highlighted in the earlier essay "Force and Signification":

"But if one considers now that the point, as limit, does not exist *in act*, is not (present), exists only potentially and by accident, takes its existence only from the line in act, then it is not impossible to preserve the analogy of the *gramme*: on the condition that one does not take it as a series of potential limits, but as a line in act, as a line thought on the basis of its extremities (*ta eskhata*) and not of its parts (220a). Certainly this permits us to distinguish between, on the one hand, time and movement and, on the other, the *gramme* as a homogeneous series of point-limits unfolded in space; but, by the same token, this amounts to thinking time and movement on the basis of the *telos* of a

gramme that is completed [*à partir du telos d'un gramme achevé*], in act, fully present, that keeps its *tracing* close to itself [*rassemblant le tracement*]." (Derrida 1982, 60)

Derrida identifies Aristotle's project of understanding the *grammē* from a teleotheological perspective as the presupposition of metaphysics. Metaphysics itself, for Derrida, consists in comprehending the *grammē* "between potentiality and the act (presence)" (60). Furthermore, it constitutes the presupposition for any critique of spatialization, "from Aristotle to Bergson" (60), to the extent that it wishes to reduce the unfolding of movement and becoming as a trace in a non-simultaneous volume of traces. Finally, Aristotle's text provides us with the foundations of structuralism in general since it conceives of movement from the actuality and presence of its achieved structure and thus forgets its genetic instance—namely, force, the relationship to an undetermined telos, the indefinite referral of trace to trace, etc. Derrida finds in the very concept of time, as the number of movement qua the line in act, the name of this operation. "Force and potentiality, *dynamics*," he writes, "have always been thought, in the name of time, as an incomplete *gramme* within the horizon of an eschatology or a teleology" (60). In other words, if we take time as what allows us to determine movement, we display a teleotheological understanding of movement. Movement must have always already been a potentiality, thus driven by the desire for its achieved structure. As Derrida summarizes, "in order to be in time, something must have begun to be and to tend, like every potentiality, toward act and form" (62).

In a note to this passage, he suggests that the concept of duration that Bergson elaborates in the *Creative Evolution* retains "something" of the "Aristotelian ontology of time," to the extent that it accounts for a certain tension and desire in/of the living for its achieved structure ("*élan*" and "the ontological tension of the living oriented by a *telos*") (62). We cannot reopen Bergson's masterwork here to put to the test the hypothesis of reading advanced by Derrida. However, it is worth

highlighting Derrida's concern with the Aristotelian presuppositions of Bergson's evolutionism and theory of the living. As we have seen from "Force and Signification" to "*Ousia* and *Grammē*," Derrida reads Aristotle's physics and, more precisely, the Aristotelian elaboration of the problem of the spatialization of time, as the foundations of structuralism across disciplines, from literary criticism to biology. Therefore, the thinking of the trace that precedes teleotheological simultaneity and discloses a non-simultaneous volume of traces offers the premises for conceiving of the living otherwise. It seeks to liberate the living from the tension and desire that must drive it in an Aristotelian-type time.

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* This article was published thanks to the support received from the British Academy. Partial versions of it were presented at the conference "Aristotle and Phenomenology: Departures and Returns" (Leuven, Belgium, December 2016) and the annual meeting of the *Society for French Studies* (Durham, UK, July 2017). I thank Nicolas de Warren, Andrea Cimino, Martin Crowley, and Gerald Moore, for their invitations and comments.

[1] For an overview of Derrida's relation to ancient philosophy, see Naas 2014, 231-251. Naas recalls that: "For if he [Derrida] will admit in 'We Other Greeks' that, 'like Foucault and Deleuze, he privileged in many ways the Platonic corpus,' he will insist that 'a reference to Aristotle will have played for me (in '*Ousia* and *Grammē*,' 'The Supplement of Copula,' 'White Mythology,' and even 'Khōra') a role that is just as indispensable' (WOG, 34)" (236). In this essay, I will attempt to develop this reference to the indispensable role of Aristotle.

[2] Here I refer to Chapter I ("The Force *of* Deconstruction") in Gasché 2016, 1-26, and Chapter III ("The Circle and the Trace: '*Ousia* and *Grammē*"') in Protevi 1994, 76-110. I also remark that Hagglund's *Radical Atheism* (2008), based on the analysis of Derrida's understanding of time, has a single, quick reference to Aristotle's *Physics* (cf. Hagglund 2008, 16).

[3] See Derrida 1978, 8-11, where Derrida demarcates a classical model of writing, grounded on the Leibnizian and classical paradigm of divine creation, from a modern concept of writing, which consists in the transcendental role of writing uncovered by Husserl in his *Origin of Geometry*. On the metaphorical sense of structure, see also Gasché 2016, 8-9.

[4] On the reduction of time to milieu and thus on its spatialization, see Bergson 2001, 105: "For if time, as the reflective consciousness represents it, is a medium in which our conscious states form a discrete series so as to admit of being counted, and if on the other hand our conception of number ends in spreading out in space everything which can be directly counted, it is to be presumed that

time, understood in the sense of a medium in which we make distinctions and count, is nothing but space." More generally, I refer to Chapter II in Bergson's *Essay* ("The Multiplicity of Conscious States: The Idea of Duration"), where the author dissociates the number (as the synthesis of similar unities that are juxtaposed in an ideal space and thus represented simultaneously, see 92-97) from duration (as the non-spatialized and psychological synthesis of the states of the soul, which consists in a process of self-organization, see 74-75).

[5] For influential interpretations of preformationism in France between '60s and '70s, I refer to Roger 1998 (1963, Chapter VI) and Jacob 1973 (1970, Chapter I).

[6] For Derrida's interest in the structure of the living throughout his reading of Rousset, see, for instance, Derrida 1978, 24: "The truth of the general structure thus restored does not describe *the Marivauldian organism* [my emphasis] along its own lines. And less so its force."

[7] On this point, see, for instance, Leibniz's *Discourse on Metaphysics* (1686, XVII-XVIII). Leibniz writes: "This consideration, in which force is distinguished from quantity of motion, is of importance not only in physics and mechanics in finding the true laws of nature and the rules of motion, and even in correcting many errors in practice which have slipped into the writings of a number of able mathematicians, but also in metaphysics for the better understanding of the principles" (Leibniz 1989, 315). For a history of Leibniz's reception of Descartes's physics, see Costabel 1960. On Derrida's interest in Leibniz's energetics, see Gasché 2016, 18.

[8] For an earlier critique of Leibniz's structuralism, see Part I in "Force and Signification" (Derrida 1978, 8-10), where Derrida suggests that there is no space for genesis in Leibniz's concept of the world to the extent that the latter consists in the self-reproduction of the Book in the singular books of each existence. Derrida writes: "Each existence continues to 'express' the totality of the Universe. There is, therefore, no tragedy of the book. There is only one Book, and this same Book is distributed throughout all books" (9).

[9] For Leibniz's text, see Leibniz 1989, 306, and Derrida 1978, 32. For an analogous interpretation of Leibniz's Cartesianism, which Derrida must have known, see Guéroult 1984, 184: "We should note, in addition, that if each elementary movement depends only on the divine creative act founding it, and does not in itself depend on what precedes it, no more than the next movement depends on it, each instant of movement in its founding action no more depends on a series of causes than the self does. There is therefore only a small step to take in conferring substantiality to each elementary movement, thus ending up with a Leibnizian doctrine. The indivisibility of divine creative action and the absolute independence that it confers to each created moment of movement is therefore, in Descartes' philosophy, the substitute for what in Leibniz's philosophy becomes force or the monad, meaning the indivisible of hyperphysical and metaphysical nature that is beyond local movement but is its independent source."

[10] Cf. Derrida 1978, 31-32.

[11] Aristotle's text continues as follows: "… of what is increasable and its opposite decreasable (there is no common name for both), increase and decrease; of what can come to be and pass away, coming to be and passing away; of what can be carried along, locomotion. That this is what motion is, is clear from what follows: when what is buildable, in so far as we call it such, is in fulfilment, it is being built, and that is building" (201b). For influential interpretations of Aristotle's physics at the time of Derrida's early work, see Aubenque 1962 (Part II, Chapter 2) and Moreau 1965. I also recall that the aforementioned passage from *Physics* constitutes a key source for Heidegger's 1931 seminar on Aristotle's *Metaphysics Θ 1-3* (cf. Heidegger 1995).

[12] In the chapter of his Aristotle book dedicated to movement, Aubenque explains that the two terms that the tradition uniformly interprets as act (*energeia* and *entelecheia*) refer to the experience of movement. *Energeia* is not the becoming but what has become, the perfect tense of having-moved

or having-been-moved. *Entelecheia* refers to the dynamic meaning of telos, which designates the end in the meaning of achievement, accomplishment, realization (cf. Aubenque 1962, 440-441).

[13] For a close reading of this passage, see Gasché 2016, 23-25. Here Gasché does not discuss the relationship between the teleological understanding of movement and theological simultaneity—that is, the legacy of the concepts of space and time that Aristotle elaborates in *Physics III* and *IV*.

[14] See the note above on duration. It is worth noting that, in *The Creative Evolution* (1907), Bergson has recourse to the concept of irreversibility to designate one of the irreducible characters of duration and life in general (cf. Bergson 1998, 21-22). Neither mechanicism nor finalism can account for it, precisely because their understanding of life and its evolution presupposes a theological simultaneity (the principle of *all is given*, cf.54). In the final section of this essay, we see that Derrida traces back to the Aristotelian ontology of time the evolutionism that Bergson demarcates from mechanism and finalism and through which he aims to take account of irreversible duration and life. According to Derrida, Bergson shares with Aristotle the very concept of time as the teleological understanding of movement from its achieved structure.

[15] Derrida continues: "This opening is certainly that which liberates time and genesis (even coincides with them), but it is also that which risks enclosing progression toward the future—becoming—by giving it form. That which risks stifling force under form" (Derrida 1978, 31).

[16] For a preliminary overview of the text, see the review of the English edition in Gasché 2016a.

[17] Here I use Bennington's translation of *Bewegung* and *Bewegtheit* as *movedness* and *movement*, which follows Derrida's choice of *mouvance* and *mouvement* (or *mobilité*).

[18] Cf. Heidegger 1996, 342: "The experiences past and just coming … are no longer or not yet 'real.'"

[19] Cf. *Physics IV* 208a: "The physicist must have a knowledge of place, too, as well as of the infinite—namely, whether there is such a thing or not, and the manner of its existence and what it is—both because all suppose that things which exist are somewhere (the non-existent is nowhere—where is the goat-stag or the sphinx?), and because motion in its most general and proper sense is change of place, which we call 'locomotion.'"

[20] Heidegger continues: "Beings are grasped in their Being as 'presence' (*Anwesenheit*); this means that they are understood with regard to a definite mode of time—the "Present" (*Gegenwart*)" (quoted in Derrida 1982, 31).

[21] Cf. Derrida 1982, 33-34.

[22] Cf. Derrida 1982, 35-39 (including the full text of Heidegger's note). For a synopsis of Derrida's essay, see Protevi 1994, 82-83.

[23] Cf. Derrida 1982, 36.

[24] My rereading of Aristotle's text is based on Castelli's excellent edition of *Physics IV*. Cf. Castelli 2012, 101-107 (for the translation of Aristotle's text) and 205-227 (for the editor's comments and bibliography). As this rereading develops, I give more detailed references on the examined passages. For the sources of Derrida's reading of Aristotle, see the note above.

[25] On Bergson's critique of spatialization as it is formalized in the *Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, see the note above. For the concept of "cinematographic mechanism," see Chapter IV in Bergson 1998.

[26] For a critical reading of the literature on this point, see Castelli 2012, 205-209.

[27] For Derrida's paraphrasis of this passage, see Derrida 1982, 58.

[28] On the use of "following" (*akolouthein*), see Castelli 2012, 209. Castelli explains that this term indicates the ontological relation of analogical dependence or structural correspondence between two terms.

[29] Cf. Castelli 2012, 212-217, on the relation among magnitude, movement, and time.

[30] On the concept of numbered number, see Castelli 2012, 220.

[31] On this point, see Derrida 1982, 57 and 59. Derrida insists that, for Aristotle, time is not a mathematical being, in order to demarcate Aristotle's conception of time and of its spatialization from Bergson's critique of spatialization and of the cinematographic concept of time (according to which, as we have seen, time is reduced to a numerical synthesis). As Aristotle seems to argue a few paragraphs later, time is the number of movement at the condition that it applies to a line delimited between two extremities. On Derrida's reading, this means that Aristotle admits the numerical being and thus the spatialization of time only as the teleotheological understanding of movement and thus as the mastery of the trace.

[32] On the ontological dependence of movement and time from the substance that is in motion, see the decisive remarks in Castelli 2012, 221-225. She writes: "Movement exists only in the movable substance, as the actualization of the potentiality of the movable substance as such, and not as a separated entity. Consequently, time and now only exist in relation to the substance that is in motion" (222, my translation). As we will see, a few paragraphs later, Derrida unfolds his interpretation of Aristotle's text by resorting to the concepts of actuality and potentiality and thus, more or less implicitly, to the definition of movement that Aristotle has in *Physics III*.

[33] In the previous section of "*Ousia* and *Grammē*" ("The Pivot [*La cheville*] of Essence"), Derrida focuses on the role that the *ama* plays in the first aporia of Aristotle's treatise on time. He finds in this particle the formalization of the necessary articulation between space and time, the spatialization of time and temporalization of space, which Aristotle cannot dismiss and yet wishes to master. For another reading of "*Ousia* and *Grammē*," which takes the aporias of time as its point of departure, I refer to Hagglund 2008, 13-49 ("Autoimmunity of Time: Derrida and Kant"). I observe that Hagglund does not take into account Derrida's engagement with the Aristotelian

question of the relation between movement and time and thus the thread that goes from "Force and Signification" to "*Ousia* and *Grammē*" and opens up the thinking of a non-simultaneous volume.

[34] Castelli speaks about "a discrepancy between the point in the line and the now in time" (cf. Castelli 2012, 226-227).

[35] For Bergson's demarcation of duration from numerical synthesis, and thus for his critique of spatialization, see the note above.

[36] For an interpretation of Derrida's understanding of the becoming-space of time and the becoming-time of space as a radicalization of the Kantian account of time and space, see Hagglund 2008, 26-27.

[37] On the schema of potentiality/actuality that permits the domination of the *grammē*, see Protevi 1994, 101-102.