Restitutions
Of Truth to Size,
_De la vérité en pointure_

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for J.C. — sztejn

translated by John P. Leavey, Jr.*

POINTURE (Lat. _punctura_), s.f., old synonym of _pique_.
Printer's term. Small thin iron plate which is pointed and
serves to fix the sheet to be printed on the tympan. Hole that
this plate makes in the paper. Shoemaker's and glover's term.
Number of stitches [the size] of a shoe or a pair of gloves.

— *Littré*

I owe you the truth in painting, and I will tell you it.
— Cézanne, cited by Hubert Damisch

But the truth _— and trying to create the true_— is so dear to
me, that in the end I believe, I believe I still prefer being a
shoemaker to being a musician with colors.

— Van Gogh

— And yet. Who said, I no longer remember, "there are no phantoms in Van
Gogh's paintings"? But right there is a story of phantoms. Yet we'd have to wait
until there were more than two to begin.
— Better to match them. And even more than three.
— There they are. I begin. What shoes? What! shoes? Whose shoes are they?

* I would like to thank Professor Derrida for his usual kind assistance, as well as Professor
Emilia Kelley for her judicious help with certain renderings of this text. A portion of this
text was delivered at Columbia University in Fall 1977. A French version is to be published
in *Macula_. — Tr.
What are they made of? And also what are they? There they are—the questions—that's all.

—Are they going to stay there, set down, left in utter neglect, abandoned? Like those apparently empty, unlaced shoes, waiting with a certain detachment as someone comes and speaks, as someone comes to say what is necessary for refastening, for reattaching them [pour les rattacher]?

—What I mean is, there will have been something like the pairing of a correspondence between Meyer Schapiro and Martin Heidegger. And, if I take the trouble to formalize a bit, it—this correspondence—would return to the questions set down a moment ago.

This correspondence would return to them. Return [revenir] will be of great import [portée] in this debate (also its scope [portée]). At least if the question is knowing whom and what these particular shoes, and perhaps shoes in general, haunt or return to [reveniennent]. To whom and to what, accordingly, we'd need, in paying our debt, to restore them, to render them [les restituer, les rendre].

—Why is it always said of painting that it renders, that it restores?

—in paying our more or less phantom debt, to restore the shoes, to render them to their rightful owner. If the question is knowing where they return from—the town (Schapiro) or the fields (Heidegger), like the mice I think they resemble (what then is man to these mice of mice?), unless they resemble more pièges à lacets, snare traps, waylaying the stroller in the full museum (can one avoid hastening one's step, in order to set one's feet down there?). If the question is knowing what revenue their out-of-use dereliction still produces, what surplus value lets loose the nullification of their use value: outside the painting, in the painting, and thirdly as the painting. Or to say it in a very equivocal word, in their truth as painting [dans leur vérité en peinture]. If the question is knowing what ghost's [revenant], townsman's or peasant's, step still comes to haunt them ("a ghost of my other I," the other I of Vincent the signer suggests Schapiro as he cites Knut Hamson ["SL," 207]—Heidegger also does this elsewhere). If the question is knowing whether the shoes in question are haunted by the phantom or are the ghostly returning [la revenance] itself (but then what are, who actually are, and whosesoever are, these things?). In short, ça revient, it returns to what? To whom? To whom, to what restore, reattach, readjust correctly

—to what size correctly, by measuring, adequately

—and from where? How? If the question is at least knowing, the return will be from a long distance [portée].

What I mean is, there will have been correspondence between Meyer Schapiro and Martin Heidegger.

One of them said in 1935: ça revient, it—this pair—returns from the fields to some peasant, indeed to some peasant woman

—where does he get the certitude that the question involves a pair of shoes? What is a pair?