

**”How Do You Read?”:
Typography and Existence in
*Postscript***

Elizabeth Li

*“Objectively the emphasis is on **what** is said,
subjectively the emphasis is on **how** it is
said”*

Concluding Unscientific Postscript (1846), 202

Efterskriftet, 1846-edition

eksisterer, og dog turde det være muligt, at der i den sokratiske Uvidenhed i Socrates var mere Sandhed end i hele Systemets objektive Sandhed, der coqueterer med Videns Fordringer og lemper sig efter Privat-Doenter.

Objektivt accentueres: hvad der siges; subjektivt: hvorledes det siges. Allerede æsthetisk gjelder denne Distinction, og udtrykkes bestemt saaledes, at hvad der er Sandhed, kan i Den og Dens Mund blive Usandhed. Denne Distinction er i disse Tider særligen at agte paa, thi skulde man i en eneste Sætning udtrykke Forstjellen mellem Oldtiden og vor Tid, saa maatte man vel sige: at i Oldtiden var der kun Enkelte der vidste det Sande, nu veed Alle den, men Underligheden staaer i et omvendt Forhold dertil*). Æsthetisk opfattes Modsigelsen,

“Objectively the emphasis is on: **what** is said,
subjectively the emphasis is on: **how** it is said”

Postscript, 202

PART 1 S p a t i a t i o n [*Spatiering*]
Its Shapes and Sources

J. G. Herder

*Another
Philosophy of
History (1774)*

“No one in the world feels the weakness of general characterization more than I... what an inexpressible thing the peculiarity of one human being is; how difficult it is to be able to put the distinguishing distinctively, how he feels and lives, how different and peculiar all things become for him after his eye sees them, his soul measures, his heart senses—what depth there is to the character of even one nation... yet [it] flees the word so persistently”

**G. W. F.
Hegel**

***Science of Logic*
(1812/1816)**

“A. BEING

Being, pure being... is in fact nothing.

B. NOTHING

Nothing, pure nothing... is... the same as, pure being. ...

C. BECOMING

Pure being and pure nothing are, therefore, the same. What is the truth is neither being nor nothing, but that being—does not pass over but has passed over—into nothing, and nothing into being. But it is equally true that they are not undistinguished from each other, that, on the contrary, they are not the same, that they are absolutely distinct, and yet that they are unseparable and inseparable and that each immediately vanishes in its opposite. Their truth, is therefore, this movement of the immediate vanishing of the one in the other: becoming, a movement in which both are distinguished, but by a difference which has equally immediately resolved itself.”

Letter #127

Kierkegaard to Regine Olsen
1840, no date

My Regine!

Our own little Regine

Such a line under a word serves to direct the typesetter to spaiate [*spatiere*] that particular word. To spaiate [*At spatiere*] means to pull the words apart from one another. Therefore, when I space out the words above, I intend to pull them *s o f a r a p a r t* that a typesetter presumably would lose his patience for he would very likely never get to set anything else in his life.

Your S. K.

“Let us take an idea, an expression from your world of poetry, or from the actual world of first love. The lovers “see” one another. This word “s e e”—you are very adept at spatiating [*at spatiere*] it, at endowing it with an infinite reality, an eternity”.

Either-Or 2, 141

PART 2: How do we think a problem like
existence?

“My main thought was that, because of the copiousness of knowledge, people in our day have forgotten what it means *t o e x i s t.*”

Postscript, p. 249

“If the concept of existence is actually to be emphasised, this cannot be stated directly in a paragraph in a system, and all direct oaths and “the devil take me” only make the didacticizing upside-downness even more ludicrous. That existence is actually emphasised must be expressed in an essential form, and in relation to the illusiveness of existence this is an indirect form—that there is no system. Yet this must not in turn become a reassuring standardised formula, because the indirect expression will always be regenerated in the form.”

Postscript, p. 123

“Existence is the spatiating that holds apart [*det Spatierende, der falder ud fra hinanden*]; the systematic is the conclusiveness that combines [*afsluttethed, der slutter sammen*]”

Postscript, p. 118

“The systematic idea is subject-object, is the unity of thinking and being; existence, on the other hand, is precisely the separation. From this it by no means follows that existence is thoughtless, but existence has spatiated and does spariate [*har spatieret og spatierer*] subject from object, thought from being”

Postscript, 123

“For the existing person, existing is for him his highest interest, and his interestedness in existing is his actuality. What actuality is cannot be rendered in the language of abstraction. Actuality is an *inter-esse* [between-being] between thinking and being in the hypothetical unity of abstraction”

Postscript, 314

“to study the ethical, every human being is assigned to himself. In that regard, he himself is more than enough for himself; indeed, he is the only place where *h e* can with certainty study it.”

Postscript, 141-2

PART 3: "How Do You Read"?

“How do you read?”, says Jesus to the lawyer... Let us imagine that this parable had already been written down in Christ’s day and that someone who has read it now comes to Christ just like the lawyer, then Christ would once again have to say; “How do you read?” and thus continually add a new interpretation and always in such a way that the “How do you read?” precedes the new interpretation and then once again, in conclusion addresses the reader: “How do you read?”. It would have to continue in this fashion—until action ensued. For everyone who does not act accordingly will surely think up one or another way out that makes necessary the reproach “How do you read?””

NB27: 15

“As a reader, I find myself only by losing myself”

Ricoeur, “The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation” (1973)