Deconstruction and Religion

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Abstract

This article provides an introduction to "deconstruction and religion" by focusing on the late writings of Jacques Derrida, in which religious and ethical themes become particularly prominent. The author explains why Derrida's writings do not constitute a "theory" or "method" for the study of religion, but rather an attempt to show how "religion" itself is impossible. Derrida's treatment of "religion" is explicated through an analysis of the key concepts of "faith" and "holiness," and interpreted as fundamentally an engagement with the question of ethics. The article culminates in an examination of Derrida's notion of "messianicity," a key concept in his late texts. Throughout the course of this analysis, attention is paid not only to Derrida's reading of a number of important philosophical figures (Kant, Levinas, and Austin), but also to the way in which his writings have been appropriated in the attempt to think God and religion after or beyond the Kantian critique of metaphysics and the Heideggerian destruction of onto-theology.

I. Introduction

One witnesses in the later part of Jacques Derrida's prolific career a heightened interest in religious and ethical themes—the religious and the ethical being thoroughly intertwined in these writings, as we will see—including faith, messianicity, apophasis, holiness, justice, hospitality, and the gift. Two oft-cited quotations from Derrida's late texts are particularly noteworthy in this regard. In the first, "Circumfession," Derrida writes of being

> read less and less well over almost 20 years, like my religion about which nobody understands anything, any more than does my mother who asked other people a while ago, not daring to talk to me about it, if I still believed in God, […] but she must have known that the constancy of God in my life is called by other names, so that I quite rightly pass for an atheist […]. (1993, pp. 154–155)

In the other text, "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority,'" Derrida writes that "*deconstruction is justice*" (2002, p. 243). While these statements have certainly taken some readers by surprise, Derrida's writings have arguably always been concerned with God, religion, and ethics in some way. For example, Derrida's engagement with the apophatic theology of Pseudo-Dionysus and Angelus Silesius—in "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials" (1992a) and "Post-Scriptum: Aporias, Ways and Voices" (1992b), respectively—traces back to earlier discussions in the late sixties about the connection between deconstruction and apophatic theology. "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion' within the Limits of Reason Alone" (1998), a text that I will address further on in some detail, continues reflections on Kant's philosophy of religion that go back at least to 1974.[1] Derrida's discussion of faith in this same text is worked out by way of an engagement with J.L. Austin's notion of the performative utterance, an engagement that is underway by 1977 (See Derrida 1982). And one could without much difficulty carry

out the same exercise for the other religious and ethical themes taken up in these later writings.

Philosophers and theologians have been mining deconstruction for theological insights for quite some time (Thomas Altizer and Mark C. Taylor being important examples of an earlier phase of the encounter between deconstruction and theology[2]). But Derrida's late writings have certainly initiated a new phase of interest in deconstruction on the part of theologians and philosophers of religion.[3] Indeed, the lines from ''Circumfession'' quoted above seem to hold open the promise that one can find in deconstruction a heretofore undetected religiosity to which deconstruction, at least in its initial reception, seemed so inimical; as a result, Derrida—no doubt with the help of this cue from ''Circumfession''—is not infrequently read as a religious thinker, or at the very least as one whose texts make possible new ways of thinking about God and religion. No one has done more to advance the image of Derrida as a religious thinker than John Caputo in his book *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion*.

At the risk of oversimplification, I would say that Caputo's work fits into a larger philosophical/theological trend of rethinking the meaning of the idea of God in the wake of the critique of traditional Western philosophical theology and metaphysics—a critique most readily associated with Kant, Nietzsche, and Heidegger—and asking precisely what becomes of the religious after the so-called ''death of God.'' Those who fall within this trend[4] frequently take Derrida as someone whose writings point the way to a recovery of the religious and of a God who is no longer the God of traditional metaphysics. It is not at all clear, however, that Derrida's texts lend themselves so easily to such a reading, though the susceptibility of his (or any) texts to such appropriation is indeed one of the basic lessons of deconstruction.[5] But if Derrida himself was not interested in the construction of a postmodern religiosity, or in attempting to free God from the confines of Western metaphysics, what exactly is the purpose of Derrida's writings on religion? I will pursue one possible answer to this question by way of an examination of several of the ''religious'' themes that Derrida addresses in his later writings, including faith, holiness, and messianicity.

II. A Deconstructive Theory of Religion?

Given that this article falls under the ''Theory and Method'' section of *Religion Compass*, it is worth asking whether one finds in deconstruction a theory of religion or a method for the study of religion. Derrida himself nowhere attempts to provide a key for the interpretation of religion as a human phenomenon, one that we could call ''deconstructive'' and place alongside other ''theories and methods'' (psychological or psychoanalytic, sociological, socio-economic or Marxist, etc.) for the study of religion. And whether one could in fact formulate a deconstructive theory of religion or a deconstructive method for the study of religion would largely depend upon one's understanding of the term ''deconstruction'' itself, since, for however much deconstruction looks like a ''method,'' Derrida himself insisted that deconstruction was neither a method nor something that one *does* to a text, precisely because deconstruction is *always already at work* in the text (1988).

It seems that we are faced at the outset, then, with the difficult question of what, precisely, deconstruction is. Derrida himself characterized deconstruction in many ways, not all of them perhaps fully compatible. But since this is an article about ''Deconstruction and Religion,'' I will privilege one particular characterization from a text called ''Et Cetera…'' in which Derrida explicitly addresses enquiries of the type ''deconstruction and X.''

Each time I say 'deconstruction and X (whatever the concept or the theme)', it is the prelude to a very singular division which makes of this X, or rather makes appear in this X, an impossibility which becomes its own sole possibility, so that between the X as possible and the 'same' X as impossible, there is no longer a relation of anything but homonymy […]. (2000, pp. 299–300)

One can expect, then, that when it comes to the question of "deconstruction and religion," the concept of "religion" that Derrida discusses will be one whose very condition of possibility is at the same time the condition of its impossibility, and moreover, that this impossible "religion" will no longer bear a clear and direct relationship to religion in a more usual sense (whatever this more usual sense might be). In fact, one can see this operation at work in the text that most directly addresses the theme of religion, Derrida's "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone." One notices that "religion" here is in quotation marks, just as the "X" as impossible was in quotation marks in the passage above. The fact, then, that Derrida will discuss "religion" as a figure of impossibility already indicates that what he has to say about religion will not necessarily be helpful as a theory of religion or a method for the study of religion, or at least not for the study of religion as a phenomenon that actually or possibly appears in the world.

Derrida does, however, make the claim in "Faith and Knowledge" that any attempt to "take measure" of the question "what is religion?" would have to incorporate several types of program of investigation. The first consists in an etymological examination of the word "religion," which provides an initial point of orientation, even if etymology alone never allows us to take full measure of the meaning of the word "religion" (1998, p. 34). The second program consists in the "search for historico-semantical filiations or genealogies […] with which the meaning of the word [religion] is put to the test of historical transformations and of institutional structures" (1998, p. 35). The third program involves an analysis concerned with the "pragmatic and functional effects" of "religion"; such an analysis would address the way religion functions in new and unprecedented contexts, liberated from its supposed origins (ibid.). But one could hardly say that there is anything new or uniquely "deconstructive" in this delineation of three programs (etymological, genealogical, and pragmatic) for the study of religion. It becomes clear, as one reads this text, that Derrida's own response to the question "what is religion?" says less about religion itself than about Derrida's particular philosophical project. In the following section, then, I will discuss Derrida's response to the question "what is religion?" in "Faith and Knowledge," and in particular, his analysis of the "two sources of religion."

III. Faith and the Holy: The Two Sources of Religion

In "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone"—a title that is in fact a combination of three other titles: Hegel's *Faith and Knowledge*, Bergson's *The Two Sources of Religion and Morality*, and Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*—Derrida posits two sources of "religion." These two sources are not faith and knowledge, as the title misleadingly suggests, but faith (or belief) and holiness (or sacredness). Derrida writes that "religion" marks the "convergence of two experiences that are generally equally held to be equally religious": "the experience of *belief*, on the one hand (believing or credit, the fiduciary or the trustworthy in the act of faith, fidelity, the appeal to blind confidence, the testimonial that is always beyond proof, demonstrative reason, intuition)"; and "the experience of the unscathed, of *sacredness* or of *holiness*, on

the other'' (1998, p. 33). These two sources ultimately correspond to the two most commonly suggested etymological derivations of the word ''religion.'' ''Faith,'' on the one hand, relates to the derivation of *religio* from *religare*, ''linking religion to the *link*, precisely, to obligation, ligament, and hence to obligation, to debt, etc., between men or between man and God'' (1998, p. 37); holiness, on the other hand, relates to the Ciceronian derivation of *religio* from *relegere*, ''bringing together in order to return and begin again; whence *religio*, scrupulous attention, respect, patience, even modesty, shame or pity'' (1998, p. 36). ''Religion,'' therefore, figures as the ellipse of these two sources ''because it both comprehends the two foci but also sometimes shrouds their irreducible duality in silence'' (ibid.). Let us, then, examine these two sources more closely.

To understand what Derrida says about faith, it is first necessary to understand the notion of ''performative utterances.'' One way to think about linguistic utterances would be to see them as essentially, if not exclusively, involved in the business of describing or reporting about things or states of affairs. This is a particularly compelling account of what linguistic utterances do, because it enables us to say why and under what conditions such utterances can be true or false: if my utterance correctly describes or reports the thing or state of affairs to which it refers, then it is true; if not, then it is false. One problem with this view of language is that there are plenty of utterances that cannot clearly be said to be in the business of describing or reporting. One particularly important class of such utterances is what the philosopher J.L. Austin called ''performative utterances.'' (See Austin 1975). What is characteristic of the performative utterance is its power not simply to report a state of affairs, but to actually bring about a state of affairs through its very utterance—to *make something happen* that can only happen through the utterance of those words. Performative utterances are frequently essential components of rituals, both religious and secular. For example, we would be mistaken to understand the words ''I do'' uttered by the bride during a wedding ceremony simply as an act of reporting her inner state or intentions. Instead, the utterance of the words ritually brings about the marriage, regardless of whether the words accurately reflect her inner state (though the groom certainly hopes they do reflect her inner state as well). The words, when spoken in the appropriate context, have a power to bring something about, and this power makes this utterance something that is not (or is not simply or necessarily) descriptive. Since it is not descriptive, the performative utterance cannot properly be said to be ''true'' or ''false'' either.

To see the relevance of the performative utterance for Derrida's notion of faith, let us consider the class of performative utterance that Austin calls ''commissive,'' precisely because its utterance commits one to some future course of action. Examples here would include promises and oaths. The promise or oath is a spoken formula (for example, ''I promise that…'' or ''I swear that…'') whose very utterance brings about the obligation to act in accordance with it; while you may have every inward intention of committing some action in the future, it is only with the utterance of those words that the obligation becomes binding upon you. What Derrida wants to show is that even those utterances which seem not to be performative, ones that involve only describing or reporting or the simple communication of factual information—what Austin calls ''constative utterances''—are in fact performative. How can this be?

Derrida argues that every utterance carries with it the promise, ''I am telling you the truth.'' We certainly do not explicitly make this promise every time we address another; but when the other lies to us, we take this lie not merely as an act of deception, but as a violation of an implied commitment to speak the truth, or at least to speak what one sincerely takes to be the truth. Indeed, if the other's promise to say the truth were not

implicit in every utterance, communication could never take place, because we would have no basis upon which to believe the other's address. And this implicit promise not only makes communication possible in the first place, it even makes possible lying and deception; for it is only on account of my assumption that the other is telling me the truth that it can be possible for him to lie to me at all. Moreover, this promise implicit in every utterance requires in the addressee a corresponding act of faith in that promise, an act of faith—an ''I believe that you are telling the truth, or at least telling me what you sincerely believe to be the truth''—that is also a necessary condition of any communication. The fact that we must operate on the basis of this faith, however, makes us structurally susceptible, as it were, to lying. In short, the promise-faith structure both makes communication possible and guarantees that we can never foreclose the possibility that we are being deceived. Derrida writes:

> The act of faith demanded in bearing witness exceeds, through its structure, all intuition and all proof, all knowledge ('I swear that I am telling the truth, not necessarily the ''objective truth'', but the truth of what I believe to be the true, I am telling you this truth, believe me, believe what I believe, there, where you will never be able to see nor know the irreplaceable yet universalizable, exemplary place from which I speak to you; perhaps my testimony is false, but I am sincere and in good faith, it is not false <as> testimony'). What therefore does the promise of this axiomatic (quasi-transcendental) performative do that conditions and foreshadows 'sincere' declarations no less than lies and perjuries, and thus all address of the other? It amounts to saying: 'Believe what I say as one believes in a miracle.' (1998, pp. 63–64)

In other words, belief is the transcendental condition of any communication whatsoever, and therefore of any basic constative meaning, precisely because communication would not be possible at all if one could not have faith in the veracity of the other's statements. Therefore, the performative or testimonial character of the address to the other is not ''added on'' to the constative statement, but is the condition of possibility of the constative statement as such. Derrida writes: ''Without the performative experience of this elementary act of faith, there would neither be 'social bond' nor address of the other, nor any performativity in general: neither convention, nor institution, nor constitution, nor sovereign state, nor law'' (1998, p. 44). It should by now be clear from this analysis that when Derrida speaks of faith in ''Faith and Knowledge,'' he is not speaking in a straightforwardly religious register, though his idea of faith is not entirely foreign to such religious faith. Rather, Derrida's ''faith'' is that which preconditions every relation to the other, and is therefore at the root of every social bond, religious or otherwise.

Let us turn now to holiness or sacredness. Among the range of meanings associated with the word ''holy'' (many of which are utilized in the course of Derrida's analysis), the most important for Derrida centers around that which is indemnified in the sense of protected from loss or damage, kept unscathed, intact, safe and sound. Just as Derrida's analysis of faith does not have to do specifically with religious faith, so too is Derrida's discussion of the holy not exclusively or even primarily linked to religion or the divine; rather Derrida is interested in the ''sacro-sanctifying attitude or intentionality'' that consists in a restraint or holding-back before that which must remain safe and intact, an attitude which goes by the names of respect, modesty, restraint, and inhibition, among others (1998, p. 49). In short, holiness involves the indemnification of the otherness of the other, an indemnification that first of all involves the injunction ''thou shalt not kill'' (1998, p. 50). As with the notion of faith, the indemnification of the other is a precondition for the social bond; a socius that lacks a prohibition of murder is hardly conceivable. And yet, as Derrida argues, holiness does not involve an *absolute* respect for life, but is

linked to a universal "sacrificial vocation" that involves not only the respect for life, but the sacrifice of life as well. To understand the link between the indemnification of the other and sacrifice, however, requires some comment on Derrida's understanding of ethics, and specifically on the relationship between "justice" and "law."

Ethics for Derrida is, strictly speaking, impossible—though not, on that account, meaningless—because it involves calculating with the incalculable. Derrida frequently begins his reflections on ethics from the Levinasian claim that I am infinitely and unconditionally responsible for the singular other.[6] Derrida does not attempt to provide a rational argument for this premise, and neither does Levinas, for that matter—the experience of unconditional responsibility is not so much rational as affective, arising as it does out of the address of the other in the face-to-face encounter. So let us provisionally accept the premise that there is an unconditional responsibility for the singular other. The problem with this unconditional responsibility is that one cannot remain in it for long, if at all, precisely because there is never just *one* other; there is always another other who makes his claim upon me as well. But one cannot be unconditionally responsible for two different others, precisely because the responsibility to the one is limited by the responsibility to the other. Thus arises a need for calculation between the claims of multiple others. And this calculation will always to some degree involve a *sacrifice* of some in the name of others. As Derrida writes in *The Gift of Death*:

> [W]hat binds me thus in my singularity to the absolute singularity of the other, immediately propels me into the space or risk of absolute sacrifice. There are also others, an infinite number of them, the innumerable generality of others to whom I should be bound by the same responsibility, a general and universal responsibility (what Kierkegaard calls the ethical order). I cannot respond to the call, the request, the obligation, or even the love of another without sacrificing the other other, the other others. (1995, p. 68)

That is, I am unconditionally responsible to the singular other, but by virtue of the fact that there are multiple singular others, this unconditional responsibility is compromised or sacrificed by the need to enter into a process of calculation to determine how best to meet these competing responsibilities. My responsibility thus becomes conditional to the extent that there is more than one other to whom I am unconditionally responsible. If "justice," for Derrida, becomes the name for the unconditional responsibility to the singular other, "law" then names the domain of calculation and rationality whereby the claims of multiple others are mediated. But the law necessarily betrays justice through its sacrifice of the absolute singularity of the other, precisely because it places conditions upon this unconditional responsibility, and moreover because, in its "general" applicability, the law fails to account for the singularity of the particular case.[7]

Let us return, then, to the "two sources." As I have said, Derrida associates the holy with the etymological derivation of *religio* from *relegere* as a returning or bringing together, as opposed to the derivation of *religio* from *religare* as a linking or joining, with which he associates faith. But Derrida notes that, whatever one decides concerning the "true" etymological source of *religio*, both etymologies involve a kind of re-union, re-assembling, or re-collecting that reacts to a prior disjunction (1998, p. 37). For example, it is only because humans are originally disjoined that the movement toward the other and the establishment of the social bond requires the act of faith examined above, or the "sacrosanctifying attitude or intentionality" that consists in, among other things, respect for the otherness of the other. What is common to both etymologies, then, is the movement that consists in responding to the call of the other. The notion of response, and indeed of

responsibility, will ultimately constitute Derrida's own response in "Faith and Knowledge" to the question "what is religion?":

> Religion, in the *singular*? Response: 'Religion is the response.' Is it not there, perhaps, that we must seek the beginning of a response? Assuming, that is, that one knows what *responding* means, and also *responsibility*. Assuming, that is, that one knows it—and believes in it. (1998, p. ;26)

The problem, however, is that religion as responsibility, or as response to the prior disjunction between beings that are ultimately wholly other, never succeeds in overcoming this disjunction; the alterity is irreducible. The socius or community that constitutes the bond between multiple others is always susceptible to dissolution: the faith that conditions any communication or response to the other always leaves open the possibility of lying and deceit; and the indemnification of the other that also conditions any community in fact requires a sacrifice of those very others who compose the community. The social bond, then, is threatened by the very thing that makes it possible—a process or condition that Derrida refers to as auto-immunization or auto-immunity. We can then say that the very sources of religion, the experiences of faith and holiness that condition every religion, simultaneously render impossible every religion as the teleological unification of a prior radical disjunction. In other words, what makes "religion" possible is the very thing that makes impossible its full realization and immunity to any threat of dissolution. This is indeed precisely what a deconstruction of "religion" (or any other X) aims to demonstrate, as Derrida indicates in the passage quoted above from "Et Cetera…": that which makes "religion" possible is that which simultaneously renders it impossible.

IV. Messianicity

It would not be unreasonable to say, on the basis of our analysis thus far, that everything Derrida has had to say about religion has really, in fact, been about ethics—provided we understand that ethics is not, here, ethics in the ordinary sense, but ethics as the impossible attempt to calculate with the incalculable. And this is no less true for the concept of "messianicity," an important theme in Derrida's late texts.

Ultimately, all of what Derrida has to say about ethics centers on the impossibility of reconciliation between law and justice. In "Force of Law," Derrida argues, through a reading of Pascal and Montaigne, that justice—again, in the sense of unconditional responsibility for the singular other—requires "force," precisely because, as Pascal says:

> Justice without force is powerless; force without justice is tyrannical. Justice without force is gainsaid, because there are always offenders; force without justice is condemned. It is necessary, then, to combine justice and force; and for this end make what is just strong, or what is strong just. (Quoted in Derrida 2002, p. 238)

However, Derrida argues (following Kant) that force is inextricably tied to the law (2002, p. 233); it is only by becoming law that justice has a chance of being enforced. But we have seen above how the law necessarily involves a sacrifice of justice as the unconditional obligation to the singular other. This is not simply because the law forces conditions upon a responsibility which is supposed to be unconditional, but moreover because the law itself is "general," precisely in the sense that a particular law does not itself specify how it is to be applied to all of the possible individual cases to which it might be relevant—in such a scenario there would have to be a different law for every individual circumstance. Derrida makes the point, following Stanley Fish (1989), that a judge in fact performatively re-invents or re-founds the law in his act of affirming or denying the

application of a given law to a particular case; in seeking to do justice to the particular case before him, the judge does not simply automatically apply the law as though he were a calculating machine plugging the data into pre-given formulas, since he must decide whether the law applies to the particular circumstance in the first place. In this way, the judge cannot simply rely on the law to ensure that justice has been done, because in applying the law, he interprets and indeed re-invents the law itself. In fact, Derrida suggests, we never have any certainty that justice has actually been done, precisely because we cannot use the law to confirm that what we have decided is in fact just. Thus we can never know whether justice has been rendered, or with good conscience sit confirmed in the knowledge that justice has taken place.

What does this have to do with messianicity? For Derrida, messianicity names the *advent of justice*, and so one can identify an affinity to the Abrahamic idea of the messiah as one who ushers in justice and peace. The key difference, however, between messianicity and Abrahamic messianisms has to do with the fact that justice, as we have seen, is impossible, precisely because it can only take place by way of complicity with a law that betrays it. Messianicity thus names the impossible experience of a ''*universalizable culture of singularities*'' (1998, p. 18), or in other words, the impossible realization of a universal community wherein there is no longer a sacrifice of the singularity of the other, a community where justice finally (impossibly) takes place. This messianicity must be opposed to the ''concrete'' or ''determinate'' messianisms of any variety (Abrahamic, Marxist, or other), for which the coming of the messiah, however improbable, does not belong to the order of the impossible.

Derrida indicates in ''Force of Law'' that deconstruction itself is animated by this desire for the impossible advent of justice that goes by the name of messianicity, and indeed that deconstruction, in this sense, ''*is justice*'' (2002, p. 243). This immediately places Derrida at a certain distance from Kant, insofar as one of the operative principles of Kantian ethics is that one only *ought* to do something if one *can* do it, if it is *possible* to do it. Derrida's discourse, however, locates responsibility precisely in the domain of the *impossible*. And one can never in fact say for sure what one's responsibility is, or be sure that one has discharged one's responsibility, precisely because of the unconditionality and singularity of justice and the conditionality and generality or universality of the law.[8]

V. Conclusion

What has emerged from this analysis is that Derrida's treatment of religion is no straightforward attempt to analyze the meaning and significance of religious phenomena, but falls within a broader pattern of deconstructive reading whereby the concept under discussion shows itself to be fundamentally aporetic and indeed ''impossible.'' Such a conclusion will perhaps be of little use to the scholar of religion; however, it has proven to be of much interest to a certain brand of philosopher/theologian interested in what becomes of God and religion in the wake of the collapse of the traditional metaphysical concept of God, and central to what is often referred to as the ''continental philosophy of religion''—to distinguish it from the more traditional analytic philosophy of religion that remains wedded in many respects to classical philosophical theology.

It is worth noting that Kant himself, who thought his *Critique of Pure Reason* to have finally put the nail in the coffin of traditional philosophical theology, sought to find a new ground for God and religion not in speculative reason, but in ethics. This replacement of speculative theology with a religion of practical reason in Kant plays out again in the 20th century, in which Heidegger's critique of ''onto-theology''—of the God of the

philosophers to whom one can "neither pray nor sacrifice" (Heidegger 2002, p. 72)—is followed by an attempt to conceive of God and religion outside of the confines of onto-theology. In this attempt, Levinas, among others, seeks to find the trace of God not in the concepts of reason but in the ethical relationship to the other.[9] It is thus not surprising that in "Faith and Knowledge," Derrida asks "*what of this 'Kantian' gesture today? What would a book be like today which, like Kant's is entitled,* Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone?," and further suggests that his task in "Faith and Knowledge" involves the "*attempt to transpose* [...] *the circumspect and suspensive* attitude" that consists in "*thinking religion or making it appear 'within the limits of reason alone'*" (1998, p. 8—italics in the original). If Derrida sees his writings on religion as a "transposition" of this Kantian gesture of thinking religion on the basis of ethics—for as we have seen, the "ethical" and "religious" are thoroughly intertwined in these texts—it nevertheless remains that "ethics" for Derrida is not the sure and stable ground that it was for Kant, given that the responsibility to bring about the advent of justice is nothing short of impossible, but something for which we nevertheless remain fully responsible.[10]

Short Biography

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Notes

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[1] See (Derrida 1986) as well as (Derrida 1987) for Derrida's earlier engagements with Kant's philosophy of religion; note that the dates in the reference are to the English translation, not to the earlier date of the French publication. For an extensive treatment of Derrida's engagements with Kant, see (Miller 2008).

[2] See the essays collected in (Altizer *et al.* 1982) as well as (Taylor 1987).

[3] For a comprehensive examination of theological responses to Derrida see (Shakespeare 2009), chapter 7.

[4] Without wishing to suggest that all of these authors can be said to be pursuing this project along similar lines, or that they would even be comfortable with the above characterization, I would point the reader to the following works: (Caputo 2006), (De Vries 1999), (Hart 1989), (Kearney 2001), and (Kearney 2011).

[5] For a criticism of the "religious appropriation" of Derrida's writings, focusing on the work of Caputo, Kearney, and de Vries, see (Hägglund 2008). Caputo delivers a scathing response to Hägglund's construal of his work and to Hägglund's reading of Derrida generally in (Caputo 2011); Hägglund responds to Caputo in (Hägglund 2011).

[6] When I say "Levinasian" here, I do not mean to imply that Derrida's usage of this idea is altogether faithful to Levinas' own intentions, or that one can assimilate Derrida's thinking to that of Levinas on this point. Instead I am claiming only that Derrida frequently used the name "Levinas" as an index for the idea of an unconditional responsibility to the singular other. For texts treating the complex question of Derrida's relationship to Levinas, see (Miller 2008), (Hägglund 2008), (Critchley 1999), and (Bernasconi 1988).

[7] This brief summary of law and justice is based upon (Derrida 2002).

[8] In addition to Derrida's discussion of messianicity in "Faith and Knowledge" and "Force of Law," see also (Derrida 1994) and (Derrida 2008). For a more detailed analysis of messianicity, see (Miller 2008), (Miller 2007), and (Caputo 1997).

[9] See, for example, (Levinas 1998), particularly the section entitled "God and Philosophy."

[10] For a full treatment of Derrida's relationship to Kant's philosophy of religion, and particularly for a reading of "Faith and Knowledge" as a "transposition" of Kant's attempt to think religion within the limits of reason alone, see (Miller 2008).

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