

TOWARDS A DECONSTRUCTIVE ETHICS:
ANECONOMIC SACRIFICE AND THE LOGIC OF THE GIFT

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that deconstruction as a practice has been, from its inception, inherently ethical, focusing in particular on Derrida's reading of the gift. Deconstruction, insofar as it remains committed to interrogating totalizing narratives, demands a radical openness with respect to the multiplicity of meanings at work in a text. Derrida's insistence on individual responsibility as obligation to the wholly other affirms the gift as an interruption in the cycle of exchange. To address the ethical implications at work in Derrida's reading of the gift, I examine the futural structure, 'messianic time,' that conditions the emergence of the gift, with particular attention to Abraham as a figure of individual responsibility *par excellence*. Derrida's Abraham, abstracted of any Judeo-Christo-Islamic inheritance, aims at recuperating a structural faith preserved in the three religions of the book. In answering the call of the unseen God, Abraham exemplifies individual responsibility, a willingness to be 'determined otherwise.'