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For the Love of Lacan

What wouldn't Lacan have said!

What didn't he say!

This is an exclamation rather than a question: an attempt to find the right tone, an experiment prior to beginning this attempt at an idiomatic conjunction of negation, of denial (*dénégation*), of the condition and future perfect (or, future in the past). The hypothesis here being that these grammars can play alternatively, simultaneous and successively, the role of screen and mirror in the forms of the *since* (*depuis*), which will have determined Lacan's relationship to the philosophers – certain philosophers. These brief observations on temporal forms would also be influenced by the incidence of Stephen Melville's observations on "narration" (1) and – subsequently – on history (*l'histoire*), on the "temporal shifts", and also on the possibility of a *Kehre* and a turning point in Lacan following the *Ecrits*, which would be during the period 1966-1967.

What didn't Lacan say!

What wouldn't he have said!

In order to get a clearer idea of what it was between Lacan and the philosophers, it is necessary not only to shed light on what is intended by "between", but also on what Lacan said, did not say, would or would not have said, caused to be said or let be said – in the future perfect (or future in the past) or in the conditional. Dealing with this enigma of the future perfect and the conditional – which is my intention today – is to deal with the problem of the archivation of that which remains or does not remain. It is an old, familiar problem. During this century, however, the birth of psychoanalysis – in conjunction with the advent of new techniques of archivation or telecommunications have consolidated the system (*appareil*) of certain paradoxes with which I feel conventional history – the way in which history or histories are told or transcribed (written) – has not yet systematically come to terms. Essentially, it is the concept of history which is at stake. The effects of these paradoxes, which could be termed techno-psychoanalytical (as they concern, at the same time, that which psychoanalysis can tell us about inscription, erasure, blanks, the non-said, memorization and new techniques of archivation – this one, for example – and all the tape recorders in this room) are obviously not exclusively concerned with Lacan. But the example of Lacan provides us with certain particular (*singuliers*) aspects which I believe merit the attention of anyone interested in these questions.

One trouble with colloquiums – at least one which bothers me particularly – is the failure to go into details. Instead of dealing with things in themselves (ah, things in themselves!) with as keen an eye as possible, we must – for lack of time and because our voices are swept along by swelling, chorus-like rhythms – make do without the minutiae of the letter – that is, those macroscopic or micrological movements or displacements in which, at a given moment, I obstinately hope things will be decided. But that given moment is never given. That this given moment be given is just what is never given in advance, and here we are, having reached certainly too soon – or, well in advance – the question of destination.

Owing to this macroscopic or macrological nature of the colloquium, movements of "external" strategy, so to speak – if a purely external exists, which I doubt -, tend to prevail. Consequently, what prevails are theses, positions, position-takings, positionings, none of which I have ever had any great liking for; I have never had

much time for such theses (*Je ne m'y suis pas souvent arrêté*), which has not only been a matter of taste. What we have here is nothing less than a question of philosophy, of what agrees with the thesis, with positionality. In a reading of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, which is not just any book by Freud – and, as you probably know, not just any book by Freud for Lacan – I attempt (in “To Speculate – on Freud”) (2) to indicate in what way Freud advanced, only to suspend without any possibility of stopping (*arrêt*), all those theses in which his successors or heirs and readers in general, would have had him stop. (3) That reading was also an interpretation of what links speculation on the name, proper name or surname, to science – and in particular to the theory and institution of psychoanalysis. It is self evident that my reading also concerned, explicitly (providing a certain code or program of translation is available), questions concerning the name of Lacan, problems of legacies, of science and institutions, and the aporias relative to archivation.

Consequently, I will attempt to resist once more the drive (*pulsion*) towards or the expectation of position-taking. Therefore anyone nurturing a similar expectation to form their judgment has my heartfelt sympathy. In order to avoid becoming lost in the quantity and difficulty of the ensuing problems, or re-opening all the texts which are after all available to anyone of a mind to read them, as well as to speed things up a bit, I will comply with the rules of discussion (as this is the moment for discussion). Initially, I will follow the line established by René Major (4) and Stephen Melville. But, in the discussion which follows, it will obviously be up to you to propose other spaces for discussion.

René Major cited the insipit of Lacan’s seminar of November 16, 1976, which began with “Were you able to read the poster?” (*Avez-vous su lire l’affiche?*), and goes on apropos of the failure (“the not-known-that-knows”, *l’insu-que-sait*). (5) In other words, if I interpret it my way – which is possibly no longer very Lacanian – the failure which fails in arriving, or which fails – precisely because it arrives, succeeds, fails in succeeding (the syntax of the *in* (*à*) moving surrepticiously, but by necessity, here – and I have often played on this – in order to pass from one grammar to another; I fail to or do not arrive because I arrive; I do not arrive in arriving as a consequence, because, since I arrive. At this point, it is the event that speaks, the event of the arrival, the coming and the “come” (“*viens*”) of which I speak and therefore a matter of failure, as of what does not succeed in arriving, precisely in arriving, due to the fact itself of arriving, because it arrives. René Major cites Lacan’s seminar of November 16, 1976: “The single stroke (6) interests us because, as Freud points out, it does not necessarily have to do with a loved one.” And Major is quite right when he comments: “It is not always those who love you who do you the best turns”. I would be dead by now if I were not in agreement with him on this point. I would be dead, and if I have correctly understood, this would not be without some ulterior benefit, at least as regards my name. But I preferred to wait.

And if I were to say at this point: “You see, I believe that we loved each other quite a lot, Lacan and I ...,” I am almost certain that many of you could not bear it. And for that reason, I am not yet sure as to whether or not I will say it. Many could not bear it, and not because it might surprise them – I am actually not convinced that it wouldn’t be strangely familiar to them – but because it is something which should not have taken place. Above all, it is something which should not be said without presumption, especially by one (saying) “we” after the death of the other. Thus, the Thing should not be said, or – above all – repeated. But if I nevertheless did say, “We loved each other a lot, Lacan and I, each as he pleased (*comme il lui aura plu*), each in his own way, or each in our own way”, would that constitute a confession, a denunciation? Let each one interpret “as he pleases”, in his own way. That “as he pleases” is a citation from Lacan, a quasi private phrase between Lacan and myself; a sentence in which “him” is me, but I shall come back to that shortly.

As for being shocked at hearing someone saying “we” after the death of the other, in the end there is really nothing to be shocked about. This also is one of the better known phenomena of the *distinerrance* (7) which imposes an internal drift on the destination of the letter, from which it might never return, but to which we should. “We” is a modality, a form, of the with, of the being-with, or the doing-with, *avoc*, *apud hoc*, (*chez*) the other, as a host or a parasite. Yet “we” is always used by the individual. It is always one person who has the courage to say “we psychoanalysts,” “we philosophers”, with you psychoanalysts, with us philosophers, or even more solemnly, we psychoanalysts with the philosophers or with us philosophers. With also means “at the home of” (*chez*) (*apud*, *avuec*, *avoc*, *apud hoc*, the category of the guest or the intruder, the visitor or

the parasite, who inevitably takes advantage of you the moment he says “we”). The logico-grammatical modality appears interesting because, among other things, it is always me who says “we”; it is always an “I” who uses the term “we”, assuming by this in sum, in the dissymmetrical structure of the statement, the absence or death of the other – or in any case his being incompetent or arriving to late to object. The one signs for the other. The dissymmetry is even more drastic when it involves a reflexive, reciprocal, or specular “we ... each other” (nous nous). Who can ever have the right to say, “We love each other”? But is there an origin of love, another amorous performance other than this presumption? If there is some degree of we in being-with, it is because there is always one who speaks in the name of the other, from the place of the other; there is always one who lives more, and longer. I will not hasten to call that individual “subject”. When we are with someone, we are perfectly aware that one of us will survive the other, does already, and will be able to or have to speak alone. And from this we can immediately draw the obvious conclusion. It happens constantly, even while singing the Marseillaise, or joining in with a chorus, that which remains the exception and commits us minimally, it is always an “I” who can say “we”; for example, “we love each other”.

What a lot archiving going on! (Qu’est-ce que ca s’archive!)

Once more, not a question but an exclamation, with the exclamation point slightly in suspension, for it is difficult to know whether it archives itself, what archives itself and how; the trace (trace) that arrives only to erase itself/that arrives only by erasing itself, beyond the alternative of presence and absence. Knowing this is not only difficult, it is impossible, and certainly not because there is always more to know, but because it is not of the order of knowledge. (savoir)

This is never a sufficient reason not to attempt to know, as an Aufklärer – to know that it archives itself, within what limits, and how; by what devious, surprising or overdetermined paths. René Major made at least two allusions; first to an “underground” history in the trajectory of Lacan’s discourse itself, and then to a “question in question” which, and I quote:

“has a history, concerns texts, many texts, that are neither limited to an identifiable circle nor delimited by a geographic area, and this despite the fact that – and above all if – it does not take the exhibited or advertised form (forme affichée) of an academic and institutional program. The question of the question is more vast, and is a matter of procedures for translation and theorico-practical issues, the confluence of which is at the frontiers of many disciplines which they destabilize.” (8)

Yes, in my opinion, this is true in general, and more particularly for the issues in question included under the title, Lacan with the Philosophers. The modalities of the with here call for a history and a type of historical interpretation characterized by extreme micrological caution, deliberateness and sophistication, with constant attention to the paradoxes of archivation, to what psychoanalysis (supposedly not only the theme or object of history here but also its interpretation) can tell us about these paradoxes of archivation, its blanks, the efficacy of its details or its nonappearance, its capitalizing guard) or (but there we are possibly beyond psychoanalysis), in the radical destruction of the archive, in its ashes without repression and without reservation (mise en reserve), without that reservation or setting aside (mise en garde) that would operate in repression by a mere topical displacement. But an equally keen attention is required as regards what in psychoanalytic discourse (Lacan’s, for example) is problematic as regards archivation, the guard, the economy of repression as guard, the inscription, erasure and destructibility of the letter, or the name. A history on the scale of these formidable difficulties, capable of including them in its own historical discourse, should add further to other readings of the archive – conventional or otherwise, (conventional) and more classically symptomatic – without in the least disqualifying them, as they are also indispensable, or at least inevitable. And this is not something which will not happen in a hurry. (C’est pas demain la veille.)

Before offering – in response to what has been said – a few modest, preliminary contributions to a similar history, I should like to explain briefly why and in what spirit I accepted the invitation kindly extended me by my friends at the Collège international de philosophie, René Major and Patrick Guyomard – who were, I believe, the first to have conceived of this grand, plural and international colloquium. If I accepted, it was certainly not because I felt I had something more or indispensable to add (a discussion of something I may have advanced nearly twenty years ago on the subject would require a microscopic examination for which none of us here would have the time or patience, and which as I have said is ill-suited to the rhythm and the setting of a large colloquium). I accepted the invitation – almost two years ago, before I could possibly have known who else would be speaking or what would be discussed (in particular, by Major; and it did not occur to me to ask him for so much as the title of his presentation) – because, besides the considerable and necessary work which was possible here – work on subjects which had been until that time too often avoided, especially within the analytic milieu, including that of Lacan -, it also constituted an international homage to Lacan. And it was to that event, that just and spectacular homage, that I was happy to be associated. But it was not only that; it was also because in today's culture, and Parisian culture in particular, I sense a political significance in this homage. I consider it an act of cultural resistance to pay homage publicly to thought, discourse, writing, which is difficult and does not lend itself easily to normalization by media, academe, or publishing, is refractory to the restoration presently in progress, and to philosophical or theoretical neoconformism in general (we are here not speaking of literature), which levels everything around us, in the attempt to make us forget what the Lacan era was, along with the future and promise of his thought, thus erasing the name of Lacan. (And we know that there are endless and at times considerably paradoxical ways of doing that, as Lacan himself learned in his lifetime through “excommunication”.) It is even possible that certain of those who evoke the name of Lacan today, and not just his heritage, are not the least active or efficient in this process. There again, the logic of “a service rendered” is one of the most underhanded, with censure, suture, and orthodoxical defensive moves (bétonnage), not in the least excluding the facade of cultural eclecticism. Whether concerning philosophy, psychoanalysis, or theory in general, what the restoration now in progress attempts to cover up, deny or censure, is the fact that nothing of that which could transform the space of thought in recent decades would have been possible without some explanation with Lacan, without Lacanian provocation (however it is received or discussed) and, I might add, without some explanation with Lacan in his explanation with the philosophers.

With the philosophers rather than with philosophy: I have always been seduced by the dramatization according to which – breaking with the commentary or the historiography in use by many professional philosophers, whether they give a more or less competent account of the lives of philosophers or reconstitute the structure of systems – Lacan put on stage the singular (singulier) desire of the philosopher, and thereby contributed not inconsiderably to opening the space for a new philosophical culture of sorts, the present one, despite the efforts made to make us forget it in order to turn back the clock. In Lacan, the being-with or explanation with the philosophers attained a sophistication and scope, the unexpected illumination of which is practically unequalled, either in the community of professional philosophers or that of psychoanalysts. Thus, rarely will the frequenting of philosophers, a being-with philosophers – and I intend this in the sense of greatest favour or greatest fervor – have merited discussion to such a degree, have merited discussing with Lacan the manner in which his account with the philosophers will have been settled. Lacan's sophistication and competence, his philosophical originality, have no precedent in psychoanalytic tradition. In this context, the return to Freud as a philosopher would have signified regression or weakness. But I will comment briefly presently on the paradoxical and perverse consequences that follow from the fact that Lacan is so much better informed a philosopher than Freud, so much more a philosopher than Freud!

Thus, once having accepted with pleasure the invitation to participate in this reflection, this discussion and homage, I did not feel offended or discouraged, as others might legitimately have been, or some might have hoped I would be, by the condition that the presentations should be exclusively on the dead and consequently not about myself, if that rule were to be respected, unless of course I chose to play dead – before the fact – and presumably I would have been given a helping hand for the occasion. In other words, it was enough to think of it, to make me disappear notably as a living person, to make me disappear for life.

However, as I am still alive and jovial, I decided not to allow myself to be offended or discouraged by the lamentable and indecent incident of my proper name being excluded from the billing, of the veto exercised on the adjective or the attribute left over from a proper name; in other words, the acting out (9) referred to by Major in making the essential point. Although I was shocked, as many might be, by the symptomatic and compulsive violence of that acting out, I was not surprised by what it symptomalized – the analysis of which I have been at grips with for the past quarter century. So, I will add nothing more for the moment: (in order) to save time, because I find it increasingly tedious, because “I know only too well” and, ultimately, because – without even mentioning the sinister political memory we have of the history which, in France, and especially in Eastern France, has been written, as it were, not in ink, but in the erasure of the name, omitting the mere mention of that political memory – the essential has been said on the subject by Freud, and by Lacan who knew what he was talking about. Now, if I may be permitted to say so, I myself have in a dozen books, including one on the names of Freud and Lacan, sufficiently formalized legibility under erasure (*sous rature*) and the logic of the event as a graphematic event – in particular as regards the proper name in which the little devil arrives only to erase itself (*n’arrive qu’à s’effacer*). I will not add anything else on this for the time being, at least for the sake of modesty, since in this case it would appear to be a matter of my “proper” name, or what might remain of it in an epithet. This said, if some of you should so express the desire, I will not remain silent on this; however, only at the end, as a postscriptum, a digression, off the record (10).

Off the record intended as off the recording, outside the archive. Thus, we are led back to the difficult question of the “record” of history and the archive. Is there an “outside-the-archive”? Impossible; however it is the impossible which is the business of deconstruction.

Underlying the question of what I will once more call the restance of the archive – which does anything but remain (*rester*) in the sense of the permanent subsistence of a presence -, behind this question of the differance or the destinerrance of the archive, there could be, at least for the duration of a session, the silhouette of all that which I consider deserving of discussion, since we are here to discuss, or once more take up discussion. By silhouette I intend that which I considered meriting discussion not with Lacan in general, and above all not in the name of philosophy in general (of the subject, in the name, and from the point of view of that of which I have never spoken, not so much as a consequence as of antiphilosophy, which has always seemed to me the thing least deserving of interest). Not with Lacan in general – for me non-existent (I never speak of a philosopher or a corpus in general as though it were a matter of a homogeneous body. I have not done this for Lacan any more than I have for any other), but with a strong, relatively coherent and stabilized configuration of a discourse at the time (1966) of the collection and binding (*reliure*) of the *Écrits*.

The binding of the *Écrits* is what holds them together, ensuring them the most solid, systemic structure, the most formalized constructure possible. And yet, if there is a text that holds together more than any other in this position and at this post of binder (*reliure*), it is the Seminar on “The Purloined Letter”. (11) As we know, the “Seminar on “The Purloined Letter,” is given a privilege, and here I quote Lacan: “the privilege of opening the sequence (the sequence of the *Écrits*) despite its diachrony”. In other words, the *Écrits* collect and bind all the texts comprising it, in chronological order (according to the “diachrony”) of their previous publications, with the one exception of the Seminar on “The Purloined Letter” which, coming at the beginning of the collection, receives the “privilege” (Lacan’s word) of representing the whole. It is for this reason that I took a privileged interest in this privilege, and if I use the word binding (*reliure*) here – binding holding the collection together at the moment of reading and re-reading (*relire*) -, it is because on one of the two occasions on which I met Lacan and spoke briefly with him, he spoke to me of the binding of the *Écrits*. I am not telling you all this for the sake of amusement or as anecdote, but because what we should be talking about is the meeting, the *tukhè* of the contingency – or not – and that which binds the signature of the event to the theorem.

I actually met Lacan only twice, and ran into him once more, much later, at a cocktail party. I am not sure if this means that we were together, one with the other; however, those two encounters did not take place at the home of, (*chez*) (*apud*), either of us. The first meeting (in 1966) took place in the United States, where we had exported ourselves for the first time (I use the word “exported” advisedly; it is a quote, because as you

probably know, using pseudonyms termed transparent by journalists, the recognizable character from some atrocious novel (when I say atrocious, it is in the sense of “literature” and not only “morals”), complaining first about not having been translated abroad with a sourness seeming to permeate the paper itself, a similar character, quite recently, said in a single breath that Lacan and I, Lacan with me, alias Lauzun with Saida for close friends, are both “adulterated products, fit for exportation”. Frankly, finding myself in the same export container with lacan would have been rather to my taste, but it was evidently not generally acceptable or to everyone else’s taste, for a journalist shuttling between the Gallimard editorial board and le Nouvel Observateur attempted to prevent me from being with Lacan by saying that, for the author of this dreadful novel, it was only Derrida – gave my name, and not that of the fictional character, or even Said, Sida or Saida – who, this time in the singular, in an inexact quotation, becomes the “adulterated product, fit only for exportation”. I alone, no longer with Lacan as the author or character of the fable would have it, but without Lacan; henceforth, quite alone, an “adulterated product” in the export compartment, all alone in my box, deported, exported abroad, and – why not, with an interdiction de sejour (12), isolated and insularized by the decree of a cultural traffic cop. That is one of the things happening today in France, in the higher spheres of culture and politics of which I spoke initially.

So, to go back to the beginning, when I was introduced to Lacan in Baltimore by René Girard, in 1966, Lacan’s first words, uttered with a friendly sigh, were; “So, we had to wait to come abroad to meet each other!”. My remark here is that – perhaps owing to the question of immanent destinerrance, and perhaps to Baltimore’s name of death (nom de mort) (Bal/timore, dance or trance and terror), Baltimore also the city of Poe, whose tomb at the time I searched for in vain, but whose house I succeeded in visiting (I went chez Poe in 1966) – is that the only two times we met and exchanged a few words with one another, the subject first brought up and by Lacan was death. In Baltimore, for example, he spoke to me of the way he thought he would be read, in particular by me, after his death.

At our second and last meeting, on the occasion of a dinner given by his in-laws, he insisted on publicly archiving, in his way, with regard to something I had told him, the way I supposedly had of disregarding “the Other” (I quote) “by playing dead”. Elizabeth Roudinesco recounts this episode very well on page 418 of her monumental classic, *Histoire de la psychanalyse en France* (Volume 2). Lacan speaks of a “father”, and it is I, a father who “did not recognize ... the way he himself disregarded the Other, by playing dead”. (13) I am still not sure that I really understood the dicey interpretation in what was, we should not forget, a signed publication in *Scilicet* (where Lacan was the only one authorizing himself to sign). (14) However, I have always wondered whether in making me the father in this story, in naming me “the father”, he didn’t really mean the son – whether he didn’t mean to say the son, didn’t want to make me or himself the son, to make me the son who disregards the Other by playing dead, as he says, or to make himself the son. As always, Lacan left me the greatest freedom of interpretation, and as always I would have taken it even had he not done so; as I pleased. He left me the greatest freedom of listening and interpreting, as he added soon afterwards: “To the father who said it to me, from here to hear me or not” (*Au père qui me l’a dit d’ici m’entendre ou non*) (this *didici* is magnificent; I can hear it in Latin, as in the night of a disco, this time and not of a dance, a disco where the old professor cannot bring himself to give up (*n’arrive pas à renoncer*) the combined compulsion of the future perfect (future in the past) and didactics- *didici*, I will have told you, will have taught you). This freedom to interpret as I pleased, he left me on the flyleaf of the *Ecrits* when they were bound; the dedication accompanying it read: “to Jacques Derrida, this hommage to take as he will”. Message received: I have always made use of this homage and continue to do so, as I like, and as I would return it (*le rendre*).

So, there was death between us, mainly a question of the death – I might even say only a question of the death – of one of us, as with or chez all those who love one another. Or, rather, he alone spoke of our death, his death which was inevitable, and about playing with death – or, playing dead – as he was convinced I was doing.

I am not forgetting the binding with which all of this is bound. The reason is that in Baltimore Lacan confided to me his other worry regarding the binding of the *Ecrits*, which had not yet appeared, but the publication of which was immanent. It seemed to me that Lacan was concerned and slightly annoyed with

those at Le Seuil who had advised him to assemble the collection in a single, large volume of more than 900 pages, the binding of which did not seem sufficiently solid and thus risked giving way. “You see,” he said to me, making a gesture with his hands, “it’s not going to hold.” The subsequent publication (in 1970) in two paperback volumes reassured him, and perhaps enabled him, with the passage, not only to confirm the necessity of placing the Seminar on “The Purloined Letter” as guarding the entrance of the *Ecrits*, but also to let fly at me one of those future in the past (antedates or antidotes), the privileged mode of all the declarations of love he so often made of me, by mentioning, I dare not say in antedating (I quote) “what I call literally the instance of the letter prior to any grammarology”. (15)

(Before any grammarology: Of Grammarology was the title of an article and a book which had appeared some five years previously, and which – this is one of the many misunderstandings or mis-recognition (*méconnaissances*) of Lacan and others on this subject – never proposed a grammarology, a positive science or discipline bearing that name, but went to great efforts to demonstrate instead the impossibility, the conditions of impossibility, the absurdity on principle, of any science or any philosophy bearing the name grammarology. This book which dealt with grammarology, was anything but a grammarology.) (16)

I link, bind, this again to the binding of the great book. I refer then to the period (the late 1960s, in 1965, 1966-1967) when the *Ecrits* were bound up with (*à l’enseignement*) the Seminar on “The Purloined Letter”. I should now like to venture making a modest contribution to this future history of the being-with of Lacan and the philosophers, a history I am sure has never been written and which I am not sure ever can be, even supposing that it were possible to decipher it. What I propose then are just a few protocols to that history, whether or not as such it is possible. As I have already spoken sufficiently long, I will limit myself – albeit arbitrarily – to three protocols. I am sure that there is enough psychoanalysis and enough psychoanalysts present to avoid it being considered mere self-indulgence or coquetry my description not from an overview of this history, but necessarily from the locus, the place I was and am now situated, inscribed, engaged, invested. A place which, although admittedly not comfortable is not a bad point of observation.

The three protocols could be outlined under the following headings:

1. of the chiasmus;
2. of the past perfect (future in the past) of the “deferred action” (*l’après-coup*);
3. of the chiasmic invagination of borders – or, the site of analysis.

What happens to the with in between (*avec entre deux*) when there is a chiasmus, the “deferred action” of the future in the past, and chiasmic invagination?

1. FIRST PROTOCOL, THE CHIASMUS

The chiasmus was cited by Major. It is the chiasmus between the courses of Freud and Lacan, as regards science and philosophical speculation. I should like to give the example of another chiasmus which occurred in France in the 1960s. At that point in time, when the Seminar on “The Purloined Letter” (18) proposed the greatest strategic formalization of Lacanian discourse at the opening of the *Ecrits*, what was happening with the philosophers? Here it is no longer possible to speak – assuming that it ever was – of philosophers in general. Rather, one must speak of what happens to certain philosophers, or to philosophy through those who are perhaps no longer simply philosophers – not that that should be considered to imply that they would necessarily have anything against philosophy, which would be simplistic and academic. What actually happened, and to me, was that at the point at which a certain number of major or dominant philosophemes, organized in what I at the time called phonocentrism and/or phallogocentrism – called, for expediency, “deconstructive” (*déconstructeur*) questioning – (which was obviously, by definition, both philosophical and eccentric, ex-centering in relation to the philosophical as such, presenting the philosophical for thought from a place that could no longer be simply philosophical nor counter-philosophical, inside or outside philosophy), at that precise point, there was a theoretical binding of the Lacanian discourse that made the strongest and most brilliantly spectacular use of all the motifs that in my opinion were deconstructible, in the

process of deconstruction, and – what I consider even more serious – not only of the most deconstructible motifs of philosophy (phonocentrism, logocentrism, phallogentrism, “full speech” as truth, the transcendentalism of the signifier, the circular return of reappropriation to the most proper of the proper place at the circumscribed borders of lack, etc. All this in a handling of philosophical reference whose form at least was in the best of cases elliptical and aphoristic, and in the worst dogmatic – but I’ll come back to this in a moment), not only of the most deconstructible motifs, but even of that which, passing through and overflowing philosophy or onto-theology (i.e., Heideggerian discourse), already seemed to me (and this goes back to 1965) to call in its turn for deconstructive questions. This because, during that period – as we have been repeatedly reminded – Lacan made frequent reference, in a decisive, confident, at times incantatory, manner to Heideggerian speech, to the logos interpreted by Heidegger, to truth and no less as adequation than as a veiling/unveiling. There is no point in recalling once more that deconstruction, if there is such a thing, is not a critique and even less so a methodocally run, theoretical or speculative operation, but that if there is such a thing, it takes place – as I have said too often, and yet once again in *Psyché* (19), to dare repeat it again – as the experience of the impossible.

I attempted to demonstrate this in *Le facteur de la vérité* and elsewhere, but it would be impossible, even if time permitted, to reconstruct all of it here.

Thus, so much for the form of the chiasmus. I found myself before a forceful philosophical, philosophizing reconstruction of psychoanalysis that articulated and assumed and bound with considerable consequence all the motifs that moreover lent themselves, not without resistance, to something akin to a genealogico-deconstructive interpretation. At the same time, of course, there was nothing to oppose in this philosophical restructuring of psychoanalytic discourse or institutions, in this philosophical and thus critical questioning which – also putting to work what is most vital in philosophy, linguistics, anthropology, displacing them and reformalizing them in turn in an original way – was far more interesting than what then lay dormant behind the term psychoanalysis. This chiasmus or, as Major also said, this criss-crossing (*chassé-croisé*), was even more paradoxical because an impulse was generated by psychoanalysis in general – and from Freud, whom I also was trying to give a personal reading, very dissimilar to Lacan’s in *Freud and the Scene of Writing* (21) – to deconstruct the privilege of presence, at least as consciousness and egological consciousness which, although apparently exterior but certainly not fortuitous, was converging with the necessity to do this along other lines, via other questions, in which I was in any case engaged (readings of Husserl, Heidegger, the question of writing and of literature, etc.). Thus, the discourse that was at once the closest and the most deconstructive, the most likely to be deconstructed at the time, was without doubt that of Lacan. This had already been indicated in *Of Grammatology* (1965-1966), with regard to the primacy of the signifier.

That is why, in *Positions* (1971), four years before publishing *Le facteur de la vérité*, as Major just recalled, (22) I presented my theoretical “explanation” with Lacan as “consisting in pursuing my own work according to its specific pathways and requirements, whether or not this work entertained a closer relationship with Lacan’s along certain lines, and even – and I do not exclude it in the least – more than any other today” (23). Now, wasn’t this a way of saying that I loved and admired him greatly? And to pay homage to him, as I liked? In this same text I stated, with and without philosophy, without, (24) with and without Lacan, that “truth is necessary”.

Since then, have we managed to come out of this chiasmus? I do not think so. Starting with this chiasmus, which made Lacan’s discourse too philosophical a discourse for me, too much at ease with the philosophers, naturally despite a variety of denials on the subject, too much in confidence with all those with whom I was in the process – not of “breaking”, which does not mean anything, as I’ve said a thousand times, but with whom I was reconsidering all contract. A Lacanian discourse, then, too much at ease with a Sartrean neoexistentialism (which has not sufficiently dealt with, or spotted its remains (*les restes*) in Lacan’s discourse up until the *Ecrits*, in which the discourse of alienation, of authenticity, etc., still dominates), too much at ease with Hegel-Kojève, “his” teacher (*maitre*) (and Hegel/Kojève is also Heidegger, for Kojève not only anthropologizes the phenomenology of mind, he also Heideggerianizes it, as you know, and was for this reason highly interesting. Although there would be a great deal more to say on this point, I am obliged to

hurry along. Elizabeth Roudinesco taught us much about this sequence the other evening (25).) Starting with this chiasmus, which made Lacan's discourse one too much at ease with the philosophers and with Heidegger (of whom my own reading from 1965 on was anything but confident and explicitly engaged questions that I have not ceased to elaborate since), I could not be with Lacan as a philosopher would be with a psychoanalyst. If I have lived with Lacan, if I have had the occasional clarification with him, if I have discussed with him, this being-with was certainly not that of a philosopher with a psychoanalyst. In any case, if that had been the case, my place in the house and home of this odd couple (26) will certainly not have been that of the philosopher, and even less that of someone from the university or the Ecole. So, it seemed to me that Lacan always harbored a desire that was, to my astonishment, intense – even avid. His only excuse as regards the university, is that he was not there. Lacan no doubt would have liked me to play the role of the university philosopher. But to take someone like myself as a university philosopher under the pretext that he is paid for it in an institution, to identify him with this office and dismiss him under this pretext, is above all not to read. Then, of this impulsive gesture, as interested as it is defensive, and nearly symmetrical – not completely, but nearly – of that gesture which would consist of taking an analyst to be an analyst under the pretext that it is for that that he is paid, I have personally always been wary .

Of this chiasmus, all the textual and theoretical effects of which I cannot reconstruct (as it would necessitate years of minutely detailed and diligent reading), I will take a single example: In the Seminar on “The Purloined Letter” (in the *Ecrits*), what tightly adjoins and binds certain motifs – let's say, eight – to make us think of the institution of the infinite number standing:

1. The motif of the circular course, the reappropriating trajectory of the letter that returns to the circumscribable place from whence it came, from which it had been detached, the letter of which Lacan says that “since it can be diverted, it must have a course which is its own” (27) and a “straight path”, (28) its own straight path that is obviously a circle.
2. The motif of truth as adequation or re-adequation, in the circular return and its trajectory, from the origin to the end, from the place where the signifier became detached to its place of reattachment – or as unveiling in this (I quote) “passion to unveil which has an object: the truth”, (29) the analyst remaining “above all the master of the truth”, (30) with real speech (*la vraie parole*), authentic, authenticated by the other in sworn faith, no longer true speech (*la parole vraie*), and with this unveiling relaying the adequation (“Speech thus appears all the more truly a speech as its truth is less founded in what is called the adequation to the thing”). (31)
3. The motif of “present speech”, or “full speech” (“Let us be categorical: in psychoanalytic anamnesis, it is not a question of reality, but of truth, because the effect of full speech is to reorder past contingencies by conferring on them the sense of necessities to come (full speech and future in the past, therefore, such as they are constituted by the little freedom through which the subject makes them present” (32); “Analysis can have for its goal only the advent of a true speech and the realization by the subject of his history in relation to a future” (33).
4. The disqualification (this too in a spirit Heideggerian spirit, in its relation to technique) of the “record” of “recording”, (34) and of the mechanical archive as “alienating”: “But precisely because it comes to him through an alienated form, even a retransmission of his own recorded discourse, albeit from the mouth of his own doctor, cannot have the same effects as psychoanalytic interlocution” (35) – which should be direct, live, immediate, etc. Thus, “full speech” which “is defined through its identity with that of which it speaks”. (36) I consider this is a very important point, and one to which I will perhaps return, one that links phono-logocentrism or phallogocentrism to the analytical situation as speech without technical interposition, without an archiving device for repetition: a very old philosopheme, dating as far back as Plato, on up to and including Heidegger.
5. The transcendental position of the phallus, “the privileged signifier of that mark in which the role of the logos is joined to the advent of desire”, (37) a transcendental position which is none other than the

doctrine that links truth to castration and, I quote, to “the mother’s lack of the penis, in which the nature of the phallus is revealed”. (38)

6. Phonocentrism at the time militant (“A writing like the dream itself, may be figurative; it is always like symbolically articulated language (langage) – that is to say phonomatic – as is the latter, and phonetic, in fact as soon as it is read (se lit)”. (39) As I remarked in *Le facteur de la vérité*, (40) this “fact” has the value of a fact only within the ethnocultural limits of so-called phonetic writing – never entirely limiting – without which there would not even be a symbolic order. This explicit and massive phonocentrism would be contradicted by Lacan himself, easily, as though it had always been (future in the past of the “deferred action”), in 1972-1973, not “before” but after “any grammatology”, as I will demonstrate in a moment);

7. The inability or failure to take into account the literary structure of narration, the omission of the frame, of the play of signatures and in particular of its parergonal effects – I cannot reproduce the demonstration I gave of this in 1975, however it resembles – and not by chance – especially in its treatment of the general narrator, the haste described by Nicole Loraux and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, which consists in a collapsing one into another of the different levels represented by the chorus, the characters and the spectators, at the theater and in tragedy, producing incalculable damage in the reading at the very point where it permits a certain formalizing calculation of psychoanalytic hermeneutics;

8. An evasion of the effects of the double (effets de double) in Poe’s story which – I believe I have shown this as well – should have blurred the limits between the imaginary and the symbolic, and consequently the rigor of this tripartition which, as we know, Lacan much later also had to question.

These eight aspects – and no doubt other more secondary ones – are strongly articulated, actually indissociable from and indispensable to the fundamental (capitale) affirmation, fundamental for both the destiny and the potential of psychoanalysis, the fundamental affirmation with which an explanation seemed urgent and strategically decisive; that is, and I quote the closing words of the Seminar: “What the ‘purloined letter’ - that is, the undelivered letter (lettre en souffrance) – means is that a letter always arrives at its destination”. (41) But this conclusion was possible only insofar as the letter (which for Lacan is not the signifier, but the place of the signifier) is not divided. Lacan says that it “does not admit partition”; “Cut a letter into small pieces”, he says, “and it remains the letter it is”. (42) Consequently, what Lacan calls the “materiality of the signifier”, (43) which he deduces from an indivisibility, which is nonexistent, seemed to me – and still does – to correspond to an “idealization” of the letter, to an ideal identity of the letter, a problem that I had also been working on, along other lines, for some time. But – and I will limit myself to this one point in our context, once more because of the limited time remaining – I could not articulate this question and this objection (upon which which it could be shown that everything depends, another logic of the event and of the destination, another conception of singularity, the dissemination of the unique beyond a logic of castration, etc.). I could thus not read this surreptitious idealization, not to say idealism, of Lacan’s, as Melville commented, if not from (depuis) a work that was already engaged, in a deconstructive mode, with the philosophers, and notably on the subject of the constitution of ideas, of ideal objects, in Husserl. In other words, without pursuing the issue in this direction, to read Lacan in a problematizing and non-dogmatic fashion, it is necessary to read Husserl, and others, in a problematic or deconstructive fashion. Here, if I may be permitted to say so, we have the outline of another formation, another course for psychoanalyst readers of Lacan, at least if they intend reading him in a non-psittacist, not-orthodox and non-defensive fashion. In other words, it was parallel advice on the “new fashion” that some of us here – those rare professional philosophers having read and published on Lacan in the philosophical university (Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy come to mind here) – had given to the philosophers in urging them to read Lacan, which, twenty years ago, was fairly unusual. (If there were sufficient time to do so, I would explain why in my opinion the texts of the “professional philosophers” to whom I have referred are not read, and not readable in France, in particular by most French “Lacanian”.)

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

As I have said, my reading of the Seminar on “The Purloined Letter”, and what presaged it from 1965 to 1971 in *Of Grammatology* and in *Positions*, was not intended to be confining or exhaustive as regards Lacan (I was explicit on this point in those texts), but only to deal with a strong and relatively stabilized configuration of Lacanian displacement. Lacan’s discourse, always highly sensitive to any movement on the theoretical scene – and who would blame him? -, never ceased thereafter to readjust, even to revise, and at times contradict the axioms I have presented here.

After 1968, the emphasis on writing became progressively stronger, to the point of inverting, very “grammatologically”, my comments above on “phonological and even always phonetic” writing, as he writes in the Seminar *Encore* (1972-1973): “But the signifier can in no way be limited to this phonological medium”. (44) René Major quoted some spectacular examples, (45) and there are many others from that point on of this sudden substitution of the graphematic for the phonological. This, by the way, is of interest in our discourse only as a symptomatic sign in what was once called the history of ideas, and not in itself, for what I have called the trace, gramme, différance, etc., is not more graphic than phonological, spatial than temporal. But this is not the place to go into this serious and persistent misunderstanding. The substitution of writing for speech around 1970, which deserves a history of its own, is not limited to Lacan. Ponge told me one day, laughingly, that he was rereading his texts to see if he hadn’t yielded too much to phonocentrism, and if he could without causing too much harm, replace, here and there, “speech” by “writing”. Roger Laporte has compiled an inventory which I found as illuminating as it was merciless, of all the times during that period, that our friend Maurice Blanchot, when republishing his old texts as collections, simply replaced “speech” by “writing”. I am not sure that it is a question of a *Kehre*, as Stephen Melville would have it, (46) but if the question of the *Kehre* were open, it would be a very general one.

All this simply to say that of that which remained and still remains, especially for me, the future of Lacanian thought moving beyond the *Ecrits*, the historical narration is as difficult to write as Lacan was an rare listener, and his discursive machine of such sensitivity that everything could be inscribed in it with finesse or discretion (which is fine; who doesn’t attempt the do the same?). However, it was inscribed in the speech of the seminars which, having generated multiple archivation – in stenotype, on tape recorders, and so on – will have also fallen prey, not only to all the problems of rights, which Mr. Conté evoked, and which I prefer not to go into here, but also to all the problems posed by deadlines for publishing and by editing (47) in the strongly interventionist American sense. All this is considerably touch-and-go, the stakes being decided over a word, an ellipsis, the form of a verb; conditional or future perfect (future in the past). And, considering Lacan’s rhetoric, I wish the best of luck to any narrator wanting to know what was said and written, by whom and when: what Lacan would or would not have said! In the end, that too is the problem with the letter and destination which perhaps separates me from being with Lacan at the point we are closest.

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

(I have gone on far too long. I will stop when you want.) Not only were my references to Lacan, and in particular to the Seminar on “The Purloined Letter”, not totalizing, homogenizing or critical, I even conceded to him on the question of being right, reason (*donné raison sur la raison*), leaving that question open, like the question of knowing what happens when one says someone is right (*donne raison*). In *The Post Card*, I said that he was right as regards “the reason of this aspect which had never been elucidated, which shows once again the depth of Freud’s intuition: that is, knowing why he advanced the thesis of the existence of only one libido, and his text showing that he conceives it as being masculine in nature”; (48) saying that Lacan was right – just as the signatory of the *Envois* in *The Post Card* begins by saying that the loved other is right. In the opening words of the *Envois* – “Yes, you were right” (49) – *Le facteur de la vérité* is explicit about “the reason of this aspect never elucidated”, of a trait drawn from reason or a trait drawn on reason. “In the logic of the cauldron (a draught – trait – drawn from reason), reason will always be right

(aura raison).” (50) This concession granted or rendered (raison donnée) to Lacan renders my text more illegible to readers pressed to decide between “for or against”, in short, to those minds (esprits) convinced that I was contradicting Lacan. The question lies elsewhere, and it concerns reason and the principle of reason. Consequently, I was neither criticizing Lacan nor even writing an objectivizing meta-discourse on Lacan or on a text of Lacan’s. By virtue of my writing, I was engaged in a scene which at the time I was demonstrating (doubtless with brief phrases no one read) could not be closed, tallied, a point which since then has been incessantly relayed by other scenes en abyme (51) deployed here and there (rather more there than here, that is once more, abroad). Moreover, for all the above reasons, the theme of *Le facteur de la vérité* does not lend itself to being framed in the text bearing that title; it is played, but adrift in *The Post Card*, the book bearing that title and which inscribed *Le facteur de la vérité* like a piece in a frameless fiction, neither public nor private, with and without a general narrator, and first in the *Envois*, (“*Envois*”), of which I am not the signatory, and in which a seldom read plot involving a strayed (errante) letter or certain remarks on destination and the analytic institution, and what does or does not happen there, demonstrate by this inscription what is enunciated without lending itself to some meta-enunciation. I will give one example, if it is possible to quote a character from this book without that being considered quoting myself – that is my excuse here – on page 261 of the *Envois* dated August 18, 1979:

“August 18, 1979. Is it true that you call me only when I am not there?”

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

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

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

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

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

This “*envoi*” induced two other postscripta, one containing the other (which I crave your indulgence for reading as well, but which you can assume are not mine), which situate, I believe, one of the essential places of the current, interminable discussion with Lacan, namely, the conception (pensée) of contingency, singularity, the event, the meeting, chance and *tukhè*, which is also a kind of conception, an interpretation or experience of death, of which the phallus is the signifier. This could sum up all the unanswered questions that I continue to put to Lacan, with whom discussion is worth the effort: on the subject of what he says (no less, all considered) about being, man, the animal (especially the animal) and thus about God).

“P.S. I was forgetting, you are quite right: one of the paradoxes of destination is that if you wanted to demonstrate, for someone, that something never arrives at its destination, it’s all over. Once the demonstration had achieved its aim, it will have proved what it was not supposed to demonstrate. But that, dear friend, is why I always say ‘a letter can reach its destination, etc.’ That it need not always be a piece of

luck.*

“You know that I never say that I am right and never prove anything. This is taken very badly; consequently, they would like nothing to have happened, everything wiped off the map.

Wait for me.

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

This conception (pensée) of the destination is indissociable, of course, from a conception of death, the destination at death – and this is why I have taken the liberty of recalling this scarcely private thing; namely, that there was the subject of death between Lacan and myself, on the occasion of each of our meetings, and that it was he alone who spoke of it.

What links the destination to death is expressed by the signatory of the “Envois”, for example:

“Murder is everywhere, my unique and immense one. We are the worst criminals in history. And right here I kill you, save, save yourself, the unique, the living one over there whom I love. Heed what I write here on these innumerable post cards, I annihilate not only what I am saying but also the unique addressee that I constitute, and therefore every possible addressee, and every destination. I kill you, I annul you at my fingertips, wrapped around my finger. To do so it suffices that I be legible – and I become illegible to you, you are dead. If I say that I write for dead addressees, not dead in the future but already dead at the moment when I get to the end of a sentence, it is not a game. Genet said that his theater was addressed to the dead and I take it in that sense at the rate at (au train où je vais) which I am endlessly writing you. The addressees are dead, the destination is death: no, not in the sense of S. or P.’s preaching, according to which we are destined to die; no, not in the sense that reaching our destination, for us mortals, is to end by dying.” (54)

So, if I may be forgiven for these readings, I will conclude with three remarks that I will make as brief and as elliptical as possible:

- death;
- the analytic situation;
- the “is there a psychoanalysis?” in general, or a psychoanalysis specifically nameable, as with a proper name?

1. Concerning death, I will say only that, after all the texts of which I have spoken, I feel increasingly tempted not to take the discourse on the being-for-death (l’être-pour-la-mort), in the Heideggerian form or in the Lacanian form in which it is linked to the phallogocentric signifier, without responding with any number of and all kinds of questions and displacements, which are also experiences, not merely speculative discourses or discussions – but critical objections. However, it is not possible to go further into this here; these things belong elsewhere, related to questions regarding the animal and God in the Seminars of those years (the remarkable things that Lacan says on the animal are also in my view highly problematic but, once more, this is neither the time nor the place to discuss it. In a word, it is a question of contesting the claim that death happens to some mortal being-for-death, but in an outrage against sense and against good sense, only happens to some immortal lacking in not lacking anything (qui manque de ne manquer de rien). What comes to mind here is a particular passage from Zarathustra on the suffering created by a lack, and which, in the course of my Seminar this year on “Eating the Other”, I interpreted in a sense which may have something in common with what Jean-Luc

Nancy spoke of the other evening.). In the conclusion of an analysis of “a lack that is never lacking (in its place)”, in *Le facteur de la vérité*, I clarify this point, which at the time seemed to me to adequately situate the difference with Lacan: “The difference which interests me here – and to be taken as you like – is that the lack does not have its place in dissemination”. (55)

2. Concerning the analytic situation, I will begin once again with a recollection of a meeting with Lacan – concerning an aspect of that meeting which I did not directly witness, and which brings up once more the question of the archive. René Girard informed me that after my Baltimore conference, as he sought to share his own assessment (which was a generous one) with Lacan, Lacan allegedly said to him: “Yes, yes, it’s good, but the difference between us is that he doesn’t deal with people who are suffering” (implying by this, people in analysis). What could he know about that? Very imprudent of him. He could only have said that justifiably, and known it, if he referred to suffering (alas, I have dealt with people who suffer – all of you, for example) or to transference – in other words, to love, which has never had need of the analytic situation to play its tricks. Lacan was thus making clinical practice – institutionalized in a certain way – and all the rules of the analytical situation, the criterion of absolute competence for speaking – of all this.

Here is a more familiar episode – occurring some ten years later, after Lacan had employed the future in the past on many occasions to reappropriate – according to the antedate, saying for example that he was relinquishing concepts and words (that of the gramme, for example – and other similar things, things which to my knowledge he had never made use of and which he instead should simply have taken up). (56) Lacan demonstrated a total lack of prudence in a Seminar of 1977 (once more, *L’Insu-que sait*), when he said that he believed I was in analysis (the audience laughed, and the sentence was replaced by (the) dots (of an ellipsis) in the journal, *Ornicar*, but too late because the transcription made the rounds – always the problem of the archive, the unmasterable archive, and here as unmasterable as ever, owing to the technique of recording. (57) That incident has now been recounted and commented on in *The Post Card*, (58) but Elizabeth Roudinesco quotes only the official version from *Ornicar*, with bracketed dots. (59) And yet, with the legal archive saturating the whole of the archive less than ever, the latter still remains un-masterable, continuing on in continuity with the anarchic).

In any case, what could he have known about whether or not I was in analysis or, if I had been, what that signified? Having never been in analysis, in the institutional sense of the analytic situation, does not prevent me from being, here or there, an analyst or analysand, on occasion and in my own way. Like anyone else. And Lacan’s remarks, while archived by recording devices, forever eluded the official archive – the syntax and the reference to not-knowing and truth you will no doubt admire: “someone who I didn’t know was – to tell the truth, I think he is in analysis – who I didn’t know that – but that is just an hypothesis – someone named Jacques Derrida, who wrote the preface to this *Verbier*”. (60) This not-knowing in truth of a belief in what was simply hypothesis therefore concerned the being-in-analysis of someone that he, Lacan, was not afraid to name. And, this was before a couple of analysts, no less (“because he couples them”, Lacan added, clearly unaware of the fact that one of the two, a friend of mine, had died at the time I was writing that preface in his memory, in his absence, and in homage to him).

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

3. This brings us to the last point. What keeps alive my interminable listening to Lacan – albeit insufficient, intermittent, inattentive and drifting – is less a question of philosophy, science or psychoanalysis, than one of what binds a certain dominant state (that is, of the master) of the history of philosophy, science, psychoanalysis, to knowing the dominant state which I call Phallogenocentrism,

to a certain historical, precarious, conventional and finite determination of the analytic situation, its rules and its limits. The topological expression I ventured to use in another example, the chiasmic invagination of borders, seems to me to fit this analytic situation. I had proposed this in *Pas and in Parages*, (61) which I am grateful to Stephen Melville for having mentioned here. (62)

If the above is really so, the question of knowing whether or not there is a psychoanalysis (x-ian, his, yours, mine) – that incalculable, unspeakable, unaccountable, unattributable question – shifts in proportion to the rate that it deconstructs – as if by itself, without deconstruction or deconstructive project – the analytic situation and therefore the analytic institution. As to the relationship between this deconstruction as experience of the impossible and the “there is” (*il y a*), I have dealt with that elsewhere. It has been archived. (63)

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

Notes:

(1) Stephen Melville, “Dupuis Lacan?” in *LACAN AVEC LES PHILOSOPHES* 391 (1991). Trans.

(2) Jacques Derrida, *To Speculate – on “Freud*, in *THE POST CARD* 257 (Alan Bass trans., Univ. of Chicago Press 1987). Trans.

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

(4) René Major, *Dupuis Lacan -*, in *LACAN AVEC LES PHILOSOPHES*, supra note 1, at 373. Trans.

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

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

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

(8) Major, supra note 4, at 387. Trans.

(9) In English in the original. Trans.

(10) In English in the original. Trans.

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

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

(13) Elizabeth Roudinesco, *HISTOIRE DE LA PSYCHANALYSE EN FRANCE: LA BATAILLE DE CENT ANS* 418 (1986); Elizabeth Roudinesco, *JACQUES LACAN & CO.: A HISTORY OF*

- PSYCHOANALYSIS IN FRANCE 1925-1985, at 410-11 (Jeffrey Mehlman trans., Univ. of Chicago Press 1990) (1986). Trans.
- (14) Jacques Lacan, *La méprise du sujet supposé savoir*, SCILICET, June 17, 1968, at 32. Trans.
- (15) Jacques Lacan, Introduction to ECRITS 11 (1970). Trans.
- (16) Jacques Derrida, OF GRAMMATOLOGY (Gayatri C. Spivak trans., Johns Hopkins Univ. Press 1976) (1967). Trans.
- (17) L'après-coup is the French translation of Freud's term *Nachträglichkeit*. Strachey translates this term in the Standard Edition with the phrase "deferred action", which has been critiqued as somewhat reductive and possibly misleading. Cf. Jean Laplanche, Notes on Afterwardness, in SEDUCTION, TRANSLATION, DRIVES 217-24 (Martin Stanton trans., Institute of Contemporary Arts 1992). I have here followed the Standard Edition translation, but marked it off with quotation marks. Trans.
- (18) Lacan, supra note. Trans.
- (19) JACQUES DERRIDA: PSYCHE, INVENTIONS DE L'AUTRE (1987). Trans.
- (20) Jacques Derrida, *Le facteur de la vérité*, in THE POST CARD, supra note 2, at 411. Trans.
- (21) Jacques Derrida, *Freud and the Scene of Writing*, in WRITING AND DIFFERENCE 196 (Alan Bass trans., Univ. of Chicago Press 1978). Trans.
- (22) Major, supra note 4. Trans
- (23) Jacques Derrida, POSITIONS 111 n.3 (Alan Bass trans., Univ. of Chicago Press 1981) (1972). Trans.
- (24) In English in the original. Trans.
- (25) Roudinesco, supra note 13. Trans.
- (26) In English in the original. Trans.
- (27) Lacan, supra note 11, at 43/29. It should be noted that the Seminar on "The Purloined Letter" does not hold this "gateway post", and in fact does not appear at all, in the English edition of JACQUES LACAN, ECRITS: A SELECTION (Alan Sheridan trans. & ed., W.W. Norton & Co. 1977), a selection of essays that according to the translator and editor Alan Sheridan is "Lacan's own". Thus references here to the Seminar on "The Purloined Letter" will be to the Mehlman translation. The number after the slash refers to the page number in the French single-volume edition of Ecrits. Translations from essays that appear only in the French Ecrits, as indicated in footnotes below, are my own. Trans.
- (28) Lacan, supra note 11, at 50/38. Trans.
- (29) Jacques Lacan, *Propos sur la causalité psychique*, in ECRITS, supra note 15, at 193. Trans.
- (30) Jacques Lacan, *The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis*, in ECRITS: A SELECTION, supra note 27, at 98/313. The number after the slash refers to the page number in the French single volume edition of the Ecrits. Trans.
- (31) Jacques Lacan, *Variantes de la cure-type*, in ECRITS, supra note 15, at 351. Trans.
- (32) Lacan, supra note 30, at 43/302 (Modified). Trans.
- (33) Id. at 88/256. Trans.
- (34) In English in the original. Trans.
- (35) Lacan, supra note 30, at 49/258. Trans.
- (36) Jacques Lacan, *Réponse au commentaire de Jean Hippolite sur la "Verneinung" de Freud*, in ECRITS, supra note 15, at 381. Trans.
- (37) Jacques Lacan, *The Signification of the Phallus*, in ECRITS, supra note 27, at 287/692. Trans
- (38) Jacques Lacan, *La science et la vérité*, in ECRITS, supra note 15, at 877. Trans.
- (39) Jacques Lacan, *Situation de la psychanalyse et formation du psychanalyste en 1956*, in ECRITS, supra note 15, at 470. Trans.
- (40) Derrida, supra note 20. Trans.
- (41) Lacan, supra note 11, at 53 (modified). Trans.
- (42) Id. at 39. Trans.
- (43) Id. at 38. Trans.
- (44) Jacques Lacan, A. Jakobson, in LE SEMINAR DE JACQUES LACAN, LIVRE XX: ENCORE 22 (Jacques-Alain Miller ed., 1975). Trans.
- (45) Major, supra note 4. Trans.
- (46) Melville, supra note 2. Trans.
- (47) In English in the original. Trans.

- (48) Jacques Lacan, The Signification of the Phallus, in *ECRITS: A SELECTION*, supra note 27, at 292 (translation modified). Derrida is referring to a passage in *Le facteur de la vérité*, supra note 20, at 482/510. The page number after the slash indicates the page number in the French edition, JACQUES DERRIDA, *LA CARTE POSTALE: DE SOCRATE A FREUD E AU-DELA'* (1980). Trans.
- (49) Derrida, supra note 20, at 7. Trans.
- (50) Id. at 482-83. Trans.
- (51) En abyme is Derrida's phrase for, in Alan Bass' words, "The infinite regress of a reflection within a reflection", and of course also a play on abime, "abyss". Cf. Derrida, supra note 2, at 511, Trans.
- (52) Derrida, supra note 20, at 244-45 (modified). Trans.
- (53) Id. at 123-24 (modified). Trans.
- (54) Id. at 33, 38-39 (modified). Trans.
- (55) Id. at 441, 470 (modified). Trans.
- (56) Jacques Lacan, *De Rome 53 à Rome 67: La psychanalyse. Raisons d'un échec*, SCILICET, June 17, 1968, at 47.
- (57) In English in the original. Trans.
- (58) Derrida, supra note 20, at 202-04, 218. Trans.
- (59) Roudinesco, JACQUES LACAN & CO., supra note 13, at 600, 603. Trans.
- (60) Lacan is referring to Derrida's *Fors: Les mots anglés de Nicolas Abraham et Maria Torok*, Forward to ABRAHAM AND TOROK, *CRYPTONOMIE: LE VERBIER DE L'HOMME AUX LOUPS* (1976) translated in *THE WOLF MAN'S MAGIC WORD: A CRYPTONOMY*, at xc (Barbara Johnson trans., Univ. of Minnesota, 1986). Trans.
- (61) Jacques Derrida, *Pas*, in *PARAGES* (1986). Trans.
- (62) Melville, supra note 1. Trans.
- (63) See JACQUES DERRIDA, *DONNER LE TEMPS I: LA FAUSSE MONNAIE* (1991), translated in JACQUES DERRIDA, *GIVEN TIME: I, CONTERFEIT MONEY* (Peggy Kamuf trans., Univ. of Chicago Press 1992). Trans.