

Apparitions—Of Derrida's Other

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**PERSPECTIVES IN
CONTINENTAL
PHILOSOPHY**

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K A S S A G H A F I

Apparitions—Of Derrida's Other

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Abbreviations

- A Jacques Derrida, *Adieu à Emmanuel Lévinas*. Paris: Galilée, 1997. Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas as *Adieu: To Emmanuel Levinas*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- AA Serge Margel, "Les dénominations orphiques de la survivance: Derrida et la question du pire." In *L'animal autobiographique*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet. Paris: Galilée, 1999.
- AI Jacques Derrida, "As If I Were Dead: An Interview with Jacques Derrida." In *Applying: To Derrida*, ed. John Brannigan, Ruth Robbins, and Julian Wolfreys. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.
- AM Maurice Blanchot, *L'arrêt de mort*. Paris: Gallimard, 1948. Translated by Lydia Davis as *Death Sentence*. Barrytown, N.Y.: Station Hill Press, 1978.
- Am Maurice Blanchot, *L'amitié*. Paris: Gallimard, 1971. Translated by Elizabeth Rottenberg as *Friendship*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997.
- AO Maurice Blanchot, *L'attente l'oubli*. Paris: Gallimard, 1962. Translated by John Gregg as *Awaiting Oblivion*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997.
- Ap Jacques Derrida, *Apories*. Paris: Galilée, 1996. Translated by Thomas Dutoit as *Aporias*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993. The English version is a translation of Jacques

- Derrida, "Apories: Mourir-s'attendre aux limites de la vérité." In *Le passage des frontières: Autour du travail de Jacques Derrida*. Paris: Galilée, 1993.
- AQ Emmanuel Levinas, *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974; repr. Paris: Livre de Poche, 1991. Translated by Alphonso Lingis as *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981.
- AV Authorized (King James) Version of the Bible.
- Ava Jacques Derrida, "Avances." Preface to Serge Margel, *Le tombeau du dieu artisan: Sur Platon*. Paris: Minuit, 1995.
- CC Roland Barthes, *La chambre claire: Note sur la photographie*. Paris: Seuil, 1980. Translated by Richard Howard as *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. New York: Noonday Press, 1981.
- CFU Jacques Derrida, *Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde*. Paris: Galilée, 2003.
- CQ Maurice Blanchot, *Celui qui ne m'accompagnait pas*. Paris: Gallimard, 1953. Translated by Lydia Davis as *The One Who Was Standing Apart from Me*. Barrytown, N.Y.: Station Hill Press, 1993.
- D Jacques Derrida, *Demeure, Maurice Blanchot*. Paris: Galilée, 1998. Translated by Elizabeth Rottenberg as *Demeure: Fiction and Testimony*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000.
- DdR Jacques Derrida, "Lecture de *Droit de regards*." In Marie-Françoise Plissart, *Droit de regards*. Paris: Minuit, 1985. Translated by David Wills as *The Right of Inspection*. New York: Monacelli Press, 1998.
- DEE Emmanuel Levinas, *De l'existence à l'existant*. Paris: J. Vrin, 1963. Translated by Alphonso Lingis as *Existence and Existents*. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1978.
- DH *De l'hospitalité: Anne Dufourmantelle invite Jacques Derrida à répondre*. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1997. Translated by Rachel Bowlby as *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000.
- DM Jacques Derrida, *Donner la mort*. Paris: Galilée, 1999. Originally published as Jacques Derrida, "Donner la mort." In *L'éthique du don: Jacques Derrida et la pensée du don*, ed. Jean-Michel Rabaté and Michael Wetzell. Paris: Métailie-Transition, 1992. Translated by David Wills as *The Gift of Death*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- DQ Jacques Derrida and Elisabeth Roudinesco, *De quoi demain . . . Dialogue* (Paris: Fayard/Galilée, 2001). Translated by Jeff Fort

- as *For What Tomorrow . . . : A Dialogue*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004.
- E Jacques Derrida, *Echographies—de la télévision (Entretiens filmés avec Bernard Stiegler)*. Paris: Galilée, 1996. Translated by Jennifer Bajorek as *Echographies of Television: Filmed Interviews*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2002.
- EC Hachem Foda, “En compagnie.” In “Idiomes, nationalités, déconstruction: Rencontre de Rabat avec Jacques Derrida,” special issue, *Cahiers INTERSIGNES* 13 (Casablanca: Editions Toubkal, 1998): 15–39.
- ED Jacques Derrida, “Violence et métaphysique: Essai sur la pensée d’Emmanuel Lévinas.” In *L’écriture et la différence*. Paris: Seuil, 1967. Translated by Alan Bass as “Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas.” In *Writing and Difference*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.
- EDD Maurice Blanchot, *L’écriture du désastre*. Paris: Gallimard, 1980. Translated by Ann Smock as *The Writing of the Disaster*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986.
- EI Maurice Blanchot, *L’entretien infini*. Paris: Gallimard, 1969. Translated by Susan Hanson as *The Infinite Conversation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
- EL Gérard Granel, “Ludwig Wittgenstein ou le refus de la couronne.” In *Ecrits logiques et politiques*. Paris: Galilee, 1990.
- FF Jacques Derrida, “La forme et la façon: (plus jamais: envers et contre tout, ne plus jamais penser ça ‘pour la forme’).” In Alain David, *Racisme et antisémitisme: Essai de philosophie sur l’envers des concepts*. Paris: Ellipses, 2001.
- Fid Jacques Derrida, “Fidélité à plus d’un.” In “Idiomes, nationalités, déconstruction: Rencontre de Rabat avec Jacques Derrida,” special issue, *Cahiers INTERSIGNES* 13 (Casablanca: Editions Toubkal, 1998): 245–46.
- Foi Jacques Derrida, “Foi et savoir: Les deux sources de la ‘religion’ aux limites de la simple raison.” In *La Religion*, ed. Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo. Paris: Seuil, 1996. Translated by Samuel Weber as “Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of ‘Religion’ within the Limits of Mere Reason.” In *Religion*, edited by Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- G Jacques Derrida, “Corona vitae (fragments).” Originally published in *Granel: L’éclat, le combat, l’ouvert*, ed. Jean-Luc Nancy and Elisabeth Rigal. Paris: Belin, 2001.

- GS Jean Hyppolite, *Genèse et structure de la Phénoménologie de l'esprit de Hegel*. Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1946. Translated by Samuel Cherniak and John Heckman as *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1974.
- LT Jacques Derrida, *Le toucher, Jean Luc Nancy*. Paris: Galilée, 2000.
- MA Jacques Derrida, *Mal d'archive. Une impression freudienne*. Paris: Galilée, 1995. Translated by Eric Prenowitz as *Archive Fever*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- MPdM Jacques Derrida, *Mémoires: Pour Paul de Man*. Paris: Galilée, 1988. Translated by Cecile Lindsay, Jonathan Culler, Eduardo Cadava, and Peggy Kamuf as *Memoires: For Paul de Man*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986; 2nd rev. ed. 1989.
- Par Jacques Derrida, *Parages*. Paris: Galilée, 1986.
- PE G. W. F. Hegel, "Préface." *La phénoménologie de l'esprit*. 2 vols. Translated by Jean Hyppolite. Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1941.
- PF Maurice Blanchot, *La part du feu*. Paris: Gallimard, 1949.
- PhG G. W. F. Hegel, "Vorrede." In *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, in *Werke*, edited by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Michel. 20 vols. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970.
- PI Louis Marin, *Des pouvoirs de l'image: gloses*. Paris: Seuil, 1993.
- PS G. W. F. Hegel, "Preface." *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by A. V. Miller. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.
- Psy Jacques Derrida, "Les morts de Roland Barthes." In *Psyché: Invention de l'autre*. Paris: Galilée, 1987. Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas as "The Deaths of Roland Barthes." In *The Work of Mourning*, edited by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.
- RA Alain David, *Racisme et antisemitisme: Essai de philosophie sur l'envers des concepts*. Paris: Ellipses, 2001.
- RC Christophe Bident and Pierre Vilar, eds., *Maurice Blanchot: Récits critiques*. Tours, France: Farrago/Léo Scheer, 2003.
- RM Jacques Derrida, "Above All, No Journalists!" Translated by Samuel Weber in *Religion and Media*, edited by Hent de Vries and Samuel Weber. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001.
- RO Emmanuel Levinas, "La réalité et son ombre." *Les temps modernes* 38 (November 1948): 771–789. Translated by Séan Hand as "Reality and Its Shadow." In *The Levinas Reader*, edited by Séan Hand. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1989.

- SM Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx: L'état de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle internationale*. Paris: Galilée, 1993. Translated by Peggy Kamuf as *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- STS Jacques Derrida with Jean-Luc Nancy, "Responsabilité—Du sens à venir." In *Sens en tous sens: Autour de Jean-Luc Nancy*. Paris: Galilée, 2004.
- TD *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Edited by Gerhard Kittel. Translated and edited by Geoffrey Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964–76.
- TI Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totalité et infini: Essai sur l'extériorité*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961. Translated by Alphonso Lingis as *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*. Pittsburgh, Pa.: Duquesne University Press, 1969.
- TO Maurice Blanchot, *Thomas l'obscur (nouvelle version)*. Paris: Gallimard, 1950. Translated by Robert Lambertson as *Thomas the Obscure*. Barrytown, N.Y.: Station Hill Press, 1988.
- VP Jacques Derrida, *La vérité en peinture*. Paris: Flammarion, 1978. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod as *The Truth in Painting*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.

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—duction

Everything is singular each time and each time analogical: a figuration of the other.

Jacques Derrida, "To Unsense the Subjectile"

What does it mean to introduce a book of essays? How does an introduction generally function? What is the role of the introduction in academic books? Do all books require an introduction? These questions are, of course, neither new nor profound. In a book on Jacques Derrida's work, they are even banal. For, was it not Derrida himself who, in "Hors livre," the famous beginning to *Dissemination*, wrote extensively on the function of a preface, in particular in Hegel's work, and argued that the *pre-*of the preface serves to reduce the future, what is to come, to the form of an evident, already digested present? Is it not to Derrida's writings that we also owe any questioning of the relation between what is called the "inside" and the "outside" of a text, of what belongs to or precedes a text proper (see *Parages*, for example)? Did Derrida's writing not at all times structurally resist strategies of simplification, summarization, generalization, and so on? After Derrida, even the very gesture of putting into question and putting on the scene the function of introductions has itself become clichéd.

However, a methodical run-through of a book's chapters, explaining their main themes and the connection of the chapters to one another, is a prerequisite of almost all academic books, even those treating Derrida's thought. A good introduction thus presents the argument(s) of a book. It is assumed that the argument(s) take the form of, or can be summarized into, a cogent thesis made up of clear, declarative, or expository sentences. The aim of the introduction would then be to *present* the explicit

“arguments” of the book, these arguments having been extracted from their context and isolated in the form of theses.

In “Hors livre,” Derrida eloquently explains that the preface assumes the existence of an “omnipotent author (in full mastery of his product).” Since the introduction is usually the first—or perhaps the only—part of a book that is read, it allows the prospective reader to anticipate all that awaits him or her, to form opinions on chapters that will follow, such that the reading of the book is determined by the introduction. The preface or the introduction announces in the future tense what will already have been written. It makes what is to come, to be read, already *present*. In rehearsing the argument(s) of the book, the introduction not only reduces the work to its “meaning, content, thesis, or theme” but actually relieves the reader of the task of reading the book.¹

Nevertheless, I am a great admirer of those who are able to succinctly but skillfully summarize their books, providing a narrative to help the reader navigate through their work. After attempting to perform such a task myself and repeatedly failing at this task, I wondered whether this *failure* was not structural, in other words, whether there was not something inherent in the structure of this book that resisted or defied writing such an introduction. One can hear the skeptics saying that this is obviously an indication of a badly structured or ill-conceived book. I am certainly willing to entertain that possibility, but what if there is something about the material itself, the very thing being written about—the other—that resists summarization? As each of the chapters gathered here attempts to demonstrate, the other is intractable, irreplaceable, and singular.² The other is thus irreducibly, infinitely other. As utterly and wholly other, it cannot be immediately presented *as such*, it cannot be recuperated or sublated. This may be why any writing on and of Derrida’s other cannot be simply a philosophical analysis, a work of synthesis, or an explication of “a theory of the other.” Since the other resists conceptualization or thematization, it would never be a matter, I suggest, of providing an exhaustive account of the descriptions of the other in Derrida’s work but rather of how the other is written (about), each time singularly.

The other, whose appearance appears without appearing, effaces itself in its coming. A thinking of the other—as that which never fully comes to presence, as that which does not present itself *as such*, and as that to which no direct access is possible—necessitates a new approach to appearing, visibility, and phenomenality in general.

The other, then, never appears *as such*. Yet we could say it appears as an *apparition*. An *apparition*, as Derrida uses this term in his writings,

taking advantage of its double meaning in French, names the appearance, the coming to appear, of something and a phantomatic or ghostly form. *Apparition* thus names the structural instability between appearing and (“mere”) appearance. As we learn from Derrida’s texts, every appearance is haunted by disappearance. In fact, every *apparition* dis-appears in its coming to appear; and this appearing in disappearing is bound up with the fact that an *apparition* harbors its own ghost, it bears death and absence within itself. Bearing traces of the departed or disappeared, it speaks of spectral survival or living on [*survivance*], before Being or essence, before the separation of life from death. If an *apparition*, this certain invisibility in the visible, never appears *as such*, if it is irreducible to its appearing, then total and complete phenomenalization is never possible. And since flesh and phenomenality dis-appear immediately in the very coming of the *apparition*, it can never be a phenomenon for me, as all phenomenality, all idealization (hence all idealism) is dependent on the visibility of a contour. This presents enormous difficulties and has far-reaching implications for phenomenology, the study or *logos* of appearances or appearing (*phainesthai*).

Neither phenomenal nor nonphenomenal, neither visible nor invisible, the other in its coming exceeds all figuration. The coming of the other—that which arrives or happens beyond all form—cannot be figured, its coming being an undoing or interruption of all form. However, this does not mean that it is entirely lacking in form: its “formless” form is that of a figure without figure or face, a face without face or figure. This is why we can claim that the coming of the other is always like the apparition of a phantom. Every time, in every relation—and every relation is a “spectral” relation—it is *as if* one were encountering a phantom. Yet it is each time, each and every time, an encounter with what is unique and singular. Any allergy to Derrida’s work, I would argue, is precisely an allergy and resistance to this other, the other who or which is unprecedented in its coming—like a revolution.

As Derrida does not philosophize or conceptualize in any classical manner but rather *reads* texts, in order to be faithful to the way he teaches us to read, the chapters of this book cannot simply be the unfolding and development of “arguments” about a “subject.” The series of *readings* that make up this book work by accretion and concatenation. I have tried to read Derrida metonymically, to read across his oeuvre, to trace certain terms throughout his corpus, a corpus that in its remarkable consistency—what may be called “an altered repetition [*une répétition alterée*]”—puts into question all narratives of “continuity” or “rupture.” Thus each of the chapters could stand alone, yet they are not simply discrete entities unrelated

to each other. A reading of all the chapters will, I hope, show that they are singular *and* in relation to one another.

Just as there is a relation of analogy—but analogy reworked, analogy otherwise—between every other, there is also a certain relation of seriality between the chapters, which open onto one another. This naturally poses a problem for their order. In contrast to a book as it is classically conceived, where the chapters have a “natural” order, an “order” that is organized around a concept of unity, where one chapter has logical priority and the others build on the work and conclusions of the previous one, the chapters of *Apparitions—Of Derrida’s Other* (following what is demonstrated about analogy in the first chapter) could substitute for each other. Conceived separately, several of the chapters could justifiably be the first chapter. In fact, depending on the order of the chapters, this book could be “about” the other, “about” specters, “about” the image and the visual, “about” the relation to the other, and so on in Derrida’s work. *Apparitions* is, of course, about all of those things, but a separate reading of each chapter should enable the reader to read anew each of the above terms or topics—the other, the ghost, relation, and so on—in light of the other chapters.

If none of the chapters were to have an absolute privilege, if none were to have precedence over another, then it would be a matter of what Derrida, in *The Truth in Painting*, calls “*duction* in series.” This would mean that “the introduction” would take its place in “the system of *duction*” (induction, production, reproduction, reduction, etc.).³ Rather than simply functioning as “preliminary to the ‘main’ portion of the text,” rather than going toward a purported “inside,” as its etymology—“to lead inside, toward the inside”—suggests, an “introduction” would then act as a lure, a ruse, a temptation for the reader to read on further, *leading* him or her toward an “inside” that is always exterior to itself.⁴

It is impossible to attempt to capture the experience of profound loss and bereavement that Jacques Derrida’s passing away left so many of us. The world did end. If there is anything that urges us to read him, that issues a demand, it is not only the rigor but also the sense of amazement, joy, and humor that he brought to every text that he read, like no other.

Analogies

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“An Almost Unheard-of *Analogy*”

Derrida Reading Levinas

This word “other” [*autre*] is very soon, I predict, going to become absolutely unutterable, given the abuse or the inflation to which it has fallen victim.

Jacques Derrida, “Above All, No Journalists!”

Show yourself! Reveal yourself to me so that I can see you!

This is the demand—the appeal—that Moses addresses to God. In the well-known passage from the Book of Exodus, Moses is said to implore God: “I beseech thee, show me thy glory” (Exod. 33:18 AV). However, his entreaty is swiftly denied when God replies: “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live” (Exod. 33:20). All that Moses can hope for is to see the “back parts” of God. “But my face,” he is assured, “shall not be seen” (Exod. 33:23).

Hachem Foda, a professor of Arabic literature, invokes this very relationship between Moses and God in a meeting of several Arab intellectuals with Jacques Derrida that took place in Rabat, Morocco, in June 1996. In a paper analyzing a series of Arabic terms having to do with the notion of *uns* (a concept that encompasses sociality and warm companionship with others as well as with God), Foda claims that any communion or relation with God is only possible in terms of a friendly and intimate relation that one shares with one’s neighbors. Foda refers to al-Kalâbâdhî’s *Traité de soufisme*, whose author quotes the words of the Egyptian mystic Dhû l-Nûn.¹ *Uns* or intimacy with God, the mystic is said to have said, “is for the one who loves, being at ease with the beloved [*être à l’aise avec l’Aimé*]” (EC 20). As an example of the desire for *uns*, for this intimacy and comfort, al-Kalâbâdhî cites the demand that Moses is said to have placed on God: “Show yourself to me, so that I can see you.”² It is the very desire for *uns*, according to Foda, that motivates Moses to want to

see God. And the response from God—“you will never see me”—Foda believes, demonstrates that divinity as such does not belong to the phenomenal order.³ Thus, having God as companion, Foda writes, is akin to “having company without companions,” it is “*being with no one* [être avec personne],” or “*being in the company of no one* [être en compagnie de personne]” (EC 30).

In his response to Foda’s paper, Jacques Derrida not only highlights the almost Blanchotian reference to companionship with this some *one* “who does not accompany me” but also the example of the relation between Moses and God. What Foda’s paper reveals, Derrida wants to suggest, is precisely the impossibility of being able to rigorously distinguish between the relation to the other and the relation to God. The scene in which Moses asks God to show himself and God refuses visibility, Derrida provocatively claims, can in fact be taken as “the *paradigm* for all relations to the other [*l’autre*], whatever it may be [*quel qu’il soit*], human or divine.”⁴ If the other’s manner of presenting itself—in a relation of interruption and separation, dissociation and disjunction—consists in not ever presenting itself, then, the relation to alterity in general, this experience of an invisibility in the visible or of a nonphenomenality, is a relation where the other “can only present itself *as other*, never presenting itself as such” (Fid 226). The condition of the experience of the other as other is that we can never have direct access to the other side, “to the zero point of this other origin of the world,” in the same manner that there can be no immediate intuition or originary perception of the alter ego. “Isn’t this,” Derrida asks, “the law of the relation to the other, whatever it may be [*quel qu’il soit*], X, animal, God or human being?” (Fid 226). In other words, the law of the relation to the other entails that all relations to the other, each relation to every other—and *tout autre est tout autre*—is an interruptive rapport to the distant, the inaccessible, and the secret.

Contrasting his belief in the impossibility of clearly distinguishing between the relation to the other and the relation to God with Levinas’s thought, which wishes to maintain a distinction, however tenuous, between the two relationships, Derrida asks: “When Levinas speaks of the Wholly Other [*Tout Autre*], or of the infinitely Other, does he speak of God or the other in general?” (Fid 226).⁵ In other words, can Levinas’s *Tout Autre* be rigorously distinguished from any other “other?” Doesn’t Levinas “set up [*s’installe*] an *analogy* between the relation of Moses to God and the relation of man to man, that is of every other to every other, of every other to the wholly other, to every other of the wholly other, to the utterly other of the wholly other [*de tout autre à tout autre, au tout autre de tout autre*]?” (Fid 226; emphasis added).

If there is such an analogy between the relation of Moses to God and the relation to the other, this gives rise to a number of questions: How are we to read this *analogy*? How are the *terms* of the analogical relation (God, for example) and the analogical *relation* itself read in Derrida's work, so that the relation of Moses to God can be designated as "the paradigmatic" relation? Further, how is the function of the *paradigm* reworked in Derrida's texts? Finally, and most importantly, who or what is "the other [*l'autre*]" for Derrida?

In what follows, I would like to suggest that from very early on (certainly as early as 1964, perhaps even earlier), what has been at work in Derrida's writings is a sophisticated notion of the other (*l'autre*) that needs to be distinguished from that of his contemporaries. Always written in the lower case, the other, for Derrida, can designate the alterity of *Autrui*, as well as encompassing what has traditionally been understood as a formal or logical sense of alterity (for example, in the Hegelian and Husserlian sense) without being reduced to it. Echoing the concerns of "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas,"⁶ Derrida's *l'autre* combines the features of the absolutely other *and* the alter ego, thus yoking the Hebraic and Hellenic while keeping each heterogeneous.

The Last Word: "Violence and Metaphysics"

Derrida's discussion in Morocco of the relation between Moses and God recalls, of course, a passage in his first and now seminal evaluation of Levinas's work, "Violence and Metaphysics," in which he had quoted the section from Exodus with which my essay began. In "Violence and Metaphysics" Derrida had taken Levinas to task, arguing that the descriptions of the relation to *Autrui* detailed in *Totality and Infinity* evoked "the Lord speaking face to face with Moses" (ED 160/108).⁷ The resemblance of the Face of Yahweh—never explicitly mentioned in *Totality and Infinity*—to that of *Autrui* was, for Derrida, the sign of an "equivocal complicity between theology and metaphysics in *Totality and Infinity*" (ED 160/108–109). Levinas's ethics, then, was inevitably contaminated by an inescapable theological conceptuality, making it susceptible to a critique of ontotheology. Yet, many years later, Derrida cites this very relationship of Moses to God as the paradigm for all relations to the other.

How are we to assess Derrida's seemingly contradictory account in Morocco in light of his earlier condemnation? Is it the case, as many have feared, that Derrida became in his last writings unseemly religious? Or is Derrida's rereading of the analogy between the relation of Moses to God and that of the relation to the other part of an enriched approach to

Levinas's corpus, a reappraisal of Levinas, mainly marked in Derrida's work not specifically devoted to Levinas—a reconsideration fully aware of the aporias of giving and generosity, gratefulness and ingratitude—that took place over more than two decades? Is it perhaps a case of the reinscription of certain initially censured terms—terms such as the absolutely other, experience, religion, and so on—allowing the terms and the relation to Levinas to be read anew?⁸

In “Violence and Metaphysics,” a long, wide-ranging, detailed, and dense essay which for many in France and elsewhere served as the first introduction to Levinas's work and has to a certain extent determined the reception of Levinas's work, Derrida presented Levinas's challenge to Husserlian phenomenology and Heideggerian ontology as a fundamental thinking of the other (*l'autre*). In a multitiered, complex examination of Levinas's reading of Husserl and Heidegger, Derrida employed the double gesture of (1) using the resources of the very thinker criticized by Levinas to pose questions to Levinas's own interpretations, and (2) in a further twist, using a Husserlian orientation to question Levinas's interpretation of Heidegger and a Heideggerian path to criticize Levinas's take on Husserl. Since its republication in *Writing and Difference* in 1967, this complicated essay has acquired the status of a canonical text, conveniently becoming the obligatory reference and final arbiter whenever the question of the relation between Derrida and Levinas is raised, even though the issues at stake in it are far from clear.

Even though Derrida devoted a number of other texts after “Violence and Metaphysics” to Levinas—in particular, “At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am” (1980) and *Adieu* (1996)—and the explicit references to Levinas's texts grew exponentially over the years (e.g., in *The Gift of Death*; *Politics of Friendship*; *Le toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy*; and *The Animal That Therefore I Am*)—many still seem to consider “Violence and Metaphysics” the last word whenever the relation between the two thinkers is broached, in particular whenever any discussion of “the other” is concerned. The other—this term, notion, or concept, which has been worn away by so much misuse, contributing to its banality, which has become a mantra in so many quarters, serving as shorthand for liberal concern for diversity and multiculturalism—has become a liability. There is too much talk of the other, we are told. And yet we cannot do away with the other, since the other and the relation to the other are at the heart of the celebrated chiasm that joins and separates the oeuvres of Levinas and Derrida.

Part of the difficulty of appealing to “Violence and Metaphysics” to resolve all differences and to explain the relation between the two thinkers is that practically all of the complaints or objections addressed to Levinas

were affirmatively reworked and reinscribed in Derrida's own work. Thus, instead of treating "Violence and Metaphysics" as if it were the last word, as if everything that Derrida wrote on Levinas and the other since 1964 ought to be judged against the formulations of that text, much care needs to be taken to avoid conflating the work of the two thinkers and to disentangle the thought of the other in Derrida from its Levinasian legacy. A more careful, deliberate, and patient exercise, for example, would consist of attending to the usage of the term *l'autre* in all of Derrida's texts, in order to gain a better sense of how it functions in his work—an enormous task indeed. Yet, even if we turn to "Violence and Metaphysics" in a very circumscribed manner and attentively read a few selected passages where Derrida poses a number of questions to Levinas, to his reading of Husserl (and the alter ego) and to Levinas's own notion of *Autrui*, we may be able to catch a glimpse of the moments in Derrida's text where it has already begun to pull away from Levinas, displacing the privilege of *Autrui* and articulating another thinking of the other (*l'autre*). In order to do so, it is necessary to draw out Derrida's remarks regarding the other in "Violence and Metaphysics," beginning with Husserl's notion of the alter ego and going on to Levinas's notion of *Autrui*.

Reading Husserl

Undertaking a rigorous reappraisal of Husserl's work, Derrida attempts to show in "Violence and Metaphysics" that despite Levinas's criticisms, Husserl's concern has always been with the other *as other*. It is worth noting that the "objections" addressed to Levinas—who, after all, co-translated the *Cartesian Meditations*—audacious though they may be, revolve around Levinas's interpretations of Husserl. Derrida's comments particularly address the adequacy of Husserl's account of the relation to the other. By broaching the topics of the alter ego and the irreducibly mediate relationship with the other (analogical appresentation), Derrida demonstrates Husserl's attentiveness to respecting and preserving the alterity of the other. Husserl's descriptions of the alter ego, Derrida claims, recognize the other *as other* in its form as ego and in its form of alterity.

Derrida notes that a schema undergirds all of Levinas's thought of the other: the other (*l'autre*) is other (*l'autre*) only if its alterity is absolutely irreducible, that is, infinitely irreducible (ED 154/104). In other words, the other is absolutely other, it is "exteriority which can be neither derived, nor engendered, nor constituted on the basis of anything other than itself" (ED 156/106). According to Levinas, Husserl's determination of the other as alter ego in the Fifth Cartesian Meditation implies that the other is the

same as the ego. Derrida presents Levinas's argument thus: "By making the other [*l'autre*] a phenomenon of the ego, in particular in the *Cartesian Meditations*, constituted by analogical appresentation on the basis of the ego's own sphere of belonging, Husserl missed the infinite alterity of the other [*l'autre*], reducing it to the same" (ED 180/123). To make the other (*l'autre*) an alter ego would be, for Levinas, tantamount to a neutralization of its absolute alterity.

Let us now follow very closely Derrida's argumentation in "Violence and Metaphysics" in order to examine how he sets out to contest Levinas's interpretation and to demonstrate that Husserl's work is in fact rigorously faithful to the alterity of the other.⁹ Derrida raises a number of points, the most important of which are: (1) the status and (2) appearing of the alter ego, (3) the mediate relationship to the other, or analogical appresentation, (4) the alterity of bodies, and (5) the economic relationship between symmetry and asymmetry.

The Alter Ego as Ego

The criticism that Levinas has leveled at Husserl is that he maintains that the other (*l'autre*) as alter ego is known through sympathy—"as another like myself" (ED 184/125). As we know, for Levinas, *Autru* is not simply an alter ego. But for Husserl, as Derrida points out, the other (*l'autre*) is never me but "an Ego [*un Moi*]"; it has the form of the ego (ED 162/110; emphasis in original). Thus Husserl understands the other as alter ego to mean "the other *as other* [*l'autre comme autre*]" (ED 184/125; emphasis added). Precisely because it is an ego, it is "irreducible to *my ego*" (ED 184/125). It is "the egoity of the other [*l'autre*]," Derrida adds, that allows him to say "ego," and "this is why he is *autru* and not a stone, or a being without speech *in my real economy*" (ED 184/125). Husserl recognizes the other (*autru*) "in its form of alterity [*dans sa forme d'altérité*]," which cannot be that of things in the world (ED 184/125). Without the recognition of the other as a transcendental alter ego, Derrida notes, "its entire alterity would collapse" (ED 184/125). Thus, for Husserl, the "passage from Ego [*Moi*] to the other [*l'Autre*] as *an Ego* is the passage to the essential, nonempirical *egoity* of subjective existence *in general*" and not a passage to that of *my ego* (ED 162–63 /110).

The Alter Ego Appears to Me

In the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl is concerned to show "how the other *as other* [*l'autre en tant qu'autre*], in its irreducible alterity, presents itself to

me,” appears to me (ED 180–81/123; emphasis added). There has to be, Derrida insists, “*a certain appearing* of the other as other to an ego” (ED 181/123; emphasis added). It would be impossible to encounter the alter ego and respect it in experience and language “without this other, in its alterity, *appearing* for an ego (in general)” (ED 181/123). There has to be a phenomenon of the totally other, “otherwise one could neither speak, nor have any sense of the totally other [*tout-autre*], or evidence of the totally other as such” (ED 181/123). But the other as other is “the phenomenon of a certain non-phenomenality,” its mode of appearing is that of “an originary non-presence” (ED 181/123). Thus Husserl’s writings, Derrida states, can be said to “describe the system of the phenomenality of non-phenomenality” (ED 183/125). The other (*l’autre*), “phenomenality as disappearance [*comme disparition*],” “appears” but never *as such* (ED 190/129). It is this appearing of the other (*l’autre*) as what I can never be, Derrida notes, this “originary non-phenomenality,” that is examined as “the *intentional phenomenon* of the ego” (ED 182/123).

*The Mediate Relationship to the Other,
or Analogical Appresentation*

Husserl’s central concern in the relationship with the other is “the *irreducibly mediate* character of intentionality aiming at [*visant*] the other as other” (ED 182/123). Husserl is most insistent that “the other as transcendental other (the other absolute origin and the other zero point in the orientation of the world)” can never be given to me in person, but only through analogical appresentation (ED 182/124).¹⁰ The *alter ego* cannot present itself, it cannot become an originary presence for the ego, it can never be given “in person,” thus resisting the principle of principles of phenomenology—namely, the intuitive given of originary presence.¹¹

Derrida notes that the relation of analogical appresentation is not an assimilating reduction of the other to the same but rather “confirms and respects separation, the unsurpassable necessity of (nonobjective) mediation. . . . If I attained the other immediately and originally, silently, in communion with the other’s own experience, the other would cease to be the other” (ED 182/124). Contrary to appearances, appresentative transposition recognizes “the radical separation of absolute origins, the relation of absolved absolutes [*absolus absous*] and non-violent respect for the secret” (ED 182/124).

Throughout all of his writings, Derrida never abandons the importance accorded analogical appresentation in his reading of Husserl. Over thirty years later, in *Le toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy*, Derrida, while praising

“Husserlian prudence” as “a model of vigilance,” reiterates the necessity of turning to analogical appresentation.¹² Noting the “unsurpassable abyss [*abime infranchissable*]” separating me from the other, Derrida emphasizes that the other (*l’autre*) is never given to me immediately, is never “presented” directly, but is “apprehended” in an indirect relationship. My access to the body (*Leib*) of the other, he writes in *Le toucher*, is possible only in “an indirect fashion, by appresentation, comparison, analogy, projection, and introjection” (LT 217). My relation to the other’s body, in contrast to the relation the other has to its own body, can only be through appresentation. The other, “*from its point of view [de son côté], which will never be mine*, has an originary relation to its body,” the same way I have to mine, which I will never have with its (LT 217). I can never have an experience of the other’s body as if I were on its side. Thus “one must be vigilant about the alterity of the other [*il faut veiller à l’altérité de l’autre*]: the latter will always remain inaccessible to an originary giving [*donatrice*] intuition, an immediate and direct presentation of *here [ici]*” (LT 218). Even though I may know or feel that “there is an *other* here [*ici*],” this other “here” presents itself as that which will never be mine. It is not possible to confuse me and the other because “the alterity of the alter ego can never be reappropriated in the ownness [*le propre*] of ‘my ego’” (LT 220). Each of our worlds is untranslatable, Derrida writes, and “at bottom there will never be the ‘same world’ [*au fond il n’y aura jamais de ‘même monde*]” (LT 220). There is an irreducible difference between us—I have a direct and originary intuition of my body and an indirect appresentation that gives me access to the other. The interiority of the other cannot be given to me immediately, it cannot be *my* interior life. I have access to the other, but only *as other* and not as another me.

Things and Alterity in General

In “Violence and Metaphysics,” Derrida is also keen to point out that Husserl’s attentiveness to alterity is not confined simply to that of the alter ego but also applies to the alterity of things: “Bodies, transcendent and natural things are others [*des autres*] in general for my consciousness. They are outside and their transcendence is the sign of an already irreducible alterity” (ED 182/124). Despite Levinas’s protestations, wishing to reserve alterity for *Autrui*, Husserl maintains that alterity is also applicable “when things are concerned [*quand il s’agit des choses*]” (ED 182/124). This understanding of alterity, according to Derrida, “takes seriously the reality of the external world” (ED 182/124). What things share with *autrui* is a general alterity, as witnessed by the fact “that something in them is

always hidden [*se cache aussi toujours*], and is indicated only by anticipation, analogy and appresentation” (ED 182/124).

The already irreducible alterity of the transcendent thing is due to “the indefinite incompleteness [*inachèvement*] of my original perceptions” (ED 183/124). Even though the transcendent thing appears through adumbrations (*Abschattungen*), in principle “the possibility of an originary and original presentation” of a hidden side is always open (ED 183/124). However, in the case of *autrui* this possibility is foreclosed. The alterity of the transcendent thing is thus “incomparable with the equally irreducible alterity of *autrui*” since the alterity of *autrui* “adds to the dimension of incompleteness . . . a more profound dimension of non-originariness”—the radical impossibility of being able to “go around [*faire le tour*] to see things from the other side,” of being able to experience the lived experience of the other from the other’s vantage point (ED 183/124).

An Economic Relation—Symmetry and Dissymmetry

It is important to note that without the alterity of bodies (*les corps*) (and *autrui* is, after all, also a body), the alterity of *autrui* could never emerge (ED 183/124). Derrida underscores that these two alterities—the alterity of bodies and the alterity of *autrui*—one inscribed in the other, need to be thought together. This is why the alterity of *autrui* is doubly irreducible, “by a double power of indefiniteness” (ED 183/124). The other remains infinitely other because “the subjective face of his experience [*vécu*] from his vantage point [*de son côté*], such as it is lived by him,” is never available to me (ED 183/124). Unlike what belongs to my sphere of ownness, the experience that the other has of what is proper to him will never be given to me originally (ED 183/124).

Yet there is a strange symmetry between me and the other: I am also the other’s other and I know this. Without this “evidence,” I could not “desire (or) respect the other in ethical dissymmetry” (ED 188/128). It is precisely because “in my ipseity I know myself to be other for the other [*autre pour l’autre*]” that the movement of transcendence toward the other could have any meaning (ED 185/126). No dissymmetry would be possible without the symmetrical recognition of the other as ego. Derrida calls this dissymmetry “an *economy* in a new sense” (ED 185/126).

This *economy*—which Derrida concedes may sound logically absurd—is “the transcendental symmetry of two empirical asymmetries” (ED 185/126).¹³ This economic relation also entails, Derrida reminds us, referring to Parmenides of the *Poem* and Plato’s *Sophist*, that the other (*l’autre*) is always said *pros heteron*.¹⁴ The other cannot be absolutely “absolved” of

relation to an ego; it cannot be absolutely exterior to the same without ceasing to be other. In other words, the other, even though utterly other, according to Derrida, must have *some relation* to the same. This would mean that the same cannot be a totality closed in upon itself, “an identity playing with itself with only the appearance of alterity” (ED 186/126). Citing Heidegger’s *Identity and Difference*, where the same presupposes mediation, relation, and difference, Derrida argues that “the ‘play of the Same’” is possible only when alterity is already lodged *in* the Same (ED 186/126–27).

(At this juncture it is essential to open a parenthesis to address the expression “infinitely other” or “absolutely other [*absolument autre*],” which, Derrida is said to have claimed cannot be said and thought at the same time. This has led certain commentators, who hold steadfast to this as an iron-clad rule, to claim that what distinguishes Derrida from Levinas is that for the former the other can never be said to be “*absolutely* other.” However, this would make it difficult to explain away the use of “the absolute other [*l’autre absolu*]” in *Donner la mort*¹⁵ and in the essay “L’animal que donc je suis”¹⁶ or comments such as: every other is “*absolutely* other [*absolument autre*]” or “infinitely other [*infiniment autre*]” (DM 110/78). A solution to this apparent contradiction or paradox can be found in exploring the expression “*Tout autre est tout autre*” which Derrida has used in a number of texts.¹⁷ For Derrida, there is a *relation* to the other which remains *absolutely* other, singular and unique).

The transcendental symmetry of two empirical asymmetries, the alterity of things, the mediate relationship to the other or analogical appresentation, the egoity of the alter ego and the necessity of its appearing make up the core of Derrida’s interpretation of Husserl’s writings on the other, which insists that Husserl’s work, by providing a rigorous account of the relation to the other *as other*, has always been thoroughly attentive to the alterity of the other. Even though Derrida provides an account of Husserl’s work that differs from Levinas (for example, Levinas would deny that *Autrui* is an ego), he is insistent that no matter the particular interpretation or use of terminology (e.g., “alter ego”) Husserl’s work is most attentive to the alterity of the other.¹⁸ Following an examination of Husserl, Derrida then turns his attention to Levinas’s notion of *Autrui*.

Levinas’s *Autrui* and Derrida’s *l’autre*

As noted above, throughout his own writings, particularly from *Totality and Infinity* onward, Levinas makes abundantly clear that the absolutely other is *Autrui*; that is, only *Autrui* can be absolutely other.¹⁹ This

“schema,” Derrida emphasizes, underpins all of Levinas’s thought on alterity (ED 154/104). In “Violence and Metaphysics,” Derrida attends to both components of this axiom, scrutinizing what Levinas means by the terms “absolutely other” and “*Autrui*.” We shall first examine the latter.

According to Levinas, ontology has always conceptualized and totalized, hence neutralized, the relation to the other (*l’autre*).²⁰ But this relation—neither mediate nor immediate—cannot be totalized by a concept of relation (ED 134/90). It is not possible to conceptualize the encounter, since the encounter itself is made possible by the other (*l’autre*). The infinitely other, resistant to all categories, cannot be bound by a concept or thought on the basis of a horizon, since the concept supposes an anticipation and a horizon. For Levinas, the encounter with the other has the form of separation, the trace of which is at the heart of all experience (ED 141–42/95).

The infinitely other is invisible; it shows itself or appears in a certain nonmanifestation (ED 135/91). It is in the face that the other is “given over in person *as other* [*se livre en personne comme autre*], that is, as that which does not reveal itself, as that which does not allow itself to be thematized” (ED 152/103). The face, which “is not of ‘the world,’” can only be reached as the inaccessible, the separate, the invisible, the intangible, and the secret (ED 153/103).

If “the existence of *autrui*” escapes conceptualization, then what can be said about *autrui*? (ED 154/104). Who or what is *autrui*? Despite appearances, as Derrida points out, there is no concept of *autrui* (ED 154/104). In French, *Autrui* is not an adjective nor a pronoun; it is a substantive (i.e., it functions syntactically as a noun but is not a noun nor a species of a noun). It is not a proper noun nor a common noun either, and unlike the Greek category of the other in general (i.e., *heteron*), it does not take the definite article and admits no plural. Quoting the entry from the *Littré*, which states, “*Autrui*, from *alter-huic*, this other [*cet autre*] . . . *Autrui* is less general than ‘*les autres*,’” Derrida asks: How are we then to understand what is meant by *autrui*? (ED 155/105).

I would now like to turn to a couple of passages from a long paragraph in “Violence and Metaphysics” where, urging us to reflect upon “*Autrui* in an artisan-like way,” Derrida’s text indicates a schema for a rereading of Levinas, at least of the terms *autrui* and *l’autre* (ED 154/104). Taking note of Derrida’s emphases—he uses the phrase “*Il faudrait réfléchir* five times on two pages—I would like to show how Derrida subtly questions the prominence and priority of the alterity of *Autrui* in Levinas’s work (ED 154–55).

After citing the etymology of *Autrui*, Derrida wonders whether its capitalization does in fact reinforce its neutrality: “We would have to reflect

upon this word 'Autrui' in an artisan-like way [*Il faudrait réfléchir de façon artisanale*] . . . this word 'Autrui' circumscribed in silence by the capital letter which ever increases the neutrality of the *other* [*l'autre*] . . . even though it is the very disorder of conceptuality" (ED 154/104–105). Next, in a difficult passage, Derrida highlights the relation of *Autrui* to *heteron*, the Greek genre or category of alterity relative to a point or term:

We should have to examine patiently [*Il faudrait réfléchir patiemment*] what emerges in language when the Greek thought of *heteron* seems to run out of breath [*semble s'essoufler*] when faced by the *alter-huic*, seems to become incapable [*impuissante*] of mastering what it alone, however, is able to precomprehend by concealing it as *alterity* (other in general) [*autre en général*], that which, in return, will reveal to it the irreducible center of its meaning (the other as *autrui*) [*l'autre comme autrui*]. (ED 155/105)

It is worth examining, Derrida notes, whether *heteron* does "run out of breath" and whether it does become incapable of mastering what it only is able to precomprehend, that is, *Autrui*. Does *heteron*, Derrida seems to be asking, conceal *Autrui* as other in general? Is it not worth reflecting on whether, as Levinas claims, *Autrui* is the "irreducible center" of the Greek thought of *heteron*? Levinas's resistance to the thought of *heteron* is a protest against the relativization of *Autrui*. According to Levinas, *Autrui* always falls outside the general and comparative Greek category of other. If, as Levinas holds, *heteron* has always concealed and precomprehended *Autrui* as alterity, as other in general, then, Derrida adds: "We would have to examine [*Il faudrait réfléchir*] the complicity of this dissimulation and precomprehension which is not produced within a conceptual movement, because the French word *autrui* does not designate a category [*espèce*] of the genre *autre*." In other words, Derrida is questioning whether there has been a "complicity" to dissimulate *autrui*.

Perhaps careful attention needs to be paid to a thought of *l'autre* in general, which should not be mistaken for that of a genre: "We should have to examine [*Il faudrait réfléchir*] this thought of *l'autre in general* (which is not a genre), Greek thought within which this nonspecific *difference* realizes (itself in) our history" (ED 155/105). But how can we understand a thought of *the other in general* that would not be a genre? Here we arrive at the crux of Derrida's questioning of Levinas. Derrida queries: "Even earlier [*Plus tôt*]: What does *autre* mean before the Greek determination of *heteron* and the Judeo-Christian determination of *autrui*?" (ED 155/105).²¹ Derrida is aware that such a question would meet tremendous resistance from Levinas, who would "contest it profoundly" (ED

155/105). For, according to Levinas, only the interruption of *autrui* would allow access to the absolute and irreducible alterity of the other. Derrida goes on to add that “we should have to examine, therefore, this *Huic* of *autrui* [*Il faudrait donc réfléchir à ce Huic d’autrui*] whose transcendence is not yet of a thou [*toi*],” nor perhaps that of a He (*Il*) (ED 155/105).²² Should a thinking of *l’autre* be limited to a choice between the invisible transcendence of *autrui*, *Il*, or that of a Buberian thou, *toi*? Is there the possibility of another option?

Derrida’s dense, suggestive passage (1) urges us to reflect, in an artisan-like fashion, no less, upon the two Latin components of *Autrui*: (a) the *Huic*, the *this*, and (b) the *alter*, the *other*, of *alter-huic*; but even more profoundly, (2) calls for a thinking of *l’autre* prior or anterior to both *heteron* and *Autrui*.

*The “Huic of **autrui**”*

We know from Levinas’s work that the *this* of *autrui* refers to *this* other human (*l’autre homme*), differentiating it from all other forms of alterity.²³ *Autrui* is thus the privileged form of alterity—*this* (*huic*), and not that, other (*alter*). By calling attention to the absolute singularity of the *this*, doesn’t Derrida intimate that the *this*, the *Huic*, need not refer only to this other human but also to others, to all that is *alter*?

The alter of alter-huic

In contrast to Levinas, Derrida in his reading of Husserl emphasizes the other as alter ego. To have a relation to the other as *alter* ego means to have a rapport with the other *as other*, an *other* irreducible to *my* ego, precisely because it is an ego (see the subsection on “The Mediate Relationship to the Other, or Analogical Appresentation,” above). Levinas seems to have underestimated or played down the alterity of the *alter* in *alter-huic*.²⁴

*L’autre prior to heteron and **autrui***

Derrida’s very schematic comments here point toward a thinking of the other anterior to *heteron* and *autrui* (ED 155/105). As we know, Levinas refuses to assimilate *Autrui* to *heteron*, since the former cannot refer to a general alterity or an alterity relative to a term. But, as Derrida demonstrates, referring to the notion of *heteron* in Plato’s *Sophist*, *heteron* must not simply be thought in opposition to *autrui*. Derrida poses this question to Levinas: “But how to think or say ‘*autrui*’ without reference—we

do not say reduction—to the alterity of *heteron* in general?” (ED 186–87/127). Can there be a thinking of alterity that utterly absolves itself from relationality?

Heteron no longer has “the restricted meaning which permits simply opposing it to that of *autrui*, as if it was confined to the region of real or logical objectivity” (ED 186/127). If, as Derrida remarks, *heteron* belongs “to a more profound and originary zone than that in which is deployed this philosophy of subjectivity still implicated in the notion of *autrui*,” then *autrui* must be thought *with heteron* (ED 186/127). A thinking of the other, *l'autre*, would not then be simply a thinking of otherness in general, or alterity relative to a term, or *this* absolutely other, *Autrui*, understood as this other human being and not any other being. A thinking that thinks the singular *this* of *autrui* and the *heteron* together *at the same time* would be, for Derrida, a thought of *l'autre*—prior to its simple determination as this other human or a general alterity—the thinking and writing of which becomes further refined in Derrida’s own work.²⁵

The Relation to the Other

What does the account of the relation to the other in “Violence and Metaphysics” teach us? What conclusions can be drawn about the relation to the other? Would it be desirable even to provide a formal account of this relation? Would such an account be able to do justice to the singularity of the other or would it run the risk of hypostasizing the other, endangering its alterity and thematizing what it seeks to investigate? In the essay, Derrida praises “the nature of Levinas’s writing,” his way of proceeding, “masterfully progressing by negations, and by negation against negation. Its proper route [*Sa voie propre*],” he writes, “is not that of an ‘either this . . . or that’ [*ou bien . . . ou bien*] but of a ‘neither this . . . nor that’ [*ni . . . non plus*]” (ED 134–35/90). Thus one of the finest features of Levinas’s writing is that it does not attempt to define or grasp the other, but its insistent rhythm strives to respect the singularity of the other. For, as Levinas comments, the relation to the other is “prior to the negative or affirmative proposition; it first institutes language, where neither the no nor the yes is the first word” (TI 32/42). It is necessary, then, to attend to the singularity of the other each time, while at the same time attempting, like Levinas, to provide as nuanced an account as possible.

There can never be a relation to the other *as such*, for the other never appears *as such*. One can have a relationship to the other only *as other*. To

have a relation with the other *as other* is to have a relation with the distant, the secret, and the invisible beyond propriety, restitution, and the present, “there where the *as such* of the other eludes [*se dérobe*] phenomenality.”²⁶ My relation to the other is a relation to that which cannot present itself *as such*, never *appears as such*, but only appears in disappearing. My relation is a relation to that which is not present, since if the other were actually present *as such*, I would be able to appropriate it in my field of experience, and it would be a phenomenon for me.

However, the relation with the other as such *is a relation*. This *rappor sans rapport* is a *paradoxical* relationship: “A relation without relation to any other relation,” a relation with that which because of its “alterity and transcendence makes the relation impossible.”²⁷ In order to enter into relation with the other, it is necessary that an interruption be possible and that the relation be “a relation of interruption.” However, this interruption does not simply interrupt the relation with the other; rather it opens the relation to it. In fact, all social bonds and ties presuppose and are made possible by such an interruption. As well as a relation of interruption, there is simultaneously a certain mediation in the relation to the other. In this other experience of mediation—not to be confused with a relation of reconciliation and totalization—the other is understood as other in a certain relation of incomprehension. It is necessary that at a given moment, the other remain as other.

Thus the relation to the other is twofold: there is (1) a suspension of opposition between binary oppositions, a mediation without opposition. At this moment one is in economy: between all oppositions there is no distinction or opposition, there is a difference (e.g., between nature and culture, where culture is nature differed and deferred, etc.), *and at the same time* (2) precisely because it suspends the opposition, there is a radical heterogeneity, the mark of radical difference or aneconomy. The relation to the other, then, is constituted by the two logics of economy (mediation without opposition) and aneconomy (radical alterity), relation *and* interruption of relation, interruption *and* negotiation.

Resemblance to God

Let us now return to the analogy between the relation to the other and the relation of Moses to God with which we began. A reading of analogy, as we shall show, is already hinted at in “Violence and Metaphysics,” but it is Derrida’s subsequent work on analogy that will enable us to read the analogical relation as resemblance *and* difference, economy *and* aneconomy.²⁸ “The question of analogy” is itself raised in a discussion of the relation

of Levinas's work to Hegel's (ED 147–48/100). It is worth noting that Derrida italicizes the term “analogy” there, thus signaling that it is not being used in a conventional manner.²⁹ This practice is true of practically every reference to analogy in Derrida's work. Referring to Levinas's statement that “Thought is language and is thought in an element analogous to sound and not to light,” Derrida asks: “What does *analogy* mean here, difference and resemblance, a relation between the sensible sound and the sound of thought as intelligible speech, between sensibility and signification, the senses and sense?”(ED 147–48/99).

Levinas employs an unusual analogy relating thought to speech in terms of sound rather than vision and light, an analogy rarely used in philosophy (hence one of the reasons for Derrida's subsequent use of the phrase “an almost unheard-of *analogy*”). If, according to Levinas, thought is language and more akin to sound than to light, then thought is being equated with speech, a living speech. Further, if, as Levinas claims, thought hears the invisible (God), then all speech (*discours*) would be a conversation with God.

We know that in *Totality and Infinity* the ethical relation with *Autrui* is speech or discourse (*discours*) and that *Autrui* is encountered in speech (TI 51/43). *Discours* would be the relation to the other as interlocutor. In the relation to the other, *Autrui*'s manner of presenting itself is called “expression,” and the face expresses itself *kath'auto*. This is why Derrida can point out that the relation to the face in Levinas is only understandable in light of a certain resemblance of man to God (ED 159/108–109). Quoting from one of the “Conclusions” of *Totality and Infinity*, Derrida notes that “*Autrui* resembles God” (ED 159/108).³⁰ It is this very resemblance—“the resemblance between man and God, man's face [*visage de l'homme*] and the Face of God [*la Face de Dieu*]” (ED 159/108)—no matter how radically thought by Levinas, which Derrida ultimately objects to, as it is the source from which both humanism and theology derive their impetus.³¹

In *Totality and Infinity* Levinas cautions us that “it would be false to qualify [the relation to the absolutely other] as theological” (TI 32/42). Even though “the dimension of the divine opens forth from the human face,” our relation with the other is “an ethical behavior and not theology,” not “a knowledge by analogy of the attributes of God” (TI 76/78). “There can be no ‘knowledge’ of God,” he later adds, “separated from the relationship with men. *Autrui* is the very locus of metaphysical truth, and is indispensable for my relations with God” (TI 77/78). Thus, Levinas further elaborates, “*Autrui* is not the incarnation of God, but precisely by his face, in which he is disincarnate, is the manifestation of the height in

which God is revealed. It is our relations with men . . . that give to theological concepts the unique signification they admit of” (TI 78–79/77). Despite all of Levinas’s qualifications, what Derrida still finds troubling in *Totality and Infinity* is the complicitous relationship of theology and metaphysics (ED 160/108–109).³²

Derrida notes: “The face-to-face is thus not originally determined by Levinas as the vis-à-vis of two equal and upright men. The latter supposes the face-to-face of the man with bent neck and eyes raised toward God on high” (ED 158/107). In this resemblance, “The Face of God” commands while hiding itself, disappears in showing itself. What Derrida detects in this passage and other passages like it are evocations of the Face of Yahweh. Derrida cites the passage from Exodus with which I began, in which, speaking face-to-face with Moses, God says: “Thou canst not see my face [*ma face*]: for there shall be no man see me and live . . . thou shall see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen” (Exodus 33:20–23).³³ Derrida concedes that “the face [*le visage*] is neither the face [*la face*] of God nor the face [*la figure*] of man: it is their resemblance. A resemblance which, however, we must think before, or without, the assistance of the Same” (ED 161/109).³⁴ (As we shall see, Derrida’s comments in Rabat will enable us to think this resemblance otherwise.)

The resemblance between the face and God’s visage also sets up an analogy between speech between men and discourse with God:

Via the passageway of this resemblance, man’s speech can be lifted up [*re-monter*] toward God, an almost unheard-of *analogy* [*analogie presque inouïe*] which is the very movement of Levinas’s discourse on discourse, on speech [*discours de Levinas sur le discours*]. Analogy as [*comme*] dialogue with God: “Speech [*Le Discours*] is conversation with God.” . . . Conversation with God, and not in God as *participation*. Conversation with God, and not discourse on God and his attributes as *theology*. (ED 159/108)

This “almost unheard-of” analogy, Derrida writes, is also the movement of Levinas’s own discourse. In other words, Levinas’s discourse (on discourse, that is, speech with God) is itself a speech addressed to God, making the status of his text, of all his writings, analogous to a conversation or dialogue with God. The nudity of the face—speech and look—is analogous to divine speech, the speech that instantaneously presents the speaker. The relation to God, in language and conversation, is therefore presupposed in every face-to-face, and speech with God, always in the background, serves as “guarantor” for all face-to-face relations. It is in this sense that Derrida can write, paraphrasing Levinas, that the dissymmetrical relation to

the other “is, perhaps, the very presence of God” (ED 159/108). Yet this “presence” is a strange presence:

Presence as separation, presence-absence as resemblance, but resemblance which is not the “ontological mark” of the worker imprinted on his product (Descartes) or on “beings created in his image and resemblance” (Malebranche), a resemblance which can be understood neither in terms of communion or knowledge, nor in terms of participation and incarnation. (ED 159–60/108)

For Levinas, this resemblance, which is not a sign or an effect of God, places us “in the Trace of God” (ED 160/108). But it is precisely this “resemblance” of man to God, the determination of *Autrui* by its resemblance to God, which prevents the face from appearing in relation with other beings: “It is the analogy between the face and God’s visage [*le visage avec la face de Dieu*] that, in the most classical fashion, distinguishes man from animal. . . . Man’s substantiality, which permits him to be face, is thus founded in his resemblance to God who is thus the Face [*Le Visage*] and absolute substantiality” (ED 210/142). Levinas’s theological conceptuality—or at least his rhetoric—reinforces the identification of the absolutely other as *Autrui*, my fellow human, and not as *this* other, whether animal, living, nonliving, and so on. Derrida remarks that Levinas’s use of the language of “substance” (“perhaps man alone is substance”) refers us to the scholastic problematic of analogy, but he prefers to leave this issue aside (ED 210/143).³⁵

Rethinking Analogy—Difference and Resemblance

The relation to the other opens up a space that is not necessarily simply theological but can also function as the source of theological discourse. As Derrida remarks regarding Levinas’s entire enterprise, “this return to experience and ‘to the things themselves,’ as a relation to the infinite(ly) other is not theological, even if it alone has the power afterward to found theological discourse” (ED 159/107–108). If God, the most proper name, were not thought of as a substance, an ineffable Being, a presence, a final anchor term, but rather was the name of an “endless desertification of language,”³⁶ if the name of God were the result of an always possible “movement of the effacement of the trace in presence” (ED 160/108), then the “theological” would be, as Derrida writes in *Of Grammatology*, “a determinant moment in the total movement of the trace,”³⁷ an “effect of the trace” (ED 160/108). God would be a “nominal effect” within “the chains of substitutions of names,” a name substituting yet another totally other for the wholly other.³⁸

This possibility of infinite substitution, the infinite substitution of the infinite, allows “God” to stand for the name, one of the substitutable names, of the unsubstitutable. Such an account would, of course, break with all the monotheistic doctrines of the oneness, uniqueness, and unsubstitutability of God. It is said that the absolute uniqueness of Yahweh does not lend itself to analogy, yet in this uniqueness and irreplaceability analogy begins.³⁹ Thus when we say that the relation to the other resembles the relation of Moses to God, we mean not only that there is a formal resemblance between the two relations but that “the other” shares a number of characteristics with what we call “God.” There is a structural analogy between the two relations.

In traditional analogy either (a) two quantities of the same kind are in a *direct* relation where the value of one determines the value of the other (*proportio*), or (b) there is a similarity or resemblance of relations, *similitudo proportionum*, between the terms (*proportionalitas*).⁴⁰ The etymology of “analogy” (*ana-logia*)—the repetition (*ana*) of a *logos* (of a relation or a *ratio*)—points to the possibility of a convertibility or conversion and a reversibility, since *ana* means reversal as well as repetition (as return, reversion, and inversion).⁴¹ Thus analogy implies a double movement: the repetition of an initial relation and the reversibility or reversal of a relation.⁴²

For Derrida, analogy is traditionally anchored by the proper name or noun (*idion onoma*), where the proper name functions as “the nonmetaphorical prime mover of metaphor,” as a first term or causality.⁴³ Traditional analogy—what Derrida has elsewhere called “ana-onto-logy,” which is dominated by the necessity of “the appearance as such of the *as such*, of the *as*”—is governed by the proper name of the *logos* outside and beyond language. The origin of analogy has always been *logos*—reason and word—what “regulates all analogy and which itself is not analogical.”⁴⁴ The analogical chain proceeds from and always comes back to an origin, to truth, whose value governs the entire chain. This return is guided by the function of resemblance (*homoiosis*): the proper and the metaphor reflect and refer to each other, where the proper noun has a single sense and means only one thing. The logical and metaphysical anteriority of that which is resembled is never contested. Traditional analogy also assumes that the identity of the terms in the analogical relation and their relationships are evident, known, and stable. In other words, all the terms are either present or can come to presence.

The relation or analogy between two relations is itself dominated and named by one of the terms within the relation of relations, for example, in our case, God. The name of the relation is the same as that of one of its terms and all the terms are comprehended in the structure of this one

term. “This comprehension,” according to Derrida, “is an act of *domination* and *decision*.”⁴⁵ Thus the relation itself is comprehended and decided in favor of one of its terms. “God,” then, would dominate the other terms of the analogy, swallowing them up, incorporating them.

For Derrida, in the analogy of the relation to the other to that of the relation of Moses to God—analogy displaced, analogy otherwise, an almost unheard-of “analogy,” analogy *and* heterology—what the terms of the analogy name, for example, “God” or “the other,” are not the proper names referring to a unique thing. The analogy does not refer back to a fixed term or an undivided origin. The relation to both, the other and God, is an indirect, reticent rapport to a certain obscurity and remoteness. What both relations have in common is a structural similarity: both are asymmetrical relations to that which is infinitely distant, to what cannot be seen or immediately presented. The description of one relation—for example, the characteristics of the relation to the other—can then shine a light, albeit a nocturnal glow, on the other relation.

Following the same logic to its limit, we could say that the relation to the other and the relation of Moses to God are at once analogous—they share a certain functional analogy (hence this relation could be inscribed in an open series which would contain many other analogous relations)—*and* also remain entirely singular, irreducible to one another, offering no guarantee of analogy. Each relation, utterly unique, singular, and irreplaceable, is part of a specific semantic or tropological system *and* can be substituted by another. Each relation is a part of a series but is also able to comprehend the whole and stand for all the others. If there is an analogy between the relation of Moses and God, analogy is here understood in a new sense, combining “the economy of analogy—the same only differed, relayed, deferred [*reporté*]*—and* the rupture of all analogy, absolute heterology.”⁴⁶ It is an interrupted analogy that once interrupted, is again resumed as an analogy between two absolute incommensurable heterogeneities.

Paradigm and Series

Thus the relation between Moses and God can be taken as the paradigm (*paradeigma*, example) for all relations to the other. In both cases a demand is made for the other to show itself (“*Montre-Toi*”), and each time this demand cannot be fulfilled. What is asked to show itself cannot show itself in person; it erases itself in “presenting” itself, disappearing in its appearance. Hence there can be no relation to the other or to God *as such*; there can only be a relation to the other *as other*.

The relation of Moses to God is exemplary and can function as the *paradigm* for all relations to the other, but this paradigm has no absolute privilege with respect to other relations in the open-ended series of relations in which it is inscribed and that it makes possible. The paradigm here is neither the producer nor the generator from which a copy emerges. It is not at the origin (*arché*) nor the model already there, in nature, from which other relations originate. This series without commencement or end, without origin or hierarchy, is composed of a chain of relations, an open series of relations, each unique and irreplaceable. The relation of Moses to God is a part of this series—which we may just as well call without paradigm—but a part that can always comprehend the whole. If the series of relations is analogous, it is in their disjunction—they are interlaced but interrupted at intervals.

Read in this manner, even if the relation of Moses to God is to be considered as the paradigm of all relations to the other, the relationship to the other need not necessarily be a “religious” relation, understood ontotheologically. In “Violence and Metaphysics,” Derrida found it objectionable to call the relation that opens ethics, this bond or tie, *religion*. At that time, Derrida demonstrated that Levinas was unable to escape the theological ambit of his thought, that he was unable to keep the philosophical texts and the confessional, theological writings apart.⁴⁷ After those early pronouncements, Derrida’s own work undertook a serious engagement with religion, as long as this term could be understood as the inescapable relationship to a nonthematizable X, a relation without relation to the totally other rather than an organized, positive, revealed religion.⁴⁸ Yet he would still have maintained that Levinas’s insistence on keeping the two realms separate leads to a metaphysical, ontotheological thought.

For Derrida, the impossibility of rigorously separating the two relations—the relation of Moses to God and the relation to the other—from one another is precisely the very condition of any relation or address to the other. What cannot be denied is the primal importance of the relation to the other, an undeniable tie or “bond” that precedes all determined community, all organized religion, every onto-anthropo-theological horizon. This bond would be what would link singularities to each other before any social or political determination. Thus what both sides of the analogy between the two relations point to is *the law of the relation to the other*—a relation anterior to the bond between men and prior to what links man to God. To have a relation to the other *as other* is not simply to have respect for the other as *human subject*, which Levinas’s notion of *Autrui* would seem to insist on; it is to be in relation with that which comes, beyond being, whose identity is always yet to be determined. Perhaps the

resemblance of the other to God as the movement of the trace is that very “space” in which the undecidable coming of the other occurs. It is in this way that the coming of the other “can no longer be confused with the God or the Man of onto-theology or with any of the figures of the configuration (the subject, consciousness, the unconscious, the self, man or woman, and so on).”⁴⁹

This Monstrous Figure without Figure or Face

This visitor can be called *Gast*, or *ghost*, *guest* or *Gespenst*.

Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*

le revenant, l'hôte, guest, ghost.

Derrida, *La vérité en peinture*

What is coming shall be monstrous. It shall have the *figure without figure or face* (*figure sans figure*) of a monster.¹

And yet, what kind of shape or “form” does the monstrous have? No anticipation can prepare one to identify this figure, this “formless” form for which one does not yet have, perhaps never will have, a name. That which cannot be figured, the unacceptable, the intolerable, comes as a monster. Without precedence, without tradition, it shows itself, yet will go unrecognized. For the monstrous is not simply grotesque, aberrant, or deviant, a strange, misshapen anomaly, but is also a prodigious figure, marvelous beyond belief, excessive, unrestrained, and extraordinary. Beyond all genres or kinds, this spectral silhouette without features whose contours cannot be traced, thus making it seem more like a hallucination, not only puts into question every thought of figurality and figuration but also disturbs all existing mechanisms of reception and receptivity put in place to receive it.

No monstrous figure can remain without shape for long, however, for there is a need to give it form, to cloak it, cover it over, as all thinking of form has to do with wearing or donning an outer garment or veiling a naked core. Yet the nudity of the monstrous, a bareness more nude than nude, is the very undoing or interruption of form as we know it.

I

In the preface written for Alain David's book *Racisme et antisemitisme*, entitled “La forme et la façon,” Derrida examines his thought-provoking

claim that the “almost originary crime [*faute*]” of racism and anti-Semitism consists of “privileging form and cultivating formal limits.”² Written in response to the provocation of the immeasurable violence of the past century, David’s book, whose “unprecedented ambition” Derrida acknowledges, confronts the entire history of philosophy and the social sciences, including all contemporary approaches to racism and anti-Semitism (FF 9). “Thinking racism *and* anti-Semitism, and the *and* of their dogmatic conjunction” together, this book is a “debate with [*explication avec*]” philosophy as that which questions after the *essence* of things (FF 10). The essential philosophical mode of interrogating—the “What is?” question—is itself put on trial, forcing us to hear it anew. Is it still possible, Derrida inquires, to pose the “What is?” question to the problem of racism? In other words, is it still possible to ask “*What is* racism?” if race and the science of race do not really exist? At the same time, can one still ask “*What is* antiracism?” if the latter shares the risks of its counterpart, racism? Nonetheless, David’s book, “a book *of* philosophy,” is also, by necessity, “a book *on* philosophy,” on the limits of philosophy, on philosophy as a certain “passion of, passion for the limit itself” (FF 10).

According to Derrida, what is so striking about David’s text is that it provides a new access to the problematic of racism and anti-Semitism through:

nothing other than *form* itself, the fascination for form, that is for the *visibility* of a certain organic and organizing contour, an *eidōs*, if you will, and thus an idealization, an *idealism* itself insofar as it institutes philosophy itself, philosophy or metaphysics as such. Racism and anti-Semitism would be in part linked to a certain “idealism.” (FF 10)³

The source of “all evil, radical evil itself,” would be, according to David’s hypothesis, “an experience of limit,” “a passion for *limitation*, which would become confused with a philosophical desire, with a desire constitutive of philosophy, with a limiting or delimiting process, with the structure that it produces, as if this limiting condition were a natural form” (FF 10). Yet how can such an abstract thing as “*form, limitation, limitation by form,*” Derrida wonders, be made responsible for all that is evil and monstrous, the worst that is humanly possible—for example, slavery or Auschwitz, and so on? (FF 11).

Pointing to the word *envers*, “the other side, the reverse (side),” in the book’s subtitle, *Essai de philosophie sur l’envers des concepts*, Derrida notes that David by no means seeks to overturn philosophy. Rather, David’s “material phenomenology,” partly inspired by the work of Michel Henry,

is a “discourse *within* phenomenology,” which seeks “the other side [*l’envers*]” of concepts, “going round concepts to reach their other side [*à leur envers*], the other front [*à l’autre face*]” (FF 12). David’s phenomenology looks for “the transcendence of the other than concept,” the face, what has been traditionally misrecognized by science and philosophy as “the objectivity of a *form*” (FF 12). Suspicious of “the generalized reduction of meaning to a concept, that is, its determination as form” (RA 218), David’s material phenomenology “pushes the transcendental reduction beyond form,” beyond “a *visible form*” (FF 16). This phenomenology would be “a challenge to form,” on the basis of “an appearing” that would, according to Henry, be “a radical self-appearing” (FF 16). Guided by a “principle of unlimitedness,” or “the illimitable,” a principle that Derrida states “illuminates” all of David’s project, his would be a phenomenology aiming “to exceed *formalism at the same time as visibility*,” a new “materialism” seeking to displace the privilege of the gaze (FF 18).

In writing his preface, Derrida tries to look for the most “‘economic’ (and thus *formalizing*) guiding thread,” in order to allow David’s work to speak for itself. This unjustifiable guiding thread would be a way of philosophically formalizing the wealth of material amassed by David to highlight all that is at fault with form (FF 15). However, by writing a *limited* preface for a book that repeatedly denounces “the power of ‘form,’ the formation of form, and philosophical formalization,” Derrida admits to committing the very two philosophical crimes denounced by David (FF 13). “Delimiting by *giving form* [*delimenter en donnant forme*] or by *believing to see a form* [*en croyant voir une forme*]” would in fact be one and the same “error [*faute*],” “the unique source, but also, one dividing itself in two, the two sources of racism and anti-Semitism” (FF 11). Derrida signals his own absurd gesture of repeating the error denounced by David in order to provide an account of David’s “powerful discourse,” a discourse that itself begins by rendering an account (FF 15). To “give an account [*rendre compte*],” after all, Derrida reminds us, recalls the principle of reason or calculation which David’s book seeks to put into question. If this manner of proceeding seems to be a flagrant contradiction, an obvious error, Derrida asks the reader to be given the time of this erring.

What Derrida decides to follow in his preface is “the rigorous consequence that links this putting on trial of form (‘race is thus the hyperbole of form’ [RA 284]) and thus of limitation to the just cause of an unconditional affirmation, that is, to the impossible, an other thinking of the impossible” (FF 17–18). David defines “the Impossible” as that which cannot be figured in a present (FF 19). His book not only stresses the necessity for unconditional justice, “justice for the invisible, for the other

as invisible, for the other who *is not there*, or who is there but still out of sight,” but also calls for a new politics (FF 18). Yet if all politics has been a politics of “the possible,” a politics of and for form, then justice for the impossible would necessitate not yet “another politics of government” but an *other* politics (FF 19).

According to Derrida, the call for justice for the invisible, “this excess of justice with regard to existing law (that is, of the possible) takes the figure (a figure without figure or face [*une figure sans figure*], rightly, and without possible form) of the *im-possible*” (FF 18). The im-possible, written with a hyphen, Derrida notes, is by no means negative, but it “fashions [*façonne*] and figures [*figure*] the most affirmative, the *least limited* of affirmations” (FF 18; emphasis added). This “Im-possible, as the site of the other, source of the *a priori* excessive injunction,” would be an affirmation irreducible to all the discourses produced by society about itself and the world (FF 18). Irreducible to any form of resignation before that which remains impossible, hence inaccessible, this affirmation would rather be “the condition and the meaning and the motivating force of an *actual* [*effective*] political *action*” (FF 18). Beyond any existing anthropology, what is being called for in David’s book “would be a matter of an other discipline” (FF 23). “Responsibility for the Impossible, subjectivity,” or “responsibility for what is not there” (FF 19) would surely call for an anthropologist to come (FF 23).

However, Derrida notes, even if David’s new definition of “subjectivity” on the basis of *responsibility for the other* may seem to reinscribe a teaching of Levinas, even if, according to a schema close to the material phenomenology of Henry, one attends to “that which exceeds *the figure or the figurable*, that is, meaning as form” (FF 20), “the concept (without concept) of the Im-possible, and above all the unlimited affirmation of the Im-possible, does not belong to the idiom of either of these two thinkers” (FF 20–21). To complicate matters even further, Derrida wonders whether David’s critique of formalism, a material phenomenology too confident in a “transcendental vitalism” and in what it too self-assuredly deems a “pure ‘transcendental life,’ or absolute immanence” (FF 16), would really be compatible with a Levinasian axiomatic (FF 20). “To what extent,” Derrida asks, “could the recourse to a logic of interruptive transcendence, indispensable to David’s book, be allied with the immanentism of a material phenomenology?” (FF 17).

In reaffirming David’s project, it is important to point out that his “imprinting of a material inflexion” on the phenomenological enterprise does allow a taking into account of *affect* (FF 24). Making us think nudity and shame, David’s work exhorts us to speak of affect, to open ourselves

to affect: “There where, outside the artifact thus named, there is no race itself [*la race*], no ‘*the Semite* [*le sémite*],’ no ‘*the Jew* [*le juif*],’ how can one speak of racism or anti-Semitism without taking seriously *the effects of the artifact*, the phantasm, the imaginary—and before all, affect?” (FF 24; last emphasis added). Whether there is such a thing as “race,” whether such a thing can be said to “exist,” Derrida underscores that the effects of this artifact would nonetheless merit serious attention. It is in affect that David seeks “the true historical weight of this artifact without consistency that we call race—and it is shame, the human experience of nudity, which he deduces . . . as ‘the feeling that governs the division of the races’ [RA 135]” (FF 24–25). For David, shame denotes “the affect of primitive humiliation that the ‘superior’ projects in front of him to constitute the ‘inferior’ as his other, over there, outside, elsewhere” (FF 25). The human being, the sole living being capable of being naked, thus engages in a performative contradiction, as though saying “I am not naked because I am naked” (FF 25). In this denial of nudity:

clothes, the “form” of modest clothing, would be a denial made real [*une dénégation faite chose*], a clothed [*habillée*], fashioned [*façonnée*] denial, already the mode or fashion [*le mode ou la mode*], the affectation of some *fashion* [in English], an originary betrayal of truth, an ineffaceable and immemorable perjury: I am (not) naked [*je (ne) suis (pas) nu(e)*]. (FF 25)

When the nude finds itself “stripped [*dépouillée*] of all its clothes [*effets*], the question of form returns, notably on the basis of the definition of nudity by Levinas” (FF 25). Any thing or material object “in being destined for use,” Levinas writes in *De l’existence à l’existant*, is “clothed with a form which conceals its nakedness [*rêvetu d’une forme qui nous en dissimule la nudité*].”²⁴ Form is that by which a thing “shows itself and is graspable [*se montre et donne prise*], what is illuminated in it and [is] apprehendable and what holds it together” (DEE 73/39). The nude, then, would be what is “undressed from its form [*déshabillée de sa forme*]” (FF 25):

Form is that by which a being is turned toward the sun, that by which it has a face [*une face*], through which it gives itself, by which it comes forward. It conceals the nudity in which an undressed being [*l’être déshabillé*] withdraws from the world, and *is* as though [*comme si*] its existence were elsewhere, had an “underside” [*un “envers”*] as though it were surprised during the time of “a bare breast glimpsed between gown and gown.” This is why the relationship with nudity is the true experience of the otherness of the

other [*l'altérité d'autrui*]—where the term experience not impossible where it is a question of a relationship which goes beyond the world. (DEE 61/31)⁵

This definition of nudity provided by Levinas in *De l'existence à l'existant*, Derrida writes, “exhibits *the other side* itself [*l'envers lui-même*], the being-reverse of the other side, the other side turned inside out [*l'être-envers de l'envers*]” (FF 25). In this “story of the nude unveiled [*l'histoire de nu dénudé*], of destitution [*dénueement*] as well as nudity,” Levinas will have spoken of “what is ‘impossible’: experience” (FF 26). Using an “impossible” term—experience—Levinas *does* the impossible, linking experience to the impossible (FF 26). What is impossible, then, is to “inscribe this *transcendence* (‘the relation that goes beyond the world’) *in immanence*, that is the presence, proximity, and immediacy that we necessarily associate with the word ‘experience’” (FF 26, emphasis added). We cannot begin to think racism and anti-Semitism, Derrida pronounces, until we take seriously what “occurs or happens beyond all form” (FF 27). “According to what form,” David asks, “does that which follows the interruption of forms appear?” (RA 291 / FF 17). To what kind of form does the interruption of form give rise? This is where we are confronted with the question of monstrosity itself, a monstrosity that is never “the formless or the deformed [*l'informe ou le difforme*] in a pure state” (FF 17).

What is the link between that which arrives beyond all form, that which breaks through form, interrupts it—the figure without figure of the im-possible—and nudity? In order to answer this question, I would like to turn to *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas* and, by distorting or disfiguring somewhat the line of questioning employed by Derrida throughout *Adieu*, to pose a further question: What kind of welcome can be given to a *figure without figure or face*?

II

Has anyone noticed? Has it truly been noticed what a profound reading of Levinas the 1997 text *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas* is? In a reading that troubles our assurances about the identity of the self (the subject, “the I [*le moi*],” but also “me [*moi*]”), and the Other [*Autrui*], and puts into question any straightforward distinction between the ethical and the political in Levinas’s work, an exceptional reading whose measure is yet to be taken a decade after its publication, a reading whose urgency of composition is quite palpable on every page, a reading that some would say deforms and disfigures major elements of Levinas’s thought, Derrida

breathlessly ranges from *Totality and Infinity* to *Otherwise than Being*, from the Talmudic readings to the lectures on death, from ethics and politics to religion and God, including an analysis of some of the most pivotal terms of the Levinasian vocabulary, such as reason and sensibility, intentionality and passivity, welcome (*accueil*) and reception, recollection or gathering (*recueillement*) and the *chez-soi*, justice and law, peace and war, fraternity and humanity, the third and illeity, election and the State, God and the stranger (*étranger*).⁶ In this celebration and reevaluation of the work of Levinas, a reading that constitutes a genuine welcoming of his thought, Derrida argues that we must think the possibility of welcome or hospitality in conjunction with a thinking of the face.

Without any pretense of exhausting existing commentaries, I would like to attempt to reread *Adieu* here, in the most naïve fashion possible, in order to reassess what by now appears to be the settled or dominant interpretation of this text. Derrida begins the first section of the second part of *Adieu*, entitled “A Word of Welcome,” by asking somewhat mischievously whether any one has noticed that *Totality and Infinity* is “an immense treatise on and of hospitality?” (A 49/21). Welcoming the invitation to open two days of events organized by the Collège international de philosophie entitled “Face and Sinai,” Derrida undertakes an interpretation of the notion of hospitality in Levinas’s writings. However, he cautions that he will not be speaking in Levinas’s place or in his name but will be speaking along with him, first by listening to him (A 44/19). Devoting several pages to an analysis of receiving (*recevoir*), welcoming (*accueillir*), receptivity, and passivity—but a passivity without passivity, “more passive than every passivity” (A 58/28)—Derrida demonstrates that not only does a vocabulary of hospitality operate throughout Levinas’s work, but more importantly, what Levinas calls “infinite hospitality” is “at the opening of ethics” (A 91/48).

Moreover, this vocabulary of welcoming would provide us with “the keys” to a reading of *Totality and Infinity* (A 101/54). Even though a rigorous study of this thought of welcoming in Levinas would be “an enormous task,” Derrida admits, it is essential because “all threads undeniably pass through the knot of hospitality” (A 78/41). All crucial Levinasian terms, such as *discourse*, *justice*, *ethical uprightness*, and so on, have a primary relation to welcoming. Further, Derrida shows that major phenomenological and philosophical concepts such as intentionality and reason undergo a radical transformation in Levinas’s work, rendering phrases such as “it [intentionality, consciousness of . . .], is attention to speech or welcome of the face, hospitality and not thematization” (A 50/22) and “reason itself is a *receiving*” perfectly acceptable (A 56/26).

In the 1996 text *Aporias*, Derrida announces his interest in a series of terms linking hospitality to ipseity and spectrality. This series, *hospes*, *hostis*, *hostage*, *host*, *guest*, *ghost*, *holy ghost*, and *Geist*, he informs us, would allow us to move from a discussion of the hostage to the *hôte* (guest/host), and from the *hôte* to the ghost.⁷ Over the course of a number of texts, from *Politics of Friendship* and *Specters of Marx* to *Religion* and *Of Hospitality*, Derrida explores the relation of these terms to each other. What has motivated these analyses, I would like to argue, is Derrida's belief, boldly stated in *Aporias*, that "there is no politics without . . . an open hospitality to the *hôte* (guest/host) as [*comme*] *ghost*, whom one holds, just as it holds us, hostage" (Ap 112/62). It is in *Adieu* and *Of Hospitality*, two complementary texts on the question of hospitality, that Derrida undertakes to sketch what "an open hospitality to the *hôte* (host/guest) as ghost" might be like. It is as though any serious consideration of "politics" would force us before all else to simultaneously assess who or what is being received as well as to ask what it is to receive and to welcome.

"A series of metonymies" in Levinas's writings, Derrida points out in *Adieu*, "bespeak[s] hospitality, the face, welcome: tending toward the other, attentive intention, intentional attention, *yes* to the other" (A 51/22). Let us immediately note that in this series of terms the face seems misplaced. Isn't the face, for Levinas, or at least in the dominant reading of the Levinas of *Totality and Infinity*, what is always welcomed rather than what welcomes or is hospitable? When Derrida adds that the welcome is always the "welcome of the other [*l'accueil de l'autre*]"—the welcome given to the other and by the other—we notice that from the very beginning of *Adieu* the terms "welcome" and "hospitality" have undergone a rereading (A 51/24), a rereading according to whose logic "the welcoming one [*l'accueillant*] is welcomed [*accueilli*]" (A 173/99).

According to the schema laid out in *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas needs to distinguish love from hospitality and emphasize the difference between "the third [*le tiers*]" and the feminine, since a true welcoming of the Other [*Autrui*] cannot be fully accomplished in love. However, in *Adieu*, Derrida demonstrates that according to "the implacable law of hospitality," the conventional definitions of the one who welcomes and the welcomed one, the host and the guest, are no longer sufficient to comprehend Levinas's deconstruction of hospitality (A 79/41). Exploiting the bivalence of the French word *l'hôte* (host/guest), Derrida's remarks submit the "The Dwelling" section of *Totality and Infinity* and the notions of home and being at home, *chez soi*, to a subtle rereading that demonstrates the impossibility of assigning a fixed role or a unique

site to the host or the guest. The one who welcomes, Derrida shows, is received *by* and *in* his own home:

The *hôte* who receives (the host), the one who welcomes the invited or received *hôte* (the guest), the welcoming *hôte* [*l'hôte accueillant*] who considers himself the owner of the place, is in truth an *hôte* received [*un hôte reçu*] in his own home. He receives the hospitality that he offers *in* his own home; he receives it *from* his own home—which, in the end, does not belong to him. The *hôte* as host is a guest [*L'hôte comme host est un guest*]. (A 79/41)

Furthermore, the welcoming *hôte*, “the one who welcomes [*l'accueillant*] is first welcomed in his own home [*chez lui*]” by the other, the invited *l'hôte*: “The one who invites is invited by the one whom he invites. The one who receives is received, receiving hospitality in what he takes to be his own home” (A 79/42).⁸ Recalling “the divine law” referred to by Rosenzweig in *The Star of Redemption*, a law “that would make of the inhabitant a guest received in his own home, that would make of the owner a tenant, that would make of the welcoming host a welcomed guest,” Derrida insists on relating this law to the passage from *Totality and Infinity* about “the feminine being as ‘the welcoming one par excellence’” (A 80/42). Welcoming in itself, Derrida notes, is defined at the precise moment when Levinas “deems it necessary to emphasize that the home is not owned”: “The head of the household, the master of the house [*Le maître de maison, le ‘maître de céans’*], is already a received *hôte*, already a *guest* in his own home” (A 81/42–43).

If, in Derrida’s reading, Levinas’s work insists on “the absolute precedence of the welcome,” we must emphasize, without being able to engage with the enormous question of “the feminine” in Levinas’s writings, that this thought of welcome is always marked by sexual difference, that is, it originally belongs to the “dimension of femininity” (A 84/44). And this welcome “takes place in a place that cannot be appropriated,” where “the master or owner receives the hospitality that he would later wish to offer [*qu’ensuite il voudrait donner*]” (A 85/45).

Any welcoming must be thought co-originarily with the face—that which exceeds and eludes formalization and thematizing description. An explication of welcoming in relation to the “face as trace” and to the third is found in Section 2 of “A Word of Welcome” (A 98/53), where, quoting a sentence from *Totality and Infinity*, which much of *Adieu* is an extended commentary on—“it [intentionality, consciousness of . . .], is attention to speech or welcome of the face, hospitality and not thematization”—Derrida writes: “This approach of the face—as intentionality or welcome, that

is, as hospitality—remains inseparable from separation itself”(A 88/46).⁹ Hospitality as the welcome of the other, as the experience of the alterity of the other, assumes and demands radical separation. The welcome is thus a relation that comes to pass through “the abyss . . . of separation” (A 88/46).

Relating hospitality to the metaphysics of the face, Derrida adds that Levinas redefines the subjectivity of the subject as hospitality (A 99/53). The subject comes to itself in the movement whereby it welcomes the other. This “coming of the subject to itself [*venue du sujet à soi*],” this “subjecting [*assujettissement*]” is also a subjection, a subordination (A 101/54). This being-under or being-below of *subjectivity* is not to be confused with the classical *subjectum*, as that which lies under, stands under its qualities or attributes, but is rather a being-submitted, a sub-jection to the law that comes from above. Derrida continues quoting from the passage from *Totality and Infinity*: “It [self-consciousness ‘in its home’] thus accomplishes separation positively, without being reducible to a negation of the being from which it separates. But thus precisely it can welcome that being. The subject is a host [*un hôte*]” (TI 334/299, cited in A 101–102/54).

Following the logic of Levinas’s text, it is absolutely reasonable, as Alphonso Lingis has done, to translate *hôte* in the previous sentence as “host,” but Derrida’s subsequent gloss, “*Le sujet: un hôte*,” allows for another interpretation (A 102/55). In what way is this equation “startling [*saisissante*],” as Derrida calls it in the sentence that follows (A 102/55)? In his remarkable reformulation, “the subject: an *hôte*,” the subject is not simply a host but can also be a guest. The equation is even more “startling” because the colon separating the two nouns also allows the other side, the side of the *hôte*, to redefine the subject. Thus the subject can no longer simply be considered as the other’s host, the one who takes up a residence and welcomes. It is not only hospitality that is reassessed in Levinas’s work, but the vocabulary of welcoming and the welcomed transforms the understanding of subjectivity, such that the term “subject” can no longer be reserved for the receiving “I.”

Derrida brings into relation two axioms from *Totality and Infinity* and *Otherwise than Being* regarding the subject—“the subject is an *hôte*” (TI 334/299) and “the subject is hostage” (AQ 142/112)—in order to show that the new vocabulary of Levinas’s second great work is not at all incompatible with the formulations of *Totality and Infinity* but bears its logic.¹⁰ Being-*hôte*, being-hostage is the subjectivity of the subject as responsibility for the Other [*Autrui*]. The hostage, Derrida writes, is “someone whose unicity endures the possibility of a *substitution*” (A 103/55). The hostage who *undergoes* substitution, who in its being-hostage is subjected

to substitution, in its responsibility for “others [*les autres*]” also *submits* to substitution (A 103/55). Substitution, then, bespeaks the responsibility of the one for the other. The subject is thus hostage because it is in question, it finds itself contested. Under accusation, “the *hôte* is a hostage insofar as it is a subject put into question,” there where, before taking up a residence, it is taken in, “taken up by a residence” (A 104/56).

There is therefore “a semantic kinship,” Derrida notes, between *hôte* and hostage, between the subject as *hôte* and the subject (or ipseity) as hostage (A 105/57). Consequently, a “*thinking of* substitution leads us toward a logic that is hardly thinkable, almost unsayable, that of the possible-impossible, the iterability and replaceability of the unique in the very experience of unicity as such” (A 128/70). The unique is unique as a substitutable substitute. In other words, in its unicity, the absolutely unique can be replaced exactly because it is irreplaceable, substituted precisely because it is unsubstitutable:

The most general possibility of substitution, a simultaneous condition, a paradoxical *reciprocity* (the condition of *irreprocity*) of the unique and of its replacement, a place that is at once untenable and assigned, the placement of the singular as replaceable, the irrecusable place of the neighbor and of the third—is not all this the first affection of the subject in its ipseity?(A 191/110, emphasis added)

Subjectivity is thus determined from substitution. It is in this way that “substitution announces the destiny of subjectivity, the subjection of the subject, *hôte* and hostage: ‘The subject is an *hôte*’ (*Totality and Infinity*), ‘the subject is hostage’ (*Otherwise than Being*)” (A 191/110).

Further, following this logic of substitution and what we could clumsily call the bidirectionality of *hôte* and hostage, we would have to say that the sites, positions, roles normally assigned to “the self” and “the Other” in a conventional reading of the Levinasian corpus—what would normally be considered as the relation of the receiving host, the Same, to the welcomed guest, the Other—can no longer remain fixed. In a seeming violation of the edicts of *Totality and Infinity*, each is able to take the other’s place, each “side” welcomes the other, opens itself to the other, takes on the other’s “role,” substitutes for the other, *without* losing its singularity and uniqueness.

According to this strange logic, precisely where places cannot be exchanged as they are unexchangeable, unicity and irreplaceability give way to substitution. These substitutions, Derrida writes in *Of Hospitality*, “make everyone and each one the hostage of the other [*font de tous et de chacun l’otage de l’autre*].”¹¹ Or, as Derrida puts it in an untranslatable

phrase: “*l’hôte devient l’hôte de l’hôte*” (DH 111). Perhaps this reading would go against the premise that the I, the *ipse*, needs to take up a site in order to welcome the Other and defies the interdiction that the invisible frontier separating the self and the other not be crossed.¹² Yet if the *chez-soi* is already permeable, infiltrated, haunted by what appears to be excluded, if there is already a disjunction in “immanence to self [*immanence à soi*],” a transcendence within immanence, then the host is not only a guest, a visitor in his own abode, but is also at ease, “at home,” “himself,” with the other, *in the other’s place* (A 173/99). This “pre-originary ex-propriety or ex-appropriation” makes the subject:

an *hôte* and an hostage, someone who is, *before* every invitation, elected, invited, *and* visited in his own home as in the home of the other [*chez lui comme chez l’autre*], who is *in his own home in the home of the other* [*chez lui chez l’autre*], in a given *at home*, an at home that is given [*dans un chez soi donné*] or, rather, loaned, allotted, advanced before every contract. (A 173/99)

III

In the last section of “A Word of Welcome,” invoking the relation of *adieu* and *à-Dieu* to Jerusalem, Derrida writes of a phrase often recited by Levinas, “the love of the stranger [*l’étranger*].” An *adieu* addressed to “God who loves the stranger,” “the Saying *à-Dieu* [*le Dire à-Dieu*] would signify hospitality,” a welcome that would be more than a welcome, an ethics of hospitality that would be more than “a law or a politics of refuge” (A 182/106). Turning to the third chapter of Levinas’s *Beyond the Verse*, “The Cities of Refuge,” which is in part a reading of an excerpt from the Talmudic Tractate Makkoth, 10a, Derrida focuses on this notion of cities of refuge.¹³ A meditation on the Jerusalem of the Torah in the context of the “urbanism,” “the humanism or humanitarianism of the cities of refuge,” Levinas’s commentary explains the injunction that temporary protection and shelter be given to the involuntary murderer in order to shield him from revenge (A 186/107). An “effective” justice (A 189/109), “the law of justice that transcends the political and the juridical,” Derrida adds, demands that the face-to-face always be thought in conjunction with the third (A 190/109–10). The face-to-face and the third are intimately linked, and:

even if the experience of the third, the origin of justice and of the question as putting into question, is defined as the interruption of the face to face, it is not an intrusion [*une intrusion*] that comes

second. The experience of the third is *ineluctable* from the very first moment, and ineluctable in the face; even if it interrupts the face to face, it also belongs to it; as self-interruption it belongs to the face and can be produced only through it. (A 190/110)

The third and the face so thoroughly belong to each other that “it is *as if* the unicity of the face were, in its irrecusable and absolute singularity, *a priori* plural” (A 190/110; emphasis added). It is *as if* the face in its singularity always bore the trace of others, *as if* the face-to-face already belonged to the domain of “the political.”

In the remarkable passage that follows, Derrida argues for an *unprecedented* hospitality—a notion that has been the subject of much misunderstanding and controversy—a hospitality that would serve as a presupposition for any politics to come. Before quoting this passage in full and orienting the reader’s attention to all the words having to do with nudity, it is important to emphasize that the passage arises in the context of an analysis of sheltering and providing asylum and “a certain desire of Jerusalem,” where what is at issue is the State’s relation to the cities of refuge (A 180/103). Attentive to the intricacy of Levinas’s Talmudic reading, Derrida’s passage draws out all its implications. It should also be noted that the placement of this passage in Derrida’s text is quite strange. After having shown that the third has always already interrupted the face-to-face, and that there can be no ethics that has not already been contaminated by “the political,” why would Derrida need to insist on a “pure” hospitality, a form of hospitality criticized by many as politically naïve or reckless?¹⁴ Here is the extraordinary passage toward the end of *Adieu*:

As *hôte* or hostage, as other, as pure alterity, subjectivity thus analyzed should be stripped [*dépouillé*] of all ontological predicates [*prédicat*], a bit like the pure *I* [*le moi pur*]¹⁵ that Pascal said is stripped [*disrobed, dévêtu*]¹⁶ of all its qualities which one could attribute to it, of every property [*propriétés*] that, as pure *I*, as properly pure, it would have to transcend or exceed.¹⁷ The other is not reducible to its actual predicates [*prédicats effectifs*], to that which we can define or thematize, any more than the *I* is. It is naked [*nu*], bared [*dénudé*] of all property, and this nudity is also its vulnerability infinitely exposed: its skin. This absence of determinable property, of concrete predicates, of empirical visibility, is no doubt what gives the face [*visage*] of the other a spectral aura, especially if this subjectivity of the *hôte* also lets itself be announced as the visitation of a face, of a visage [*d’un visage*]. *Host* or *guest*, *Gastgeber* or *Gast*, the *hôte* would be not only a hostage. It would have, according to a profound necessity, at

least *the face, figure of spirit or phantom* [*la figure de l'esprit ou du fantôme*] (*Geist, ghost*) [emphasis added]. One day someone expressed concern to Levinas about the “phantomatic character [*caractère fantomatique*]” of his philosophy especially when it treats the “face of the other.” Levinas did not directly object.¹⁸ Resorting to what I have just called the “Pascalian” argument (“it is necessary that the other be welcomed independently of its qualities”), he clearly specified “welcomed,” especially in an “immediate,” urgent way, without waiting, as if “real” qualities, attributes, or properties (everything that makes a living person into something other than a phantom) slowed down, mediatized, or compromised the purity of this welcome. It is necessary to welcome the other in its alterity, without waiting, and thus not pause to recognize its real predicates. It is thus necessary, beyond all perception, to receive the other while running the risk, a risk that is always troubling, strangely troubling, like the stranger (*unheimlich*), of a hospitality offered to the *hôte* as [*comme*] *ghost* or *Geist* or *Gast*.¹⁹ There would be no hospitality without this chance [*cette enjeu*] of spectrality. (A 191–92/110–12)

What if we were to take seriously the enormous consequences of this passage for a reading of Levinas? What are “the stakes [*enjeux*]” of a hospitality offered to a “subjectivity” that exceeds every figure and every attribute? What could Derrida possibly be suggesting regarding the “chance [*enjeu*]” of such spectrality?

At the culmination of a most remarkable analysis of “subjectivity” in Levinas’s work, what is at stake is nothing less than the experience or ordeal of the undecidable. If the experience of this im-possible hospitality, the experience of “‘the one who or which comes’ [(*ce*) *qui vient*],” is chancy or risky, Derrida exhorts us, it is a fine risk to be run.²⁰ Let us closely examine the passage above.

1. The beginning of the opening sentence of the passage, “as *hôte* or hostage, as other, as pure alterity, subjectivity . . .,” immediately indicates that what is being called “subjectivity” now encompasses the “self or the ego” and the Other, a proposition that would seem to go against a certain “humanistic” and “ethical” tenor of Levinas’s philosophy.

2. Thus analyzed, the “I,” the same *and* the other, subjectivity as pure alterity, Derrida remarks, should be (*doit être*) stripped of all ontological predicates, properties, and attributes by which it could be defined.²¹ For the other is no more reducible to its predicates than the “I” is. This stripping of all that would, conventionally speaking, make the other other, is not that far removed from Husserl’s procedure in the *Cartesian*

Meditations, where, in Section 44, during a description of the phenomenological reduction, he provides the example of “cultural predicates” as what gives the other its sense.²²

3. Naked and vulnerable, “subjectivity” described in this manner is not something simply visible. Its nudity, its absence of empirical visibility, necessarily imbues it with a spectral aura.

4. Thus, as host/guest *and* hostage, subjectivity, as pure alterity, would have, according to a profound necessity—a necessity that cannot be underscored enough—the figure of spirit or phantom. This ungraspable figure without figure or face, the apparition or appearance of a body that is never present for itself, “*spectralizes itself* [se spectralise]”; it appears by disappearing.²³

5. The urgent welcoming, then, must take place independently of all the qualities with which one would normally identify a living person, as if “real” qualities would slow down the welcome, mediatize this spectral figure, come in between as a medium or an intermediary.

6. It is necessary to receive and to welcome even while running the risk, the troubling risk, of a hospitality offered to the *hôte* who comes or comes back as a ghost or *Geist* or *Gast*.

7. Without the chance of this spectrality, there would be no hospitality. This spectrality of the ghost, Derrida adds, is what “exceeds and thus deconstructs all ontological oppositions, being and nothingness, life and death”; it “can give” and “give pardon” (A 193/113). Further, pointing out the “extreme ambiguity” of Levinas’s example, a case involving a situation of death, a putting to death, where one must give shelter and immunity, an “at least temporary immunity,” to the one who is “guilty of an involuntary act,” a murder, Derrida notes that it is not insignificant that the city of refuge is more than a promise, a promise that must be *inscribed in* the earthly Jerusalem (A 193/112; emphasis added). Hospitality, in this case providing refuge or shelter, would be the very inscription of a transcendence *in* immanence.

IV

At the beginning of *Adieu* in “The Word of Welcome,” Derrida wonders whether anyone has noticed that *Totality and Infinity* is “an immense treatise of *hospitality*” and suggests that the very thought of Levinas gives us to think what “welcoming” and “hospitality” are (A 49/21). In *Of Hospitality*, published a year later in 1997, Derrida demonstrates that what has been called “hospitality” in the Western tradition has always been a conditional hospitality regulated by convention or law.

Starting from its Homeric inception, “hospitality” has been a conventional arrangement of reciprocity. Drawing upon Benveniste’s work, Derrida explains that *xénos* initially described relations of reciprocity between men linked by a pact, *xénia*, implying precise obligations extending to their family and descendants. According to Benveniste, there can be no *xénos* without a *xénia*;²⁴ as Derrida puts it:

From the outset, the right to hospitality involves a household [*une maison*], a line of descent [*une lignée*], a family, a familial or ethnic group receiving a familial or ethnic group. Precisely because it is inscribed in a right, a custom, an *ethos*, a *Sittlichkeit*, this objective morality . . . presupposes the social and familial status of the contracting parties, the possibility of being called by their names, to have names, of being subjects of the law, to be questioned and be liable, to have crimes imputed to them, to be held responsible, endowed with nameable identities and proper names. A proper name is never purely individual. (DH 27/23)

Examining the role of the foreigner/stranger (*l'étranger*) in Plato’s dialogues, such as the *Sophist*, the *Statesman* (where the Stranger [the *Xénos*, *l'Étranger*] is one of the interlocutors), and the *Apology* (where Socrates feigns to be a foreigner, presenting himself as if he were a foreigner, a stranger to the manner of the law court), Derrida notes that as Benveniste and Henri Joly have shown, in Athens the foreigner/stranger had some rights, “a foreigner’s right [*un droit des étrangers*],” for example, the right of access to the courts (DH 25/19).²⁵ There was thus a right of hospitality for foreigners, a right granted to the foreigner. However, this right extended to the foreigner had a built-in restriction or limit, for no hospitality could be offered to “an anonymous *arrivant*,” to the savage, the barbarian, someone without a name, patronym, or social status (DH 27–29/25).²⁶ The role (and definition) of the foreigner/stranger was thus already regulated from within the structure of guest-friendship or hospitality.²⁷ Within this structure, those who are welcomed are to a certain extent already vetted; they are a party to a prearranged pact.

Hospitality as classically defined is a right regulated by law. The relation to the foreigner/stranger thus becomes regulated by law, by the becoming-law of justice. By implication, our notions of being hospitable and welcoming, including the right to hospitality in the cosmopolitan tradition, are derived from this legal and juridical approach—to be hospitable is to limit oneself, to have a limit, to place a limit. Hospitality thus has always been limited or conditional. This law of hospitality as right or duty, this pact of hospitality, requires that in order to receive a foreigner/

stranger, one begin by posing a question, by addressing a demand, “the first demand”: “What is your name?” (DH 31/27).

In Part 1 of *Of Hospitality*, “Question d’Étranger: Venue de l’Étranger,” Derrida distinguishes between hospitality in the ordinary sense, or conditional hospitality, and absolute or unconditional hospitality offered to “the absolute [*l’autre absolu*], unknown, and anonymous other” (DH 29/25). In the second part, entitled “Pas d’Hospitalité,” Derrida contrasts “the laws [*les lois*] of hospitality,” those conditions, norms, rights, laws, and duties imposed on all hosts, with “the law [*la loi*] of absolute, unconditional, hyperbolic hospitality.” He describes “the collision” of these two laws as an insoluble, nondialectizable “*antinomy*” and “*aporia*” between, on the one hand, *the* unconditional law of unlimited hospitality (to “give to the *arrivant* all of one’s home and oneself [*son chez-soi*], to give it one’s own [*son propre*], our own, without asking a name, or compensation, or the fulfillment of the least condition”) and, on the other hand, the laws of hospitality, those rights and duties always conditioned and conditional, as defined by the Greco-Roman and the Judeo-Christian traditions and by the law and the philosophy of law (DH 73/77).

These two “registers” of law, of the law (*de la loi*) and of the laws (*des lois*), Derrida writes, are:

at the same time [*à la fois*] contradictory, antinomic *and* inseparable. They imply and exclude each other, simultaneously. They incorporate one another at the moment of excluding one another, they dissociate at the moment of enveloping each other, at the moment [*au moment*] (simultaneity without simultaneity, instant of impossible synchrony, moment without moment) when, exposing themselves to each other, . . . they show themselves at the same time more and less hospitable, hospitable and inhospitable, hospitable *inasmuch as* inhospitable. (DH 75/81)

In their relation to each other, thus, “exclusion and inclusion are inseparable in the same moment” (DH 75/81). Further on Derrida refers to this antinomic “at the same time” as “this duration without duration, this lapse, this seizure, this instant of an instant that is nullified” (DH 113/127). The law in the absolute singular contradicts the laws in the plural, but “each time it is the law *within* the law [*chaque fois c’est la loi dans la loi*], each time *outside the law* in the law [*chaque fois hors la loi dans la loi*]” (DH 75/81).

This is what Derrida calls “the laws of hospitality [*les lois de l’hospitalité*],” this “strange plural” that consists of “two different plurals at the same time [*deux pluriels différents à la fois*]” (DH 75/81). There are thus *two*

“laws” in the plural: the first plural refers to *les lois*, the conditional *laws* of hospitality, where it is only a matter of multiplicity and differentiation ($n + n + n + . . .$), while the other plural is an addition of the conditional *laws* to the unique and singular, great Law (*grande Loi*) of hospitality. The second plural, then, is a matter of “One + a multiplicity [*Un (ou de Une) + une multiplicité*]” or “One + n [*Un + n*]” (DH 77/81).

Further in the text, during a reading of Klossowski’s *Les lois de l’hospitalité*, Derrida returns to this distinction between the two laws, remarking on the strange temporality and spatiality of the times and “the tenses of an improbable sequence, the temporal and antinomic modalities of these *Laws [ces Lois]*” (DH 113/127; emphasis added). The Laws, capitalized here, refer to the Laws of hospitality, singular *and* multiple, “radical heterogeneity” *and* “indissociability” (DH 131/147), the unconditional law *and* the laws, the law *within* the law. “The impossibility of this ‘at the same time’ [*cet ‘à la fois’*],” Derrida notes, “is at the same time what happens. One time and every time [*Une fois et chaque fois*]” (DH 111/125).

The experience of what happens, the event of what comes, the *arrivant*, takes place *between* the two logics of *invitation* and *visitation*. According to these logics, either there is a horizon of expectation, and authority rests with the host, who remains master in his home (*chez soi*). This would allow the structures of welcoming to remain in place and the unity of the world to be undisturbed. If there is any hospitality it must be offered to one with a name, to a subject (of the law). Or the visitation of the absolute *arrivant (l’arrivant absolu)*, anonymous, without a name, takes place without a horizon of expectation. The *arrivant*, of whom or which I know nothing in advance, interrupts and disturbs the presumed “unity of the world.” In its coming or appearing, this undecidable figure, which is not immediately recognizable, does not come toward me like an object or a subject that can be anticipated against the background of a horizon or a foreseeable future.

Perhaps the most just, the most hospitable welcoming takes place *between* these two logics, *between* two frontiers. The “logic” of the “perhaps” dictates that this *between* of the perhaps, the taking place of this event, the experience of the *arrivant* disturbs “a horizon of pre-comprehension, a presumption of unity, a presupposition of coherence, of belonging, the logos or the *legein* of a gathering, a horizon starting from which or against the background of which all that happens [*tout ce qui arrive*], *arrives as such*”:²⁸

If there is some other *arrivant [s’il y a de l’arrivant autre]*, absolutely other, it must puncture this horizon, that there be no more horizon;

or rather that this horizon, before even letting *itself* be traversed [se *laisser traverser*], be traversed passively by some totally other, by the totally other [*du tout autre*]. (Fid 246)

This would be “the surprise of the absolute *arrivant*, that is of the totally other other [*l’autre tout autre*]” (Fid 246). “The *arrivant* must be so surprising for me that I cannot even determine it as human” (Fid 247). Typically, when speaking in French of an *arrivant*, a new arrival, one defines it by nationality and restricts the *arrivant* to the category of the human. Yet “the other that may come may be a god or a dog and I cannot even anticipate the human face of the *arrivant*” (Fid 247). Thus even though the two modalities of hospitality—the unconditional law of the relation to the other and the juridical and political laws of the state—remain irreducible, irreconcilable and indissociable, this antinomy necessitates a reference to a pure or im-possible hospitality offered to the *arrivant*.²⁹ Without this pure hospitality, which does not belong to law or politics, there can be no concept of hospitality.

The only possible hospitality then, as pure hospitality, must be im-possible, the becoming-possible of the impossible. And here, like the possibility of the gift, it would be to think the possible as the impossible itself. In an awaiting (*une attente*) without a horizon of expectation, this im-possible hospitality would welcome the *figure sans figure* in its nudity, in its “bare passivity [*passivité dénudée*].”

V

Who or what comes—and is to be welcomed—then does not have a recognizable figure or form. This *figure sans figure*, “the figure of the absolute future,” “beyond all anticipatable forms and norms,” would exceed all figuration—it would be monstrous.³⁰

The monstrous, going beyond all conventional limits or boundaries, is intolerable and unacceptable precisely because in its coming it is unprecedented. A marvel, a wonder that never presents itself, the *monstrum* in its coming or appearing can only be unrecognized or misunderstood; only when reduced to what is recognizable can it ever be identified. Monstrous would then be a figure, the figure, of the im-possible that never appears *as such* but only appears *as impossible*. Yet this “Im-possible” should not be mistaken for something negative; rather it would be the very name of true experience itself. The im-possible would be a relation with the other beyond form, beyond a relation to form, a relation to a *figure sans figure*. This interruption of form, however, seems to have a *certain* form that

exceeds its attributes. Its “form,” bearing the traces of the unformed, of the amorphous, of a certain nonpresence, puts into crisis all distinction between figure and nonfigure:

Monstrous would be the coming of the one who or which comes [*la venue de (ce) qui vient*] but does not yet have a recognizable figure—and who therefore is not necessarily another man, my likeness [*mon semblable*], my brother, my neighbor. . . . It can also be a “life” even a “specter” in animal or divine form, without being “the animal” or “God,” and not only a man or a woman, nor a figure sexually definable according to the binary assurances of homo- or heterosexuality. (DQ 90/52)

At the same time, a metonymic figure for the event of what comes or who comes, *(ce) qui vient*, a thought of the event before distinguishing or conjoining the “what” and the “who,” this figure would exceed any autonomy or sovereignty of the *ipse*.³¹ Putting into question the mastery of the sovereign, the purported provenance or dominance of the *ipse* over its home, the *chez-soi*, this figure is ineluctably “linked to all the political questions of sovereignty” (DQ 91/53). Thus care must always be taken to differentiate this figure of the *arrivant*, *l'autre absolu*, the other in its coming, from that of *l'étranger*, for the stranger or the foreigner always has a relation to the state. Only when the incalculable other—*ce qui arrive, de qui arrive*—becomes determined according to the laws of the state is it a foreigner/stranger.

Thus “Come!” can only be addressed “to the other, to others that have yet to be determined as persons, subjects, equals,”³² “to someone other [*quelqu'un d'autre*]” that I cannot determine in advance as “self, consciousness, nor even as animal, god, . . . man or woman, living or non-living” (E 20/12). To genuinely welcome would be to treat the *hôte* as ghost, to treat every *hôte* as ghost, like a ghost, *as if* it were a ghost, *as if* it were without ontological predicates or qualities. *As if* its existence were elsewhere, had an “elsewhere,” an underside, an other side, *as if* the ontological predicates or attributes assigned to it, such as “race,” “sex,” and so on, would specify too much about it, would take away from its singular alterity.

This hospitality would amount to welcoming the ghost in every *hôte*—the one who or which demands that it be welcomed in its nudity and treated regardless of its clothes, skin color, or other features and attributes. For to see or to believe to see the form, the shape or features of this *figure without figure or face* is to judge it in advance and not to welcome it. By seeking to define it according to its attributes or properties, one would only be welcoming those attributes. What Derrida, in *De quoi demain*,

calls “*la culte de l’identitaire* [the cult of the identitarian]” needs to identify this *figure sans figure*, a desire to give all such figures some form of identity (DQ 44/21). “Beyond or prior to any culture,” this figure always exceeds any cultural traits that could be attributed to it.³³ But the incalculable coming of who or what comes, the *hôte as ghost*, would trouble all prevailing notions of belonging or identification and would resist any simple inclusion in or exclusion from a group or class. This is why hospitality shown to the ghost that I am incapable of welcoming would be nothing less than the fortune and the threat of im-possible hospitality itself. It is *as if* hospitality names the opening of the possible onto the im-possible. Far from a naïve acquiescence or permissiveness, this “politics” of hospitality, indispensable for any politics to come, would perhaps be the only hospitality worthy of its name.

What Alain David’s book *Racisme et antisemitisme: Essai de philosophie sur l’envers des concepts* has the great strength of bringing out, Derrida notes in his preface, is the power of affect, exhorting us never to forget the *effects* of the *artifacts* called “racism” and “anti-Semitism.” Specific and thorough analyses of the devastating effects of *affect*, the effects we know of as “prejudice” and “racism,” are more essential and indispensable than ever before; however, such analyses run the risk of replicating and reinforcing existing metaphysical structures if they fail to take the measure of the monstrous *figure sans figure* and the im-possible hospitality owed to it.

“Ça’ me regarde”

Regarding Responsibility in Derrida

Dieu me regarde et je ne le vois pas. [God looks at me, concerns me and I don’t see him.]

Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*

Le fantôme, toujours, ça me regarde. [The ghost, *always*, is looking at me, is my concern.]

Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*

[D]epuis *ce lieu* infiniment *autre* je suis regardé, *aujourd’hui* encore *cela me regarde.* [From this *infinitely* other place, I am watched. Still, today, it looks at me, concerns me.]

Jacques Derrida, *Echographies of Television*

Three texts and three looks; three scenes of repetition—the repetition of a spectral regard whose look cannot be returned—and three singular instances of the relation to the other—Abraham’s relation to God, the relation to *Hamlet’s* Ghost in Shakespeare’s eponymous drama, and the relation to the otherworldly gaze of a recently departed actress—in which responsibility is instituted toward that which cannot be seen yet demands a response.¹

In what follows, it is my suggestion that an important dimension of what Derrida has called “spectrality” has to do with this look or gaze of the other.² To explore the ramifications of the regard of and for the other in Derrida’s writings, I would like to juxtapose three texts: *The Gift of Death* (1992), *Specters of Marx* (1993), and *Echographies of Television* (1996). What all three texts give us to read, I believe, is that responsibility and inheritance are brought about by and through an asymmetrical *spectral* regard beyond any exchange, where I receive an injunction from the other, the other that is *before* me yet is not “present” and cannot be seen.³ This being before the other’s gaze, before the spectral *someone other*, I will claim, broadens the scope of responsibility immeasurably, extending it well beyond the realm

of the “living” or the “actually present,” to every other. I would like, then, to let my entire reading of responsibility in Derrida be oriented by a phrase repeated in a number of Derrida’s writings, a phrase that—although its complexity cannot be fully captured in translation—perfectly encapsulates the instance of the spectral look: “*ça me regarde*.”⁴

I

God looks at me, concerns me [*me regarde*] and I don’t see him and it is on the basis of this regard that regards me [*ce regard qui me regarde*] that my responsibility comes into being. Thus is instituted or uncovered the “it concerns me” [*le “ça me regarde”*]: that leads me to say “it’s my business [*c’est ma chose*], my affair, my responsibility.” (DM 126/91)⁵

This is Derrida’s description of the relation of the gaze or regard to responsibility, which is first broached in “Donner la mort,” a text originally given as a lecture in 1990 and published in 1992 in the collection *L’éthique du don*, a year before *Specters of Marx*. Through a reading of the Czech philosopher Jan Patočka’s *Heretical Essays on the Philosophy of History*⁶ and the biblical account of Abraham’s “sacrifice of Isaac,” Derrida traces the genesis or genealogy of responsibility in the Western tradition from its Platonic and Christian origins to the works of Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Levinas (DM 93/64).⁷

Responsibility, Derrida writes, has always been understood as being grounded in freedom, that is, in the apprehensive approach to (one’s own) death. Further, since responsibility in all of its various conceptions has always necessitated public disclosure, openness, frankness, a necessity to answer for and justify one’s actions, and an ability to give an account of them before others, it has always forbidden secrecy and silence. According to Derrida, Patočka believes that all true, binding responsibility or obligation is issued from “someone, from a person such as an absolute being who transfixes me, takes possession of me, holds me in his hand and in his gaze [*sous son regard*] (even though through this dissymmetry I don’t see it; it is essential that I don’t see it)” (DM 54/32). Derrida remarks that in this genesis of responsibility proposed by Patočka, what takes on greater importance is “the relation to self as being before the other [*devant l’autre*]: the other in its infinite alterity, one who regards [*celle qui regarde*] without being seen” (DM18/3).

Thus responsibility is what “exposes me dissymmetrically” to the other’s regard [*au regard de l’autre*], it “exposes me” dissymmetrically as far

as the other is concerned, such that my gaze, my regard, is not the measure by which every thing is judged (DM 47/27). In other words, responsibility is not something that can be thematized or phenomenologically intuited, because it “gives without giving itself to be seen” (DM 47/27). More precisely, what gives rise to responsibility is a “dissymmetry in the gaze, in the concern [*dissymétrie dans le regard*],” a “disproportion that relates me, in what looks at and concerns me [*dans ce qui me regarde*], to a gaze that I don’t see and that remains secret from me although it commands me” (DM 48/27).

Since the assumption of responsibility necessitates dissymmetry and thus takes place outside of knowledge, in secrecy, then the exercise of responsibility, or witnessing in silence, takes place where no reason can be asked for or given. This is why Derrida claims that responsibility has “the structure of a type of secret” (DM 47/27). This secrecy is by definition incommensurable with objectivity and knowledge, for reason and rationality always demand proof, manifestation, phenomenalization, and the unveiling of the veiled, whereas the relation to the other—here, Abraham’s relation to God, who is absolutely transcendent and must remain hidden or secret—cannot satisfy the demands of reason. The other would not be other, Derrida insists, if it were “to share its reasons with us by explaining them to us,” or “if it were to speak to us without any secrets” (DM 84/57). Like Abraham, who is in a position of non-exchange with respect to God and who “expects neither response nor reward from him,” the relation with the other also involves an essential lack of communication where no signs or promises are exchanged (DM 132/96).

Thus, in the most common instance of responsibility, Derrida’s reading implies, I am in the same relation to the other as Abraham was to God. Abraham is in a situation of heteronomy, where there is a “dissymmetry between the divine regard [*le regard divin*]” that sees him and Abraham, who doesn’t see what is looking at him (DM 82/55–56).⁸ Derrida explains this relation of absolute dissymmetry further when he writes: “God sees me, he sees into me in secret [*il voit dans le secret en moi*], but I don’t see him, I don’t see him see me, even though he looks at me while facing me and not, like an analyst, to whom I turn my back” (DM 125/91). This “secret” is thus a secret *from* me, because it is what I can never see, but not *for* the other, since it is what is delivered over only to the other and only the other can see (DM 126–27/91–92).

But like the Ghost in *Hamlet*, as we shall discover, precisely because I cannot see God looking at me, “I can, and must, only hear him” (DM 125/91). “Most often I have to be led to hear or believe him [*on doit me le*

donner à entendre],” through the voice of another, an intermediary, whether a messenger, an angel, a prophet or a messiah, “who speaks between me and God” (DM 125/91). Derrida summarizes the asymmetrical relation with the other, in this case God, and the coming into being of what he calls “*ça me regarde*” thus: “There is no face-to-face and exchange of looks [*regard échangé*] between God and myself, between the other [*l’autre*] and myself” (DM 126/91).

II

“What, has this thing appeared again tonight?” asks Marcellus at the beginning of *Hamlet*, when the sentinels Horatio, Francisco, and Barnardo confer with him about the appearance of an “apparition,” a “dreaded sight” that has visited the two previous nights during their watch. Recalling these opening scenes, when the sentinels sense the gaze of a ghostly figure that they cannot see, Derrida’s reading in *Specters of Marx* focuses on the occasions in which this ghost is encountered, at first by Horatio and the soldiers and later by Hamlet himself.⁹

What specifically distinguishes this ghost or specter, Derrida notes, is its look or gaze (*regard*). This “someone other [*quelqu’un d’autre*]”—which, Derrida emphasizes, we must resist as determining as “self, person, consciousness, spirit, and so forth”—is marked by its regard (SM 27/7).¹⁰ “This Thing” that is not a thing, *this* thing—and not just any thing—*this* specter, “looks at us, concerns us [*nous regarde*], and sees us not see it even when it is there” (SM 26/6). Quite simply, the Ghost of the King sees without being seen. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida terms this asymmetrical relation in which we are unable to see what regards us “the *visor effect*,” and underscores its significance, the “spectral asymmetry” of a gaze that cannot be returned, by stating that “*it will be presupposed by everything we advance on the subject of the specter in general, in Marx and elsewhere*” (SM 26, 27/6; emphasis added).¹¹

With regard to “this spectral *someone other*,” Derrida remarks:

we feel ourselves being looked at by it, outside of any synchrony, even before and beyond any look on our part, according to an absolute anteriority (which may be on the order of generation, of more than one generation) and asymmetry, according to an unmasterable disproportion. Here anachrony makes the law. (SM 27/7)

We “*feel* ourselves seen,” observed, and surveyed by a look that disrupts all specularity and “de-synchronizes” time, by a gaze that “will always be impossible to cross” (SM 27/7).

It is on the basis of this visor effect that we inherit the law: since we are incapable of looking back at the one who sees us and who makes the law, since the one who issues the injunction cannot be identified, we are delivered over (*livrés*) to its voice (SM 27–28). Thus the one who says to Hamlet “I am thy Father’s Spirit” can only be taken at his word. This obedience, “an essentially blind submission to his secret,” is “a first obedience to the injunction,” the obedience conditioning all others to come (SM 28/7). The armor that covers from head to toe, the body supposedly belonging to Hamlet’s father, “prevents perception” from deciding on the identity of what lurks behind. Functioning as “a kind of technical prosthesis,” dressing, protecting, and masking “the spectral body,” it only permits “the so-called father to see and to speak” (SM 28/8).¹²

The appearance of the Shakespearean Ghost raises the *ti esti* question about that which has no essence and does not come to presence: Thus, we must pose the question: “*What is a ghost? [qu’est-ce qu’un fantôme?]*” (SM 31/10). Even though it is difficult to differentiate the specter or the *revenant* from all other terms and notions it has been associated with throughout the history of philosophy, such as the *spirit*, including the spirit in the sense of ghost (*fantôme*) in general, as well as from the icon, the idol, the image of an image that is the Platonic *phantasma* or the simulacrum of something in general, what characterizes the specter, Derrida writes, is “a supernatural and paradoxical phenomenality, the furtive and ungraspable visibility of the invisible, or an invisibility of a visible X . . . it is also, no doubt, the tangible intangibility of a proper body without flesh, but always someone as someone other [*quelqu’un comme quelqu’un d’autre*]” (SM 27/7). Neither soul nor body, both one and the other, the specter is the “becoming-body” of the spirit, “a certain phenomenal and carnal form” of the spirit (SM 25/6), the “deferred spirit,” spirit as it defers and differs from itself (SM 216, 217/135, 136).

The specter cannot simply be substituted for the simulacrum, for “the ghost is a ‘who’ [*un ‘qui’*]” (SM 75/41–42). “It has a kind of body,” yet a body “without property” (SM 75/41–42). There is a return to the body, but a body “more abstract than ever”—“like the dis-appearing of an apparition” (SM 202/126). For, even though the “spectral apparition” of spirit is due to “flesh and phenomenality,” the latter “disappear right away in the apparition, in the very coming of the *revenant* or the return of the specter” (SM 25/6). The apparition itself, as the “reapparition of the departed,” always bears the traces of something disappeared and absent (SM 25/6).¹³ Further, it can never be known whether this thing “between something and someone, anyone or anything,” that appears in “a space of invisible visibility,” is living or dead (SM 202/126). In fact, Derrida insists, “this

being-there of an absent or departed one [*disparu*],” cannot be known for it does not belong to the realm of knowledge (SM 26/6).

III

“I am dead, I know what I am talking about from where I am, and I am looking at you, I concern you [*je te regarde*].”¹⁴ Jacques Derrida is speaking in a filmed interview to Bernard Stiegler, describing his previous participation with the young actress Pascale Ogier in a movie by Ken McMullen entitled *Ghost Dance*.¹⁵ He is approximating her words, the words that Ogier would have uttered while staring at him. And although she never actually pronounced these words, Derrida wants to suggest, she would have fully endorsed them. In recalling a scene filmed in his office, where the two exchanged a few words and glances, Derrida says he knew that “already a spectrality was at work” from the moment Ogier had uttered her words (E 135). Ogier—who passed away not long after her participation in McMullen’s film—“knew” at the time of shooting that any reproduction of her utterances would only be possible on the condition of their survival in her absence. She knew, Derrida explains, “as we know, that even if she had not died in the interval, one day it would be a dead woman who would say ‘I am dead’ or: ‘I am dead, I know of what I speak from where I am and I am looking at you, I concern you’” (E 135).¹⁶

Remarking on her regard, a gaze that Derrida is faced with while viewing the film *Ghost Dance* with a group of students a few years later, a gaze that Derrida repeatedly says looks at him, concerns him *here-now*, as she *appears* on the large screen of an auditorium in Texas, he claims that hers is no simple look but a regard that remains asymmetrical, “exchanged beyond all possible exchange, *eye-line* without *eye-line*, *eye-line* of a gaze that fixes and looks for the other, its other, its counterpart [*vis-à-vis*], the other gaze met in an infinite night” (E 135).¹⁷ In the very same language that he uses to discuss the regard of God and *Hamlet*’s Ghost, Derrida declares: “She looks at me [*me regarde*], concerns me [*me concerne*], she addresses only me” (E 137).

This asymmetrical look, this “heteronomic figure of the law,” what in *Specters of Marx* was dubbed “the visor effect”—the ghost looks at us, concerns us (“*Le fantôme nous regarde*”)—is for Derrida the experience of all inheritance (E 135). The ghost is our concern precisely by looking at us. Yet this ghost is not some wraith that we see coming and going but rather some *one* by whom we feel observed and surveyed, like the law (E 135). We are “before the law” when the other looks only at us and there can be no reciprocity or symmetry (E 135). Being looked at and watched

by the law places an infinite demand on me by addressing me solely with an address that is impossible to determine as a request or an order. This regard, Derrida stresses, does not belong merely to the realm of what we too simply call the “living”: “The wholly other [*Le tout-autre*]—and the dead one is the wholly other [*le mort, c’est le tout-autre*]—looks at me, concerns me, and looks at me in addressing me . . . with a prayer or an injunction, an infinite demand, which becomes the law for me” (E 135–37).

As a result of this address, I am an inheritor. The other has come before (me). The other’s absolute “*precedence or previousness [prévenance]*, the heterogeneity of a *pre-* [*pré-*],” is not only the fact that it comes before me, but also “before any present, thus before any past present, but also what, for that very reason, comes from the future or as future: like the very coming of the event” (SM 56/28). All the ramifications of the relationship to the other, with all its temporal and spatial significance, can be expressed by the English word “before”: we could say “the other is *before* me, ahead of me and in front of me, *before* I who am *before* it.”¹⁸

From the moment that I cannot meet the other’s glance, “I am dealing with the other [*j’ai affaire à de l’autre*]” (E137). Yet even if I think that I have looked into the other’s eyes—as Derrida did while seemingly exchanging glances with Ogier—the eyes that see, seeing eyes, eyes that view are not the same as what is seen or is visible to me. I can never see the eyes of the other simultaneously “as seeing [*comme voyant*] and as visible” (E 137), a logic that Derrida details in *Memoirs of the Blind*.¹⁹ This impossibility of exchanging looks with the other, however, does not mean that I can ever absolve myself of my responsibilities. This impossibility of exchanging looks with that which regards me places me in a situation of absolute heteronomy. Yet even though my law is received from the other, not only is my freedom not negated, but it “springs from the condition of this responsibility which is born from the heteronomy in the eyes of the other [*l’hétéronomie au regard de l’autre*], before the other’s gaze” (E 137). Responsibility is thus always assumed when one is in a situation of heteronomy, where the law of the other is obeyed “passively,” in a passivity without passivity. In responsibility, I am summoned, I am under the injunction of someone who is “not there,” because if the other were present, that is, “actually present, then I would be able to appropriate it in my field of experience” and it would “be a phenomenon for me, part of myself.”²⁰ Rather, “the other whose injunction I obey . . . must be infinitely distant, or a ghost. Or dead” (AI 223).

Everything about this spectral regard signifies “an *other world*, an other source of phenomenality, an other zero point of appearing” (E 138).²¹ The *here-now* of the other as it looks at me is “absolutely heterogeneous,” a

here-now absolutely incommensurable with mine. Each *here-now* is both “a world and the opening of a world.”²² According to Derrida, the other is “a singularity from which a world opens” and Pascale Ogier was someone for whom “a world, that is, a possible infinity or an indefiniteness of possible experiences, was open” (E 138). For her, there was a unique world, and from “this other origin” that I cannot reappropriate for myself, Derrida remarks, from this “infinitely other place” that I am always looked at, today, still “it looks at me, concerns me and asks me to respond or be responsible” (E 138–39).

In the same manner that each look signifies the opening of a world, of *the* world, each death brings the world to a close, there is the end of the world, “another end of the world.”²³ What death takes away from us is “someone through whom the world and first of all our own world, will have opened up in a both finite and infinite—mortally infinite—way.”²⁴ But the other need not die, its world need not end, for me to begin to mourn. Since I can never have access to the *here-now* of the other, a certain mourning is originary in every relation to the other. As Ogier sat across from Derrida practicing her lines, mourning was already there even before her death, since the laws of friendship and mourning dictate that one of the two friends would see the other go first. For mourning and haunting are “unleashed” before death itself, from the simple possibility of death—yours and mine (E 148). Every visit, every appearance of the other, then, is marked by the possibility of an absence.

IV

During the course of a reading of Kierkegaard’s *Fear and Trembling* in *The Gift of Death*, Derrida demonstrates that the exercise of responsibility in the Western tradition has been interpreted as requiring either “an accounting, a general answering-for-oneself,” before generality or the general, and hence the possibility of substitution (of a particular case for another) or attention to “absolute singularity,” unicity, and uniqueness, thus “non-substitution” and “nonrepetition” (where responsibility is assumed in a singular and solitary fashion) (DM 89/61).²⁵ What Derrida (with Kierkegaard) calls “*absolute* responsibility” in *The Gift of Death*, however, is not “a responsibility” or “responsibility in general” (DM 89/61). Absolute responsibility, not to be confused with a *concept* of responsibility, is that which resists any conceptualization or any self-presentation before the violence that consists of asking for an account to be rendered or a justification to be given (DM 89–90/61). Absolute responsibility, then, would be what requires generality (hence substitution) *and* unicity (absolute singularity

or nonsubstitution). Because it must risk irresponsibility in order to be absolutely responsible, this “exceptional” or “extraordinary” responsibility must remain “inconceivable” or “unthinkable” (DM 89/61).

The narrative of the relation of Abraham to God concerning Isaac’s sacrifice, Derrida writes, can be read as highlighting the “paradox” that structures the very concept of duty or absolute responsibility (DM 95/66). The narrative, he explains, “puts us in relation with the absolute other [*l’autre absolu*], with the absolute singularity of the other, whose name here is God” (DM 95/66).²⁶ “Duty or responsibility tie me to the other, to the other as other,” linking me in my absolute singularity. “God is the name of the absolute other as other and as unique” (DM 97/68). Yet, Derrida asks, doesn’t this describe the most common relationship of responsibility? Doesn’t the “monstrous” story of Isaac’s sacrifice show “the most common thing,” where “the Other, the great Other” asks, demands, or orders “without giving the slightest explanation?” (DM 97/67).

This narrative can thus function as the narrative for every instance of responsibility. “As soon as I enter into a relation with the absolute other, my singularity enters into relation with it on the level of obligation and duty” (DM 97/68). In responsibility, I am bound in my absolute singularity to the other as other, and in this immediate relation to the other, I have a relation of responsibility to each and every other. That is to say, the very thing that binds me in my singularity to the absolute singularity of the other also “immediately throws me into the space or risk of absolute sacrifice” (DM 97–98/68). For responsibility binds me to an infinite number of singular others, whom it would be impossible to respond to and be responsible for. By being responsive and responsible to one, I will naturally be denying others. What gives rise to responsibility, by “situat[ing] originary culpability and original sin,” is also the source of its betrayal (DM 129/94). As Derrida notes in *The Gift of Death*:

I cannot respond to the call, the request, the obligation, or even the love of another without sacrificing the other other [*l’autre autre*], the other others [*les autres autres*]. *Tout autre est tout autre. Every other (one), the wholly other, is every (bit) other.* (DM 97–98/68)²⁷

Relishing the abyssal heterogeneity of the untranslatable phrase *Tout autre est tout autre*, Derrida explains that it functions as a sort of secret or a shibboleth that can only be heard in a certain language. The phrase, which takes advantage of the multiple meanings of “tout” and “autre”—*tout* as an indefinite pronominal adjective, as in some, someone, someone other, and as an adverb of quantity meaning totally, entirely, absolutely, infinitely; and *autre* as an indefinite pronominal adjective and noun—can

be heard in at least four different ways: (1) Every other is wholly and entirely other; that is, every other (in the sense of *chaque autre*) is absolutely different, altogether other. (2) Every other is every other. Each other (one) is every other (one). (3) The wholly other, *Tout autre*, is wholly and completely other.²⁸ (4) What is wholly other is every other. What is called the wholly other (*tout autre*) is every other. In this way *tout autre* refers to all that is other and not solely to God or to Levinas's *Autrui*.

If every other is singularly other, then it would be impossible to rigorously distinguish between my obligation to God as singular and my obligation to each and every other. Since my obligation to each of these singular others, each of those who are wholly other, is infinite, I would not be able to find a way to completely fulfill all my obligations, as each is as necessary and exigent as the other. Thus responsibility structurally condemns me to paradox or to what Derrida calls "scandal." This scandal always places me in a bind, a double bind, that is, in a position of betrayal and sacrifice every time I have to exercise my responsibility.

Yet the scandalous nature of responsibility can never be used as an excuse for irresponsibility as long as I know that my choices—and I must always make choices—would never be able to satisfy the judgments of a tribunal. This is why, Derrida writes:

as soon as I am in relation with the other, with the regard, request, love, command, or call of the other, I know that I can respond only by sacrificing ethics, that is, by sacrificing whatever obliges me to also respond, in the same way, in the same instant, to all the others.
(DM 98/68)

Without this constitutive possibility of betrayal, perjury, or failure, there would be no responsible relation to the alterity of the other.

V

If we were to follow the consequences of this strange syntagma, *Hamlet's* Ghost or Pascale Ogier's apparition would call for the same treatment reserved for every other, whether considered to be presently living or not. What the regard of a spectral *someone other* has given us to think is that *tout autre est tout autre*. The relation to God or to the otherworldly gaze of Ogier—*ça me regarde*—is *analogical* to my relation to *tout autre*, to every other, to the wholly other, and to every other as wholly and utterly other. *This* entirely other, neither phenomenal nor nonphenomenal, neither visible nor invisible, is *before* me (it precedes me and is anterior to me), as I am before it in an asymmetrical relation. Yet my relation to it is not that

of an originary perception: I cannot apprehend it by immediate intuition, I have no direct access “to the other side, to the zero-point of this other origin of the world—and this is the condition of the experience of the other as other [*l'autre comme autre*]” (Fid 226).

As the origin of *another world*, the other looks at me and through this asymmetrical gaze obligates me. My relation to it, to “an other origin of the world or to an other gaze [*regard*], to the gaze of the other [*au regard de l'autre*]” thus always involves a spectrality (E 139). Since justice demands my responsibility in every relation to the other, the relation to Ogier as *tout autre*, as utterly other, also assigns an infinite responsibility beyond the living present. “Respect for the alterity of the other,” Derrida notes, “dictates respect for the ghost that returns [*le revenant*], and thus for the non-living, for that which is *possibly non-living*. Not dead, but not living” (E 139; emphasis added). Thus justice and respect cannot solely be reserved for those others called the “living”—as if one could simply delimit “the living” from “the non-living.” Even if we say that the nonliving do not “exist” any more, concern for them cannot be any less (E 148). There would be “no respect,” Derrida elaborates, “thus no possible justice, without this relation of fidelity or of promise, as it were, to that which is no longer living or not yet alive, to that which is not simply present” (E 139). This respect, he affirms, “would be owed to the law of the other who appears without appearing and looks at me, concerns me like a specter, as a specter [*me regarde comme un spectre*]” (E 139). Since every other—whether human, animal, X, “living” or “nonliving”—is absolutely other, respect for the alterity of the other would then dictate respect for the *revenant*, the ghost that returns, as much as for the *arrivant*, who or what comes, because we are never simply hospitable toward an identifiable “subject.”

What Ogier's apparition or the appearance of *Hamlet's* Ghost would further allow us to say is that the coming of the other is always *like* the apparition of a ghost. Every time the other comes to me, it is *as if* I were encountering a ghost.²⁹ Derrida's encounter with the apparition of Ogier is an encounter with her singular alterity, but the reappearance of her apparition is also, at the same time, analogous to the coming, the coming back and living on, of the other, of every other. Indeed, every relation to the other has the character of a “spectral” relation.

What links the three spectral regards—the look of the Ghost in *Hamlet*, the divine regard, and Ogier's otherworldly glance—is that each, in its own singular alterity, is an example of the relation to the other. Each of the three looks is absolutely singular and unique—one could rightly say that they have *no relation* to each other, yet at the same time all three

are instances of a relation to a secret, distant, asymmetrical gaze that sees, a relation to an entirely other point of view, where responsibility is instituted in a situation of nonexchange. In each instance, I feel myself being looked at by a spectral *tout autre*, to whom or which I am responsible, and my “yes-saying” to this heteronomy is a tacit acknowledgment of a legacy and inheritance bestowed upon me. This is why we can say that the gaze or look is perhaps the best “paradigm” for responsibility, if paradigm is taken in the Greek sense of *paradeigma*: example. The spectral regard, however, would not be merely an example but the exemplary example.

Moreover, all the three instances of the asymmetrical regard have a spectral relation to each other. On the one hand, each gaze or look is absolutely unique, resistant to any analogy, with no similarity or affinity to any other look. Yet on the other hand, there is an analogical relation of *as if* between the three gazes, *as if* the Ghost’s look could be metonymically substituted by God’s gaze or Ogier’s glance. This interruptive relation, or relation without relation, would allow us to link, however tenuously, the gaze of and concern for God, the Ghost, Ogier—and here we could also add, as Derrida does in *L’animal que donc je suis* a cat that looks at me—making responsibility infinitely more than what I solely owe the “living person” standing before me. Rather than merely being responsible for myself, my actions, my emotions (Sartre), or even for *Autrui* (Levinas), my responsibility would not be restricted to the living and the human—it would extend to every *one*. It is in this sense that responsibility is overwhelming.³⁰

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Apparitions

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The Ghost *of* Jacques Derrida

“Here, now, yes, believe me, I believe in ghosts [*crois-moi, je crois aux fantômes*].”¹ So declares Jacques Derrida, recounting the words of another, words that were once pronounced to him by Pascale Ogier during the filming of the movie *Ghost Dance*.² These words, repeated in a filmed interview with Bernard Stiegler, form part of a book entitled *Echographies of Television* published in 1996. In this interview, Derrida describes the singular, “strange,” and “unreal” experience of filming a scene in his office for Ken McMullen’s movie, a scene in which he and Ogier sit face-to-face, looking at each other, into one another’s eyes. Practicing with Ogier, Derrida is supposed to ask her: “And you then, do you believe in ghosts?,” and at the behest of the director, she is to respond succinctly: “Yes, now, yes.”

Derrida recalls this experience—that of rehearsing this scene in his office with Ogier at least thirty times—when, two or three years later, he is asked to view McMullen’s movie again by his students in the United States. Asking Stiegler to imagine his experience, given the fact that Ogier had unexpectedly passed away in the interim, Derrida remarks: “I saw the face of Pascale, all of a sudden, coming on the screen, which I knew was the face of a dead person” (E 135). “She responded to my question ‘Do you believe in ghosts?’ Looking at me almost in the eyes, she said to me again, on the large screen: ‘yes, now, yes’” (E 135). Subsequently, after Ogier’s death, while viewing *Ghost Dance*, Derrida has the overwhelming feeling of the return of “the specter of her specter [*le spectre de son spectre*],” coming back “to tell me, here now: ‘Now . . .

now . . . now . . . that is, in this dark room or auditorium of another continent, in another world, here, now, yes, believe me, I believe in ghosts'” (E 135).

A voice comes forward to say “Here, now,”—but which “now?”—“yes, believe me, I believe in ghosts.” The voice does not simply seek to assure—“believe me, have faith in me”—but asks to be trusted—“believe me when I say that I believe in ghosts.” How is one to take this phrase, “Believe me, I believe in ghosts,” especially if it is itself the repetition of the very phrase of another? What is it not only to believe in ghosts but to *declare* that one believes in them? Soon it becomes clear that this strange enunciation is much more complex than it first appears, bearing within it a (double) affirmation (“yes” and “I believe”), an exhortation (“believe me!”), a request (“please believe what I tell you”), a declaration (“I believe in ghosts”), an (infinite) repetition (“yes, I believe in ghosts,” this utterance being itself the repetition of another’s avowal, repeated again with every appearance of Ogier on the screen), and a testimony that in repeating affirms the belief. As if matters were not already complicated enough, all of this is brought to us via video, thus raising the question of the relation between technics and the affirmation of belief or believing in general.

I would like to take up Derrida’s avowal of belief in ghosts, not simply to explain the significance of “ghosts,” simulacra, doubles, hence images, in Derrida’s work and to show their relation to death and mourning nor to merely draw an analogy between the structure of doubles or simulacra and what we may call “synthetic” images but also in order to scrutinize each part of the expression “Believe me, I believe in ghosts.” This phrase would oblige us not only to attend to the performative force of “Believe me!” but also to think the alliance between the image, the ghostly, and belief. The aporetic rapport between faith (religious and fiduciary) and technics, in every attestation and testimony, would bring to the fore the credit we accord the image. If I will have resorted to what may seem like “excessive quotation” by the standards of academic writing, I will have done so in order to give Derrida the word. By citing him as much as possible in an essay that is “mimetic,” I have tried to bear in mind what he taught us about citation. It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that much of Derrida’s thought can be contained in this very phrase, “Believe me, I believe in ghosts.”

Ghosts

Generally speaking, there would have to be plenty of skepticism about an avowal of belief in ghosts uttered by a philosopher, but these words,

coming from Derrida's mouth, may not strike us as so absurd. After all, a thought of ghosts, phantoms, and specters has been at work across the entirety of Derrida's corpus, from *Dissemination* (1972) to *The Truth in Painting* (1978), from *Memoires: For Paul de Man* (1988) to *Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde* (2003).³ As Derrida writes in *Specters of Marx*, "the concept or scheme of the ghost was heralded long time ago" in his work, and on several occasions he has gone on record admitting that specters have in fact haunted his texts for decades.⁴

Now, what we in English refer to as a "ghost"⁵ is one rendering or translation of a number of related archaic and Attic Greek terms, such as *eidōlon*, *phantasma*, *phasma*, and *psuchē*, found in texts from Homer onward.⁶ These terms, whether referring to the shades of the dead or the exact duplicate of a Homeric hero fashioned by a god, designate a category of doubles hovering between life and death, the real and the unreal.⁷ What is always suggested by these terms and other related words—shadow (*skia*), dream vision (*oneiros*), reflections in water, or figures in mirrors—is something visible or visual that appears but whose appearance is more faint, that which has less being or reality than what is "real."⁸

What is worthy of serious study is how these terms, which are not exact equivalents, have been translated in the philosophical languages of the West—as *figura*, *forma*, *simulacrum*, *effigy*, and *imago*, hence "image"—a translation and hence interpretation that has been dominated by Platonism throughout Western metaphysics.⁹ At least this seems to be Derrida's assessment in *Dissemination*, where, turning to Plato, he examines philosophy's relation to all that is "ghost"-related. It is in the dialogues of Plato, according to Derrida's reading, that the status of the "ghostly" is once and for all determined in the West.¹⁰ Through the course of a number of essays, in particular "Plato's Pharmacy" and "The Double Session," Derrida undertakes to reevaluate the place assigned to doubles and simulacra in the Platonic interpretation of *mimēsis*, hence rewriting and reinscribing the terms associated with spectrality and the ghostly.

It was Socrates who passed the first and most decisive judgment on the magical and thaumaturgical operation of *mimēsis* in the *Republic*. There he judged the production of likenesses or fabrication of images (*eidōlōpoiikē*), what can be called mimetology, to be far removed from truth and reality.¹¹ According to an "order of appearing, the precedence of the imitated [*ordre d'apparition, la pre-séance de l'imité*]," the anteriority and superiority of "reality," that which *is*, substance, or the thing itself, takes precedence over that of images, likenesses, doubles, or copies.¹² An order of appearance and appearing is set up, with its own linear temporality, in which the orders are distinct and discernible—numerically discernible. The first

order is constituted by the signified, the simple, which is more real, essential, and true. The double, the imitator, the signifier, belongs to the second order, coming after the thing or the meaning of the thing itself, its manifest presence. The model or the imitated thus always precedes the image and appears first—it has an ontological and logical precedence.¹³

Thus the referent is conceived as a real thing or cause, anterior and exterior to all that proceeds from it. Following a schema commanded by ontology and a process of truth, the *eidos* (the idea as the presence of what is) gives rise to *logos*, which in turn solicits the *eikon* and the *phantasma*: what *is* mirrors intelligibility or visibility itself, which then leads to the production of icons and images.¹⁴ The mimetic arts, such as painting and writing, are then measured against the truth, understood as the being-present of what is. “This order of appearance is *the order of all appearance* [*Cet ordre d’apparition est l’ordre de l’apparition*], the very process of appearing [*l’apparaître*] in general,” which is commanded by a process of truth (D 219/192).

By putting into play the simulacrum, the *phantasma*, or the ghost throughout *Dissemination*, Derrida sets out to undertake “a displacement without reversal of Platonism and its heritage” (D 240/211). Associating what he is calling *writing* with the simulacrum, Derrida states that writing “open[s] up the possibility of the double, the copy, the imitation, the simulacrum” (D 181/157), as long as the simulacrum is not understood, as it has been throughout Western thought, as a copy of a copy but is taken as an undecidable double. The simulacrum or the *phantasma*, “at once image and model, and hence image without model, neither image nor model,” would not be a derivative of the *eidos* but a “double” with nothing coming before it (D 239/211). If there is no simple reference but only the differential structure of *mimēsis*, then “there is no longer any model, and hence, no copy and that this structure . . . is no longer being referred back to an ontology or a dialectic” (D235/207).

For Derrida, Plato, in his criticisms of writing as a game, as that which repeats itself, always signifying the same thing, is only criticizing a pale form—or the ghost of—writing, that is, writing understood within a binary opposition dominated by philosophy. Yet, Derrida adds, what he himself “imprudently named *fantôme* [italicized in his text] can no longer be distinguished, with the same assurance, from truth, reality, living flesh, etc.” (D 118/103). For if there is no simple reference, then the *eidos* springs from the same possibility as the phantom. Here “the historical ambiguity of the word *appearance* [apparence] (at once the appearing or apparition [*l’apparaître ou l’apparition*] of the being-present *and* the dissimulation of the being-present behind its appearance”

is significant (D 239–40/211). The instability between the appearing and the appearance, between perception and hallucination leads to constant supplementation. If we say that there are only appearances or apparitions, this is without a dissimulated reality, without another world behind it, thus an appearance without appearance: “A difference without reference [to reality], or rather a reference without referent, without any first or last unit, a ghost that is phantom of no flesh [*fantôme qui n’est le fantôme d’aucune chair*], wandering about without a past, without death, without birth or presence” (D 234/206). Reference remains, but the referent cannot be said to “exist” in a static realm (ontological or not).

By juxtaposing Mallarmé’s “Mimique” and sections of Plato’s *Philebus* in “The Double Session,” Derrida enacts the disorganization and dislocation of the ontological machine of oppositions in order to displace the Platonic heritage of a weakened, ontologically less significant entity, a pale imitation of the real. With the tall, white Pierrot, the one with the cadaverous face, as one among the many errant ghosts wandering about throughout his text, Derrida’s “Double Session,” through a proliferation of simulacra, reinvigorates—if the deathly and the moribund can be given life and energy anew—all the limit-terms between life and death, presence and absence, the real and the unreal, performing a reevaluation of all ghostly terms, “at once living and dead, living more dead than alive, between life and death,” in Western thought, such as *eidōlon*, *phantasma*, and phantom (*fantôme*) (D 233 n./205 n.). This also allows for a reformulation of what has been called the image, transforming it from denoting a sensible object belonging to the domain of the visual and art history created or fashioned in resemblance or likeness of a prototype or an idea to the spectral trace—the appearing in disappearing—of the nonpresent other.

Force

The simulacrum is a force, declares Derrida in the essay “Dissemination,” which bears the same title as the collection in which it appears (D 362/326). In the course of reading a number of Philippe Sollers’s texts, Derrida writes that if writing is what puts the simulacrum into play, then the simulacrum bears a relationship to force—it is a force, it has a force. Functioning “between life and death, reality and fiction,” “the writing of force [*l’écriture de force*]” ceaselessly dislocates identity, especially the identity of the “I” (D 361/325). Feigning to put onstage the presence of the present, “this force of writing [*cette force d’écriture*],” writing’s force, produces “reality-effects,” doubling reality, simulating it. And death is

what gives the simulacrum its force. It is also what gives painting, writing, and the image in general their force without force.

What is force, then? Immediately this very question would seem to paralyze or disable whatever effectiveness—to use a word that Louis Marin employs in the introduction, “L’être de l’image et son efficace,” to his text *Des pouvoirs de l’image*—the image, or any discourse on the image, may have.¹⁵ For the use of the locution “What is?” would already submit the image to the ontological order, an order that has conceived of it as a secondary thing with less reality, an appearance of a being, a being of illusion, a weakened reflection, setting up a relationship between the image and being that is regulated by imitation, making the former a representation of the thing (PI 10).

In his introduction, Marin notes that the philosophical tradition has always considered the image “*a lesser being* [un moindre être]” (PI 10; emphasis in original), a weaker and inferior being, “a being without power [un être sans pouvoir],” “a being of little power, of little force.”¹⁶ Submitting the image and its force to the “What is?” question, then, would be “to miss it and its force,” to miss “the image in its force [*l’image en sa force*],” which has less to do with whether it is or not, but with the fact that “its dynamic, its *dynamis*, the dynasty of its force, will not submit to an onto-logic: its dynamo-logic . . . would never have been, a logic of being, an ontology” (FD 181/145). In other words, the ontological order, that is, philosophy, “would have been constituted as such for not knowing the powers of the image” (FD 181/145). This would be either because philosophy did not take the powers of the image into account or because it mistook them “*with a view* [en vue] to doing so, so as to oppose them . . . to the unavowed counterpower of a denial intended to assure an ontological power *over* the image, over the power and *dynamis* of the image” (FD 181/145–46).

The powers of the image stem from “the force of an image that must be protected from every ontology,” a force that “protects itself,” “tears itself away” from the ontological tradition of the question “What is?” This is its force, “the force of its force [*la force de sa force*]” (FD 181/145). “Force” then would be that which disturbs the authority of the “What is?” question. The emphasis on force and *dynamis* is itself borrowed from Marin’s phrase in the introduction to *Des pouvoirs de l’image* where he speaks of *la virtù* and the *dynamis* of the image. As soon as *dynamis* is withdrawn or protected from the traditional ontology that dominates it, it would play “a decisive role” linking “force, power, and *virtù*” with “the virtual *as such*—i.e. a virtual that has no vocation to go into action [*passer à l’acte*]” (FD 181–82/146). *Dynamis* then would have to do with a possible that

remains “possible as possible,” accomplishing “the possible *as such* [*le possible en tant que tel*] without effacing it or even enacting it in reality” (FD 182/146). *Dynamis* would mark “within itself . . . the interruption of this going into action, this enactment [*l’interruption du passage à l’acte*],” an interruption that bears “the seal” of death (FD 182/146).

A paradox thus illuminates Marin’s earlier trajectory, a law according to which “the greatest force does not consist in continually expanding ad infinitum but develops its maximal intensity only at the mad moment of decision, at the point of its absolute interruption, there where *dynamis* remains virtuality, namely, a virtual work as such”(FD 184/148).

Death

Only death—or rather mourning—“can open up this space of absolute *dynamis*” necessary for understanding the powers of the image (FD 182/146). Philosophy’s attempt “to reduce, weaken, and wear out” these powers, so as to subject the image to philosophy, this “philosophical exorcism,” would concern and “would *regard* death [*aurait à voir avec la mort*]”—that which should not be seen and hence must be denied (FD 182/146). In fact, philosophy’s “clandestine war of denial” is precisely a denial of death (FD 182/146). According to Derrida, Marin’s book *Des pouvoirs de l’image* brings about a “double conversion”: first, it protects the question of the image from the authority of ontology, and second, this protection finds its truth or its law in “the being-toward-death [*l’être-pour-la-mort*] of the image”; “the being-to-death [*l’être-à-mort*] of an image . . . that *has* the force, that *is nothing other than* the force *to resist, to consist and to exist* in death” (FD 183/147).

This *being-to-death* of the image would oblige us to think it “not as the weakened reproduction of what it would imitate, not as a *mimème*, a simple image, idol or icon, as they are conventionally understood . . . , but as the increase of power,” as the origin of authority, “the image itself becoming the author, . . . insofar as it finds its paradigm, which is also its *enargeia*, in the image of the dead” (FD 183/147). The image of the dead is not one among a wide array of images but its paradigm, for “an image would give seeing” *from* death, from “the *point of view of death*,” of the dead (FD 184/147).

“Mourning is the *phenomenon* of death,” and the *phainesthai* of this phenomenon provides the “only possible access to an original thought of the image” (FD 184/148). Marin proposes the images of the dead as examples in order to make the power of the image visible and energetic: “It is in the *re-presentation* of the dead that the power of the image is

exemplary” (FD 185/148; emphasis added). It is in death, or “the point” of mourning, that “the non re-productive intensity in the *re-* of re-presentation gains in power” what “the present that it represents loses in presence” (FD 185/148). Marin broaches the “substitutive value” of the *re-* of re-presentation in order to track “a re-presentation or an absolute substitution of representation for presence,” as well as “to detect within it an increase, a re-gaining of force or a supplement of intensity in presence, and thus a sort of potency or potentialization of power for which the schema of substitutive value, of mere replacement, can give no account” (FD 185/149). Thus representation would no longer be “a simple reproductive re-presentation,” but rather such a “resurgence of presence thereby intensified” that it would make us think the lack or “default” of presence that “had hollowed out in advance” the living present (FD 185/149).

Image?

“Image?” asks Marin provocatively (PI 11). But can one still speak of an image, when “representation actually gains in intensity and force, when it seems to have even more power than that of which it is said to be the image or the imitation?” (FD 186/149). Yes and no. If “the ontological concept of the image as the mimetic and weakened double of the thing itself” is no longer acceptable, we have to think the image “on the basis of death,” in other words, “on the basis of the mourning that will confer upon it its power and an increase in intensive force” (FD 186/149). This image would then be “more than an image, stronger or *more forceful* than the image defined and weakened by ontology” due to “the power of alterity that works over the being-to-death of every image” (FD 187/151).

Yet the power of the image would not have to wait for death,” since “the anticipation of death” is what “comes so indisputably to hollow out the living present that precedes it” (FD 188/151). And every image derives its *efficacy* and “enacts its efficacy [*agit son efficace*] only by signifying the death from which it draws all its power” (FD 189/152). The image draws its force from death, which, as “the most absent of absences,” gives it “its greatest force”; but because it bears death, “this greatest force is also the ‘without-force’” (FD 191–92/154). The force of the image, a force that “*owes itself not to be,*” must thus be intimately linked to that which is not force, the “without-force” (FD 183/147). Thus “the greatest force is to be seen in the infinite renunciation of force, in the absolute interruption of force by the without-force” (FD 183/147).

What representation purports to do, according to Marin, is “the presentification [*présentification*]” (PI 12) of the absent, and what the image

does is to make “appear the disappeared, the departed [*faire paraître le disparu*], or making it re-appear [*faire ré-aparaître*] with greater clarity or *enargeia*” (FD 195/157). Each time, the image makes the disappeared appear, but in doing so, it obeys no simple temporality—“resuscitat[ing] as *having been* [ayant été] the one who (singularly, he or she) will have been [*aura été*]” (FD 194/156). Not only does the image, as Leon Battista Alberti wrote of painting, “make the absent present” but it also shows “the dead to the living.”¹⁷ For Derrida, this displays “an acute thought of mourning and of the phantom that returns, of haunting and spectrality: beyond the alternative between presence and absence, beyond negative and positive perception even, the effect of the image would stem from the fantastic force of the specter, and from a supplement of force” (FD 190/153).

Working on Mourning

Derrida works on mourning.

Working *on* mourning, working *at* mourning, on the *work* of mourning, Derrida partakes in a work of remembrance, taking part in death, in one’s own death, for what is working on mourning but also partaking in one’s own death—not the death to come, but the one already announced and *at work*—and, more importantly, the death of the other.

Derrida works at mourning.

By honoring Louis Marin, one of the foremost thinkers of “the Age of Representation,” an expert on the works of Pascal and the logic of the Port Royal, by working on one of the works of Marin, Derrida works at mourning him. But this work of mourning, he tells us, would not be something whose time would eventually come to an end; it cannot ever fully succeed, for success in mourning would amount to reconciling with death and the complete incorporation of the other—a denial or effacement of his alterity. Thus Derrida works at mourning so as to not fully succeed; knowing that true mourning would always be impossible, interminable, and necessarily so, he is at work on “failing” at mourning. For as far as mourning is concerned, this “failure” would let the other remain other.

“By Force of Mourning,” written, on the one hand, to celebrate the living force of Marin’s thought on the occasion of an (at that time) yet-to-be published work, *Des pouvoirs de l’image* and, on the other hand, as an homage to a close friend very recently passed away, bears the strange temporality of these contradictory purposes. How better to salute and honor a friend, how better to celebrate the work of a contemporary, how better to convey the gentle force of Louis Marin’s work, Derrida’s essay seems to

ask, than to bring to the fore those very motifs in his work—the image, force, death—that occupied him throughout his life and to which he had devoted so much of his intellectual energy? How else to convey his loss, our loss, on the occasion of both a public homage and the celebration of the upcoming publication of a new text on the force of the image than to show the increase in intensity and power of Louis Marin’s image, an image that looks at us, even now? What better than to show, drawing on Marin’s work, a work that articulates “a thought of the theologico-political and a certain icono-semiological theory of representation,” how whatever has been construed as “the image” in the West has always been intricately linked to death (FD 184/148)?

In light of Marin’s last work, Derrida’s essay calls for a reassessment of “the image,” arguing that what is called the image is to be thought anew on the basis of death and mourning. Moreover, “By Force of Mourning” also demonstrates that this reassessment—dare one say these days, a deconstruction?—of the image, along with a thought of spectrality, has been at work throughout Derrida’s own writings, particularly in his writings on mourning and death.

After the death of a friend, in his or her absence, one is left only with memory, the memory of the other left “in me.” As Socrates says in the *Theaetetus*, memory, akin to an image (*eidōlon*) imprinted upon a slab of wax, functions by retaining an impression of what is remembered (191c–d). The death of the other leaves us, bereft and alone, with no other choice but to remember and interiorize, to bear within us remembrances of the other. In *Memoires for Paul de Man*, Derrida points out, referring to Hegel’s *Encyclopedia*, the felicity of the German idiom in which memory and interiorization coincide.¹⁸ We know from Hegel’s *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit* that remembering-interiorizing, *Erinnerung*, consists of intelligence (*Intelligenz*) positing the content of the feeling in its interiority, in its own space and time, as an image (*Bild*).¹⁹ We also know from Freud that the “normal” work of mourning “entails a movement in which an *interiorizing idealization* [Er-innerung] takes in itself or upon itself the body and voice of the other” (MPdM 54/34–35). This devouring of the other gives a place to or “makes place for a body, a voice, a soul which, although ‘ours,’ did not exist and had no meaning *before* this possibility that one *must* always begin by remembering and whose trace must be followed” (MPdM 54/34–35).

This movement of interiorization, Derrida remarks, thus keeps “within us in the form of images” the “life, thought, body, voice, look or soul of the other” (MPdM 55/37). Mourning, the desire to remember and retain in memory, then, would be an attempt “which would interiorize within us

the image, idol, or ideal of the other” (MPdM 29/6). Yet the other “resists the closure of our interiorizing memory,” allowing itself only to be interiorized, if at all, as that which cannot be fully interiorized (MPdM 53/34). For interiorization is not possible, must not be possible and completed, if the other is to remain other.

Yet if the friend is no more, no longer here, he “can only be but *in us* [en nous]” (FD 200/159):

When we say “in us,” when we speak so easily and painfully of inside and outside, we are naming space, we are speaking of a visibility of the body, a geometry of gazes. . . . *We are speaking of images*. What is *in us* seems to be reducible to images, which might be memories or monuments, but which are reducible in any case to a memory that consists of *visible* scenes that are no longer anything but *images*, since the other of whom they are the images appears only as the one who has disappeared or passed away [*comme le disparu*], as the one who, having passed away, leaves “in us” only images. (FD 198/159)

Yet if complete interiorization is not possible, “it would be, rather, because of another organization of space and visibility, of the gazing and the gazed upon [*du regardant et du regardé*],” because of a strange topology where the inside and the outside could no longer be delimited simply by drawing a line (FD 198/159).

The image owes its force to the fact that it “sees more than it is seen [*voyante, plus que visible*]”: “The image looks at us, concerns us [*L’image nous regarde*]” (FD 199/160). This dissymmetry of being looked at marks “an essential anachrony” in our being exposed to the other: “Louis Marin is outside and he is looking at me,” Derrida confides. “I am an image for him. At this very moment. There, where I can say *cogito, sum*, I know that I am an image for the other and am looked at by the other” (FD 199/160). Moreover, “in my relationship to myself, he is here in me before me [*en moi avant moi*], even stronger or more forceful [*plus fort*] than me” (FD 199/160).

We are all looked at, each of us singularly. But this strange dissymmetry “can be interiorized only by exceeding, fracturing, wounding, injuring, traumatizing the interiority that it inhabits or that welcomes it through hospitality, love, or friendship” (FD 199/160). This inversion indicates:

an *absolute* excess and dissymmetry in the space of what relates us to ourselves and constitutes the “being-in-us,” the “being-us,” in something completely other [*tout autre chose*] than a mere subjective interiority: in a place open to an infinite transcendence. The one

who looks at us in us—and *for whom* we are—is no longer; he is completely other [*tout autre*], infinitely other. (FD 200/161)

Death, bringing about a distance, has distanced the other in “this infinite alterity” (FD 200/161).

We thus appear before a gaze that we are not able to “seize and appropriate” or master. We bear this excess and dissymmetry “*in ourselves*,” bearing the gaze that “Louis Marin bears *on us*,” from “there where this power of the image comes to open the being-far-away. This excess also brings about the limitless enlargement of the image. This power of dilation gives it its greatest force” (FD 200/161).

This “trace of the other in us” (MPdM 49/29), what with a totally new inflection we have been calling the *image* of the other in us, outside inside, inside outside, bears a force, a power, that increases with “the incontestable authority of death, that is the very inexistence of the image, its fantastic power, the impresence of a trace” (FD 204/164). The image derives its authority, its force without force, from the lack or absence of ground, or of a founding body, an authority that begins, to be sure, before death:

The authority or power, and particularly the theologico-political power of representation . . . might come to it, in its very founding agency, precisely from its lack or absence of *Grund*, from the *Abgrund* on the basis of which it founds: for it founds precisely there where the founding body, the founding agency or existence, comes to disappear in death, to act as the one who has disappeared or passed away. (FD 190/152)

Marking the intertwining of the nonliving, absence, and reference to the other, the *image*, the specter of the nonpresent, living-dead other, has the tangible intangibility of a body without flesh. Its mode of appearance is that of appearing in disappearing, disappearing in its appearance.²⁰ Making the disappeared appear or “making reappear,” all images partake of a spectral structure. This spectrality, no stranger to technics and technology, allows for the revenant or image of the disappeared to be interiorized, to remain in me, *as other*, living-dead, inside, yet outside, while at the same time making possible the appearance of “visual” images outside, in us.

All the spectral terms in the series of “almost equivalent words” that signify haunting—the phantom, the ghost, the specter, the image, and so on—have their specific singularity; nonetheless, as doubles or simulacra they all have a certain structure and function in common. This is why the spectral trace of the other can be said to share in the same

structure as the “synthetic” image. The structure of the digital, televi-
sual image is spectrally constituted via technological delay. The remote
dispatching of “bodies” that are nonbodies—“artifactual” bodies—is
made possible by spectral virtualization.²¹ It is this very structure that
allows for Pascale Ogier’s apparition, a spectral simulacrum, to appear
and reappear on the screen.

A Spectral Body

Pascale Ogier’s *apparition* returns. It comes back. Each time she appears,
her reappearance is an event. Her every “appearance” is a becoming-body,
but a body that “disappears in its appearance, apparition [*apparition*].”²²
Bearing the traces of something disappeared or departed, the ghostly or
spectral apparition, then, is that which “effaces itself in the appearing of
its coming [*s’efface dans l’apparition de sa venue*]” (AA 460). The return of
Ogier’s apparition on the screen attests to the “structure” of *revenance*: the
production of a spectral, virtual, prosthetic body incarnating the appa-
rition of the departed, the disappeared [*l’apparition du disparu*]. Pascale
Ogier’s apparition, her “digitized image,” like the fabrication of a virtual
body through a phantomatic work of mourning, belongs to the same
“structure” that makes possible the production of all spectral bodies. In
the process of taking in, memorializing the other, the work of mourning
also leads to the production of phantomatic bodies—to ward off death, or
the return of the dead, and to protect the living from confrontation with
their own death while at the same time guaranteeing the survival and the
“living on” of the dead.

The terms “specter” and “phantom or ghost” (*fantôme*), in contrast to
revenant, the ghost that returns, are etymologically related to visibility
and the visible spectacle.²³ Spectrality and “ghostliness” (*fantomalité*)
share “the becoming almost visible of that which is visible only insofar as
it is *not visible* in flesh and blood” (E 129; emphasis added).²⁴ Exceeding
the oppositions between the sensuous and the nonsensuous, “*at the same
time* visible and invisible, phenomenal and non-phenomenal: a trace that
marks in advance the present by its absence” (E 131; emphasis added),
the return of a specter is “the *frequency* of a certain visibility” that is not
tangible (SM 165/100–101).

Ogier’s *apparition*, then, is not the simple making-present, aided by
technology, of that which is no longer present. Her spectral *apparition*
puts into question the temporal schema utilized to understand the dis-
tinction between the “live presence of the real” and its “preservation” and
“reproduction” by archival machines, such as video or film. The apparition

cannot merely be attributed to a representation or an “image,” as conventionally understood, captured and preserved by recording equipment. To say that we see Ogier’s “digitized image” is to say that we are confronted by the return of her ghostly apparition, her *phantasma* or *eidōlon*.

The reappearance of her *apparition*, the very possibility of its appearance, reproduction, and archivization, depends on the apparition’s ability to appear in Ogier’s absence. In fact, all tele-technology functions on the basis that what is captured must be reproducible in its absence. Thus each of Ogier’s appearances, the “first” time and every time after, is always already haunted by disappearance, by her absence or death; a disappearance or departedness (*disparition*) that was already there as she spoke and was being filmed. She was already haunted by this disappearance (*disparition*), a “disappearance” that is also there whenever her apparition appears to us. This disappearance already bears within it:

another magic “apparition” [*“apparition” magique*], a ghostly “re-
apparition” [*une “re-apparition” fantomale*] which is in truth properly *miraculous* . . . as admirable as it is unbelievable [*incroyable*],
believable only by the grace of an act of faith, which is summoned
by technics [*la technique*] itself, by our relation of essential incompetence to technical operation. (E 131)

And the every day usage of tele-technology functions to conceal this miraculousness.

The reappearance of Ogier’s apparition is only possible because the living constantly divides itself, harboring within death and nonpresence. The living present’s deferral from itself, this delay or lag, which modern technologies are in constant pursuit of shortening, effacing, or denying, ensures the possibility of any “making-present.” It is this spectral self-relation and relation to the other that makes possible what we, in general, call “images” and enables them to be recorded or reproduced. The possibility of death inhabits and haunts all modern technologies, brings about re-production as well as allowing for the restitution as “living present” of what is dead but is preserved *as if* it were alive. Every “live effect [*un effet de direct*]” or a real-time “effect,” then, is an effect of the simulacrum brought about by technics (E 48).

For the skeptic, who can only believe what he or she can see, what may appear to distinguish Ogier’s *apparition* from what has conventionally been understood or maligned as “a ghost” is that it can readily be “seen” in everyday life on the video screen. One sees, one believes that one sees immediately, right away, without delay, live—there is actuality. Yet what we “see” on the screen, as Derrida explains in his interview with

Bernard Stiegler, is of an entirely other order. The spectral *apparition* of Pascale Ogier, the visibility of Ogier's "image," is no simple visibility but what he calls "a nocturnal visibility," a "visibility of the night" (E 129–31). Whatever is "captured" by optical instruments is already the specter of "a 'televised' [*une 'télévisée'*]," already dis-appearing as it is looked at, aimed at, targeted, by an intentionality at a distance (*télé-visée*) (E 131).

"You'll Just Have to Believe Me"

In the contemporary world, tele-technologies such as video are quite commonly relied upon to provide proof or evidence, but this would be to mistake showing, displaying, or presenting with testifying and witnessing. Even though tele-technologies may be used to indicate or exhibit something, they can never take the place of bearing witness and testimony. We place our faith in technology—we believe in it without really knowing how it functions—but technology or technics cannot be relied upon for proof. With live presence or a live broadcast, it seems that no doubt is possible, for the thing itself is being presented. There is the immediacy of the senses and certitude, the reasoning goes, thus no necessity for any belief or faith. Live presence or the thing itself thus seems to call for a suspension of belief.²⁵ Not only is there no need for blind belief, the image seems to imply, but one can also dispense with any commentary or analysis. And yet—there is the necessity of testimony.

Technics cannot be relied upon for evidence; it cannot take the place of or substitute for testimony. However, no testimony or attestation is without an intimate relation to technics. On the one hand, technics or the technical is the possibility or "chance" of any faith and is indispensable for all testimony. There would be no faith without iterability, thus no faith without all that is technical and "machine-like [*machinique*]."²⁶ For *tekhne* and all that is automatic open up life and the living to death and the other. *Tekhnē* is not simply added on to nature or a natural body; it does not happen to something that is presumed to be natural; it always already haunts, inhabits, and is originarily at work in that to which it "happens." On the other hand, even though the "living present of the testimonial pledge" is not only detached from its proper presence but is also made possible by repetition and iterability, technics will never produce testimony. Thus the "the machine-like and faith [*le machinique et la foi*]" will always need to be thought together in their *aporetic* relation.

What happens, then, when a voice comes forward and says "Believe me!?" What occurs when one attests to some thing, when an appeal is made asking one to believe, an appeal that comes to us via technics? For

example, a plea such as “here, now, yes, believe me, I believe in ghosts.” Is this declaration—“You have to believe me,” “I tell you that I am telling the truth. Believe me. You have to believe me”—evidence or proof?²⁷ The statement is presented as a testimony: this given word, this sworn faith, like the *sacramentum*, promises to testify truthfully to the truth, it vows to speak the truth. And like all attestation, this avowal is advanced in the first person: “I swear!,” “Believe me!,” “I pledge to tell the truth.” The voice says: “I promise you the truth. And I ask of you to believe. Believe in what I believe.” But when someone says, “Believe me! I’m telling you the truth,” the appeal is itself not provable, since the act of faith or belief called forth by any bearing witness is beyond all knowledge and intuition. Bearing witness is not the equivalent of proving. The witness attests that some “thing” has been present to him or her: “I swear I have seen, I have heard,” “I swear, believe me, I’m telling you the truth.” This testimony is itself beyond proof or demonstration—it is an appeal to blind confidence, *as if* this voice were saying: “My testimony could be false, but I am sincere and in good faith. This is not a false testimony” (Foi 83/64).

To say “believe me! [*crois-moi!*]” is to appeal to the experience of a miracle: “Believe in what I say as one believes in a miracle” (Foi 83/63–64). All attestation, by definition, thus attests to the miraculous and the extraordinary: “*Pure* attestation, if there is such a thing, belongs to the experience of faith and of the miracle” (Foi 84/64). To believe what I tell you, to have “faith in my good faith, . . . is *as if* you were to believe in a miracle.”²⁸ It is nothing short of “extraordinary to *believe* someone who tells you ‘believe me,’” and the experience of disenchantment is nothing but a modality of this “miraculous” experience (RM 76).

All witnessing assumes as part of its structure that the addressee of the witness will never see what was once present to the witness. The addressee, the third, has no immediate access to what was witnessed. Of course, the witness is not present to what he or she recalls either; all he or she can do is attest *now* to his or her having-been-present. So the voice asks you to believe—“Believe me because I tell you to, because I ask it of you”—but to believe is never to subscribe to the conclusion of a syllogism. A testimony is a pledge of sworn faith, yet “You have to believe me” cannot be taken as a convincing demonstration. Witnessing appeals to the act of faith, which is always open to betrayal, infidelity, and perjury. If perjury or false oaths were not at the heart of all witnessing—and there must always be the chance of perjury—there would be no testimony.

A testimony asks us to believe, but what is it to believe? What is an act of belief? “The radical phenomenon of believing [*croyance*]” is “the only possible relation to the other as other.”²⁹ There can be no social bond or

tie without belief and believing, for an appeal to faith is made in every act of language and every address of the other. As soon as one opens one's mouth or exchanges a silent look, a "believe me" is involved. Each time I speak or manifest something to another, I am testifying to the extent that every utterance implies: "I am telling you the truth, I am telling you what I think, I testify before you. . . . As soon as I testify, I am before you as before the law." And "you'll just have to believe me," take me at my word, at the very moment that I swear.³⁰

"I Believe in Ghosts"

A voice asks us not just to believe, but *to believe in the belief* in ghosts. Yet how can anyone believe *in ghosts*?³¹ Especially if a preoccupation with ghosts, at least since the Enlightenment, has always been associated with obscurantism, occultism, mysticism, and superstition, and if the thought of ghosts—even the word itself—has always evoked, certainly in the Anglo-American tradition, "ghoulies and goblins," haunted houses, Halloween, and children's fairy tales?³² If philosophical thinking, the exercise of *logos*, has been throughout its history a struggle against all forms of superstition, mystification, and demagoguery, if the ultimate aim of the rational drive or the scientific enterprise has been an attempt to dissociate and free thought from all illusions and phantasms (in particular those associated with religion, theology, the occult, etc.), then it seems "believing in ghosts" would be tantamount to a taking leave of one's senses, unless the form of thinking dominant in the West, which links science to the real and the objective, has placed too much of its faith in the reality of the real, the perdurance of the substantial and the living present.³³

Has it not always been "in the name of the scientificity of science," Derrida asks, "that one conjures ghosts or condemns obscurantism, spiritualism, in short, everything that has to do with haunting and with specters?" (E 133/118). To "believe in ghosts," then, would require not a steadfast trust in the rationality of thought but a leap of faith—and what is faith but belief in the "unbelievable?"—a leap that is unacceptable to the adherents of immanentism, objectivism or realism, rationalism or scientificity, all of whom believe themselves to be on firm ground, holding on to the reassuring idea of a continuous progress of universal rationality.³⁴ This tele-technoscientific reason or rationality, with its disdain for all popular interest in such things as clairvoyance, parapsychology, and metapsychology, must reject all belief as a remnant of theological doctrine. Little did Marx know how right he was when he wrote disparagingly in the *German Ideology* that theology *in general* is "belief in ghosts [*croyance aux fantômes*]

(*Gespenserglaube*)” (SM 234/146).³⁵ There is an intimate relation not only between religion, theology, and ghosts but also between belief, credulity, and ghosts: “One might say belief *in general*” is belief in ghosts (SM 234/146).³⁶ Yet to say “yes, believe me, I believe in ghosts” is not to believe in some *thing* or some general notion of “spirituality” or the existence of a more glorious afterlife.

“Because, You See, I Am a Ghost”³⁷

“Comment filmer un spectre qui dit: je suis un spectre?”³⁸

When Jacques Derrida turns to the camera and confesses that he “believes in ghosts” is he referring to the ghost that “he *is*,” the ghost that “*he has* in him,” or the one before him, “in front of him” and who haunts him, “an other,” therefore, “the ghost (who is an other) in him as the ghost of an other?”³⁹

Jacques Derrida “looks at us. *In us*. He looks in us [*Il regarde en nous*]” (FD 200/161). Far away in us, outside. He looks at each of us singularly and asks us to bear witness and be responsible. Believe me, he says, I believe that, from the beginning, there is death; this possibility exists in life and all that is living; each thing or mark is double, dividing or doubling itself in order to relate to itself; bearing its specter within itself, it can only be itself if it is divided by “the phantom of its double,” making possible all images; there is *revenance* and *survivance*, ghostly return and spectral sur-vival *in life*, even before death: an absolute affirmation of life, life beyond life, therefore a certain thought of death, a life that does not go without death. Believe me, he says, I believe in belief or faith itself, but a faith without dogma, a belief without organized religion, a belief in the necessity of believing. I believe in believing. This is what I believe in, yes, here, now, yes, believe me!

Phantasmaphotography

The black orb has me in its sight. At the turn of almost every page a solid black point aims at me straight in the eye. The *punctum*, the absolute singularity of the other, points at me. Pierced and punctured by its gaze, like the stare of Cyclops's eye, I am its only concern, for it addresses solely me.

Composed of a series of fragmentary paragraphs or sections, each separated from the other—punctuated, Derrida would say—by a solid black circle or point which links together the passages that it separates, and which, with more than a wink, refers to one of its main motifs, “The Deaths of Roland Barthes” is a remarkable testimony to the writings of a contemporary and a testament to a unique friendship.¹ Written on the occasion of the passing away of a friend, originally published in the journal *Poétique* in 1981 and later collected in *Psyché: Inventions de l'autre* in 1987, Derrida's essay is a meditation on death and mourning, memory and ghosts, the referent and the other, the proper name and the unique, the look and the image, and their intertwining in the structure of photography. Devoted mainly to a reading of Barthes' last book, *La chambre claire*, itself a book of mourning, “The Deaths of Roland Barthes” elucidates how the force of metonymy allows us to speak of a singular death, how, despite having a suspended relation to the referent, photography permits us to maintain a relation to the absolute singularity of the other, and how, despite the ubiquity and pervasiveness of photographs in our culture, their relation to spectrality remains to be examined.

The *point* of the commentary that follows, if it has one point, would be to attempt to graft a few remarks onto just one passage of Derrida's essay, a passage that ties together all the motifs mentioned above, in order to elaborate the relation between photography and spectrality. By functioning as a testament or proof for the exigency of the absolute singularity of the other, or "the referent," photography demonstrates how death and the referent are brought together in the same structure (Psy 292/53). It is this "conjugation" of death and the referent in "the photographic event" that, I would like to show, gives photography its "spectral" structure (Psy 291/53).

I

A text written *for* Roland Barthes and in tribute to him, Derrida's essay addresses the dilemma of writing not just *about*, but also *to* and *for*, a friend who has recently passed away. How to write, Derrida wonders, so that the writing would somehow keep alive within oneself the recently departed friend? Derrida admits to wishing to "write at the limit," in a writing beyond the neutral and colorless that would respect the singularity and uniqueness of Barthes' own writing but would also circumvent the pitfalls associated with conventional eulogies and tributes (Psy 282/43). These pitfalls would consist of either an excess of fidelity, which in its devotion to the subject amounts to saying nothing by returning the other's words back to him, or an undue emphasis on the living friend, which would then risk the total effacement of the other. Neither of these paths—or "infidelities," as Derrida calls them—is avoidable, and we are left with correcting the one with the other (Psy 283/45).

It is "*for him*," for Roland Barthes himself, that Derrida wants to write, yet he realizes that any attention paid to Roland Barthes and thus to his name would have to be fully aware of the separation of the name from its bearer (Psy 284/45). So when Derrida evokes the name of Barthes after his passing away, he knows that it will not be the bearer of the name who will receive it, but only his name. Unable to call upon the friend who is no longer here, "it is certainly him whom I name," Derrida writes, but also "him beyond his name" (Psy 285/46). By invoking his name—which can never be said to have been his uniquely, since any proper name can function only if it is detachable from its bearer—"it is him in me that I name, toward him in me, in you, in us that I pass through his name" (Psy 285/46). When one calls out his name, Derrida says, he is with me, with us, here. He knows this because "the image of the I of Barthes that Barthes inscribed in [him]" smiles at him, here and now (Psy 275/36). This "image" is not merely a memory that one has of the friend; it is not

how he or she is going to be remembered—he is here, now. Conventionally, we believe that mourning begins with the death of the other, with that “unqualifiable event called death,” but from the first moment that the name separates from its bearer, and perhaps even before, mourning—“the interiority (of the other in me, in you, in us)” —has commenced (Psy 285/46).

II

Just as Barthes in his texts “mobiliz[ed] concepts by playing them against one another,” Derrida’s essay plays “concepts,” derived from a close reading of *La chambre claire* (somewhat unsatisfactorily translated as *Camera Lucida*), against one another in order to arrive at Barthes’ “unique trait” (Psy 276/38).² By reading Barthes’ first book, *Writing Degree Zero*, and the last book published before his death, *La chambre claire*, two books that he claims he had never read before, Derrida hopes to have an “instantaneous access” to Barthes’ work.³ With a combination of irony and seriousness, knowing that what he is asking for is unrealistic and daring, Derrida still believes it possible to ask for “revelation” from a detail. “*As if*,” he emphasizes, by proceeding in this manner—by reading the first and the last book and by playing one motif off against another—the “secret” of Barthes’ text would yield itself to him (Psy 276/38).

Risking “a certain mimetism,” which is necessary whenever we take someone into ourselves in order to make him or her speak within us, Derrida claims he will be able “to see and know everything” about Barthes, “the pace, step, style, timbre, tone, and gestures” by following this *modus operandi* (Psy 276/37, 38). Thus Derrida’s essay—incomplete, yet faithful to Barthes’ own manner of approaching a topic—follows a detail “at once very visible and hidden,” that of the relation of the *punctum* to the *studium* in *Camera Lucida*, in order to gain access to all of Barthes’ work and his unique way of reading and writing, as if such a thing were possible (Psy 277/38). Derrida reads Barthes as Barthes himself read the text of others. Choosing his words carefully, as one would choose a garment to wear, Derrida feels it important to take on an approach or a writing that would suit Barthes, that would attend to the suppleness, refinement, and rigor of his writing.⁴

It is from a detail, then, rather than a major theme, topic, subject, or theory that Derrida asks for “the ecstasy of revelation [*l’extase révélatrice*]” (Psy 277/38). By focusing on this detail, by magnifying it and opening it out, Derrida seeks, he confides in the reader, to search just “*like him*, as him” (Psy 277/38). Having secluded himself to read Barthes’ first and last

book in order to write his essay, he keeps looking at photographs of Barthes for something that may catch his eye, a particular detail, something that speaks only to him, something that is meant only for him. And it is the *punctum*, he finds, that is pointing at him, and only at him. The *punctum* is that detail which looks only at him.

In *La chambre claire*, Barthes distinguishes two elements of a photograph, the *punctum* and the *studium*. He defines the *punctum* as a “sting [*piqûre*], a little hole, mark, cut—and also a cast of the dice. A photograph’s *punctum* is that accident which *pricks me, points me* [me point], (but also bruises me, is poignant to me [*me poigne*])” (CC 49/27 §10). The *punctum*, Derrida elaborates, is that “point of singularity that punctures the surface of the reproduction—and even the production—of analogies, likenesses and codes” (Psy 277/39). The *studium*, in contrast, is “a kind of general, enthusiastic commitment,” which is of “the order of *liking*, not of *loving*,” arousing a general intelligent interest, an interest developed through culture or learning (CC 48, 50/26, 27 §10, 11). Barthes noticed that in certain photographs the *studium* is “traversed, lashed, striped by a detail (*punctum*)” (CC 69/40 §17). In a photograph, Barthes admitted, he sought out and was “culturally” involved in the *studium*, but the *punctum* was that which rose out of the scene of the photograph, shooting out like an arrow to point to him and prick him.⁵

Such is “the Winter Garden photograph” discussed in *La chambre claire*, a photograph capturing Barthes’ mother at the age of five, posing with her brother in a glassed-in conservatory, a photograph that Barthes confesses he cannot reproduce in the book. For others, this photograph could, at most, sustain a mild interest or curiosity, whereas for Barthes it remains a poignant wound. Yet this wound is not an insignificant detail of mere personal interest; “irradiat[ing]” the entire book, as Derrida claims, it is the *punctum* of *La chambre claire* (Psy 296/58). Evoking the love of the mother, his mother, the unique other, the Winter Garden photograph seems to encapsulate an irreplaceable grace and “a *quality* (a soul)” that Barthes associates with her—not just with the Mother but with *his* mother (CC 118/75 §31). The Winter Garden photograph, he writes, “was indeed essential, it achieved for me, utopically, *the impossible science of the unique being*” (CC 110/71 §28).

Yet for Derrida, the “poignant singularity” of the Winter Garden photograph need not signify a personal particularity restricted to Roland Barthes’ life. The singularity does not forbid the generality from having “the force of law, but only arrows it, marks, and signs it. Singular plural” (Psy 284/46). That is why in *La chambre claire* Barthes decides to take the Winter Garden photograph as his guide, as the thread that would connect

all the photographs of the world, thus revealing to him what it was that drew him to photography in general. The Winter Garden photograph thus becomes that singular, unique specimen from which the “essence” or “nature” of all photography is to be “derive[d]” (CC 114/73 §30).

III

The *punctum*, the absolute singularity of the other, points (at) me.

Derrida writes of the singular starting point of Barthes’ investigation, the invisible *punctum* of the book:

It pierces me, strikes me, wounds me, and, first of all, seems to concern only me [*ne regard que moi*]. Its very definition is that it addresses itself to me. The absolute singularity of the other addresses itself to me, the Referent that, in its very image, I can no longer suspend, even though its “presence” forever escapes me . . . having already receded into the past. . . . But it is always the singularity of the other insofar as it comes to me without being directed towards me, without being present to me; and the other can even be “me,” me having been [*ayant été*] or having had to be [*devant avoir été*], me already dead in the future anterior and past anterior of my photograph. (Psy 278/39)

This pivotal passage in Derrida’s essay calls for several detailed remarks:

1. The other in its absolute singularity looks at me, addresses me, concerns me.

The *punctum*, the other in its absolute singularity, comes to me without being directed toward me or being present to me. The unique other always appears, without appearing, for it can appear only in disappearing. It forever eludes me and escapes my grasp. The other looks at me; in its absolute singularity it addresses me, concerns me. By calling me and addressing me, it seems to concern only me. The image of the other—the image that the other inscribed in me—haunts me, is in me, looks at me. Roland Barthes, or “the image of the I of Barthes,” Derrida writes, looks at him (Psy 275/36). He “looks at us (inside each of us [*chacun au-dedans*])” but this look that is within us, in us outside, is not ours, we do not possess it, even though each of us has it at his disposal to do with it whatever we wish (Psy 282/44). This look means that I am never in a position to deny, reject, or suspend the absolute singularity of the other (or of what is perhaps too lightly called the Referent).

2. The absolute singularity of the other, the Referent, cannot be suspended, although a naïve notion of the referent must be.

Earlier on in his essay, noting that *punctum* could be translated as “detail,” Derrida mentions the “proximity” of Barthes’ passion for details to that of Walter Benjamin’s: “Moving through, extending beyond, and exploiting the resources of phenomenological as well as structural analysis, Benjamin’s essay and Barthes’ last book could very well be the two most significant texts on the so-called question of the Referent in the modern technological age” (Psy 277/39).⁶ For Derrida, photography in general, and Barthes’ *La chambre claire* in particular, bring to light the significance of the notion of reference.

Discussions of “the referent” often invoke the thought of a unique, singular thing or object that is said to “really exist.” It is commonly believed that a photograph always points to the preexistence of an external origin or model. One takes a photograph of something, and the photograph is the most simple proof of the existence of that which was photographed. For Barthes, what the photograph points to is not the preexistence of a fully constituted referent or an independent reality but the *inevitability* or *insistence* of the referent. As Barthes writes in *La chambre claire*, “the photograph always carries [*emporte*] its referent with itself” (CC 17/5 §2); it testifies to the “singular adherence” and “stubbornness of the Referent in always being there” (CC 18, 17/6 §2). Photography is thus always dependent on “a visible referent” that it must presume as given. Barthes admits that “in Photography I can never deny that *the thing has been there* [la chose a été là]” (CC 120/76 §32). He adds that what he calls the “photographic referent” is “not the *optionally* real [*facultativement réelle*] thing to which an image or sign refers but the *necessarily* real thing which has been placed before the lens, without which there would be no photograph” (CC 120/76 §32).

For Derrida, it would be more accurate to say that the photograph does not serve as evidence for the Referent itself—as if such a thing existed—but for a structure of reference to the absolute singularity of the other. The *notion* of the referent and, in particular, reference cannot be dispensed with; rather, the *effects* of reference must be rethought. What “adheres” in photography, then, is “the ‘photographic referent,’” a more rigorous discussion of which would require us (a) to *suspend* a naïve conception of the referent that is most commonly subscribed to, and (b) to acknowledge the possibility of the *suspension* of the Referent but not of reference (Psy 287/48–49).

What is meant by the terms “suspension” and “referent” in the phrase “the suspension of the referent” needs to be closely examined, for they are understood by Derrida in another register. Unlike the vague “grandiose theories [*quelques gros théorèmes*] on the general suspension of the Referent,” mentioned by Derrida, that are always certain about the meaning of

“the reality of an exterior referent,” suspension here does not amount to a denial of the necessity of the referent nor to a rejection of historical or political factors pertaining to it (Psy 292/53). What it does suggest is suspension as a discontinuation or cessation of maintaining a notion of the referent as a fully constituted, independent object anterior to the structure of reference.

In photography the referent is not renounced but is *held* in abeyance. Even though this suspension entails putting off, deferring, and delaying the encounter with the absolute referent, the wholly other, a *suspended* relation is still maintained with the referent in this process of placing it in quotation marks. This suspended relation denotes *suspense* (the state of being suspended, of awaiting determination or a decision that is *pending*) but also *dependence* on the referent (a hanging onto, a reliance on it). While there is no direct access to it, the referent is still desired and reference is maintained. In photography it is always the “photographic referent” that “*interests* us and animates” our readings (Psy 299/61).⁷

Highlighting the notion of reference—or what Derrida prefers to call “the referential [*le référentiel*]”⁸ in order to combine reference and the referent and not to have to choose between them—the photographic referent is not related “to a present or to a real but, in an other way, to the other, and each time differently according to the type of ‘image,’ whether photographic or not” (Psy 287/48). That which is referred to, alluded to, and pointed to in reference is not necessarily “reality” *as such* but the other, to which there can never be any direct access.⁹

Even though the other is irreducible and can never be fully comprehended within any enclosure, there is in reference a *relation* to the other. Reference, or the structure of referral, maintains a relation to alterity—to that which differs—and retains the mark of the other. Thus reference describes the structure of being marked by the other *and* maintaining a relation to it at the same time. Further, in its etymology, reference (*ference* [*férance*]: carrying, bearing, of “that which carries” and referent: what “carries back to,” from Greek *phéro* and Latin *fero*) points to a relationship to the other. What is significant in reference, then, is the combination of the *ference*, the conveyance, the transport or mediation, and the referent, what “carries back to” the other. The structure of *reference* carries or bears the other and carries back to the other. Photography thus refers to *and* suspends that which it refers to, the absolute singularity of the other.

3. Photography functions as a testimony to death, mourning, and bereavement.

In its structure, photography, or the photographic event, assumes the mortality, that is, the possibility of the loss or death, of the photographed.

In order for photography to be at all possible, its most rudimentary requirement dictates that photographs be able to circulate freely, separated from the presence of the photographed. Each photograph, then, functions as the announcement of the absence—or death—of what is photographed. At the click of a button, there is death. From the moment the picture is taken and the photo becomes detached from the photographed, like the name from its bearer, the presence of the photographed is not necessary for the survival of the photograph. In other words, that which is photographed might as well be dead. Photography brings sudden death: in becoming photographic “images,” the subjects of photography are transformed, petrified, mortified, embalmed (CC 30/14 §5). In this sense, every photograph is a picture of death.

The photograph that brings death thus enables us to speak of our death before our “actual” death. The taking of a photograph is at once a suspension of life (the life of the photographed, assuming for the moment that we know what “life” is) and the instauration of death, producing the “posthumous” character of lived experience. Every picture that I look at is a signal that the one whom I am looking at could have died long ago, is now dead, or is going to die. Bearing the signs of death, every photograph speaks of a past anterior—“*a catastrophe that has already occurred*”—or a future anterior of a death (CC 150/96 §39). It is not important whether the photographed is “actually” dead or not; what does matter is that “every photograph is this [very] catastrophe,” pointing to the mortality of its subject (CC 150/96 §39).

Derrida refers to this “posthumous” character, which links death to a certain strange temporality, when he writes that “the other can even be ‘me,’ me having been or having had to be, me already dead in the future anterior and past anterior of my photograph” (Psy 278/39). This “other,” here, refers to the manner in which photography enables me to view my own picture. Since my photograph, by its very structure, survives me, not only would others be able to look at my picture after my death but I, when I look at it, will appear to myself as dead, as already other, even before the moment of my death. This is perhaps what Barthes is suggesting when he writes: “The photograph is the advent [*l’avènement*] of myself as other” (CC 28/12 §5). The photographic structure is what makes the bereaved memories of a mourning-yet-to-come possible.

This explains Barthes’ conviction, in the—albeit nocturnal—light of the Winter Garden photograph, that the best way to interrogate photography is from the viewpoint of love and death, since for Barthes, the loss of the unique, the one he uniquely loved—his mother’s death—is not his first death, is not the first that he has had to bear, but precipitates and

presages his own death. Following his mother's death, life takes on an "unqualifiable" quality, already beginning to resemble death—death in life. The "deaths" of Roland Barthes in Derrida's title thus alludes not just to the singular and unique death of Barthes (Barthes beyond the name), but to "the plurality of deaths" in Barthes' life (made possible by the name), including his "own" (Psy 285/46).¹⁰ With the first nomination, the first interiorization of the other, preparation has already begun for a "plurality of deaths."

IV

It is the relation of the structure of reference, or the incessant movement of referral to the other, to the photographic referent that bestows photography with spectral qualities. Barthes makes an explicit reference to the relation between photography and the spectral in *La chambre claire* when he describes the different elements involved in photography:

The *Spectator* is ourselves, all of us who glance through collections of photographs—in magazines and newspapers, in books, albums, archives. . . . And the person or thing photographed is the target, the referent, a kind of little simulacrum, any *eidolon* emitted by the object, which I should like to call the *Spectrum* of the Photograph, because this word retains, through its root, a relation to "spectacle" and adds to it that rather terrible thing which is there in every photograph: the return of the dead. (CC 22–23/9 §4)

Echoing Balzac's belief in the ghostly character of photography,¹¹ Barthes writes that the photograph captures the emanations emitted by the referent.¹² What emerges is "neither image nor reality, a new being, really: a reality one can no longer touch" (CC 136/87 §36). Photography then, for Barthes, is not only a means for the production of ghostly images but also a technical method or apparatus for recording the impressions of these *eidōla*. It is as if there is a direct link, by "a sort of umbilical cord," Barthes explains, between that which is photographed and the gaze (CC 126/81 §34). Upon the realization that his photograph is being taken, Barthes admits, "I then experience a micro-version of death (a parenthesis): I am truly becoming a specter" (CC 30/14 §5). Moreover, this experience need not occur only when one is photographed but also when one looks at one's own picture. As Derrida notes, "the 'target,' the 'referent,' the '*eidolon* emitted by the object,' the '*Spectrum*' (CC 22/9 §4)," need not designate an other but can also "be me, seen in a photograph of myself" (Psy 292–93/54).

In *La chambre claire*, Barthes insists that even though what the photograph photographs may no longer be living, the referential structure of the photograph always attests to its having-been-there. It is an undeniable fact that photography points to the “That-has-been [*Ça-a-été*]” (CC 120/77 §32). Agreeing with Barthes, Derrida writes that even though *in the photograph* the so-called referent is “noticeably [*visiblement*] absent, suspendable, vanished into the unique past time of its event,” the “reference to this referent . . . implies just as irreducibly the having-been [*l’avoir-été*] of a unique and invariable referent” (Psy 292/53; emphasis added). Derrida returns to the discussion of the photographic referent and its relation to death and temporality in a text published five years after the appearance of “The Deaths of Roland Barthes,” entitled *Droit de regards* (translated as *The Right of Inspection*). Toward the end of his reading of Marie-Françoise Plissart’s series of photographs, Derrida writes: “Of all the arts, photography, it seems to me, is the only one that is unable to suspend its explicit dependence on a visible referent” (DdR xxxiv). Yet the having-been of the referent and its “exteriority” are not mutually exclusive. Derrida writes: “Here, the exteriority of the referent, its being-passed, is not canceled out [*Ici l’extériorité du référent, son être-passé ne s’annule certes pas*]” (DdR xxxv).

It seems everything hinges upon how this “having-been” is understood. According to Derrida, the “having-been” of the referent is never a reference to a presence or an external reality that must have existed at some time but to the referential relation of the referent that incorporates death, spectrality, and temporality.¹³ “What adheres in the photograph,” Derrida explains, “is perhaps less the referent itself, in the present effectivity of its reality, than *the implication in the reference of its having-been-unique* [*avoir-été-unique*]” (Psy 295/57; emphasis added). Yet the having-been-unique, the unicity of the “having-been,” its “[one time or] ‘unique time’ [*unique fois*],” is bound up with a temporality of spectral return (*revenance*, return of the dead) and arrival (*arrivance*, *l’arrivée spectrale*) (Psy 292/54). Derrida writes:

Though it is no longer *there* (present, living, real), its *having-been-there* [*avoir-été-là*] now presently part of the referential or intentional structure of my relationship to the photogram, the return of the referent indeed takes the form of a haunting. This is a “return of the dead,” whose spectral arrival [*l’arrivée spectrale*] in the very space of the photogram indeed resembles that of an emission or emanation. Already a sort of hallucinating metonymy: it is something else, a piece come from the other (from the referent) that finds itself in me, before me but also in me like a piece of me. (Psy 292/54)

If photography structurally assumes the mortality of the photographed, that is, if at the time of the click of the shutter the photographic referent is already riven with loss, absence, or death, then the “having-been” of the referent refers to the having-been of the dead or to phantoms that keep coming back. Every photograph attests to the return of the dead or departed, the spectral return of the other, like the proper name, which despite having already been distanced from its bearer, always comes back to it. In every photograph I am addressed by the other that comes back, keeps coming back, like a ghost. Derrida alludes to this structure of spectral coming back or return (*revenance*), making the two meanings of *revenant* resonate: “The other, returning [*revenant*], addresses himself to me, in me, the other truly returning, truly ghostly [*l’autre revenant vraiment*]” (Psy 301/64).

The temporality of the referential combines the time of a future anteriority and a delay or deferral. According to Barthes, “what I see” may have been there “yet already deferred” (CC 121/77 §32). Thus the having-been-there of the other is always deferred, constituting itself in a delay.¹⁴ In order to be photographable, in order for it to be possible to have technically reproduced images ad infinitum, the “now” of what is photographed must already be self-differing and -deferring, it must constantly diverge from itself. It can only ever be itself through a detour, by way of the other. The photographic referent is thus never self-identical but already split from itself, already ghostly. This self-divergence constitutive of any entity is spectrality itself and makes photography possible. From the moment of taking the picture—perhaps, even before—the photographed is a phantom. For there to be photography, the referent must be spectral. What the early photographs allude to, with their sepia tones and hazy images (which *resemble* emissions or emanations),¹⁵ is not some defect or imperfection in the instrument or the photographic process that could be eliminated with advances in technological techniques, but the ghostliness of what is photographed and of photography itself.¹⁶ In fact, there would be no photography without specters.

In every photograph there are specters. What survives or lives on in a photograph, thanks to the photographic process, is the survival of the dead or of ghosts. If, as one of the voices in *Droit de regards* proclaims, “The spectral is the essence of photography [*C’est l’essence de la photographie, le spectral*],” then photography is nothing but taking pictures of ghosts (DdR vi). It is an inscription or a writing, in light and shade, of phantoms (a *phantasmaphotoskiagraphy*). Those who look at photographs, then, are being looked at by ghosts. Derrida writes of such an experience while looking at some of the photographs of Barthes during the preparation of

his essay. "I am looking," he confesses, "for something that regards me [*me regarde*], or has me in view, without seeing me" (Psy 301/63).¹⁷ Mourning and spectrality are nothing else but this relation of being regarded by all "the others [*les autres*] outside and inside ourselves" (Psy 288/50).

V

Throughout his essay, Derrida approaches the *studium* and the *punctum* as a pair (and not as distinct concepts). Attentive to Barthes' comment that in general the photographs he likes are constructed in the manner of a classical sonata, Derrida traces the *compositional* relationship of, what he devilishly refers to as S and P.¹⁸ Traditionally, the predicative formula "S is p" designates the attribution of a property to a subject or denotes an object placed under a concept. From very early on, Derrida has submitted the proposition "S is p," which is, for Husserl, "the fundamental and primitive form, the primordial apophantic operation from which every logical proposition must be derivable by simple construction," to a rigorous examination.¹⁹ Whenever the opportunity has presented itself in various texts, he has played with this predicational statement and its terms, S and P, sometimes to hilarious ends.²⁰

In "The Deaths of Roland Barthes" Derrida examines "the concepts that seemed the most squarely opposed, or opposable" in Barthes' work, such as Nature and History but also *studium* and *punctum*, and shows that they "were put in play by him, the one *for* the other, in a metonymic composition" (Psy 276/37). What may have been interpreted as the presence of binary oppositions in Barthes' work is, in fact, Derrida contends, his "light way of mobilizing concepts" by setting them off against each other, which "could frustrate a certain logic, while at the same time resisting it with the greatest force, the greatest force of play" (Psy 276/37). According to Derrida, the apparent opposition of the *studium* and the *punctum* instead "facilitates a certain *composition* between the two concepts" (Psy 279/41). Remaining heterogeneous yet not opposed to each other, they "compose together, the one *with* the other" (Psy 279/41).

Barthes' analysis consists of first demonstrating the heterogeneity, the "absolute irreducibility of the *punctum*," or what Derrida calls the "unicity of the *referential*" (Psy 295/57). Derrida explains: "The heterogeneity of the *punctum* is rigorous; its originality can bear neither contamination nor concession. And yet . . ." (Psy 295/57). And yet, Barthes also comes to recognize that "the *punctum* is not what it is" (Psy 295/57). The singular, unique *punctum* is, right from the start, a "double punctuation"—there is already introduced in the first mark another possibility (Psy 278/39).

Derrida writes of the two different aspects, or the two “exposures,” of the *punctum*: “On its minute surface, the same point divides of itself,” disorganizing “both the unary [*l’unaire*] and the desire that is ordered in it” (Psy 278/39). The punctuated effect of the *punctum* is brought about in a double movement, when in the same instant and place—at the same point—the *punctum* aims at me, pricks me, and points me (*me point*) as I look at it and point to it. The “point of singularity” comes toward me by piercing the surface of the reproduction, bruising me as discourse traverses toward the unique, irreplaceable other (Psy 277, 295/38, 56).

Indeed, not only is the *punctum* double, but the *punctum* and the *studium* have a compositional, rhythmic relationship with each other. Thus they are not treated like “essences coming from outside the text” but as “motifs” that cannot be individually singled out (Psy 281/42). This “simulacrum of an opposition” is considered by Barthes as “neither tautological nor oppositional, neither dialectical nor in any sense symmetrical” but rather as a “contrapuntal” composition (Psy 295, 296, 295/57, 58, 57). This contrapuntal relationship may be understood in at least three ways:

1. A supplemental relationship. The *punctum* (p) relates to the *studium* (S) by adding itself to the latter. It “comes to stand in or double for [*qui vient le doubler*]” the *studium* (Psy 281/43). Barthes writes of the *punctum* that “it is an addition [*supplément*]: it is what I add and *what is nonetheless already there*” (CC 89/55 §23; emphasis added).²¹ In that case, the supplement cannot be a mere surplus simply exterior to what it adds to—a pure addition. The addition implies that the *studium* cannot be a plenitude either, since at the same time as p adds itself to S, it partially hollows S out. The *punctum* adds itself only in order to replace. It is not being added to a full presence nor is it simply exterior to S. The relation of the *punctum* to the *studium*, then, is of an other order—it is supplementary. Belonging without belonging to the *studium*, the *punctum* cannot be located within it. As he looks at a photograph, Barthes adds or *invents*, in the supplementary addition of a detail, the *punctum* (*his punctum*), which has been lying in wait all along for him to *discover* it.

2. A rhythmic relationship. The *punctum*, “this absolute other[,] composes with the same, with its absolute other that is not its opposite, with the locus of the same and of the *studium*” (Psy 295–96/57). In composing with it, in giving rhythm to it, the *punctum* “scans” the *studium* (Psy 280/42). Composition, then, is this rhythmic relation between the *punctum* and the *studium* in the photograph (the *punctum* pierces the fabric of the photograph but allows itself to be reappropriated), and all photographs bear the signs of a constant negotiation or rhythmic relation between what is irredeemably other, outside, and the process of technological

reproduction, which seeks to interiorize it. Every photograph is thus a constant attempt at capturing the other by luring it into the picture, a relentless pointing to what is singularly other within a graphics of light and shade.

3. A relationship of haunting. The *punctum* inhabits the *studium* in such a manner that the haunting of the two elements prevents us from clearly distinguishing two distinct places, contents, or things from one another. In this way, neither the *punctum* nor the *studium* could be “entirely subjugated to a concept,” since a concept usually signifies “a predicative determination that is distinct and opposable” (Psy 280/41). Not a concept, but “the ghost of a concept,” not a clearly demarcated, self-sufficient concept or entity, but one inhabited by another (Psy 280/41).

This relation of haunting suggests a “quasi-concept” of the ghost; “quasi-” because the “quasi-concept” of the ghost, barely understandable or graspable as such, could hardly be considered a “concept” as this term has been traditionally understood. Thus it is necessary to designate the relationship of the *punctum* to the *studium* in another way. Derrida writes, “Ghosts [*Fantômes*]: the concept of the other in the same, the *punctum* in the *studium*, the completely other, dead, living in me” (Psy 280/41–42). The quasi-concept of the ghost is also what permits Derrida to discuss the relationship of another pair of motifs, separated by a slash, evoked by glancing at Barthes’ photographs: life/death.

VI

Early on in his essay, Derrida writes of the Winter Garden photograph and Barthes’ relation to his mother, “there should not be [*il ne devrait pas*], there *should* not be [*il devrait ne pas*], any metonymy in this case, for love protests against it” (Psy 286/48). The relationship between Barthes and his mother *ought* to remain unique, for it is without *his* mother that Barthes cannot live, and not without *the* Mother. Yet the singular *punctum* lends itself to metonymy, allows itself to be “drawn into a network of substitutions” (Psy 296/57). “Scandalous” though it may sound, metonymy does not efface the singularity of the *punctum* but actually allows us to speak of the unique (Psy 296/58). If the *punctum* were a mere “one-off,” occurring only one discrete time, we would not be so deeply moved by what Barthes writes of his mother. Nor would we be able to offer his writings up to any analysis or sustain a discourse of “a certain generality” about it.

Thus there must be “a metonymic force” at work that is “induced” by the *punctum* itself (Psy 296/58). It is the *punctum* that induces metonymy, Derrida notes, “and this is its *force*, or rather than its force (since it exercises

no actual constraint and exists completely in reserve), its *dynamis*, in other words, its power, its potentiality, virtuality, and even its dissimulation, its latency” (Psy 296/57). In *La chambre claire*, Barthes observes the force of the *punctum* and its potential “power of expansion [*force d’expansion*]” (CC 74/45 §19). Derrida relates this “metonymic force” or “power” to the supplementary structure of the *punctum* and to the *studium* “that receives from it all its movement” (Psy 296/58). Since the *punctum* is “more or less than itself, dissymmetrical—to everything and in itself—then it can invade the field of the *studium* to which, strictly speaking, it does not belong” (Psy 296/57). Contaminating “the field” of the *studium*, Derrida comments, “the punctual supplement parasites the haunted space of the *studium*,” pluralizing itself (Psy 280/42).

This pluralization occurs because the metonymic force “divides the referential trait, suspends the referent and leaves it to be desired, while still maintaining the reference” (Psy 299/61). In photography, the referential trait is split by a metonymic force that prevents the trait from ever being uniquely itself but also constitutes it in this process of self-detachment and splitting. This division (or spectrality, we may say) is what allows for the possibility of repetition and technical reproduction. Thus the “unique death” and “the instantaneous [*l’instantané*]” are always susceptible to metonymy.²²

This metonymic force, or this force of pluralization, also allows one death to be substituted for all the others, “one part for the whole or one name for another” (Psy 297/58). The whole is inserted into a part, which thus becomes larger than the whole. Hence each photograph, even the Winter Garden photograph, can be inserted into another photograph. This relationship of haunting, where each photograph photographs the other, not only pertains to the *studium* and the *punctum* but applies to every conceptual opposition. In this way, the part that is smaller and more particular encapsulates the concept that it is subjugated to. It is thus impossible to arrest the metonymic substitution, this “phantasmimeticism [*phantasmimétique*]” without limit, this invagination of an invagination, a photograph in a photograph (DdR xxxii).

VII

“Torn between two languages, one expressive, the other critical,” between Proust and Michelet, between the Novel and History, Barthes’ book on photography eschews any encyclopedic pretensions (CC 20/8 §3). A “note”—a sign, an annotation, a (musical) remark—on photography, expressed in concise, staccato fashion, Barthes’ *La chambre claire* will remain unsatisfactory for those who expect a commentary analyzing and dissecting the medium

of photography, for the same reason that Michelet was considered by many to be a bad historian—because he *wrote*.²³ Yet Barthes' book, a chamber of light lit by "the radiant invisibility of a look [*un regard*]" (Psy 275/36), takes as its inspiration not the desire to comprehensively say all that can be said about photography but the desire to bear witness to the "bright shadow" cast by his mother's gaze (CC 169/110 §45).

By Barthes' own admission, all his work supposes "a mobile, plural reader," a reader who, as he writes in *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, "begins to write *with me*."²⁴ In "The Deaths of Roland Barthes" Derrida begins to do just that. His elegiac reading of Barthes, following Barthes' own inimitable manner of reading, also "displays, plays with, and interprets the pair *studium/punctum*, all the while explaining what he is doing by giving us his *notes*" (Psy 279/40). Negotiating between S and p, between a studied discourse and minute attention to detail, neither entirely imposing its own words over that of the other nor totally giving itself over to the voice of the other, Derrida's own "metonymic composition" adds to what is nevertheless already there (Psy 276/37).

Derrida's own essay could be described with the very same words he uses to explain Barthes' "manner" of proceeding. Derrida writes of Barthes:

This manner is unmistakably his. He makes the opposition *punctum/studium*, along with the apparent versus of the slash, appear slowly and cautiously in a new context, without which, it seems, they would have no chance of appearing. He gives to them or he welcomes this chance. The interpretation . . . imposes its necessity without concealing the artifact under some putative nature. It demonstrates its rigor throughout the book, and this rigor becomes indistinguishable from its productivity, from its performative fecundity. He makes it *yield* [*lui fait rendre*] the greatest amount of meaning, of descriptive or analytic power (phenomenological, structural, and beyond). (Psy 279/40)

And what Derrida's reading makes Barthes' book *yield* is a most fecund thought about the structure of photography. Bearing within a reference or referral to the other, a testament to the absolute singularity of the other, every photograph brings together "the referent" and death in the same spectral structure. Photography's strange temporality of future anteriority and delay gives rise to a situation in which we are always being looked at and addressed by the other, that comes back as a ghost. Every snapshot, then, is permeated thorough and through by this spectrality, just as Barthes' entire text is haunted by that Winter Garden photograph.²⁵

Approaches

BLANK PAGE

By the Board

Derrida Approaching Blanchot

BOARD *n.* . . . IV. A border, side, coast [OE *bord*; lost in ME and replaced by F. *bord*]. 11. The border or side of anything; a hem; an edge; a coast. *Obs. exc.* in *seabord*, sea-coast. V. A ship's side [OE. *bord*: reinforced by OF]. 12. (*Naut.*) a. The side of a ship. b. by the board: (down) by the ship's side, overboard, as *to slip by the board. to come, go*, etc. by the board: to fall overboard, to go for good and all, to be "carried away." *to try by the board*: to try boarding. Also *fig.*

Oxford English Dictionary

ABORDER 1 *vt* (a) *lieu* to reach; *personne* to approach, come up to; *sujet* to tackle. (b) (*Naut*) (*attaquer*) to board; (*heurter*) to collide with. 2 *vi* (*Naut*) to land (*dans, sur on*).

Collins Robert French-English English-French Dictionary, Second Edition

All the paradoxes of the limit, the step [*la marche*] or the margin, multiply themselves when one determines them *by the edges* [*en bords*]. This word recurs often in his writings.

Jacques Derrida, *Parages*

This time, I decided to get on board.

But how else does one get on board than *by the board*?

How to approach the board, that is, the edge, the rim, the borderline, or the shore, a shore that is divided in its very outline? How to approach a text or a work? How to approach the text of the other or the other's work? How to gain access to and then navigate one's way around the texts of the other—in this case, those of Maurice Blanchot? Or, more simply, how to read Blanchot? But more generally, how not only to take on the other's work but also to broach the topic or the subject of *the other* while writing on the texts of another, whose own writings have been some of the most acute, yet intractable, texts on the "relation to the other [*rapport à l'autre*]"

in French letters? These are all questions for which Derrida seeks answers in the four essays collected in *Parages*.¹

How to read Blanchot, then? What to do with a writer, critic, and journalist whose entire oeuvre has shown great resistance to didactic norms, summarization, and genre classifications, an author whose works leave us with no simple *positions* to interrogate, a writer whose writing cannot be reduced to themes and arguments to be taught and passed on to generations of students, a writing that does not lend itself easily to teaching?² How to approach the work of a writer whose writing has displayed an uncanny awareness of how it is to be read, a writing that raises the question of its own status, reads itself, comments on itself, contains “instructions” on how it is to be read and interpreted? How to write about an author of “novels” (as Blanchot’s earlier literary output was labeled) and “narratives” (*récits*), who has also produced some of the most rigorous theoretical texts not just on works of literature but also on the act of writing itself and its strange temporality and space? How to give an account of a writer who is scrupulously attentive to the relation of different forms and genres of writing and is mindful of how they interpret and “read” each other?

How to speak to or address someone, how to call out to him? How to reach the other, that is, the other shore?

“*Je cherchais, cette fois, à l’aborder.*” I sought, this time, to approach him.³ Derrida cites this opening sentence of Blanchot’s *Celui qui ne m’accompagnait pas* in his introduction to *Parages*, stating that if he were to choose a number of exergues for his four writing performances on Blanchot, this sentence would be one of them. The desire to use this phrase as an epigraph may be read as a telling sign of Derrida’s own efforts to write on and about Blanchot. By citing the first sentence of Blanchot’s 1953 *récit* many times throughout *Parages*, it is as if Derrida is announcing or giving notice about his decision to approach Blanchot’s work. It is as if he were saying to the reader: “I sought, this time, to broach the almost unapproachable territory that is Blanchot’s oeuvre. This time, I looked for a way to tackle the subject of Blanchot. This time, I looked for a way to come up to him, to approach him. By the board.”

The four essays in *Parages*, “Pas” (1976), “Survivre” (1979), “Titre à préciser” (1979), and “La loi du genre” (1979), by putting into play the very topics that they interrogate—for example, “What is a genre?” “What is a title?” and so on—and by utilizing all the resources available to the French language (hence making all of them, and in particular “Pas,” almost untranslatable), remain difficult to place, almost unclassifiable. Indeed, the introduction to *Parages* makes clear that Derrida has no

intention of writing a conventional book analyzing Blanchot's so-called "literary theory." Neither is it his aim to propose any definitive conclusions about the thought of Blanchot in the form of theorems (Par 12). *Parages*, Derrida reminds the reader, shall not take the form of a thematization or summary of the works and thoughts of Blanchot.

If the essays in *Parages* are not theoretical discourses, they cannot, strictly speaking, be called commentaries either. Describing his own manner of proceeding, Derrida explains that rather than accompanying a text with a commentary that surpasses it or does without it, he "will read it slowly, underscoring here or there a word, a passage, *a moment, a movement*. Another reading, another time, will underscore otherwise" (Par 75). Derrida's slow and patient reading not only frustrates the question that demands to find out where to draw the lines between "a citation, a paraphrase, a commentary, a translation, a reading, an interpretation," but also performs the impossibility of ever adequately answering that question (Par 12). Guided by "the law of the other [*la loi de l'autre*]," Derrida's text repeatedly quotes Blanchot according to what he calls "a new thinking of citation [*une nouvelle pensée de la citation*]" (Par 50, 25). This "citational or recitational [*récitative*] writing," in a gesture of affirmation, makes room for the voice and the words of the other (Par 23).⁴

The unsuspecting reader making his or her way through *Parages* soon finds out that Derrida's reading proceeds by *not writing directly* on any of Blanchot's texts, that is, by not writing on "what the text is about," its contents, main themes, claims, or arguments. Rather than directly approaching Blanchot's work—what would a direct approach to Blanchot's work amount to anyway?—Derrida's essays skirt around the edges of Blanchot's oeuvre, coming up to it along the shore. He alerts the reader that he prefers an approach fitting its subject, that is, a *littoral* approach to Blanchot's texts, especially to his *récits*: "I prefer a more indirect and limited access [*accès*], also more concrete at the edge of the *récit*, of the text as *récit*. I say *récit* and not narration" (Par 128). Thus all four essays share Derrida's concern with what is said to "surround" a text, its edges or its frontiers—for example, its parts, divisions, and title. Throughout the essays, Derrida poses a host of questions concerning what delimits a text: What is a title, and how does it function? Does the title belong to the essay, is it a part of it or is it a separate entity? What makes a genre? According to what laws are genres defined and demarcated from one another? What authority can legitimate such laws? What makes one work philosophical and another literary?

By remaining on the *threshold* of Blanchot's texts ("*demeurai probablement sur le seuil*") (Par 58), where the shore joins the sea, Derrida's essays

approach Blanchot's works like the caress of the waves breaking against land, pressing forward, receding and returning. Yet this remaining on the threshold, in the vicinity or *parages* of Blanchot's texts, is not "a simple thought of the *limen*" (Par 58).⁵ Rather, the impossible cartography of the coastal and the "incalculable topology" of Blanchot's work put into question any simple conception of a border (Par 17). Written in the margins of Blanchot's works, in the locality of the coastal waters where land and water touch, *Parages* not only testifies to this strange topology of the border but also performs it. The insertion of a running commentary, the "Journal de bord" (the ship's log), at the bottom of each page in "Survivre," which provides "directions" on how to navigate one's way through the text above; the discussion of the break separating the two narratives in Blanchot's *L'arrêt de mort*; and the questioning of the relation between an essay and its title in "Titre à préciser" all challenge the conception of the text as monolithic and self-contained and resist its reduction to a single discourse.

For Derrida, the choice of the word "*parages*" as a title economically signifies not only the unusual topology of the border but also the impossible approach—this movement toward and away from Blanchot's work, the indecision between the near and the far, the close and the distant. "*Parages*," Derrida writes, is:

what *situates*, very close or from afar, the double movement of approaching and distancing [*éloignement*], often the same step, singularly divided . . . always other, on the verge of the event, when it happens *and* does not happen [*quand il arrive et n'arrive pas*], infinitely distant from the approach of the other shore. (Par 15)⁶

Above all, Derrida's reading of Blanchot demonstrates the utmost respect for the singularity of the other, the uniqueness of his idiom. What motivates his essays is a desire to approach the event of Blanchot's signature (Par 43). Derrida's attentiveness to the singular idiom of Blanchot extends from the use of multiple voices in "Pas" to the ingenious attention paid to the lexical (*viens, pas, sans, sauf*) and sublexical structure (*ô, au, o, l'ô, l'au, l'o, mo, o*) of his signature, and to the employment of rebuses or word-things such as "*l'eau*" throughout his work (Par 40).⁷

All through *Parages*, Derrida's reading is attuned to the fact that the texts under discussion are Blanchot's *récits* and that a strictly philosophical reading, searching for their thematic content, their underlying principles or kernels of truth, would not only do a disservice to the uniqueness of Blanchot's work, but would merely continue an age-old tradition of posing the "What is?" question to a literary text. Such a philosophical approach

has always desired to master the text, to totalize it, to “understand” it, digest it, and “figure out” its *proper* meaning. The “philosophical” reading, in its desire to extract the meaning, expects the text to submit to the interrogations of reason. It places a demand, at least an implicit one, on the text under consideration to conform to preexisting interpretative protocols so that it can be classified according to long-established taxonomic categories. If Derrida’s reading of Blanchot cannot, strictly speaking, be said to be a “philosophical” reading, it is not because it resorts to naïve playfulness or because it lacks rigor; rather, it is because it holds Blanchot’s works in the highest regard.

Yet Derrida’s decision to write in the margins of Blanchot’s works of “fiction” may not be as odd a choice as it first seems. Although he is drawn in by the “ineluctable force,” the “force of haunting and of conviction” of Blanchot’s “fictions,” Derrida admits that they have remained inaccessible to him (Par 11). Even though Blanchot’s so-called “theoretical” works, such as *L’espace littéraire*, *Le livre à venir*, and *L’entretien infini*, have accompanied Derrida for many years, leaving their unmistakable imprint on his writing, none of the four essays in *Parages* explicitly engages with them. Compared to the “theoretical” texts, the fictions seem even more impenetrable and unapproachable (Par 11). Even after repeated readings, they still create in the reader an experience of being submerged in fog, where it is difficult to find one’s bearings.⁸

One of the most important reasons to direct one’s attention to a careful reading of Blanchot’s *récits*, I would like to argue, is that it is there that “the relation to the other [*rapport à l’autre*]” is explicitly played out and performed. In the *récits*, Blanchot writes (about) the other. Derrida’s reading attests that Blanchot’s concern for the other (*l’autre*) is not a late theoretical preoccupation but that an engagement with alterity displays itself very early on in his writing. A certain reading of Blanchot’s theoretical texts may give the impression that it was only under the insistent influence of Levinas’s writings that Blanchot began to devote his attention to the question of the other. However, it could be shown that as early as 1935 or 1936 (see “Idyll” and “The Last Word”) a concern for the other, for “the unknown [*l’inconnu*]” and “the stranger, foreigner [*l’étranger*],” manifests itself in his *récits* and that a sustained treatment of and engagement with the other takes place in Blanchot’s early *récits*.⁹ Derrida’s reading of Blanchot would thus, on the one hand, guard against a certain (ontological) reading of Blanchot—which views him as merely a “literary ontologist of the neuter or the disaster”—while, on the other hand, very subtly demonstrating his kinship with Levinas and their shared concern for alterity.

My approach to Derrida's text will be animated by a number of inter-related questions: How do Derrida's essays in *Parages*, in particular "Pas" and "Survivre," allow us to make sense of the usage of the term "the other [*l'autre*]" in Blanchot's work? How are the other and alterity broached in Blanchot's *récits*? What is the relation between the other and what Blanchot terms *le neutre* (the neuter/neutral); and how does Derrida, in his reading of Blanchot, link the relation to the other, the narrative voice, and "spectrality?" An exhaustive study of the notion of the other (*l'autre*) in Blanchot would be neither possible nor desirable here since it would simply thematize the very thing it seeks to investigate. I hope to show that the passages chosen by Derrida from Blanchot's *récits* are *exemplary instances of the relation to the other*. "Pas" and "Survivre," in particular, highlight moments of the encounter with the other and show that the other is approached in terms of a *pas sans pas*. Derrida's reading of Blanchot is itself an exemplary case of welcoming and negotiating with *the other*—with an other, with the utterly other, and with alterity in general.

The Shore

How to approach him, the other? How to reach the other, that is, the other shore? Since the shoreline always recedes as it is approached, how is it possible to distinguish the contours of the rim from the approach to it? If the outline of the coast, the other shore, is far from stable, how can one be sure that one has approached it? Isn't the other shore, the other, inseparable from the approach to it?

When Blanchot speaks of the other, the figure of the shore and its contours, upon which one never really arrives, is never far off. "The other becomes thing or shore," Derrida writes in "Pas" (Par 65). "The figure of the other, without figure or face [*sans figure*], the doubled face [*le visage dédoublé*], of the shore . . . insists when he speaks of the other, which we do not arrive at, whose distance we do not manage to surmount" (Par 65–66). The insistence of the seascape in the discussions of the other in Blanchot has to do with the equal difficulty and unfamiliarity of both terrains. The figure and the face of the other, like the shore, belong to an *other* landscape, an unfamiliar vista, where there is always the danger of foundering and shipwreck: "Face, coast, shipwreck, it is the same marine landscape, a landscape without landscape, without familiarity, without roots [*Visage, rivage, naufrage, c'est le même paysage marin, un paysage sans paysage, sans familiarité, sans racine*]" (Par 66).

Derrida associates this forbidding topography with Blanchot's and Levinas's writings on "the other." Placing a quote from Blanchot's

L'entretien infini, where Blanchot comments on “the teaching of Levinas,” immediately after the sentence on the maritime scenery in Blanchot’s texts, Derrida links the face and the shore with shipwreck and ruin (*nauffrage*) (Par 66):

But we are led through the teaching of Levinas before a radical experience. *Autrui* is the wholly Other [*le tout Autre*]; the other [*l'autre*] is what exceeds me absolutely. The relation with the other that is *autrui* is a transcendent relation, which means that there is an infinite, and, in a sense, an impassable distance between myself and the other, *who belongs to the other shore*, who has no country in common with me, and who cannot in any way assume equal rank in a same concept or a same whole [*ensemble*].¹⁰

It is well known that Blanchot’s *L'entretien infini* bears the marks of an intense and serious engagement with the work of Levinas, in particular as it concerns the relation to *Autrui*. The sympathetic, patient readings of Levinas conducted by Blanchot throughout that text nonetheless indicate a preference for the use of the term *l'autre* despite Levinas’s explicit insistence on the significance of the human *Autrui* throughout his work.¹¹ In the early chapters of *L'entretien infini*, Blanchot explains how philosophy has been understood as the attempt to acquire knowledge about that which is unknown. But this desire for knowledge of the “not-known [*non-connu*]” is, for Blanchot, inseparable from a desire to seize and grasp what is not-known, that is, to gain power over it (EI 72/50). What is of interest for Blanchot is whether it would be possible to have a “relation with the unknown [*relation avec l'inconnu*]” that would not be a relation of knowledge. This “impossible relation,” Blanchot writes in agreement with Levinas, would be a relation with the other (EI 78/55).

Utilizing terms from a shared vocabulary with Levinas going back to their earliest writings, Blanchot repeatedly prefers to refer to *Autrui*, the main concern of Levinas’s philosophy, as the Stranger [*l'Étranger*] and the Unknown [*l'Inconnu*] (EI 74/52).¹² For Blanchot, the relation with *Autrui* would not be a relationship of knowledge, where the unknown, understood as the as-yet-not-known, would be soon discovered. Rather this relation would be the “experience of the obscure” (EI 73/51) or “commerce” with the obscure *as obscure* (EI 72/50).¹³ In “Relation of the Third Kind [*Le rapport du troisième genre*] (Man without Horizon),” the seventh chapter of the first part of the book, “Plural Speech (the Speech of Writing) [*La parole plurielle (parole d'écriture)*],” Blanchot begins to ask whether the term *Autrui* needs to be withdrawn (EI 102/72) and by the end of the book, in the chapter entitled “The Narrative Voice,” he goes as

far as to suggest that we should altogether refrain from using a capital letter to refer to the other, *l'autre* (EI 564–65/385).

So when Derrida quotes a passage from the chapter entitled “Knowledge of the Unknown [*l'Inconnu*]” in *Parages*, placing it immediately after the sentence on the other (*l'autre*) and the shore quoted above, the reader of Blanchot is aware that Derrida is referring to the subtle displacement of the term *Autrui* by *l'autre* in *L'entretien infini*. Derrida's own usage of *l'autre* in the lower case throughout *Parages*, and in all his other writings (except when explicitly discussing Levinas's *Autrui*), may also indicate a silent acknowledgment and tacit agreement with the alteration imposed on Levinas's work by Blanchot in *L'entretien infini*.¹⁴

In the introductory pages of *Parages*, Derrida already signals a connection between the two terms that will play an important role throughout the book—the shore and the other: “Because *the shore, that is, the other* [la rive, entendons l'autre], appears by disappearing from view” (Par 15; emphasis added). This association of the shore with the other is part of an intricate reading not just of the corpus of Blanchot but also that of Levinas in which, through a series of complex, discreet moves, Derrida links Levinas's *Autrui*, and Blanchot's rereading of it as *l'autre*, to *la rive*. That Derrida's choice of “the shore” in the above passage is not merely accidental, we can be sure. It will not have escaped the careful reader's attention that this choice displays keen awareness of both Blanchot's and Levinas's vocabulary. Derrida could not be ignorant of Levinas's use of “*aborder*,” “*déborder*,” and “*débordement*” in *Totality and Infinity* and elsewhere, nor could he be unaware of Blanchot's references to “*au bord de l'écriture*” and “*rivage*” in *Le pas au-delà*, where Blanchot signals the importance of these terms in his own self-reading.¹⁵ (As an astute commentator on his own work, Blanchot often re-cites and rereads certain terms and motifs from his previous work, indicating the importance that he himself accords these motifs).

Blanchot's choice of the phrase “the other shore” in *L'entretien infini* is itself worthy of interest. In a tacit nod, Blanchot is borrowing this term from Levinas, who in “Reality and Its Shadow,” an early essay that would prove to be extremely significant for all of Blanchot's writings in the 1950s on literary space, makes reference to this phrase.¹⁶ Describing the temporality of artworks as a time of “dying,” Levinas comments: “The very-time [*le temps-même*] of ‘dying’ cannot give itself the other shore” (RO 786/140). This temporality of the “meanwhile [*entretemps*],” which is “the great obsession of the artistic world” is condemned by Levinas for being closed off to the future (RO 785/140). Even though the horizon of the future is given in this time of dying, one always remains

in the interval without ever reaching the other shore (RO 785/140). In *Totality and Infinity* Levinas notes that the relation with the other, what he calls “the relation of truth,” “does not form a totality with the ‘other shore’” (TI 35/64). However, taking up this phrase, Blanchot employs it otherwise in his own texts, like many other terms and phrases circulating between him and Levinas.¹⁷

A couple of pages before the quote from *L'entretien infini* discussing Levinas's teaching and the other shore, Derrida cites from the last italicized pages of Blanchot's *Friendship*, from an essay of the same title dedicated to his friendship with Georges Bataille (Par 62).¹⁸ Describing a certain discretion in words and speech that links friends, Blanchot there writes of “words from one shore [*rive*] to the other shore, speech responding to someone who speaks from the other shore [*l'autre bord*]” (Am 329/292). By quoting from *Friendship*, where Blanchot is speaking of his friend Bataille and his friendship with him and of words exchanged between two disparate shores, Derrida discreetly brings into contact the thought of *la rive* in Blanchot and Levinas. Thus, by forging a link between the other and the shore in *Parages*, Derrida brings the two corpuses, or two coasts, of Levinas and Blanchot together in the same neighborhood (*voisinage*), a vicinity in which the thought of the impossible relation to the other is shared.

If the other always belongs to the other shore—a coastland whose profile is far from distinct and accessible—“can we, should we, must we approach this other shore?” (Par 66). And if we should, how should we? Derrida's text “Pas” performs the ebb-and-flow movement of the approach *to* and the approach *of* the other by fully exploiting the nautical and marine terminology in Blanchot's writings (starting from his first work, *Thomas the Obscure*) and by taking advantage of all the different meanings of the French verb “*aborder*.” By going aboard or ashore, by approaching (*aborder*), one remains close to, while maintaining at the same time a separation from, the other. While sustaining this separation, one still addresses the other, contacting it from afar. Derrida writes:

Aborder [to reach, approach, tackle, collide] is the strange slowness of a movement of approach, between gesture and speech, which does not yet reach the end [*qui ne touche pas encore au bout*], does not yet reach the goal [*le but*]—here the shore—does not happen yet, has not yet arrived. (Par 96)

In this strange movement or step (not taken), there is not yet any contact with the shore's edge, since the other may not necessarily allow itself to be approached.

The Close-Distant [*Proche-Lointain*] Relationship

Aborder, then, describes the double movement of approaching and distancing or estrangement of and toward the other (Par 15), the coming and going (“*le va-et-viens*”) of the close and the distant (*le proche et la lointain*) (Par 27). But each time, in this coming and going, the opposition of the near and the distant is nullified or annulled according to what Derrida calls “the gait, the approach of a step/not [*la démarche d’un pas*]” (Par 27). What, then, happens when the near becomes far, the close distant?

The complexity of the approach or of proximity prevents us from ever saying that the other *occupies* a position. The other, between the near and the far, is always at the limit, on the threshold. In the *récits* the other is *close* by, terrifyingly close, oppressively near to the narrator yet infinitely out of reach:

I did not have to take another step [*encore un pas*] to know that there was someone in that room. That if I went forward, all of a sudden someone would be there in front of me, pressing up against me, absolutely near me, of a proximity that people are not aware of: I knew that too.¹⁹

Derrida calls this relation to the other that recurs throughout Blanchot’s *récits* “the proximity of the *almost* [*la proximité du presque*]” (Par 58). The narrator of *Celui qui ne m’accompagnait pas* recounts “the insane proximity” of a presence, “this intense, living, yet unmoving nearness [*voisinage*],” thus: “I immediately had the full sensation that in the armchair very near me—it was the proximity that was insane, for my hand, almost without moving, could have brushed against it—someone was sitting, someone I now perceived in a profound, intense way” (CQ 59/30).

This other always appears in a room or in a hotel—the site of most of Blanchot’s *récits* (Par 28)—where the “the law of the *oikos* (home, room, tomb, crypt), the law of savings [*loi de la réserve épargnante*]” is in operation (Par JdB 121). Yet, due to the ambiguity of the proximate-distant relationship, in this “economy” of the “*chez soi*,” it is never clear who is the host and who the guest (Par 204).

In some *récits*, the other is in such close proximity as to be viewed by the narrator through glass or a windowpane. In *L’arrêt de mort*, for example, the narrator describes seeing S(imone) D., a young acquaintance of his, again after some years:

Six years later I saw her again, through a store window [*la vitre d’un magasin*]. When someone who has disappeared completely is suddenly there, in front of you, behind a pane of glass [*derrière une*

glace], that person becomes a sovereign figure (unless it upsets you). (AM 72/43)²⁰

For thirty seconds, the narrator derives an “immense pleasure” from seeing the other, this sovereign figure, through the glass. He acknowledges both the need to feel this pleasure again and a desire to break through the glass:

The truth is that after having had the fortune of seeing her once through a pane of glass, the only thing I wanted, during the whole time I knew her, was to feel that “great pleasure” again through her, and also to break the glass [*briser la vitre*]. (AM 73/44)

The narrator admits that this “the phenomenon of the glass pane or partition [*la vitre*]” in fact applies to every person or book that he delights in.²¹ All encounters can only be enjoyed “under glass [*sous verre*]” and hence remain remote while giving pleasure (AM 79/48):

For instance, if I read a book that interested me, I read it with vivid pleasure, but my very pleasure was behind a pane of glass [*sous une vitre*], I could see it, appreciate it but not use it. Similarly, if I met a person whom I liked, everything pleasant that I experienced with her was behind glass [*sous verre*]. (AM 79/48)²²

Later the narrator, who is facing a friend, Nathalie, accompanied by an unknown man, remarks on his proximity to her: “I saw her passing in front of me, walking back and forth in a place that was very near and infinitely separated from me, as if it were behind a window [*derrière une vitre*]” (AM 97–98/60). In *Au moment voulu*, the other is again viewed from behind a screen, but the narrator begins to question his own position—that of an observer of the world—“silently questioning the world from the other side of a windowpane [*vitre*]?”²³

Since the relationship with the other is never direct or immediate, we can say that all relationships take place as if they were through glass. In the relation with the other, the other is always separated by a very thin yet impassable glass partition (“*une vitre infranchissable*”) (Par 207). Derrida notes “the *vitriifying* structure [*la structure vitrifiante*]” of writing and desire in *L'arrêt de mort* in the “Journal de bord” accompanying the essay “Survivre” (Par 183/139) as well as addressing the phenomenon of the *vitre* and the *vitre brisée*, citing a number of instances from Blanchot’s *récits* involving a *vitre* (Par 183–86/139–142).²⁴ In the absence of any direct contact, the other is always just out of reach, nearly untouchable. However, even though there is always a separation from the other, a relationship is still

maintained: contact through the *vitre* brings together and separates at the same time. The narrator of *L'arrêt de mort*, by his own admission, derives pleasure from this contact under glass and desires to repeat this pleasure. Yet he also wants to “break the glass”—to get through to the other side, to get closer, to gain direct access to the other and to stop having contact merely through the glass.

Dis-stancing [*É-loignement*]

In Blanchot's texts the movement of the approach of and to the other is never separated from that of “distancing [*éloignement*].” The proximity of the near is never simply near; for to be “there” is not to be near: “everything that is close [*proche*] is more distant than the distant [*plus loin que lointain*].”²⁵ Distancing in Blanchot, Derrida writes, akin to the thought of *Entfernung* in Heidegger, “dis-stances the near [*é-loigne le lointain*] which it constitutes, brings it closer by holding it at distance” (Par 27).²⁶ Yet this distancing, he adds, noting the invisible hyphen that divides the word from itself, is also dis-stanced [*é-loigné*] from itself. The passage in *L'attente l'oubli* continues:

It is as if she carried the force of proximity in herself. Far away—when she is standing against the door—necessarily close and drawing ever closer, but near to him, still being only close and, nearer, placed completely at a remove [*éloignée*] by the proximity that she makes manifest. When he holds her, he touches this force of approach that gathers together proximity, and, in this proximity, the far-off and the outside in their entirety. (AO 115/60)

This “force of proximity” or “force of approach” is that which “sets into motion, approaches, gathers [*rassemble*] proximity and within it, outside it, the distant” (Par 33). This force, or rather “*the difference of force*,” is double, always differing and deferring (“*différente*”), and “thus always excessive in relation to itself—disproportionate” (Par 33). Derrida points out that the context of *L'attente l'oubli* leaves us with no other choice but to think this force “‘from out of’ [*à partir de*] the dis-tancing of the near, from what approaches, gathers together proximity and, within it, according to an inclusion without interiority, the distant” (Par 34). Yet it needs to be noted that to think force “from out of” or “beginning or starting from” does not amount to thinking it from a simple, punctual starting point; rather this source, this “from out of,” can only be a differentially self-dividing “source.” Blanchot's thought, Derrida observes, is “a thought that thinks, what is wholly other, ‘from out of’—this distancing” (Par 34).

Derrida continues: “The disjuncture of the near [*le disjoint du proche*] and the present produces, engenders, and indicates at the same time a fissure without limit in knowledge or in philosophical discourse” (Par 35). But this fissure still holds together, near each other, the very two things that it separates, preserving the proximity of the distant and the near. It separates without separating, maintains without maintaining together. This totally singular syntax of the “without or -less [*sans*]” in the writing of Blanchot’s *récits*, along with that of the *pas*, Derrida remarks, holds us under the powerful fascination of his attraction (*attrait*) (Par 35). According to Derrida, the path taken by this “law without law of dis-stancing” crosses a discursive schema of Heidegger’s and prepares us to think, at the same time, proximity and the chiasm forcefully distancing the two thoughts of *Entfernung* (*é-loignement*) and *Ereignis* (*l’événement*)—the collusion without identity of the close and the distant—from each other (Par 36).

What, Derrida asks, is “the close-distant relation [*la relation proche-lointain*]?” (Par 36). What is the proximity of the nearby, of nearness or closeness? “The thing” certainly may be close by or near, but proximity itself can never be said to be near: “The proximity of the near is not an *other thing* but the near thing, *nothing other than* the near thing [*n’est pas autre chose que la chose proche*], but it is not near” (Par 36). Thus, “the more one attempts to approach the proximity of what approaches [*de ce qui s’approche*], the more this proximity, which is wholly other [*tout autre*] and thus infinitely distanced, hollows itself out” (Par 37). No *opposition* or identity is pertinent between the near and the far. This double bind between the near and the far “affects *everything*, everything that *is*, that is, everything that presents itself, *is present*, comes, advenes, happens, exists, [affects] the essence of the event and the event of essence” (Par 37). It imprints “a strange rhythm on our discourse, on our choice of words, on the construction of our sentences,” and especially “on the idiom of the word ‘*pas*’” (Par 37).

Pas

“*Il y va de l’autre*” (Par 37). It is a matter of the other.²⁷ But the other “can only be approached *as other*, in its phenomenality as other, by moving away from it, and can only *appear* in its remove of infinite alterity by drawing closer to it” (Par 37). It is the other that, in its double *pas* (step/not), dislocates the opposition between the near and the distant without merging the two (Par 37). According to Derrida, the *pas* is what is implicated in every narrative [*récit*] in general and in all of Blanchot’s *récits*: “In

every *récit*, in every *récit* of Blanchot, it is a matter of this *pas* [*il y va de ce pas*]” (Par 32). All the *récits* are concerned with both the word and the thing, “the word *pas* and the step or the not [*le mot pas et le pas, ou le pas*]” (Par 52). As an adverb of indecision when it comes to negation, every *pas* is a double *pas* without being a negation of negation, “*pas* without negation” (Par 52).²⁸ There is nothing dialectical in or about this *pas*, since it will never be present to itself, near itself, in some return to itself (Par 31).

There are *always two* steps/nots: one in the other without being totally incorporated, one affecting the other immediately but overstepping the other in distancing itself from it. Always two *pas*, the double *pas*, divided from itself yet united, neither *pas* opposing the other in its infinite distance.²⁹ In the double structure of the *pas*—one more step, no more step, the other step—one *pas* haunts the other, at once going through it and overstepping it. Its transgression, its step, is not yet a labor or an activity; rather it is passive, transgressing nothing.³⁰ And time itself is “the digressional difference [*la différence digressive*]” between each *pas*, step and not, the separation of one from the other (Par 40). There is no time “outside the distancing movement of the near, outside the movement distancing the near [*hors du mouvement éloignant du proche*]” (Par 40).

The structure of the *pas* prevents the double effect of the *pas* (annulment-conservation of the beyond) from being a negation of a negation, prohibiting the inclusion and interiorization of the *pas* for itself.³¹ Derrida remarks: “[The double *pas*] is the strange process in which the negation of negation remains in its powerful system a determined effect of the *pas*, a step/not” (Par 45).³² This *pas* that, according to Derrida, has the structure of a labyrinth also “is borne as a labyrinth [*il s’emporte comme labyrinthe*]” (Par 37). In all the significations of that word, the *pas* is labyrinthine—that is, not merely complex in anatomical structure, arrangement, and character but logically tortuous, and immediately, singularly multiple (Par 38).

Pas does not simply describe the structure of Blanchot’s narratives but is also “the system (without system) of all of his redoubled affirmations” (Par 57). The double *pas* is a “yes-saying” to every other, to the wholly other (*tout autre*). Derrida writes of “this affirmation of the double *pas*, the alliance without contract of the one to every other, the wholly other [*l’alliance sans contrat de l’un au tout autre*] (yes, yes)” (Par 61). This affirmation takes place in Blanchot’s *récits* whenever a call rings out to the other, informally bidding or inviting it to “come.”³³ Someone or some thing whose identity cannot be reduced to that of the narrator or the writer—a voice—says “come” to the other. In fact, this “come,” which we shall not be able to analyze here in any detail, is never said by a subject to

another subject.³⁴ An exhortation and an invitation, “come” is above all an affirmation of and to the other.

This “come”—which cannot be said ever to take place or happen, since the structure of the “come” is such that it conceals itself without presenting itself elsewhere—is related to the coming of what comes.³⁵ The “come” provokes the coming of what comes, which is always the coming of the other. An affirmation issued by the other, an affirmation that comes from the other, “come” is also an address by the other, to which I respond. Thus the coming of what comes is always related to a “come,” an assent and a confirmation, yet without either the call or the coming preceding the other. Thus “come” inaugurates while already being a response.

The relation of the “come” to what comes, like the approach of and toward the other, occurs in a rhythmic, back-and-forth, self-differential movement—a *pas sans pas*. In its double movement, with its halting, lilt-ing gait, the *pas sans pas* forbids further movement or stepping beyond, yet also sets into motion, gives further impetus. In a strange temporality of suspension and “generation,” the “dis-stancing of the close [*é-loignement du proche*]” allows for the coming of the event or the other. It is not accidental that its self-annulling syntax resembles a *paralysis*, an apparent stasis. Derrida writes:

If a science or theory of the reading of these *récits* had to be constituted . . . I would call it paralysis [*la paralysie*]. This would also be the science and practice of his writing, of what he does in writing. He/ It—paralysis—writes [*Il—la paralysie—écrit*], describes the desirable trap of a *come*. (Par 74)

In distinction to “*la paralysie*,” the usual French word designating a state of powerlessness to act or the loss of ability to move, Derrida’s “*la paralysie*” highlights its relation to analysis. No analysis could measure up to “*la paralysie*,” which would go counter (*para*) to it. It would go against, counter to, the movement or activity of breaking down, breaking up, loosening, or resolving (*lyein*). *Para* can not only mean “beside,” ‘*à côté de*,’ but also “protection against,” as in a *parasol*.³⁶

The beginning paragraph of *Celui qui ne m’accompagnait pas*, a passage around which much of “Pas” is written, a passage that we have encountered before and that I shall later come back to, exemplifies this impression of immobility, this inability to go any further:

I sought, this time, to approach him [*Je cherchai, cette fois, à l’aborder*]. I mean I tried to make him understand that, although I was there, still I couldn’t *go any farther*, and that I, in turn, had

exhausted my resources. The truth was that for a long time now I had felt I was at the end of my strength.

“But you’re not,” he pointed out.

About this, I had to admit he was right. For my part, I was not.
(CQ 7/1; emphasis added)

But this sensation of “not being able to go any farther,” this “paralysis,” is not a state of complete cessation. What Derrida calls Blanchot’s “*pas de l’immobilité*” does not amount to utter powerlessness, incapacity for action, or suspension of activity (Par 58). At no time does the *pas sans pas* come to a rest against an artificial limit or threshold. This “desire for paralysis [*désir de la paralysie*]” never stops, does not ground to a halt, rather it “puts into motion [*donne le mouvement*]” (Par 73), a “*mouvement sans pas*” (Par 40). This movement without step/not is a movement nonetheless, like the steps taken on the stairwell [*l’escalier*] in numerous Blanchot *récits*.

Paralysis

The step (not) taken toward the other, “*le pas vers l’autre*” (Par 97), takes place in a rhythmic back-and-forth movement. Like the relation between the “come” and that which comes, the close-distant relationship, in a strange, halting, to-and-fro movement, this *pas sans pas*, which epitomizes all of Blanchot’s work, occurs according to a certain logic of paralysis. In French, a synonym of the verb “*paralyser*” is “*neutraliser*.” Thus, if “paralysis” can be said to be “the science and practice” of all of Blanchot’s writing, then we can say that the movement of paralysis is also a *neutral* movement. The “*pas vers l’autre*,” the approach toward the other, takes place in terms of a *pas sans pas* that obeys a logic of the *neutre*. In what sense is the relation to the other, the approach toward the other and the other’s approach, a neutral relation?

From one of the opening epigraphs, “The neutral, the neutral [*le neutre*] how strangely this sounds for *me*,” to the subtitle of its third section, “The Absence of the Book (the Neutral, the Fragmentary),” it is clear that the notion of *le neutre* plays a critical part in *L’entretien infini*.³⁷ In “Relation of the Third Kind (Man without Horizon),” Blanchot underscores the importance of the relationship between *autrui* and *le neutre*, which is not to be understood as the impersonal: “All the mystery of the neutral passes, perhaps, by the way of *autrui*, and sends us back to him” (EI 102/72).

In the following chapter, “Interruption (As on a Reimann Surface),” Blanchot notes that the alterity under consideration is not a self or another

existence; rather it is the alterity of “the unknown in its infinite distance,” an “alterity that maintains itself in the name of the neutral” (EI 109/77). There is a distortion in the field of relations, “by the presence of the other understood in the neutral [*entendu au neutre*],” that prevents any direct communication or relation of unity (EI 109/77). The relation to the other, Blanchot continues, is like “an essentially dissymmetrical field governed by discontinuity, accepting no passage or bridge that would be capable of connecting the two shores [*franchir les deux rives*]” (EI 110/78).

Later on, in “René Char and the Thought of the Neutral,” Blanchot begins by pointing out that certain words in the poetry of Char are grammatically neuter but quickly adds that *le neutre* is not a matter of vocabulary. Then, noting the occurrence of the word “unknown” in Char’s poems, Blanchot wonders: “why the exigency of a relation with the unknown?” (EI 440/298). An answer immediately follows on the heels of the question: “The unknown is verbally neuter” (EI 440/298). Blanchot adds:

What belongs to the neuter is not a third genre or gender [*un troisième genre*] opposed to the other two and constituting a determined class of existents or reasoning beings. The neuter is that which cannot be assigned to any genre or gender whatsoever [*ne se distribue dans aucun genre*]: the non-general, the non-generic, the non-particular. (EI 440/299)

Given that the *neutre* does not belong to the category of the subject or the object nor to any genre, it follows that “the unknown is always thought in the neuter” (EI 440/299). But what is it that is being proposed, Blanchot queries, “when the unknown takes this neuter turn,” that is, when “the experience of the neutral is implied in every relation with the unknown?” (EI 440/299).

A few pages later, in the italicized section (“Parentheses”), Blanchot extends the reach of *le neutre* to the encounter with the other:

And yet every *encounter*—where the Other [*l’Autre*], suddenly looming up, obliges thought to leave itself, just as it obliges the Self [*le Moi*] to come up against the lapse [*la défaillance*] which constitutes it and from which it protects itself—is already marked, already fringed by the neutral. (EI 450/306)

The following chapter, “Parole de Fragment [The Fragment Word],” is also succeeded by an addition entirely in italics titled “Parentheses,” in which, under the double neutral sign, an exchange of voices takes place regarding the relation of *le neutre* to the Other (*l’Autre*). One of the voices states: “The Other is in the neuter [*L’Autre est au neutre*], even when it speaks

to us as *Autrui*, then speaking by way of the strangeness that makes it impossible to situate and always exterior to whatever would identify it” (EI 456/311).

In “The Narrative Voice (the ‘He,’ the ‘It,’ the Neutral [*le ‘il,’ le neutre*]),” toward the end of *L’entretien infini*, Blanchot explains the connection between *le neutre* and what he calls the narrative voice. He notes that already in *L’espace littéraire* it was demonstrated that to write is to pass from “*Je*” to “*Il*.”³⁸ In this passage, Blanchot writes, the “*Il*” by no means represents another “*I*.” If the “*Il*” is a voice, it is neither the voice of the author nor that of the narrator (the narrating voice). Often mistaken for the impersonality of a third person or a stance of aesthetic disinterestedness or distance, the “*Il*” is not the voice of anyone in particular. It is what occurs when one tells a story, and it is in the novels of Kafka that Blanchot finds its most striking exemplification.

In Kafka’s writing, narration is no longer the presentation of a story through the intermediary and from the viewpoint of a chosen actor-spectator. Rather than showcasing a privileged “*I*,” what Kafka’s novels in their austerity teach us is that storytelling is to “put the neutral into play [*met en jeu le neutre*]” (EI 563/384). The *neutre* does not take the place usually occupied by the subject, rather, it “unseats [*destitue*] every subject” (EI 564/384). Storytelling or narration, then, is governed by the *neutre* in two ways. When Blanchot writes that “the narrative voice is neutral” (565/385), he is suggesting not only that what is recounted “is not recounted by anyone [*n’est raconté par personne*]: it speaks in the neutral [*au neutre*],” but also that in the neutral space of the narrative, whoever speaks—the bearer of speech—falls into a relation of self-nonidentification (EI 564/384).

Having already established in the previous chapters that the other and every encounter with it are marked by *le neutre*, Blanchot now writes that the narrative voice is also inscribed by the intrusion of the other:

The narrative voice “it” [*Le “il” narrative*], whether absent or present, whether it affirms itself or hides itself, and whether or not it alters the conventions of writing—linearity, continuity, readability—thus marks the intrusion of the other [*l’intrusion de l’autre*]—understood as neutral—in its irreducible strangeness and in its wily perversity. The other [*l’autre*] speaks. But when the other is speaking, no one speaks because the other, which we must refrain from honoring with a capital letter that would determine it by way of a majestic substantive, as though it had some substantial or even unique presence, is precisely never simply the other. The other is rather *neither*

the one nor the other [ni l'un ni l'autre], and the neutral that indicates it withdraws it from both. (EI 565/385; emphasis added)

It is worth recalling that earlier, in “René Char and the Thought of the Neutral,” Blanchot had already defined the neutral literary act in relation to a certain “spectrality.” There, one of the voices says:

Neutral would be the literary act that is neither affirmation nor negation and (at a first stage) frees meaning as a phantom, a haunting, a simulacrum of meaning; *as though* literature were *spectral* by nature [*comme fantôme, hantise, simulacre de sens, comme si le propre de la littérature était d'être spectrale*], not because it would be haunted by itself, but because it bears the preliminary of all meaning, which is its obsession [*sa hantise*]. (EI 448/304; emphasis added)

In “The Narrative Voice,” in an even bolder gesture, Blanchot associates the intrusion of the other as *neutre* with what he calls “the spectral”:

The narrative voice that is inside only inasmuch as it is outside, at a distance without distance, cannot be embodied. Although it may well borrow the voice of a judiciously chosen character, or even create the hybrid function of mediator (that which ruins all mediation), it is always different from what utters it: it is the indifferent-difference [*la différence-indifférente*] that alters the personal voice. Let us (on a whim) call it *spectral, ghostly* [*Appelons-la (par fantaisie) spectrale, fantomatique*]. (EI 565–66/386; emphasis added)

The narrative voice is said to be “spectral” because, neither inside nor outside, in a placeless place, it “always tends to disappear [*s'absenter*] in its bearer and also efface the bearer as the center” (EI 566/386). The spectral narrative voice is never central, nor does it create a center from out of which it speaks. It bears the *neutre* insofar as “to speak in the neutral is to speak at a distance, preserving this distance without *mediation* and without *community*, and even in sustaining the infinite distance of distance—its irreprocity, its irrectitude or dissymmetry” (EI 566/386). The *neutre* is precisely this greatest or infinite distance where dissymmetry governs. Moreover, “neutral speech [*la parole neutre*]” does not reveal or conceal; its signification is not in the manner of illuminating or obscuring, thus it falls outside the regimes of the visible and the invisible (EI 566/386).³⁹

The significance of these passages, in particular those concerning the relation between the *neutre* and spectrality, does not escape Derrida's attention. In “Survivre,” Derrida writes that Blanchot, in a section “that makes the ghost return, ‘ghostly,’ ‘phantom-like’ *revenance* [*qui fait revenir le*

revenant, la revenance “spectrale,” “fantomatique”], juxtaposes the narrative voice and spectrality (Par 151).⁴⁰ Derrida observes that in order to define and explain the narrative voice, Blanchot twice employs the “syntax of the *sans*” (Par 151/106). In phrases such as “*lieu sans lieu*” (EI 565) and “*distance sans distance*” (EI 566), according to Derrida, the syntax “neutralizes (without positing, without negating) a word, a concept, a term (X without X): ‘-less’ or ‘without’ without privation or negativity or lack (‘without’ without *without*, *less-less* ‘-less’ [(X *sans* X). *Sans sans privation ni négativité ni manque* (sans *sans* ‘sans’)]” (Par 151/105–106). The narrative voice then bears the *neutre*—which should never be confused with neutrality—“beyond dialectical contradiction and beyond all opposition” (Par 151).

Derrida further writes of the *neutre*: “Despite the negative form that it takes on in grammar (*ne-uter*, neither-nor) and that betrays it, it surpasses [*déborde*] negativity. It is linked rather to the double affirmation (*yes, yes, come, come*) that re-cites itself and becomes involved in the *récit*” (Par 152). Thus “the ‘not’ [*le ne-pas*],” rather than directing negation “towards a position or a negation,” directs it “toward the singular undecidability of the approach of the other [*l’abord de l’autre*]: being able to go *neither* further *nor* closer [*ne pouvoir aller ni plus loin ni plus près*]” (Par 97; emphasis added).

It is this “*ni . . . ni* [neither/nor]” structure involved in all neutral statements—not being able to go any further or to come any closer—that permits Derrida to speak of the movement of the *neutre* in “*Pas*” in terms of undecidability.⁴¹ Derrida explains that this movement is neither negative nor dialectical; rather, the undecidable is only a phase that “foils [*déjoue*]” a certain relation to the dialectic and neutralizes it. The *neutre* must, “at a certain moment, pass in a natural way that is without possible conventions, through the same form as what it neutralizes or passes through [*neutralise ou passe*]” (Par 70). In this case, the *neutre* must pass through the form of dialectics, a binary or triadic thinking, that logic or grammar that encloses the *ne-uter* in negativity or makes of “*pas*” a noun *or* an adverb (see Par 70). But this movement without movement of the *neutre* does not ever come to a stop with the undecidable.

Drawing together the movement of the *neutre* and the undecidable in “*Survivre*,” Derrida emphasizes that both terms have a relationship to the spectral.⁴² Commenting on the *l’arrêt de mort* of Blanchot’s *récit*, the sentence that puts death into motion at the same time as arresting it, Derrida describes the neutral logic of the *arrêt*, which he associates with undecidability and *différance* (Par 159):

The *arrêt de mort* is not only the decision that decides the undecidable [*arrêtant l’indécidable*]: it also arrests death by suspending it,

interrupting it, deferring it while putting into motion a living on, a survival [*la sursaut d'une survie*]. . . . [W]hat suspends or holds back death is the very thing that gives it all its power of undecidability—another false name, rather than a pseudonym, for *différance* [*la différence*]. (Par 159/114)

What the *arrêt* decides or determines, that is, the *neutre*, is the undecidable itself:

For the suspensive *arrêt* [*l'arrêt suspensif*] is undecided [*indécis*] because what it decides—death, the Thing [*la Chose*], the neuter—is the undecidable itself, installed by the decision in its undecidability. Like death, the *arrêt* *remains* (rests, arrests itself) undecidable [*Comme la mort, l'arrêt reste (s'arrête, s'arreste) indécidable*]. (Par 159/115)

This remaining (*restance*) of the *arrêt*, Derrida adds, has an “essential relationship to the ghostly, the phantasmatic [*au fantomatique, au phantasmatique*],” and to “*Phantasieren* (Freud) or to the ‘*Waking dream*’ (*The Triumph of Life*)” (Par 160).

In Blanchot's *récits*, the undecidable, neutral—spectral—step/not toward the other is taken toward an other that is itself strangely spectral. Nothing but a shade (*une ombre*), a pure reflection without consistency, a void or a gap (*une vide*), a double, the double of the thing, the thing doubled, “the figure of the other, without figure, face [*la figure de l'autre, sans figure*],” belonging to the zone of shadows, neither real nor unreal, this ghostly “neutral” figure, this phantomatic “image,” is the exemplary *figure* of Blanchot's *récits*, yet a figure that in its singularity, like every figure, resists generalization (Par 62).

This “neutral” figure cannot be reduced to a certain asexuality or a palid form of impersonality and should not be mistaken as ushering in the masculine in the guise of the neuter. Rather the *neutre* here refers to the heterogeneity, the “productive” multiplicity, of an as-yet-unbifurcated “potential” or “reserve.” The contaminated undecidability of this figure, a nonbinary *neutre*, a *neutre* not determined by the dialectic, allows for the possibility of chance and randomness and thus for the possibility of a different sexuality on each singular occasion.

Figure(s)

In the stillness of a hallway, a most poignant encounter takes place in *Celui qui ne m'accompagnait pas* with a *ghostly figure* that the narrator gazes at intensely. The motionless figure appears larger than life, as it is seen high

above at the top of the stairs. Viewed just where the staircase disappears out of view, the figure remains suspended before the narrator's gaze. The encounter resembles the sighting of an apparition or an "image":

There was no movement I could have made. Where I was, without turning around, I could see the steps [*les marches*], there were six or seven before one reached the sort of vault, rather low and heavy, under which the staircase made a turn. The figure [*la figure*] was over there, I saw it motionless, almost turned away, as it seemed to me, and I had the feeling that at the moment my eyes were fixed on it, it was preparing to climb the last steps and disappear. This movement, which was not carried out, gave that presence a new truth, and the whole distance that separated us, measuring a few steps [*quelques pas*], made it astonishingly close, closer than a short time before when, as I realized, what made its insane proximity apparent was the distress of its distance [*éloignement*]. But the strangest thing was that in the space at that confined spot—and the form was, I saw, almost leaning against the wall—even though it couldn't see me and probably knew nothing of me, it was nevertheless stopped and suspended under my gaze, as though the fact that my gaze was riveted to it had, in fact, riveted it to that point. There was something odd, absolutely unhappy about that, and I was so shaken by it that the background of strangeness against which this scene was unfolding was transformed. Probably, affected by my disturbance, I must have moved slightly: now I saw the staircase from a steeper perspective, rising abruptly toward the figure I was still staring at, which revealed itself more, so that the impression I had was that of someone larger than I had thought, yes, it was this feeling that struck me then, of someone a little larger than he should have been, and I don't know why this singularity was like a disconcerting summons [*un appel*] to my eyes, an insistence that maddened my gaze and prevented its grasping anything. It seems to me that I was prepared to approach even closer, perhaps to bring this moment back to life, to allow it to reconquer itself; but what happened and what I could have foreseen, actually struck me as unexpected—I believe I had never forgotten him to this degree before—and, when he asked me: "Do you see him at this moment?" I, in my surprise and also because of a sort of pain that I felt spring up in me, faced with this speech, which sought to encroach on me and participate in a guarded moment, did not answer, no doubt incapable. Shortly after, from very far

away [*lointain*], from the distance that was made of my resistance and my disavowal, I heard him murmur:

“You know, there’s no one there.”

I don’t know if I welcomed the remark at that moment, but with extreme emotion, I saw the figure visibly move a little, I saw it slowly climb a step, approach the turn [*se rapprocher du tournant*], and enter the area of shadow [*la zone d’ombre*] (CQ 62–65/32–33).⁴³

Even though the figure never turns back, its strange “insistence” is like a call or a summons for the narrator. Struck by the obsessive proximity to, and the infinite distance from, this figure, the narrator senses this call. He wonders about approaching this ungraspable figure that seems to repel or refuse his gaze. The calm of the moment, however, is interrupted by the narrator’s companion, who informs him that there is really no one there. This interjection begins to give the narrator the impression that he is witness to the endless repetition of an event and an exchange.⁴⁴ It is as if the figure keeps making a return in the same manner, and the narrator repeatedly has the sensation that someone is looking at him. But his companion corrects this impression by denying the presence of anyone. Yet for the narrator, it is precisely its “slip into disappearance” that makes the reality of the figure all the more pressing; it is as if what links the narrator to the apparition is this very disappearance:

The evidence of reality had never been as pressing as in this slip toward disappearance [*glissement vers la disparition*]; in this movement, something had been revealed that was an allusion to an event, to its intimacy, as though, for this figure, to disappear was its most human truth and also the truth closest to me. (CQ 65/33)

What do terms such as “the figure,” “the unknown,” “the shore,” “the stranger,” and so on, in Blanchot’s *récits* have in common, if anything? If they are *figures* of the other, the term “figure” here does not refer to a rhetorical trope, a figure of speech or an image, in the traditional sense. These figures do not simply symbolize or represent something; they do not illustrate a general argument or theory. They are not particular cases of a generality. In other words, they are not simply figures (forms, images, likenesses) *of* something, transporting its sense or proper meaning in a trope. Effacing the rigid distinction between the figurative and the proper, as well as suspending the possibility of deciding between the figural and the literal distinction, each is the figure of the whole and at the same time only one figure. They are figures of the other in the sense that each can be a “figure” or example of the other and *the* figure of the other.

In Derrida's reading of Blanchot, the shore, for example, functions metonymically with other terms such as the edge or the brim (*le bord*), the figure (*la figure*), and so on, each of which also substitutes for "the other." All of these terms belong to a series of terms related to each other by resemblance and difference. In other words, the terms are serially linked in metonymic relation: each is singular and quite specific, yet is also substitutable for the other (or a general notion of alterity) and for every other. Each term thus belongs, without belonging, to the series of terms it makes possible: each can and does take its place outside the series, yet each is also inscribed in the series. In this way, each part is able to comprehend the whole, act as a substitute, and stand for all the others. Each of these figures is both part (i.e., a term in the series) and whole (the entire series can be figured in it). A part stands for the whole, yet each is also apart (each can be discussed separately on its own merits). Therefore, none of the terms in this series without model or paradigm can function as the first or last term. The infinite multiplication of the figures serves as a reminder that there is no "*the other*" as such.

Since the other can only be understood in terms of a relation and an approach ("*le pas vers l'autre*"), Derrida's reading shows that in Blanchot's *réécits*, the relation to the other is performed in terms of several "topical figures [*figures topiques*]" (Par 75): the staircase, the labyrinth, the step/not, the figure, and so on. None of these "*figures du pas*" is an image (understood in its traditional sense), nor are they sites *in* space (Par 75). Not only are they topical figures, spacing figures, but also tropical figures, understood otherwise, enacting the relation to the other. Figures such as the glass pane and the stairwell are not sites *in* space as such, contained by space, but their spacing gives place to a site.

The stairway, perhaps the quintessential figure of the *pas*, encapsulates the relation of approach-distancing toward the other. It remains at the same time infinitely distanced from and yet infinitely close to every perceptible, presentable, familiar stairway. Turning on itself, without advancing, but without ever fully coming back to itself, each step of the winding staircase repeats itself, entirely differently (Par 78). Like the ascent up or descent down the staircase, the approach or coming of the other and the relation to it take place in the halting gait of a *pas sans pas*.

It could always be claimed that these are *merely* examples, examples taken from Blanchot about the relation to the other or simply examples from Blanchot's "fiction." In other words, it can always be claimed that the examples are of limited pertinence and scope, only applying to one author (Blanchot) and his "interpretation" of "the other." For example, when noted Levinas expert Jacques Rolland speaks praisingly of Blanchot's work

by calling it an “extraordinary literary exposition of alterity,” is he damning Blanchot with faint praise, reducing the force of Blanchot’s writings not simply to a “literary” endeavor but also to a mere exposition or illustration of a general notion?⁴⁵ Is Blanchot’s work simply an “exposition” in the sense of providing examples, showing and illustrating examples of alterity? Or is Rolland claiming, as I take him to be doing, that Blanchot’s work is an *exemplary* case, the most exemplary case (in the sense of an example without model, without precedent), of the exposition of the other?

Each of the figures—the staircase [*l’escalier*], the step/not [*le pas*], the glass partition [*la vitre*], and so on—is exemplary of the relation to the other. What each example exemplifies is itself, but at the same time each example always is, says, and does something other, something other than itself. Each example is unique (that is, what the example gives can only be given in that singular example, so that *the shore* is irreducibly different from *the figure* or *the step*), but at the same time, each is also exemplary and thus can speak for or stand for other examples. Each example is just one example out of an infinite series of examples of the same thing that might be given and is always at the same time the example of examples, the exemplary example, unique and singular.

Gone Overboard?

In my insistence to approach him, the other, did I go too far?

Every time I attempted to approach him, or to broach the subject, the other, or Blanchot’s writings on the other, I felt absolutely adrift. Each approach, each attempt led to a recoiling, as if I was assailing or accosting him. Even though I tried, I could not go any farther.

This time, however, I looked for a way to approach him, the other. This time, I decided to get on board. This time, I would come up to him via another, through the writings of another. Yet, as I discovered, the time of *this time* (*cette fois*), like the time of the approach of and toward the other (unique and repeatable), is no ordinary time. Quoting the first line of *Celui qui ne m’accompagnait pas* in “Pas,” Derrida explains that the unrepresentable time of the *récit*, the time of this time, “thwarts [*dejouée*]” all assurances of negation, dialectics, or negative theology (Par 103). The events of the *récit* take place “in the unlimited, elementary medium of a floating present without authority, exhausted by [*essoufflé après*] the entirely other past tense that does not have the form of a past present” (Par 103). The strange, unlimited present of the narrative is conveyed through the combination of the *passé simple* and the imperfect tense, which tend to freeze the moment or slow it down immeasurably.

Did an event, an encounter, really take place? Derrida notes that *Celui qui ne m'accompagnait pas* begins at first with an event that is not an event or a commencement, since nothing has properly taken place. The *récit* begins, but not with an originary event that actually took place:

Celui qui ne m'accompagnait pas begins with an event *at first* [d'abord] that is not an event and not a beginning since nothing, properly, happens or takes place: "I sought, this time, to approach him, it." The approach [*l'abord*] is not an original event, and the narrative begins by this false beginning or this faux-pas of beginning. (Par 96)

I cannot say for sure whether the approach did or did not occur, as the encounter with the other is "a semblance of an event [*un semblant d'événement*]." But it seems that something did happen *this time*, one unique time, even if it was a nonencounter. The time of this time, the almost-now of the *récit*, speaks of an event that only ever returns, because it never happens in the present. Derrida writes of the unique occurrence of the event, occurring one time, once, each time:

The coming of an event, the unique, like the relation to the other, the step that does not accompany, each *time* uniquely and unalterably other, the "time" [*fois*] being always other, here, now, like when you told me, without possible context or anticipation, without the least shoreline [*rivage*], *come*, and always other, but *always* (all the same) other. (Par 64)

I cannot help but feel that all I have been doing has been trying to approach it, the other. Yet I cannot avoid the sensation that all of this had somehow already taken place ("*cela avait déjà eu lieu*" [CQ 37, 66]), as if the time of approaching him, this time, was not unique, as if I had been taking part in a scene of infinite repetition. And each time, as if anew, in the quasi-now of a repetition, I am drawn to him, the other, who remains eternally withdrawn. It seems as if what keeps repeating over and over again is the approach. Yet what repeats is never the same and becomes other in repetition.

Did I succeed in approaching him, the other? My relation to him, the other, driven by an "insane proximity [*proximité insensée*]" (CQ 59, 63)—intimately close yet absolutely remote—compels me to approach him. However, in seeking to approach him, the other, contact with the shore is never assured, since the step taken toward the other ("*le pas vers l'autre*") is also "*pas d'é-loignement*" (Par 97). If I could have ever approached him, it would have had to have been along the seaboard, since anything that happens or arrives, like the event, the other, or death, does so by the board,

in the margins, “*on the verge* [au bord]. It would affect the edge” (Par 63). Any approach only happens along the shore, on the borderline: “It is at the border that everything happens or fails to happen; we could say that sometimes it lacks the shore for anything to happen [*manque le bord d’arriver*]” (Par 95). But “there is no border in itself [*bord en soi*] that does not mark the limit of an approach, that is of a dis-stancing, of a *pas*” (Par 95). Derrida is emphatic about the importance of the question of the *bord* when he stresses the significance of the borderline in the “Journal de bord”:

The question of the borderline [*du bord*] precedes, as it were, the determination of all the dividing lines [*les partages*] that I have just mentioned: between a phantom [*un fantôme*] and a “reality,” an event and a non-event, a fiction and a reality, one corpus and another, and so forth. (Par 126–27/82–83)

In a text made out of quotations, stitched or cobbled together, rather than intricately and seamlessly woven, a text that obsessively quotes him over and again (*ré-cit*), according to “this logic of abortive interruption—cutting, border, the violence of framing [*coupure, bordure, violence du cadrage*],” I set out to get close to him, the other (Par 103). In an extended reading with the most neutral voice that I could manage (“*de la voix la plus neutre que je pourrais*” [Par 166]), miming Derrida’s desire to negotiate his own proximity not simply to Blanchot but also to Levinas, by seeking to make their two corpuses touch each other, I strove to reach this most desolate and remote of waterfronts.

And to the question from “Pas” posed earlier—“Can we, should we, must we approach, reach, come up to this other shore [*aborder cette autre rive*]?” (Par 66)—perhaps I can only give one answer: “It is necessary to arrive at the other end [*il faut arriver à l’autre bout*]” (Par 58).

Salut-ations

Between Derrida and Nancy

Chapeau!

I doff my cap, I take my hat off to you.

How else to remember and commemorate a great thinker who touched us so, a thinker whom we knew, without knowing, as a living force, a thinker whom we observed from a distance mourn and watch over the work of friends and colleagues? How else than to pay our respects, to salute him, or raise our hat to him? For one must begin by saluting the other, by addressing a greeting to the other, as there is a *salut* at each moment of encounter or leave-taking, at every meeting or parting, at every beginning and end. *Salut!*

It is necessary to seize this occasion not only to memorialize, to remember, to pay homage or tribute to Jacques Derrida, not simply to express one's admiration, but also to hail an extraordinary philosopher, to salute him. This act of saluting, what in French is "*donner un coup de chapeau*" or "*tirer son chapeau à quelqu'un*," would be a mark of one's respect. Yet this salutation would not dare to confer, as every *salut* usually does, health or eternal life on its recipient. For the would-be recipient of this particular *salut* did everything he could in his last writings to disabuse us of any hope for immunity, safety, and salvation.

I began by citing, quoting from a portion of a text itself discussing another chief, "capital text on the hat [*un texte capital sur le chapeau*]."¹ There, the word "*chapeau*" is cited without an exclamation mark, depriving it of any connotation of praising, congratulating, or saying bravo.

Jacques Derrida refers to a hat and a crown in his essay on Gérard Granel, "Corona vitae (fragments)," published alongside texts on other friends and colleagues in *Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde*.² Written in the form of a letter to Jean-Luc Nancy, the coeditor of a collection dedicated to Granel, who was Nancy's teacher, Derrida's essay cites an article written by Granel entitled "Ludwig Wittgenstein ou le refus de la couronne." In a discussion of the relation between religion and logic, Granel notes that Wittgenstein's ultimate attitude toward all things religious remained that of "*tirer son chapeau*" (taking his hat off) as a mark of respect.³ This is recourse neither to religion nor to a religiosity without positive religion but, Granel explains with another hat-related expression, that of "*mettre son chapeau sur la tête*" (putting one's hat on one's own head), which each person can only do for oneself (EL 32). In other words, for each person, it is a matter of thinking in the manner that only he has the ability to do, in the manner best suited to him.

Granel is alluding to a fragment in a collection of Wittgenstein's notes, translated by Granel himself into French, in which Wittgenstein claims that no one is able to think for another. The fragment reads: "No one can think a thought for me in the way no one can don my hat for me."⁴ Granel renders this in French as: "*Personne ne peut former une idée à ma place, de même que personne ne peut mettre mon chapeau sur la tête.*" To each his own hat or head, then.

Cut to a scene at Jacques Derrida's birthday celebration at the château in Cerisy-la-Salle. On a beautiful summer day, scholars from across the world are gathered in the courtyard around a birthday cake celebrating the seventy-second birthday of a man of enormous vitality whom they have witnessed over a number of days bounding up and down the stairs of the château with a spring in every step, attending every session and commenting on every paper. Derrida has been in great spirits all day, laughing and joking. While standing next to Derrida, who is smoking, Jean-Luc Nancy teasingly raises his arm and feigns to put his hat, the fedora (*chapeau mou*) that he's been known to wear quite often, on Derrida's head. Like a halo or a crown, the hat rests in the air for a moment. Derrida, annoyed somewhat, moves his head to the side to try to prevent Nancy from placing his hat on his head. The hat touches his hair. Derrida immediately reacts, runs his hand through his ruffled hair to straighten it, as if to say "*ce chapeau ne tient pas sur ma tête*" (this hat won't stay on my head).

I am invoking this event not out of any indiscretion but in order to read into this scene of friendly jesting and rivalry, which for me says a great deal about the relationship between these two thinkers. However,

like the hat suspended in the air, allow me to hold off from drawing any conclusions about this scene for a while.

It would be impossible to deny the increasing importance of Jean-Luc Nancy as an interlocutor for Derrida, especially in the past few years. Their incontestable proximity, or affinity, became more intense and accelerated after the publication of Derrida's majestic tome on Nancy's work, *Le toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy*, in 2000. Since then, one could trace numerous occasions or places where each winks at the other's work, where their writings have crossed. This crossing (*croisement*) of terms or concepts that have passed back and forth between the two thinkers, such as "community," "fraternity," and "freedom," this constant saluting and hailing (*saluer*) of each other, was also accompanied by the crossing of paths at numerous conferences where they both shared the stage.

It is well-known that Derrida's friendship with Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe dates back a number of decades, some details of which were recounted by them in their introduction to *Penser à Strasbourg*, a collection celebrating the lively intellectual environment at the University of Strasbourg and Derrida's frequent contributions to this scene. Co-organizers of the first *décade* at Cerisy devoted to Derrida's work, colleagues in GREPH (the group convened to analyze the state of the teaching of philosophy in France), collaborators with Sarah Kofman in the series "Philosophie en effet" for Galilée, and companions of long standing, they note in their introduction that it was very early on in their friendship with Derrida that they learnt that "[philosophical] work occurs by way of texts [*le travail passe par les textes*]."⁵

In Safaa Fathy's film *D'ailleurs Derrida*, Nancy, the only one of Derrida's friends to discuss his relationship with Derrida on camera, briefly recounts how they first came to be acquainted. He remarks that although they have known each other for a long time, over the thirty years of friendship, he and Derrida exchanged very few philosophical propositions. Friendship, he explains, is independent of "all speech [*tout discours*]." Rather, "things [between us] happen through texts . . . and not through speech [*les choses là se passent entre les textes . . . passent pas par la parole*]." The companionship of Nancy and Derrida, "a friendship of thought [*une amitié de pensée*]," then, takes the form of a different kind of rapport, a textual relationship, which, far from a relation of mastery and discipleship, has left its traces in numerous texts.

Nancy's and Derrida's texts display the mutual admiration that each has for the other's work: words, terms, themes nod or wave at each other. This admiration for the other also went beyond tributes to the other's

writing, Derrida having gone on record to remark on Nancy's exactitude, punctuality, and so on.⁶ In fact, one of the traits that Derrida appreciates most about Nancy is his hardheadedness. In *Le toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy*, he tells us that it is Nancy's "stubborn impertinence [*l'impertinence têtue*]" and "shamelessness [*l'insolence*]" that he loves and admires the most (LT 304).⁷ Nancy's writing is characterized by a certain boldness, and perhaps this boldness—in approach and choice of themes—is what distinguishes his work and gestures from those of Derrida. Elsewhere, at a conference devoted to Nancy, Derrida speaks of a sense of wonder or marvel (*émerveillement*) at their differences of approach.⁸ He salutes the fact that Nancy has had the courage, or "the Heart," not only to take up the heritage of the tradition but also to face those "immense conceptual ghosts" or difficulties that would frustrate most other thinkers, themes such as sense (*sens*), world, creation, freedom, community, and so on, which Nancy has time and again faced head-on (STS 167).

Not only has a constant salutation been taking place between the two thinkers, but, I would like to suggest, the very term *salut*, what Derrida has elsewhere called "that strange French word *salut*," also became a theme, a part of the textual relation between the two thinkers. Semantically rich in French, the verb *saluer* means "to hail, to salute, or to pay one's respects," while the expression "*salut!*" is used in everyday informal speech to greet those to whom one is close, to say hello and goodbye or simply "see you!" The noun *le salut*, when raised in the context of religion or illness, can mean "salvation" or "health." Yet the appearance of the term *salut* in the later texts of Derrida and Nancy, far from simply signifying its conventional meanings, signals a radical reassessment of *salut* as salvation and safety.

The references to being "safe and sound [*sain et sauf*]" in Derrida's writings go as far back as the 1970s (for example, *The Truth in Painting*) and continue up to his last texts, and they are almost always accompanied by a the quasi-mechanical repetition of a series of terms taken from Benveniste's *Indo-European Language and Society*. (As an aside, an analysis of Derrida's almost automatic recourse to Benveniste in many of his writings would be worthy of a great study). A concentrated cluster of texts during the years 1995 to 1997 treat the question of *salut* in more detail. In "Avances," a text written to introduce Serge Margel's book on the *Timaeus* (1995), Derrida writes of an infinite wound inflicted upon all that "should be safe and sound, holy and unharmed [*sain et sauf, saint et sauf*] (*hieros, hagios, hosios, sacer, sanctus, heilig, holy, sacrée, saint, indemne, immun*)."⁹ A few pages later, in a footnote, he suggests that what he is proposing ought to be read alongside Heidegger's interpretation of Hölderlin, where Heidegger reads the failing of names:

dans une pensée du salut, du salulaire ou du sauf (*heilen* et *Gruss*). . . . Mais ne peut-on se risquer à dire, sans ou contre Heidegger, que le salut à l'autre (*Gruss*) doit suspendre toute assurance ou toute promesse du salut comme ce qui *sauve*, dans le sauf, la salvation ou le salulaire de la santé (*heilen, heilig*)? (Ava 42 n.)

in a thought of *salut*, the salutary or the safe, the saved (*heilen* and *Gruss*). . . . But can it not be risked to say, without or against Heidegger, that the *salut* to the other (*Gruss*) must [*doit*] suspend all assurance or all promise of *salut* as that which *saves*, in the safety, salvation, or the salutariness of health (*heilen, heilig*)?

In his essay “Comment nommer” (presented in 1995 and published in 1996), dedicated to the poet Michel Deguy, who was one of the early translators of Heidegger’s writings on Hölderlin, Derrida again comments that what he would have liked to examine is the call (*grüssen, heissen*) and Heidegger’s definition of the poet as the one whose mission is to say what is *heilig* (safe, sound, unharmed, immune).¹⁰

The question of *salut* really comes to the fore in Derrida’s texts with “Faith and Knowledge” in *Religion* (1996). Asking whether it would be possible to “dissociate a discourse on religion from a discourse on the *salut*, that is on the healthy, the holy, the sacred, the saved, the unscathed, the immune [*le sain, le saint, le sacrée, le sauf, l’indemne, l’immun*] (*sacer, sanctus, heilig, holy* and their supposed equivalents in so many languages),” Derrida launches into an examination of the two sources of religion and the “fatal logic of the *auto-immunity of the unscathed [l’indemne]*.”¹¹ What is wished for or dreamed of, what Derrida calls the “law of *salut [loi du salut]*,” is “saving the living as intact, unscathed, safe (*heilig*)” (Foi 65). His remarks in “Faith and Knowledge” link the religious and the sacred and all the values associated with “the sacrosanct (*heilig, holy, safe and sound, unscathed, intact, immune, free, vital, fecund, fertile, strong, and . . . [the] ‘swollen’*)” to the fetishization of life, especially human life (Foi 63/48). Religion, then, would be the religion of the living, a celebration of all that says life force, all the values associated with life and vitality, strength and fertility. And at the end of “The Reason of the Strongest” in *Voyous*, Derrida raises the question of *salut* by returning to Heidegger’s usage of the three verbs *retten, heilen, grüssen* in the famous *Der Spiegel* interview.

In relation to Nancy, the term *salut* is first employed and deployed by Derrida in 2000 in *Le toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy*, and in 2003 in *Voyous* and *Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde*. On the last page of *Le toucher*, Derrida calls for:

une bénédiction sans espoir de salut, un salut exespéré, un salut sans calcul, un incalculable, un imprésentable salut qui d'avance renonce, comme il se doit pour être un salut digne de ce nom, au Salut. (LT 348)

a benediction without hope of salvation, an *exespéré salut*, a *salut* without calculation, an incalculable and unpresentable *salut*, which in advance renounces, as it must do in order to be worthy of this name, Salvation [*Salut*].¹²

On the last line of the same page, he writes of “a *salut* without salvation, a *salut* just to come, a just *salut* to come [*un salut sans salvation, un salut juste à venir*]” (LT 348). In the “Prière d’insérer,” the insert placed in *Voyous*, Derrida notes that the call of democracy to come remains “without hope [*sans espoir*],” “not hopeless [*désespéré*] but foreign to teleology, to the hope and the *salut* of salvation.”¹³ This call, he qualifies, is not “foreign to a *salut* to the other [*étranger à un salutation à l’autre*], to the adieu or to justice,” but still resistant to “the economy of redemption.” He repeats this caution, however with even more insistence, in the “Foreword” to *Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde*, a book of bidding farewell, *adieu*, but also *salut*, to so many dear friends and to an exceptional “generation” of intellectuals:

Ce livre est un livre d’adieu. Un salut plus d’un salut. Chaque fois unique. Mais c’est l’adieu d’un salut qui se résigne à saluer, comme je crois tout salut digne de ce nom est tenu de le faire, la possibilité toujours ouverte, voire la nécessité du non-retour possible, de la fin du monde comme fin de toute résurrection. Non seulement de la résurrection au sens commun, qui ferait lever et marcher des corps revenus à la vie mais même de l’*anastasis* dont parle Jean-Luc Nancy dans *Noli me tangere* (2003). Si différente qu’elle soit de la résurrection classique, l’*anastasis* continue, fût-ce avec la rigueur de quelque cruauté, de consoler. Elle postule et l’existence de quelque Dieu et que la fin d’un monde ne serait pas, au sens où je l’entendais plus haut, la fin *du* monde. (CFU 11)¹⁴

This book is a book of adieu. A *salut* more than a *salut*. Each time unique. But it is the adieu of a *salut* that resigns itself to greet, as I believe each *salut* worthy of its name is to keep doing, the always open possibility, that is, the necessity of the possible non-return, of the end of the world as the end of all resurrection. Not only of resurrection in the everyday sense, which would raise and make the bodies returned to life walk, but even the *anastasis* of

which Jean-Luc Nancy speaks in *Noli me tangere* (2003). However different it is from classical resurrection, *anastasis* continues with the harshness of some cruelty to console. It postulates the existence of some God and that the end of *a* world would not be, in the sense that I meant above, the end of *the* world.

Derrida's salvos not only elevate *salut* to a major term of contention between Nancy and Derrida but also lead Nancy to explicitly treat the question of *salut* in two essays addressed to Derrida: "Consolation, désolation," which appeared in a special issue of *Magazine littéraire* dedicated to Derrida's work in April 2004 and "Salut à toi, salut aux aveugles que nous devenons," a eulogy published in the newspaper *Libération* on October 11, 2004, just following Derrida's passing away.¹⁵ Derrida's spirited reaction to Nancy's writings on resurrection, in particular in *Noli me tangere*, where Nancy attempts, in his own words, to "deconstruct" the notion of "resurrection," must of course be assessed in light of a number of Nancy's recent texts written in the context of his project of the deconstruction of Christianity and collected in *La décroissance*, particularly "Résurrection de Blanchot."¹⁶

The word "resurrection" has appeared in numerous places in Derrida's own writings; in fact, Nancy refers to two of these occurrences himself in "Consolation, désolation."¹⁷ Derrida has even used the word in relation to Blanchot's writings on at least ten instances in *Parages*.¹⁸ A more detailed and nuanced tracing of the occurrences of this word in Derrida's work would have to take into consideration the contexts in which it is being used—at times very positively, for example in the context of the poet's role in awakening language, and at others quite critically, for example as a Christian doctrine of redemption or salvation (e.g., his reading of the relation between *Aufhebung* and resurrection in *Glas*). If there is a resistance to resurrection, it is to resurrection as a theme (to be deconstructed) and to the desire to retain the name resurrection. This may be why, in the context of writing the "Foreword" to *Chaque fois unique*, a book proclaiming that each death is "the end of the world," a book that initially was to be titled *À la vie à la mort*, Derrida may have displayed such a strong distaste for the word "resurrection."

On March 29, 2003, Derrida and Nancy shared the stage in an auditorium at the University of Paris VII–Jussieu. In a session entitled "Dialogue," the two thinkers presented plenary talks wrapping up a three-day conference dedicated to Maurice Blanchot. Even though the international conference had been planned months in advance, Blanchot's death on February 20 had drawn a pall over the entire event. From the manner of

proceeding (whether there had been plans to present a formal paper or to have an informal discussion) to the asides during each of their papers (whether a written homage to Blanchot was appropriate or whether it was too soon to speak about Blanchot after his death), the exchanges during the plenary session seemed tense. This was not simply an academic disagreement over the interpretation of Blanchot's writings. Nancy and Derrida, as certain "inheritors" of Blanchot, were engaged in a contestation on how the thought of dying (*mourir*) in Blanchot is to be read. Naturally, questions of death and dying would have been raised by Blanchot's passing away, yet this contestation, played out over the figure of Blanchot, more than those already rehearsed in the past over questions of community and fraternity, was a differend between Nancy and Derrida over death, mortality and finitude, over *salut*, salvation, and safety, and in particular over the question of resurrection. Moreover, what was at stake was also nothing less than the status (and limits) of deconstruction itself. For to ask how to interpret Blanchot's writings on death and dying, or whether there is a thought of resurrection in his writings, amounts to asking not only "What, if any, thought of *salut* is there in Blanchot's writings?" or, as if posing the *ti esti* question, "What is *salut*?" but also "Is there such a thing as the undeconstructible?"

In order to investigate all the ramifications of this differend, one would have to turn to an attentive and micrological reading of the texts presented by both thinkers at the Blanchot conference, "Maurice Blanchot est mort" by Derrida and "Fin du Colloque" by Nancy, as well as to analyze and elaborate on the choice of texts selected to be commented on—in particular "Literature and the Right to Death" and the two versions of *Thomas the Obscure* and the quasi-evangelical evocations of Lazarus in both texts.¹⁹ One would have to take into consideration Derrida's piece written in honor of Blanchot, "Un témoin de toujours," published in the daily *Libération*, followed by its longer version pronounced at Blanchot's cremation ceremony and later published as the last essay in *Chaque fois unique*, where the impossibility of dying is interpreted in relation to possibility, power, and negativity. One would then have to attend to Nancy's definition of resurrection in *Noli me tangere* (published approximately a month after the Blanchot conference, in April 2003)—where he insists that resurrection is not a return to life, not a process of regeneration or resurgence, not an apotheosis or an erection, but an infinitely prolonged departedness or disappearance—and the two subsequent essays dedicated to Derrida, "Consolation, désolation" and "Salut à toi," written to redress, rectify, clarify and shed new light on this differend between them. By turning to Derrida's essay from the proceedings of the Blanchot conference,

later published as the fifth essay in the new edition of *Parages* (2003), by restricting my attention to Derrida's reading of the terms *mourir*, *survivre*, and *l'immortalité*, and by focusing on the relation between *salut* and resurrection, I can only, in the interest of time and space, indicate very schematically here why Derrida would be so resistant to a *thought* or *theme* of resurrection—and its deconstruction—attempted by Nancy.

“Maurice Blanchot est mort [Maurice Blanchot Is Dead]” is an elliptical, almost cryptic essay, its structure bearing the traces of being composed shortly after Blanchot's death. Much can be said, and would need to be said, about Derrida's choice of texts and quotations from Blanchot's writings—from the invocation of literature, terror, and the death penalty in “Literature and the Right to Death,” the phantasm of being buried alive in “The Language of Fiction,” the decomposing body in *Au moment voulu* [*When the Time Comes*], the reference to a “principle of resurrection” in *L'instant de ma mort* [*The Instant of My Death*] to the hallucinatory passage from the first version of *Thomas the Obscure*—but what is clear is Derrida's aim to let Blanchot's words speak for him. His allusive essay is in fact kept in motion by the use of very long citations from Blanchot's works, often with little if any commentary. Counting himself among those who have written a good deal on Blanchot, with him and after him, and almost always about that impossible-possible thing called death (“la mort possible impossible”), Derrida mentions his own work on “*la mort sans mort*” in *Pas*, on “*survivre*” in *La folie du jour* and *L'arrêt de mort* in *Parages*, and on “*demeure*” in *L'instant de ma mort*, before turning to an examination of the essay “La littérature et le droit à la mort” (RC 596).

“Literature and the Right to Death” from *La part du feu* [*The Work of Fire*] (published in 1948) remains an extraordinary essay on writing and its relation to death, in which Blanchot accompanies, doubles, interrupts, delimits, and rewrites the Hegelian dialectic. If, for the sake of argument, one were to agree with Kojève's reading of Hegel, one could say that Hegel's philosophy is a philosophy of death. This would be so because death functions in the Hegelian text as the source of negativity and all possibility as such. Blanchot explains that speaking allows mastery over things. The act of naming, in particular, is a disturbing power that negates the thing, annihilates it, separating the word from the thing, thus making language possible. Hence death is already present in language: “When I speak death speaks in me.”²⁰ Language is essentially tied to death and negation and is animated by this negativity. My speech assumes that the one that I have named can be detached from herself, removed from her existence and plunged into nothingness. Thus, my speech would not be possible if she were not capable of dying. Death thus enables speech—“what wonderful

power [*admirable puissance*]!” (PF 316/ 46). Speech, or language, is the life of this death, it is “the life that endures death and maintains itself in it” (PF 316, 324).

The task of literature, however, is more ambiguous and contradictory. Derrida articulates this task by citing a very lengthy passage from “Literature and the Right to Death” that I will reproduce here:

La littérature, si elle s'en tenait là, aurait déjà une tâche étrange et embarrassante. Mais elle ne s'en tient pas là. Elle se rappelle le premier nom qui aurait été ce meurtre dont parle Hegel. “L'existant,” par le mot, a été appelé hors de son existence est devenu être. Le *Lazare, veni foras* a fait sortir l'obscurité réalité cadavérique de son fond original et en échange, ne lui a donné que la vie de l'esprit. Le langage sait que son royaume, c'est le jour et non pas l'intimité de l'irrévélé. . . . Qui voit Dieu mort. Dans la parole meurt ce qui donne vie à la parole; la parole est la vie de cette mort, elle est “la vie qui porte la mort et se maintient en elle.” Admirable puissance. Mais quelque chose était là, qui n'y est plus. Quelque chose a disparu. Comment le trouver, comment me retourner vers ce qui est *avant*, si tout mon pouvoir consiste à en faire ce qui est *après*? Le langage de la littérature est la recherche de ce moment qui la précède. Généralement, elle le nomme existence; elle veut le chat tel qu'il existe, le galet dans son parti pris de chose, non pas l'homme, mais celui-ci et dans celui-ci, ce que l'homme rejette pour le dire, ce qui est le fondement de la parole et que la parole exclut pour parler, l'abîme, le Lazare du tombeau et non le Lazare rendu au jour, celui qui déjà sent mauvais, qui est le Mal, le Lazare perdu et non le Lazare sauvé et ressuscité. *Je dis une fleur!* Mais dans l'absence où je la cite, par l'oubli où je relègue l'image qu'elle me donne, au fond de ce mot lourd, surgissant lui-même comme une chose inconnue, je convoque passionnément l'obscurité de cette fleur, ce parfum qui me traverse et que je ne respire pas, cette poussière qui m'imprègne mais que je ne vois pas, cette couleur qui est trace et non lumière. Où réside donc mon espoir d'atteindre ce que je repousse? Dans la matérialité du langage, dans ce fait que les mots aussi sont des choses, une nature, ce qui m'est donné et me donne plus que je n'en comprends. Tout à l'heure, la réalité dans mots était un obstacle. Maintenant, elle est ma seule chance.

Even if literature stopped here, it would have a strange and embarrassing job to do. But it does not stop here. It recalls the first name which would be the murder Hegel speaks of. The “existant” was called out of its existence by the word and it became being. This

Lazare, veni foras summoned the dark cadaverous reality from its primordial depths and in exchange gave it only the life of spirit. Language knows that its kingdom is day and not the intimacy of the unrevealed. . . . Whoever sees God dies. In speech what gives life to speech dies; speech is the life of that death, it is “the life that endures death and maintains itself in it.” What wonderful power. But something was there and is no longer there. Something has disappeared. How can I recover it, how can I turn around and look at what exists *before*, if all my power consists of making it into what exists *after*? The language of literature is a search for this moment which precedes literature. Literature usually calls it existence; it wants the cat as it exists, the pebble taking the side of things, not man, but the pebble, and in this pebble what man rejects by saying it, what is the foundation of speech and what speech excludes in speaking, the abyss, Lazarus in the tomb and not Lazarus brought back to daylight, the one who already smells bad, who is Evil, Lazarus lost and not Lazarus saved and brought back to life. *I say a flower!* But in the absence where I mention it, through the oblivion to which I relegate the image it gives me, in the depths of this heavy word, itself looming up like an unknown thing, I passionately summon the darkness of this flower, I summon this perfume that passes through me though I do not breathe it, this dust that impregnates me though I do not see it, this color which is a trace and not light. Then what hope lies in the materiality of language, in the fact that words are things, too, are a kind of nature—this is given to me and gives me more than I can understand. Just now the reality of words was an obstacle. Now, it is my only chance. (PF 315–16/45–46)

Summoning “the cadaverous reality” from its depths, literature can only in exchange give it the life of Spirit. As Hegel famously notes in the “Preface” of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the life of Spirit is the life that carries with death and endures the negative. And speech is the life of this death, the life that endures death:

But the life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures and maintains itself in it [*Aber nicht das Leben, das sich vor dem Tode scheut und vor der Verwüstung rein bewahrt, sondern das ihn erträgt und in ihm sich erhält, ist das Leben des Geistes; Ce n'est pas cette vie qui recule d'horreur devant la mort et se préserve pure de la destruction, mais la vie qui porte la mort, et se maintient dans la mort même,*

qui est la vie de l'esprit]. . . . Spirit is this power [*Macht*] only by looking the negative in the face, and tarrying with it. This tarrying [*Verweilen*] with the negative is the magic power [*die Zauberkraft*] that converts it into being.²¹

The life of Spirit is a tarrying with the negative because Spirit, as the “reconciliation” of the abstract and the immediate, has incorporated the death and resurrection of Christ: The death of Christ is “no longer what it immediately signifies, the non-being of this *singular* entity, it is transfigured into the *universality* of Spirit which lives in its community, and dies in it everyday and is resurrected daily” (PhG 570–71/PE II 286). As Jean Hyppolite explains in *Genesis and Structure of Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, the community must reconcile “finite existence with divine essence, by interiorizing the death and resurrection of Christ.”²² When Hegel writes that God is *revealed* as Spirit it is because, as Spirit, God has become the universal self-consciousness of the community (GS 547).

If language is the life that endures death and maintains itself in it, literature searches for something other. It is a search for the foundation of speech, what speech must exclude in order to speak—the other Lazarus, the one that is *not* resurrected: “the Lazarus in the tomb [*le Lazare du tombeau*] and not Lazarus returned to the light, the one already beginning to smell, who is Evil, Lazarus lost and not Lazarus saved and raised from the dead” (PF 316). Literature is bound up with death, but not the death that conspires with negativity, the death whose idealization transforms it into a dialectical power, but a death that refuses to become pure negation—an endless dying.

“The right to death” of which Blanchot speaks, Derrida explains, can, of course, be read as the right to accede to death, the right to kill, to be killed, and to kill oneself (RC 604). Yet the principle of death, he notes, is also “a principle of resurrection and *salut* [*un principe de résurrection et de salut*]”—hence the references to Lazarus in “Literature and the Right to Death” (RC 605). Derrida draws a comparison between what Christ in the Gospel of John says to Lazarus—“*El’azar, viens dehors (veni foras)*”—and what the Russian soldier tells the narrator of *L’instant de ma mort*, who according to Derrida “had already traversed life and death, the limit between life and death,” as he lets him escape death: *Veni foras*, in other words, leave here and “save yourself [*sauve-toi*]” (RC 605).

Already in 1948, Derrida remarks, Blanchot speaks of “dying [*mourir*]” only as an *impossibility*, for example, “death as impossibility of dying [*impossibilité de mourir*]” (PF 325; RC 606). The impossibility of dying, a “syntagma” that is repeated throughout Blanchot’s writings, is a passivity, not a possibility or a power upon which all speaking is dependent. And

the right to death always fails before this impossibility. Death *works* in the world, but to die is to lose death: “As long as I live, I am a mortal man, but when I die, ceasing to be a man . . . I am no longer capable of dying” (PF 325/55). Blanchot notes that this impossibility of dying is often confused by certain religions with immortality. “Through death I lose the possibility of being mortal, because I lose the possibility of being man; being man beyond death could only have this strange meaning: being, despite death, always capable of dying, continuing as though nothing had happened” (PF 325/56). Other religions call this “the curse of being reborn [*la malédiction des renaissances*]”; one is condemned to live again [*revivre*] and to work at dying fully and completely (PF 325/56).

Blanchot suggests that literature, in particular Kafka’s writings, does not “make of this theme the expression of a drama of the beyond [*un drame de l’au-delà*],” but “attempts to find a way out [*une issue*] of this condition” (PF 325–26). “Literature does not act: but what it does is plunge into this depth of existence which is neither being nor nothingness and where the hope of doing anything is radically eliminated” (PF 327). The writer has a relation to this “impersonal power [*une puissance impersonnelle*] which leaves him neither living nor dead [*ni vivre ni mourir*]” (PF 327). “Literary immortality,” he adds, is “the very movement by which the nausea of a survival which is not a survival, a death which does not end anything, insinuates itself into the world, a world sapped by crude existence” (PF 327). The writer who writes a *work* eliminates and affirms himself at the same time, realizing that what the work brings is only “a mockery of immortality [*une dérision de l’immortalité*]” (PF 327; cited in RC 607).

What Blanchot calls “dying” is further discussed in *L’écriture du désastre* [*The Writing of the Disaster*] as “*la mort impossible*” and the “impossibility of dying” (RC 612).²³ Derrida draws our attention to “*l’aporie de l’impossible possible*” in a passage from *The Writing of the Disaster* in which Blanchot, in a treatment of suicide, assesses the Hegelian and Heideggerian approaches to death (RC 612). The desire for death either uses death as a *power*, an ability (*pouvoir*), or as a *possibility*, what is for *Dasein* the possibility of the impossible. Blanchot notes, however, that the infinite passivity of dying is “the impossibility of all possibility [*l’impossibilité de toute possibilité*]” (EDD 115). Thus what Blanchot terms dying, or “*mort sans mort*,” elsewhere, can also be a strange survival, a living on (*une survie*), an “immortality” even, which is not to be confused with the conventional senses of these terms (PF 327).

In his most fascinating analysis of Blanchot’s *The Instant of My Death* in *Demeure*, Derrida devotes some remarkable pages to the phrase “Dead—immortal [*Mort—immortel*].”²⁴ The narrator’s experience of being before

a “firing squad” and of narrowly escaping death, Derrida writes, “made him ‘perhaps’ invincible. Invincible because totally vanquished, totally exposed, totally lost” (D 86/67). “Dead—immortal.” This strange phrase, a sentence that is not a sentence, unsettles all “logical modalities”:

mort *et cependant* immortel, mort *parce qu’*immortel, mort *en tant qu’*immortel (un immortel ne vit pas), immortel *dès lors que et en tant que* mort, *tandis que et aussi longtemps que* mort.

dead *and yet* immortal, dead *because* immortal, dead *insofar as* immortal (an immortal does not live), immortal *from the moment that* and *insofar as* dead, *although* and *for as long as* dead. (D 86/67).

An immortal is someone who is dead. Derrida further explains this “immortality *as death*”:

car une fois mort on ne meurt plus et, selon tous les modes possibles, on est devenu immortel. . . . Quand on est mort, ça n’arrive pas deux fois. . . . Par conséquent, seul un mort est immortel—autrement dit, les immortels sont morts.

for once dead one can no longer die and, according to all possible modes, one has become immortal. . . . When one is dead, it does not happen twice. . . . Consequently, only someone who is dead is immortal—in other words, the immortals are dead (D 86/67).

Yet the experience described with the phrase “Dead—immortal” is “not a Platonic or Christian immortality in the moment of death or of the Passion when the soul finally gathers itself together as it leaves the body,” neither does it refer to any kind of eternity or perduring presence (D 86–7/67). Rather, “the immortality of death is everything but the eternity of the present” (D 89/69). For Derrida, “this non-philosophical and non-religious experience of immortality *as death* [*l’immortalité comme mort*]” is also to be distinguished from resurrection or a rebirth (D 89/69). “Neither happiness, nor unhappiness,” Derrida quotes from *The Instant of My Death*, “this lightness [*légèreté*] neither frees nor relieves of anything; it is neither a salvation through freedom nor an opening to the infinite [*ni un salut par la liberté ni l’ouverture à l’infini*]” (D 120/90). Rather, echoing a phrase—“To live without living, like dying without death [*Vivre sans vivant, comme mourir sans mort*]”—from “Une scène primitive” in *L’écriture du désastre*, Derrida adds that the narrator’s is “a death without death and thus a life without life [*une mort sans la mort et donc une vie sans vie*]” (D 119/89). This “death without death” can be nothing but “a confirmation of finitude” (D 121/90).

Derrida's earlier essay "Survivre" in *Parages* is also concerned with the question of a certain *survie*, a living on at the limits of life and death. This "more than life, no more than life" is, Derrida elaborates quoting a phrase from Blanchot's *L'arrêt de mort* [*Death Sentence*]:

"Plus qu'une vie, plus que cette éternité de vie. . . .": ce plus, cette *sur-vie* marque . . . une survie dans le temps de la vie, dans la forme d'un sursis.

"More than a lifetime, more than that eternity of life. . . .": this "more," this *more-than-life*, this *living on*, marks . . . a temporal extension in the time of life, in the form of a reprieve.²⁵

Derrida's extensive analysis of the *arrêt* in the title of Blanchot's *récit*, which makes the *récit* at the same time about a death sentence and an arrested or suspended death, advances a powerful interpretation of "survivre" in Blanchot's writings.²⁶ In a detailed reading of *L'arrêt de mort*, as well as Shelley's poem "The Triumph of Life," "Survivre" takes up all the possible meanings of the French word "*survivre*"—living on, surviving, an afterlife, above or beyond life, and so on:

(la survie peut être *encore* la vie ou *plus et mieux* que la vie, le suspens d'un *plus-de-vie* avec lequel nous n'aurions jamais fini), et le triomphe *de* la vie peut aussi triompher *de* la vie et renverser la procession du génitif.

(survival/living on can be life *again*, life after life, more life or *more* than life and *better*, the state of suspension of (*no*) *more life* that we would never have done with) and the triumph *of* life can also triumph *over* life and reverse the procession of the genitive. (Par 121/77)

Derrida's exploration of "survivre" finds confirmation in a passage from Blanchot's *Le pas au-delà*:

Survivre: non pas vivre ou, ne vivant pas, se maintenir, sans vie, dans un état de pur supplément, mouvement de suppléance à la vie, mais plutôt arrêter le mourir, arrêt qui ne l'arrête pas, le faisant au contraire *durer*.

Survivre, living on: not *living* or, not living, maintaining oneself, without life, in a state of pure supplement, a movement of substitution for life, but rather arresting the dying, an arrest that does not arrest it, making it on the contrary *go on, last*. (cited in Par 152/107)²⁷

This living on (*survivance*) or *revenance*, ghostly return, between living and dying, is an undecidability beyond opposition and dialectical contradiction. Derrida associates the “*sur*” in “*sur-vivre*” with the logic of the supplement:

Survivance et revenance. Le survivre déborde à la fois le vivre et le mourir, les suppléant l’un et l’autre d’un sursaut et d’un sursis, arrêtant la mort et la vie à la fois.

Survivance and *revenance*, living on and phantom returning: living on goes beyond living and dying at the same time, supplementing each with a sudden surge and a reprieve, deciding and arresting life and death at the same time. (Par 153/108)

Derrida’s essay further focuses its attention on the relation or condition that he refers to as “*vivre, survivre*,” which he remarks is “neither conjunction, nor disjunction, neither equation nor opposition”:

ni la vie ni la mort, SUR VIVRE plutôt. . . . Survivre ne s’oppose pas à vivre, pas plus que cela ne s’identifie à vivre. Le rapport est autre, autre que l’identité, autre que la différence de distinction, indéci, ou, en un sens très rigoureux, “vague,” évasif, évasé.

neither life nor death, but rather LIVING ON. . . . Living on is not the opposite of living, just as it is not identical with living. The relationship is other, other than identity, other than the difference of distinguishing, indistinct/undecided, or in a very rigorous sense, “vague,” evasive, splayed. (Par 179/135)²⁸

For, this “*vivre, survivre*,” this “living, living on”:

retarde à la fois la vie et la mort sur une ligne (celle du *sur* le moins sûr) qui n’est donc ni d’une opposition tranchante ni d’une adéquation stable. Il diffère, comme la *différance*, au-delà de l’identité et de la différence.

delays at once life and death, on a line (the line of the least sure *sur*-) that is thus one neither of clear-cut opposition nor of stable equivalence. It differs and defers, like *différance*, beyond identity and difference. (Par 179–80/136)

Thus the two terms in “living, living on,” a relation that could also be written as “dying, living on,” have a *neutral* relationship, a relation of interruption and suspension *and* deferral and extension.

The analysis of “*survivre*” in *Parages*, “*mort—immortel*” in *Demeure*, and “*mort sans mort*” from “Literature and the Right to Death,” therefore

indicate that what is at work in Blanchot's writings is far from a *thought* or *theme* of resurrection. For resurrection, even as *anastasis*, makes use of death as a power, as a possibility, it puts negativity to work, amortizes it. Thus, despite all of Nancy's denials, resurrection is an *Aufhebung* operation: what dies is born again, what is destroyed preserves itself, what slips away is retained. Resurrection *at once* displaces and elevates, raises and cancels—in the language of *Glas*, it “relieves.” What is “relieved” (*relevée, aufgehobene*) is embalmed, interiorized, magnified, elevated, spiritualized, and idealized. Nancy insists in *Noli me tangere* that the *levée*, the raising, of which he speaks is not relieve (*relève*), the term used by Derrida to translate *Aufhebung*, but rather a lifting up, an upthrust or uprising (*soulèvement*). But what does one gain by wanting to “save” resurrection, to save the *name* “resurrection” after its de-Christianization? Despite all of Nancy's qualifications, wouldn't resurrection always ultimately invoke the glorious body, the resurrection of the body of Christ? Wouldn't keeping the name “resurrection,” no matter how sophisticated the reinscription of the term, allow it to remain as the horizon for one's hope and hence encourage faith in something determinable? In the end, resurrection is reassuring; it reassures that there shall be no remainder, no *reste*.

Salut, however, is not only not “the triumph of life” and the living but is also not the promise or the reassurance of overcoming death. *Salut*, if there is such a thing, can only be an address to the other, a *salut*-ation that calls out without assurance, certainty, and determined hope. When Derrida writes of a “*salut sans salut*,” particularly in his analysis of Blanchot's *The Instant of My Death*, this *salut* is without Christian soteriology, or any doctrine of salvation. As he writes in *The Monolingualism of the Other* (1996):

Aucun salut qui sauve ou promette la salvation, même si, au-delà ou en deçà de toute sotériologie, cette promesse ressemble au salut adressé à l'autre, à l'autre reconnu comme autre tout autre (tout autre est tout autre, là où une connaissance ou une reconnaissance n'y suffit pas), à l'autre reconnu mortel, fini, à l'abandon, privé de tout horizon d'espérance.

There is no *salut* that saves or promises salvation, even if beyond or on the hither side of every soteriology, this promise resembles the *salut* addressed to the other, to the other recognized as the other entirely other (every other is every other, is wholly other, there where a knowledge or recognition does not suffice for it), the other recognized as mortal, finite, in a state of neglect, and deprived of any horizon of hope.²⁹

The hat held aloft. For an instant. The very instant in which all time is suspended, the moment into which an entire history of hats and crowns, sovereignty and resistance, could be folded. As Derrida gently but insistently dodges Nancy's hat at Cerisy, an entire relationship between the two thinkers unfolds.

In "Corona vitae" Derrida notes that Gérard Granel's article is itself "a way of saluting another thinker, of raising one's hat [*façon de saluer l'autre penseur, de tirer son chapeau*]," a gesture and salute to Wittgenstein's hat in his refusal of the crown ("*un salut magnifique, donc, au chapeau de Wittgenstein dans son 'refus de la couronne'*") (G 144). In his own aforementioned article on Wittgenstein, Granel further comments on the latter's attitude toward religion by examining the only two passages in *Remarques mêlées* mentioning the Epistles of Paul. The refusal of the crown in the title of Granel's article has to do with a fragment which reads: "The Old Testament seen as the body without its head; the New Testament: the head; the Epistles of the Apostles: the crown on the head. . . . But I do not necessarily have to think of a head as having a crown [*Aber ich denke mir nicht notwendigerweise einen Kopf mit einer Krone; Mais je ne me représente pas nécessairement une tête avec une couronne*]."30

For Granel, the crown is linked to "the loftiness of lordly, stately power [*la hauteur du pouvoir seigneurial*]," and images of the crown and "Lordship [*la Seigneurie*]" signify the Pauline, which he describes as "the perversion of the evangelical attitude by power" (EL 31). He notes that in Wittgenstein's view the Gospels are associated with a certain humility, which is "obscured [*écumer*]" by the Epistles of Paul. The refusal of the crown, then, is to be interpreted as a refusal of Pauline power, whereas evangelism, in contrast, would be the condition of "being uncrowned [*être découronné*], of refusing Pauline 'power'" (EL 32). For Wittgenstein, being uncrowned thus functions as the image of another power—that of theory and of knowledge.

In his homage to Granel, Derrida further explains the refusal of the crown in the title of Granel's essay by quoting from the Epistle of James: "*Magnifique l'homme (makários àner, beatus vir) qui résiste à l'épreuve, car, une fois éprouvé, il recevra la couronne de vie (tòn stéphanon tēs zoēs, coronam vitae) que le Seigneur a promise à ceux qui l'aiment' (I, 12)*" (G 147). The King James version reads: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

According to the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, as well as signifying sovereignty, crowns have in general been a sign of salvation and protection for the wearer.³¹ Since the Christian life is often compared by

Paul to a race or sporting contest, the “*stéphanos tēs zoēs* is an eschatological gift of God which is granted to the victor” in the contest of life (TD 629). In Timothy 4:8, Paul looks back on his life as death approaches. Having “fought a good fight,” he will be given a crown by the Lord, the precondition of which is “faithfulness to Christ” (TD 629). Paul realizes that in the judgment the fruits of his life will be measured and judged (cf. 1 Cor. 4:1–5, 2 Cor. 5:10, etc.). Yet he “does not merely want to be saved personally,” but “wants a reward and praise for the results of his life because they prove to be enduring” (TD 630). Since the crown is also an expression of joy and glory, with the crown “Paul receives from God his glory and praise”—hence “the crown of glorying” (TD 630). In James 1:12 “the *stéphanos tēs zoēs* means that if the crown is the reward of victory the content conferred” with the crown is life (TD 630–31). The “crown is the promise and gift of the Lord for those who love Him” and have faith in Him, that is, those who resist assaults and endure suffering (cf. also 2 Tim. 4:8) (TD 631). The crown of life is also “a crown of light, and it is thus represented as a halo around the head” (cf. 1 Pet. 5:4) (TD 631).

If a head with a crown signifies devotion to God, then in Granel’s view, by “refusing” Pauline “power,” Wittgenstein’s thought is an uncrowned (*découronnée*) thought.³² By dodging Nancy’s hat, we can hypothesize, Derrida is not only refusing the Lord’s crown of life or Paul’s doctrines, but also Nancy’s insistence that he accept another’s manner of thinking. Derrida’s refusal would thus be at least twofold: the refusal of the sovereign’s crown and the refusal to be “crowned” by another, by Nancy—as if, like Wittgenstein, Derrida is claiming that each person ought to wear his or her own hat, think for himself or herself, thus remaining content with putting on one’s own hat. By evading the hat, he declines the *hauteur* of lordly power, the power and ability (*pouvoir*), the being-able, associated with the sovereign. The hat and its refusal would then stand for Derrida’s resistance to the Pauline thought of sovereignty but also to the theme of resurrection and salvation.

One must salute this refusal, this resistance and obstinacy. One must tip one’s hat to the one who dares to refuse. How else to show one’s gratitude, one’s immense respect, to the one who always resisted? Aside from lingering over his work, the work he has given us to *read*, and taught us to read in such an unprecedented manner, especially regarding the term *salut* itself, the *salut* sent to us in the form of a salutation, how else, then, do those left bereft even begin to pay their respects?

For everything that you have bestowed to us, Jacques Derrida, I take off my hat. *Salut!*

Notes

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1. Jacques Derrida, “Hors livre” in *La Dissémination* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), 13; translated by Barbara Johnson as “Outwork, prefacing” in *Dissemination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 7.

2. What Derrida calls “the other [*l'autre*],” a thought of which has been at work from the beginning in his writings, should not be simply conflated with Levinas’s human other [*Autrui*] or with the conceptions of “the other” at work in the discourses of the humanities, for example in cultural and postcolonial studies. One of the readers of Derrida to have noted the importance of a notion of the other is J. Hillis Miller. See his “Derrida’s Others” in *Applying: to Derrida*, ed. John Brannigan, Ruth Robbins, and Julian Wolfreys (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996). This essay was later expanded as “Jacques Derrida’s Others” in J. Hillis Miller, *Others* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

3. Jacques Derrida, *La vérité en peinture* (Paris: Aubier-Flammarion, 1978), 223; translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod as *The Truth in Painting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 194.

1. “An Almost Unheard-of Analogy”: Derrida Reading Levinas

1. Hachem Foda, “En compagnie,” in “Idiomes, nationalités, déconstruction: Rencontre de Rabat avec Jacques Derrida,” special issue, *Cahiers INTER-SIGNES* 13 (Casablanca: Editions Toubkal, 1998), 20. All further references, abbreviated as EC, are cited in the body of the text. Foda is referring to the French translation of Abu Bakr ibn Abi Ishaq Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Ya’qub al-Bukhari al-Kalâbâdhî, *Ta’arruf li-madhab ahl al-tasawwuf, Traité du*

Soufisme, trans. Roger Deladrière (Paris: Sindbad, 1981), trans. into English by A. J. Arberry as *The Doctrine of Sufis*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

2. This is my translation of Foda's citation, "*Montre-Toi à moi, que je Te regarde*," from the *Traité du Soufisme*.

3. I am here translating Foda's rendering in French, "*Tu ne Me verras point*," of a citation from the Qur'an 7:143. The King James Version of the Bible reads: "And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory." In his response God states: "for there no man shall see me" (Exod. 33:18–20).

4. Jacques Derrida, "Fidélité à plus d'un," in *Idiomes, nationalités, déconstruction: Rencontre de Rabat avec Jacques Derrida*, special issue of *Cahiers INTERSIGNES* 13 (Casablanca: Editions Toubkal, 1998), 226; emphasis added. All further references, abbreviated as Fid, are cited in the body of the text.

5. See, for example, Levinas's following remarks in an interview with Richard Kearney regarding the difference between his two forms of writing: "I always make a clear distinction in what I write, between philosophical and confessional texts. . . . I would never, for example, introduce a talmudic or biblical verse into one of my philosophical texts to try to prove or justify a phenomenological argument." Richard Kearney, "Dialogue with Emmanuel Levinas," in *Face to Face with Levinas*, ed. Richard Cohen (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 18.

6. Jacques Derrida, "Violence et métaphysique," in *L'écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), trans. Alan Bass as "Violence and Metaphysics" in *Writing and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). All further references, abbreviated as ED, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions. I have silently modified the translation where necessary. This article was first published in two parts under the same title in *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 69.3 (1964): 332–45; and 69.4 (1964): 425–73.

7. *Autrui* is often rendered in English as "others" (see, e.g., *Harper Collins–Robert French Dictionary*); however, in translations of Levinas the term is customarily translated in the upper case as "the Other" to indicate that Levinas's concern is always with a human other. For Levinas, *Autrui* is a concrete reference to the other person, to the empirically human, whereas the use of *Autre* tends to stress the formal sense of alterity, even though he is not consistent about this throughout his writings. The French dictionary *Le Petit Robert* provides the following entry for *autrui*: "(pronom)—*altrui* 1080, *cas régime de autre; un autre, les autres hommes*." The following etymology can be found in the *Littre*: "*Provençal altrui, altrui; ital. altrui; de alter-huic, cet autre, à un cas régime: voilà pourquoi altrui est toujours au régime, et pourquoi altrui est moins général que les autres*." Perhaps, like the translators of *Being and Time* who chose not to translate *Dasein*, philosophical English should adopt *Autrui* as a more acceptable term than "the Other." This practice is followed by Susan Hanson in the translation of Blanchot's *The Infinite Conversation*. Maurice Blanchot,

L'entretien infini (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), trans. Susan Hanson as *The Infinite Conversation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

Since one of the purposes of this chapter is to disentangle the different conceptions of the term “other” in the works of Levinas and Derrida, I have retained the French terms throughout in my essay. Also, I have maintained Derrida’s use of the lower case *l’autre*, the other, in order to emphasize how he utilizes this term.

8. The complex relation between Derrida and Levinas, involving a number of texts over the course of decades, would naturally require a careful analysis that cannot be undergone here. It needs to be remembered that (1) “Violence and Metaphysics” mainly treats Levinas’s early writings (Derrida notes that his essay was already written before the publication of “The Trace of the Other” in 1963); and (2) certain terms and motifs have shuttled back and forth between the two authors, and a nuanced reading of the relation between the two thinkers would have to take into account this mutual rereading. My concern in this essay is not whether Derrida’s interpretation of Levinas is “accurate,” nor is it to provide Levinasian “responses” to any of Derrida’s “objections.”

9. Since the aim of this chapter is to attend to Derrida’s reading of Husserl, we would have to leave aside an examination of Husserl’s own texts. It is worth noting, however, that throughout his writings, from the Husserliana volumes 13–15, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität* (1905–1935) to *Formal and Transcendental Logic* and the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl maintained that there can be no presentation (*Gegenwärtigung*) of the other’s lived experiences. I can never have unmediated access to the other. Since the other cannot be given in flesh and blood, it never offers itself *originaliter* (*originär*), it can only be analogically apperceived. In the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl insists that the experience of the other, *Fremderfahrung*, is not an inference from analogy or reasoning by analogy (§50). Apperception is not a thinking act or a projection, rather the relation to the *alter ego* or the alien (Husserl uses the adjective *die, der fremde*) is a transfer, an analogizing transposition. Husserl uses the terms *analogization* (*Analogisierung*) and *analogon* frequently to signify a process rather than a state. See, e.g., Edmund Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität*, ed. Iso Kern (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), Husserliana 13:265, and *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, ed. S. Strasser (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), Husserliana 1:125 trans. Dorion Cairns as *Cartesian Meditations* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), §44: “The other [*der Andere*] is my *analogon*.”

For a comprehensive analysis of Husserl’s writings on intersubjectivity, see the following: Natalie Depraz, *Transcendance et incarnation: Le statut de l’intersubjectivité comme altérité à soi chez Husserl* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1995), where Depraz calls the access to the other “a mode of immediate mediation”; and her summary of Husserliana vols. 13–15, in Natalie Depraz, “Les figures de l’intersubjectivité. Etude de *Husserliana* XIII–XIV–XV,” *Archives de philosophie* (1992) 55: 479–98. Also see Françoise Dastur, *Husserl: Des mathématiques à l’histoire* (Paris: PUF, 1995); Didier Franck, *Chair et corps: Sur la*

phénoménologie de Husserl (Paris: Minuit, 1981); A. L. Kelkel, "Le problème de l'autre dans la Phénoménologie transcendentale de Husserl," *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 61 (1956): 40–52; Paul Ricoeur, "La Cinquième Méditation Cartésienne," in *À l'école de la phénoménologie* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1987), 197–226; Elizabeth Ströker, *Husserls transzendente Phänomenologie* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1987), trans. by Lee Hardy as *Husserl's Transcendental Phenomenology* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993); and Bernhard Waldenfels, "Experience of the Alien in Husserl's Phenomenology," *Research in Phenomenology* 20 (1990): 19–33.

10. For another reference to analogical appresentation, see *Voice and Phenomenon*, where Derrida writes: "outside the transcendental monadic sphere of what is my own (*mir eigenes*), the ownness [*la propriété*] of my own (*Eigenheit*), my own self-presence, I only have relations of *analogical appresentation, of mediate and potential intentionality*, with the other's ownness [*le propre d'autrui*], with the self-presence of the other; its primordial presentation is closed to me [*le présentation originaire m'est interdite*]." Jacques Derrida, *La voix et le phénomène* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967), 42, trans. David Allison as *Speech and Phenomena* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 39.

11. See Jacques Derrida, "Il faut bien manger," in *Points de suspension: Entretien*, ed. Elisabeth Weber (Paris: Galilée, 1992), 278, trans. Peter Connor and Avital Ronell as "Eating Well," in *Points . . . : Interviews, 1974–1994*, trans. Peggy Kamuf et al. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995), 263–64.

12. Jacques Derrida, *Le toucher, Jean Luc Nancy* (Paris: Galilée), 218. All further references, abbreviated as LT, are cited in the body of the text. Translations are mine.

13. Derrida goes on to add that this economic relationship is also at the same time a relation of violence and nonviolence (ED 188/128–29). The question of violence in the works of Levinas and Derrida has been the subject of much controversy which cannot be broached here.

14. We know from Plato's *Sophist* that to be other is to be other than something else. See, e.g., "other is always said relative to other [*heteron aei pròs heteron*]." Plato, *Sophist*, vol. 7 of the Loeb Classical Library, trans. Harold North Fowler (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996 [1921]), 255d. Stanley Rosen, *Plato's Sophist: The Drama of Original and Image* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1983), 271, renders this passage as: "whatever is other is necessarily this specific nature with respect to another" (*Sophist* 255d6–7). It is also in the *Sophist* that the question is posed whether "the other" (*heteron*) belongs to a class (*génos*) (*Sophist* 254e). Derrida notes that even though the other is always said *pròs heteron*, this "does not prevent it from being an *eidós* (or a *genre* [genus] in a nonconceptual sense) that is, from being the same as itself," as long as we understand this sameness to involve alterity (ED 186/127).

The notion of the other in Plato, whether *allo, ta alla* (the others), or *heteron*, is especially difficult to comprehend, particularly in the later dialogues (see, e.g.,

Parmenides 139c). In the *Parmenides* the interlocutors wonder whether “other [allo]” and “different [heteron]” are two names for the same thing (164b–c). For an interesting discussion, see Stella Sandford, “Plato and Levinas: The Same and The Other,” *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 30.2 (May 1999): 131–50. Sandford cites Jean Wahl, who in 1926 wrote that the other is “unable to be grasped [*insaisissable*] by pure conceptual thought,” and Paul Ricoeur, who calls the other “the most ungraspable [*insaisissable*] of the categories” (141).

15. Jacques Derrida, *Donner la mort* (Paris: Galilée, 1999), 97, trans. David Wills as *The Gift of Death* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 68. All further references, abbreviated as DM, are cited in the text, with page references to the French version, then to the English version.

16. Jacques Derrida, “L’animal autobiographique,” in *L’animal autobiographique: Autour de Jacques Derrida*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet (Paris: Galilée, 1999), 261.

17. See Chapter 3, ““Ça” me regarde’: Regarding Responsibility in Derrida.”

18. For two penetrating analyses of Derrida’s reading of the notion of the other in Husserl in “Violence and Metaphysics,” see Robert Bernasconi, “The Alterity of the Stranger and the Experience of the Alien,” in *The Face of the Other and the Trace of God: Essays on the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas*, ed. Jeffrey Bloechl (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000); and Leonard Lawlor, *Derrida and Husserl: The Basic Problem of Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

19. “The absolutely other is *Autrui* [*L’absolument Autre, c’est Autrui*].” Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totalité et infini: Essai sur l’extériorité* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961), 28. All page references in this chapter are to the *Livre de Poche* edition; translated by Alphonso Lingis as *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 39. All further references, abbreviated as TI, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions.

20. When discussing Levinas’s work in “Violence and Metaphysics,” following Levinas’s own practice in *Totality and Infinity*, Derrida uses *autrui* and *l’autre* synonymously. It should be noted that even when providing an account of the characteristics of the other in Levinas, Derrida consistently uses the term *l’autre* in the lower case. *Autrui* is a term that does not belong to Derrida’s terminology.

21. One cannot but hear in the words *plus tôt* (even earlier) echoes of another word, *plutôt* (rather). Rather, Derrida seems to be asking, what does *autre* mean before its Greek and Judeo-Christian determinations?

22. The “thou” is an obvious reference to Martin Buber’s work, which is founded on an ontology and a theology of the “*l’entre-deux* [*Ontologie des Zwischen*].”

23. We find the following definition in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968):

hic haec hoc, *pron. adj.* 1. This (indicating a particular person or thing that is present in place, time, or thought); a person or thing present in fact or thought; (referring to the nearer of two persons or things, the one with whom the context is primarily concerned); hīc, *adv.* 1. in this place; hūc, *adv.* [*<*hoi-ce*, cf. HIC] 1. To this place, hither; . . . (d) to the person speaking; 2. (a) To this point (in an argument, etc.), to this topic or subject; (b) to this degree.

24. Generally speaking, in Latin *alter* is used to indicate the other of two, whereas *alius* is used to refer to that which is other or different. However, this is by no means a rigorous distinction, as the entries in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* demonstrate:

alter -ra -rum, a. [cf. ALIVS; Osc. *alitrām*, and, for *-ter*, Gk. *heteros*] 1. A second, a further, another; (pl.) a second group of, further, other, *ego alter, alter idem*, a second self; 2. (in neg. & indefinite exprs.): (a) *ullus*, etc. *-r*, Any other; *nullus*, etc., *-r*, no other, (b) (without *ullus*, etc.) any other; also, some other (no matter what), *ne qua legio -rae legioni subsidio uenire posset* Caes *Gal*, [also see Horace, Tacitus, Livy]; 3. (num & temp series) The second, the next; 4. One or other (of two), the second; 5. (of members of a pair, specified or implied): a) *unus -r* the one . . . the other; 6. *unus et alter* One or two, a few; 7. (of river-banks, gates, etc.) Opposite in position (to something implied in the context), further, other; 8. Opposite in quality (to something implied in the context), different, contrary; (pred.) changed, altered. *sperat infestis, metuit secundis -ram sortem bene praeparatum pectus* Horace *Carm*; *nondum -ram fortunam expertus* Liv.

alter -ra -rum, pron. 1. (a) A further or second person or thing, another (one), (emph). one other person, (b) (in a series) the second person; 2. A person other than oneself or the person in question, a second party, another; that which is different. Plautus, Quintilian; 3. (in neg. and sim. exprs.) Any other person, anyone else; *et tamen -r si fecisset idem, caderet sub iudice morum*. Juvenal, Livy, Vergil; 4. (a) one or other (of two persons or things), Juvenal, (b) either of two, (c) the other (of two), Vergil.

ālivs -a -ud, a. [cf. Gk. *allos*, Osc. *allo*] 1. Different in identity, other, (b) different in quality, a different sort of; also, different in quantity . . . (d) (after negs. and sim.) other (than), else (besides), *nihil -ud quam*; . . . 3. (sg.) An additional or further (one) or (ones); . . . 7. Other than what is familiar, strange, new, different, (b) (esp. w. prop. names) a new, a fresh, a second, another; 8. One or the other (of two), the second, (b) *-us* . . . *-us*, the one . . . the other (of two).

alius -a -ud, pron. 1. A person, etc. other than the one concerned, another, (pl.) other persons, others; . . . 4. A further or additional person, another, (pl.) others; 5. (=alter) the other of two; 6. Something different, another thing, something else, (pl.) other things.

Here, It is also worth mentioning the word *aliēnus* [ALIVS+ -ENVS], *a.*, which meant “Of another country, foreign; m. a foreigner, a stranger or person unconnected by blood, outsider.”

25. It is clearly not possible to fully substantiate this claim in the space of one chapter.

26. Jacques Derrida, *Adieu à Emmanuel Lévinas* (Paris: Galilée, 1997), 100, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas as *Adieu: To Emmanuel Levinas* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999), 54.

27. Jacques Derrida and Pierre-Jean Labarrière, *Altérités* (Paris: Osiris, 1986), 81–82, my translation. My account of the relation to the other in this section borrows heavily from this text.

28. For a partial list of Derrida’s references to analogy, see the discussion of “the principle of analogy” in *Archeology of the Frivolous, Voice and Phenomenon*, “Ousia and Grammē,” and “White Mythology” (where metaphor is called “the manifestation of analogy”) in *Margins of Philosophy*, “Plato’s Pharmacy” in *Dissemination*, “Paregon” in *The Truth in Painting* (where Derrida notes the connection between anthropotheologism and analogism), “Economimesis,” “To Speculate—on ‘Freud’” in *The Post Card, On the Name, Signsponge*, “Shibboleth: For Paul Celan,” and *The Gift of Death*.

29. Analogy is also italicized at ED 148, not reflected in the English translation on 100.

30. This is a quotation from TI 326/293.

31. We can find in the writings of Saint Bonaventure references to a resemblance (*similitudo*) between creatures and God. In the commentaries on the four books of *Sentences* he wrote that the likeness of creature to God is a relation of *proportionalitas*. The relationship of creature to God is that of the *exemplatum* to the *exemplar*, making every creature a *vestigium Dei*.

For Aquinas, the foundation of all analogy is also the likeness of creatures to God. Analogical predication is founded on resemblance. In *De veritate* Aquinas distinguishes the resemblance of proportion (*convenientia proportionis*) from the resemblance of proportionality (*convenientia proportionalitas*). In the *Summa Theologica* I Aquinas writes of an analogy of proportion, *analogia secundum convenientiam proportionis*, and proportionality, *analogia secundum convenientiam proportionalitas*. In Aquinas, analogy plays an important role as a supplement to human *logos* in understanding God. See George Peter Klubertanz, *St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy: A Textual Analysis and Systematic Synthesis* (n.p.: Loyola University Press, 1960).

32. In an interview, Levinas clarifies the relation between God and *autrui*: “I cannot describe the relation to God without speaking of my concern for *autrui* [*ce qui m’engage a l’égard d’autrui*].” Adding that in Matthew 25, the relation to God is presented as “a relation to another person [*l’autre homme*],” Levinas says: “In *autrui* there is the real presence of God.” See Emmanuel Levinas, “Philosophie, Justice et Amour,” in *Entre nous: Essais sur le penser-à-l’autre* (Paris: Grasset, 1991), 120–21, trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav as “Philosophy,

Justice and Love,” in *Entre nous: Thinking-of-the-Other* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 109–10, trans. modified.

33. I am here citing the translation used by Alan Bass in *Writing and Difference*, which differs slightly from the one with which my essay begins.

34. In the context of a discussion of the role of art in “Reality and Its Shadow,” Levinas writes of a resemblance without model. Historically resemblance has been understood as a relation between the thing and its image, a comparison between an image and the original. In this extremely rich early essay, Levinas thinks of resemblance as the very movement that engenders the image. The thing, he writes, resembles itself. See Emmanuel Levinas, “La réalité et son ombre,” *Les temps modernes* 38 (1948): 771–89, trans. Alphonso Lingis as “Reality and Its Shadow,” in *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Seán Hand (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1989).

35. The main Scholastic philosophers (late-fifteenth- to sixteenth-century) associated with the question of analogy were Thomas de Vio (Cajetan), Peter de Fonseca, and Francis Suárez. In *Disputationes metaphysicae* Suárez wrote: “Every creature is being in virtue of a relation to God, inasmuch as it participates in or in some way imitates the being (*esse*) of God, and as having being, it depends essentially on God.” Francisco Suárez, *Disputationes metaphysicae*, 2 vols. (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1965), disp. 28.

36. Jacques Derrida, *Sauf le nom* (Paris: Galilée, 1993), 56, trans. John P. Leavey, Jr., as “Sauf le nom,” in *On the Name*, ed. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995), 55–56.

37. Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie* (Paris: Minuit, 1967), 47, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak as *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 1974), 69.

38. Jacques Derrida, “La Différance,” in *Marges de la philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972), 28, trans. Alan Bass as “Différance,” in *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 26–27.

39. Derrida returns to the question of analogy and the Name of God in Levinas in Jacques Derrida, “En ce moment même dans cet ouvrage me voici,” in *Psyché: Invention de l'autre* (Paris: Galilée, 1987–1998), 159–202, trans. Ruben Berezdivin as “At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am,” in *Re-Reading Levinas*, ed. Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 11–48. Quoting Levinas’s words in “The Name of God according to a Few Talmudic Texts,” where he emphasizes that God refuses all analogy with beings, Derrida adds that once interrupted, this analogy is again resumed. Just as there is a resemblance between the Face of God and the face of man, Derrida writes, there is also an analogy between all proper names and the Names of God, which are, in their turn, analogous among themselves.

40. The terms *proportio* and *proportionalitas* are from the Latin translation of Euclid’s *The Thirteen Books of the Elements*, vol. 2, trans. Thomas L. Heath (New York: Dover, 1956), bk. 5, defs. 3 and 5. The Latin word *proportio* translates the Greek *analogia*, a translation that already betrays a Platonic conceptualization of analogy.

41. See Eliane Escoubas, *Imago Mundi: Topologie de l'art* (Paris: Galilée, 1986), 113. *Ana* has the same sense as the Latin *re* or *retro*. It can also mean “upward,” and in certain circumstances “according to,” “in mutual accord,” “reciprocally.”

42. The origins of analogy are somewhat obscure. A general theory of analogy was first developed by Eudoxus (?406–?355 BCE) and then codified by Euclid. Whether it is credited to the Pythagoreans or their predecessors, the initial use of analogy was mathematical, where it signified the equality of two proportions. For the use of analogy in Plato, see *Republic* bk. 7, 508c (*analogon* “to stand in a proportion with itself”), 534a (“the proportion [*analogia*] between the things”), 510a–b, 511e, 530d, 534a, 576c; *Gorgias* 465b–c; *Phaedo* 111a–b; and *Timaeus* 29c, 31 c, 32a–c, 69b.

Aristotelian analogy also emphasizes the relation of “a proportion or equality of two relations”; see, e.g., *Nicomachean Ethics* V, 6, 1131a30; *Metaphysics* 1003a33, 1017a; *Rhetoric* III, 10, 1411a1, 1411b5; III, 11, 1412a; *Poetics*; *Topics* 108a7–8, V, 8, 138b24; *Politics* 1296b. Derrida repeatedly links the problem of analogy and metaphor, noting that for Aristotle, analogy is metaphor par excellence as it is based on an equality of relations (*Rhetoric*; *Poetics*).

It is well known that Brentano's 1862 *Von der mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seienden nach Aristoteles* was influential on Heidegger (see “Letter to Richardson”). Franz Brentano, *Von der mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seienden nach Aristoteles* (Hildesheim, Germany: G. Olms, 1960), ed. and trans. Rolf George as *On the Several Senses of Being in Aristotle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975). In *Being and Time* Heidegger poses the question: What constitutes the unity of the universal concept of being? Quoting Aristotle in the opening pages, Heidegger credits him with elevating this problem to a fundamental level. Being is not a genus, Heidegger notes, and the universality of Being transcends any universality of genus. In medieval theology, being is designated as a *transcendens*. According to Heidegger, Aristotle himself knew the unity of this transcendental “universal” as a *unity of analogy*, but the Schoolmen who inherited the doctrine of the unity of analogy failed to explain how the unity of being is possible. Not only is the doctrine of the analogy of being not a solution to the *Seinsfrage*, Heidegger points out in a lecture course, but it is the index of “the most stringent aporia,” an “impasse [*Ausweglosigkeit*].” Martin Heidegger, *Aristoteles, Metaphysik* ① 1–3, *Von Wesen und Wirklichkeit der Kraft*, GA 33, ed. Heinrich Hüni (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1981), 46, trans. Walter Brogan and Peter Warnek as *Aristotle's Metaphysics* ① 1–3: *On the Essence and Actuality of Force* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 38; According to Heidegger it is impossible to illuminate the primary meaning of being until the question of time is broached.

Brentano situated his work within the tradition of Scholastic philosophy, which attributed to Aristotle the determining of the manifold meanings of being in terms of analogy. However, many commentators on Aristotle have pointed out that for the Stagirite, it is more accurate to say that being is said *pros hen* and not analogically (e.g., *Metaphysics* 1003a33). It is the late Scholastics, and not Thomas Aquinas, who equate the Aristotelian *pros hen legomenon* with the

analogy of attribution. Jean-François Courtine, *Les catégories de l'être: Etudes de philosophie ancienne et médiévale* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2003), argues quite convincingly that the doctrine of analogy of being, *analogia entis*, appears much later in the commentators on Aquinas, such as Capréolus (Jean Cabrol), Cajetan, and Suárez.

In Kant, analogy is a “perfect resemblance or similarity of two relations between two quite dissimilar things [*eine unvollkommene Ähnlichkeit zweier Verhältnisse zwischen ganz unähnlichen Dingen bedeutet*].” Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1957), §58, 124, Ak. 357–58, trans. James W. Ellington as *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, trans. revised by Paul Carus (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1977), 98. Analogy is then a matter of resemblance [*Ähnlichkeit*] and relations [*Verhältnisse*]. Operating everywhere in the *Critique of Judgment*, analogy attempts to bridge the abyss between the two absolutely heterogeneous worlds of Nature and the Ethical. As Derrida writes in *The Truth in Painting*, “the recourse to analogy, the concept and the effect of analogy,” in Kant “are or make the bridge itself.” Jacques Derrida, *La vérité en peinture* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978), 43; trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod as *The Truth in Painting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 36. All further references, abbreviated as VP, are cited in the text, with page references to the French version, then to the English version. See, for example, Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft* in *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, Akademie edition, ed. Gerhard Lehmann (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co, 1902–), Ak 464, trans. Werner Pluhar as *Critique of Judgment* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1987), 356. Derrida also underscores “the connection between anthropo-theologism and analogism” in the Third Critique: “the principle of analogy is here indeed inseparable from an anthropocentric principle. The human center also stands in the middle [*au milieu*], between nature (animate or inanimate) and God” (VP 133–34/117). For a guide to the question of analogy in Kant, see François Marty, *La naissance de la métaphysique chez Kant: Une étude sur la notion kantienne d'analogie* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1980).

43. Jacques Derrida, “La mythologie blanche,” in *Marges de la philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972), 290, trans. Alan Bass as “White Mythology,” in *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 243.

44. Jacques Derrida, “Economimesis,” in *Mimesis des articulations* (Paris: Aubier-Flammarion, 1975), 85, trans. Richard Klein as “Economimesis,” *Diacritics* 11.2 (1981): 19.

45. Jacques Derrida, “La pharmacie de Platon,” in *La dissémination* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), 133, trans. Barbara Johnson as “Plato’s Pharmacy,” in *Dissemination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 117.

46. Jacques Derrida, “Comme si c’était possible,” *Revue internationale de philosophie* 205.3 (1998): 497–529, 524.

47. Referring to Levinas’s *Difficult Freedom*, Derrida states that the ethical relation is a religious relation. The source of concern for Derrida is that

Levinasian ethics inevitably leads to “religion,” “not *a* religion, but *the* religion, the religiosity of the religious.” Emmanuel Levinas, *Difficile Liberté: Essais sur le judaïsme* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1963), 142, trans. Seán Hand as *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 96. Levinas defines religion in *Totality and Infinity* in the following ways: “We propose to call religion the bond [*le lien*] that is established between the same and the other without constituting a totality” (TI 30/40); and “For the relation between the being here below and the transcendent being that results in no community of concept or totality—a relation without relation—we reserve the term religion” (TI 78–79/80). This term is, of course, revisited by Derrida in “Foi et savoir: Les deux sources de la ‘religion’ aux limites de la simple raison,” in *La Religion*, ed. Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo (Paris: Seuil, 1996), trans. Samuel Weber as “Faith and Knowledge: The Two sources of ‘Religion’ within the Limits of Mere Reason,” in *Religion* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998).

48. Both Hent de Vries, from whose work I have benefited greatly, and John Caputo comment extensively on Derrida’s writings on religion. See Hent de Vries, “Violence and Testimony: On Sacrificing Sacrifice,” in *Violence, Identity, and Self-Determination*, ed. Hent de Vries and Samuel Weber (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997); de Vries, *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); de Vries, *Religion and Violence: Philosophical Perspectives from Kant to Derrida* (Baltimore.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); and John D. Caputo, *The Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida: Religion without Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).

49. Jacques Derrida, “Psyché: Invention de l’autre,” in *Psyché. Inventions de l’autre* (Paris: Galilee, 1987–1998), 61, trans. Catherine Porter as “Psyche: Inventions of the Other,” in *Reading De Man Reading*, ed. Lindsay Waters and Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 61.

2. This Monstrous Figure without Figure or Face

1. To the best of my knowledge, Catherine Malabou is the only commentator on Derrida to have noted this *figure*. See Jacques Derrida and Catherine Malabou, *La contre-allée* (Paris: Editions La Quinzaine Littéraire–Louis Vuitton, 1999), 231, trans. David Wills as *Counterpath: Traveling with Jacques Derrida* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004), 235. In *La contre-allée*, Malabou notes that “*le tout autre est la figure sans figure*” but does not develop this further.

2. Jacques Derrida, “La forme et la façon: (plus jamais: envers et contre tout, ne plus jamais penser *ça* ‘pour la forme’),” in Alain David, *Racisme et antisemitisme: Essai de philosophie sur l’envers des concepts* (Paris: Ellipses, 2001), 15. All further references to Derrida’s preface, abbreviated as FF, are cited in the body of the text. All further references to David’s text, abbreviated as RA, are cited in the body of the text. Translations from both texts are mine.

3. A thought of form has always been bound up with the metaphysics of Platonic *eidos* and Aristotelian *morphē*. According to Heidegger's definition in chapter 16 of his first *Nietzsche* volume:

forma, corresponds to the Greek *morphē*. It is the enclosing limit and boundary, what brings and stations a being into that which it is, so that it stands in itself: its configuration [*die Gestalt*]. Whatever stands in this way is what the particular being shows itself to be, its outward appearance, *eidos*, through which and in which it emerges, stations itself there as publicly present, scintillates, and achieves pure radiance.

Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Erster Band* (Pfullingen, Germany: Neske, 1961), 119, trans. David Farrell Krell as *Nietzsche: Volume I* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 119.

4. Emmanuel Levinas, *De l'existence à l'existant* (Paris: Vrin, 1963), 92, trans. Alphonso Lingis as *Existence and Existents* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1978), 51. All further references, abbreviated as DEE, are given in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions. In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas writes that "things" can be naked only when they are "without adornment or ornamentation [*sans ornements*]." See Emmanuel Levinas, *Totalité et infini: Essai sur l'extériorité* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1988 [1961]), 71, trans. Alphonso Lingis as *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 74. All further references, abbreviated as TI, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions. When things are involved in the accomplishment of the function for which they were made, they have no need of adornment. It is as if, subordinated by their own finality, they disappear into this finality, disappearing beneath their form. For a thing, Levinas notes, "nudity is the surplus of its being over its finality" (TI 71/74). Nudity would be its uselessness, which appears only in relation to the form against which it contrasts itself. Genuine nudity, however, a nudity disengaged from every form, would belong to that of the face.

It will be recalled that in his discussion of the thing in the "The Origin of the Work of Art" (1935–1936), Heidegger employs terms with a relation to nudity, e.g., *die Blösse* (nakedness), *entkleidete* (unclothed), from *entkleiden* (to undress somebody, to strip). Traditionally, Heidegger explains, there have been three modes of defining thingness: the thing as bearer of traits, as the unity of a manifold of sensations, and as formed matter. For Heidegger, the thing is neither simply a core (*to hypokeimenon* or *hypostasis*) nor an aggregate of traits, properties, or characteristics (*ta symbebēkota*) occurring along with this core. The opposition of these two Greek terms, which in Latin become transformed into *subjectum* (*substantia*) and *accidens*, alongside two other significant oppositional pairs, *aisthēton/noēton* (sensible/intelligible) and *hylē/eidos-morphē* (matter/form-figure), shall determine the course of every metaphysical determination of the thing and every theory of art. For Heidegger, the thingness of the thing is

irreducible to a form-matter structure, which, alongside the being-product, needs to be thought outside of metaphysical determinations. The thing pure and simple [*blosse Ding*], Heidegger explains, has always been determined starting from, and on the basis of, a thinking of the thing-as-product, or equipment [*Zeug*]. This becomes apparent, he notes, when we say: “The mere thing [the naked thing, *das blosse Ding*] is a sort of equipment [product, *Zeug*], albeit equipment denuded of its equipmental being [*das seines Zeugseins entkleidete Zeug*].” Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” in *Basic Writings*, ed. and trans. David Farrell Krell (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), 156. The “mere” or “naked” here, Heidegger notes, refers to the removal (stripping, *Entblössung*) of the character of usefulness (*Dienlichkeit*). “It remains doubtful whether the thingly character comes into view at all in the process of stripping off everything equipmental [*des Abzugs alles Zeughaften*]” (156). In other words, the “subtraction (*Abzug*)” or stripping of the product or equipment will not restore, or provide access to, a naked thing.

5. The relationship with nudity, Levinas will later say, is a relation with the face: “In the concreteness of the world, the face is abstract or naked [*nu*].” Emmanuel Levinas, “La trace de l’autre,” in *En découvrant l’existence avec Husserl et Heidegger* (Paris: Vrin, 1967), 194, trans. Alphonso Lingis as “The Trace of the Other,” in *Deconstruction in Context*, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 352. In another essay in the same volume, Levinas writes that a face is “decomposed and naked [*défait et nu*].” Emmanuel Levinas, “Enigme et phénomène,” in *En découvrant l’existence avec Husserl et Heidegger* (Paris: Vrin, 1967), 208, trans. Alphonso Lingis, trans. revised by Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley, as “Enigma and Phenomenon,” Levinas, in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, ed. Adriaan T. Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 69. In contrast to things, which have a form and can only be seen in the light, the face signifies itself. It presents itself in a way or “mode [*façon*] irreducible to manifestation,” above and beyond the manifested and purely phenomenal form, “without the intermediary of any image, in its nudity” (TI 218/200). In the way that it presents itself, the face undoes the form and content distinction (TI 43/51); however, it does not present itself as “formless [*l’informe*], as matter that lacks and calls for form” (TI 149/140). In “The Trace of the Other,” Levinas further explains: The presence of *Autrui*, “who manifests himself in the face,” consists in “divesting itself of the form [*se dévêtir de la forme*] which nevertheless manifests him.” Levinas, “Trace of the Other,” 194/351–52. Its way (*façon*) of presenting itself is to break through its plastic image, to overflow all figures. “Denuded of its own image [*dénudé de sa propre image*]” (194/352), “stripped of its very form, a face is benumbed in its nudity [*dépouillé de sa forme même, le visage est transi dans sa nudité*]” (195/352).

6. The translators of *Adieu* consistently render “*le moi*” as “the I,” whereas Alphonso Lingis’s translation of *Otherwise than Being* renders it as “the ego.” Jacques Derrida, *Adieu à Emmanuel Lévinas* (Paris: Galilée, 1997), trans. Pascale-

Anne Brault and Michael Naas as *Adieu: To Emmanuel Levinas* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999). All further references, abbreviated as A, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions. I have very slightly modified the excellent translation to reflect my reading.

7. Jacques Derrida, *Apories* (Paris: Galilée, 1996), 110, trans. Thomas Dutoit as *Aporias* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993), 60. The English version is a translation of an earlier article, Jacques Derrida, "Apories: Mourir-s'attendre aux limites de la vérité," in *Le passage des frontières: Autour du travail de Jacques Derrida* (Paris: Galilée, 1993). All further references, abbreviated as Ap, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions. The translation has been very slightly modified wherever appropriate.

8. As well as referring to the home, the phrase "*chez lui*" in "*L'accueillant est d'abord accueilli chez lui*" can also mean that the welcoming one is welcomed *tout court*.

9. See TI 334/299.

10. "The subject is hostage [*Le sujet est otage*]" is in Emmanuel Levinas, *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 142, (repr. Paris: Livre de Poche, 1991), 177, trans. Alphonso Lingis as *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981), 112. All further references, abbreviated as AQ, are cited in the body of the text, with page references to the Livre de Poche edition first, followed by the English version. In a note (A 103/141), Derrida provides further references from the original Nijhoff French edition, which differ from the edition I have worked with: AQ 145, 150, 164, 179, 201, 212. These references can be found on 180, 186, 203, 220, 246, and 259 of the handy Livre de Poche edition.

11. Jacques Derrida, *De l'hospitalité: Anne Dufourmantelle invite Jacques Derrida à répondre* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1997), 111, trans. Rachel Bowlby as *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 125. All further references, abbreviated as DH, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions. I have slightly modified the translation to reflect my reading. The Bowlby translation renders this phrase as: "These substitutions make everyone into everyone else's hostage."

12. At several junctures in his reading, Derrida admits that he may be pushing Levinas's thought, at times taking it where Levinas did not go or may not have wanted to go. There are at least seven occasions in *Adieu* where Derrida explicitly points out that Levinas would not have exactly put things his way: A 52/23, 54/25, 66/32, 67/33, 68/34, 91/48, 122/67. On one occasion Derrida writes, "the hypothesis I am venturing here is obviously not Levinas's, at least not in this form, but it seeks to move in his direction" (A 122/67). Derrida's remark is an acknowledgment of the risks involved and to be taken in any reading. That is, to read affirmatively, to receive Levinas's legacy and inherit from him, would not be

to show pious faith but would necessitate a vigilant and active reading. Toward the end of *Adieu*, Derrida asks: “Would Levinas have subscribed to those [propositions] we risked formulating earlier, or those we are advancing now? Whatever our desire for fidelity, we cannot respond to this question, we *must* not claim to do so, or claim responsibility for what Levinas himself would have responded” (A 198/115). The silence or nonresponse in the face of such questions, Derrida writes, is not weakness but conditions any responsibility or decision-making, especially a political one. If the entirety of *Adieu* also functions as a protocol for the reading of Levinas, can we say that in a reading “*in the name of* [au nom de] Levinas” (A 44/19), Derrida is showing us how to receive and welcome him “beyond the capacity of the I [*la capacité du Moi*]?” (A 43/18).

13. The Cities of Asylum network was established by the International Parliament of Writers (IPW), an organization set up in 1993. Barcelona, Seville, Valladolid, Bonn, Frankfurt, Berlin, Amsterdam, Venice, Helsinki, Strasbourg, La Rochelle, and Caen were among the European cities agreeing to offer refuge to writers fleeing their repressive home regimes or whose languages and cultures are endangered. Initial response from the United States and the United Kingdom has been lukewarm; as of this writing, Ithaca, N.Y., and Las Vegas are the only two cities in America designated as cities of asylum, and the United Kingdom is the only member of the European Union that has not yet decided to participate. It is worth noting that the request by the IPW in October 1998 for Paris to be added to the list of participating cities was turned down by the office of the mayor, Jean Tiberi. The organization still functions under the title of the International Network of Cities of Asylum (Réseau international des villes-refuges).

14. See, for example, Sylviane Agacinski, *Journal interrompu: 24 janvier–25 mai 2002* (Paris: Seuil, 2002), where, in her entry for May 23, 2002, she writes of “*le concept derridien d’‘hospitalité inconditionnelle’*” that

Il n’est pas seulement absurde (il faut tout de même le dire), il est provocateur. S’il semble louable de défendre la cause des sans-papiers, cela ne peut certainement pas se faire au nom d’une hospitalité *inconditionnelle*, car rien n’est plus *conditionnel* que l’hospitalité. L’inconditionnel, en général, répond au goût des belles âmes pour l’absolu et le pur. Il est d’inspiration kantienne, c’est-à-dire qu’il sacrifie l’intelligence de la réalité à la pureté du concept. Mais il renonce à penser la réalité effective.

Agacinski, *Journal interrompu*, 152–53. I would like to thank Justine Malle for bringing this passage to my attention.

15. I have not been able to locate an exact reference to “*le moi pur*” in Pascal’s work. There are no references to this phrase in Hugh M. Davidson and Pierre H. Dubé, eds., *A Concordance to Pascal’s Pensées* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1975). A few lines further on in the same passage from *Adieu*, Derrida refers to Levinas’s argument that “the Other must be received independently of his qualities” as “what I have just called the ‘Pascalian’ argument.” Readers of Husserl in French will no doubt be familiar with the rendering of *des reinen Ich*

as “*le moi pur*” (translated into English as “pure I” or “pure ego”). See, e.g., §§37, 57, and 80 of Edmund Husserl, *Idées directrices pour une phénoménologie*, trans. Paul Ricoeur (Paris: Gallimard, 1950). The pure I is of course not the empirical subject (the human being) endowed with this or that body and this or that set of personality traits.

16. There are no entries in Davidson and Dubé, *Concordance*, for the words *devêtir*, *dépouiller*, or *nudité*.

17. In a chapter in the *Essays* entitled “Of the Inequality That Is between Us,” Montaigne argues that a person should be judged by his soul, by what is *in him*, rather than by his qualities. Montaigne laments that

on the subject of judging men [*l'estimation des hommes*], it is a wonder that, apart from us, everything is evaluated by its own qualities [*qualitez*]. . . . Why do we not judge a man by what is his own? He has a great retinue, a beautiful palace, so much influence, so much income: all that is around him, not in him. . . . If you are bargaining for a horse, you take off his trappings, you see him bare and uncovered [*nud et à decouvert*]. . . . Why in judging a man do you judge him all wrapped up in a package [*tout enveloppé et empaqueté*]? He displays to us only parts that are not at all his own, and hides from us those by which alone one can truly judge of his value. . . . You must judge him by himself, not by his finery [*Il le faut juger par luy mesme, non par ses atours*]. . . . If his soul is composed, equable, and content: this is what we must see, and by this judge the extreme differences that are between us.”

Michel de Montaigne, “De l’inegalité qui est entre nous,” in *Essais*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Albert Thibaudet and Maurice Rat (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1962), 1:42, 251. I have consulted the versions in *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald Frame (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1958), 189–190; and Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, trans. M. A. Screech (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1987), 288–90; and have used portions of each.

In the second of his *Meditations*, Descartes tries to show that a piece of wax can be known not through vision but through “*une inspection de l’esprit* [*Mentis inspectio*].” Thus the wax is not its shape, hardness, scent, i.e., its qualities, but must be judged independently of what “surrounds” it, as if it were nude:

But when I distinguish the wax from its outward forms . . . as if I having taken off its clothing [*que si je lui avais ôté ses vêtements*], I consider it completely naked [*et tanquam vestibus detractis nudam considero, je la considère toute nue*], then although my judgment may still contain errors, I cannot conceive it this way without a human mind.

René Descartes, *Oeuvres philosophiques*, vol. II: 1638–1642, ed. Ferdinand Alquié (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 1999), 427–28, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch as *Meditations on First Philosophy* in

The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 22. I have modified the translation where appropriate. Descartes then proceeds from inspecting a piece of wax to the people passing by his window:

If by chance I look out of the window and see people walking by on the street, just as I claim to see the wax I say that I see people. And yet what do I see outside this window if not hats and coats, which could conceal *specters* or dummies which only move by springs [*qui peuvent couvrir des spectres ou des hommes feints qui ne se remuent que par ressorts*]? (427/21)

The Latin version reads: “Sub quibus latere possent *automata*” (emphasis added). For Descartes, this passage suggests that I could mistake what passes by my window as specters or automata but I do judge them as human. What allows him to do so, he surmises, are not his eyes, which could deceive him, but his mind. What then, Descartes asks himself, can I say of this I (*moi-même*)? It is nothing but mind [*esprit*], which is able to “see” the wax. Descartes, *Oeuvres philosophiques*, 428/22.

Descartes’ “hats and coats” become the “distinct qualities” of the *moi* in Pascal’s *Pensées*. Yet for Pascal, the *moi* is not the union of mind and body—it is not the Cartesian *je*. The “I [*je*]” becomes “(un) *moi* [(a) self],” and this is what Derrida may be referring to as the pure *moi*. It is interesting to note that while Descartes asks “*que suis-je?*” or “*Mais moi, qui suis-je?*” Pascal poses the question “*Qu’est-ce que le moi?*” Attention must also be paid to the shift that takes place from Montaigne to Descartes to Pascal: for Montaigne it is a matter of *judging* the other, for Descartes of *seeing* or *knowing* the other, whereas Pascal’s concern is *loving* the other. Both Jean-Luc Marion, in *Sur le prisme métaphysique de Descartes* (Paris: PUF, 1986), and Vincent Carraud, in *Pascal et la philosophie* (Paris: PUF, 1992), have noted this shift.

Pascal argued that *le moi* cannot really be *loved* once it is stripped of its qualities; we can only love a person for his or her qualities. However, as far as Pascal is concerned, what constitutes *le moi*, the self, cannot be reduced to its qualities or attributes:

What is the self [*le moi*]? A man who sits at the window to watch passers-by; can I say that he sat there to see me if I pass by? No, for he is not thinking of me in particular. But the one who loves someone because of her beauty, does he love her? No, because smallpox, which will destroy beauty without destroying the person, will ensure that he no longer loves her.

And if someone loves me for my judgment or my memory, do they love *me* [*m’aime-t-on moi*]? No, for I could lose these qualities without losing my self [*moi-même*]. Where then is this self [*ce moi*], if it is neither in the body nor in the soul? And how can you love the body or the soul except for its qualities, *which do not make up the self*, since they are perishable [emphasis added]? For would we love the substance of a person’s soul, in the abstract, whatever qualities it contained? That is impossible,

and would be unjust [*injuste*]. Therefore we never love anyone [*personne*], but only qualities . . . for we only love a person for his borrowed qualities [*qualités empruntées*].

Blaise Pascal, “Qu’est-ce que le moi?” in *Pensées*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Michel Le Guern (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 2000), fragment 582. This corresponds to Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. Philippe Sellier, Classiques Garnier (Paris: Bordas, 1991), fragment 567; Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. Léon Brunschvicg (Paris: Flammarion, 1976), fragment # 323-688; and Pascal, *Pensées: Sur la religion*, ed. Louis Lafuma (Paris: Editions du Luxembourg, 1951), fragment # 688-167. I have consulted the versions in Pascal, *Pensées and Other Writings*, trans. Honor Levi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); and Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A. J. Krailsheimer (New York: Penguin, 1966), but have not reproduced either one fully.

It was with great pleasure that I noted, after the completion of the present chapter, the appearance of a parenthetical remark regarding specters in Descartes in Derrida’s *L’animal que donc je suis* (Paris: Galilée, 2006), 106, trans. David Wills as *The Animal that Therefore I Am* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 73–74.

18. The exchange is documented in Emmanuel Levinas, “Questions et réponses,” in *De Dieu qui vient à l’idée* (Paris: Vrin, 1992), 129, trans. Bettina Bergo as “Questions and Responses,” in *Of God Who Comes to Mind* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), 80. The interlocutor was Dr. T. C. Frederikse at the University of Leiden, Netherlands, and the exchange took place in May 1975.

19. That Derrida’s references to the word “ghost” are not so strange etymologically could be demonstrated by noting that the source of the English word “ghost” is from the Old English *gast* (also *gæst*) and the Old Teutonic **gaisto-z*. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, although the word is known only in the Western Germanic languages, it is apparently of pre-Teutonic formation, **ghoizdo-z*, denoting “fury, anger.” The spelling with *gh-* appears for the first time in English in Caxton, who was probably influenced by the Flemish *gheest*. Of further interest is that *hostis* in Latin corresponds to *gasts* of Gothic and to *gostǐ* of Old Slavonic, both of which mean “guest [*hôte*].” In his entry on hospitality, Benveniste writes about the formation of **ghosti-* (*hostis*), noting that since all the ancient compounds in *-poti-* have as their first element a general word designating a group, *ghosti-pets*, *hospes* can best be understood “as the incarnation of hospitality.” (See also note 24 below). See Emile Benveniste, *Le vocabulaire des institutions Indo-Européennes*, vol. 1. *Économie, parenté, société* (Paris: Minuit, 1969), trans. Elizabeth Palmer as *Indo-European Language and Society* (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1973).

20. Jacques Derrida and Elisabeth Roudinesco, *De quoi demain . . . Dialogue* (Paris: Fayard/Galilée, 2001), 92, trans. Jeff Fort as *For What Tomorrow . . . : A Dialogue* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004), 52. All further references, abbreviated as DQ, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions.

21. In *Otherwise than Being*, Levinas writes of *le moi*, the ego or the I, that it is “not just a being endowed with certain qualities [*doué de certaines qualités*] called moral that it would bear [*porterait*] like a substance bears [*porte*] its attributes or that it would don, put on [*revêt*] as accidents in its becoming” (AQ 184–85/117; trans. mod.).

22. Husserl writes in the *Cartesian Meditations*:

we abstract from what gives human beings [*Menschen*] and animals their specific sense as Ego-like living beings [*ich-artigen lebenden*] and consequently from all determinations of the phenomenal world that refer by their sense to *others* [*Andere*] as Ego-subjects [*Ichsubjekte*], and, accordingly, presuppose these. For example, all cultural predicates [*Kulturprädikate*].

Edmund Husserl, *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, ed. S. Strasser (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950), 126–27, trans. Dorion Cairns as *Cartesian Meditations* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), 95. The translation has been slightly modified as appropriate.

23. I am taking this locution from Jacques Derrida, *Force de loi. Le “Fondement mystique de l’autorité”* (Paris: Galilée, 1994), 106, trans. Mary Quaintance as “Force of Law: The ‘Mystical Foundation of Authority,’” in *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar (New York: Routledge, 2002), 279.

24. As Benveniste explains, *xénos* indicates relations of giving and taking, gift and counter-gift, arranged by convention between equals bound by a *xenia*, a pact, under the protection of Zeus Xénios. According to this pact, which also binds the descendants, a man is linked to another by obligation to compensate. Examples can be found in Homer, Herodotus, and Thucydides. The one who is received (*l’hôte reçu*) is the *xénos* and the one who receives is the *xenodókhos*. It is only much later, Benveniste notes, that *xénos* becomes the stranger (*l’étranger*), the nonnational. With the transformation of ancient Greek society into Roman institutions, the reciprocal relations between men and clans changed into discerning what was interior from what was exterior to the *civitas*. The word *hostis* began to assume a hostile flavor, being applied to an “enemy.”

25. Henri Joly, *Etudes platoniciennes: La question des étrangers* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1992). For a discussion of the role of foreigners in Plato’s dialogues, see also Pierre Vidal-Naquet, “La société platonicienne des dialogues,” in *La démocratie grecque vue d’ailleurs* (Paris: Flammarion, 1990).

26. It is often the Greek word *épēlus* that is rendered into French as “arrivant.” It refers to the nonautochthonous, the immigrant, the invader (*l’intrus*). Chantraine’s *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, citing Herodotus, Aeschylus, and Thucydides as sources, notes that *épēlus* designates “celui qui survient, étranger.” Pierre Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1968), 337. For a negative characterization of *épēlus*, see e.g., Herodotus, *Histoires* bk. IV, 197. Nicole Loraux, *Né de la terre: Mythe et politique à Athènes* (Paris: Seuil, 1996), is a rich source for a study of autochthony and the vocabulary of terms associated with non-Athenians.

27. The term or concept “hospitality” comes to us from Latin, derived from *hospes*, which goes back to *hosti-pet-s*. The second component *pet-* or *pot-* means “master”; thus *hospes* literally means “the guest-master [*le maître de l’hôte*].” Devoting several paragraphs to the analysis of the two elements of hospitality, *hostis* and *potis*, Benveniste demonstrates that *hostis* does not initially bear any connotations of hostility and often denotes equality by compensation. The *hostis* is not a stranger in general (that would be reserved for *peregrinus*) but “the stranger in so far as he is recognized as enjoying equal rights to those of the Roman citizens.” This recognition of rights implies a certain relation of reciprocity between this particular stranger and the citizens of Rome and supposes an agreement or compact.

28. Jacques Derrida, “Fidélité à plus d’un,” *Idiomes, nationalités, déconstruction: Rencontre de Rabat avec Jacques Derrida*, special issue of *Cahiers INTERSIGNES* 13 (Casablanca: Editions Toubkal, 1998), 245–46. All further references, abbreviated as Fid, are cited in the body of the text.

29. In a lengthy footnote in *Voyous* (Paris: Galilée, 2004), 204, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas as *Rogues* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005), 172–73, Derrida reiterates his emphasis on *unconditional hospitality*, providing detailed references from his own work.

30. Jacques Derrida, *Schibboleth pour Paul Celan* (Paris: Galilée, 1986), 102, trans. Joshua Wilner as “Shibboleth: For Paul Celan,” in *Word Traces: Readings of Paul Celan*, ed. Aris Fioretos (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 61–62.

31. Jacques Derrida, “Le ‘monde’ des Lumières à venir (Exception, calcul et souveraineté),” in *Voyous* (Paris: Galilée, 2004), 203, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas as “The ‘World’ of the Enlightenment to Come (Exception, Calculation, Sovereignty),” *Research in Phenomenology* 33 (2003): 39.

32. Jacques Derrida, “Artefactualités,” in *Echographies—de la télévision (Entretiens filmés avec Bernard Stiegler)* (Paris: Galilée, 1996), 19–20, trans. Jennifer Bajorek as “Artifactualities,” in *Echographies of Television: Filmed Interviews* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2002), 11. All subsequent references, abbreviated as E, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions.

33. Writing of an ethical orientation or sense that is prior to culture in the 1964 essay “Meaning and Sense,” Levinas notes that the nudity of the face is “a bareness without any cultural ornament [*un dépouillement sans aucun ornement culturel*].” See Emmanuel Levinas, “La signification et le sens,” in *Humanisme de l’autre homme* (Paris: Fata Morgana, Livre de Poche, 1972), 52, trans. Alphonso Lingis as “Meaning and Sense,” in *Collected Philosophical Papers* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993), 96. In one of the last sections of this essay, entitled “Avant la culture,” Levinas writes that the ethical signifies “‘prior to’ [*avant*]” history and culture. Even though the term “culture” is deployed by Levinas in a variety of ways, at times associated with artistic civilization, and even if we do not pursue Levinas’s trajectory in “Meaning and Sense” and “The Trace of the Other” that argues for “a Platonism in a new

way,” we can endorse what he writes here of “abstract man, disengaged from all culture, in the nakedness of his face [*dégagé de toute culture dans la nudité de son visage*]” (60/101). In an interview with Emmanuel Hirsch, Levinas embellishes further: “Other, not at all because he would have other attributes or would be born elsewhere or at another moment, or because he would be of a different race.” Emmanuel Hirsch, “La vocation de l’autre,” in *Racismes: L’autre et son visage* (Paris: Cerf, 1988), 92, all translations are mine. “Alterity is strangeness [*l’étrangeté*]. . . . The other has no tribal tie with anyone [*L’autre n’a aucun lien tribal avec personne*].” Ibid., 96. To differentiate and identify according to “nation, profession, race, place or date of birth” is only one way of understanding human identity; it is still to identify or individuate “according to genre [*dans le genre*].” Ibid., 97. Beyond the “community of genre or kind [*genre*],” there is a filiation of transcendence beyond all tribal ties (*l’au-delà du tribal*). Ibid., 96. To say that the nudity of the face, its abstractness, is “beyond” or “prior” to culture does not mean that it exists somewhere in another world but that it is a disturbance between the world and what exceeds it. It disturbs immanence without settling into the horizons of the world. The “elsewhere [*ailleurs*]” from which it comes is an elsewhere *in* the world. For an alternative view, see Robert Bernasconi, “Who Is My Neighbor? Who Is the Other? Questioning the ‘Generosity of Western Thought,’” in *Ethics and Responsibility in the Phenomenological Tradition* (Pittsburgh: Simon Silverman Phenomenology Center, Duquesne University, 1992).

3. “*Ça me regarde*”: Regarding Responsibility in Derrida

1. This repetition of three looks bears only a superficial resemblance to the repetitive scenes of “three glances [*trois regards*]” discussed in Jacques Lacan, “Le séminaire sur ‘La Lettre volée,’” in *Ecrits* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), 24, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman as “Seminar on ‘The Purloined Letter,’” *Yale French Studies* 48 (1972): 39–72. Naturally, care needs to be taken to distinguish the use of *le regard* in the works of Sartre, Lacan, Foucault, and Levinas from that of Derrida.

2. I would have wanted to entitle this chapter “Regarding Regarding,” if John Llewelyn had not already written an excellent essay of that title. I would like to thank him for graciously sending me a copy of his paper, initially presented at the 1996 meeting of the International Association of Philosophy and Literature in Pittsburgh. His paper, which deals with the various significations of the term “regard” in English and French and is in part a meditation on Gaston Bachelard’s phrase “*tout ce que je regarde me regarde*,” has now appeared in a different form in John Llewelyn, *Seeing through God: A Geophenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004). According to his own words, this and another of his articles, John Llewelyn, “L’intentionnalité inverse,” *La part de l’œil* 7 (1991): 92–101, may be regarded as “texts *en regard* or *en face*.” Llewelyn points out that the English *regard* and *look* are both of Germanic origin, as is the French *regard*. The French word, which was originally used to render the Latin *intueor* or *intuitus sum*, has both senses of a gaze or steady look, and respect or concern.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* provides the following etymology for the English *regard*: “from F. *regard*, OF. *regart*, *regars*, *reguart*, *reguard*, med. L. *regardum*.”

3. Since the distinction between living and nonliving is precisely what is at issue with the specter and the spectral, and since the status of the other (*l'autre*) as simply human is being put in question, then the references to the other or “*lui*” cannot be rendered into English as “him.” Even though the use of “it” is awkward and inelegant, it prevents the reader from identifying the other simply as human. In Chapter 1, I demonstrate how, as far back as the early 1960s, the term *l'autre* in Derrida's work could not simply be reserved for the human other.

4. The expression “*ça me regarde*” has embedded in it a reference to the id (*ça*), which makes it particularly interesting for a discussion of responsibility. It has appeared in a number of Derrida's writings, for example, in a passage discussing death and a casket in Jacques Derrida, “Cartouches” in *La vérité en peinture* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978), 220, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod as *Truth in Painting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 191: “There I am, like them now, like him, obsessed, besieged, *ça me regarde* from all sides, *ça me regarde* in all senses and from the bottom of the mirror, like a death already happened to me”; in a passage on the responsibility of an “author” in Derrida, “Spéculer—sur Freud” in *La carte postale: De Socrate à Freud et au-delà* (Paris: Aubier-Flammarion, 1980), 366, trans. Alan Bass as “To Speculate—on Freud,” in *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 344; in a discussion of the law in Derrida, “Loi du genre,” in *Parages* (Paris: Galilée, 1986), 286, trans. Avital Ronell as “Law of Genre,” in *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992); on the topic of ghosts involving the relation of Stirner and Marx in Derrida, *Spectres de Marx: L'état de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle internationale* (Paris: Galilée, 1993), 214, 224, trans. Peggy Kamuf as *Specters of Marx: the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 134, 141; and, of course, in Derrida, *Donner la mort* (Paris: Galilée, 1999), 126, trans. David Wills as *The Gift of Death* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 91. In addition, attention must be paid to Derrida's reference to the last image of Safaa Fathy's film in Jacques Derrida and Safaa Fathy, *Tourner les mots: Au bord d'un film* (Paris: Galilée, 2000), 125–26: “*c'est moi qui vous regarde pour finir, les yeux dans les yeux, moi, l'Acteur. Moi, ça ne me regarde pas.*” Finally, one must note Derrida's comments regarding a certain overuse of this phrase in Derrida, “Tête-à-tête,” in *Camilla Adami* (Milan: Mazzotta, 2001), 7.

5. “Donner la mort,” a text given as a lecture in 1990, was originally published in Jacques Derrida, “Donner la mort,” in *L'éthique du don: Jacques Derrida et la pensée du don*, ed. Jean-Michel Rabaté and Michael Wetzell (Paris: Métailie-Transition, 1992). The English translation, *The Gift of Death*, is a translation of that text. An augmented version, *Donner la mort*, was subsequently published in book form in 1999 by Galilée. All further references, abbreviated as DM, are cited in the text, with page references first to the French version in the 1999 edition, then to the English version. The translation has been silently slightly

modified in order to reflect my reading. I have not been able to take into account David Wills's very fine translation in the complete English edition published in 2008. Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death and Literature in Secret*, second edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

6. Jan Patočka, *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*, trans. Erazim Kohák, ed. James Dodd (Chicago: Open Court, 1996).

7. Readers of Levinas, in whose work there is an extensive discourse on the look or the regard, will not be unaware of the significance of the phrase "*il me regarde*." For a sampling, see Emmanuel Levinas, *Autrement qu'être, ou au-delà de l'essence* (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1991 [1974]), 148, trans. Alphonso Lingis as *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1991), 93: "He is looking at me—everything in him looks at me [*Il me regarde, tout en lui me regarde*]," and also *ibid.*, 183/116. For the two senses of "*me regarde*," see Levinas, "L'autre, utopie, et justice," in *Entre nous: Essais sur le penser-à-l'autre* (Paris: Grasset, 1991), 239, trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav as "The Other, Utopia, and Justice," in *Entre nous: Thinking-of-the-Other* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 227, trans. mod.: "Whether he looks at me or not, he 'regards me' [*Qu'il me regarde ou non, 'il me regarde'*]. . . . I call face what in the other, concerns the I [*regarde le moi*]—looks at me, concerns me [*me regarde*];" Levinas, "Les droits de l'homme et les droits d'autrui," in *Hors sujet* (Montpellier, France: Fata Morgana, 1987), 169, trans. Michael B. Smith as "The Rights of Man and the Rights of the Other," in *Outside the Subject* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1994), 124: "the other 'regards me,' not in order to 'perceive' me, but in 'concerning me,' in 'mattering to me as someone for whom I am answerable.' The other, who—in *this sense*—'regards' me [*me «regarde»*], is the face"; and Levinas, "La responsabilité pour autrui," *Ethique et infini* (Paris: Fayard, 1982), 92, trans. Richard A. Cohen as "Responsibility for the Other" in *Ethics and Infinity* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985), 96: "since the Other looks at me [*dès lors qu'autrui me regarde*], I am responsible for him, without even having *taken* on responsibilities in this regard; his responsibility *is incumbent on me*."

8. The feeling of always being regarded and having an indissoluble bond with God may always be mistaken for delusions of persecution or paranoia, famously analyzed by Freud in the Schreber Case (first published in 1911). See Sigmund Freud, "Psychoanalytische Bemerkungen über einen autobiographisch beschriebenen Fall von Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides)," in *Studienausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1969–1975), vol. 7, trans. Andrew Weber as *The Schreber Case (Psychoanalytic Remarks on an Autobiographically Described Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides))* (New York: Penguin, 2003).

9. The first mention of the Ghost in *Hamlet* is in I.1.21, where it is referred to as "this thing" that has come twice before. A few lines later it is called "this dreaded sight" and "this apparition" (I.1.27). Horatio, Francisco, and Barnardo consistently refer to the Ghost as "it," emphasizing its remarkable likeness to "the King that's dead" (I.1.41).

10. Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx: L'état de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle internationale* (Paris: Galilée, 1993), 214, trans. Peggy Kamuf as *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 134. All further references, abbreviated as SM, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions. I have very occasionally silently modified Peggy Kamuf's excellent translation to reflect my reading.

11. The word "visor" does not actually appear in *Hamlet*. The English word used by Shakespeare that the French translations render as visor is "beaver": "he wore his beaver up" (I.2.229). For the distinction between visor and beaver, see the Arden Shakespeare edition of *Hamlet*, ed. Harold Jenkins (Walton-on-Thames, U.K.: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1997), 195. I owe this fact and much else on the use of "visor" in Shakespeare to Nicholas Royle, "Mole," trans. into French by Ian Maclachlan and Michael Syrotinski, in *L'animal autobiographique: Autour de Jacques Derrida*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet (Paris: Galilée, 1999).

12. Yet for "the helmet effect" to be in operation, a visor is not always necessary; the *possibility* of the visor is sufficient to suggest that "someone, beneath the armor, can safely see without being seen or without being identified" (SM 28/8). So *even though* the visor may be raised, "the helmet effect is not suspended" (SM 29/8).

13. Derrida writes: "*Il y a du disparu dans l'apparition même comme réapparition du disparu*," which is elegantly rendered as "There is something disappeared, departed in the apparition itself as reappearance of the departed" (SM 25/6).

14. Jacques Derrida, "Spectrographies," in *Echographies—de la télévision: Entretiens filmés avec Bernard Stiegler* (Paris: Galilée-INA, 1996), 135. All further references, abbreviated as E, are cited in the body of the text. While I have provided my own translations, I have also benefited from Jennifer Bajorek's translation, which appeared as *Echographies of Television: Filmed Interviews* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2002).

15. *Ghost Dance* (100 min., 1983), produced, written, and directed by Ken McMullen, a Looseyard production for Channel 4 (Great Britain) and ZDF (West Germany). Pascale Ogier, daughter of Bulle Ogier, herself a famous actress, appeared in a number of films, notably Eric Rohmer's *Les nuits de la pleine lune* (*Full Moon in Paris*), 1984, before her untimely death. My thanks to Justine Malle, the expert in all things cinematic, for this reference.

16. This awareness is not the banal cognizance that we all have of our mortality and finitude. Rather, Ogier knew, and we know as we watch her, that *as she spoke* her words were those of a ghost, haunted by a future that would bear her death.

17. Derrida explains that he learned from Ogier that "the eye-line" (in English in the original) is a cinematic term describing two actors looking at each other eye to eye.

18. Derrida plays with all senses of before, *avant* and *devant*, in the following passages: The other, the law, is before me, "ahead of me, I who am 'owing' or indebted [*avant moi qui suis 'devant' ou redevable*]" (E 137); and "The one

who looks at me, concerns me, is before me [*avant moi*], the predecessor has come before me, in front of me, I who am before it, owing it everything [*devant moi qui suis devant lui, lui devant tout*]” (E 137). Interestingly, as well as with “before,” much can be said about Derrida’s work with the words “after,” “front,” and “back.” See, e.g., Nicholas Royle, *After Derrida* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1995); and Nicholas Royle, “Back,” *Oxford Literary Review* 18.1–2 (1996): 145–57.

19. Derrida discusses this inability to see the eyes of the other in both Jacques Derrida, *Mémoires d’aveugle: L’autoportrait et autres ruines* (Paris: Réunion des Musées nationaux, 1990), trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas as *Memories of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993); and Derrida, *Le toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy* (Paris: Galilée, 2000).

20. Jacques Derrida, “As If I Were Dead: An Interview with Jacques Derrida,” in *Applying: To Derrida*, ed. John Brannigan, Ruth Robbins, and Julian Wolfreys (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 223. All further references, abbreviated as AI, are cited in the body of the text.

21. Derrida is, of course, making a reference to Husserl’s “zero point [Nullpunkt].” See Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch: Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution*, Husserliana 4, ed. Marly Biemel (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952; 2nd ed. 1984), §41, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer as *Ideas pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Second Book: Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution* (Boston: Kluwer, 1989); and Husserl, *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, Husserliana 1, ed. Stephan Strasser (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950), trans. Dorion Cairns as *Cartesian Meditations* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960).

22. Jacques Derrida, “Fidélité à plus d’un,” in “Idiomes, nationalités, déconstructions: Rencontre de Rabat avec Jacques Derrida,” special issue, *Cahiers INTERSIGNES* 13 (Casablanca: Editions Toubkal, 1998): 221–65, 248. All further references, henceforth abbreviated as Fid, will be cited in the body of the text. I have provided my own translations.

23. Jacques Derrida, “Lettre à Francine Loreau,” in *Max Loreau* (Brussels: Lebeer-Hossmann, 1991), 96, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas as “Letter to Francine Loreau,” in *The Work of Mourning*, ed. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2001), 95.

24. Jacques Derrida, “Le goût de larmes,” in *Jean-Marie Benoist: Hommages* (Imprimerie Lancry Graphic, 1993), 13, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas as “The Taste of Tears,” in *The Work of Mourning*, ed. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2001), 107.

25. For other conceptions of responsibility, one could, of course, refer to Heidegger, Sartre, and Levinas. In a discussion of Kant in his 1927 Marburg lectures, Heidegger writes: “Only in responsibility does the self first reveal itself.” See Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, Gesamtausgabe 24 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975), 194, trans. Albert

Hofstadter as *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 137. In his Schelling lecture course from the summer semester of 1930, he notes: “responsibility for oneself [Selbstverantwortlichkeit] then designates the *fundamental modality of being* which determines all comportment of the human being, the *specific and distinctive human action, ethical praxis.*” Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Menschlichen Freiheit*, Gesamtausgabe 31 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1982), 263. For the notion of responsibility, see François Raffoul, “Heidegger and the Origins of Responsibility,” in *Heidegger and Practical Philosophy*, ed. François Raffoul and David Pettigrew (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002). Also see Jean-Paul Sartre, “Liberté et responsabilité,” in *L’être et le néant* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943), trans. Hazel Barnes as “Freedom and Responsibility,” in *Being and Nothingness* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1956); and Levinas’s later writings, esp. Emmanuel Levinas, “Substitution,” in *Otherwise than Being*, 99–130; and Levinas, “God and Philosophy” in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, ed. Adriaan T. Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernsconi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 129–48.

26. It is important to note that it is Derrida who is introducing the vocabulary of “the absolute other [*l’autre absolu*]” here. In *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard’s terminology is that of “the absolute.” Kierkegaard writes that there is “an absolute relation with the absolute [*un rapport absolu avec l’absolu*].” See the French translation in Søren Kierkegaard, *Oeuvres complètes*, t.5, *La Répétition: Crainte et tremblement*, trans. Paul-Henri Tisseau and Else-Marie Jacquet-Tisseau (Paris: Editions de l’Orante, 1972 [1843]).

27. In addition to appearing in *Specters of Marx*, where it is translated as “every other is altogether other” (SM 273/173), the phrase “*tout autre est tout autre*” also occurs in a number of Derrida’s texts. The following is a sampling of the different renderings of this phrase: “any other is totally other” in Jacques Derrida, *Sauf le nom* (Paris: Galilée, 1993), 95–96, trans. John P. Leavey, Jr., as “Sauf le nom,” in *On the Name*, ed. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995), 76, 92/74; “Every other is completely other” in Derrida, *Aporias* (Paris: Galilée, 1996), 49, trans. Thomas Dutoit as *Aporias* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993), 22; “The altogether other, and *every other (one) is every (bit) other*” in Derrida, *Politiques de l’amitié* (Paris: Galilée, 1994), 259, trans. George Collins as *Politics of Friendship* (New York: Verso, 1997), 232, 40/22; “every other is every other other, is altogether other” in Derrida, *Mal d’archive: Une impression freudienne* (Paris: Galilée, 1995), 123, trans. Eric Prenowitz as *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 77; “every other is utterly other” in Derrida, “Foi et savoir: Les deux sources de la ‘religion’ aux limites de la simple raison,” in *La Religion*, ed. Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo (Paris: Seuil, 1996), 46, trans. Samuel Weber as “Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of ‘Religion’ within the Limits of Mere Reason,” in *Religion*, ed. Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), 33; “the entirely other is entirely other” in Derrida, *Le monolinguisme de l’autre* (Paris: Galilée, 1996), 128, trans. Patrick Mensah as *Monolingualism of the*

Other (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), 68; “every other (one), the wholly other, is every (bit) other” in Derrida, “Aletheia,” in “*Nous avons voué notre vie à des signes*” (Bordeaux, France: William Blake & Co, 1996), 78, trans. Pleshette DeArmitt and Kas Saghafi in *The Oxford Literary Review*, forthcoming; and “every other is altogether other” in Derrida, “Le ruban de machine à écrire,” in *Papier machine* (Paris: Galilee, 2001), 102, trans. Peggy Kamuf as “Typewriter Ribbon,” in *Without Alibi*, ed., trans., and with intro. by Peggy Kamuf (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002), 126.

28. The use of the term “the wholly other” in discourse pertaining to religion must be noted. In the religious sense, “the ‘wholly other [*das ganz Andere*]’ (*thateron, anyad, alienum*),” writes Rudolf Otto in a discussion of the *mysterium tremendum*, denotes that which is mysterious, beyond the sphere of the usual, the intelligible, the familiar. See Rudolf Otto, *Das Heilige: Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* (Munich, Germany: C. H. Beck, 1997 [1917]), trans. John W. Harvey as *The Idea of the Holy: An Enquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1923; repr. 1967).

29. The conventional use of the “as if,” for example in Bentham (see Jeremy Bentham, *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, ed. John Bowring, 11 vols. [Edinburgh: W. Tait, 1838–1843], 8:19: “To be spoken of at all every fictitious entity must be spoken of as if it were real”), Kant, and Hans Vaihinger, takes for granted the metaphysical distinction between reality and fiction, being and seeming, “is” and “is not.” The “as if” belongs to a mode of fiction or the work of imagination always conscious and assured of its fictional nature. To employ the “as if” is to assume an express awareness of treating something, for the sake of illustration, as if it were such and such, *when in fact* or *in reality* it is not. However, the logic of the *as if* (*comme si*) can only operate when it is no longer possible to rigorously differentiate reality from fiction. The *as if*, like the *perhaps*, is a spectral modality that makes the copulative tremble: it neither *is* nor *is not*, it is *neither* this *nor* that. My relation to the other, that of analogical transfer or appresentation, is a relation of *as if*: *as if* I were there, in the other’s place, substituting for it, *as if* I were on the “other side.” Yet the other remains utterly other, and I can never have a direct, unmediated access to the other or experience the world from its view. To have a relation to the other is to experience the other *as other*.

30. For a detailed account of the notion of responsibility in Derrida’s work, see Rodolphe Gasché, “L’étrange concept de responsabilité,” in *La démocratie à venir: Autour de Jacques Derrida*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet (Paris: Galilée, 2004), 361–74.

4. The Ghost of Jacques Derrida

1. Jacques Derrida, “Spectrographies,” in *Échographies—de la television: Entretiens filmés* (Paris: Galilée-INA, 1996), 135. All further references, abbreviated as E, are cited in the body of the text. All translations are my own.

2. *Ghost Dance* (100 min., 1983), a film produced, written, and directed by Ken McMullen, a Looseyard production for Channel 4 (Great Britain) and ZDF (West Germany).

3. A list of references may include the following texts by Derrida: *Dissemination* (117/103, 159/138 n., 165/143, 234/206, 361/325), *Glas* (230ai/205ai), *The Truth in Painting* (221/193, 248/217, 292/257, 330/288, 377/329, 412/360–61, 426–27/373–74, 431–35/377–81), *The Post Card* (206/191), *Ear of the Other* (58–59 Eng. ed. only), *The Right of Inspection* (XVI–XVIII, XXI, XXXII), *Parages* (86, 91, 96, 106, 108, 116, 136–38, 164–65), *Shibboleth* (96/19, 102/62), *Psyché* (263, 628), *Ulysse gramophone* (10 Fr. ed. only, 27/149, 30/150, 141 Fr. ed. only), *Of Spirit* (11/1, 45/24, 142/91, 162/99, 184/113), *Cinders* (22), *Memoires— for Paul de Man* (76/64, 89/80), *Memoirs of the Blind* (53/47, 72/68), *Given Time* (204/161), *The Other Heading* (105/87, 107/89), *Points . . .* (145/135), *Politics of Friendship* (93ff/75ff, 320/288), *Archive Fever* (63–65/38–39, 98–100/61–62, 111/69, 131–40/84–89), *Religion* (15/6), *Aporias* (68/35, 60–61/110–12), *Resistances* (45/30, 112/88), *Echographies* (6, 20, 30–32, 39, 61, 129), *Adieu* (191–92/111–12), *Of Hospitality* (39/37), *Marx en jeu* (24, 57–58), *Demeure* (91/71, 94/72, 98/75, 123/91), “Fors” (42–3/xxx–xxx), *Specters of Marx*, etc.

4. See e.g., Jacques Derrida, Marc Guillaume, and Jean-Pierre Vincent, *Marx en jeu* (Paris: Descartes & Cie, 1997), 57–58: “*Il y a des spectres partout, dans mes textes, depuis des décennies.*”

5. The entry for “ghost” in the *Oxford English Dictionary* informs us:

Forms: 1 gást, gáest, 2–5 gast(e, 3–6 gost(e, 4–6 gooste(e, 6 Sc. goast, goist, 5–6 ghoste, ghoost, (6 ghoast, 8 ghest), 5–ghost, 6– Sc. g(h)aiſt. [Common W Ger.: OE. *gást* (also *gáest*) str.masc. = O Fris. *gâst*, OS. *gêst* (Du *geest*), OHG. (MHG., mod. Ger.) *geist*: — O Teut. type *gaisto*–z. Although the word is known only in the W Ger. langs. (in all of which it is found with substantially identical meaning), it appears to be of pre-Teut. formation. The sense of pre-Teut. **ghoizdo*–z, if the ordinary view of its etymological relations be correct, should be “fury, anger.” . . . Outside Teut. the derivatives seem to point to a primary sense “to tear, wound, pull to pieces.”

The OE. form *gáest* is constant in the Exeter Book. “The spelling with *gh*-, so far as our material shows appears first in Caxton, who was probably influenced by the Flemish *gheest*. It remained rare until the middle of the 16th c., and was not completely established before about 1590.”

6. The distinction between the living and the dead has been at the source of every thought of the image. The entire history of the West could be written by tracing the appearance and subsequent translation of limit-terms such as *psuchē*, *eidōlon*, *phantasma*, and *phasma*. What is called for is a non-Platonic interpretation of these terms. The following is a mere sampling:

eidōlon: *Iliad* 5.451 and 23. 72, 23.104–7; *Odyssey* 4. 796, 4. 824, 4. 835, 11. 83, 11.213, 11.602, 20.355, etc.; Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 839; Sophocles, *Ajax*

126; Euripides, *Helen* 684, 1136; Plato, *Theaetetus* 240a–b, *Cratylus* 432a, *Sophist* 240a, 234 c, 241e, 266b, 267c, *Republic* 598 b, 516a, 599d, *Timaeus* 71a, *Laws* 959b, *Theaetetus* 150c.

phantasma: Aeschylus, *Seven against Thebes* 710; Euripides, *Hecuba* 54, 94, 390; Plato, *Phaedo* 81d, *Sophist* 236b, 241e, 264c, *Republic* 599a, *Timaeus* 71a, *Protagoras* 356e.

psuchē: *Iliad* 1.3, 9.408, 16.505, 22.362, 23.67 and 72; *Odyssey* 11.37, 24.1, 24.14–20; Euripides, *Alcestis* 712.

phasma: Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 415; Sophocles, *Electra* 501, 644, 1466, *The Women of Trachis* 509; Euripides, *Hecuba* 70, *Alcestis* 1125, *Iphigenia among the Taurians*, 1263; Plato, *Symposium* 179d, *Theaetetus* 155a.

oneiros: *Iliad* 2.56–8.

skia: *Odyssey* 10.495, 11.207; Plato, *Phaedrus* 260c, *Republic* 510e, 417d, 532c.

7. The birth of doubles in archaic and Attic Greece is bound up with the perception of death and the funerary practices involved. After death and the performance of burial rites, each person takes on a double aspect:

a. A visible aspect: permanent, localized, hard like the stone erected over the tomb. A *mnēma*, a memorial, was constructed by the erection of a *sēma* on the tomb. The *sēma*, a mark in the form of a burial mound, *kolossós* or stele, stood in for the *soma*, the effigy or the corpse that the person became at death. Up to the end of the seventh century BCE, a stele was simply a brute stone with no inscription marking the place of a tomb. In the sixth century, the stele began to bear figurative representations. The immovable funerary substitute for the absent corpse also served to evoke in men a glory that was now certain not to perish. Apart from the *mnēma*, the only way for the dead to be remembered was through the permanence of their name and the glory of their renown in the memory of the living and that of future generations.

b. An invisible aspect: that of the ungraspable, evanescent *psuchē*, the double of the living body—which resembles the body, having its exact appearance, clothing, gestures, voice, etc.—but which is exiled to the world of the beyond, Hades. In contrast to the standard translations of *psuchē* as “life breath,” or, according to Benveniste, simply “breath”, both Redfield and Vernant convincingly argue that the *psuchē*, that which leaves the person at the moment of death, is not the soul but a phantom. See James Redfield, “Le sentiment homérique du moi,” *Le genre humain* 12 (1985): 93–111; and Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1994); Jean-Pierre Vernant, “Psyché: Double du corps ou reflet du divin?” *Nouvelle revue de psychanalyse* 44 (Autumn 1991): 223–30, repr. in *Entre mythe et politique* (Paris: Seuil, 1996), trans. Froma I. Zeitlin as “Psyche: Simulacrum of the Body or Image of the Divine?” in *Mortals and Immortals: Collected Essays*, ed. Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991).

All doubles or “supernatural” apparitions, whether *psuchē*, *phasma*, or *oneiros*, connote a “presence” external to the subject and at the same time reveal themselves to belong to another, inaccessible realm. Each phantomatic double

is a real “presence” and simultaneously an irremediable absence, the irruption of the invisible in the visible. It is with Plato, the first theoretician of the image as artifice and fiction, that all doubles become judged against the proper, against truth, against essential being (*ousia, to on*) as insubstantial semblances. On “the category of doubles,” see Jean-Pierre Vernant’s extensive work, esp. Vernant, “Eidolon: Du double à l’image,” in *Figures, idoles, masques* (Paris: Julliard, 1990); Vernant, “Figuration de l’invisible et catégorie psychologique du double: Le colossus,” in *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs: Etudes de psychologie historique* (Paris: La Découverte, 1985); and Vernant, “De la présentification de l’invisible à l’imitation de l’apparence,” in *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs: Etudes de psychologie historique* (Paris: La Découverte, 1985), trans. Froma I. Zeitlin as “From the ‘Presentification’ of the Invisible to the Imitation of Appearance,” in *Mortals and Immortals: Collected Essays*, ed. Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991).

8. Plato, *Republic* 510a, 516a4–6.

9. The sources of the word *image* in English are: “a. F. *image* (13th C in Littré), in 11th and 12th C. *i’magene* = Pr. *image, emage*, It. *Im(m)agine*, Sp. *imagen*, Pg. *imagem*, ad. L. *imāgo, imāgin-em* . . . containing the same root as *im-itārī*” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). The image bears a relationship to the effigy, a pictorial likeness of the dead, in particular of royalty. See, for example, Plato’s *Laws*, where, in a description of funerary practices, it is remarked that “dead bodies [*nekrôn sómata*] are said to be *eidōla*” (XII, 959). Also, in the *Histories* Herodotus recounts that a substitute is fashioned for the royal corpse: “Whenever a king is slain in war, they make an *eidolon* of him and carry it out on a well-bedecked bier” (VI, 58).

10. Attending to the nuances and subtleties of Plato’s arguments in *Dissemination*, Derrida demonstrates that Plato’s discourse on *mimēsis* is never monolithic and that there is more than one type or version at work in the Dialogues. The Platonic tradition, Derrida writes in *Specters of Marx*, associates the image (*eidolon*) with the specter and the idol with the phantasm, “the *phantasma* in its phantomatic or errant dimension as living-dead.” In the *Phaedo* and *Timaeus*, *phantasmata*, which are not distinguished from *eidōla*, are “figures of dead souls.” See Jacques Derrida, *Spectres de Marx: L’état de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle internationale* (Paris: Galilée, 1993), 235, trans. Peggy Kamuf as *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 147. All further references, abbreviated as SM, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions.

11. As is well known, in the *Republic*, *mimēsis* is called a “demiurgy of images [*eidolon dēmiourgia*]” (599a7), while in the *Sophist*, *mimēsis* is a fabrication or making (*poiēsis*) of images (265b1). The maker of an image (*eidōlu poiētes*) is a *mimētēs*. For *mimēsis* in Plato, see Gerald Else, “‘Imitation’ in the Fifth Century,” *Classical Philology* 53.2 (April 1958): 73–90; and Else, *Plato and Aristotle on Poetry*, ed. Peter Burian (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1986);

and Göran Sörbom, *Mimesis and Art: Studies in the Origin and Early Development of an Aesthetic Vocabulary* (Uppsala, Sweden: Svenska Bokförlaget, 1966). Particularly helpful is Jean-Pierre Vernant, "Naissance d'images," in *Religions, histories, raisons* (Paris: Maspero, 1979), trans. Froma I. Zeitlin as "The Birth of Images," in *Mortals and Immortals: Collected Essays*, ed. Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991). The vocabulary of *mimos*, *mimeisthai*, *mimēma*, *mimētēs* belonged to the literary genre of the mime in the fifth century, e.g., Xenophon's *Memorabilia*.

12. Jacques Derrida, *La dissémination* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), 218, trans. Barbara Johnson as *Dissemination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 192. All further references, abbreviated as D, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions. We could say that the priority of that which *is* has to do with its *pré-venance*, its prior coming on the scene.

13. Deleuze's reading in "The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy," one of the appendices to the *Logic of Sense*, shares with Derrida's *Dissemination* an emphasis on the simulacrum. According to Deleuze, in the attempt to distinguish essence from appearance and to identify false pretenders in the *Sophist*, Plato divides the domain of images-idols into two, "copies-icons" (belonging to the realm of the *eikastikē*) and "simulacra-phantasms" (belonging to the *phantastikē*). The copy is an image endowed with resemblance (a good copy), whereas the simulacrum is an image without resemblance (a bad copy, a copy of a copy, or an infinitely degraded copy). However, for Deleuze, "the simulacrum is not a degraded copy. It harbors a positive power [*une puissance positive*] which denies *the original and the copy, the model and the reproduction.*" Gilles Deleuze, "Simulacre et philosophie antique," in *Logique du sens* (Paris: Minuit, 1969), 357, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale as "The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy," in *Logic of Sense* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 262. It is worth noting that Derrida's reading, for reasons that should become clear, does not observe the Platonic or Deleuzian distinction between the *phantasma* or simulacrum and the *eidōlon* or *eikon*.

14. The prohibition of images and the interdiction against any substitution stem from mimetology. The idol—fallen, distanced, removed from the origin—is always judged according to a lineage and patrimony of the idea. For an analysis of iconoclasm, see Alain Besançon, *L'image interdite: Une histoire intellectuelle de l'iconoclasme* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), trans. Jane Marie Todd as *The Forbidden Image: An Intellectual History of Iconoclasm* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). For an examination of idolatry, see Moshe Halbertal and Avishai Margalit, *Idolatry*, trans. Naomi Goldblum (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992).

15. Louis Marin, *Des pouvoirs de l'image: Gloses* (Paris: Seuil, 1993). All further references, abbreviated as PI, are cited in the body of the text.

16. Jacques Derrida, "A force de deuil," in *Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde* (Paris: Galilée, 2003), 181, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas as "By

Force of Mourning,” in *The Work of Mourning*, ed. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 145. All further references, abbreviated as FD, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions. I have occasionally very slightly modified the translation to reflect my reading. The expression “*A force de*” can also mean “by dint of,” “as a result of,” “due to.” So the clause “by force of” in the title of the essay can be read as “as a result of mourning.”

17. Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*, trans. John R. Spencer (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1966), cited in PI 11.

18. Jacques Derrida, *Mémoires: Pour Paul de Man* (Paris: Galilée, 1988), 54, trans. Cecile Lindsay, Jonathan Culler, Eduardo Cadava, and Peggy Kamuf as *Memoires: For Paul de Man* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986; 2nd rev. ed. 1989). All further references, abbreviated as MPdM, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions.

19. See G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, vol. 3, *Phenomenology and Psychology*, ed. M. J. Petry (Dordrecht, Netherlands: D. Reidel, 1978), §452, 144–217. For an illuminating reading of the third section, “Psychology,” of the first division “Subjective Spirit,” of the third part of Hegel’s *Encyclopedia*, “The Philosophy of Spirit,” see David Farrell Krell, *Of Memory, Reminiscence, and Writing: On the Verge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990). As Krell explains, the image is transitory (*vorübergehend*). Interiorized and remembered in intelligence, the image no longer *exists* as such. It is unconsciously preserved (*bewusstlos aufbewahrt*), in intelligence. The abstractly preserved image requires for its true existence an existent intuiting. *Erinnerung* is the relation of the image to an intuiting whereby each individual intuition conforms to the universal and to representation as such. The image which was the property of intelligence is then released to the exterior. The synthesis of an interior image with its remembered existence is representation proper (*das Vorstellen*).

20. “Like the dis-appearing of an apparition [*comme dis-paraitre d’une apparition*]” (SM 202/126).

21. See SM.

22. Serge Margel, “Les dénominations orphiques de la survivance: Derrida et la question du pire,” in *L’animal autobiographique*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet (Paris: Galilée, 1999), 460. All further references, abbreviated as AA, are cited in the body of the text.

23. “Specter” is derived from F. *spectre* (sixteenth century) or L. *spectrum*, f. *specere*, to look, see, and “phantom or ghost [*fantôme*]” from ME *fantosme*, *fantome*, f. OF *fantosme* (twelfth century) f. L f. Gk. *phantasma* from *phantazo*, make visible f. *phaino*, show; which is related to *phainesthai*, appearance or appearing before the eyes, and to the brilliance of the day and to phenomenality.

24. This is my rendering of “*C’est que devient alors quasiment visible ce qui n’est visible que pour autant qu’on ne le voit pas en chair et en os.*”

25. I recall Jacques Derrida’s comments during a conference on the topic of “Transcendance, évangile, télévision: les nouvelles nouvelles” at the Institut

néerlandais in Paris in December 1997, when one of the members of the audience commented that the media tend to efface the question of the body, and that in discussions of the media more attention needed to be paid to our “physical presence” and “bodies.” Derrida noted, gesturing toward her, that at the very moment that he was speaking, he was much less sure of “presence” and “the body itself.” He added that he was not sure at all that we were fully in the presence of each other.

26. Jacques Derrida, “Foi et savoir: Les deux sources de la ‘religion’ aux limites de la simple raison,” in *La Religion*, ed. Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo (Paris: Seuil, 1996), 63, trans. Samuel Weber as “Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of ‘Religion’ within the Limits of Mere Reason,” in *Religion*, ed. Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), 47. All further references, abbreviated as Foi, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions. I have silently modified the translation to reflect my reading.

27. Jacques Derrida, “‘A Self-Unsealing Poetic Text’: Poetics and Politics of Witnessing,” trans. Rachel Bowlby, in *Revenge of the Aesthetic: The Place of Literature in Theory Today*, ed. Michael P. Clark (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 189.

28. Jacques Derrida, “Above All, No Journalists!” trans. Samuel Weber, in *Religion and Media*, ed. Hent de Vries and Samuel Weber (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001), 76, emphasis added. All further references, abbreviated as RM, are cited in the body of the text.

29. Jacques Derrida, *Mal d'archive: Une impression freudienne* (Paris: Galilée, 1995), 147, trans. Eric Prenowitz as *Archive Fever* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 94, trans. mod. All further references, abbreviated as MA, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions.

30. This is Peggy Kamuf’s translation of the phrase “*et là il faut me croire*” from Jacques Derrida, “Le ruban de machine à écrire (Limited Ink II),” in *Papier machine: Le ruban de machine à écrire et autres reponses* (Paris: Galilee, 2001), 110, trans. Peggy Kamuf as “Typewriter Ribbon,” in *Without Alibi*, ed. and trans. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002), 132.

31. For a sample study of the modalities of *believing* in ghosts (in Europe from the fifth to the fifteenth centuries), see Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Les revenants: Les vivants et les morts dans la société médiévale* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), trans. Teresa Lavender Fagan as *Ghosts in the Middle Ages: The Living and the Dead in Medieval Society* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998). It is Schmitt’s argument that there was no such thing as an immutable “belief in ghosts” in the Middle Ages and that this belief was always in the process of being shaped and transformed.

32. The dismissal of “ghosts” and their relegation to the realm of children’s stories has a long history in the Anglo-American tradition. The status of ghosts as fodder for supernatural folklore and horror stories may have much to do with the developments occurring between the end of the fifth century and the nineteenth century shaping the West’s relation toward death, as detailed by Jean-Claude

Schmitt in the last chapter of Schmitt, *Les revenants*. Even though Schmitt's study is confined to the Middle Ages, he provides a thumbnail sketch of developments regarding the relationship to ghosts up to the twentieth century. He explains that the impact of Protestant reform (which officially rejected the doctrine of souls in Purgatory and contributed to an increased diabolization of ghosts), the link between the apparition of spirits and belief in sorcery, the transformation of popular beliefs into folklore, the replacement of "messengers of souls" by spiritualists, the evolution of attitudes toward death, and the rise of fantastic literature have all helped shape current Western attitudes toward ghosts.

As regards attitudes toward ghosts in the English-speaking world, we must not underestimate the great influence on our current views of thinkers such as Hobbes and Locke, who often advocated the need to expel ghosts and phantoms in order to secure the limits of rational discourse. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes makes a sustained attack on miracles and wonders, drawing a close connection between "phantasms of the brain" and "dead men's ghosts." He criticizes "the demonology of heathen poets" and "their fabulous doctrine concerning demons, which are but idols, or phantasms of the brain, without any real nature of their own, distinct from human fancy; such as are dead men's ghosts and fairies, and other matter of old wives' tales." Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1994), 398. This attack on ghosts must be thought in conjunction with Hobbes's attempt to delimit, purge, and exorcise language, particularly its figurative dimension. For Hobbes, "Fictitious miracles" and "histories of apparitions" are associated with religion that promotes "conjunction" (ibid., 449, 401–403). "Spirits" which have come to be translated as "ghosts," he comments, "signifieth nothing, neither in heaven nor earth, but the imaginary inhabitant's of man's brain" (ibid., 265; see also 436).

Locke also attributed "the Ideas of Goblins and Sprights" to tales told to children by "foolish Maids." See John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Niddich (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), bk. II, ch. 33, §10, 397–98. For both thinkers, it was important to be able to mark the boundaries between "the enlightened and dark Part of Things" (ibid., I, 1, 7) and to draw clear limits between monstrous figures and rational philosophical discourse. It should be noted that an attack on monsters, chimeras, and ghosts was also a criticism of rhetoric and figurative language, which always had the potential to mislead judgment. T. J. Lustig also notes the above references to Locke and Hobbes and makes very similar observations in *Henry James and the Ghostly* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Thus it would not be surprising to note that literary studies, very broadly speaking, has been more friendly toward the spectral than philosophy has. While it would be impossible to exhaustively cite all the texts that have concerned themselves with all things spectral, I would be remiss not to mention the following: Avital Ronell, *Dictations: On Haunted Writing* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); Laurence A. Rickels, *Aberrations of Mourning: Writing on German Crypts* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988); Herman Rappaport,

Heidegger and Derrida: Reflections on Time and Language (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989); Mark Wigley, *The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida's Haunt* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993); Samuel Weber, *Mass Mediauras: Form, Technics, Media* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996); Jean-Michel Rabaté, *Ghosts of Modernity* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996); Peter Buse and Andrew Stott, eds., *Ghosts: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Michael Sprinker, ed., *Ghostly Demarcations: A Symposium on Specters of Marx* (New York: Verso, 1999); Serge Margel, "Au lieu de profondeur," in *Plasticité*, ed. Catherine Malabou (Paris: Léo Scheer, 2000); and Julian Wolfreys, *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

Permit me here to salute the work of Nicholas Royle, who has single-handedly championed "the ghostly" in numerous texts. See in particular Nicholas Royle, *Telepathy and Literature: Essays on the Reading Mind* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1991); Royle, *The Uncanny* (New York: Routledge, 2003); and Royle, "Blind Cinema," in *Derrida: Screenplay and Essays on the Film*, Kirby Dick and Amy Ziering Kofman, directors (New York: Routledge, 2005).

33. For Derrida's comments regarding the relation between superstition and "scientific positivism" in particular in Freud, see Jacques Derrida, "Mes chances," in *Psyché I: Invention de l'autre* (Paris: Galilée, 1987–1998).

34. See for example: "the essence of believing, here the essence of faith *par excellence*, which can only ever believe in the unbelievable [*l'incroyable*]" (SM 227/143). For a very interesting examination of "belief, confidence, faith, fidelity, credit, credibility, [and] credulity," see Peggy Kamuf, "Melville's Credit Card," in *The Division of Literature: Or the University in Deconstruction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). One of the voices in Michael Naas and Pascale-Anne Brault's "To Believe: An Intransitive Verb? Translating Skepticism in Jacques Derrida's *Memoirs of the Blind*," *Paragraph* 20.2 (July 1997): 105–23, notes that belief or faith—like the ghostly, we might add—takes place at the limits of vision or sight.

35. For another reference, see Derrida's comments on "*croyance aux esprits, aux spectres at aux âmes des revenants (der Glaube an Geister und Gespenster und wiederkehrende Seelen)*" in Freud's *Gradiva* in MA 129–55/83–101, esp. 138–39/88–89 and 147/94–95.

36. Derrida further notes in *Specters of Marx* that the religious "gives to the production of the ghost or of the ideological phantasm its originary form or its paradigm of reference, its first 'analogy'" (SM 264/166).

37. In a brilliant article, Maud Ellmann quotes from Ken McMullen's video: "In the recent film *Ghost Dance*, directed by Ken MacMullen [*sic*], Jacques Derrida is interviewed by an ethereal young woman who asks him if he believes in ghosts. 'That's a hard question,' he smiles, 'because, you see, I *am* a ghost.'" Maud Ellmann, "The Ghosts of Ulysses," in *James Joyce: The Artist and the Labyrinth*, ed. Augustine Martin (London: Ryan Publishing, 1990), 193. A note indicates that Ellman's translation is "condensed and approximate." In his account of the

filming of the movie, Derrida does not mention this exchange. See “The Ghost Dance: An Interview with Jacques Derrida by Andrew Payne and Mark Lewis,” trans. Jean-Luc Svoboda, *Public 2* (1989): 60–73.

Maud Ellmann’s acutely perspicacious essay, first delivered as the Richard Ellmann Memorial Address at the Eleventh International James Joyce Symposium in Venice in June 1988, in which she speaks of Joyce’s ghost and in which she calls *Ulysses* “a book about mourning” (Ellmann, “Ghosts of Ulysses,” 197), also mentions Stephen Daedalus’s famous definition of a ghost: “‘What is a ghost?’ Stephen said with tingling energy. ‘One who has faded into impalpability through death, through absence, through change of manners.’” Remark- ing on Stephen’s “curiously undefinitive” answer, Ellmann adds: “He could be wiser to inquire if anyone, or anything, is not a ghost, because the living are already almost dead, dispersed among the names and images they leave behind to haunt succeeding generations” (ibid., 196). Further, criticizing our culture’s “*vivocentrism*” which tries to protect the living from the dead by insisting upon an opposition between them, she queries “what could be blinder than refusing to believe in ghosts?” (ibid., 193). Toward the end of her essay, Ellmann confides in the reader that “the ghost of my father, Richard Ellmann, has been visiting me regularly in my dreams” (ibid., 217). She recounts three of her recent dreams about him, the last of which goes as follows:

The last time my father visited was the ghostliest day of the calendar, the 29th of February. In the dream, however, it was Bloomsday, and I was at an Irish shebeen revelling with two companions. Exhilarated by the music we shouted in unison. “I want to dance!” We seized the piano. One of my friends began to play elaborate arpeggios, his fingers dancing over the keys. The other man, I now saw was my father, said “I want to sing tenor aria but I need Maudie to help me reach some of the high notes.” I agreed, although I was nervous about singing in public, and I also thought it odd that my father should be so eager to perform, since he was virtually tone-deaf and had lost the power of speech before he died. He began tunelessly enough, but slowly, stealthily, his voice rose into a tenor of such unearthly sweetness that every listener was wonderstruck. I began to weep. “Why are you crying?” my father asked. I said, “I miss you.” “How can you miss me when I’m right here?” “But you’re *dead!*,” I exclaimed. “Well, I guess there is *that* to consider!,” he laughed, as if it were the least of inconveniences. Now that our song was finished I went to take my place among the audience again: but as I passed each person I demanded, “Was that not my father?” And no one could deny it. The vision faded: I woke up to remember I was fatherless. But now, as I resume my place amongst the living, my dream begins again, and I leave you with my ghost-inspired question. Was that not my father?

Ibid., 218.

38. Jacques Derrida, “Le cinéma et ses fantômes,” [Interview with Antoine de Baecque and Thierry Jousse] *Cahiers du cinéma* 556 (April 2001): 83.

39. Jacques Derrida, *La vérité en peinture* (Paris: Aubier-Flammarion, 1978), 426, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Ian McLeod as *The Truth in Painting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 373. I have very slightly modified the translation to reflect my reading.

5. Phantasmaphotography

NOTE: The term “phantasmaphotograph” comes from Jacques Derrida, “Lecture de *Droit de regards*,” in Marie-Françoise Plissart, *Droit de regards* (Paris: Minuit, 1985), xxxii, trans. David Wills as *The Right of Inspection* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1998), unpaginated. All further references, abbreviated DdR, are cited in the body of the text, with page references to the French version. The translation has been occasionally slightly modified.

1. Jacques Derrida, “Les morts de Roland Barthes,” *Psyché: Invention de l’autre* (Paris: Galilée, 1987), originally published in *Poétique* 47 (September 1981): 269–92, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas as “The Deaths of Roland Barthes,” in *The Work of Mourning*, ed. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). This a revised translation which was originally published in *Continental Philosophy I: Philosophy and Non-Philosophy since Merleau-Ponty*, ed. Hugh J. Silverman, (New York: Routledge, 1988): 259–97. All further references, abbreviated Psy, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions.

For discussions of Derrida’s essay on Barthes, see Bernard Stiegler, “Mémoires gauches,” *Revue philosophique de la France et l’Etranger* 2 (April–June 1990): 361–94; Rudy Steinmetz, “Deuil et photographie,” in *Les styles de Jacques Derrida* (Brussels: De Boeck, 1994), 173–93; Jean-Michel Rabaté, “Barthes as Ghostwriter,” in *The Ghosts of Modernity* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), Marian Hobson, *Jacques Derrida: Opening Lines* (New York: Routledge, 1998); and Laurent Milesi, “Between Barthes, Blanchot, and Mallarmé: Skia(Photo)-Graphies of Derrida,” in *The French Connections of Jacques Derrida*, ed. Julian Wolfreys, John Brannigan, and Ruth Robbins (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), 175–209.

2. See Derrida’s comments on why the translation of “*la chambre claire*” as “camera lucida,” accurate though it is as a translation for the apparatus known as camera lucida, does not quite capture all the meanings of the French term: “*La chambre claire*, the light room, no doubt says more than *camera lucida*, the name of the apparatus anterior to photography that Barthes opposes to *camera obscura*” (Psy 286/47).

According to Helmut Gernsheim, the term *camera lucida* was used mainly to refer to an apparatus or instrument. In 1668, Robert Hooke was the first to describe the “camera lucida” as “a contrivance to make the picture of anything appear on a wall, cupboard, or within a picture-frame, etc., in the midst of a light room in the daytime, or in the night time in any room which is enlightened with a considerable number of candles” (Gernsheim, *Origins of Photography* [New York: Thames and Hudson, 1982], 15). Hooke’s contrivance or arrangement was

unrelated to the camera obscura. Nor did it have a connection to William Hyde Wollaston's camera lucida, introduced in 1807, which was a small optical *instrument* for drawing in broad daylight (Gernsheim, *Origins of Photography*, 19).

On the camera lucida see Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990).

3. Cf. Roland Barthes, *La chambre claire. Note sur la photographie* (Paris: Seuil, 1980), 172, trans. Richard Howard as *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Noonday Press, 1981), 111, §46. All further references, abbreviated as CC, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions, then the section number.

4. After all Barthes was the author of a text entitled *Système de la mode* (*The Fashion System*).

5. A useful summary of the various interpretations of the Barthesian *punctum* can be found in Michael Fried's more recent "Barthes's *Punctum*," *Critical Inquiry* 31 (Spring 2005): 539–574.

6. Derrida is, of course, referring to Walter Benjamin's "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit" in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. I/2 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980), trans. Edmund Jephcott and Harry Zohn as "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility," in Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, 4 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996–2003), 3:101–131, 4:251–82. In "The Deaths of Roland Barthes," commenting on the fact that that both Barthes and Benjamin shared an interest in details, Derrida notes: "Benjamin saw in the enlargement of the fragment or minute signifier a point of intersection between the era of psychoanalysis and that of technical reproduction, in cinematography, photography, etc." (Psy 277/38–39). In "Lecture de *Droit de regards*," Derrida reiterates that "the *invention* of photography and the *advent* of psychoanalysis *concur*" (DdR, xxiii). He adds that these "two religions or two cultures of 'detail'" fully understand the power of magnifying details (ibid., xxiii). For a brilliant account of Benjamin's writings on photography, see Eduardo Cadava, *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997).

7. See the brief remarks on suspension in Roland Barthes, "L'image," in *Le bruissement de la langue* (Paris: Seuil, 1984), trans. Richard Howard as "The Image," in *The Rustle of Language* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986). Referring to the *epoche* in terms of "suspension of judgment," Barthes adds that "suspension is not negation" (ibid., 395/356).

8. Cf. Psy 295/57. See also the reference to the "irreducible referential [*référentielle*]" (Psy 299/61) among others.

9. In "Lecture de *Droit de regards*," Derrida emphasizes that photography does not suspend reference to "reality as such" but only to a certain type of reality. In doing so, it opens a relationship to the wholly other:

But, as soon as [*mais, dès lors que*] the referent itself consists of enframed photogrammes [*photogrammes encadrés*], the index of the wholly other [*l'indice du tout autre*], how marked it may be [*si marqué qu'il soit*],

endlessly defers reference [*n'en renvoie pas moins la référence à l'infini*]. . . . It does not suspend reference, it indefinitely defers [*éloigne*] a certain type of reality, that of the *perceptible* referent. It gives the prerogative to the other [*Il donne droit à l'autre*], opens the infinite uncertainty of the relation to the wholly other, this relation without relation. (DdR xxxv, trans. mod.)

10. "The name alone makes possible the plurality of deaths" (Psy 285/46).

11. In his autobiography *Quand j'étais photographe* (Paris: Editions d'aujourd'hui, 1979), the famous photographer Nadar (real name Gaspard Félix Tournachon) discusses Balzac's belief that photography led to a constant loss of spectral layers by all physical bodies. Every time someone's photograph is taken, a spectral layer is removed from the body and transferred to the photograph. Nadar writes:

Donc, selon Balzac, chaque corps dans la nature se trouve composé de séries de spectres, en couches superposées à l'infini, foliacées en pellicules infinitésimales. . . . Chaque opération Daguerrienne venait donc surprendre, détachait et retenait en se l'appliquant une des couches du corps objecté. De là pour ledit corps, et à chaque opération renouvelée, perte évidente d'un de ses spectres, c'est-à-dire d'une part de son essence constitutive.

Ibid., 6. A portion of Nadar's autobiography has been translated by Thomas Repensek as "My Life as a Photographer," *October* 5 (Summer 1978): 7–28. Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1978), 158–59, refers to Balzac's views on photography. (My thanks to Jean-Christophe Ferrari for this reference.) Barthes mentions Sontag's text without discussing Balzac explicitly (CC 126/80–81 §34).

It is not clear whether Nadar had based his views on a particular text of Balzac, but a possible source may be Honoré de Balzac, *Le Cousin Pons* (1848), in *La comédie humaine*, vol. 6, ed. Marcel Bouteron (Paris: Gallimard, Pléiade, 1965), 625, trans. Herbert J. Hunt as *Cousin Pons* (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1968), 131:

Si quelqu'un fût venu dire à Napoléon qu'un édifice et qu'un homme sont incessamment et à toute heure représentés par une image dans l'atmosphère, que tous les objets y ont un spectre saisissable, il aurait logé cet homme à Charenton. . . . Et c'est là cependant ce que Daguerre a prouvé par sa découverte.

If any one had come and told Napoleon that a man or a building is incessantly and continuously represented by a picture in the atmosphere, that all existing objects project into it kind of specter which can be captured and perceived, he would have consigned him to Charenton [as a lunatic]. . . . And yet that is what Daguerre's discovery proved!

Also:

Ainsi, de même que les corps se projettent réellement dans l'atmosphère en y laissant subsister ce spectre saisi par le daguerréotype qui l'arrête au passage; de même, les idées, créations réelles et agissantes, s'impriment dans ce qu'il faut nommer l'atmosphère du monde spirituel, y produisent des effets, y vivent *spectralement* (car il est nécessaire de forger des mots pour exprimer des phénomènes innommés), et dès lors certaines créatures douées de facultés rares peuvent parfaitement apercevoir ces formes ou ces traces d'idées.

Just as physical objects do in fact project themselves on to the atmosphere so that it retains the "spectre" which the daguerreotype can fix and capture, in the same way ideas, which are real and active creations, imprint themselves on what we must call the "atmosphere" of the spiritual world, produce effects in it *spectrally* (one must coin words in order to express unnamed phenomena); if that be granted, certain creatures endowed with rare faculties are perfectly capable of discerning those forms or traces of ideas.

Ibid., 626/133. Of course, we should not forget that Balzac, who was an early reader of Emanuel Swedenborg and Jacob Böhme (see *Louis Lambert*), who had a great interest in the "supernatural" (see *Séraphita*), phrenology, physiognomy, Mesmerism, and animal magnetism (see Balzac, "Avant-propos," in *La Comédie humaine*, vol. 1, ed. Marcel Bouteron (Paris: Gallimard, Pléiade, 1965), 12), and who wrote a number of "fantastic tales" such as *L'elixir de longue vie*, was also the author of *Les contes philosophiques* (1830–1832) and the *Etudes philosophiques* (1835). See Pierre-Georges Castex, *Le conte fantastique en France: De Nodier à Maupassant* (Paris: José Corti, 1962). Castex, a preeminent Balzacian, is also the editor of the new Pléiade edition of Balzac's works.

12. Balzac's view is obviously reminiscent of the Empedoclean and Democritean belief that all objects continually emit *eidōla* that are exact replicas of them. An *eidōlon* is distinguished from an *eikon*, an image, which is produced in the eyes by *eidōla*. For Empedocles, see Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz, eds., *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Zurich/Berlin: Weidemannsche Verlag, 1952), DK 31B109a in particular, and DK 31 A90. No complete translation of the Diels and Kranz version is available in English; however, Jean Bollack, *Empédocle*, vol. 2, *Les origines: Edition et traduction des fragments et témoignages* (Paris: Minuit, 1969), provides a translation of all the fragments and testimonia. Bollack's exhaustive commentaries make up the two-part companion *Empédocle*, vol. 3, *Les origines: Commentaire 1 et 2* (Paris: Minuit, 1969). For Democritus, see DK 68A 77, 68A 135, and 67 A29, translated in C. C. W. Taylor, ed., *The Atomists: Leucippus and Democritus: Fragments* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999). See also Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Figures, idoles, masques* (Paris: Julliard, 1990), 36–37. Barthes' references to "emanations" perhaps allude to Jean-Paul Sartre, the dedicatee of *La chambre claire*; see, for example, Sartre, *L'imaginaire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1940), 53.

13. "By the time—at the instant—that the *punctum* rends space, the reference and death are in it together in the photograph" (Psy 292/53).

14. For the relation between a time of lag and delay (*retard*) and photography, see Jacques Derrida, “Demeure, Athènes,” in Jean-François Bonhomme’s book of photographs, *Athènes: À l’ombre de l’Acropole* (Athens: Olkos, 1996); republished as Derrida, *Demeure, Athènes* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 2009), English translation forthcoming from Fordham University Press.

15. Precision is necessary here: the referent, as has been already described, is not an *already existing entity* that emits *eidōla*. The spectrality of the photographic referent *resembles* that of emanations or emissions.

16. For an account of the relation between photography and the production of ghostly images, see Tom Gunning, “Phantom Images and Modern Manifestations: Spirit Photography, Magic Theater, Trick Films, and Photography’s Uncanny,” in *Fugitive Images: From Photography to Video*, ed. Patrice Petro (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 42–71. That photography was associated with Spiritualism from its inception has to do more with its *spectral potential* than any lack of sophistication in the technological capacity of the early instruments.

17. See CC 172/111 §46 for the distinction between looking and seeing.

18. Cf. CC 49/27 §10.

19. See Jacques Derrida, *La voix et le phénomène* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967), 82, trans. David B. Allison as *Speech and Phenomena: And Other Essays on Husserl’s Theory of Signs* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 73. Also cf. Edmund Husserl, *Formale und transzendente Logik: Versuch einer Kritik der logischen Vernunft*, ed. Paul Janssen, *Husserliana*, vol. 17 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974); trans. Dorion Cairns as *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969). In chap. 1, §13, Husserl begins by studying logic from the Aristotelian perspective, i.e. analytics, which treats predicative judgments or assertions. Thus “apophantic analytics” (from *apophansis* meaning assertion) studies judgments in the propositional form. The determining judgment “S is p” (where S denotes a substrate and p a determination) is the “primitive form” from which other “particularizations and modifications” are derived (45/51). Suzanne Bachelard, *La logique de Husserl: Etude sur Logique formelle et transcendente* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957), 63, trans. Lester E. Embree as *A Study of Husserl’s Formal and Transcendental Logic* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 11, emphasizes that “there is only one truly fundamental form of judgment” from which other forms can be engendered by derivation, and that is “S is p.”

20. See, e.g., another text, also published in 1980, Jacques Derrida, “Envois,” in *La Carte postale* (Paris: Flammarion, 1980), where Derrida plays with Socrates-Plato, pS, Sp, S/p, S and [et] p, S hates [hait] p, I speculate, the primal scene, Psychology-Philosophie, and many other similar formulations. For a more recent occasion, see Jacques Derrida, “Sauver les phénomènes—pour Salvatore Puglia,” *Contretemps* 1 (Winter 1995): 14–25, where Skia-Photographia, *psykhe* or *soma*, and, of course, Salvatore Puglia are put into play.

21. Also cited by Derrida (Psy 280/41).

22. See, e.g., “If the photograph bespeaks the unique death, the death of the unique, this death immediately repeats itself, as such, and is itself elsewhere” (Psy 296/57). Also “The instantaneous or instamatic in photography, the snapshot [*L’instantané photographique*], would be but the most striking metonymy within the modern technological age of an older instantaneity” (Psy 299/61).

23. See Barthes, *Le bruissement de la langue*, 228/198.

24. Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), 143, trans. Richard Howard as *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* (New York: Noonday Press, 1977), 161.

25. Eduardo Cadava and Paola Cortés-Rocca’s beautiful “Notes on Love and Photography,” *October* 116 (Spring 2006): 3–34, came to my attention after this chapter was written. I could not recommend it more highly.

6. By the Board: Derrida Approaching Blanchot

NOTE: I have referred to Blanchot’s books by their French titles for two reasons: (1) Even though many of Blanchot’s books have been recently translated into English, they have long been familiar to the readers of Blanchot by their French titles, and (2) while I have an enormous respect for the difficult task and the admirable results of the translators of Blanchot, the deliberately ambivalent titles of some of Blanchot’s books does not (and cannot) come across in the given titles of the published translations.

1. Jacques Derrida, *Parages* (Paris: Galilée, 1986). All further references, abbreviated as Par, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French edition, then the English version, where such exists. The first edition of *Parages*, which I have worked with in this chapter, is a collection of four essays, each previously published separately. A portion of “Pas” was originally published as Jacques Derrida, “Pas I,” in *Gamma: Lire Blanchot* 3–4 (1976): 111–215. It remains untranslated and is, perhaps, untranslatable. The other three essays in *Parages* have been translated: “Survivre: Journal de bord,” trans. James Hulbert as “Living On: Border Lines,” in *Deconstruction and Criticism*, ed. Harold Bloom, Paul de Man, et al. (New York: Continuum, 1979), 75–176 [This essay itself consists of two texts, the main text and the “Journal de bord,” henceforth abbreviated as JdB], “La loi du genre,” trans. Avital Ronell as “The Law of Genre,” in Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge (New York: Routledge, 1992), and “Titre à préciser,” trans. Tom Conley as “Title to Be Specified,” *Sub-Stance* 31 (1981): 5–22. While throughout the chapter, I have only worked with the French texts, I have provided the English translations where available, modifying them where necessary. In the case of “Pas,” I have provided, what would have to be preliminary translations. A second edition of *Parages*, revised and expanded with a new essay entitled “Maurice Blanchot est mort,” was published by Galilée in 2003. This chapter has not attempted to take account of the new text.

2. At the beginning of *L’entretien infini* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), in a chapter entitled “Thought and the Exigency of Continuity,” Blanchot claims that

throughout the Western tradition, philosophy has been inexorably linked to teaching and institutions. To do philosophy, to philosophize, is to teach, and the philosopher, at least from Kant onward, has always been primarily a professor. It is impossible, according to Blanchot, to disentangle teaching from the privilege of speech. Further, it would be too easy to forget the relation established between the exercise of Reason and the functions of the state. If philosophy has primarily been dialectics (with its concomitant demands for identity, coherence, continuity, etc.), then it would be fair to ask what kind of works fit (and do not fit) the academic requirements of teaching. It is interesting to note that in the introduction to *Parages*, Derrida mentions that the essays that make up the book arose out of teaching certain works of Blanchot in his seminars over a period of several years. His own essays, he writes, in their own way, make teaching “a theme” (Par 13).

3. This sentence, which appears as the first line of *Celui qui ne m'accompagnait pas*, may be alternatively translated as “I sought, this time, to broach it.” See Maurice Blanchot, *Celui qui ne m'accompagnait pas* (Paris: Gallimard, 1953), 7, trans. Lydia Davis as *The One Who Was Standing Apart from Me* (Barrytown, N.Y.: Station Hill Press, 1993), 1. All further references, abbreviated as CQ, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions. The “l” in “l'aborder” could refer to him, her, or it. See Thomas Pepper, “Because the Nights: Blanchot’s *Celui qui ne m'accompagnait pas*,” in *Singularities: Extremes of Theory in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). For other commentaries on CQ, see Brian Fitch, *Lire les récits de Maurice Blanchot* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992); David R. Ellison, “Blanchot and Narrative,” in *Of Words and the World: Referential Anxiety in Contemporary French Fiction* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 104–31; and Anne-Lise Schulte Nordholt, *Maurice Blanchot: L'écriture comme expérience du dehors* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1995).

4. The common translation of the French word *citation* is, of course, “quotation.” For the use of “*citation*” in Derrida, however, see Jacques Derrida, “Signature, événement, contexte,” in *Marges de la philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972), trans. Alan Bass as “Signature Event Context,” in *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); and Derrida, *Limited Inc.*, trans. Samuel Weber (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1988).

5. Derrida’s reference to *limen* is naturally to the Latin word that means “threshold, entrance, or house.”

6. It is difficult to render *éloignement* adequately in English. It must be remembered that it has connotations of estrangement and removal as well as distance.

7. Derrida remarks that “*eau*” names at the same time the letter, the syllable, or the word *and* the thing. Also see Par 90.

8. Christophe Bident, “Le secret Blanchot,” *Critique* 99 (September 1994): 301–20, 301, compares the various approaches to Blanchot’s *récits* over the decades and judges Derrida’s reading to be “by far the best interpretation of Blanchotian *récits*” given so far.

9. See Maurice Blanchot, *Après coup* (Paris: Minuit, 1983), trans. Paul Auster as *Vicious Circles: Two Fictions and "After the Fact,"* (Barrytown, N.Y.: Station Hill Press, 1985). This volume contains two *récits*, "L'idylle" and "Le dernier mot," dated "1935, 1936," initially published under the title *Le ressassement éternel* (Paris: Minuit, 1951), as well as a new afterword, "Après coup," written for republication.

10. Maurice Blanchot, *L'entretien infini* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 74, emphasis added, trans. Susan Hanson as *The Infinite Conversation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 52. All further references, abbreviated as EI, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions. I have occasionally modified the translation to reflect my reading.

11. See, e.g., Emmanuel Levinas, *Totalité et infini: Essai sur l'extériorité* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1961), trans. Alphonso Lingis as *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), where Levinas notes "L'absolument Autre, c'est Autrui" (9/39) and "L'autre en tant qu'autre est Autrui" (42–3/71).

12. See, e.g., "the unknown, the foreign: *autrui*," EI 76/53 and 82/63.

13. Blanchot's usage of the word "commerce" is a reference to Levinas's phrase "commerce with the obscure." See Emmanuel Levinas, "La réalité et son ombre," *Les temps modernes* 38 (November 1948): 771–89, 773, trans. Séan Hand as "Reality and Its Shadow," in *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Séan Hand (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1989), 132. All further references, abbreviated as RO, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions. This article was reprinted in *Revue des Sciences Humaines* 185, 1 (1982): 103–17, and collected in *Les imprévus de l'histoire* (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1994).

14. Blanchot's emphasis and preference will vary over the span of his texts. While his views of alterity led him to a preference for the use *l'autre* in *L'entretien infini* and *Le pas au-delà*, in the 1980s, especially after the publication of Levinas's *Otherwise than Being*, Blanchot focuses his attention on *autrui* (see, e.g., *La communauté inavouable*).

15. As proof that the term *la rive* is shared between Derrida, Blanchot, and Levinas, see Derrida's reference in "Violence and Metaphysics" to Levinas's writing as "the infinite insistence of the waves on a beach [*des eaux contre une plage*]: return and repetition, always, of the same wave against the same shore [*la même rive*]." Jacques Derrida, "Violence et métaphysique," in *L'écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), 124, trans. Alan Bass as "Violence and Metaphysics," in *Writing and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 312 n. 7. Also note the occurrence of "*les bords*," "*les effets de bord*," "*déborde*," and "*la bordure*" in the first few pages of Jacques Derrida, "En ce moment même dans cet ouvrage me voici," in *Psyché: Inventions de l'autre* (Paris: Galilée, 1987), trans. Ruben Berezdivin as "At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am," in *Re-Reading Levinas*, ed. Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

For an interesting use of “*la rive*” and “*abordage*,” see also Jacques Derrida, *La carte postale: De Socrate à Freud et au-delà* (Paris: Aubier-Flammarion, 1980), 279, trans. Alan Bass as *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 261:

Dérive désigne un mouvement trop continu: plutôt indifférencié, trop homogène, il paraît éloigner sans saccade d’une origine supposée, d’une rive encore, et d’un bord au trait indivisible. Or la rive se partage en son trait même, et il y a des effets d’ancrage, des effondrements de bord, des stratégies d’abordage et débordement, des strictures de rattachement ou d’amarrage, des lieux de réversion, d’étranglement ou de *double bind*.

Also note the juxtaposition of “*l’autre*” and “*l’autre rive*” in Jacques Derrida, *De l’esprit: Heidegger et la question* (Paris: Galilée, 1987), 142 trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby as *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 90.

16. I have attempted to show the importance of this essay for Blanchot in an unpublished paper, “*Aux deux-là: Blanchot’s Image in Levinas’s Shadow.*”

17. See, e.g., Maurice Blanchot, *Le dernier homme* (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), 17, trans. Lydia Davis as *The Last Man* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 7.

18. Maurice Blanchot, *L’amitié* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg as *Friendship* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997). All further references, abbreviated as Am, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions.

19. Maurice Blanchot, *L’arrêt de mort* (Paris: Gallimard, 1948), 107 trans. Lydia Davis as *Death Sentence* (Barrytown, N.Y.: Station Hill Press, 1978), 67. All further references, abbreviated as AM, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions.

20. Blanchot’s use of the word “sovereign,” a term that he shares with Bataille, is not reflected in the published translation. For “sovereignty” in Bataille’s work, see Georges Bataille, *Le coupable*, trans. Bruce Boone as *Guilty* (Venice, Calif.: Lapis Press, 1988); Bataille, *Méthode de méditation* in *Oeuvres complètes*, 12 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1970–1988), 5:213–23; and Bataille, *La souveraineté, La part maudite III*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 8, trans. Robert Hurley as *The Accursed Share II, III*, (New York: Zone Books, 1993). The term “*souveraineté*” appears in Bataille’s writings as early as 1933; see Bataille, “La structure psychologique du fascisme,” in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 1.

21. This is translated as “the shop window experience” by Lydia Davis.

22. For the phenomenon of the *vitre*, see Anne-Lise Schulte Nordholt, *Maurice Blanchot: L’écriture comme expérience du dehors* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1995), 260–62. Derrida makes note of this passage in Par 184.

23. Maurice Blanchot, *Au moment voulu* (Paris: Gallimard, 1951), 94, translated by Lydia Davis as *When The Time Comes* (Barrytown, N.Y.: Station Hill Press, 1985), 40–41.

24. Derrida has a brief discussion of “*la vitre*” and “*la structure du ‘sous verre’*” (translated as “this ‘under glass’ structure”) in the second part of Jacques Derrida, “La double séance,” in *La dissémination* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), 263, trans. Barbara Johnson as “The Double Session,” in *Dissemination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 233.

25. Maurice Blanchot, *L’attente l’oubli* (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), 115, trans. John Gregg as *Awaiting Oblivion* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 60, cited in Par 32. All further references, abbreviated as AO, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions.

26. For *Entfernung*, see, e.g., Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen, Germany: Max Niemeyer, 1953), 105, §23, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson as *Being and Time* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 138.

27. In this section I have resorted to liberal paraphrasing of Derrida’s analysis of “*pas*” in Blanchot. Considering that any commentary or analysis on *pas* would be impossible without a serious engagement with the translation of Derrida’s passages, and since abler translators have so far given up the task of rendering “Pas” into English, I have not dared do much more than give loose English approximations or summaries of Derrida’s account in this section. For this reason, I have often used Derrida’s words without attribution and have not provided citations in every case. For a rich analysis of “Pas,” see Marian Hobson, *Jacques Derrida: Opening Lines* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

28. “Le mot *pas* est nom ou adverbe, adverbe d’indécision quant à la négation (demi-paire de la négation qui annonce, dans le doublement immédiat et inévitable du pas, de l’autre pas, dans le pas même, un double pas sans négation de négation et sans dénégation), pas sans négation” (Par 52).

29. “Il y a *toujours deux pas*. L’un dans l’autre mais sans inclusion possible, l’un affectant l’autre immédiatement mais à le franchir en s’éloignant de lui. Toujours deux pas, franchissant jusqu’à leur négation, selon le retour éternel de la transgression passive et de l’affirmation répétée. Les deux pas, le double pas désuni et à lui-même allié pourtant, l’un passant l’autre aussitôt, passant en lui et provoquant dès lors une double prétérition instantanée, mais interminable. . . . Ils ne s’opposent plus, dans leur différence infinie, que le pas à l’autre pas” (Par 59).

30. “Le pas de plus—le pas autre—travaille silencieusement son homonyme, il le hante ou le parasite, il franchit dans les deux sens, d’un seul coup, les deux limites. Sa transgression n’est pas encore un travail ou une activité, elle est passive et ne transgresse rien” (Par 57).

31. “La structure du pas exclut que le double effet du pas (annulation/conservation de l’au-delà) soit une négation de la négation revenant à inclure, intérioriser, idéaliser pour soi le pas” (Par 45).

32. “C’est l’étrange procès dont la négation de la négation reste en son puissant système un effet déterminé du pas, un pas.”

33. For “*viens*” in Blanchot, see CQ and AM. For “*venez*,” see AO.

34. For a brief description of this “come,” which demands or desires nothing and is not an order or an imperative, see Par 74.

35. “Viens: dans ce suspens de proximité é-loignante, le bord de l’abord . . . se dissimule sans pourtant se présenter ailleurs” (Par 96).

36. *Lusis* denotes loosening, relaxation, or release. For *analuein* as untangling, untying, detaching, or freeing, see Jacques Derrida, “Résistances,” in *Résistances—de la psychanalyse* (Paris: Galilée, 1996), 15, trans. Peggy Kamuf as “Resistances,” in *Resistances: of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, Pascale-Anne Brault, and Michael Naas (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), 3.

37. The translation of the term *le neutre* in Blanchot has led to many interpretative difficulties. Neither a concept nor an entity, *le neutre* cannot simply be translated as either “the neuter” (neither feminine nor masculine) or “the neutral” (referring to impartiality or refusal to engage in conflict). Despite its unseemliness, I have left it in the French throughout most of my account. Only in some cases, I have resorted to the term “the neutral.” There are a number of fine texts on the *neutre* in Blanchot. For a mere sampling, see Roger Laporte, “Le oui, le non, le neutre,” *Critique* 66.229 (1966): 579–90; Mike Holland, “Le hiatus théorique: le neutre,” *Gramma* 3/4 (1976): 53–70; Jacques Rolland, “Pour une approche de la question du neutre,” *Exercices de la patience* 2 (1981): 11–45; Leslie Hill, “Writing the Neuter,” in *Blanchot: Extreme Contemporary* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 103–57; and Hill, “‘A Kind of Struggle’: Blanchot, Kafka, the Neutre,” *Oxford Literary Review* 22 (2000): 74–93; Manola Antonioli, *L’écriture de Maurice Blanchot: Fiction et théorie* (Paris: Editions Kimé, 1999); Marlène Zarader, *L’être et le neutre: À partir de Maurice Blanchot* (Paris: Verdier, 2001); and Christophe Bident, “The Movements of the Neuter,” in *After Blanchot: Literature, Criticism, Philosophy*, ed. Leslie Hill, Brian Nelson, and Dimitris Vardoulakis (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005).

38. Blanchot’s first mention that literature is “this passage from *Ich* to *Er*, from I to It/He [*Je au Il*]” is in Maurice Blanchot, “Kafka et la littérature,” in *La part deu feu* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), 29, trans. Charlotte Mandell as “Kafka and Literature,” in *The Work of Fire* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995), 21.

39. On the narrative voice, see Daniel Wilhem, *Maurice Blanchot: La voix narrative* (Paris: Union Générale d’Editions, 1974).

40. Blanchot’s use of phantom terms is almost always in conjunction with or in relation to *le neutre*. For example, in *L’entretien infini*, in a discussion of experience and suffering, Blanchot writes of a neutral suffering tinged with spectrality, “of a suffering that is almost indifferent [*comme indifférente*], not suffered, but neutral [*neutre*] (a phantom of suffering [*un fantôme de souffrance*])” (EI 63/44–45).

41. Also note:

Procès comme arrêt de mort *indécidable*, *ni* la vie *ni* la mort, SUR VIVRE plutôt, le procès même qui appartient sans appartenir au procès de la vie et

de la mort. Survivre ne s'oppose pas à vivre, pas plus que cela ne s'identifie que la différence de distinction, indécis, ou, en un sens très rigoureux, "vague," évasif, évasé comme on le dirait d'un bord ou de ses parages.

Par 179; emphasis added. James Hulbert renders the following translation:

Proceeding, progression, as *arrêt de mort* that cannot be decided, neither life nor death, but rather LIVING ON, the very progression that belongs, without belonging, to the progression of life and death. Living on is not the opposite of living. The relationship is different, different from being identical, from the difference of distinctions—undecided, or, in a very rigorous sense, "vague," *vagus*, evasive, *évasé* [splayed, beveled], like a bevelled edge [*bord*].

Par 135.

42. In Derrida's later texts, the terms "spectral" and "spectrality" are always associated with the undecidable or the logic of neither/nor. For examples, see Jacques Derrida, "Artefactualités" in *Echographies—de la télévision (Entretiens filmés avec Bernard Stiegler)* (Paris: Galilée, 1996), 30, trans. Jennifer Bajorek as *Echographies of Television Filmed Interviews* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2002), 22, where, discussing a spectral law, the phantom or the revenant is said to be neither present nor absent (*ni . . . ni*); and Derrida, *Résistances*, 30: "it is an *apparition* (and all this deconstruction is also a logic of the spectral and haunting, of surviving [*la survivance*], neither present nor absent, alive or dead [*ni présent ni absent, ni vivant ni mort*])." In Derrida, "Comme si c'était possible, 'within such limits,'" *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 205.3 (1998): 497–529, 498, Derrida is even more explicit about associating spectrality with the logic of neither/nor: "*une pensée de la spectralité (ni vive, ni morte, mais vive et morte)*."

43. Christophe Bident, in his indispensable *Maurice Blanchot: Partenaire invisible* (Seussel, France: ChampVallon, 1998), 325, notes that stairways and bay windows are also sites of the apparition of specters in Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*, a book commented on by Blanchot in "Le tour d'écrou," *Nouvelle Nouvelle Revue Française* 24 (December 1954): 1062–72.

44. "As though all this had already taken place, and once again, once again" (CQ 37/18).

45. Jacques Rolland, *Parcours de l'autrement: Lecture d'Emmanuel Levinas* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2000), 75. This phrase is said of one of Blanchot's *récits*, *The Last Man*.

7. *Salut*-ations: Between Derrida and Nancy

1. Jacques Derrida, "Corona vitae (fragments)," in *Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde* (Paris: Galilée, 2003), 144. All further references, abbreviated as CFU, are cited in the body of the text.

2. "Corona vitae (fragments)" was originally published in *Granel: L'éclat, le combat, l'ouvert*, ed. Jean-Luc Nancy and Elisabeth Rigal (Paris: Belin, 2001).

All further references to this version, abbreviated as G, are cited in the body of the text.

3. Gérard Granel, “Ludwig Wittgenstein ou le refus de la couronne,” in *Ecrits logiques et politiques* (Paris: Galilee, 1990), 32. All further references, abbreviated as EL, are cited in the body of the text.

4. “Niemand kann einen Gedanken für mich denken, wie mir niemand als ich den Hut aufsetzen kann,” Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, ed. G. H. Von Wright in collaboration with Heikki Nyman, trans. Peter Winch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 2–2e. The English translation is a bilingual edition. The German text is *Vermischte Bemerkungen* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977), trans. Gérard Granel as *Remarques mêlées*, 2nd ed. (Mauvezin: T.E.R, 1990), 11. Wittgenstein’s remark dates from 1929.

5. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, “Derrida à Strasbourg,” in *Penser à Strasbourg* (Paris: Galilee/Ville de Strasbourg, 2004), 15.

6. Derrida praises Nancy’s exactitude in Jacques Derrida, *Le toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy* (Paris: Galilée, 2000). All further references, abbreviated as LT, are cited in the body of the text; unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine. Most interestingly, the words “resuscitate” and “resurrection” turn up in this passage: “L’exactitude . . . c’est son mot et c’est sa chose. Il les a réinventés, il les a réveillés, il les a ressuscités . . . Je crois cela assez nouveau. Comme une résurrection. Exacte est la probité de sa signature” (LT 17).

7. Derrida writes: “car l’impertinence têtue de Nancy, l’insolence que j’aime et admire le plus, c’est qu’au coeur de l’extase, de l’offrande, du rapt, de l’abandon de soi à l’autre, voire du sacrifice, il rappelle résolument—c’est l’homme le plus résolu que je connaisse—, il rappelle exactement—je ne connais personne de plus exact ou ponctuel que lui” (LT 304).

8. Jacques Derrida with Jean-Luc Nancy, “Responsabilité—Du sens à venir,” in *Sens en tous sens: Autour de Jean-Luc Nancy* (Galilee, 2004), 168. All further references, abbreviated as STS, are cited in the body of the text.

9. Jacques Derrida, “Avances,” preface to Serge Margel, *Le tombeau du dieu artisan: Sur Platon* (Paris: Minuit, 1995), 38. All further references, abbreviated as Ava, are cited in the body of the text.

10. Jacques Derrida, “Comment nommer,” in *Le poète que je cherche à être: Cahier Michel Deguy*, ed. Yves Charnet (Paris: La Table Ronde/Belin, 1996), trans. Wilson Baldrige as “How to Name,” afterword to Michel Deguy, *Recumbents*, trans. Wilson Baldrige (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2005). Derrida is referring to Heidegger’s reading of Hölderlin’s “Andenken” in “Hölderlin und das Wesen der Dichtung,” *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung* GA 4 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1981).

11. Jacques Derrida, “Foi et savoir: Les deux sources de la ‘religion’ aux limites de la simple raison,” in *La religion*, ed. Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo (Paris: Seuil, 1996), 59, trans. Samuel Weber as “Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of ‘Religion’ within the Limits of Mere Reason,” in *Religion*, ed. Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998),

44. All further references, abbreviated as Foi, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions.
12. The neologism *exespéré* in this passage, coined by Derrida, is impossible to translate. The word combines references to *exaspéré* (“aggravated, exacerbated”), which appears earlier in Derrida’s passage, and *espéré* (“hoped-for”). The “ex-” has the sense of “outside of,” “anterior.”
13. Jacques Derrida, “Prière d’inserer,” in *Voyous* (Paris: Galilée, 2003). *Voyous* was published at the beginning of 2003 but was first presented in July 2002 at Cerisy-la-Salle. The “Prière d’inserer,” the insert or fly sheet, does not appear in the English translation.
14. Jacques Derrida, “Avant-propos,” in *Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde* (Paris: Galilée, 2003).
15. Jean-Luc Nancy, “Consolation, désolation” *Magazine littéraire* (April 2004): 58–60, trans. Bettina Bergo as “Consolation, Desolation,” *Epoché* 10.2 (Spring 2006): 197–202; and Nancy, “Salut à toi, salut aux aveugles que nous devenons,” *Libération*, October 11, 2004, 3.
16. On *salut*, see Jean-Luc Nancy, *L’intrus* (Paris: Galilée, 2000), trans. Susan Hanson as “L’intrus,” *CR: The New Centennial Review* 2.3 (Fall 2002): 1–14. For resurrection, besides a reference (“*la résurrection infinie de soi*”) in “Fin du colloque” in *Maurice Blanchot: Récits critiques*, ed. Christophe Bident and Pierre Vilar (Tours, France: Farrago/Léo Scheer, 2003), 630, see especially *Noli me tangere* (Paris: Bayard, 2003), esp. 29–45, 73–77, 86–87; and “Résurrection de Blanchot” (presented in Jan. 2004), 135, 138, 145; “Consolation, desolation,” 59, 60; 135, 138; and “Le judéo-chrétien” (“la résurrection guérit et glorifie la mort dans la mort même”) in *La décloison (Déconstruction du christianisme, 1)* (Paris: Galilée, 2005).
17. Apart from the two examples cited by Nancy from *Memoires of the Blind* and “Cette nuit dans la nuit,” see *Glas, Memoires for Paul de Man*, “Circumfession,” “By Force of Mourning,” “Faith and Knowledge,” “Hostipitality,” “.” (on Sarah Kofman), *Veils, Le toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy, Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde*, etc.
18. Jacques Derrida, *Parages* (Paris: Galilée, 1986), 161, 169, 170 (twice), 172, 173 (twice), 208, 238, and 240.
19. The proceedings of the conference have been published as Christophe Bident and Pierre Vilar, eds., *Maurice Blanchot: Récits critiques* (Tours, France: Farrago/Léo Scheer, 2003). All further references, abbreviated as RC, are cited in the body of the text.
20. Maurice Blanchot, “La littérature et le droit à la mort,” *La part du feu* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), 313, trans. Lydia Davis as “Literature and the Right to Death,” in *The Gaze of Orpheus and Other Literary Essays*, ed. P. Adams Sitney (Barrytown, N.Y.: Station Hill Press, 1981). All further references, abbreviated as PF, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions. I omit the English page number in cases where the translation I provide is my own.

21. G. W. F. Hegel, "Vorrede," *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, in *Werke*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Michel, 20 vols. (Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Suhrkamp, 1970), III:36; "Preface," *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 18–19, §32; "Préface," *La phénoménologie de l'esprit*, 2 vols., trans. Jean Hyppolite (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1941), 29. All further references to the German and French versions are cited in the text as PhG and PE respectively; references to the English version are cited in the text as PE II.

22. Jean Hyppolite, *Genèse et structure de la Phénoménologie de l'esprit de Hegel* (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1946), 546, trans. Samuel Cherniak and John Heckman as *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1974). All further references, abbreviated as GS, are cited in the body of the text.

23. These phrases appear in Maurice Blanchot, *L'écriture du désastre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980), 110, trans. Ann Smock as *The Writing of the Disaster* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986). All further references, abbreviated as EDD, are cited in the body of the text.

24. Jacques Derrida, *Demeure, Maurice Blanchot* (Paris: Galilée, 1998), 86, trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg as *Demeure: Fiction and Testimony* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 67. All further references, abbreviated as D, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions.

25. Jacques Derrida, "Survivre: Journal de bord," in *Parages* (Paris: Galilée, 1986), 168, trans. James Hulbert as "Living On: Border Lines," in *Deconstruction and Criticism* (New York: Continuum, 1979; 2nd ed. 1988), 124. I have used the published translation throughout but have modified it to reflect my reading. All further references, abbreviated as Par, are cited in the body of the text, with page references first to the French, then to the English versions.

26. Derrida discusses these two *arrêts* in terms of the arrested or suspended death, "*arrêt suspensif*," and the death sentence, "*arrêt décisif*" (Par 159).

27. This citation occurs on p. 184 of Blanchot's *Le pas au-delà* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973).

28. Derrida is referring to the meaning of "vague" (derived from the Latin *vagus*) as hazy, imprecise, uncertain, indeterminate and "*évasé*," from the verb *évaser*, meaning to open out, to flare.

29. Jacques Derrida, *Le monolinguisme de l'autre* (Paris: Galilée, 1996), 128, trans. Patrick Mensah as *Monolingualism of the Other; or, The Prosthesis of Origin* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), 68.

30. This remark of Wittgenstein in *Culture and Value*, 35–35e, dates from 1939 or 1940.

31. For the use and significance of the crown or wreaths in the ancient world and their occurrences in the Old and New Testament, see the entry on *stéphanos, stephanóo* in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey Bromiley, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans,

1964–1976), 615–36. All further references, abbreviated as TD, are cited in the body of the text.

32. Derrida concedes in “Corona vitae” that, for Nancy, the crown is a signification of “life” rather than power. For an exceptionally interesting reading of Paul, see Jacob Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul*, ed. Aleida Assmann and Jan Assmann, et al., trans. Dana Hollander (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004). In a reading of Psalm 2, the coronation psalm, “You are my son, I have fathered you this day,” Taubes comments, “This is an act of enthronement. So we are dealing with a conscious emphasis of those attributes that are imperial, kingly, imperial” (ibid., 14).

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