MARCO ROLLA

Nietzsche and Derrida on Acceptance and Difference

Student Number: 428414

Contents

Introduction

The following paper links the presuppositions gathered in business studies with a different approach based on the works of both Nietzsche and Derrida. While the former are often founded on causality and other fixed assumptions, the philosophy of difference sheds an alternative light regarding the relationship between modernity and knowledge. The aim of this thesis is therefore to show how business professionals and business scholars base their practises on fundamental concepts, therefore limiting the array of possible findings. Being a business *and* philosophy double degree student, I will highlight a possible area of contact between the two disciplines.

In the initial section of this thesis, a literature review will outline the main characteristics of the two selected books. First, Nietzsche's "The Gay Science" will be discussed to better grasp the still innovative insights of the German thinker. The review will mainly focus on the topic of the Death of God and on the peculiar literary style present in this masterpiece. Regarding the style, these insights will be then retrieved to analyse the second selected book: Derrida's "Spurs: Nietzsche's Style". Here, the principal activity will be to rework Nietzsche's pivotal themes in a more contemporary scenario. This is done through an innovative stylistic analysis that places language before meaning to unveil societal applications and issues. Through the technique of deconstruction, the Gay Science will be confronted with various understandings that relevant thinkers had of the text in the following decades. Although the review strictly follows the flow presented in the book, personal elaborations will be added to better understand the following section.

This will then comprehend the main reasoning and is structured as follows. First, theoretical terms such as difference, distance and simulation are further explained to thoroughly mould them within the main argument. Then, the present approach will be confronted with other philosophical currents such as psychoanalysis to ensure logical viability. This will also enrich the matter of the digression. Subsequently, the idealized difference between men and women and between women and females will be again clarified and embedded in a more practical reasoning. The latter will then gradually flow from theoretical standpoints. In the practical argumentation, it will be argued that the societal structure no longer supports the needs of a fast-changing society. This claim will be supported by empirical evidence and by theoretical reasoning. Analogies, logical arguments and literary insights will guarantee a certain degree of validity.

As a remark, it is important to notice how this work has no claim to deliver viable solutions or to debunk the social systems altogether. These are in place and it is therefore necessary to combine acknowledged standpoints with the proposed insights. The approach is therefore incremental for two reasons. First, throughout history piecemeal change has been proven to be exponentially more effective. Second, the proposed texts will show how overarching systems are a human fiction and it is therefore useless to pursue another radical one to causally solve a problem.

Literature Review

The Gay Science

To thoroughly understand Derrida's work and the subsequent reasoning, it is necessary to accurately grasp the meaning and style of "The Gay Science". Although the following texts and digressions will often refer to other works by Nietzsche as well, the Gay Science is still considered the corner stone. These other works will not be reviewed separately but will be incrementally clarified throughout the text. Additionally, some themes will not be hereby discussed. Although these might be of central importance within the Nietzschean text, they do not add insights to the main aim of this paper and will be therefore excluded.

The Death of God

Sections 125 and 126 of the Gay Science highlight two central topics of Nietzsche's thought: namely the death of God and the subsequent rejection of overarching metaphysical systems. The former one is named after "The Madman" and will be a pivotal passage for the philosophers of the following century. Approaching a market with unceasing screams, the madman claims to be seeking God. People observe him with astonishment while he subsequently declares the death of God. With this aphorism, Nietzsche points out how the Christian God is no more amongst us and that we are the ones who killed him. The reason for this event is that a world dominated by science and technology asserts the futility of fundamental metaphysical systems. Continuous discoveries more than once debunked commonly held Christian standpoints hence tackling faith and dedication of the masses.

Suddenly, the madman destroys the lamp with which he came and, in the darkness, screams how his message is yet premature. This metaphor exemplifies the slow nature of such an epochal event. While some individuals notice the ontological collapse, the rest of the society is too busy with day to day activities to even notice a change. According to Nietzsche, this will become clear with time and people will acknowledge this change, although it may take 150 years.

Consequences of the Death of God

"Mystical explanations are regarded as profound; the truth is that they do not even go the length of being superficial." (Nietzsche, 1882, Section 126)

Here, the previous findings are extended from religion to any explanation that is ultimately based on an overarching system of ontological explanations. What in the previous aphorism seemed a fierce critique towards the Christians, here is extended to any religion. Moreover, mystical explanations can also be addressed to the dogmatic philosophers. Keen to unveil an ultimate truth to man and to the world, they lose themselves in shallow explanations and conclusions. This is a turning point within the Nietzschean philosophy as the death of God also comprehends the death of the logos.

"New Struggles. After Buddha was dead people showed his shadow for centuries afterwards in a cave, - an immense frightful shadow. God is dead: - but as the human race is constituted, there will perhaps be caves for millenniums yet, in which people will show his shadow. - And we - we have still to overcome his shadow!" (Nietzsche, 1882, Section 108)

As previously mentioned, the madman affirms to have announced the death of God too early. This aphorism confirms the tendency and highlights how societies need time to understand and elaborate on such a radical change. This entails that societies will face a period of transition where the struggle between chaos and order will emerge. More precisely, people used to a world ordered by Christian assumptions will have to face the Dionysian condition of existence hence abandoning order and scope. This is so since each of the fundamental human truths were erroneously build throughout the centuries always being based on a supernatural entity that ultimately validated the conclusions.

"Ultimate Scepticism. But what after all are man's truths? - They are his irrefutable errors" (Nietzsche, 1882, section 261)

Nietzsche states how for several decades humanity will be bound to erroneous standpoints. These must be debunked to ensure the rebuilding of a truthful culture. However, it will be clear throughout the text how these standpoints should not be substituted by other metaphysical ones. Man should overall refrain from fundamental conclusions and embrace the chaotic condition unveiled by the death of God.

Against Ontotheology

After having analysed the previous aphorisms, it is clear how Nietzsche embraces a clear position both against religion and against the dogmatic philosophers that enhance such a *logocentric[1]* tradition. Heidegger will then refer to this tradition as *"onto-theology"*.

"Adventitious Liars. When people began to combat the unity of Aristotle in France, and consequently also to defend it, there was once more to be seen that which has been seen so often but seen so unwillingly: people imposed false reasons on themselves because of which those laws ought to exist, merely for the sake of not acknowledging to themselves that they had accustomed themselves to the authority of those laws and did not want any longer to have things otherwise. And people do so in every prevailing morality and religion and have always done so: the reasons and intentions behind the habit, are only added surreptitiously when people begin to combat the habit and ask for reasons and intentions. It is here that the great dishonesty of the conservatives of all times hides: - they are adventitious liars" (Nietzsche, 1882, Section 29)

Here it is exemplified how the ontotheological tradition is built throughout the ages. According to Nietzsche, these philosophers are nothing more than liars composing false

---

[1] With logocentrism it is intended the philosophical tradition initiated by Plato and augmented by the Christian scriptures in which the aim of knowledge is ultimately to unveil an essential truth from which everything descends.

explanations able to fit the metaphysical system. Moreover, dogmatic philosophers choose profound descriptions to clear and simple ones. The reason for this is the deceitful nature of their findings. While a reader can easily understand the erroneousness of a clear concept, this becomes harder in complex ones. Not understanding the reasoning to the fullest, it is easier for the reader to postulate the truthfulness of the finding within a superior system of untouchable truths.

Against Causality, Towards *Amor Fati*

One of the main ways of reasoning in Greek philosophy and in Christian theology is the bond between cause and effect.

"Cause and effect: there is probably never any such duality; in fact there is a continuum before us, from which we isolate a few portions; just as we always observe a motion as isolated points, and therefore do not properly see it, but infer it. The abruptness with which many effects take place leads us into error; it is however only an abruptness for us. There is an infinite multitude of processes in that abrupt moment which escape us. An intellect which could see cause and effect as a continuum, which could see the flux of events not according to our mode of perception, as things arbitrarily separated and broken, would throw aside the conception of cause and effect, and would deny all conditionality." (Nietzsche, 1882, Section 112)

Here Nietzsche introduces the main reason for which causality should not be considered as an empirically solid relationship. The reason why humans identify causes and effects with such facility is that we are used to actively search for causal relationships. A man entering a dark room with a flashlight will only discover what he is actively searching for. Connections between natural features are embedded in an extensive number of contingencies. The inability to process such an amount of information drives the human mind to postulate truth out of the empirical world or to isolate occurrences so that they can be ordered within a linear relationship. This second process is the fundamental error that occurs when people categorize causality as fundamental. Although this passage seems at first glance detached from the discourse on ontotheology, it is instead of central importance to understand this critique. Dogmatic philosophers base most of their reasonings on causality and is it therefore necessary to understand why such an approach can lead to erroneous conclusions.

"The general character of the world, on the other hand, is to all eternity chaos; not by the absence of necessity, but in the sense of the absence of order, structure, form, beauty, wisdom, and whatever else our aesthetic humanities are called." (Nietzsche, 1882, Section 109)

This aphorism extends the discourse on causality to a general life condition that is usually hindered by causal relationship. Dogmatic conclusions or strict causality eventually depict the world as an ordered place where everything happens for a reason thanks to an ultimate scope that is there for humans to discover. By following this line of thought, mankind fails to embrace the Dionysian essence of the world. In this sense, Nietzsche aims to highlight how a shift from dogmatic standpoints could ensure a culture of acceptance characterized by naturalisation of life rather than by anthropomorphising nature to our will.

"Amor fati: let that henceforth be my love!" (Nietzsche, 1882, Section 276)

The acceptance of the chaotic "essence" of the world is for Nietzsche the first step towards a condition of *Amor Fati*. More precisely, this condition reflects a new way of acknowledging the uselessness of dogmatic standpoints as well as the rebuttal of all-embracing metaphysics. Accepting these features ultimately overcomes the gloomy condition that followed the death of God and initiates a condition of joy. Once human beings have understood the feeble importance of their existence and the lack of order in the world, they embrace destiny as something upon which they have no ultimate judgement. This leads to a naturalization of life and therefore to a joy, beyond the happiness of the "last man".

Arbitrariness of values and the Importance of Distance
"Whatever has value in the present world, has not it in itself, by its nature, - nature is always worthless" (Nietzsche, 1882, Section 301)

The discourse on ontological illusions and epistemological errors is concluded towards the end of the book with a "curative" argument. Nietzsche argues how, since it is useless to define something as essentially good or evil, values are always subjective. This entails that valuable entities change based on personal characteristics and on the situational contingencies. Building on these findings, Nietzsche points out how distance is an important catalyser between valuable entities and possessions. Nietzsche states how possessions are diminished by possession. More precisely, this entails that, ceteris paribus, something is considered more valuable when is not yet owned. This same reasoning is then extended to women and their *actio in distans.* This passage is of central importance and will be therefore analysed thoroughly in the following sections.

Stylistic Analysis
The Gay Science is important for two main reason. First, it was written in Nietzsche's mid literary life. This entails a mediated and varied approach. As we will further see, difference will assume a central role in several digressions. Second, the book handles the topic of the death of God. This expression can also be addressed as the end of the metaphysical tradition and constitutes the fundamental theme of the following text. Chaos, nihilism and possibility are the inevitable outcomes of this epochal event (Allison, 2001, p.70-p.73). The variation that characterises Nietzsche's work is not only the outcome of a change in his literary standpoints. Most importantly, the chosen styles are necessary to deal with a world that, for the first time in history, is not bounded to any general ontological system. Nietzsche greatly focuses on religion and on the negative effects that religion's limitations have on the devout man. Surely, these arguments can be directly read as a critique to religion; however, Nietzsche's criticism extends to any transcendent ontology that poses the ultimate truth in an intelligible world. In this sense, the Gay Science can be read as an inverse Platonism. One could then further extend the criticism to ontological systems as whole, disapproving also the immanent ones. These do not suppose an intelligible idea but nonetheless arbitrarily claim the existence of an ultimate truth. Since the claim cannot be rationally justified, any metaphysical argument has no sense whatsoever.

Diversity is surely present within the contents of the book; however, Nietzsche's great variety is to be found within the style. It is not a coincidence that Derrida's focus will be on his way of writing. He defines the literary technique as directly descending *from his blood*. It means that personal passions override the need for academic structure and further elaboration from other authors will become almost impossible (Allison, 2001, p.74-p.80). Heavy reliance on passions and the radical avoidance of the commonly accepted style will be central themes in Derrida's deconstructive process. It is sound to say that style and content in the Gay Science become the same (Allison, 2001, p.74-p.80). It will therefore be conceivable for future linguistics to treat meaning and signifier as one. This makes it possible to derive meaning from style and vice versa. The complete rebuttal of a pre-defined order is confirmed by Nietzsche both in his prose and in what the prose means.

Aphorisms and apothegms become the perfect grounds to deconstruct western dogmas and construct a more holistic philosophy of possibility. Aphorisms are unfinished and therefore do not risk incurring in dogmatic conceptions. Moreover, by changing throughout time they assure a dynamic understanding of knowledge (Allison, 2001, p.74-p.80). Interpretation becomes the main action of the reader that filters the author's ideas through his own psyche and his own historical period. Another important practise is the one of metaphors. These can create connections between similar concepts and therefore enlarge the body of knowledge from a straight-line cause-effect relationship to one based on possibility and contingencies (Allison, 2001, p.74-p.80). Overall, it is clear how Nietzsche's style is an open dispute with the literary tradition he is trying to debunk. However, differently from avant-garde literature and other destructive currents, Nietzsche's aim is to construct on the ruins of dogmatic tradition a more dynamic account of reality. We will see in Derrida how this process of destructive construction (deconstruction) assumes a central role in the partial understanding of a world without a God.

Further Analysis of the Death of God

Regarding the event of the death of God, it is important to pinpoint what Nietzsche refers to with the word God and which are the consequences of this approach. First, Nietzsche originally condemns the ancient western God. The reason for this is that western cultures created out of fear a god of being (Allison, 2001, p.90-p.95). By assuming a creator, religion immediately becomes a transcendent metaphysical system. Moreover, the God of being also becomes the God of truth. This is standardized by Plato as the *logos*. Idealized as the original truth from which everything descends, Plato becomes the truth itself. This belief is also incorporated by Hebraic and Christian traditions and directly reflected in religious philosophies of the middle ages all the way to Descartes. Modern philosophy claims to start with Descartes since this is the first moment in history where the logos is finally detached from monotheistic religions. However, the only action done in early modernity is to go from transcendent logos to an immanent one. According to Nietzsche, some immanent logos is still

logos, and therefore God. As mentioned above, Martin Heidegger labels this western tradition as an onto-theology (Allison, 2001, p.90-p.95).

The essential reasoning in western ontotheology is that everything depends on God, but God is unknowable (Allison, 2001, p.90-p.95). This causes the authorities[2] of these metaphysical systems to filter knowledge and safeguard God's inscrutability. For the same purpose, knowledge assumes the form of a cause-effect straight-line that arbitrarily discerns logic from unlogic, truth from falsehood. This system culminates with the creation of a dogmatic knowledge base where thinkers believe in a universal truth and are deceived by the illusion of truly handling it.

The death of God is for Nietzsche the moment in which logos is not needed anymore. This happens at the moment when westerners recognize science and technology as the omnipotent driving force (Allison, 2001, p.90-p.95). Natural disasters are met by technological solutions and, where these are not yet available, by faith in scientific progress. Allison (2001) identifies four main consequences of this pivotal event. First, there is a radical shift in morality. For centuries people based the justness of their actions on the relation with a transcendent being. It is clear how, with the death of this entity, there will be a deep overturn of the whole moral system. The second and third consequences assert how western societies will continue to live for an indefinite amount of time under the ruins of the ontotheological systems. Moreover, the perceived lack of an ultimate truth will cause westerners to reconsider the previous era as a golden one. Finally, the fourth consequence is the birth of a new age. This will be solely based on man and ultimately westerners will free themselves from their self-incurred limitations (Allison, 2001, p.97-p.98).

The historical deployment of God in the western societies, the consequences of the death of God as well as the current and future anthropological condition of man will be reworked and contextualized in post-modernity by Derrida in "Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles".

---

[2] With authorities I mean any social position enabled to decide what accounts as knowledge and what does not. Examples might be Plato in ancient times, The Church during the middle ages, and the laic philosophers of the early modern era.

Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles

The text commences with a letter sent by Nietzsche to Malwida von Meysenbug (Derrida, 1991, p.38). He affirms that with the publication of "The Birth of Tragedy", he has become the most shocking philologist ever. This is so since, in that work, Nietzsche points out how reality descends from disorder rather than from order and orderability. It is therefore a first step towards the book that will be hereby analysed. With the opposition between Apollonian and Dionysian, he initiates the modern philosophy of acceptance that will be then be lengthily discussed by 20th Century thinkers.

Style: Meaning and Signifier

Following this short prologue, Derrida immediately points out that the book should have been named *The Problem of Style* (Derrida, 1991, p.39). It will be clearer throughout the text why this is so and why style assumes such a central role in his digression. Subsequently, he states that although that should have been the question, *women* will be the subject[3]. The next passage is a continuous stream of similitudes necessary to better understand the different meanings of *style.* Derrida manages the French signifier of the word *style* to create resemblances such as a dagger, a spur or a sail. The former exemplifies a tool through which someone could harm philosophical disciplines to the point of leaving a durable sign. The spur is the central theme of the book and it illustrates the Ancient Roman *rostrum* able both to harm and to cut water like a knife. The spur is also able to defend from what Derrida identifies as the *truth*. This tool should be understood as a device that the philosopher of difference uses to defend himself from whom promotes unilateral truths. At the same, the spur sharpens the philosopher's own knowledge and understanding. However, the spur can also be a dangerous dagger able to deliver pain by however is intentioned to do so. The sail (or veil) refers to the effect that women have through distance. (Derrida, 1991, p.41-p.45)

Women: Actio in Distans

To better understand this passage, Derrida includes an extract from the Gay Science where Nietzsche imagines the scenario of a disturbed man. This character has no specific disorder but nonetheless is bothered by an internal turmoil. This sensation is given by the overreliance on dogmatic truths and by the illusion of handling the ultimate meaning of life with some significant degree of truthfulness. When the man observes the passage of a vessel full of women he is convinced that within that peace he would also discover interior tranquillity. However, also the nicest vessel is permeated by disorder and confusion. Hence, this effect provoked by women functions to the extent that distance remains a necessary condition. Without distance, women lose the concealing effect of the veil, loosing both style and truth. (Derrida, 1991, p.46-p.48)

---

[3] Subject here can be seen both as the central topic of the book as well as the subject of the Hegelian opposition apt to unveil further insights in a dialectic manner.

Women as the Truth

Following this elaboration regarding the importance of distance, Derrida contemplates on the connection between women and truth. While, according to Derrida, men are permeated with the pursuit of truth, women are inherently sceptic of the fact that truth exists. Hence, they are even more doubtful of the possibility that mankind can handle this truth. It is therefore the case that women do not believe any kind of absolute truth. The refusal of this belief makes it possible for women to unconsciously embody the truth. A truth that is such since they do not believe in it and that is filtered by the permanent limit of distance. Moreover, Derrida identifies a parallelism between women and life. Recalling the similitude of the veil, Derrida affirms that women's attractiveness is mediated using veils that show the presence of beauty while at the same time conceals the beauty itself. Similarly, life perpetually shows indications of where to find beauty but covers everything with a golden veil when the moment to enjoy that gorgeousness has finally come. Here, life's veil should be identified as possibilities and expectations. While these are always flourishing, the actual life events hardly match the gloriousness of these mental projects. (Derrida, 1991, p.49-p.53)

Derrida's conclusion is that life is inherently woman. Just as life does not believe in a meaning itself but requires someone (men) to apply a rational sense, women do not believe in themselves and their truthfulness is only evident to external observers (men again). It is clear how, in both these processes, distance plays a catalysing and necessary role. Derrida ironically concludes this paragraph by stating that perhaps, the reason why dogmatic philosophers have always been so far from the truth, is that they do not know how to approach women. (Derrida, 1991, p.54)

Castration

At this point, Derrida has completed his ideas on the connection between truth and women. As previously mentioned, truth is what men cannot reach. In this sense, women, that are truth, cannot be reached. In a way, while the maniacal pursuit of written style is man, written language[4] is woman. Derrida then confirms these conclusions by stating how some old women might be more sceptic towards truth than any other man. On the other hand, these men incur in castration (Derrida, 1991, p.55-p.58). This term is retrieved by classic psychoanalysis. Sigmund Freud (1954) describes castration as the implicit fear - for a kid aged three to five - of physical removal of the penis as a punishment for sexually desiring his mother. It is therefore the Oedipus complex to cause the fear of castration. In later psychoanalysis, Jacques Lacan (2014) idealizes this concept to any mental fetish. More precisely, castration is the symbolic loss of an imaginary concept.

In this sense, the pursuit of truth and the following loss of it embody a perfect example of idealistic castration. According to Derrida, men are never old enough to be sceptic and always have sufficient will and energy to take over activities that have self-attributed utility.

---

[4] Here, written language refers to the unstructured style that Nietzsche employs in his works and especially in *The Gay Science*.

Conversely, women need this effect of castration to augment attractiveness. Moreover, women know something that any dogmatic philosophy would never discover: castration does not exist. Castration would occur with an existing truth and the realistic chance of losing it. However, this truth does not exist. Without any truth, castration does not happen either. (Derrida, 1991, p.58-p.59)

Feminism

Derrida then introduces the topic of feminism. We will delve in this topic further in the text. For now, it is enough to say that women manifesting for equal rights, start believing in the truth and therefore become utterly like men. As a mirror image is the same as its original, feminists gain social leverage but lose the privileged position of truth-bearers and most importantly they lose distance, veil and style. According to Derrida, feminists should strive for equality by convincing men of the inexistence of truth and castration. Yet, they reach equality from the opposite way: by incurring in castration themselves. Naturally women do not want the truth and the process of feminism is a way to degrade the only sparkle of reality present in the world. They do not want the truth because they are not interested. Similarly, a man treats "truth" as his son, women accomplish pregnancy. While on one side men are busy in the void pursuit of truth, women think of what is ultimately important and leave dogmatic systems to scepticisms and indifference. (Derrida, 1991, p.62-p.63)

Women as Deceivers

The chapter is concluded by stating how the greatest of women's arts is deceitfulness[5]. In the following section, women's deceitfulness is said to be twofold. First, women deceive men through seduction. This happens in distance and has as a central feature the partially concealed disposition of truth. At the same time, women do not believe in this truth and are therefore deceiving philosophers a second time. Nietzsche then compares women to artists. In both cases, the art of fiction and falseness is naturally implicit. (Derrida, 1991, p.55-p.67)

Heidegger's discourse on Nietzsche's Style

Derrida now interrupts the former reasoning to closely understand another issue regarding the topic. This refers to the writing style employed by Nietzsche in the Gay Science that, as you may probably have noticed, is of central importance in the digression. Previously, the concepts of truth-veil and simulacrum-castration have been mentioned. The common trait of both concealment and imitation is the need for interpretation. The philosopher of difference requires interpretation to grasp feminine insights. In Nietzsche's literature, this interpretation is applied also to the writing itself, thus making it an interpretation *tout-court.* In "Will to Power" Nietzsche affirms that these existentialist concepts should be attempted through a *Great Style.*

Regarding this style, Heidegger (1981) outlines three main issues. The first is to avoid aesthetic confusion. This matter derives from the new nature of the philosopher. Thinkers are increasingly becoming like artists and should therefore be aware of the risks. The main one

---

[5] Deceitfulness is often addressed by Nietzsche as *simulacrum*

associated with this new role is to confuse every reasoning with aesthetic representations and consequentially promote emptiness. The second problem especially applies to the Will to Power. Heidegger states that the great style should be entirely different from what he calls *heroic-boaster* style. The latter is typical of the bourgeoisie and ultimately descends from Wagner. Again, the risk associated with this approach is to design a void literary style only useful as an independent artistic representation. The third recommendation entails that reading Nietzsche should be necessarily preceded by a thorough knowledge of the 19th Century European history. Heidegger highlights the inevitable historical nature of Nietzsche's works. (Derrida, 1991, p.71-p.72)

Heidegger's Critique of Nietzsche's Aesthetics

According to Nietzsche, classic aesthetics is characterized by *female* characteristics. More precisely, it is a sort of aesthetics only concerned with the evaluation and digression of art rather than with its active production. Modern aesthetics should therefore assume *masculine* traits to become active and productive. Until now, the dogmatic philosopher confronted with arts has been like a spinster that solely observes pieces of art with ignorance and impotence. Moreover, Nietzsche addresses art as a metaphysical representation. (Derrida, 1991, p.72-p.73)

Yet, more than a resemblance of classic ontology, art acquires here the characteristics of a reversed Platonism. Nonetheless, a reversed metaphysics that overturns each classical principle should still be considered as a metaphysics of its own. This process is called by Nietzsche *Umdrehung* and refers to the overturn of Plato's metaphysical standpoints. Heidegger attempts to reverse this style, even though his writing abilities as well resemble an unconnected prose. What Heidegger tells us however, is that the scope of Philosophy is not simply to inverse the hierarchy of philosophy but to change the structure of the hierarchy altogether. (Derrida, 1991, p.74-p.76)

Philosophy as the History of Truth

Derrida applies the same Heideggerian reasoning by saying that the scope of the book is not to reverse Heidegger. In that case, it would mean to be doing again the same thing[6]. It is here necessary to discuss an aspect that was not fully touched: the idea that becomes woman. The French philosopher then describes the idea as dependent on the historical age. In his words, it is clear how the woman and the idea have not always been the same concept. According to him, in the origin of the western thought the idea was in fact Platonic. It is therefore necessary to always account history in this discourse: since idea develops throughout history, this same history is needed to identify the idea in our current age. Philosophy cannot attempt this alone because it is fully embedded in history as well. Further on, this theme will be again used to justify how the disposition of the idea changed between the modern and the post-modern age.

---

[6] The underlying reasoning here is constructed on the counterargument proposed by Heidegger short before.

It is interesting to notice how, through the reasoning explained above, it is possible to identify a moment in time in which Plato could not affirm to be the truth anymore. Derrida refers at this moment in time as the instant in which history began. Here, the idea becomes transcendental and therefore develops a repulsion against the dogmatic philosopher, which is metaphysically positioned in another era. In this sense, the idea becomes thin, captious and elusive: it becomes woman. What Derrida has understood as his conception of the idea is now part of history: the history of an error. This way of thought is surpassed by the idea that becomes woman, commencing therefore another era. (Derrida, 1991, p.80-p.82)

The Importance of Passions

Following the flow of the idea throughout history, Derrida identifies the Christian age as the real moment of castration of the idea. Seen from a Hegelian point of view, it is described as a necessary step in the development of the idea that becomes woman. In this case, the step of the negative dialectic opposition: the antithesis. Nietzsche's master-slave morality depicts how the Christian attitude of repelling passions to avoid the negative consequences of their stupidity is today an acute exercise of stupidity. The Christian way to deal with passions is solely through radical castration. However, attacking directly the base of any passion utterly means to castrate life altogether. It is both hostile to women and to life. (Derrida, 1991, p.83-p.85)

Derrida concludes the reasoning by stating how this destruction is not only performed by men towards women, but also vice versa, and between the same genders as well. He argues for this by stating how in a heterosexual couple, men strive to find someone with deep and intense passions while women are in search of someone with mental brightness and intelligence. It is therefore the case that men pursue the idealized men and women pursue the idealized women. No interaction is present in this kind of relationship. Christians should instead spiritualise passions, which leads to the ultimate Christian aim: love. (Derrida, 1991, p.85-p.87)

Having understood the necessity of passions in life, and sensing how everything is permeated with life, Nietzsche applies these insights to everything, comprehending of course also his literature. This would explain his style pervaded by unstructured aphorisms. These are necessary for the connection of literature with passions and feelings. Only this way the philosopher of difference can then be one step closer to the idea[7]. (Derrida, 1991, p.88)

Women's Condition

Once the heterogeneity of Nietzsche's language has been explained, Derrida continues his pursuit of styles in which the woman is positioned. The first one refers to a condemned woman. This is so because it is considered a deceitful force that opposes the logos and therefore the phallic truth. The second position also refers to a condemned woman. Here, woman is not despised for lies but for the opposite reason. She is hated for the unjust possession of the truth and her use of it as a personal fetish. The third position is diametrically

---

[7] Here, the idea is the Derridean similitude of the woman and therefore of the truth.

different and sees woman as a positive Dionysian artistic representation. Not only does she not descend from the dialectical opposition of men, she affirms herself as the idea and permeates men in every aspect of it. In this sense, there is no castration and men are free from their self-incurred limitation. When analysing these positions, the woman and therefore the *simulacrum*[8] can both embody truth or cause castration. In this sense, Derrida finds himself in a sort of web where he contemporarily fears castrated women or women able to castrate while he also loves women as the only power that avoids castration. These feelings change both based on the moments of his life and of history. Later, we will see how this change in the relation between mankind, the idea, and castration throughout history can yield important insights to construct a philosophy of possibility for the foreseeable future. (Derrida, 1991, p.89-p.93)

Plurality of Truth

The previous reasoning drives towards a central statement: as there is not one single position of the woman, there is not one single way of reading Nietzsche. All in all, truth is always plural. Derrida notices how, since truth is not singular, also the relation between men and women cannot be reduced to a straight-line ontology. Derrida therefore specifies that any philosopher can draw conclusions only based on his knowledge and not on the general ontological system. It is then the case that any statement about a general system will be from now on addressed as a Derridean truth rather than a truth itself[9]. The discourse on women suspends the ability of the philosopher to decide what is true and what is not. Hence, hermeneutics fails, and philosophy is detached from the duties of truth production. The only remaining activity is the style problem. As previously mentioned, style is plural and as such is the only construct able to partially understand the plural truth. By deconstructing style, the philosopher does not aim to unveil findings, his only purpose is to determine the historical framing of the question. The question as such remains plural and therefore unsolvable. Overall, philosophy abandons the problem-solution fetish to embrace a more general approach of possibility and acceptance. (Derrida, 1991, p.94-p.98)

Appropriation

In the following chapter, Derrida explains a Nietzschean passage from "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" in which the process of appropriation between men and women is out-lined. In his words, women necessitate offspring. Hence, men are only a mean to an end. In sociological relations, men are possessive while women provide this possession to men. In short, men want to have, and women want to give. In this giving, women become the necessary actors and therefore overturn the possessive relation. This process overrides any possible dialectic and any possible ontology. (Derrida, 1991, p.100-p.102)

---

[8] Simulacrum is here again the deceitful power of women.
[9] Since it is plural, it is not possible to grasp the truth in every shade of it.

Appropriation is hence present within any style and therefore moulds the history of the idea[10]. It is useful for the dogmatic philosopher to consider the problem of possession to reappraise his ontological and hermeneutic standpoints. The discourse on being and truth is incorporated in the one of appropriation and can thus be considered as the conclusion of the long metaphysical tradition. It is important to note how metaphysics is based on the opposition between what is being (truth) and what is not. The discourse on appropriation however, as previously mentioned, supersedes dialectics. Consequently, it cannot be the case that a new metaphysics of appropriation is created on these standpoints. (Derrida, p.103-p.105)

Derrida then claims that since being is incorporated in possession, it is impossible to think of appropriation with a mindset that discerns among what is true and what is not. Thus, it is also impossible to identify an essence of possession, an essence of difference between men and women and an essence of the woman-truth itself (Derrida, 1991, p.106-p.109).

Nietzsche's Freedom from Dogmas

The radical conclusion here is that the woman was not the topic of the text after all. This probably explains the debated Nietzschean passage of the Gay Science: "I forgot my umbrella". Having reached the conclusion that there is no essence in style, woman-truth or sexual difference, Nietzsche might be describing how he finally lost his phallogocentric fetish. After all, the umbrella could represent a phallic form. The same form that for so long deceived the dogmatic philosophers towards a tradition of beliefs and metaphysics. By stating that truth is plural, Nietzsche might be defining his style as a piece of a grater puzzle composed by more styles. This awareness finally frees the philosopher from his self-incurred limitations. (Derrida, 1991, p.113-p.127)

---

[10] As previously outlined, the idea (truth) is plural and therefore only partially understandable from language (the signifier). Style (language) is for the author his individual truth. The study of language throughout history exemplifies the history of the idea.

Reasoning

Deconstruction

The following reasoning stem from a cross-analysis of Nietzsche's "Gay Science" and Derrida's "Spurs: Nietzsche's styles". For whom is already used to the French author, this opposition will sound as a common trait: deconstruction. Derrida is not new to the practice of recalling a classic text and to analyse it in every instance. Usually, the scope of deconstruction is to unveil new understandings of the text. Precisely, a reading that is not bounded to previous knowledge or mind-set given for granted in one's culture.

In "Spurs", there is a Nietzschean deconstruction in place and the aim is to un-conceal the idea of *Woman*. For this reason, Derrida bases his analysis on the "Gay Science" and its passage on women: *"Die Frauen und ihre Wirkung in die Ferne"* (Section 60). As it often happens with Derrida, this linguistic deconstruction has a deeper goal. Investigating the role of Women in western philosophy, the French author wishes to provide the reader with a picture of the western man's condition. This process does not have the arrogance to pinpoint a single result. Derrida pursues a contingent viewpoint apt to relieve societies from their self-incurred dogmas.

Distance

The central theme in Nietzsche's passage is distance. He describes the masculine condition with a naval metaphor. The main character is a man with his internal turmoil. He stares at a peaceful boat that passes by in that moment and he thinks that, contrary to his disorder, the boat is populated by calm and happiness: women. However, what he does not consider is that his turmoil is essential to every human being, with no exclusion on board of the desired vessel. For the man, distance embodies the limit between himself and happiness. Yet, since the desired features of the ship are not real but solely a representation of his own mind, distance is the only feature that can maintain the boat in a peaceful state. It is therefore the case that distance is both a limit and the essential characteristic of virile desire and hope. (Nietzsche, 1882, Section 60)

According to Nietzsche, men should ultimately seduce women at a distance without being seduced. This process of actively leveraging the effect of distance instead of passively suffering it is the first piece of the deconstructive puzzle. By analysing it thoroughly without pre-conceptions, Derrida sheds a different light on distance and on the effect that distance has in the relation between men and women.

Language

Distance embodies the outcomes of the *différance.* This neologism signifies the extent through which every existing entity is utterly different from the definition or communication of this same entity through the means of language. More precisely, language, with its constructs and grammatical rules, modifies the original message.

The philosophy of *différance* has several implications for philosophy. First, it shows that language should be considered more as a *simulacrum* rather than as an ontological reality. Umberto Eco states that language is whatever a man can use to lie (1975, 19). Consequentially, it follows that western culture, being heavily based on language (especially written one), erroneously treats some concepts as ontologically true (i.e. philosophy).

Having this said, woman in the Derridean sense is not a precise concept. Experienced through an *actio in distans,* women are non-truth[11]. This provokes an overturn of ontology, meaning that the *simulacrum* of women is indeed the only possible reality. From this point on, Derrida will embody the non-truth essence of truth with the image of the woman.

Women and the Truth

In the "Gay Science", Nietzsche anticipates a reply to the unanswered questions of the psychoanalytical tradition. Freud and especially Lacan could not provide an answer to the enquiry of what a woman wants (Lacan, 1974, 399). Nietzsche (1882) models an aphorism in which he forwards the idea that women do not seek truth. On the contrary, since the greatest women's quality is appearance (beauty), their fundamental ability is deceitfulness.

Derrida's deconstruction of this passage is of central importance. He argues that dogmatic philosophers pursuing any kind of absolute truth have lost sight of the woman: the only truth.[12] Although women are the truth, they do not believe in the truth, meaning that they do not believe in themselves. This is another issue for the dogmatic philosopher always searching an ultimate truth. According to Derrida, they have never been more far from reality. The reason why women are the truth, is that they do not believe in it.

This absolute scepticism of an ultimate principle from which everything descends is the real wisdom and the only truth. Opposed to this truth is the philosophical tradition. Also called castration or phallogocentrism[13], it exemplifies the tendency of male dogmatic philosophers to canalize efforts and theories towards the search for truth.

Simulacra

Women are depicted by Derrida as a source of both truth and deceit. They are truth-bearing individuals since they do not believe in an ultimate truth. Conversely, depicting themselves as something they are not is fundamentally deceitful.

This reasoning on truth and women will be better understood through a detailed emphasis on the *style.* Derrida commences his work by introducing the problem of the style. On the one hand, language is a *simulacrum* and therefore a tool often used by phallogocentric

---

[11] This is the case since women are reality only through the filter of distance. Without distance women are not women (in the Derridean sense) anymore. It means that the perceived existence of women is dependent on the ontological non-existence of them.

[12] Here, the woman as truth embodies the main reasoning of the text: acceptance of the non-existence of truth is the actual truth.

[13] Term coined by Lacan (1992) in psychoanalysis.

philosophers to affirm dogmatic statements. On the other hand, language is the weapon through which the writer strives against its logos[14].

The immortal nature of written language clashes with the mortality of the author. Moreover, the style plays an important role especially in the first part of Derrida's text. Through a French linguistic similitude, he introduces the concept of the spur and of the dagger. The former is described as the front side of Ancient Roman ships while the latter as a weapon able to provoke serious pain. A parallelism with the Nietzschean opening image describes the woman able to hit the ontological traditions just as a spur would repeatedly crash the waves. Here women embody the truth. At the same time, women would be able to use the truth as a dagger and aggravate the masculine situation. This metaphor is used by Derrida to point out deceitfulness.

Contrary to most authors, Nietzsche's style is woman. His variated and unstructured literature contrasts the rigid and structured style typical of phallogocentric authors. Derrida therefore decides to deconstruct these aphorisms as he would deconstruct a woman or the truth. In the final part of the book, he writes "I forgot my umbrella". Although this passage is still highly debated, it can be understood as a loss of the penis and of the phallic inhibitions. It would follow that the deconstruction of Nietzsche's styles eventually managed to free the philosopher from his blind pursuit of truth.

Philosophers' Condition

After this parallelism between women and writing, Derrida returns to a Nietzschean aphorism. Here, he affirms that the written language is woman since it does not accept the typical rationalistic and phallic conception of linear life and death. In the "Twilight of the Idols" (1889, Chapter 5), Nietzsche identifies a genealogy of language and its relationship with the truth.

It all starts with the position of Plato, that states "I *am* the truth": we are in front of the apotheosis of man-truth. However, Plato's condition is not considered as shallow as the one of the modern thinkers. This is the case since the philosopher and the concept of truth are still together in one single entity. After this moment, philosophy will assume the characteristics of a blind pursuit of the *idea*: not being able to produce beauty anymore. The idea is therefore the object of truth towards which the philosopher is directed once these two entities are departed from one another.

At this point the outcome is twofold. On the one hand, the philosopher can accept the distance of the idea as something unreachable that gains value from the distance itself. In this instance, the idea becomes a woman that the philosopher treats with love and respect, recognizing her truthfulness. On the other hand, the dogmatic philosopher can erroneously claim the reachability of the idea. Nothing other than lies and mediocrity are the outcomes

---

[14] Here, logos is not intended in a Platonic sense. In modern and postmodern philosophy logos is the embodiment of rational thought: in this case the rational thought of death.

of this approach. The woman in this case would be treated with hate and disdain proper of whom spreads lies among the society. (De Conciliis, 2015, p.41-p.42)

Women's Condition

Women avoid castration through the effect of distance and the one of simulacra. This is valid only in the case in which they do not believe in themselves being the truth and they seduce through the filter of distance. Without these features, women become man in the sense that they also incur in castration.

According to Nietzsche (and in more moderate terms also to Derrida), feminism is utterly opposed to these standpoints. Feminists believe in themselves as truth. However, they also believe that until that moment this same truth has been solely possessed by men. Fighting for parity rights drags them to the same dogmatic and foolish condition as the one incurred by men, therefore loosing style, distance and acceptance (De Conciliis, 2015, p.43-p.44). From a social viewpoint they gain equality and justice, but they lose the privileged position of unsuspecting truth-holders. Derrida will then enlarge this discourse to the point of drawing a line between females and women. Only the latter avoid castration through distance and simulacra.

Female's Condition

The distinction between females and women is now important to better understand the condition of adolescences. Derrida revisits the Nietzschean intuitions on feminism by generalizing them towards the society at large. He restricts the state of idea-bearers only to women by excluding *females* from this category.

The main difference is that females hold an empty simulacrum and are not filtered through distance. Their qualities are only used to cultivate beauty without caring of the connection with the idea. Externally they are like women and may also act in the same way, internally they are empty of significance and of depth. A woman is therefore a female that possesses a deep embodiment with the idea while still maintaining that fleetingness able to seduce. Females that did not yet reach the condition of women think that they can avoid castration, not considering that ultimately, they are men with a different aspect. Derrida is particularly harsh with this life choice. In his view, they are not any better than any dogmatic philosopher. (De Conciliis, 2015, p.43-p.44)

However, females can unconsciously decide whether to become women or remain in their condition. In the first case, they must introduce the filter of distance. As previously mentioned, distance will turn the female in the truth-bearer and therefore into a woman. Feminists instead, by diametrically opposing masculine behaviour and mindset, become the mirror image of those men that in life solely achieve castration and illusion.

Society's Condition

Women, according to Derrida, are the truth-bearers characterized by a fundamental scepticism of an ultimate truth. Females, again according to Derrida, instead believe in an

essential truth and are eager to reach it through emptiness and consumption. I will address this issue in the next section.

As it often happens with Derrida, the truth escapes us again and again. This means that one dogmatic revelation can never relieve its contrary by just affirming another dogmatic proposition. This is precisely the opposite of what societies think about mankind and its abilities. In early post-modern times, mass-media events such as the moon-landing promoted the idea of an invincible mankind. This idea has been partly reconsidered in contemporary times. However, instead of a full reconsideration of the human condition and a subsequent liberation from its self-incurred castration, mankind went towards a nihilation of values and purpose. People understand that a purpose is lacking, yet we continue to pursue blind results as if these were universal truths. This process ultimately produces a society of empty consumption composed by people that understand the issue but do not act upon it (or more precisely *stop-to-act*)[15].

The overview of this societal condition embraces Derrida's and Nietzsche's insights regarding the women-female distinction. Nowadays, increasingly less females manage to become women-truth. In 2003, the Tiqqun editorial identified this trend as *adolescence*. They understood adolescence as the age in which consumption is pure. Most teenagers swindle between a complete absence of purpose and a strive towards radical overturns of traditional societies. More precisely, they go from emptiness to metaphysical castration and vice versa. This view is then enhanced by the image of the female adolescent. Here, not only emptiness and castration are the central themes, but everything is adorned by a self-cure and self-celebration apt to augment beauty, aesthetic social acceptance and futile consumption. It is therefore the case that young generations understand the absence of purpose. However, instead of leveraging this insight to debunk metaphysical rationales embedded in literature and knowledge, we rather create futile purposes of beauty and social acceptance.

---

[15] Since the problem of overproduction in societies derives from a general surplus of time and energy, society would benefit more from an absence of action rather than from a counter-action.

Closing Remarks

At this point, the reader should have grasped some of the discrepancies between business' and (post)Nietzschean philosophy's relationships towards knowledge. The former assumes causality, essentiality and univocity while the latter attempts to deconstruct these assumptions. Business professionals and scholars are interested in the economic viability of their theories and therefore accept assumptions so to ensure simplicity and applicability. Philosophers of difference in turn, strive to eliminate any preconception that could undermine the validity and truthfulness of the reasoning.

As a double degree student, I have attended both business and philosophy courses and have reached the following conclusions. Business academics should more often recall how their theories are used to educate whole generations of students. It is therefore necessary to find a middle point between applicability of the theory and validity of the theory itself. Walking the campus of a business school it is clear how people are trained to solve day-to-day issues but are not used to think out of the box. Within the faculty of philosophy, the problem is the opposite: students are able to generate critical thoughts but seldom share the practical consequences of their reasonings.

A common ground could be found so to ensure a better education and personal development of both categories. Following the reasoning highlighted in the thesis it is clear how there is nothing wrong in assuming causality or univocity to ensure theory applicability. This has been proven functional towards the creation of a wealthy society. In turn however, business students should be taught how these assumptions are not universally valid but only in the case of a practical application. A desired condition should be one in which business students learn from philosophy ones how assumptions are generally false while still using these to manage day-by-day activities.

It would then be the case that philosophers provide the thinking tools used by business professionals to avoid castration of the latter category. Causality, for instance, would then become a powerful tool used by managers that nonetheless understand the constructiveness of this assumption and therefore do not limit the array of possible choices that are to be considered. Managers and business academics would therefore end the ongoing ontotheological tradition by embracing possibility and freeing themselves from their self-incurred limitations.

Personally, the experience of a double degree has developed my own way of reasoning towards a more open mindedness. While I still understand the importance of business theorists in the creation of efficient practices, I am often sceptic towards those scholars that postulate universal applicability of their theories. This has given me the chance to approach issues in a broader manner trying to limit preconceptions on the topic. At the same time, I am also able to understand that in everyday life it is often needed to accept functional assumptions. This however, is always done bearing in mind the constructed nature of these presuppositions: therefore avoiding universal generalizations.

Bibliography

- Allison, D. (2001). *Reading the new Nietzsche*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.
- De Conciliis, E. (2015). *Il divenire donna dell'idea e la verità della Jeune-Fille*. [online] Ladeleuziana.org. Available at: http://www.ladeleuziana.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/De-Conciliis2.pdf [Accessed 13 May 2018].
- Deleuze, G. Guattari, F. (1977). *Anti-Oedipus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia* 1977. Viking Penguin,
- Derrida, J. (1991). *Sproni. Gli stili di Nietzsche* (a cura e con una prefazione di S. Agosti). Milano: Adelphi.
- Eco, U. (1975). Trattato di semiotica generale. Milano: Bompiani.
- Freud, S. (1954). *The Origins Of Psycho-Analysis: Letters To Wilhelm Fliess, Drafts And Notes: 1887-1902*. New York: Basic Books.
- Heidegger, M., D.F. Krell. (1981). *Nietzsche*. English language ed. 1981, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Lacan, J. (1974). *Scritti* (a cura di G. Contri). Torino: Einaudi. vol. I.
- Lacan, J. and Miller, J. (2014). Book X. *Anxiety*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Nietzsche, F. (1882). *The Gay Science.*
- Nietzsche, F. (1998). *Twilight of the idols, or, how to philosophize with a hammer*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tiqqun, (2003). Elementi per una teoria della Jeune-Fille. Torino: Bollati Boringhieri.