

FOR THE LOVE OF LACAN

*Jacques Derrida**

What wouldn't Lacan have said!

What won't he have said!

This is not a question, it is an exclamation: to get my voice right, to find the appropriate tone, before beginning to try out this idiomatic conjunction of negation, denial [*dénégation*], conditional and future in the past, my hypothesis being that these grammars, now in succession, now simultaneously, play the role of a screen and of a mirror in the modalities of the *with*, as they do in the modalities of the *since* [*depuis*] that will have determined Lacan's relationship to the philosophers—to certain philosophers. These few reflections on temporal modalities will thus bear the imprint marked by the effects of what Stephen Melville has just said about “narration,”¹ and therefore about history [*l'histoire*], “temporal shifts,” and also about the possibility of a *Kehre*, of a “turning” in Lacan after the *Écrits*—that is, more precisely, since 1966-1967.

What won't Lacan have said! What wouldn't he have said!

To get a better idea of what there was between Lacan *and* the philosophers, one would have not only to make clear what “between” can mean in this case, but also to elucidate what Lacan said, did not say, will, or will not have said, will have caused or allowed to be said—in the future in the past or in the conditional. To deal with this enigma of the future in the past and the conditional, which will be my particular concern today, is to deal with the problem of archivation, of what does or does not remain. It is an old problem. But, in this century, the birth of psychoanalysis—in conjunction with the advent of new techniques of archivation or telecommunication—will have consolidated the system [*appareil*] of certain paradoxes with which, at least this is my feeling, conventional history, the way in which history or histories are told or transcribed (written), has perhaps not yet systematically come to terms. It is quite simply the concept of history that is at stake here. The effects of these paradoxes, let's call them technopsychoanalytic (since they concern *conjointly*, at the same time [*du même coup*], what psychoanalysis can tell us about inscription, era-

* Translation by Brent Edwards & Ann Lecerle.

¹ Stephen Melville, «*Depuis Lacan?*», in LACAN AVEC LES PHILOSOPHES 391 (1991).
Trans.

sure, blanks, the un-said, memorization *and* new techniques of archivation, this one, for example, and all the tape recorders that are in this room), do not only concern Lacan, of course. But the example of Lacan offers certain peculiar [*singuliers*] features, at least in my view, which deserve the attention of all those whom these questions interest.

The trouble with colloquiums, at least the one that bothers me, is that one does not go into details, and instead of treating the "things themselves" (ah, the things themselves!) with as keen an eye as possible, we must, for want of time and because our voice finds itself caught in the swelling rhythms of a sort of chorus or choir, give up the minutiae of the letter—that is, the microscopic or micrological displacements where I always incorrigibly hope that things are decided—at a given moment. But the given moment is never given. That this given moment might be given, is precisely what is never given in advance—and here we are, having already reached, too early of course, well in advance, the question of destination.

Owing to this macroscopy or macrologic of the colloquium, moves of "external" strategy—so to speak; supposing the purely external existed, which I do not believe—tend always very largely to prevail. And then what prevails over work are theses, positions, position-taking, positionings. I have never had a great liking for those things, theses, I have never had much time for them [*je ne m'y suis pas souvent arrêté*], and it is not just a question of taste. It is the question of philosophy, nothing less, and of what is consonant with the *thesis* in philosophy, with *positionality*. In a reading of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, which is not just any book by Freud, and as you know, not just any book by Freud for Lacan, I tried (it was *To Speculate—on "Freud,"* in *The Post Card*)² to indicate in what way Freud only progressed in so far as he suspended, without possibility of stopping [*arrêt*], all the theses in which it would have been in the interest of his successors or heirs, his readers in general, to stop him.³ This reading was also an interpretation of what links speculation on the name, the proper name or the surname, to science, and in particular to psychoanalytic theory and to the psychoanalytic institution. It is self-evident that my reading

² JACQUES DERRIDA, *To Speculate—on "Freud,"* in *THE POST CARD* 257 (Alan Bass trans., Univ. of Chicago Press 1987) (1980). *Trans.*

³ Derrida is playing in this passage on the many meanings of the word *arrêt* in French: a stop or stopping; a judgment or decision; an arrest. In the latter case, he may also be alluding to Lacan's frequent references to the so-called "psychoanalytic police" that brought about his expulsion from the International Psychoanalytic Association. *Trans.*

also concerned—explicitly, providing there is a certain code or program of translation available—questions concerning the name of Lacan, the problems of legacies, of science and of institutions, the aporias of archivation with which it is bound up.

I will thus once more attempt to resist the drive [*pulsion*] towards or the expectation of position-taking. And to those expecting some positioning here from me in order to fix [*arrêter*] their judgment, I wish the very best of luck.

So as not to lose myself in the number and difficulty of the problems that it is necessary to tackle, so as not to keep you too long, so as not to reopen too many texts which, after all, are available and in principle readable for those who so desire, I will confine myself to the rules of discussion (since the moment has come for discussion), and first of all to the discussion as it has been broached by what René Major⁴ and Stephen Melville have just said to us. I will observe this rule scrupulously. But it is self-evident that in the discussion which follows, it is up to you all, if you like, to propose another space for discussion.

René Major cited the *incipit* of Lacan's seminar of November 16, 1976, which begins with the words "Did you know how to read the poster?" [*Avez-vous su lire l'affiche?*], and which says regarding failure ("the not-known-that-knows" [*l'insu-que-sait*])⁵—that is, if I translate it my way, which is perhaps not very Lacanian, the failure which fails *in* arriving [*qui échoue à arriver*], in other words which fails—namely because it arrives, because it succeeds, which fails *in* succeeding (the syntax of the *in* [*à*] moving surreptitiously, but quite necessarily, here—and I have often played on this—in order to pass from one grammar to another; "I fail in arriving" [*J'échoue à arriver*] means both "I do not arrive," "I cannot manage to arrive," and I fail to or I do not arrive because I arrive, I do not arrive *in* arriving, as a consequence, because, since I arrive—here it is the event that speaks, it is of the event, of the arrival, of the coming and of the "come" [*viens*]) that I speak), thus a matter of failure as of what does not manage to arrive, precisely *in* arriving, due to the fact of arriving, because it arrives. René Major cites

⁴ René Major, *Depuis Lacan: —, in LACAN AVEC LES PHILOSOPHES*, *supra* note 1, at 373. *Trans.*

⁵ The pun in French is untranslatable: the word for failure here, "*l'insuccès*," when pronounced sounds the same as "*l'insu-que-sait*," which literally means "the not-known-that-knows." *Trans.*

Lacan's seminar dated November 16, 1976: "The single stroke⁶ interests us because, as Freud emphasizes, it does not especially have to do with a loved one." And Major is quite right to continue: "I hasten to add that it is not always the people who love you who do you the best turns." I would be dead if I did not believe that he is correct on this point. I would be dead, and if I have understood aright, this would not come about without some secondary profit, at least for my name, but I have preferred to wait.

And if I said now: "You see, I believe that we loved each other a great deal, Lacan and I . . . ," I am almost sure that many here could not bear it. This is why I don't know yet whether I am going to say it. Many could not bear it, and that explains a number of things. Many could not bear it, not out of being surprised by it, not at all, I even wonder if the thought wouldn't be strangely familiar to them, but because it is a thing that should not have taken place, and which above all must not be said without presumption, especially by one person (saying) "we" on his own after the death of the other. Thus, the Thing should not be said, nor above all repeated; and if nonetheless I did repeat, "We loved each other a great deal, Lacan and I, each as we pleased [*comme il lui aura plu*], each in his own way or each in our own way," would that be a revelation, a confession, a denunciation? Let everyone interpret "as he pleases" in his own way [*comme il lui plaira*]. That, "as he pleases," is a citation from Lacan, of a quasi-private phrase between Lacan and me, a sentence in which "him" is me, and a sentence I shall come back to in a moment.

As for being shocked to see someone say "we," speaking on his own after the death of the other: there's nothing to be shocked about. There, too, it's one of the best-known phenomena of the *destinerrance*⁷ which inflicts an internal drift on the destination of the letter, from which it might never return, but to which we should return. "We" is a modality of the *with*, of the being-with, or of the

⁶ "Single stroke" is Alan Sheridan's translation of "trait ununaire" in JACQUES LACAN, *FOUR FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS* (Alan Sheridan trans., W.W. Norton & Co. 1977) (1973). *Trans.*

⁷ In not translating Derrida's neologism *destinerrance*, I am following the strategy of other Derrida translators, with terms such as *différance*, *restance*, and *revengeance*. *Destinerrance* is a pun: the French word for "addressee" is *destinaire*, and so one noun for "addressing" would be *destinairance*, which is a homonym for *destinerrance*. The latter term marks the possibility or risk in any addressing that, as Derrida writes on page 444 in *The Post Card*, "a letter can always not arrive at its destination"; *errance* means both "erring" and "wandering," and so the compound noun *destinerrance* literally translates as "destination erring," or "destiny wandering." See generally THE POST CARD, *supra* note 2, especially the first section, *Envois*. *Trans.*

doing-with, *avoc*, *apud hoc*, at the home of [*chez*] the other, as a host or a parasite. Yet “we” is always said by only one. It is always one person alone who has the nerve to say “we psychoanalysts,” “we philosophers,” with you psychoanalysts, with us philosophers, or more solemnly yet, we psychoanalysts with the philosophers or with us philosophers. “With” means also “at the home of” [*chez*] (*apud*, *avuec*, *avoc*, *apud hoc*, the category of the guest or the intruder, of the visitor or the parasite, thus—you were talking of that a moment ago—who always takes advantage of you as soon as he says “we”). The logico-grammatical modality seems interesting because, among other things, it is always myself who says “we,” it is always an “I” who utters “we,” assuming in sum by this, in the dissymmetrical structure of the utterance, the other to be absent or dead or in any case incompetent or arriving too late to object. The one signs for the other. The dissymmetry is even more violent if it is a question of a reflexive, reciprocal, or specular “we . . . each other” [*nous nous*]. Who will ever have the right to say “we love each other”? But is there another origin of love, another amorous performative than this presumption? If there is some *we* in being-with, it is because there is always one who speaks alone there in the name of the other, from the place of the other, there is always one who lives more, and longer. I will not hasten to call this one “subject.” When we are with someone, we know *without delay* [*sans retard*] that one of us will survive the other, is thus already doing so, and will be able or will have to speak alone. And from this, one can immediately draw the consequences. It happens every day; and even when we sing the Marseillaise or join in with a chorus, which remains the exception and does not commit us much, it is still an I who can say “we”—for example, “we love each other.”

What archiving goes on! [*Qu'est-ce que ça s'archive!*]

That is not a question. It is yet another exclamation, an exclamation point slightly in suspension, because it is always difficult to know if it archives itself, what archives itself, how it archives itself, the trace [*trace*] that arrives only to erase itself/that arrives only by erasing itself [*qui n'arrive qu'à s'effacer*], beyond the alternative of presence and absence. To know this is not only difficult, it is rigorously impossible, and not, without doubt, because there is always more to know, but because it is not of the order of knowledge [*savoir*].

This is never a sufficient reason not to seek to know, as an *Aufklärer*—to know that it archives itself, how far, up to what limit, and how, by what devious, surprising or overdetermined routes.

René Major made at least two allusions a little while ago, first to an “underground” history in the very trajectory of Lacan’s discourse, then to a “question in question” which, I am quoting,

has a history, concerns texts, many texts, that are neither limited to a locatable circle nor delimited by a geographic area, and this despite the fact that it does not take the exhibited or advertised form [*forme affichée*] of an academic and institutional program—even if and especially if it does not take that form. The question of the question is more vast, and is a matter of procedures for translation and theorico-practical issues whose confluence is at the frontiers of many disciplines which they destabilize.⁸

Yes, I believe that this is true in general and more particularly for the things in question under the title *Lacan with the Philosophers*: the modalities of the *with* here call for a history and a type of historical interpretation characterized by extreme micrological prudence, deliberateness and sophistication, that pays unremitting attention to the paradoxes of archivation, to what psychoanalysis, supposedly not only the theme or the object of the history here but also its interpretation, can tell us about these paradoxes of archivation, of its blanks, the efficacy of its details or its nonappearance, of its capitalizing guard—or but there we are possibly already beyond psychoanalysis, in the radical destruction of the archive, in its ashes without repression and without reservation [*mise en reserve*], without that reservation or setting aside [*mise en garde*] that would operate in repression by a mere topical displacement. But just as keen an attention is also required regarding what, in psychoanalytic discourse, Lacan’s for example, is problematic concerning precisely archivation, the guard, the economy of repression as guard, the inscription, the erasure, the destructibility of the letter or the name. A history on the scale of these formidable difficulties, capable of taking them into account in its own historical discourse, should come on top of other readings of the archive—whether conventional or not, (conventional) and more classically symptomatic—without in the least disqualifying them, because they are also indispensable, or at least inevitable. And that is not going to happen in a hurry. [*C’est pas demain la veille.*]

Before offering, in response to what has just been said, a few modest, partial, preliminary contributions to such a history, I would like to say briefly why and in what spirit I accepted the invitation I was honored with by my friends at the *Collège international*

⁸ Major, *supra* note 4, at 387. *Trans.*

de philosophie, René Major and Patrick Guyomard—who were, I believe, the first to have the fine idea of having this grand colloquium, plural and international. If I said yes, it was certainly not because I think I have something more or something irreplaceable to say concerning these things (the discussion of what I happened to put forward nearly twenty years ago around these questions would demand a microscopic examination that we, you and I, here, have neither the time nor the patience for, and that, as I've said, is ill-adapted to the rhythm and the setting of a large colloquium). No, if I was happy to accept the invitation and if I did so almost two years ago, before I even knew who would be speaking and what would be said here, in particular what Major would say (it did not occur to me for an instant to ask him even what would be the title of his paper); if I was happy to accept the invitation, then, it was because, in addition to the considerable and necessary work which can be done here—work on subjects too often avoided until now, especially within the analytic milieu, including that around Lacan—this colloquium also has the significance of an international homage to Lacan. And it was with this event, this just and spectacular homage, that I was happy to be associated. Not only for this reason, but also because, in our present era, that of culture, and of Parisian culture in particular, I find a political virtue in this homage. I consider it an act of cultural resistance to pay public homage to thought, discourse, writing, that is difficult, that does not lend itself easily to the normalization by media, academe, or publishing, that is refractory to the restoration now in process, to philosophical or theoretical neoconformism in general (we are not speaking of literature), which is flattening out and levelling smooth everything around us, (which is) attempting to make us forget what the era of Lacan was, as well as the future and the promise of his thought, and thus, in doing so, to erase the name of Lacan (and you know that there are a thousand, occasionally most paradoxical ways of doing that, as Lacan in his lifetime was to experience by way of “excommunication”; and it is possible that certain of those who invoke the name of Lacan today, and not just his heritage, are amongst the least active or efficient in this undertaking. There again the logic of “favour done” is at its most underhanded, with censure, suture, and orthodoxical defensive moves [*bétonnage*] not ruling out the facade of cultural eclecticism—on the contrary). Whether it concerns philosophy, psychoanalysis, or theory in general, what the restoration now in process attempts to cover up, to deny, or to censure, is that nothing of that which was able to transform the space of thought in the course of recent decades would

have been possible without some explanation *with* Lacan, without Lacanian provocation (however one receives it or discusses it), and I will add, without some explanation *with* Lacan in his explanation *with* the philosophers.

With the philosophers rather than with philosophy: I have always been seduced by the dramatization according to which—breaking with the commentary or the historiography in use by many professional philosophers, whether they give a more or less competent account of the lives of philosophers or whether they reconstitute the structure of systems—Lacan put on stage the singular [*singulier*] desire of the philosopher, and thereby contributed more than a little to opening the space for a sort of new philosophical culture. Where we now find ourselves, even if one wants to make us forget it in order to turn the clock back. In Lacan, the being-with or the explanation with the philosophers attained a sophistication, a scope, the unexpected luminosity of a “lighthouse beam” [*coup de phare*] of which there are few other examples either in the community of professional philosophers or in that of psychoanalysts. And thus, rarely will a frequenting of philosophers, a being-with philosophers—and I say it in the sense of the greatest favor or the greatest fervor—have *deserved discussion* to this degree, deserved that one discuss *with* Lacan the manner in which he will have settled [*réglé*] his account *with* the philosophers. Lacan’s sophistication and competence, his philosophical originality, have no precedent in the psychoanalytic tradition. From this point of view, the return to Freud as a philosopher would have been a regression or a weakness, but I will say in a moment a word about the paradoxical and perverse consequences that follow from the fact that Lacan is so much better informed a philosopher than Freud, so much more a philosopher than Freud!

Having thus accepted with joy the invitation to participate in this reflection, in this discussion and in this homage, I believed that there was no cause for offense or discouragement, as there might legitimately have been for others, and as certain people perhaps hoped there would, when they put forward as a pretext the rule that one would speak only about the dead here, and thus not about me, if one respected this rule, except on the condition that I play dead, even before the fact, and that I’d be given a helping hand for the occasion—that is, it sufficed to think of it, of making me disappear notably as a living person, because that I am (alive), to make me disappear *for* life. I thus believed that I should not let myself be offended or become discouraged, living as I still am, and jovial.

with it, by the lamentable and indecent incident of my proper name being forbidden on the hoardings, of the veto concerning the adjective or the attribute left over from a proper name—I mean the *acting out*⁹ referred to by Major just now, when he truly made the essential point. If I was indeed shocked like many by the symptomatic and compulsive violence of that acting out, I was not surprised by what it symptomalizes—the analysis of which I have been versed in for the past quarter century. Thus I will not add anything else for the moment: (in order) to save a little time, because I find it increasingly tedious, and because, let's say, “I know all too well,” and finally because—without even speaking of the sinister political memory that we have of the history which, in France, and especially in Eastern France, has been written, so to speak, not in ink, but in the erasure of the name, without then even mentioning this political memory—the essential has been said on this subject, precisely by Freud and by Lacan—who knew what he was talking about. And if I may permit myself this self-reference in a dozen books including one on the names of Freud and Lacan, I myself have elsewhere sufficiently formalized legibility under erasure [*sous rature*] and the logic of the event as a graphematic event, in particular that of the proper name, which, the little beauty [*le beau diable*], only arrives *in* erasing itself [*n'arrive qu'à s'effacer*], to add anything here for the time being, at least out of modesty, since in this case it seems to be a matter of my so-called “proper” name, or what might remain of it in an epithet. This said, if some among you wish, I will not seek to silence what I think about all this, but only at the end, after everything, as a postscriptum or in parentheses, *off the record*,¹⁰ as one says in English.

Off the record means off the recording, outside the archive. We are thus led back to the difficult question of the “*record*,” of history and of the archive. Is there an “outside-the-archive?” Impossible, but it is the impossible, and thus the business of deconstruction.

At bottom, behind the question of what I will call again the *restance* of the archive—which does everything but *remain* [*rester*] in the sense of the permanent subsistence of a presence—behind this question of the *differance* or of the *destinerrance* of the archive, there might be outlined, at least for the duration of a session, the silhouette of all that seemed to me to merit discussion, since we are here to discuss or to restart discussions. By which I mean the silhouette of that which seemed to me to merit discussion not with

⁹ In English in the original. *Trans.*

¹⁰ In English in the original. *Trans.*

Lacan *in general*, and especially not in the name of philosophy *in general* (on the subject, in the name, and from the point of view of which I have never spoken, no more consequently, than I have spoken of antiphilosophy, which has always seemed to me to be the thing least deserving of interest), not with Lacan in general—who for me does not exist (and I never speak of a philosopher or of a corpus in general as though it was a matter of a homogeneous body: and I have not done so for Lacan any more than for any other); but with a strong, relatively coherent and stabilized configuration of a discourse at the period of the collection and the binding [*reliure*] of the *Écrits*, that is, in 1966.

The binding of the *Écrits* is what makes them hold together and what ensures for them the most solid systemic structure, the most formalized constructure, as formalized as possible. Yet if there is a text that holds together more than any other in this position and at this post of binder [*reliure*], it is certainly the *Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"*.¹¹ As you know, the *Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"* receives a privilege; I quote Lacan's words: "the privilege of opening the sequence [the sequence of the *Écrits*] despite its diachrony." In other words, the *Écrits* collect and bind all the texts that comprise it in their chronological order (according to the "diachrony") of their previous publication, with the one exception of the *Seminar on "The Purloined Letter,"* which, coming at the head of the collection, receives the "privilege" (Lacan's word) of figuring the synchronic configuration of the ensemble and thus of *binding* the whole. It is for this reason that it had seemed to me justified to take a privileged interest in this privilege; and if I use this word *binding* [*reliure*] here, binding that makes the collection hold together at the moment of reading and re-reading [*relire*], it is because one of the only two times in my life when I met Lacan and spoke a little *with* him, he himself spoke to me of binding, and of the binding of the *Écrits*. I am not telling these stories for the amusement or diversion of anecdotes, but because what we should be talking about here is the meeting, the *tukhè*, the contingency—or not—and that which binds, if you wish, the signature of the event to the theorem.

I met Lacan only twice, and ran into him at a cocktail party on a third occasion, much later. I do not know if this means that we were together, one *with* the other, but in any case these two meet-

¹¹ Jacques Lacan, *Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"* (Jeffrey Mehlman trans.), in *THE PURLOINED POE: LACAN, DERRIDA & PSYCHOANALYTIC READING 28* (John P. Muller & William J. Richardson eds., 1988). *Trans.*

ings did not take place at the home of [*chez*] (*apud*) one or the other; moreover, the first time, we were abroad, in 1966, in the United States, where we had exported ourselves for the first time (I use the word “exported” advisedly; it is a quote, because you know perhaps—that through the pseudonyms that journalists term transparent—the recognizable character out of some atrocious novel (when I say atrocious, it is to talk “literature” and not only “morals”), complaining first about not being translated abroad, complaining about it with a sourness that seems to permeate the paper itself; this character said quite recently, in a single breath, that Lacan and I, Lacan *with* me, alias Lauzun *with* Saïda for close friends, are both “adulterated products, fit for exportation.” To find myself in the same export package *with* Lacan would have been rather to my taste, but this was not bearable to everyone and to everyone’s taste, for a journalist who shuttles between the Gallimard editorial board and *le Nouvel Observateur* attempted to separate me from being *with* Lacan by saying that, for the author of this dreadful novel, it was only Derrida—told him my name, not at all that of the fictional character, not even Saïd, Sida or Saïda—who, this time in the singular, in a quotation that was inexact, becomes an “adulterated product, fit for exportation.” I alone, no longer *with* Lacan as the author or character of the fable had claimed, but without Lacan, I henceforth quite alone, an “adulterated product” in the export compartment, I all alone in my box, deported, exported abroad, and, why not, with my reentry denied [*interdit de séjour*],¹² I all alone, isolated, insularized by the decree of a cultural traffic policeman. That’s one of the things that is happening in France today, in the great *quartiers* of culture and politics that I was speaking of at the beginning).

So (I am starting again) so when I met Lacan in Baltimore for the first time, in 1966, and when we were introduced to each other by René Girard, Lacan’s first words, with a friendly sigh, were: “So we had to wait to come here, and abroad, to meet each other!” And I remark here, perhaps owing to the problem of the *destinerance* that awaits us, and perhaps to Baltimore’s name of death [*nom de mort*] (Bal/timore, dance or trance and terror), Baltimore which is also the city of Poe, whose tomb I searched for in vain at the time, but whose house I was at least able to visit on that occasion (I went *chez* Poe in 1966), I remark here that perhaps owing to Baltimore’s name of death that the only two times we met and ex-

¹² The French phrase *interdit de séjour* refers to a former prisoner who is banned by decree from specified places. *Trans.*

changed a few words *with* one another, the subject of death was raised between us, and in Lacan's mouth, first. In Baltimore, for example, he spoke to me of the way he thought that he would be read, in particular by me, after his death.

Concerning our second and last meeting, on the occasion of a dinner given by his in-laws, he insisted on publicly archiving, in his way, with regard to a thing that I had told him about, the way I supposedly disregarded "the Other," I quote, "by playing dead." Elizabeth Roudinesco recounts this entire episode very well, I re-read it this morning on page 418 of her monumental classic *Histoire de la psychanalyse en France* (volume 2). Lacan's sentence mentions a "father," and it is I, a father who "didn't recognize . . . the way he himself was disregarding the Other, by playing dead."¹³ I am still not sure that I really understood the interpretation I ventured to suggest in what was, we should not forget, a signed publication in *Scilicet* (where Lacan was the only one who authorized himself to sign),¹⁴ but I have always wondered whether in making me the father in this story, in naming me "the father," he didn't really mean the son; I have always wondered whether he didn't mean to say the son, whether he didn't want to make me or himself the son, to make me the son who disregards the Other by playing dead, as he says, or to make himself the son. As always, Lacan left me the greatest freedom of interpretation, and as always I would have taken it even if he hadn't done so, as I please; he had left me the greatest freedom in listening and interpreting, since he added soon afterwards: "To the father who said it to me, from here to hear me or not" [*Au père qui me l'a dit d'ici m'entendre ou non*] (this *didici* is magnificent, I can hear it in latin, as in the night of a *disco*, this time, and not of a dance, a *disco* where the old professor cannot bring himself to give up/to which the old professor does not betake himself having given up [*n'arrive pas à renoncer*] the conjoined compulsion of the future in the past and didactics: *didici*, I will have told to you, I taught it to you). This freedom to interpret as I please, he left me on the flyleaf [*page de garde*] of the *Écrits* when they were bound, since the dedication that accompanied it said "to Jacques Derrida, this homage to take as he likes."

¹³ 2 ELIZABETH ROUDINESCO, *HISTOIRE DE LA PSYCHANALYSE EN FRANCE: LA BATAILLE DE CENT ANS* 418 (1986); ELIZABETH ROUDINESCO, *JACQUES LACAN & Co.: A HISTORY OF PSYCHOANALYSIS IN FRANCE, 1925-1985*, at 410-11 (Jeffrey Mehlman trans., Univ. of Chicago Press 1990) (1986). *Trans.*

¹⁴ Jacques Lacan, *La méprise du sujet supposé savoir*, *SCILICET*, June 17, 1968, at 31. *Trans.*

Message received: I have always made use of this homage, and still do, as I like and as I like to render it [*le rendre*].

Thus, there was death between us, it was mainly a question of the death—I will even say *only* a question of the death of one of us, as *with* or *chez* all those who love one other. Or rather he was alone in speaking of it, for I for my part never breathed a word, he was alone in speaking about our death, about his death which would not fail to come [*qui ne manquerait pas d'arriver*], and about playing with death, or rather playing dead, as in his view I was doing.

I am not forgetting the binding with which all of this is bound up. The reason is that in Baltimore Lacan confided his other worry to me regarding the binding of the *Écrits*, which had not yet appeared, but whose publication was imminent. Lacan was concerned, a little displeased, it seemed to me, about those at Le Seuil who had advised him to assemble the collection in a single large volume of more than 900 pages, whose binding risked not being solid, and thus giving way: “You see,” he said to me, making a gesture with his hands, “it’s not going to hold.” The republication in two paperback volumes in 1970 reassured him, and will have enabled him, in passing, not only to confirm the necessity of placing the *Seminar on “The Purloined Letter”* so as to hold the fort at the entrance of the *Écrits*, but also to let fly at me one of those future anteriors (antedates or antidotes) that will have been the privileged mode of all the declarations of love he so often made to me, by mentioning, I don’t dare say by antedating, I quote: “what I call properly the instance of the letter before any grammatology.”¹⁵

(Before any grammatology: *Of Grammatology* was the title of an article and a book which had appeared some five years beforehand, and which—this is one of the numerous misunderstandings or misrecognitions [*méconnaissances*] by Lacan and many others on this subject—never proposed a grammatology, some positive science or discipline bearing this name, but went to great expense to demonstrate on the contrary the impossibility, the conditions of impossibility, the absurdity on principle of any science or of any philosophy bearing the name of grammatology. This book, which treated *of grammatology*, was anything but a grammatology.¹⁶)

I bind this again to the binding of the great book. I am thus going back to that time (the end of the 1960s, in 1965, 1966-1967)

¹⁵ 1 JACQUES LACAN, *Introduction to ÉCRITS* 11 (1970). *Trans.*

¹⁶ JACQUES DERRIDA, *OF GRAMMATOLOGY* (Gayatri C. Spivak trans., Johns Hopkins Univ. Press 1976) (1967). *Trans.*

when the *Écrits* were bound up with [*à l'enseigne*] the *Seminar on "The Purloined Letter."* I would like now to risk a modest contribution to this future [*à venir*] history of the being-with of Lacan and the philosophers, a history which I am sure has never been written, and which I am not sure ever can be written, even supposing that one might be able to decipher it. What I am going to propose, then, are only a few protocols to such a history, whether or not that history is possible. And since I have already spoken too long, I will limit myself somewhat arbitrarily to *three protocols*. I am sure that there is enough psychoanalysis, and enough psychoanalysts, here not to ascribe to indulgence or coquetry the fact that I am describing things not from [*depuis*] a point of view dominating this history, but necessarily from the locus, the place where I was then and am now situated, inscribed, engaged, invested. A place which, I must say, will not have been comfortable, but neither will it have been a bad observation post. I will outline these three protocols in the light of a few figures with the headings

1. *of the chiasmus*;
2. *of the future in the past of the "deferred action" [l'après-coup];*¹⁷
3. *of the chiasitic invagination of borders—or of the site of analysis.*

What happens to the *with in between* [*avec entre deux*] when there is a chiasmus, the "deferred action" of the future in the past, and chiasitic invagination?

1. FIRST PROTOCOL, THE CHIASMUS

The chiasmus was cited by Major. It was a question of the chiasmus between the trajectories of Freud and Lacan as to science and philosophical speculation. I would like to give the example of another chiasmus that occurred in France in the 1960s. At the moment when the *Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"*¹⁸ proposed the greatest strategic formalization of Lacanian discourse at the opening of the *Écrits*, what was happening with the philosophers? Here

¹⁷ *L'après-coup* is the French translation of Freud's term *Nachträglichkeit*. Strachey translates this term in the *Standard Edition* with the phrase "deferred action," which has been critiqued as somewhat reductive and possibly misleading. Cf. Jean Laplanche & Jean-Baptiste Pontalis, *THE LANGUAGE OF PSYCHOANALYSIS* 114 (Donald Nicholson-Smith trans., W.W. Norton & Co. 1973) (1967); JEAN LAPLANCHE, *Notes on Afterwardness*, in *SEDUCTION, TRANSLATION, DRIVES* 217-24 (Martin Stanton trans., Institute of Contemporary Arts 1992). I have here followed the *Standard Edition* translation, but marked it off with quotation marks. *Trans.*

¹⁸ Lacan, *supra* note 11. *Trans.*

one can no longer speak, supposing that one ever could have, of philosophers in general; instead one must speak of what happens to certain of them, or what happens to philosophy by certain of them who are perhaps no longer simply philosophers—not that they would have, for all that, anything against philosophy, that would be a little simplistic and academic. What happened was this, and it happened to me, that at the moment when a certain number of major or dominant philosophemes, organized in what I proposed at the time to call phonocentrism and/or phallogocentrism, called for a—let’s say, for expediency—“deconstructive” [*déconstructeur*] questioning (a questioning that quite obviously, by definition, was both philosophical and eccentric, ex-centering in relation to the philosophical as such, presenting the philosophical for thought from a place that could no longer be simply philosophical nor counter-philosophical, inside or outside philosophy), at the same time, exactly at the same moment, one could witness a theoretical binding of the Lacanian discourse that made the strongest use, the most brilliantly spectacular use, of all the motifs that in my eyes were deconstructible, in the process of deconstruction, and—what was still more serious to my mind—not only of the most deconstructible motifs of philosophy (phonocentrism, logocentrism, phallogocentrism, “full speech” as the truth, the transcendentalism of the signifier, the circular return of reappropriation to the most proper of the proper place at the circumscribed borders of lack, etc., in a handling of philosophical reference whose form at least was in the best cases elliptical and aphoristic, in the worst dogmatic—I’ll come back to this in a moment), not only of the most deconstructible motifs, then, but even of that which, passing through and overflowing philosophy or onto-theology (I mean Heideggerian discourse), already seemed to me—and this goes back to 1965—to call in its turn for deconstructive questions, since Lacan often made reference at that period, as we have often been reminded here, in a frequent, decisive, and confident, sometimes incantatory, manner, to Heideggerian speech, to the *logos* interpreted by Heidegger, to truth, no less moreover as adequation than as veiling/unveiling. There is no point recalling once again that deconstruction, if there is such a thing, is not a critique, even less a theoretical or speculative operation methodically run by someone, but that if there is such a thing, it takes place—I have said so too often, and once again in *Psyché*,¹⁹ to dare repeat it again—as the experience of the impossible.

¹⁹ JACQUES DERRIDA, *PSYCHÉ: INVENTIONS DE L’AUTRE* (1987). *Trans.*

I attempted to show this in *Le facteur de la vérité*²⁰ and elsewhere; I do not have the time, and it would be impossible, to reconstruct all of it here.

So much for the form of the chiasmus, then: I found myself then before a forceful philosophical, philosophizing reconstruction of psychoanalysis that articulated and assumed and bound with the greatest consequence all the motifs that moreover offered themselves, not without resistance, to something like a genealogico-deconstructive interpretation. At the same time, of course, there was nothing to be sorry about, even less to be opposed to, in this philosophical restructuring of psychoanalytic discourse or institutions, in this philosophical and thus critical questioning which—also putting to work what is most alive in philosophy, linguistics, anthropology, displacing them and reformalizing them in its turn in an original way—was so much more interesting than what was then lying dormant under the name of psychoanalysis. This chiasmus or, as Major was also saying this criss-crossing [*chassé-croisé*], was even more paradoxical because an impulse was coming from psychoanalysis in general—and since Freud, whom I also was trying to read in my way, very dissimilar to Lacan's in *Freud and the Scene of Writing*²¹—to deconstruct the privilege of presence, at least as consciousness and ecological consciousness, which, in a way that was apparently exterior but without doubt not fortuitous, was converging with the necessity to do this along other lines, via other questions, those in which I was engaged elsewhere (readings of Husserl, of Heidegger, the question of writing and of literature, etc.). So that, the discourse that was at once the closest and the most deconstructible, the most to be deconstructed at the time, was without doubt that of Lacan. This was already indicated in *Of Grammatology* in 1965-1966, with regard to the primacy of the signifier.

And that is why, as I said in *Positions* in 1971, four years before even publishing *Le facteur de la vérité*, as Major recalled just a moment ago,²² my theoretical “explanation” with Lacan “consisted in pursuing my own work according to its specific pathways and requirements, whether or not this work should along certain lines entertain a closer relationship with Lacan's, and even—I do

²⁰ JACQUES DERRIDA, *Le facteur de la vérité*, in THE POST CARD, *supra* note 2, at 411. *Trans.*

²¹ JACQUES DERRIDA, *Freud and the Scene of Writing*, in WRITING AND DIFFERENCE 196 (Alan Bass trans., Univ. of Chicago Press 1978) (1967). *Trans.*

²² Major, *supra* note 4. *Trans.*

not exclude it in the least—more than any other today.”²³ Wasn’t this a way of saying that I loved and admired him greatly? And to pay him an homage [*lui rendre hommage*], as I liked? It was in this same text that I said, with and without philosophy, *without*,²⁴ with and without Lacan, that “truth is necessary.”

So, since then? Since then, have we ever come out of this chiasmus? I do not think so. Starting with this chiasmus, which made Lacan’s discourse too philosophical a discourse for me, too much at ease *with the philosophers*, naturally in spite of all kinds of denials on the subject, too much in confidence with all those people with whom I was in the process, not of “breaking,” which does not mean anything, as I’ve said a thousand times, but with whom I was reconsidering all contracts. A Lacanian discourse, then, too much at ease with a Sartrean neoexistentialism (which we have not spoken enough about, or spotted the remains [*les restes*] of, in Lacan’s discourse up until the *Écrits*, in which the discourse of alienation, of authenticity, etc., still dominates), too much at ease with Hegel/Kojève “his” teacher [*maitre*] (and Hegel/Kojève is also Heidegger, for Kojève does not only anthropologize the phenomenology of mind, he also Heideggerianizes it, as you know, and it was thus highly interesting—but I am obliged to hurry along here, there would be so much to say; Elizabeth Roudinesco taught us a great deal about this sequence the other evening²⁵). Starting with this chiasmus, which made Lacan’s discourse a discourse too much at ease with the philosophers and with Heidegger (of whom my own reading from 1965 on was anything but confident, and was explicitly engaging questions that I have not ceased to elaborate *since then*), I could not, for my part, be *with* Lacan as a philosopher would be with a psychoanalyst. If I have lived *with* Lacan, if I have had the occasional explanation myself *with* him, if I have discussed with him, this *being-with* was certainly not that of a philosopher *with* a psychoanalyst. In any case, if that had been the case, my place in the house and home of this *odd couple*²⁶ will certainly not have been that of the philosopher, and even less that of someone from the university or the *École*, for which, it seemed to me, Lacan always harbored a desire that was, to my astonished eyes, intense—even avid. His only excuse, as to the university, is that he was not there. Lacan would have no doubt liked me to play this

²³ JACQUES DERRIDA, POSITIONS 111 n.3 (Alan Bass trans., Univ. of Chicago Press 1981) (1972). *Trans.*

²⁴ In English in the original. *Trans.*

²⁵ ROUDINESCO, *supra* note 13. *Trans.*

²⁶ In English in the original. *Trans.*

role of the university philosopher. But to take someone, me for example, to be a university philosopher under the pretext that he is paid for it in an institution, to identify him or sum him up with this office under this pretext, that first of all is not to read; then, this impulsive gesture, as interested moreover as it is defensive, is nearly symmetrical, not completely but nearly symmetrical to that gesture which would consist in taking an analyst to be an analyst under the pretext that he is paid for that: I've always been wary [*me suis gardé*] of doing so.

Of this chiasmus, all the textual and theoretical effects of which I cannot reconstruct (it would necessitate years of minutely detailed and courageous reading), I will take only one example to say just a little more. Take for example in the *Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"* (in the *Écrits*), what tightly adjoins and binds a certain number of motifs—let's say eight arbitrarily, to make us think of the institution of the infinite number still left standing.

1. The motif of the proper and circular trajectory, the reappropriating trajectory of the letter that comes back to the circumscribable place where it is missing from which it had been detached, the letter of which Lacan says that "since it can be diverted, it must have a course *which is proper to it*,"²⁷ and a "straight path,"²⁸ a proper and straight path that is obviously a circle.

2. The motif of truth as adequation or re-adequation, in the circular return and the proper trajectory, from the origin to the end, from the place where the signifier became detached to its place of reattachment—or as unveiling in, I quote, this "passion to unveil which has an object: the truth,"²⁹ the analyst remaining "above all the master of the truth,"³⁰ with real speech [*la vraie parole*], authentic, authenticated by the other in sworn faith, no

²⁷ Lacan, *supra* note 11, at 43/29. It should be noted that the *Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"* does not hold this "gateway post," and in fact does not appear at all, in the English edition of JACQUES LACAN, *ÉCRITS: A SELECTION* (Alan Sheridan trans. & ed., W.W. Norton & Co. 1977) (1966), a selection of essays that according to the translator and editor Alan Sheridan is "Lacan's own." Thus references here to the *Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"* will be to the Mehlman translation. The number after the slash refers to the page number in the French single-volume edition of *Écrits*. Translations from essays that appear only in the French *Écrits*, as indicated in footnotes below, are my own. *Trans.*

²⁸ Lacan, *supra* note 11, at 50/38. *Trans.*

²⁹ JACQUES LACAN, *Propos sur la causalité psychique*, in *ÉCRITS*, *supra* note 15, at 193. *Trans.*

³⁰ JACQUES LACAN, *The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis*, in *ÉCRITS: A SELECTION*, *supra* note 27, at 98/313. The number after the slash refers to the page number in the French single volume edition of the *Écrits*. *Trans.*

longer true speech [*la parole vraie*], and with this unveiling relaying the adequation ("Speech thus appears all the more truly a speech as its truth is less founded in what is called the adequation to the thing"³¹).

3. The motif of—I'm going quickly—"present speech," or "full speech" ("Let us be categorical: in psychoanalytic anamnesis, it is not a question of reality, but of truth, because the effect of full speech is to reorder past contingencies by conferring on them the sense of necessities to come, full speech and future in the past, therefore such as they are constituted by the little freedom through which the subject makes them present"³²; "Analysis can have for its goal only the advent of a true speech and the realization by the subject of his history in his relation to a future"³³).

4. The disqualification (this too in a spirit that is quite Heideggerian in its relation to technique) of the "record," of "recording,"³⁴ and of the mechanical archive as "alienating": "But precisely because it comes to him through an alienated form, even a retransmission of his own recorded discourse, be it from the mouth of his own doctor, cannot have the same effects as psychoanalytic interlocution"³⁵—which therefore should be direct, live, immediate, etc. Thus "full speech" which "defines itself through its identity with that of which it speaks."³⁶ A very important point for me, one to which I'll perhaps come back, that links phono-logocentrism or phallogocentrism to the analytical situation as speech without technical interposition, without an archiving device for repetition: a very old philosopheme, from Plato up to and including Heidegger.

5. The transcendental position of the phallus, "the privileged signifier of that mark in which the role of the *logos* is joined with the advent of desire,"³⁷ a transcendental position which is none other than the doctrine that links truth to castration and, I quote, to "the mother's lack of the penis, in which the nature of the phallus is revealed."³⁸

³¹ JACQUES LACAN, *Variantes de la cure-type*, in *ÉCRITS*, *supra* note 15, at 351. *Trans.*

³² LACAN, *supra* note 30, at 48/302 (modified). *Trans.*

³³ *Id.* at 88/256. *Trans.*

³⁴ In English in the original. *Trans.*

³⁵ LACAN, *supra* note 30, at 49/258. *Trans.*

³⁶ JACQUES LACAN, *Réponse au commentaire de Jean Hippolite sur la "Verneinung" de Freud*, in *ÉCRITS*, *supra* note 15, at 381. *Trans.*

³⁷ JACQUES LACAN, *The Signification of the Phallus*, in *ÉCRITS*, *supra* note 27, at 287/692. *Trans.*

³⁸ JACQUES LACAN, *La science et la vérité*, in *ÉCRITS*, *supra* note 15, at 877. *Trans.*

6. Phonocentrism at the time militant (“A writing, like the dream itself, may be figurative; it is always like symbolically articulated language [*langage*], that is to say *phonomatic* just like the latter, and phonetic in fact [*en fait*] as soon as it is read [*se lit*].”³⁹ As I remarked in “Le Facteur de la Vérité,”⁴⁰ this “fact” has the value of a *fact* only within the ethnocultural limits of so-called phonetic writing, which moreover are never limits through and through, anywhere—without which there wouldn’t even be a symbolic order. This explicit and massive phonocentrism will be contradicted by Lacan himself, as though nothing was the matter, as though it had always been the future in the past of the “deferred action,” in 1972-1973, not “before” but after “any grammatology,” as I will show in a moment.)

7. The misrecognition [*méconnaissance*] or the failure to take into account the literary structure of narration, the omission of the frame, of the play of signatures and in particular of its parergonal effects. I cannot reproduce the demonstration I gave of this misrecognition in 1975, but it is a misrecognition that resembles, not by chance, notably in its treatment of the general narrator, the haste that Nicole Loraux and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe were talking to us about, and which consists in collapsing one into another the different levels represented by the chorus, the characters and the spectators, at the theater and in tragedy, producing incalculable damage in the reading at the very moment where it permits a certain formalizing calculation of psychoanalytic hermeneutics.

8. An evasion of the effects of the double [*effets de double*] in Poe’s story which—I think that I have shown this also—should have blurred the limits between the imaginary and the symbolic, and thus the rigor of this tripartition which, as you know, Lacan also had to question, much later.

These eight motifs—and no doubt other more secondary ones that I don’t have the time to take stock of—are strongly articulated amongst themselves, in truth indissociable from and indispensable to the fundamental [*capitale*] affirmation, fundamental for both the destiny and the possibility of psychoanalysis, the fundamental affirmation *with* which an explanation seemed time urgent and strategically decisive: that is, I quote the final words of the Seminar, “What the ‘purloined letter,’ that is, the undelivered letter [*lettre en souffrance*], means is that a letter always arrives at its destina-

³⁹ JACQUES LACAN, *Situation de la psychanalyse et formation du psychanalyste en 1956*, in *ÉCRITS*, *supra* note 15, at 470. *Trans.*

⁴⁰ DERRIDA, *supra* note 20. *Trans.*

tion.”⁴¹ But this conclusion was possible only in so far as the letter (which for Lacan is not the signifier, but the place of the signifier) is not divided. Lacan says that it “does not admit partition”; “Cut a letter in small pieces,” he says, “and it remains the letter it is.”⁴² So that what Lacan thus calls the “materiality of the signifier,”⁴³ which he deduces from an indivisibility that is found nowhere, seemed to me—and still seems to me—to correspond to an “idealization” of the letter, to an ideal identity of the letter, a problem that I had also been working on, and along other lines, for some time. But—and I will hold myself to this one point in the context that is ours and in the time I have left—I could not articulate this question and this objection (one could show that everything depends on it: another logic of the event and (of the) destination, another conception [*pensée*] of singularity, the dissemination of the unique beyond a logic of castration, etc.), I could thus only read this surreptitious idealization, not to say idealism, of Lacan’s, as Melville did—from [*depuis*] a work that was already engaged, in a deconstructive mode, with the philosophers, and notably on the subject of the constitution of idealities, ideal objects, in Husserl. That is to say, without pursuing the issue in this direction, that in order to read Lacan, to read him in a problematizing and nondogmatic fashion, it is necessary to read Husserl too for example, and some others, and to read them in a problematic or deconstructive fashion. There is, in that, if you will permit me to say so, the outline of another formation, of another course for psychoanalyst readers of Lacan, at least if they want to read him in a nonparrotlike, nonorthodoxical and nondefensive fashion; in short it was equivalent advice about the “new formation” that some of us here, the rare professional philosophers to have read and published on Lacan in the philosophical university (I am thinking first of all of Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and of Jean-Luc Nancy), had given to the philosophers in saying to them—which rather more rare at the time, almost twenty years ago: read Lacan. (If I had the time, I would say why in my view all the texts of “professional philosophers” to which I have just referred are not read, and not readable, in France, in particular by most of the French “Lacanian.”)

⁴¹ Lacan, *supra* note 11, at 53 (modified). *Trans.*

⁴² *Id.* at 39. *Trans.*

⁴³ *Id.* at 38. *Trans.*

2. SECOND PROTOCOL: THE FUTURE IN THE PAST OF THE "DEFERRED ACTION"

As I have said, my reading of the *Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"*, and what foreshadowed it from 1965 to 1971 in *Of Grammatology* and in *Positions*, was not intended to trap or to exhaust Lacan (I said this explicitly in these very texts), but only to deal with a strong and relatively stabilized configuration of Lacanian displacement. Lacan's discourse, always highly sensitive to all the movements of the theoretical scene—and who would blame him?—never ceased thereafter to readjust, even to revise, and sometimes to contradict the axioms I have just mentioned. The emphasis on writing grew constantly stronger after 1968, to the point of inverting, very "grammatologically," the utterance that I quoted a little while ago about "phonological and even always phonetic" writing, since he writes in the *Seminar Encore*: "But the signifier can in no way be limited to this phonological medium."⁴⁴ René Major quoted some spectacular examples a while ago,⁴⁵ and there are many others from this moment on, of this sudden substitution of the graphematic for the phonological (which, by the way, interests me here only as a symptomatic sign in what used to be called the history of ideas, and not in itself, for what I have proposed to call the trace, gramme, *différance*, etc., is no more graphic than phonological, spatial than temporal—but let's leave that, this is not the place to deal with this serious and tenacious misunderstanding). This kind of substitution of writing for speech around 1970 deserves a history of its own [*à part*], and is not limited to Lacan. Ponge told me one day, laughing, that he was rereading his texts to see if he hadn't yielded too much to phonocentrism, and if he could replace here or there "speech" by "writing" without harm. Roger Laporte has compiled an inventory that I found as illuminating as it was merciless of all the times when, during these same years, our friend Maurice Blanchot, republishing all his old texts as collections, simply replaced "speech" by "writing." I do not know if it is a question of a *Kehre*, as Stephen Melville was saying,⁴⁶ but if the question of the *Kehre* were open, it would be a very general one.

All this to say only that the historical narration of what remained and still remains, and for me first of all, the future of La-

⁴⁴ JACQUES LACAN, *A Jakobson*, in *LE SÉMINAIRE DE JACQUES LACAN, LIVRE XX: ENCORE 22* (Jacques-Alain Miller ed., 1975). *Trans.*

⁴⁵ Major, *supra* note 4. *Trans.*

⁴⁶ Melville, *supra* note 1. *Trans.*

canian thought moving beyond the *Écrits*, is all the more difficult to write as Lacan was an incomparable listener, and his discursive machine—a machine of such sensitivity that everything could be inscribed in it with finesse or discretion (and that's fine; who doesn't try to do as much?), but moreover is inscribed in the speech of the Seminars which, having given rise to multiple archivation, in stenotype, on tape recorders, etc., will have also fallen prey—in addition to all the problems of rights, which I do not want to go into here, and which Mr. Conté has no doubt evoked in passing the other day—to all the problems posed by the deadlines of publication and *editing*,⁴⁷ in the American sense, of a highly interventionist kind. All these things are touch-and-go, the stakes being decided over a word, an ellipsis, the modality of a verb, a conditional or a future in the past, and especially if one knows Lacan's rhetoric, one can wish the best of luck to the narrator wishing to know what—what was said and written by whom at what date: what Lacan would or would not have said! At bottom, that too is the problem with the letter and destination which perhaps separates me from being *with* Lacan at the point we are closest.

3. THIRD PROTOCOL, FINALLY: THE CHIASTIC INVAGINATION OF BORDERS

(I'm going on too long: I'll stop when you want.)

Not only were my references to Lacan, and notably to the *Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"*, not totalizing, homogenizing or critical, but I even conceded to him on the question of reason [*donné raison sur la raison*], the question of reason remaining open, like the question of knowing what happens when one says someone is right [*donne raison*]; and I said this in *The Post Card*, that he was right with regard to "the reason of this characteristic [*trait*] that had never been elucidated, which shows once again the depth of Freud's intuition: namely, why he advances the view that there is only one *libido*, his text showing that he conceives it as masculine in nature."⁴⁸ And saying that Lacan was right—just as the signatory of the *Envois* in *The Post Card* begins by saying that

⁴⁷ In English in the original. *Trans.*

⁴⁸ JACQUES LACAN, *The Signification of the Phallus*, in *ÉCRITS: A SELECTION*, *supra* note 27, at 291 (translation modified). Derrida is referring to a passage in *Le facteur de la vérité*, *supra* note 20, at 482/510. The page number after the slash indicates the page number in the French edition, JACQUES DERRIDA, *LA CARTE POSTALE: DE SOCRATE À FREUD ET AU-DELA* (1980). *Trans.*

the loved other is right, in the first words of the *Envois*: “Yes, you were right”⁴⁹—*Le facteur de la vérité* speaks precisely about “the reason for this characteristic [*trait*] that had never been elucidated,” of a trait drawn from reason or a draught drawn on reason. “In the logic of the cauldron (a draught [*traite*] drawn from reason), reason will always be right [*aura raison*].”⁵⁰ This concession granted or given back [*raison donnée*] to Lacan renders my text again illegible to readers in a hurry to decide between “for or against,” in short, to those minds [*esprits*] who believed that I was contradicting Lacan or saying that Lacan was wrong [*donner tort*]. The question is elsewhere, and it is the question of reason and of the principle of reason. Thus not only did I not criticize Lacan, but I was not even writing some sort of domineering or objectivizing meta-discourse *on* Lacan or *on* a text by Lacan. By virtue of my writing I was engaged in a scene that, at the same moment, I was showing (doubtless through little phrases that no one reads) to be incapable of closure, uncloseable, unframeable, a point which *since then* has been incessantly relayed by other scenes *en abyme*⁵¹ that have deployed themselves, here or there, rather there than here—that is to say, yet again, abroad. Moreover, for all these reasons, the argument of *Le facteur de la vérité* does not allow itself to be framed in the text which carries that title; it is played with, but adrift in *The Post Card*, the book that carries that title, and which inscribes *Le facteur de la vérité* like a piece in a borderless fiction, neither public nor private, with and without a general narrator, and first of all in the “Envois,” of which I am not the signatory, and in which a plot, little read, of a wandering [*errante*] letter, or of certain remarks on destination, as well as on the analytic institution, and what does or does not happen there, demonstrates by this inscription what is uttered without lending itself to some meta-utterance. I will take only one example, if you will permit me to quote a character from this book without quoting myself—that’s my excuse here—on page 261 of the *Envois* dated August 18, 1979:

August 18, 1979. Is it true that you call me only when I’m not there?

One day you told me that I was a torch
“come”

⁴⁹ DERRIDA, *supra* note 20, at 7. *Trans.*

⁵⁰ *Id.* at 482-83. *Trans.*

⁵¹ *En abyme* is Derrida’s phrase for, in Alan Bass’s words, “the infinite regress of a reflection within a reflection,” and of course also a play on *abime*, “abyss.” Cf. DERRIDA, *supra* note 2, at 511. *Trans.*

which is of no interest without the tone, without the timbre, without the voice of mine that you know. So much for the fire.

They had staked everything on a picture (of one, the other, the couple), and then remained attached to the stakes, and they are still speculating but they are no longer there. Each of them to the other: you were in league to destroy me, you conspired, you have covered all the trails, get out of it yourself.

And a short philosophical dialogue for your entertainment: '—What is a destination?—Where it arrives.—So everywhere it arrives there was destination?—Yes.—But not before?—No.—That's convenient, since if it arrives there, it is because it was destined to arrive there. But then you can only say so after the event [*après coup*]?—When it has arrived, it is indeed the proof that it had to arrive, and arrive there, at its destination.—But before arriving, it is not destined, for example it neither desires nor demands any address? There is everything that arrives where it had to arrive, but no destination before the arrival?—Yes, but I meant to say something else.—Of course, that's what I was saying.—There you are.'

As I gave her to understand, I don't know if she was right to write *what* she wrote, and that is quite secondary, but in any event she was right to write it. Right *a priori*. I know nothing about how it happens, how it arrives for her, and it won't be soon either [*c'est pas demain la veille*], it's only just beginning, but she cannot have been wrong to send herself that.⁵²

This "envoi" induced two other postscriptum, one inside the other (which I crave your indulgence for reading as well, but you can assume that they're not from me), which situate, I believe, one of the essential places of the current, interminable discussion with Lacan, namely, the conception [*pensée*] of contingency, singularity, the event, the meeting, chance, and *tukhè*, which is also a certain type of conception, an interpretation or an experience of death, of which the phallus is the signifier; this could sum up all the unanswered questions that today I'm still putting to Lacan, *with* whom it is worth the effort to discuss things: questions on the subject of what he says, no less, in sum, about being, man, the animal (especially the animal) and thus about God.

P.S. I was forgetting, you are quite right: one of the paradoxes of destination is that if you wanted *to demonstrate*, for someone, that something never arrives at its destination, it's all over. The demonstration, once it had reached its aim, will have proved what it was not supposed to demonstrate. But that, dear friend,

⁵² DERRIDA, *supra* note 20, at 244-45 (modified). *Trans.*

is why I need not always say 'a letter *can* reach its destination, etc.' That need not always be a piece of luck.*

You know that I never say that I'm right and never prove anything. They take this very badly, consequently they would like nothing to have happened, everything wiped off the map. Wait for me.

*P.S. Finally, a piece of luck, if you like, if yourself can, and if you have it, the luck (*tukhè*, fortune, that is what I mean, good fortune, us). This ill-luck (the misaddress) of this luck is that in order *to be able* not to arrive, it must bear within itself a force and a structure, a drift [*dérive*] of the destination, such that it *must* also not arrive in any case. Even in arriving (always at some 'subject'), the letter evades arrival. It arrives elsewhere, always several times. You can no longer take hold of it. It is the structure of the letter (as post card, in other words the fatal partition that it must admit) which causes this, I have said so elsewhere, delivered to a *facteur* subject to the same law. The letter asks for this, right here, as you do too.⁵³

This conception [*pensée*] of the destination is indissociable, of course, from a conception of death, of the destination at death—and this is why I authorized myself to recall this scarcely private thing, namely that there was the subject of death between Lacan and me, on the occasion of each of our meeting, and that it was he alone who spoke of it.

What links the destination to death is said by the signatory of the "Envois," for example:

Murder is everywhere, my unique and immense one. We are the worst criminals in history. And right here I kill you, save, save, you, save you only run away [*sauve-toi*], the unique, the living one over there whom I love. Understand me, when I write, right here, on these innumerable post cards, I annihilate not only what I am saying but also the unique addressee that I constitute, and therefore every possible addressee, and every destination. I kill you, I annul you at my fingertips, wrapped around my finger. To do so it suffices that I be legible—and I become illegible to you, you are dead. If I say that I write for dead addresses, not dead in the future but already dead at the moment when I get to the end of a sentence, it is not in order to play. Genet said that his theater was addressed to the dead and I take it in that sense at the rate at [*au train où je vais*] which I am endlessly writing you. The addressees are dead, the destination is death: no, not in the sense of S. or P.'s preaching, according to which we are

⁵³ *Id.* at 123-24 (modified). *Trans.*

destined to die, no, not in the sense in which to arrive at our destination, for us mortals, is to end by dying.⁵⁴

So, forgive me for these readings, which lead me to hasten my conclusion with three remarks that I will make as brief and as elliptical as possible:

1. death;
2. the analytic situation;
3. the “is there a psychoanalysis?”, in general, or psychoanalysis properly nameable as such, nameable with a proper name?

1. Concerning death, I will say only that I feel more and more tempted not to receive the discourse on the being-for-death [*l'être-pour-la-mort*], in the Heideggerian form or in the Lacanian form in which it is linked to the phallogocentric signifier, since [*depuis*], since all the texts that I have just been speaking about, without many, many questions in return, of all kinds, and without displacements, which are also experiences, not only speculative discourses or discussions—indeed, critical objections. But I cannot say more about this here, these things are happening elsewhere, in relation to the questions of the animal and God in the Seminars of those years (the remarkable things that Lacan says on the animal are also in my view highly problematic, but I cannot get involved in that here; in a word, it is a question of contesting the claim that death happens to some mortal being-for-death, but, in a scandal against sense and against good sense, only happens to some immortal that lacks in not lacking anything [*qui manque de ne manquer de rien*]). I am thinking here of a particular passage of Zarathustra on the suffering that is born of a lack, and which, in the course of a Seminar this year on “Eating the Other,” I interpreted in a direction in which I perhaps cross the path of what Jean-Luc Nancy was saying the other evening. In *Le facteur de la vérité*, in the conclusion of an analysis of “a lack that is never lacking (in its place),” I clarify this point, which then seemed to me to situate rather well the difference *with* Lacan: “The difference which interests me here is that—a formula to be understood as you please—the lack does not have its place in dissemination.”⁵⁵

2. Concerning the analytic situation, I will start again one last time with a memory of my meeting with Lacan. In this I was not a direct witness—and the question of the archive arises in yet another way. René Girard reported to me that after my Baltimore

⁵⁴ *Id.* at 33, 38-39 (modified). *Trans.*

⁵⁵ *Id.* at 441, 470 (modified). *Trans.*

conference, as he was seeking to share his own assessment (it was a generous one) with Lacan, Lacan allegedly said to him: "Yes, yes, it's good, but the difference between him and me is that he doesn't deal with people who are suffering" (implying by this: people in analysis). What did he know about that? Very imprudent. He could only have said that calmly, and known it, if he referred to suffering (alas, I have dealing with people who suffer—all of you, for example) nor to transference, that is, to love, which never needed the analytic situation to play its tricks. Lacan was thus making out of clinical practice, institutionalized in a certain mode, and out of the rules of the analytic situation, an absolute criterion of competence for speaking—of all this.

Here is a better-known episode. It comes some ten years later, after Lacan had employed the future in the past on many occasions to reappropriate himself according to the antedate, saying for example that he was relinquishing concepts and words, that of the *gramme* for example, and other similar things, things of which to my knowledge he never made use and which he should have simply, on the contrary, taken up.⁵⁶ Lacan shows a compulsive lack of prudence in a Seminar in 1977 (*L'Insu-que-sait*, again): he says that he thinks that I am in analysis (the audience laughs, and the sentence is replaced by (the) dots (of an ellipsis) in the journal *Ornicar*, but too late, since the transcription is circulating—always the problem of the archive, the unmasterable archive, here no more masterable than ever, owing to the technique of *recording*.⁵⁷ The incident is now recounted and commented on in *The Post Card*,⁵⁸ but Elizabeth Roudinesco quotes only the official version from *Ornicar*, with bracketed dots.⁵⁹ Yet, with the legal archive saturating the whole of the archive less than ever, the latter remains un-masterable and continues on, in continuity with the anarchival).

In any case what did he know about it, whether I was or was not in analysis, and what could that signify? That I have never been in analysis, in the institutional sense of the analytic situation, does not prevent me from being an analyst or analysand, here or there, in a not very accountable fashion, on occasion and in my way. Like everyone. And when Lacan says this, the remark being

⁵⁶ Jacques Lacan, *De Rome 53 à Rome 67: La psychanalyse. Raisons d'un échec*, SCILICET, June 17, 1968, at 47.

⁵⁷ In English in the original. *Trans.*

⁵⁸ DERRIDA, *supra* note 20, at 202-04, 218. *Trans.*

⁵⁹ ROUDINESCO, JACQUES LACAN & Co., *supra* note 13, at 600, 603. *Trans.*

archived by recording devices but forever withheld from the official archive—you will admire the syntax, and the reference to not-knowing and to truth: “Someone who I didn’t know was—to tell the truth I think he’s in analysis—who I didn’t know what in analysis—but that’s just a hypothesis—it’s someone named Jacques Derrida who wrote the preface to this *Verbier*.”⁶⁰ This not-knowing in truth of a believing in a simple hypothesis concerned the being-in-analysis of someone that he, Lacan, wasn’t afraid to name, in front of a couple of analysts, no less (“because he couples them,” added Lacan, who was visibly unaware that one of the two, who was my friend, had died at the time I was writing that preface in his memory, in his absence, and in homage to him).

How could Lacan have made his audience laugh on the subject of or following [*depuis*] a blunder, his own, on the subject of a hypothetical analysand—when he presented himself, and this one of his most interesting propositions, as an analysand, master of truth because he was analysand and not analyst? How could he have insisted on two occasions on my real status as an institutional non-analyst and on my status, wrongly assumed by him, as an institutional analysand, when he should have been the first to suspect the limits or the borders of these sites, to draw attention to the exceptionally knotted knots [*noeuds surnoués*] of this invagination?

3. This brings me to my very last point. What keeps alert my interminable listening to Lacan, insufficient, intermittent, inattentive and drifting though it is, is less the question of philosophy, of science or of psychoanalysis, rather the question of what binds a certain dominant state (dominant, that is: of the master) of the history of philosophy, of science, of psychoanalysis—namely the dominant state that I have named phallogocentrism in a certain historical determination, a precarious, conventional, finite determination of the *analytic situation*, of its rules and its limits. The topological expression that I ventured to use on another example, the chiasmic invagination of borders, seems to me to fit this analytic situation. I had proposed this in *Pas*, and in *Parages*,⁶¹ which I am grateful to Stephen Melville for having evoked here.⁶²

If this is really so, the question of knowing whether or not there is a x-ian psychoanalysis—his, yours, mine—that comes or

⁶⁰ Lacan is referring to Derrida’s *Fors: Les mots anglés de Nicolas Abraham et Maria Torok, Forward to ABRAHAM AND TOROK, CRYPTONOMIE: LE VERBIER DE L’HOMME AUX LOUPS* (1976), translated in *THE WOLF MAN’S MAGIC WORD: A CRYPTONOMY*, at xc (Barbara Johnson trans., Univ. of Minnesota, 1986). *Trans.*

⁶¹ JACQUES DERRIDA, *Pas*, in *PARAGES* (1986). *Trans.*

⁶² Melville, *supra* note 1. *Trans.*

holds, then this incalculable, unspeakable, unaccountable, unattributable question shifts as the analytic situation, and thus the analytic institution, deconstructs itself, *as if by itself*, without deconstruction or deconstructive project. As for the relations between this deconstruction as experience of the impossible and the "there is" [*il y a*], I have spoken of that elsewhere, it is archived.⁶³

What won't I have said today! But if I had said that we loved each other very much, Lacan and I, and thus promised each other very much, and that this was for me a good thing in his life, would I have been in the truth? Stephen Melville has said that the promise always risked also being a threat. This is true. But I would always prefer to prefer the promise.

⁶³ See JACQUES DERRIDA, *DONNER LE TEMPS I: LA FAUSSE MONNAIE* (1991), translated in JACQUES DERRIDA, *GIVEN TIME: I, COUNTERFEIT MONEY* (Peggy Kamuf trans., Univ. of Chicago Press 1992). *Trans.*