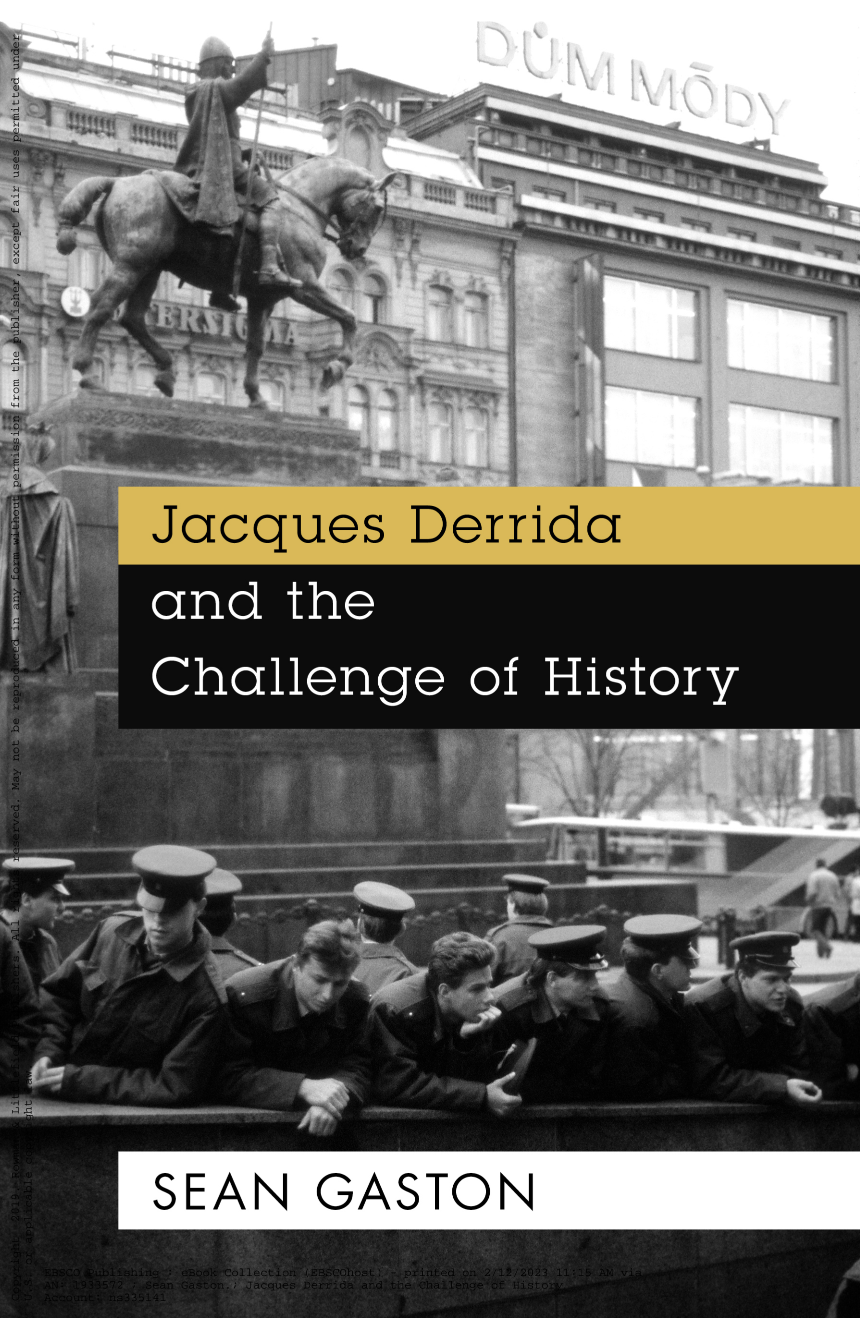

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AN: 1933572 ; Sean Gaston.; Jacques Derrida and the Challenge of History
Account: ns335141

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JACQUES DERRIDA AND THE CHALLENGE OF HISTORY

Sean Gaston

ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD
INTERNATIONAL
London • New York

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Published by Rowman & Littlefield International, Ltd.
6 Tinworth Street, London SE11 5AL
www.rowmaninternational.com

Rowman & Littlefield International, Ltd. is an affiliate of
Rowman & Littlefield
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706, USA
With additional offices in Boulder, New York, Toronto (Canada), and London (UK)
www.rowman.com

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: HB 978-1-78661-080-5
ISBN: PB 978-1-78661-081-2

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Gaston, Sean, author.
Title: Jacques Derrida and the challenge of history / Sean Gaston.
Description: Lanham : Rowman & Littlefield International, 2019. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2018038028 (print) | LCCN 2018053702 (ebook) | ISBN 9781786610829 (Electronic) | ISBN 9781786610805 (cloth : alk. paper) | ISBN 9781786610812 (pbk. : alk. paper)
Subjects: LCSH: Derrida, Jacques. | History—Philosophy.
Classification: LCC B2430.D484 (ebook) | LCC B2430.D484 G383 2019 (print) | DDC 194—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2018038028

™ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Printed in the United States of America

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Wolfson College Oxford and, in particular, the former president of Wolfson College, Professor Dame Hermione Lee, the acting president, Professor Philomen Probert, the college secretary, Juliet Montgomery and the Visiting Scholars Liaison Officer, Dr. Daniel Isaacson, for the opportunity to be a visiting scholar in 2017–2018 as I completed this book. As someone who has long admired Isaiah Berlin, I was delighted to be at Wolfson and am grateful for the unfailing kindness and generosity I have experienced during my visit. The staff at the Bodleian Library, the Taylorian Institute and the Maison Française at the University of Oxford were also invariably kind and helpful.

An earlier version of chapter 2 was first published under the title "Derrida and the Problem of History 1964–1965" in *New Literary History* 48.2 (2017). I would like to thank Rita Felski and Johns Hopkins University Press for enabling me to use this material. I am grateful as ever to Sarah Campbell at Rowman & Littlefield International for her care and clarity and to Jane Brown for her remarkable photo, taken in Prague in 1990, for the front cover (see: www.janebrownphotography.com). I would also like to thank Professor Peter Otto at the University of Melbourne for thirty years of intellectual friendship. I am particularly grateful to those exceptional residents of Boulogne-Billancourt, Deborah Thebault and Viviane de Charrière.

This book is dedicated to Carmella Elan-Gaston.

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PREFACE

The Problem of History

I

The hypothesis of this book is that Jacques Derrida's (1930–2004) work can be treated as the basis for a philosophy of history and a deconstructive historiography. The possibility of seeing Derrida not as a philosopher of language but as a philosopher of history has become more apparent with the publication in 2013 of Derrida's 1964–1965 seminar, *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*.[1] Delivered at the École normale supérieure in the critical period in which Derrida was first articulating his critique both of the history of metaphysics in philosophy and of the proclaimed "end" of metaphysics as found in the mid 1960s in linguistics, structuralism and structural linguistics, the seminar treats history as a problem that encounters the impasse of renewed models of historicism and ahistoricism. Derrida complicates this impasse by thinking about history in terms of *la trace* and *différance*; both profound attempts to disrupt the metaphysical assertion of essence as a form of the sensible or the intelligible and to displace the traditional definition and separation of time and space. Thanks to the publication of the 1964–1965 lectures, we now know that the *problem* of history was at the heart of Derrida's work in the mid 1960s prior to the publication of his best-known work, *Of Grammatology* (1967).

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One of the implications of a heightened focus on history in Derrida's writings over fifty years is that his so-called political turn in the early 1990s, which saw the publication of a wide range of material on the law, ethics and politics, can also be treated as marking an ongoing engagement with the challenge of history. For example, in this period Derrida also focused on the problem of Friedrich Nietzsche's (1844–1900) understanding of "political history."[2] However, if there is the possibility of a deconstructive historiography, it is found not only in the many and varied works in the early 1990s in which Derrida talks directly about the concept of history; it is also found in his growing interest from at least the mid 1970s in a range of different historical problems that include: the dating of a written work; the relation between autobiography, biography and historical testimony; the differences between fictional narratives, memoirs and historical events; and the political and institutional contexts that shape the history of philosophy and, especially, the philosophy of the first half of the twentieth century.

The second part of this book will therefore be focusing on Derrida's work on *context*, *memory* and *narrative* from the mid 1970s to the mid 1990s as the basis for a possible deconstructive historiography. The first part of the book examines Derrida's treatment of historicism and historicity in the 1960s before turning to what I would describe as Derrida's formulation of a *philosophy of history* in the early 1970s.

Chapter 1 addresses Derrida's persistent criticism of reductive forms of historicism. From his earliest work in the 1950s on phenomenology, Derrida engaged with Edmund Husserl's (1859–1938) sustained challenge to a philosophy determined by an empirical, historical, cultural and "relativist" context. Husserl argues that philosophy can only aspire to a science if it can account for trans-historical objects and trans-historical objectivities. Derrida always treated Husserl's notion of historicity as a history of idealized trans-historical objectivities as an example of philosophy assuming a privileged vantage point over history. But he also retained Husserl's critique of a historicism that appeared to give history an authority founded on a self-evident and determining empiricism.

From his readings of Husserl, confronted with one side advocating a seamless history of "the same" and the other side insisting on a history without the possibility of the same exceeding a determined, particular context, Derrida argued in the 1960s that the *possibility* of the same *as*

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the same also registers an unavoidable relation to "the other." A necessary repetition of the same cannot avoid some kind of alteration or difference. The same may still be "the same" but as a repetition it cannot be identical. Derrida's early critiques of historicism and ahistoricism also evoke structures in which the possibility of totality announces the *possibility* of what exceeds any totality. In Derrida's thought, there is therefore a *quasi*-transcendence that counteracts a determined historicism without privileging a classical ahistoricism. In my view, this can be described as a philosophy of history because these quasi-transcendental gestures also register the historicity of the historical event and its narrative.

Chapter 2 focuses on Derrida's recently published 1964–1965 seminar on Martin Heidegger's (1889–1976) treatment of historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) in *Being and Time* (1927). The political and philosophical contexts for Derrida's first seminar at the École normale supérieure in 1964 also need to be placed in the context of recent Heidegger studies after the publication in 2014 of the *Black Notebooks* (1931–1941) with their explicit link between anti-Semitism and historicity. In the context of the mid 1960s, in the seminar Derrida both addresses Heidegger's links with National Socialism and treats the concept of historicity in *Being and Time* as an important philosophical and ethical gesture because it describes the possibility of a historicity that is not founded on the designation of a non-historicity. Both G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831) and Husserl had defined historicity by contrasting it to "peoples" who have "no history." We now know that Heidegger himself did this in the 1930s in the *Black Notebooks*.

At the same time, in 1964 Derrida already starts to mark the limitations of Heidegger's concept of historicity, not least through its proximity to Hegel. In his later work, Derrida will criticize a historicity of the history of Being as a "sending off" or "sending out" that is determined by a clear and emphatic destination. Importantly, the 1964–1965 lectures also show us how critical terms in Derrida's thought such as text, trace, difference and repetition are registered *in relation to* the problem of history. Nonetheless, it is also apparent that history remains a *problem* for Derrida in the 1960s. This has partly to do with Derrida's attempt to challenge the traditional relation between philosophy, the history of philosophy and the philosophy of history. But it also has to do with the fact that after 1965 Derrida does not take up Heidegger's

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definition of a historicity *of Dasein* based on an absolute difference between history itself and historiography or the science of history. As I argue in chapter 3, it is only in the mid 1970s after his later critical reading of Heidegger's "Time and Being" (1962) that Derrida starts to articulate a "new" kind of philosophy of history in his wide-ranging treatment of context, memory and narrative.

Chapter 3 opens with an account of the differences between Derrida and Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005). Like Derrida, Ricoeur began as a reader and translator of Husserl. But unlike Derrida, Ricoeur's hermeneutical philosophy engaged directly with "the history of the historians."[3] There are significant differences between Derrida and Ricoeur, not least what might be called Ricoeur's avowedly Protestant and quasi-Hegelian philosophy of history in which a necessary stage of negation or iconoclasm generates a final "post-critical faith"; but Ricoeur's fifty-year engagement with the problem of history and, for our purposes, especially his early work in the 1950s and 1960s on the relation between philosophy and history, is invaluable in thinking about the possibility of a deconstructive historiography.

As Derrida's 1964–1965 lectures on Heidegger and history show, it was not Hegel but the proximity and distance between Hegel and Heidegger that prompted Derrida to articulate a different philosophy of history. From the early 1970s, Derrida links the problem of history to Heidegger's treatment of Being as a gift or of giving as the basis for the "there is" and for a historicity of the event of appropriation and expropriation. Rather than follow Heidegger's model for a determined historicity of appropriation and expropriation—or Hegel and Ricoeur's triadic model for a historicity of appropriation, expropriation and reappropriation—Derrida advocates a historicity of *ex-appropriation*. One neither starts with the appropriation of the proper—an original property or propriety—nor treats expropriation, its absolute difference, as the possibility of a final re-appropriation. It is from the challenge of *ex-appropriation* that Derrida starts to think again in the 1970s about the problem of history.

Ex-appropriation can be described as Derrida's *philosophy* of history. It is the theoretical basis—and the practical basis, since the two are intertwined, heterogenous and incessantly call to each other—of a deconstructive historiography. A practical historiography always exceeds its theoretical frameworks and the more it insists on a historiography

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that is only practical, the more it reinforces the idealized theoretical assumptions that make this exclusion possible.[4] As Derrida suggested in his recently published 1975–1976 seminar on theory and practice, if theory and practice are treated like a simple opposition, one gets the situation of a certain Marxism that demands a purely practical Marxism in the name of a hyper-theoreticism.[5] However, by its very nature, by its refusal of the proper as its *arkhē* or *télos*, *ex-appropriation* does not offer a neat method, a secure model or final resolution. I believe that it *opens* the *problem of history* for Derrida.

II

As I have suggested, Derrida's work in the 1960s and 1970s can be described as a philosophy *of* history. This philosophy of history accounts for the possibilities and limits of any deconstructive historiography. I doubt Derrida himself would have accepted the description of his work as a "philosophy" of history, as he attempts to engage with a "history" that exceeds the traditional designations and limitations of a philosophy of history or, indeed, of a history of philosophy. In a 1998 interview he explicitly states "deconstruction is not a philosophy of history."[6] He goes on to explain that deconstruction is "not a philosophy" and that "the concept of history is too problematic for me to say that deconstruction is a philosophy of history."[7] Geoffrey Bennington (1956–) may be closer to Derrida's own view of the relation between philosophy and history when he remarks "philosophy cannot understand the totality of its field with the help of one of the concepts of that field" and, therefore, "philosophy 'is' its history to the extent that it is never quite itself."[8]

Nonetheless, in Derrida's first publication, his 1962 translation of and introduction to Husserl's short work "The Origin of Geometry" (1936), he makes a point of referring to the "*philosophy of history*" as it is understood "in the current sense," suggesting that in the early 1960s he already believes it can be understood in a different sense.[9] There can be a philosophy of history that does not simply follow Hegel and the legacy of his *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* (1821).[10] There can also be a historicity that does not simply follow Husserl and Heidegger. As Derrida observes in an interview from April 1989, in his

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work he has sought not only to critique historicism but also *to find* a historicity "beyond, against, and without [*au-delà de, contre ou sans*] Husserl or Heidegger."[11]

Derrida's interest in the philosophy of history—and in the history of philosophy—was initially shaped by Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger and, I would argue, by Ricoeur. In his later work he engages directly with only a few historians—notably Hayim Yosef Yerushalmi (1932–2009)—and I will focus in some detail on his reading of Yerushalmi and the problem of historical memory in chapter 7.[12] But he does often criticize an implicit philosophical idealization of history, from the accounts of visitors to Stalinist Russia to formulaic celebrations of the "end of history." As Derrida observed in *Spectres of Marx* (1993), long before the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 in France in the 1950s there had been intense debate over Alexandre Kojève's (1902–1968) emphatic reading of Hegel and the philosophical and political claim for "the *end* of History" (*la* fin *de l'Histoire*).[13] As Derrida remarks, in 1980 he described this as an "apocalyptic tone in philosophy."[14] This is also "an apocalyptic tone" in philosophy about history.

As this book is focused on the history of Derrida's own work, I have not engaged with a wider literature on the philosophy of history and have broadly confined myself to some contexts and interventions from twentieth-century French historiography. Marc Bloch (1886–1944), co-founder of the influential Annales school of history, remains a constant source for Ricoeur on the problem of the *trace* of the past as a witness in spite of itself. As Ricoeur remarks, for Bloch history "aspires to be a science of traces."[15] Ricoeur treats the traces "on which the historians work" as "written and eventually archived" traces, and one of the challenges in exploring the relation between Derrida's thought and a possible historiography is to recognize that *la trace* has a different status in Derrida's work: it is not a track that remains visible but rather a mark that can also efface itself and be lost.[16] I also touch on the work of later French historians, such as Jacques Le Goff (1924–2014), from the younger generation of the Annales school, and François Hartog (1946–), whose recent work reflects on its aftermath.

In relation to the problem of "contemporary" history, to a history where the event and its narrative apparently take place at the same time, I have included some brief discussions of Hegel's account of Herodotus and Thucydides and contrasted these to the work of the classi-

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cal historian Arnaldo Momigliano (1908–1987). I have also gestured elsewhere to historiographical writings that Derrida himself has referred to, such as those of Michel de Certeau (1925–1986), Michel Foucault (1926–1984), Hayden White (1928–1918) and Carlo Ginzburg (1939–). As I have said, this book is concerned with making the case for Derrida as a significant figure in these debates. I will leave it to others to develop future conversations and polemics.

The second part of this book argues that in view of the philosophy of history chartered in the first part, Derrida's work can provide the basis for a *possible* deconstructive historiography and this can be found in his relentless questioning of the problems of context, memory and narrative from the mid 1970s to the mid 1990s.

Chapters 4 and 5 examine the relation between history and context in Derrida's thought. Starting with Derrida's responses to the challenge of history in his own lifetime—such as the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and his arrest in Prague in 1981—they address the imperative in his work to be at once "in" and "out" of context. Derrida's criticism of the use of context in philosophy and history can be seen both in the example of the historian Quentin Skinner's (1940–) "ideas in context" and Derrida's long engagement with the problem of an idealized context in speech act theory. Derrida's work from the mid 1970s on the historical and institutional contexts of philosophy also offers an alterative approach to the problem of context, treating it as a *mi-lieu* or half-placing. Context is not self-evident or sufficient unto itself as a single determination. Context remains a problem that needs to be addressed and readdressed. Contexts are mobile and always have the possibility of the relation to other and different contexts.

An example of this can be seen in the attempt to construct the "intellectual history" of Derrida himself through a careful chronological sequence of his varied writings. Many of his publications were published in a series of revised versions over a number of years. A work from 1990 may be published only in 2000 and includes a decade of revisions and additions. Another work from 1990 may be the development of an issue first raised in 1970. How does one date such works? One has to take account of contexts that also spread and recede. A possible deconstructive historiography would need to engage with the problem of context as the half-placing or *mi-lieu* of spreading and receding contexts.

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Chapters 6 and 7 focus on the relation between memory and history in Derrida's thought and begin by looking at Derrida's interest from the mid 1970s in writing works with dates and the use of the *dated* work, including essays in the form of letters, journals or dairies with multiple dates. They then turn to Derrida's own engagement with the work as a memoir that is not only autobiographical but also interwoven with other memoirs, biographies and historical memories. When it comes to history and memory and to the problem of *historical memory*, Derrida's work suggests a historiography that addresses the overlapping layers of different kinds of memory and historical memory in a historical event. Derrida's remarkable 1991 work "Circumfession"—which combines dated diary entries from 1976–1981 with a year-long series of long single sentence "periods," dated from March–May 1989, with extensive quotations from St. Augustine's (354–430 CE) *Confessions* (c. 400 CE) who, like Derrida, was born in what is now Algeria—is a striking example of this layering of different kinds of memory in one work.[17] As a critic of the philosophical idealization of memory, for Derrida there is always more than one kind of memory—and this is a problem for historiography.

Chapters 8 and 9 address the relation between narrative and history in Derrida's thought starting with his thirty-year reading of Hegel's provocative "union" (*Vereinigung*) between the historical event (*Geschichte*) and its narration (*Historie*) in world history.[18] In contrast, as we shall see in chapter 2, Heidegger argued in *Being and Time* that, as part of raising the question of the meaning of Being, the authentic historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) of *Dasein* requires a clear distinction between history itself (*Geschichte*) and the science of history or historiography (*Historie*).[19] As Heidegger remarks:

> The most obvious ambiguity of the term "history" [*Geschichte*] is one which has often been noticed, and there is nothing "fuzzy" [*ungefähre*] about it. It evinces itself in that this term may mean the "historical actuality" [*geschichtliche Wirklichkeit*] as well as the possible science of it. We shall provisionally eliminate the signification of "history" [*Geschichte*] in the sense of a "science of history" (historiology) [*Geschichtswissenschaft* (*Historie*)].[20]

In looking at the question of narrative, which includes that status of *Historie*, Derrida is not concerned with trans-historical structures that

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add a level of rhetorical patterns or quasi-fictional narration to historical events (the focus of Hayden White's work), but rather with the entangled relation between the *historical* event and the *event* of its narration and historiography. Hegel may distinguish the historical event and its subsequent narrative but he also argues that the event and its narrative can appear simultaneously: the historian as participant or as eyewitness generates the first and most original world history. "The narration of history," Hegel observes, "is born at the same time as the first actions and events that are properly historical."[21]

Faced with the legacy of this different treatment of the relation between the event and its narrative—of Hegel who argues for a distinction-union made in the name of the exclusive club of "world history" (*Weltgeschichte*) and of Heidegger who argues for an emphatic distinction and the primacy and priority of history "itself" made in the name of *Dasein* and meaning of the question of Being—Derrida insists that for an event to become a historical event—and part of the history of historiography—it must be repeated, related and narrated. Taking account of how a historical event is narrated and altered in some fashion is not to embrace some heightened self-reflexivity or to assert a metalanguage at the expense of the historical; it is rather to say that the witnessing, the relating and the narrating of an event is a critical issue in a viable and accurate historiography. The problem of how a historical event is narrated by the eyewitness or the historian is also the problem of how narration limits the historical event.

III

One of the striking contexts for Derrida's thirty-year interest in the relation between historical events and their narration is that it was undertaken during a period when French historiography was dominated by the Annales school, which believed that too much emphasis had been placed on the event in works of history. Founded in 1929 by Lucien Febvre (1878–1856) and Marc Bloch, and later represented after World War II by influential historians such as Fernand Braudel (1902–1985), Georges Duby (1919–1996), Jacques Le Goff and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie (1929–), the Annales school argued that there should be a longer and wider context for history—the *longue durée*.[22]

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Historical writing should be more than the reconstruction of notable events and key episodes directed towards "the actions, words, or attitudes of a few personages."[23] A history of long-standing structures and far-reaching social and economic levels could recognize different kinds of coexisting temporalities.[24] It could also concern itself with a broad history of the "mentalities" of a given age or epoch.[25]

As François Dosse (1950–) has noted, by the late 1960s there were attempts in France to bridge this approach with the innovations of structural linguistics and structural anthropology: "history and structure" was the order of the day for the younger generation of Annales historians.[26] The underlying structures of the historical past had already been a focus of the Annales historians. Braudel's remarkable *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (1949) demonstrated the *longue durée* by beginning with an extended analysis of the fundamental geographical and ecological structures of the Mediterranean Sea and surrounding region before turning to the political events of the period.[27] For Braudel, history is "the inexhaustible history of structures."[28] In broad terms, the Annales historians opposed an expansive history of structures to a limited and limiting history of events. As Le Goff observed, history is unduly limited and distorted when confined to the "history of *events*."[29] Traditional historiography has been dominated far too long, he argued, by "a story-history, a narrative" (*une histoire-récit, une narration*).[30]

In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969), Michel Foucault emphatically rejected the hermeneutical opposition found in Ricoeur's work in the 1960s between structure and event.[31] Foucault insisted that "the structure / development" (*structure-devenir*) opposition is not "relevant" in his redefinition of "the historical field" as a relation between "discourse," "discursive events" and "discursive formations."[32] According to Foucault, the reliance on the opposition of immobile structures and closed systems to "the living openness of history" *only* returns history to the "sovereignty" of the conscious subject.[33] In part in reaction to the opposition between structure and event, in *Time and Narrative* (1983–1985) Ricoeur emphasized the fundamental importance of the relation between history and narrative.[34]

For Ricoeur, narrative is *unavoidable* in historiography. This essential narration also registers the fundamental relation between history and temporality. Even in a *longue durée* history by the Annales school,

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Ricoeur argues, there are "quasi-events."[35] Derrida's own implicit reaction to the Annales treatment of history—and perhaps also to Foucault—is apparent in his abiding interest not only in a critique of concepts of time and space when treated in a historical work governed by underlying and centralizing structural forces but also in his ongoing engagement with the problem of events and their narratives.[36] Despite their profound differences, in this context Derrida is quite close to Ricoeur.

In the mid twentieth century, French historiography, like structural anthropology, becomes caught up in a series of traditional assumptions about structure. As Derrida had noted in 1966, a structural analysis rests on bestowing an organizing and limiting center as "a point of presence" and "a fixed origin."[37] Such an analysis reinforces the ahistorical priority of a history of structures rather than a history of events that can also be thought from a structural perspective. As the structuralism of Claude Levi-Strauss (1908–2009) had began to spread its influence in the late 1940s, in his essays from the early 1950s on the relation between philosophy and history Ricoeur had already made a point of describing the quandary of the historian as he or she is "caught" between "the event-filled aspect" focused on the appearance of "great personages" and "the structural aspect of history" based on "slowly progressing forces" and "stable forms."[38] Writing in 2003, François Hartog reflects on the aftermath of these long debates in French historiography, noting that historians today should not feel forced "to revive a notion of history driven by a single time, whether this is the *staccato* of the event or, the other extreme, the immobility of the long or very long *durée*."[39] Historiography, he argues, should now be able to work with a "diversity" of mobile experiences or "regimes" of times.[40]

Derrida himself had already challenged the simple opposition of history and structure in *Of Grammatology*.[41] In his reading of Levi-Strauss's treatment of writing in structural anthropology, he had recognized that structuralism both neutralized historical relations to establish its own structural vantage points and registered that there was an "irreducible relativity" in how historicity or non-historicity is experienced.[42] It would therefore probably be more accurate to say that rather than any evident antipathy to the Annales school, Derrida had an active interest in the philosophical problem of the relation between an event and its repetition or narration and he also treated this as a problem of

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history. It is also worth noting that from the mid 1980s, Derrida and many of the key figures in the Annales school were working in the same institution in Paris, the École des hautes études en sciences sociales. As Derrida suggests in his essay "Privilege" (1990), which introduces a collection of his writings on the academic institution, his interest in the event was intertwined with a political imperative. Democracy must be thought, he observes, as "the promise of an event and the event of a promise" because it is constituted "in a here and now whose singularity does not signify presence or self-presence."[43]

The recent publication of the 1964–1965 lectures show us that Heideggerian historicity played a significant role in the formation of Derrida's notions of difference and repetition in the years immediately preceding *Of Grammatology*. At the very least, this should prompt a reassessment of the account of history and historicity in *Of Grammatology*. The recent work of scholars such as Ethan Kleinberg, Mark Mason, Edward Baring and Andrew Dunstall give encouraging signs that this work is beginning and complements the long-standing work of an older generation of scholars such as Dominick LaCapra (1939–) and Geoffrey Bennington.[44] In his recent book *Haunting History: For a Deconstructive Approach to the Past* (2017), Ethan Kleinberg (1967–) has argued that Derrida's work can temper without invalidating the empirical and ontological imperatives in traditional historiography.[45] As Kleinberg rightly states, Derrida's work can be treated as an new elaboration of the problem of the "remote" past that remains remote and can still be registered as "past" without being reduced to a present past or assimilated presence. In Kleinberg's formulation, prompted by deconstruction "the past ~~is~~, crossed out, present and absent."[46]

In an elegant study, Kleinberg focuses on Derrida's "hauntology" as a challenge to the "ontological realism" of current historical writing. For Derrida, the "spectres" of the past indicate a future of the past that *returns*—uncanny, disjointed and untimely—and suspends the reduction or the possibility of the retention of the past to either its "spirit" or "body": the past remains between these ontological categories.[47] However, I would disagree with Kleinberg that when it comes to Derrida's treatment of the historical event and the event of its narrative a "hauntology" would entail the "event" being "silently determined by the telling that replaces it."[48] The historical event must be repeated *openly* to be registered *as* an event of the past; this repetition complicates and

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alters the event to some extent but it does not replace it or invalidate its transmission as a veritable history *of* the past, at the very least in the name of the witness, justice and the political.[49]

Kleinberg is interested in a deconstructive historiography that emerges between a traditional "ontological realism" and a vibrant "constructivism" that he associates with Hayden White.[50] Derrida himself distinguished his work from that of Hayden White, seeing the link made between them as part of a misunderstanding about Derrida's critique of—rather than adherence to—the so-called linguistic turn.[51] Judith Surkis has noted that the term "linguistic turn" was coined in the 1950s, brought to prominence in America in the late 1960s by Richard Rorty (1931–2007) and originally referred to the influence of logical positivism and the ordinary language philosophers before being later associated with "French Theory."[52] As Derrida remarked in a 1994 interview:

> Deconstruction was inscribed in the *Linguistic Turn*, when it was a protest against linguistics. And this gave rise to a great many misunderstandings, not only in philosophy and literary criticism, but also in history: there are some historians, epistemologists of history (Clifford Geertz, Hayden White, etc.), who have attempted to practice the *Linguistic Turn* in history. And their work has been put together, in my opinion, very unjustly, with what I do—even though, probably, I have more affinity with them than with more classical historians.[53]

Kleinberg's conclusion that a deconstructive historiography prompts a better grasp of "the polysemous nature of the past" is to be welcomed.[54] At the same time, his refutation of a viable "ontology" and the absent-present axis in historiography may not be the most useful place to start with Derrida's own challenge to history. Even in a moment that we register *as* present, all the objects around us—and we ourselves—are *from* the past. It is the profound *weight* of the past that leads Derrida in his 1964–1965 lectures on Heidegger to think of the future *of* the past. One can rather begin with Heidegger's non-ontological "enigma" of the past and Derrida's turn away from Heideggerian "historicity" in the 1960s and his elaboration of *ex-appropriation* from the 1970s to the 1990s as a problem of history in his treatment of context, memory and narrative.[55]

Keeping in mind all the difficulties and qualifications that are made in this book, if aspects of Derrida's work can be treated as the basis for a

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philosophy of history this leaves us with the challenge of a deconstructive historiography. This "new" kind of historiography remains a philosophy of history; it is not trying to displace the hard-won traditions of good practice in historiography. But it can be taken as a prompting to think about different kinds of historiography that can contribute to the history of historiography. The irrepressible challenge of history to philosophy is also a challenge for the writing of history.

June 2018, Oxford

NOTES

1. Jacques Derrida, *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, ed. Thomas Dutoit with the assistance of Marguerite Derrida, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); *Heidegger: La question de l'Être et l'Histoire: Cours de l'ENS–Ulm 1964–1965*, ed. Thomas Dutoit avec le concours de Marguerite Derrida (Paris: Galilee, 2013).

2. Jacques Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*, trans. George Collins (London: Verso, 1997), 79, 81.

3. Paul Ricoeur, *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics II*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and John B. Thompson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 3, 138.

4. Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death and Literature in Secret*, second edition, trans. David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 27.

5. Jacques Derrida, *Théorie et pratique: Cours de l'ENS–ULM 1975–1976*, ed. Alexander Garcia Düttmann (Paris: Galilée, 2017), 17, 20, 29–31.

6. Jacques Derrida and Michal Ben-Naftali, "Interview with Professor Jacques Derrida: Uniqueness, Limitation and Forgivability," trans. Moshe Ron, *Shoah Resource Center*, Jerusalem, January 8, 1998. The quotation is from the sub-section entitled "Auschwitz as a Proper Name." http://www.yadvashem.org/articles/interviews/jacques-derrida.html

7. "Interview with Professor Jacques Derrida."

8. Geoffrey Bennington, "Derridabase," in *Jacques Derrida* by Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 1–316: 127–29; *Kant on the Frontier: Philosophy, Politics, and the Ends of the Earth* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), xiv n. 1.

9. Jacques Derrida, *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, trans. and intro. John P. Leavey Jr., second edition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 103.

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10. G. W. F Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Manuscripts of the Introduction and the Lectures of 1822–1823*, ed. and trans. Robert F. Brown and Peter C. Hodgson with William G. Geuss (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). See also Geoffrey Bennington, "Inter," in *Other Analyses: Reading Philosophy* (e-book, 2004; printed 2008), 370–400: 380–400; Sean Gaston, "Histories–Décalages (1–30 November 2004)," in *The Impossible Mourning of Jacques Derrida* (London: Continuum, 2006), 19–73; Rebecca Comay, *Mourning Sickness: Hegel and the French Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

11. Jacques Derrida and Michael Skinner, "Politics and Friendship," in *Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews 1971–2001*, ed. and intro. Elizabeth Rottenberg, trans. Robert Harvey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 147–98: 157; Jacques Derrida, *Politique et amitié: Entretiens avec Michael Sprinker sur Marx et Althusser* (Paris: Galilée, 2011), 36.

12. Based on the available published work in 2018, Derrida also wrote on or wrote for a number of other historians, including Jean-Pierre Vernant, Nicole Loraux (see this book 52n200), Philippe Ariès (see this book 42, 238), Jacques Le Goff (see this book 276–77n6).

13. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (London: Routledge, 1994), 14–16. See also 60–62, 70–75. See Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*, ed. Raymond Queneau and Alan Bloom, trans. James H. Nichols Jr. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969), 32. See also 45, 95–97, 158–61 n. 5, 193, 258; *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel: Leçons sur la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit professées de 1933 à 1939*, ed. Raymond Queneau (Paris: Gallimard: [1947], 1968), 162.

14. *Specters of Marx*, 15. See Jacques Derrida, "Of an Apocalyptic Tone Newly Adopted in Philosophy," in *Derrida and Negative Theology*, ed. Harold Coward and Toby Foshay, trans. John P. Leavey Jr. (New York: SUNY, 1992), 25–71.

15. Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 13.

16. *Memory, History, and Forgetting*, 13.

17. Jacques Derrida, "Circumfession," in *Jacques Derrida* by Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 3–315.

18. G. W. F. Hegel, *Introduction to The Philosophy of History*, trans. Leo Rauch (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988), 64; *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, in *Werke*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel, 20 vols. (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1986), 12: 83.

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19. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 375, 378. See also 10 n. 1, 20 n. 1. Pages cited in this edition refer to the page numbers given in the margins that match the pages numbers of the original German edition.

20. *Being and Time*, 378; *Sein und Zeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), 378.

21. *Introduction to The Philosophy of History*, 64.

22. See François Dosse, *New History in France: The Triumph of the Annales*, trans. Peter V. Conroy Jr. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994); Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution: The Annales School, 1929–2014*, second edition (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).

23. Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, trans. Peter Putnam, pref. Peter Burke (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 42.

24. François Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time,* trans. Saskia Brown (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 14.

25. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 188–200, 216–27; Peter Burke, "Strengths and Weaknesses of the History of Mentalities," in *Varieties of Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 162–82.

26. For an overview see François Dosse, *The History of Structuralism: The Sign Sets, 1967–Present*, trans. Deborah Glassman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 227–66. See also Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity*, 23–40.

27. Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II*, trans. Siân Reynolds, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

28. Fernand Braudel, "History and Sociology," in *On History*, trans. Sarah Matthews (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 64–82: 75.

29. Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, trans. Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 2.

30. *History and Memory*, 7; *Histoire et mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 39.

31. Paul Ricoeur, "Structure and Hermeneutics," in *The Conflict of Interpretations*, ed. Don Ihde, trans. Katheleen McLaughlin (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 27–61.

32. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 11, 22, 27, 38; *L'archéologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 21. See also Geoffrey Bennington, "The Truth About *Parrhēsia*: Philosophy, Rhetoric and Politics in Late Foucault," in *Foucault / Derrida: Fifty Years Later: The Futures of Genealogy, Deconstruction, and Politics*, ed. Olivia Custer, Penenlope Deutscher and Samir Haddad (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 205–20.

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33. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 12–13.

34. Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, Volume 1*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 91–94, 101–2, 177.

35. *Time and Narrative*, I: 109, 208–25.

36. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 152. See also Sean Gaston, *The Concept of World from Kant to Derrida* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2013), 151–61.

37. Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in Discourses of the Human Sciences," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 278–94: 278.

38. Paul Ricoeur, "Objectivity and Subjectivity in History," in *History and Truth*, trans. Charles A. Kelbley (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965), 21–40: 39. See also Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Samuel Presner and Others, fore. Hayden White (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 6–8.

39. *Regimes of Historicity*, 16.

40. *Regimes of Historicity*, 16.

41. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), lxxxix, 13–14, 101.

42. *Of Grammatology*, 128. See also Claude Levi-Strauss, "Introduction: History and Anthropology," in *Structural Anthropology*, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York: Basic Books, 1963), 1–27.

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44. See Ethan Kleinberg, "Haunting History: Deconstruction and the Spirit of Revision," *History and Theory* 46.4 (2007): 113–43; Mark Mason, "Deconstructing History," in *Derrida and the Future of the Liberal Arts: Professions of Faith*, ed. Mary Caputi and Vincent J. Del Casino Jr. (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 93–121; Edward Baring, "*Ne me raconte plus d'histoires*: Derrida and the Problem of the History of Philosophy," *History and Theory* 53 (May 2014): 175–93; Andrew Dunstall, "The Impossible Diagram of History: 'History' in Derrida's *Of Grammatology*," *Derrida Today* 8.2 (2015): 193–214. See also Dominick LaCapra, "Rethinking Intellectual History and Reading Texts," in *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 23–71; Geoff Bennington and Robert Young, "Introduction: Posing the Question," in *Post-Structuralism and the Question of History*, ed. Derek Attridge, Geoff Bennington and Robert Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 1–14; Geoffrey Bennington, "Demanding

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History," in *Legislations: The Politics of Deconstruction* (London: Verso, 1994), 61–73.

45. Ethan Kleinberg, *Haunting History: For a Deconstructive Approach to the Past* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017).

46. *Haunting History*, 144.

47. *Specters of Marx*, 10, 63, 202.

48. *Haunting History*, 2.

49. *Haunting History*, 2.

50. *Haunting History*, 3.

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52. Surkis, "When Was the Linguistic Turn?," 705. See also *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method*, ed. Richard Rorty (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967). For Rorty's own view of Derrida see *Deconstruction and Pragmatism*, ed. Chantal Mouffe (London: Routledge, 1996).

53. Jacques Derrida and Maurizio Ferraris, *A Taste For the Secret*, ed. Giacomo Donis and David Webb, trans. Giacomo Donis (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), 76; *Le gout du secret: Entretiens 1993–1995*, ed. Andrea Bellantone, Arthur Cohen and Pauline Iarossi (Paris: Hermann, 2018), 97. Translation modified.

54. *Haunting History*, 2.

55. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 381. See also Derrida, *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 174, 204, 210–11.

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Part One

A Philosophy of History

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I

HISTORY AND HISTORICISM

> But it is not through philosophies that we become philosophers.
> —Husserl, "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science"[1]

1. HUSSERL AND HISTORICISM

To begin to address the possibility of a philosophy of history in Derrida's thought we need to recall that he remains critical of any historicism in which history becomes the determining ground, the *arkhē* and the *télos* of all questions, not least because an *arkhē* and *télos* already assume an "anhistoric" structure in relation to the problem of history.[2] This leads us to Derrida's own distinctive use of notions of excess, of quasi-transcendence or the quasi-transcendental in relation to history. Derrida's 1963–1964 writings on Michel Foucault and Emmanuel Levinas (1906–1995) evoke the relation between an apparently "closed" totality (which is described as a historically determined, finite structure) and a historicity that goes beyond or exceeds this totality.[3] This "excess" is not some positive infinity but rather the registering of the difference between a historically determined structure and its possibility. This implies that a structure that is historically determined—encompassed, defined—cannot give rise to itself; its possibility is already in excess of its "closed" determination.

Derrida is challenging two conceits here. First, the structuralist claim to a total synchronous analysis of captured differential relations,

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which is necessarily ahistorical. Second, the broadly Marxist claim to a total historical determination on an economic, political or cultural basis of a historical period, epoch, event or narrative. Derrida makes a point in the 1990s in *Monolingualism of the Other* (1996) of describing this excess as a gesture of "*transcendence*."[4] At the same time, Derrida takes care to place this reference in a conditional "as if": it is *as if* his work has evoked an "'elsewhere'" and "as if" there were "places of *transcendence*, of an absolute elsewhere, therefore, in the eyes of Graeco-Latino-Christian Western philosophy, but yet *inside it*."[5]

Obviously, this "*transcendence*" is not a reference to the "transcendental signified" that Derrida analysed and criticized in *Of Grammatology* (1967).[6] But we need to treat this weighted word with caution. The "as if," a gesture to Immanuel Kant's (1724–1804) regulative ideas, in part suspends and exceeds the traditional ontological determinations of transcendence but this is also, critically, a *quasi*-transcendence. In the context of *Monolingualism of the Other*, it is a beyond, an "absolute elsewhere," that is also "*inside*." In the context of our discussion, this quasi-transcendence accounts not for some ideal vantage point above and beyond a total historical determination but for the difference—*la différance*—that is found at once between and "*inside*" ahistoricism and historicism.[7] In broad terms, *différance* describes an entanglement of space and time that disrupts—differs and defers—the idealized projects of gathering or re-gathering an original unity, especially through the old but pervasive categories of the "sensible" or the "intelligible." If there can be a deconstructive historiography, it needs to recognize the challenge of *différance* because historiography is constantly tempered—necessarily so—by the procedural determinations of ahistoricism and historicism.

As Derrida remarks at the start of *Of Grammatology*, his treatment of logocentrism will remain "inaccessible to a simple historical relativism."[8] In a footnote added to a 1971 interview in *Positions* (1972) Derrida observes, "the critique of historicism in all its forms seems to me indispensable."[9] He goes on to say that he has "first learned about this critique in Husserl" and singles out Husserl's "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science" (1911) and "The Origin of Geometry" (1936) as key works on the limitations of historicism.[10] We should briefly look at these works to understand why Derrida always seeks a vantage point beyond a histori-

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cist determination without simply re-subscribing to the tenets of phenomenology.

In the first part of "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science," Husserl argues that the natural sciences in general, and in particular experimental psychology (with its basis in physiological, empirical and experiential processes), cannot provide a "foundation" for the "pure principles" of a philosophy that can be treated as a rigorous science.[11] For Husserl, philosophy alone can use a phenomenology of consciousness, which is always concerned with the consciousness *of* something in general, as the basis for a theory of knowledge that can register an "ideal groundableness" by grasping the essence of "objectivity's mode of giveness."[12]

In the second part of his essay, Husserl turns towards historicism, which he associates with the work of Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911). Best known today for his concept of worldviews (*Weltanschauung*), Dilthey also charted the differences between the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*) and the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*) as a reaction to the positivism and sociology of Auguste Comte (1798–1857), which itself had developed from an initial scientific empiricism to ever more grandiose formal and ahistorical deductions.[13] As Rudolf Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi succinctly observe, in his best-known work *The Formation of the Historical in the Human Sciences* (1910) Dilthey argues that the natural sciences "abstract from many aspects of our lived experience" (*Erlebnis*) and the task for the human sciences is "to bring out the incipient sense that history already has for us in ordinary life."[14]

Dilthey would be an important figure of opposition and inheritance for both Husserl and Heidegger.[15] At the start of *Being and Time* (1927), Heidegger notes that Dilthey's scientific psychology of the spirit "no longer seeks to be oriented towards psychical elements and atoms or to piece the life of the soul together, but aims rather at '*Gestalten*'" and "'life as a whole.'"[16] "He was, *above all*, on his way towards the question of 'life,'" Heidegger concludes.[17] Heidegger still goes on to dismiss Dilthey's work as a "philosophical anthropology."[18] While Heidegger later suggests that Dilthey's work on the human sciences can contribute to an interpretation of the historicity of Dasein, he also reiterates that historicism attempts "to alienate Dasein from its authentic historicity."[19]

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Nonetheless, the question of lived experience (*Erlebnis*) remains a central concern of *Being and Time*. One of the reasons that Derrida himself hardly refers to Dilthey after the 1960s is that in his critique of phenomenology in *Voice and Phenomenon: Introduction to the Problem of the Sign in Husserl's Philosophy* (1967) he challenges the metaphysical trinity of the privileging of life, the living present and living speech as formulated by Dilthey and Husserl.[20] As he remarks, for Husserl, "the Living Present is the phenomenological absolute out of which I cannot go because it is that in which, toward which, and starting from which every going out [*toute sortie*] is effected."[21]

In his early 1959 paper "'Genesis and Structure' and Phenomenology," which was significantly revised before its publication in 1965, Derrida gives "*Diltheyism*" a central place in his discussion and defines the ahistorical structures of Husserl's *Ideas* as a direct reaction to "the historicist or psychologistic genetism" of Dilthey.[22] Derrida observes:

> And despite Dilthey's vehement protests, Husserl will persist in thinking that, like all historicism, and despite its originality, the *Weltanschauungs-philosophie* avoids neither relativism nor scepticism. For it reduces the norm to a historical factuality, and it ends by confusing [. . .] the *truths of fact* and the *truths of reason*. Pure truth or the pretension to pure truth is missed in its *meaning* as soon as one attempts, as Dilthey does, to account for it from within a determined historical totality, that is, from within a factual totality, a finite totality all of whose manifestations and cultural productions are structurally solidary and coherent, and are all regulated by the same function, by the same finite unity of a total subjectivity.[23]

Derrida reiterates this same point in a fulsome footnote on Dilthey in his introduction to "The Origin of Geometry," which was completed in the summer of 1961 and published in 1962. While Dilthey "starts from the already constituted objective spirit," Derrida observes, Husserl wants to establish "the possibility of objective spirit as the condition for history."[24] As Derrida remarks in an uncollected article from 1966 on Husserl, "Phenomenology of the Closure of Metaphysics," for Husserl truth has a status that is "infinite" and "universal" and it is "this possibility of truth—[of] science and the project of philosophy as science—that demolishes historicism."[25] This is the essential argument of "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science."

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Historicism, Husserl declares, "takes its position in the factual sphere of the empirical life of the spirit."[26] It also relies on and generates a "relativism" that is comparable to the relativism of "naturalistic psychologism."[27] Husserl then asks whether the sciences can be taken as just one of many "cultural formations that come and go in the stream of human development."[28] What of the *trans*-historical "objective validity" of the sciences? At its extreme, historicism becomes a culturally determined "sceptical subjectivism."[29] Such a historicism of science denies the possibility of an "unqualified validity, or validity-in-itself."[30] For Husserl, the "science of history" can "itself decided nothing" when confronted by "the scientific decision" about validity and its "ideal normative principles."[31]

In his 1966 article on Husserl, Derrida reiterates that Husserl remained critical of Dilthey because he "reduced norm to fact."[32] Husserl even speaks of "the superstition of the fact" generated by the *Weltanschauung-Philosophie*.[33] The critical point for Husserl is that any "idea" in Dilthey's work is treated as a *finite* idea and is a "different one for each time."[34] The idea of *the same* and the "transfinite" (*transfiniten*) is incompatible with a history founded on determining historical-cultural epochs or ages.[35] Science, and philosophy as a rigorous science, must be understood as "supratemporal" and not "limited" by the "relatedness to the spirit of one time."[36]

As Derrida suggests in his introduction to "The Origin of Geometry," Husserl's own dynamic notion of time as the relation between a retention of the present past and the protention of the present future co-ordinated by the central authority of the "Living Present" supports the "transfinite."[37] For Husserl, the possibility of history is found in the ability of the living present at once to retain the present and to go "beyond" the past present.[38] This movement of time allows the constitution—with rupture or interruption—of "*another* primordial and original Absolute, another Living Present."[39] History and, most significantly, the *trans*-historical are made possible by the capacity of the present and its "always renewed originality of an absolute primordiality."[40] The "historic present" has this facility of self-renewing protention and projection.[41]

Husserl's critique of a historicist approach to science reinforces his essential belief that no history of the genesis or development of mathematics can ever be confused with "the question of truth."[42] As Hegel

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had suggested, there can be no history *of* the truth because truth "has no history": it is always the same and trans-historical.[43] As early readers of Husserl, both Derrida and Ricoeur began their work with the problem of the history *of* truth.[44] As Ricoeur observes in his influential 1949 essay "Husserl and the Sense of History," Husserl had little interest in concepts of development, evolution or becoming because there can be no sense of "a genesis where the more rational is derived from the less rational."[45] The genesis of arithmetic cannot be treated as a conventional, empirical history of arithmetic.[46]

Despite the emphatic rejection of the empiricist's need for a historical or chronological development to account for the refined machines of human reason, sense and experience, even Husserl could not ignore the problem of genesis. It is precisely this question of a genetic phenomenology—one could even say of a *historical* phenomenology—that the young Derrida focuses on in his 1953–1954 dissertation, *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy*. Derrida opens his preface by insisting that he will be "adopting a philosophy of genesis" that will reveal the "essential inseparability" of the "history of philosophy and philosophy of history" in Husserl's thought.[47] This genetic method or historical phenomenology already complicates or disrupts Husserl's own strictures on the truths and objective validities that can be grasped through a phenomenological approach. In this sense, Derrida is closer to Hegel than Husserl in emphasizing the importance of history in relation to philosophy and follows the influence of his teacher, the distinguished Hegel scholar and translator Jean Hyppolite (1907–1968).[48] Hegel had insisted "the study of the history of Philosophy is an introduction to Philosophy itself."[49]

At the same time, Husserl himself was aware of the problem of genesis and after the publication of *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology* in 1913 he began to construct his own notion of genetic phenomenology, drawing a distinction between a "passive" genesis and "active" genesis.[50] In the *Cartesian Meditations* (1929), Husserl argues that passive genesis registers "a passivity that gives something beforehand" and includes at "the *lowest levels*" consciousness constituting physical objects.[51] Active genesis, on the other hand, accounts for the ego constituting "*new objects originally*," including irreal or ideal objects.[52] Husserl therefore recognizes that every active synthesis "has its

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'history'" because it also registers the continuity of a passive genesis and "antecedent formations."[53]

In this manner, Husserl not only acknowledges a process of becoming, of development and even of a "history" in the everyday consciousness of objects founded on a transcendental phenomenology, but also recognizes that there is a development or history in science. In a fragment from the mid 1920s, "Idealization and the Science of Reality," he describes the "development" of logical concepts as a process of "idealization."[54] Idealization accounts for the "*exact* development of concepts," so that the "empirically straight and curved" produces the "geometrical straight line and circle."[55] However, as Derrida notes, it was only in the mid 1930s that Husserl moved beyond questions of genesis as aspects that are at once constituted and reduced by a transcendental consciousness to "history itself" in the texts written for his final work, *The Crisis of European Sciences*.[56]

Though Husserl praises the advances made by Dilthey in "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science," he also makes his relation to historicism abundantly clear:

> If, then, I look upon historicism as an epistemological mistake that because of its consequences must be just as unceremoniously rejected as was naturalism, I should still like to emphasize expressly that I fully recognize the extraordinary value of history in the broadest sense for the philosopher. For him the discovery of the common spirit is just as significant as the discovery of nature. In fact, a deeper penetration into the general life of the spirit offers the philosopher a more original and hence more fundamental research material than does penetration into nature. For the realm of phenomenology, as a theory of essence, extends immediately from the individual spirit over the whole area of the general spirit; and if Dilthey has established in such an impressive way that psychophysical psychology is not the one that can serve as the "foundation for the humanistic sciences," I would say that it is the phenomenological theory of essence alone that is capable of providing a foundation for a philosophy of the spirit.[57]

Modesty is hardly a feature of the history of philosophy. Husserl suggests a hierarchy of depth and breadth: nature and empiricism are the most shallow and narrow; as a particular cultural and historical formation, the science of spirit or philosophy of *Weltanschauung* has a wider

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scope; and, of course, phenomenology alone has the breadth of vision and depth of analysis to establish "a foundation for a philosophy of the spirit." This is Husserl's position on historicism in 1911 and it will not so much change as be modified when he turns to what we can call the problem of the history *of* the same twenty-six years later in the fragment known as "The Origin of Geometry." As Derrida points out in his introduction to this work, what changed was Husserl's own attempt to engage with history itself.[58]

2. THE HISTORY OF THE SAME

In "The Origin of Geometry" (1936) Husserl offers his most sustained account of the *history of the same* or the "invariant throughout all conceivable variation."[59] As Derrida observes in his introduction to "The Origin of Geometry," Husserl is interested in "the invariants *of* historicity."[60] In a 1954 article on Husserl, Ricoeur noted that phenomenology emerges from Husserl's *Logical Investigations* (first edition 1900–1901, revised 1913 and 1921) which, in broad terms, establishes a method for logic—as the *possibility* of securing the invariant, the identical or the same—in which an intended *meaning* of the consciousness *of* something, of an object, clears or empties perception and creates the conditions for *sense* to be then filled by a unified and fully intuitive *presence* as the *achievement* of the intended meaning.[61] This context gives us a better understanding of Derrida's later critique of meaning and presence and its relation to teleology.[62]

The phenomenological analysis of the consciousness of something as sense becoming presence embraces objectivity and subjectivity within an objectified framework. Despite the numerous shifts of emphasis in Husserl's later work, this relation between intended meaning, sense and fulfilled presence as the condition to register the repetition of the identical or the same is the basis of Husserl's eventual turn in his published work to the problem of history in the 1930s. The fulfilled *sense* of a phenomenological philosophy of history will be a history that is prompted and guided by a teleological task: to secure the *history* of reason and scientific philosophy in a time of crisis in Europe. Ricoeur captures this in the title of his 1949 article: "Husserl and the Sense of History."[63]

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As Ricoeur observes, for Husserl the political crisis in Europe in the mid 1930s prompts "a question both about history and in history."[64] Husserl's work from 1935–1937 was published posthumously in 1954 as *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. "The Origin of Geometry" is one of the many unfinished or uncollected fragments of *The Crisis*. Husserl's final project had begun with his May 1935 Vienna lecture "Philosophy and the Crisis of European Humanity." It is a powerful and moving lecture. As a Jewish-born European intellectual who is no longer able to publish or publically lecture in Nazi Germany, Husserl has gone to Vienna to speak of the crisis of the present times. Evoking Kant's call for an international community of scholars that can speak freely of ideals that exceed the limitations of nation states, Husserl uses the crisis in Europe to celebrate and reinforce the capacity of man "to secure rational meaning for his individual and common human existence."[65] As Husserl's student Eugen Fink (1905–1975) observed, *The Crisis* tells us that the "indispensable task of philosophy" is "humanity's responsibility for itself."[66] For Derrida in his 1962 introduction, *The Crisis of European Sciences* is indicative of Husserl's equivocal relation to history: it shows that he was at once "a stranger to history" and strove to "respect historicity's own peculiar signification and possibility."[67]

Husserl gives his project various titles, including the development of a "philosophical-historical idea" and "a teleological-historical reflection."[68] His overarching purpose is the demonstration of reason as the source of a secure and ideal meaning for humanity in the past, present and future.[69] History is given the grave task of registering the genesis and continuous development of free and pure rational thought, of unchanging truths, values and ethical imperatives: a history *of* reason.[70] As Derrida remarks, what is remarkable about Husserl's treatment of history is the very ambition to have a historicity *of veritas aeterna*.[71] This could be "interpreted as both a refusal of history," Derrida comments, "and as a deep fidelity to the pure sense of historicity."[72] But this is a historicity that always remains guided by the univocal "limpidity" of a rational historical "ether."[73]

The emergence of purely theoretical philosophy in classical Greece, the Cartesian search for universality founded on the *cogito* and even the decline of philosophy into empiricism and its surrender to the sciences of facts, illustrate historical moments that are already part of a greater

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philosophical teleology. History is therefore only considered by phenomenology as it accounts not for *a*-historical but *trans*-historical meaning, reason and ideality.[74] As Derrida notes, geometry is *trans*-historical because "geometry's development is a *history* only because it is *a* history."[75] This *one* history also never stops running, flowing or circulating (*avoir cours*).[76] Like a river, it carries on and carries the "sense and value" of the ideal object.[77]

Husserl begins "The Origin of Geometry" with the call for a new kind of relation between philosophy and history. The problem of the *origin* of geometry will not be resolved by relying on a conventional historical examination of "the ready-made" or "handed-down" (*die fertig überlieferte*) geometry.[78] Because geometry has had the *same* meaning in "all its new forms," a *phenomenological* history must focus on the "meaning-origin" (*Sinnesursprungs*) of geometry.[79] There is a historical aspect to this task but it is "historical in an unusual [*ungewohnten*] sense."[80] Husserl's unusual history is unusual because it evokes a turning back to the past but has no interest in searching for the first geometer to establish the origin of geometry.[81] His *Rückfrage* into the "meaning-origin" of geometry is a backward inquiry, a re-inquiry into a past that is "still present for us" and is "still being worked on in a lively forward development" (*lebendiger Fortarbeit*).[82] A phenomenological history is a re-turn to a past that is also present and has a future: the past is not simply *in* the past.

This treatment of a past with a present and future is possible because the "meaning-origin" of geometry describes a "continuous synthesis in which all acquisitions maintain their validity."[83] As Husserl explains, the "total acquisition" is the condition or conduit for each new acquisition.[84] This accounts for the gathering, forward-looking "mobility" of all the sciences.[85] However, the "meaning-origin" of geometry still raises the problem of "a more primitive formation of meaning" that should not be confused with the "*total* meaning" of geometry.[86] We cannot treat the *origin* of geometry as a simple "project" that is subsequently completed by a period of "mobile" fulfillment.[87] The meaning-origin of geometry is not developmental, empirical or historical; but it still gives rise to a certain type of history. The history *of* geometry therefore presents a challenge to conventional notions of history and their use in the history of science.

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Husserl wants to give geometry a total, non-developmental meaning *and* a developmental history calibrated by this meaning. He attempts to do this by arguing that geometry should be treated as an *ideal* objectivity that has a distinctive historicity. As Derrida remarks, for Husserl "the conditions of Objectivity" are "the conditions of historicity itself."[88] Geometry cannot be limited to "the personal sphere of consciousness," even of its first "inventor," because it has an objective validity and supertemporality that is "accessible" to everyone.[89] This universal validity ensures that "all forms newly produced by someone on the basis of pregiven forms immediately take on the same objectivity [*dieselbe Objektivität*]."[90] In the history of geometry, all events of invention are already part of a continuum of discovery: all inventions exceed the life and times of the inventor.

There is an *ideal* objectivity in geometrical theorems because in every translation its "meaning-origin" remains "identically the same."[91] Such theorems "exist only once" (*existiert nur einmal*): they are "spiritual" forms that remain untouched by "sensible utterance."[92] The history of geometry is therefore *the history of the same* or, rather, the history of a special kind of repetition in which ideal objects that "exist only once" can be *repeated* and *remain identical* in every repetition. This assertion of the history of the same is grounded on a fundamental phenomenological certainty that an original "self-evident production" can secure "the pure fulfillment of its intention."[93] As Derrida observes, for Husserl "intentionality is the root of historicity."[94]

In a passage that will be critical in Derrida's later thought, Husserl goes on to compare the "'ideal' objectivity" in the theorems of geometry to "a whole class of spiritual products of the cultural world," notably "fine literature."[95] The "spiritual form" of these great literary works remain the same through all of their "sensible utterances" as they are translated into other languages.[96] The ideal objectivity of the literary work is rendered transparently through "the meaning of speech."[97] However, this turn to language and the introduction of a clear difference between the spiritual form and the sensible, spatiotemporal and corporeal body, creates a series of strained distinctions. Husserl recognizes that for an ideal object to "exist objectively in the world" it must also rely on "sensibly embodying repetitions."[98] At the same time, as Derrida emphasizes, Husserl insists that the "*bound*" idealities regis-

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tered *in* language should not be confused with the "*free*" ideal objects found *in* geometry.[99]

The rigorous distinction between a language that is still tied to some extent to the sensible, contingent and the cultural and the absolute ideality of ideal objects should inform that basis for what Derrida describes as the "enigmatic" claim in phenomenology for a "*transcendental historicity*."[100] Nonetheless, Husserl argues that the only way that a "geometrical ideality" could pass from its singular moment of invention into a universal and trans-historical objectivity is "by means of language" (*mittels der Sprache*).[101] As Derrida argues, this is a critical step, because Husserl recognizes that language can spread and transport the commonly held and verified truths of geometry across the ages.[102] A certain kind of language can work with an objective historicity. For Husserl, the possibility of a history of geometry rests on explaining how a "linguistic embodiment" is compatible with a subjective and historical moment of invention becoming an "*objective* structure."[103] It is Husserl who ensures that the question of language is intertwined with the problem of history and with the possibility of a phenomenological historicity that can carry ideal objectivities.[104]

Husserl suggests that ideal objectivities must both rely on the sensible and exceed the sensible. As Derrida observes, the ideality of an objectivity is apparent when "its being is thoroughly transparent and exhausted by its phenomenality."[105] In this sense, the "ideality of the number" is "never an empirical fact accessible to a history in precisely this same style."[106] This dilemma is only compounded by the recognition that it is language—ideal words rather than ideal objects—that can transform an event in history into a trans-historical ideality or a historicity of ideal objectivity. One could say that language here is both a *snag* that catches on the spiritual form of ideal objects and a *lever* that raises ideal objects out of historicism. For Husserl, there is "a common language" and its "far-reaching [*weitreichende*] documentations" which supports the historicity of ideal objects.[107] What is past can be "reawakened" through a "recollection" that generates a "quasi-new" or present activity.[108] This revival repeats "what was previously self-evident" as "the same."[109]

It is then language and what Husserl calls intersubjective "empathy" that gives this revived sameness an objectivity as it can be repeated and spoken of until "what is self-evident turns up as the same in the con-

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sciousness of the other."[110] This repeated communication eventually generates "one structure common to all."[111] However, it is *written works* alone that generate a repetition that supports "the *persisting existence*" (*das* verharrende Dasein) of ideal objects.[112] As Husserl remarks, "the important function of written, documenting linguistic expression is that it makes communications possible without immediate or mediate personal address; it is, so to speak, communication become virtual."[113] Writing is the *promise* of a virtual existence (*Dasein*) that persists, which survives or carries on despite worldly, historical events. As Derrida observes, for Husserl writing is the guarantee of an "absolute traditionalization" for ideal objectivity.[114] And we can note here that Derrida is already interested at the start of the 1960s in the question of tradition.

At the same time, Derrida adds, writing also accounts for many of the crises that Husserl discerned in European science and philosophy in the 1930s including "passivity" and "forgetfulness."[115] Writing, like forgetfulness is a "historical category."[116] Writing as an *inscription* preserves the ideal *and* it reinforces the risk of the sensible and contingent.[117] Nonetheless, as Derrida remarks, this virtual, ideal communication "sanctions and completes the existence of pure transcendental historicity."[118] This "*internal* or intrinsic" historicity, historicity *as* the truth of an ideal objectivity, accounts for a confined "relativity" within a larger invariable framework and cannot be touched by the external events or caprices of history, much as the spirit or soul inhabits and transcends the body.[119] In this sense, one cannot speak of "an event 'of' geometry."[120] In the wake of Derrida's careful, detailed analysis one can already see that Husserl has a difficulty in distinguishing the relations between spiritual form and sensible utterance and ideal words and ideal objects when he argues that it is writing alone that conveys a persistent and trans-historical ideal objectivity across the ages.[121]

Husserl attempts to resolve this problem by arguing that language serves a larger dynamic between a passive recollection and an active reactivation. As Derrida observes, when it comes to the *origin* of geometry one must also "reawaken the dependence of sense with respect to an inaugural and institutive act concealed under secondary passivities and infinite sedimentations."[122] For Husserl, historicity must therefore also be part of the general essence or *eidos* of ideal objectivities.[123] It is within this framework that one can say "writing-down effects a transfor-

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mation of the original mode of being of the meaning-structure."[124] The passive understanding relates to the sensible-ideal word, the active reactivation (*Rückfrage*) to the spiritual-ideal object. The passive acquisition of associated meanings in the use of language represent "a constant danger" when it comes to establishing a common convention or tradition of univocal expression.[125] The scientist must secure assertions that are "forever identically repeatable with self-evidence."[126] At the same, Husserl still suggests that writing is the *possibility* of the ideality of the "origin-meaning" of geometry.[127]

For Husserl, historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) in this context is the conduit for ideal objectivities and registers "the historical possibility of a genuine tradition [*ursprungsechten Tradition*]."[128] Historicity describes a historical framework that already recognizes the primacy of a historical *a priori*.[129] Neither historicist or ahistorical, historicity facilitates the *trans*-historical repetition and reactivation of the self-evident "origin-meaning" of the ideal objects of geometry.[130] As Husserl observes, "we stand, then, within the historical horizon in which everything is historical, even though we may know very little about it in a definite way. But it has its essential structure [*Wesensstruktur*] that can be revealed through methodical inquiry."[131] The re-inquiries that actively reactivate the origin (*Rückfragen nach dem Ursprung*) account for the "essential structure" of the "historical horizon."[132] It is on this basis that Husserl can challenge the "ruling dogma" that has separated "epistemological and genetic origin."[133]

In his introduction, Derrida contrasts this Husserlian challenge to the Kantian separation of *a priori* frameworks and empirical history.[134] For Kant, "all history can only be empirical."[135] In contrast, Husserl argues that there can be a historicity *of* ideal objectivities because the consciousness that constitutes these idealities is also "a concrete consciousness"—there is no Platonic ideality in itself that merely precedes the subject found in "an actually perceived real world"—and therefore "every ideal objectivity has a history which is always already announced in that consciousness."[136] The nuanced but notable difference between Kant and Husserl is between an "already" that can only be an empirical already (even if it has an *a priori* possibility) and an ideal "always already" (that is at once historical and ideal). As Derrida explains, for Husserl, when an "*a priori* normativity of history" is recognized as an essential necessity "*after* the fact of the event" this confirms that the

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fact in question is *already* an "*example*."[137] This necessary "interplay" avoids the extreme limitations of an empirical historicism or rationalist ahistoricism.[138]

Husserl moves away from Kant, Derrida explains, by insisting that "the instituting fact" must also be "*invariable*."[139] The history of the same rests on recognizing the invariable fact of a moment of origin that cannot be repeated *and* "its eidetic invariance" that can be "*repeated*" indefinitely.[140] For Husserl this recollected and reactivated original self-evidence can be taken as proof of both the "identity" and the "repetition" of the same.[141] Extending an argument made by Heidegger, Derrida will later challenge the claim that there can be a history *of* the same, disputing that the same can be repeated and remain identical with itself.[142]

According to Husserl, historicity in the service of ideal objectivities confirms the larger "temporal horizon" and widest possible perspective of "one human civilisation," "one cultural world" and the "life-world," which marks out each distinctive "historical period."[143] It is from this vista that Husserl gestures to a "universal" history and an *a priori* context for the historicity that supports trans-historical idealities and the history of the same.[144] From this grand vantage point, Husserl argues, we can appreciate that culture is not an inductive collection of historical facts, as Dilthey had implied, but a trans-historical record of what has been constituted and rendered self-evident by the actions of consciousness.[145] Historicism is refuted.

For Husserl, historicity is an essential part of "every transition from making explicit to making self-evident."[146] History (*Geschichte*), he concludes, is therefore "the vital movement of the coexistence [*Miteinander*] and interweaving [*Ineinander*] of original formations and sedimentations of meaning."[147] Derrida will make much of this dynamic "interweaving" in his later work, but will also establish his break from Husserl by arguing that these sedimentations—these inscriptions—always disperse and transfigure the original sense and self-evidence of meaning: the same cannot be identical with itself—to treat the same *as* the same is already to register the same *and* the other.

At the outset of his introduction to "The Origin of Geometry" Derrida was interested in Husserl's attempts to establish "a new type or profundity of historicity."[148] This new kind of history, he notes, is a "historicity of ideal objectivities," a history that accounts for both the

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"transmission" and the "perdurance" of ideal objectivities.[149] It is different because it cannot be determined as either an empirical history or as an ahistoricism.[150] However, this difference is itself also clearly determined as a *trans-historical* history of the same. In every case, the historicity of ideal objectivities relies on a structure "in which the intentional reactivation of sense should—*de jure*—precede and condition the empirical determination of fact."[151] As Derrida points out, Husserl's critique of historicism is predicated on the belief that the meaning and direction (*sens*) of "history in general" must be found through understanding the history of science *as* the historicity of ideal objectivities.[152] Can there be a philosophy of history that does not simply confirm the history of the same? Derrida begins his remarkable academic career with this question.

3. HISTORY AND QUASI-TRANSCENDENCE

In the closing pages of "The Origin of Geometry" Husserl had dismissed the history of philosophy complied "in the style of the usual factual history" in the name of what Derrida calls "a *phenomenological history*."[153] "A genuine [*echte*] history of philosophy," Husserl states, "is nothing other than the tracing of the historical meaning-structures given in the present, or their self-evidences, along the documented chain of historical back-references [*historischer Rückverweisungen*] into the hidden dimension of the primal self-evidences which underlie them."[154] Husserl defines the history of the same as the possibility and limitation of the history of philosophy. At the same time, as Derrida notes, in his own history of philosophy Husserl includes "the narrative [*le récit*] of the adventures and misadventures of the transcendental motif."[155] A phenomenological history also has its historical *narratives*—a problem that Husserl does not address.[156]

A year after the publication of his introduction to "The Origin of Geometry," Derrida evokes a different kind of philosophy of history in his paper from March 1963 on Foucault's reading of René Descartes (1596–1650) in his *Madness and Unreason: History of Madness in the Classical Age* (1961).[157] It is a philosophy of history that, in contrast to Husserl, must take account of the vagaries of the history of philosophy. One of the key passages in "Cogito and the History of Madness" refers

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to both Husserl and Dilthey and gives the history of philosophy a significant role in any philosophical historiography. Derrida observes:

> I believe that historicity in general would be impossible without a history of philosophy, and I believe that the latter would be impossible if we possessed only hyperbole, on the one hand, or, on the other, only determined historical structures, finite *Weltanschauungen*. The historicity proper to philosophy is located and constituted in the transition, the dialogue between hyperbole and the finite structure, between that which exceeds the totality and the closed totality, in the difference between history and historicity [*l'histoire et l'historicité*].[158]

The history of philosophy as described by Derrida in 1963 has an important role to play in "difference between history and historicity." It is therefore significant that thirty years later in the 1990s Derrida still locates this quasi "*transcendence*" in terms of the history of philosophy. As we have seen, in *Monolingualism of the Other* it is "as if" there were "places of *transcendence*, of an absolute elsewhere, therefore, in the eyes of Graeco-Latino-Christian Western philosophy, but yet *inside it* (*epekeina tes ousias*, and beyond—*khōra*—negative theology, Meister Eckhart and beyond, Freud, and beyond, a certain Heidegger, Artaud, Levinas, Blanchot, and certain others)."[159]

From Plato's evocation in *The Republic* of *epekeina tes ousias*, of an excess beyond being, to a "certain" Heidegger and Levinas, it is "as if" there are "places of *transcendence*" in the history of Western philosophy.[160] Importantly, there are also "places of *transcendence*" (*lieux de* transcendance) beyond this history of philosophy, found "elsewhere" in theology, psychoanalysis, literature and literary criticism.[161] Part of Derrida's challenge to a phenomenology that refutes historicism *in the name of* the history of the same is to evoke an excess and quasi-transcendence. This gesture is no doubt difficult for a customary historiography but it is indispensable for thinking a different kind of philosophy of history. For our purposes, we can approach this through the problem of the relation between history, quasi-transcendence and the need to recognize the *possibility* of the "non-event" or "the event of nothing" in a historiographical undertaking.

In *Monolingualism of the Other*, Derrida also refers to "what *makes history*" (*ce qui* fait l'histoire).[162] How does "what *makes history*" relate

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to the "quasi-transcendental"?[163] The *quasi*-transcendental is not only a thinking that accounts for and exceeds the old empirical-transcendental relation and resists these two classical philosophical gestures without resorting to a determined empiricism or non-empiricism.[164] But this is a good place to start, as it resists the Kantian choices and architectonics as the basis for the history of philosophy that Husserl reconfigures in *The Crisis of European Sciences*. More than a series of "places" or contexts for transcendence in the history of philosophy, the hyperbolic or quasi-transcendental raises the problem of "the *opening* of context."[165] As Derrida explains in an interview from 1988, "the limit of the frame or the border of the context always entails a clause of nonclosure [*non-fermeture*]."[166] We therefore need to think of the "nonclosure" in relation to "what *makes history*" to avoid the easy acceptance of context as the implicit or self-evident conformation of a historical determination or historicism. We will come back to the problem of context in chapters 4 and 5.

We can begin with Derrida's persistent interest in the hyperbolic in his writings on Judaism, which we will be focusing on in later chapters. In a 1991 interview with Elisabeth Weber (1959–), Derrida reiterates that Judaism is marked by a paradox of exemplarity. The traditional theological-historical claim to exemplarity announces the Jewish people as the chosen people par excellence to witness not only "what a people can be" as "God's allies, God's chosen" but also as "God's witnesses."[167] This claim to exemplarity links individual Jewish self-identity to a formidable universality that also generates a "certain non–self-identity."[168] In a seminar from the 1980s Derrida linked the claim to exemplarity and universality to nationalism.[169] As he later observes in the paper "Abraham, the Other" (2000), "exemplarism is a formidable temptation" and "operates in every modern nationalism, nationalism never having been the claim to particularity or to an irreducible difference but rather a vocation for universal exemplarity."[170] At the same time, he argues, the claim to a universal exemplarity also generates "a responsibility without limits, for every one and in front of every one, living and dead, a responsibility that is historically incarnated in this difference."[171]

Faced with the complex theological, historical, cultural and political legacy of exemplarity and Judaism or Jewishness, Derrida evokes the *hyperbole* of the most and the least, of the too much and too little,

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which always slips over or stops just short of the assured destination and all claims to a single identity or origin. As he explains in "Abraham, the Other," when it comes to his own sense of being Jewish, "I still feel, *at once*, *at the same time*, as less jewish [this word is used in the lower case in the text] *and* more jewish than the Jew, as scarcely Jewish and as superlatively Jewish as possible, more than Jew [*plus que Juif*], exemplarily Jew, but also hyperbolically Jew."[172] This hyperbolic relation has a wider cultural, ethical, political and historical imperative. As Derrida explains, "the more radically you break with a certain dogmatism of the place or of the bond [*du lieu ou du lien*] (communal, national, religious, of the state), the more you will be faithful to the hyperbolic, excessive [*démesurée*] demand, to the *hubris*, perhaps, of a universal and disproportionate responsibility toward the singularity of every other."[173] This hyperbolic gesture reinforces that "the most" also becomes "incomparably the least, or the other."[174] In the specific context of exemplarity and Judaism, Derrida is clear that the hyperbole of this "nonclosure" is *already* engaged with the challenge of history.

Can this hyperbole of the "always more" and "always less" be applied to the history of philosophy? In a long interview with Jean-Louis Houdebine (1934–2015) and Guy Scarpetta (1946–), given on 17 June 1971 and collected in *Positions* (1972), Derrida reiterates his critique of the history of philosophy from *Of Grammatology*.[175] At one point he argues in *Of Grammatology* that there is an aspect of the concept of the sign that "has never existed or functioned outside the history of (the) philosophy (of presence)."[176] In the 1971 interview he remarks, "I have never believed in the absolute autonomy of a history as the history of philosophy, in a conventionally Hegelian sense."[177] However, he also adds a later footnote to this comment, which he places after the phrase "absolute autonomy": "But it is true that I am very interested in the history of philosophy in its 'relative autonomy.'"[178] This "relative" autonomy of the history of philosophy is not a sign of relativism as much as of a strategic relation to the hyperbolic.[179]

Twenty-two years later in *A Taste for the Secret* (2001), a series of interviews with Maurizio Ferraris (1956–) from the mid 1990s, Derrida offers some significant remarks on his relation to both philosophy and to the history of philosophy. He begins his first interview on 16 July 1993—the day after his sixty-third birthday—by clarifying his relation to philosophy. In the face of the "insistence" to close a philosophical sys-

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tem that remains to some degree tenaciously open, Derrida treats this "insistence" as a form of difference that reiterates "the impossibility of identification, of totalization."[180] He then goes on to observe, "it is a matter of an *excessively* philosophical gesture: a gesture that is philosophical and in excess in relation to the philosophical."[181] This more-and-less-than hyperbolic relation to philosophy informs Derrida's subsequent remarks on the history of philosophy.

For Derrida, a purely diachronic concept of history assumes "something that is contemporary to itself—self-contemporary [*contemporain de soi-même*]—can succeed to a past."[182] The presumption of the "now" makes it impossible to access something that is past. The "self-contemporary" in this sense does not "*make history*." If the present is non-contemporary, people living and dying in a certain period of time should not be reduced to contemporaries. This means that the construction of the history of philosophy—a "history of the history of philosophy"—must be interpreted in a "far more troubled and suspicious manner."[183]

It is also worth emphasizing here that Derrida remained a critic of any kind of meta-language to resolve the problem of a "history of the history of philosophy." As he suggests in his 1964–1965 seminar on Heidegger, as we shall see in chapter 2, this view of language touches directly on how one understands historicity. In his interview with Ferraris from 16 July 1993, Derrida observes: "There is *polemos* when a field is determined as a field of battle because there is no metalanguage, no place of truth outside the field, no absolute and ahistorical overhang [*surplomb*]; and this absence of overhang, that is to say the radical historicity of the field, makes the field necessarily subject to multiplicity and heterogeneity."[184] There is no meta-language to "overhang" the relation between "what *makes history*" and the strategic hyperbolical or quasi-transcendental gestures that disrupt the traditional framework for the history of philosophy.

In this specific context Derrida is responding to a question about *polemos*, so this statement on "the radical historicity" of the polemical "field of battle" should only be taken as one possible perspective rather than a general rule. But if we are asking what "*makes history*" in relation to a quasi-transcendence that outmanoeuvres historicism, I take this link between *polemos* and historicity as Derrida's broad description for re-interpreting the history of philosophy. As he later remarks in an

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interview from 26 January 1994 with Ferraris, the "business of philosophy" (*Geschäft der Philosophie*)—a phrase he takes from *Being and Time*—can treat "the history of philosophy as a history of disagreement and divisions about this same that is not the same."[185] One can also take this as the basis for a historiography that is *always* in a state of contestation. A dramatic example of this would be the political contestation in America that arose in the 1990s from a work of history on the creation of the American Constitution in 1787–1788.[186]

4. A DIFFERENT PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

In another interview with Ferraris on 25 May 1994, Derrida returns to the immense problem of a philosophy of history. Following in the wake of Hegel, the question of the *history* of philosophy is never far from the claims for a commanding *philosophy* of history. He makes it clear that he has profound difficulties with any assured philosophy of history "where history has an orientation—a sense [*un sens*, a meaning, a direction]."[187] He goes on to state unequivocally that "where there is philosophy of history, there is no longer history, everything is in principle foreseen."[188] Derrida's objections here to a philosophy of history are based on its unavoidable denial of the unforeseen or ungatherable event. As he had done thirty years earlier, he contrasts this Hegelian legacy of a teleological history to a "historicity" that "supposes the limit of a philosophy of history."[189] In Hegel's philosophy, "the *past*" is the "teleological necessity of an 'already-not-yet.'"[190]

Derrida goes on in his interview to offer a brief summation of his efforts to outmanoeuvre a traditional philosophy of history. "I often say," he observes, "that deconstruction is *what happens* [*ce qui arrive*]; the fact that "it happens" [*ça arrive*] is sufficient on its own to put philosophies of history into question."[191] As we shall see in chapter 2, for Derrida the event as an event also remains *to come* and the future *of* the past cannot be foreclosed in a homogenous and teleological encyclopaedia: an event and event of the past are not simply closed or behind us. In contrast, Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* was the possibility and the culmination of his philosophy of history: it was always a *philosophy* of history.[192] For Derrida, what "makes history" (*fait l'histoire*) and "makes events" marks a "limit," a resistance

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to this Hegelian colonization of the event.[193] What "*happens*" also "makes history" because in the event there is "a reserve and an excessive chance—a chance for excess to have a future, and consequently to engender new contexts."[194] The hyperbolic and the quasi-transcendental gesture to the possibility of a different kind of history—and, I would argue, to a different kind of philosophy of history.

This insistence on "a chance for excess to have a future" as a quasi index for "*what happens*" or takes place and "makes history" brings us to the larger question of the "beyond" (*au-delà*) in relation to history and historiography. The hyperbolic and the quasi-transcendental inform the limits that Derrida marks when it comes to various forms of historicism. For example, in *Aporias: Dying—Awaiting (One Another at) the "Limits of Truth"* (1992) he challenges the historian Philippe Ariès's (1914–1984) wide-ranging "history of death" not on cultural grounds—Derrida acknowledges at the outset "there are cultures of death"—but on the assumption that the historian and anthropologist "grants to himself the unquestioned knowledge of what death is."[195] What "makes history" possible? In his interview with Ferraris on 17 July 1993, Derrida suggests that it is the future (*l'avenir*). It is only the thinking of a quasi-eschatological and non-determinable future that can treat "*what happens*" *as* an event *and* as a historical event. This future is not the simple imperium of what has not yet happened; it is a future already marked, but not determined by, the past; it is a future that *remains* and remains *to come* (*à-venir*), the future *of* the past that Derrida first explores in his 1964–1965 lectures on Heidegger. This future that "overflows [*déborde*] any sort of ontological determination" and "the entire field of history" does not counterbalance or escape from the polemical and heterogeneous "field" of historicity.[196] It is rather its possibility.

What I would describe as Derrida's philosophy of history insists not only on a future tense but also resists the implicit historicism of the "self-contemporary." Derrida's "Circumfession," published in March 1991, was produced as part of an extended work on Derrida by Geoffrey Bennington, "Derridabase," for Seuil's *Les contemporians* series and Derrida's contribution can be seen as a bold, even excessive claim, for treating Derrida himself as a "non-contemporary."[197] In "Circumfession" Derrida treats his own circumcision as "the strange turn of the event of nothing [*l'événement de rien*]."[198] An event has *taken place* but

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it is an event that is "beyond or short of" Derrida's ability to use his memory to register it as an autobiographical memory—it is an event that cannot be colonized *as* contemporary.[199]

The "event of nothing" registers the possibility of the "place" for taking place—both in the sense of "what takes place" as an event and unavoidable displacement of "the place" as the site, ground or source for the fixed, programmatic point of departure for a historicism, an ahistoricism, as well as for a historicity of ideal objectivities (Husserl) and a history of Being (Heidegger). The historical event and the "event of nothing" are entangled at any point of departure with an event that takes place "beyond or just short of" these assured points of departure. Again, this does not describe some kind of neat, theoretical impossibility for traditional historiography; it describes the difficulties in taking seriously the legacy of a *philosophy* of history.

In *Monolingualism of the Other*, Derrida's "places of *transcendence*" in *and* beyond the history of Western philosophy include Plato's *khōra*. In an 1987 article in honour of the classical historian Jean-Pierre Vernant (1914–2007), Derrida suggests that the use of *khōra* in Plato's *Timaeus*—traditionally defined in classical Greek thought as a receptacle or space—describes an "immense history of interpretations and reappropriations" as part of the ongoing attempt to fill this receptacle, place or space.[200] This "immense history" also gives rise to an inevitable "tropology and anachronism."[201] For Derrida, this history reiterates that *khōra* gives a *place* (*lieu*) to traditional metaphysical oppositions such as the sensible and the intelligible without itself being "subject to the law of the very thing which it *situates*."[202] Most of all, this *history* of *khōra* "goes beyond or falls short of" (*porte au-delà ou en deçà*) the opposition between the metaphor and the literal sense that informs the relation between myth and logos in Plato's work.[203]

Derrida argues that *khōra* has "nothing as its own" (*de n'avoir rien en propre*) and this can be compared to his later treatment of "the event of nothing" (*l'événement de rien*) in his own quasi-confessional "history" of his childhood in Algeria.[204] We will come back to this evocation of an "X" that has almost nothing of the proper or of property as propriety in chapter 3. What is significant here is Derrida's link in the 1980s and early 1990s between a quasi-transcendental "nothing" and different kinds of "history." One can describe this as the ongoing attempt to write a different kind of history.

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From his early work on Husserl and Heidegger in the 1960s, Derrida had been interested in "a difference that in fact distinguishes nothing [*rien*]" and is "yet a difference that, without altering anything, changes everything [*change tous les signes*] and in which alone is held the possibility of a transcendental question."[205] If it is treated as a *quasi*-transcendental, the *nothing* that makes all the difference cannot support either a *pure* presence or a *pure* absence. It may be the possibility of many transcendences, idealities and phenomenologies, but it is also their risk and their ruin. A history of the same that relies on the difference of the nothing (*le rien*) must always risk a loss of displacement in registering itself *as* itself.[206]

From his earliest work on Husserl in 1950s Derrida was already attentive to the traditional metaphysical claim for what he then called the non-dialectical origin of the dialectic.[207] In the name of the history of philosophy, from Plato to Hegel and beyond, there is the attempt to secure an *arkhē* to secure the *télos* of the event, its history and its narratives. Derrida has something quite different in mind with *khōra*. To avoid the historicist claim that everything is always and already *in* history, one needs an *event* that is at once *beyond* and *just short of* the *arkhē* as its *own* historical determination. As Derrida asks, "is a prescribed, programmed, reproductive, reflexive history still a history?"[208]

Once again, it is important when examining this *nothing* that makes all the difference as a quasi-transcendental that we do not idealize negation as some kind of pure absence. As Derrida observes in an interview from 28 April 1990, "I am skeptical about discourses of absence and negativity."[209] If *khōra* is treated as "a receptacle" that "gives place to all the stories [*toutes les histoires*]," it is apparent that *khōra* "herself, so to speak, does not become the object of any *tale* [récit], whether true or fabled."[210] There is *no narrative* for the *khōra* itself as the place or space that generates so many stories and histories. This limit is also apparent when it comes to history: "she/it eludes all anthropo-theological schemes, all history, all revelation, and all truth. Preoriginary, *before* [avant] and outside of all generation, she no longer even has the meaning of a past, of a present that is past. *Before* signifies no temporal anteriority."[211] For Derrida, *khōra* is more akin to an "interval" or "spacing" that registers what cannot be described as simply "in" history without taking on the traditional place of an idealized ahistorical point of origin or vantage point.[212] At the same time, this quasi-transcendence

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is taken as the *possibility* of the historical event. It is the possibility of the historical event that "*makes history*."

This evocation of a quasi-transcendental or hyperbolical gesture that has no narrative and no history at the heart of the historiographical project can be a profound *impasse* for the historian. At the same time, it raises a difficult question about the possibility of what "*makes history*." How does an event, perhaps even a "first" event, appear "in" history? How would such an event appear "outside" of history? Is history always already there? Or is history constituted by its events and its narratives? Is there a tradition that determines certain events to be "in" history or "outside" of history? These types of question inform Derrida's earliest writings on the problem of history. They also suggest that Derrida was keenly aware that most historical writings have a philosophical agenda that allows them to sidestep these questions.

NOTES

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3. Jacques Derrida, "Cogito and the History of Madness," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 31–63; "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 79–153.
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6. *Of Grammatology*, 20.
7. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 71.
8. *Of Grammatology*, 3. See also 14.
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11. "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science," 84–87.
12. "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science," 90–91.
13. Mary Pickering, *Auguste Comte: An Intellectual Biography*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993–2009).

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15. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, second edition (London: Continuum, 1989), 214–35.

16. *Being and Time*, 46.

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22. Jacques Derrida, "'Genesis and Structure' and Phenomenology," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 154–68: 157, 161.

23. "'Genesis and Structure' and Phenomenology," 160.

24. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 63 n. 38. See also, 57, 112–13.

25. Jacques Derrida, "Phenomenology of the Closure of Metaphysics: Introduction to the Thought of Husserl," in *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy*, *Volume III*, ed. Burt Hopkins and Stephen Crowell, trans. Ronald Bruzina (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 103–20: 109.

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28. "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science," 124.

29. "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science," 125.

30. "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science," 125.

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32. "Phenomenology of the Closure of Metaphysics," 109; *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 27.

33. "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science," 141.

34. "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science," 135.

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36. "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science," 136.

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45. Paul Ricoeur, "Husserl and the Sense of History," in *Husserl: An Analysis of his Phenomenology*, trans. Edward G. Ballard and Lester E. Embree, fore. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 143–74: 146.

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47. Jacques Derrida, *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy*, trans. Marian Hobson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), xvii.

48. See Benoît Peeters, *Derrida: A Biography*, trans. Andrew Brown (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 69, 102, 104, 107, 111, 144, 148–49; see also Leonard Lawlor, *Derrida and Husserl: The Basic Problem of Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 89–91, 97–98; Bruce Baugh, *French Hegel: From Surrealism to Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 2003).

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52. *Cartesian Meditations*, 77–78.

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University Press, 1970), 353–78: 377. See also Derrida, *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 111.

60. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 116.

61. Paul Ricoeur, "Husserl (1859–1938)," in *Husserl: An Analysis of his Phenomenology*, trans. Edward G. Ballard and Lester E. Embree, fore. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 3–12: 6–7.

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63. "Husserl and the Sense of History," 144–50.

64. "Husserl and the Sense of History," 151.

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66. Eugen Fink, "Outline for the Continuation of the *Crisis*," in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. and intro. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 397–400: 400.

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68. *The Crisis of European Sciences*, 269, 3 n. 1.

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70. *The Crisis of European Sciences*, 9. See also Derrida, *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 144–45.

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72. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 101.

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74. *The Crisis of European Sciences*, 9.

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82. "The Origin of Geometry," 354; "Der Ursprung der Geometrie," 366.

83. "The Origin of Geometry," 355.

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89. "The Origin of Geometry," 356.
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91. "The Origin of Geometry," 357.
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94. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 150.
95. "The Origin of Geometry," 356–57.
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98. "The Origin of Geometry," 357.
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104. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 66, 69.
105. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 27.
106. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 28.
107. "The Origin of Geometry," 358–59; "Der Ursprung der Geometrie," 370.
108. "The Origin of Geometry," 359–60.
109. "The Origin of Geometry," 360.
110. "The Origin of Geometry," 360.
111. "The Origin of Geometry," 360.
112. "The Origin of Geometry," 360; "Der Ursprung der Geometrie," 371.
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114. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 87.
115. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 87, 88.
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119. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 95, 109, 131.
120. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 97. On the double genitive of the "*of*," see 142.
121. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 88–93.
122. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 47–48, 90.
123. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 48.
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131. "The Origin of Geometry," 369; "Der Ursprung der Geometrie," 378.
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133. "The Origin of Geometry," 370.
134. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 41–42.
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136. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 42, 45.
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145. "The Origin of Geometry," 370.
146. "The Origin of Geometry," 370–71.
147. "The Origin of Geometry," 371; "Der Ursprung der Geometrie," 380.
148. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 26.
149. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 26.
150. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 26–27.
151. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 26.
152. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 27; *L'origine de la géométrie*, 5.
153. "The Origin of Geometry," 372; Derrida, *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 28.
154. "The Origin of Geometry," 372–73; "Der Ursprung der Geometrie," 381.
155. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 29; *L'origine de la géométrie*, 8.
156. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 29. See also Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, I: 179–80.
157. Michael Foucault, *The History of Madness*, intro. and ed. Jean Khalfa, trans. Ian Hacking (London: Routledge, 2006).

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158. "Cogito and the History of Madness," 60; "Cogito et histoire de la folie," in *L'écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), 51–98: 94.

159. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 71. See also Jacques Derrida, "Différance," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 1–27: 6.

160. Plato, *The Republic*, trans. G. M. A. Grube and C. D. C. Reeve (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992), 509b.

161. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 71; *Le monolinguisme de l'autre ou la prothèse d'origine* (Paris: Galilée, 1996), 132.

162. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 61; *Le monolinguisme de l'autre*, 118.

163. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 26.

164. See also Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 168–69; Bennington, "Derridabase," 267–83.

165. Jacques Derrida and Gerald Graff, "Afterword: Toward An Ethic of Discussion," in *Limited Inc*, ed. Gerald Graff, trans. Samuel Weber (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 111–60: 152.

166. "Toward an Ethic of Discussion," 152; "Postface: Vers une éthique de la discussion," in *Limited Inc*. ed. and trans. Elisabeth Weber (Paris: Galilée, 1990), 199–285: 282.

167. Jacques Derrida and Elisabeth Weber, "A Testimony Given . . . ," in *Questioning Judaism: Interviews* by Elisabeth Weber, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 39–58: 41.

168. "A Testimony Given," 41.

169. "Philosophical Nationality and Nationalism" (1984–1988). See http://derridaseminars.org/seminars.

170. Jacques Derrida, "Abraham, the Other," in *Judeities: Questions for Jacques Derrida*, ed. Joseph Cohen and Raphael Zagury-Orly, trans. Bettina Bergo (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), 1–35: 12.

171. "Abraham, the Other," 12.

172. "Abraham, the Other," 16. See also Jacques Derrida, "Avowing—The Impossible: 'Returns,' Repentance, and Reconciliation," in *Living Together: Jacques Derrida's Communities of Violence and Peace*, ed. Elizabeth Weber, trans. Gil Anidjar (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 18–42.

173. "Abraham, the Other," 13.

174. "Abraham, the Other," 16.

175. *Of Grammatology*, lxxxix.

176. *Of Grammatology*, 14.

177. *Positions*, 50.

178. *Positions*, 102 n. 21.

179. See also Bennington, "Derridabase," 128; Derrida, *Positions*, 71.

180. *A Taste for the Secret*, 4; *Le goût du secret*, 8. Translation modified.

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181. *A Taste for the Secret*, 4; *Le goût du secret*, 8. Translation modified.

182. *A Taste for the Secret*, 6. *Le goût du secret*, 11. Translation modified.

183. *A Taste for the Secret*, 66, 7.

184. *A Taste for the Secret*, 12; *Le goût du secret*, 18. Translation modified.

185. Derrida, *A Taste for the Secret*, 58; Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 220; *Sein und Zeit*, 220.

186. See Jack N. Rakove, *Original Meanings: Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution* (New York: Random House, 1997).

187. *A Taste for the Secret*, 64; *Le goût du secret*, 77.

188. *A Taste for the Secret*, 64; *Le goût du secret*, 77. Translation modified.

189. *A Taste for the Secret*, 64.

190. Jacques Derrida, "*Ousia* and *Grammē*: Note on a Note from *Being and Time*," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 29–68: 43 n. 16.

191. *A Taste for the Secret*, 64–65. *Le goût du secret*, 78. Translation modified.

192. Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* comprises three levels: logic, nature and mind or spirit (*Geist*).

193. *A Taste for the Secret*, 65. *Le goût du secret*, 78. Translation modified.

194. *A Taste for the Secret*, 30.

195. Jacques Derrida, *Aporias: Dying—Awaiting (One Another at) the "Limits of Truth,"* trans. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 24, 25.

196. *A Taste for the Secret*, 20; *Le goût du secret*, 26.

197. "Circumfession," 63.

198. "Circumfession," 14; "Circonfession," in *Jacques Derrida* by Geoffrey Bennington and Jacques Derrida (Paris: Seuil, 1991), 7–291: 16.

199. "Circumfession," 206.

200. Jacques Derrida, "*Khōra*," in *On the Name*, ed. Thomas Dutoit, trans. Ian McLeod (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 89–127: 98. Derrida also discusses the work of the classical historian Nicole Loraux (1943–2003) in "*Khōra*" (149–50) and in *The Politics of Friendship*, 75, 109–111, 134. Loraux also gave a paper at the 1993 Cerisy-la-Salle conference on Derrida's work. Nicole Loraux, "The Return of the Excluded," in *Born of the Earth: Myth and Politics in Athens*, trans. Selina Stewart (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 111–24.

201. "*Khōra*," 94.

202. "*Khōra*," 90.

203. "*Khōra*," 92; *Khōra* (Paris: Galilée, 1993), 22.

204. "*Khōra*," 97; *Khōra*, 33.

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205. Jacques Derrida, "Review of Edmund Husserl's *Phänomenologische Psychologie: Vorlesungen Sommersemester 1925*," *Etudes Philosophiques* 2.18 (1963): 203–6: 205. See also, Jacques Derrida and Dominique Janicaud, "Jacques Derrida: Interviews of July 1 and November 22, 1999," in *Heidegger in France*, trans. François Raffoul and David Pettigrew (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 337–63: 337, 342. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 9, 27, 38, 181; *Of Grammatology*, 35.

206. Jacques Derrida, "Force and Signification," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 3–30: 8, 29.

207. See *The Problem of Genesis*.

208. "*Khōra*," 99.

209. Jacques Derrida, "The Spatial Arts: An Interview with Jacques Derrida," in *Deconstruction and the Visual Arts: Art, Media, Architecture*, ed., Peter Brunette and David Wills, trans. Laurie Volpe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 9–32: 28.

210. "*Khōra*," 117; *Khōra*, 75–76.

211. "*Khōra*," 124–25; *Khōra*, 92.

212. "*Khōra*," 125.

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2

HISTORY AND HISTORICITY

> This is where another thinking of historicity calls us beyond the metaphysical concept of history.
>
> —*Specters of Marx*[1]

1. HISTORICITY AND NON-HISTORICITY

One can only praise the patience and care of Thomas Dutoit, Marguerite Derrida and Geoffrey Bennington for deciphering the handwritten lectures that Derrida delivered at the École normale supérieure in late 1964 and early 1965. The publication in 2013 of *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History* gives us an extended examination of the problem of history in Derrida's work prior to *Of Grammatology*. As we have seen, before the Heidegger lectures Derrida's earliest work had already shown a critical preoccupation with the uneasy relation between philosophy and history, especially with Husserl's treatment of the differing demands of the structural and the genetic (or the developmental) and the necessary transcendence in phenomenology of empirical, relativistic historicism.[2] The 1964–1965 lectures provide an insight into Derrida's detailed response to Heidegger's treatment of history and historicity in *Being and Time* as Derrida began to formulate his well-known critique of speech and writing.

Despite its opening dismissal of "the classical categories of history," Derrida would later insist that his most celebrated work, *Of Grammatology* (1967), was "a history book through and through."[3] Derrida

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argues in *Of Grammatology* that neither speech nor nature can be taken as an ahistorical essence; to register itself *as* natural, each must be supplemented by the cultural, the conventional and the historical. At the same time, this supplement cannot be taken as a historical determination. As Derrida reiterates, deconstruction challenges both the natural and the conventional. For example, questioning the assumption of the organic it would also question the assertion of the contractual.[4] Derrida's "history book" evokes fluid terms such as *la trace* and *différance* to account for a new history of metaphysical concepts that cannot be reduced to a customary historicism.

As we have seen, at the outset of *Of Grammatology* Derrida insists that his project will avoid "a simple historical relativism," but he also adds a striking list of problems that he will address in relation to history: a kind of writing that "must dissimulate its own history as it produces itself," the "history of truth" as the "debasement of writing," "the historical origin and structural possibility of philosophy" and "the concept of history itself."[5] The question of the history *of* writing—of its origin and use in any history of writing and the apparent resolution of this question by modern linguistics—puts in question the metaphysical determination both of writing (as a history) and of history (as a writing).[6]

In the midst of discussion in *Of Grammatology* of Heidegger and the introduction of the term *différance*, Derrida also challenges the treatment of Being as a "trans-epochal signified" and argues that his own "question," which must engage with the status and history of writing, can "provisionally" be called "historial" (*historiale*).[7] As he explains in his 1964–1965 lectures, *historiale* is a problematic French translation for Heidegger's use of *geschichtlich* (historical) and *Geschichte* (history), which he *opposes* to *Historie* as "the science of history" or historiography.[8] The 1964–1965 lectures show us that before the publication of *Of Grammatology*, Derrida was already grappling with the *problem* of the distinction between history "itself" and historiography.

In his subsequent work, which responded in part to the common charge of an ahistorical underpinning, Derrida took pains to emphasize that whatever has been historically instituted, founded or constructed can be deconstructed because "neither their origin nor their solidity is natural."[9] Once the dust settles over Derrida's use of the term *text* in *Of Grammatology* to describe a differentiated framework that exceeds both the claims of linguistics for a pure science of language and the

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metaphysical motifs that still dominate the treatment of speech and writing in philosophy, we may come to see that history was the great problem that dominated Derrida's philosophical thinking. As Edward Baring justly observes, "deconstruction would not have appeared quite so threatening [to historians] if it did not in some way address central problems of historical understanding."[10]

Derrida's recollections of the contexts for the 1964–1965 lectures suggest that history was as much a political as a philosophical problem in this period. Derrida had been invited by Louis Althusser (1918–1990) to return to the École normale supérieure in 1964, where he had studied as a student from 1952–1956, at the very moment when Althusser was beginning his influential seminar on Karl Marx (1818–1883) that would give rise to *Reading Capital* (1965). In his seminar Althusser explored the relation between Marxism and structuralism and argued that Marxism should not be reduced to an empirical historicism.[11] Althusser insisted that properly understood, Marxism is "an anti-historicism" and should be distinguished from the historicist interpretations of dialectical materialism by figures such as Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937).[12] As Derrida recalled in a 1989 interview with Michael Sprinker (1950–1999), he was not persuaded by Althusser's treatment of history. "Many questions seemed to me to have been passed over," he remarks, "notably those about the historicity of history [*l'historicité de l'histoire*] or the concept of history."[13] Some twenty-nine years after the Heidegger seminar, Derrida suggested in *Specters of Marx* (1993) that his own critical reading of Marxism rested on its problematic relation to ontology and metaphysics and its claim for a dialectical and historical materialism.[14]

As we saw in chapter 1, these critical questions about history had been prompted by Derrida's earlier analysis of "the conditions of possibility for a history of ideal objectivity" in Husserlian phenomenology.[15] Husserl had argued in "The Origin of Geometry" (1936) that "all [merely] factual history remains incomprehensible because, always merely drawing its conclusions naïvely and straightforwardly from facts, it never makes thematic the general ground of meaning upon which all such conclusions rest, [and] has never investigated the immense structural *a priori* which is proper to it."[16] The phenomenological problem of charting the historical development of a necessarily ahistorical objectivity in

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science and language had led Derrida in the early 1960s to a more "preliminary" question about "the historicity of history."[17]

Starting his first seminar at the ENS on history raised a political difficulty for Derrida in part because, though he was not a member of the French Communist Party, he did not want his work to be "taken for crude and self serving criticisms connected with the right or left."[18] As is more widely appreciated today, Derrida's relation to politics, and specifically to Marxism, was always shaped by the febrile atmosphere of Paris.[19] In the 1964–1965 lectures, Derrida is clear in his critique of Marxism: it has so far failed "to radicalize the thinking of history."[20] Derrida's other difficulty was his decision to devote his entire seminar to Heidegger. As Dominique Janicaud (1937–2002) has noted in his wide-ranging *Heidegger in France* (2001), while there were occasional sharp debates about Heidegger's politics in France from the 1940s, it was only in the 1980s that these led to persistent and widespread discussion.[21] Derrida would remark in 1968 that his own reading of Heidegger was intent on avoiding the common extremes in France of reverent discipleship or outright condemnation.[22] As we shall see, on two occasions in the 1964–1965 lectures Derrida addresses Heidegger's association with National Socialism.

There is a fifty-year gap between Derrida's 1964 lectures and the publication of Heidegger's *Black Notebooks* in 2014. Heidegger's *Ponderings* (*Überlegungen*) comprise his private diaries kept in a series of small black notebooks, notably from 1931–1941.[23] Derrida, of course, did not have access to this material. However, as Jean-Luc Nancy (1940–) suggests in *The Banality of Heidegger* (2015), his convincing analysis of the *Black Notebooks*, there is an aspect of Heidegger's notebooks that relates directly to Derrida's treatment of historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) in *Being and Time*.[24] As Nancy points out, in his diaries from the late 1930s Heidegger unequivocally links "the deconstruction (*Abbau*)" of metaphysical ontology to "the destruction (*Zerstörung*)" of those who appear "to be destroying the world and history."[25] For Heidegger, Nancy argues, there must be a destruction of the *absence* of historicity (*Geschichtslosigkeit*) and this absence is emphatically associated with the Jewish people, a people who are described as having "no soil, no history."[26]

Given the relentless uncovering in the last thirty years of Heidegger's relation to National Socialism and anti-Semitism or anti-Judaism,

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the more we learn about Heidegger the more we see that Emmanuel Levinas was right.[27] As Levinas observed in 1963 at a conference organized by Vladimir Jankélévitch (1903–1985) on Jewish consciousness, history and forgiveness: "One can forgive many Germans, but there are some Germans it is difficult to forgive. It is difficult to forgive Heidegger.[28] As Derrida himself remarked in 1988 at a conference in Heidelberg on Heidegger and politics, in the wake of Heidegger's "terrible *silence*" on the *Shoah*, there is "the necessity of reading Heidegger as he did not read himself."[29]

As Nancy aptly observes, the immense influence of Heidegger on twentieth-century philosophy rests on his emphatic dismissal of the self as the central axis of the philosophical project. His displacement of the classical substantive (*ousia*) in *Being and Time* opens a new relation to the event (of what is to come, to happen) and to the subject as that which is sent off or sent out (from, with and towards the other).[30] After his first substantial essay on Heidegger, "*Ousia* and *Grammē*" (1968), Derrida's extended critique of Heidegger would focus on the radical possibilities of the subject as a sending out or sending off (*schicken*, *envoi*) being foreclosed by Heidegger's persistent emphasis on a destiny (*Geschick*) with a destination.[31] In a series of publications from the early 1980s until his death in 2004, Derrida explored a range of sexual, racial, political, anthropological and historical determinations in Heidegger's thought that limited, undermined and darkened the bright promises of *Being and Time*.[32]

What makes Derrida's 1964–1965 lectures dramatically different from a reading of Heidegger after the publication of the *Black Notebooks* is the possibility of an ethics and politics based on Heidegger's treatment of historicity and non-historicity in *Being and Time*. Derrida devotes the end of his fourth lecture to emphasizing a critical difference between Hegel and Heidegger: in *Being and Time* the authentic and inauthentic are *both* "modes of *Geschichtlichkeit*."[33] The absence of historical consciousness, Derrida argues, should therefore be understood "as a deficient mode of historicity rather than a mode of non-historicity."[34] As Heidegger remarks in §76, "it is not the case that unhistoriological eras [*unhistorische*] as such are unhistorical [*ungeschichtlich*] also."[35] It is Hegel, not Heidegger, Derrida observes, who insists on "non-historicity as *Geschichtslosigkeit*."[36] It is Hegel, not Heidegger, who argues that "a people that does not have the politics of its

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historical science—such a people has no history, is not *geschichtlich* [historical]."[37] This is the "Heideggerian difference," as Derrida calls it.[38]

As Derrida points out, like Hegel before him, Husserl also used his definition of historicity to identify those "peoples said to be without history."[39] Husserl claimed that non-European cultures only demonstrate an "empirical historicity," which can be taken "as *non-historicity* (*Geschichtslosigkeit*)."[40] In his introduction to *The Origin of Geometry* (1962), Derrida had asked how it was possible for Husserl to "reconcile the affirmation according to which historicity is an essential structure of the horizon for all humanity (as well as for every community) and the allusion to the 'non-historicity' (*Geschichtslosigkeit*) of certain archaic societies?"[41] In contrast, as Derrida observes in the 1964–1965 lectures, the refusal to construct a notion of historicity that requires the declaration and imposition of *non-historicity* shows how Heidegger "breaks with this Hegelian-Husserlian metaphysics of history, this spiritualist metaphysics, this metaphysics of *Geist*."[42]

As we now know, Derrida came to see that the "Heideggerian difference" was, after all, not that different—starting with the evocation of spirit (*Geist*) itself.[43] Derrida's later work shows a wider interest in the idiomatic difference between *Geschichtlichkeit* and *Geschichtslosigkeit*. In a 1983 article he suggests that while Heidegger proclaims the neutrality and asexuality (*Geschlechtslosigkeit*) of Dasein in an effort to avoid an anthropocentrism, this gesture can be taken as a wider critique of sexual difference as a limited sexual duality.[44] Derrida had already noted in *Glas* (1974) Hegel's insistence that the brother-sister relation is uniquely "a-sexual (*geschlechtloses*)," as part of a series of concepts that Hegel evokes to safeguard pure or absolute differences against the perpetual and progressive differentiations of the *Aufhebung*—a negating, conserving and progressively uplifting movement—in the history *of* spirit, where the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness and reason mirrors the progression of human history.[45] For Hegel, "the movement of carrying forward the form of its [spirit's] self-knowledge is the labour which it accomplishes as *actual History* [wirkliche *Geschichte*]."[46]

Indeed, Derrida's interest in the proximity of Heidegger and Hegel is one of the most striking features of the 1964–1965 lectures. It is to be expected that the question of history would require some reflections on

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Hegel and his influential use of history in the service of philosophy. As Raymond Aron (1905–1983) aptly commented in 1935: "the traditional philosophy of history culminates in the system of Hegel. The modern philosophy of history begins with the refusal of Hegelianism."[47] Derrida will write in *Of Grammatology* that the Hegelian *Aufhebung* is "*the* concept of history and of teleology."[48] As Françoise Dastur (1942–) has noted, it was also most likely Hegel who coined the neologism *Geschichtlichkeit* that Dilthey and Count Paul Yorck von Wartenberg (1835–1897) handed on to Heidegger.[49] Nonetheless, the privileged place of Hegel in a series of lectures on *Being and Time* is remarkable.

At the outset, Derrida contrasts Heidegger's destruction of the history of ontology with Hegel's insistence that historicity only begins with the end of history or an absolute "refutation" of the past.[50] At the same time, he speaks of "troubling resemblances" between Heidegger and Hegel.[51] In the first lecture Derrida also argues, not entirely persuasively, that Heidegger avoids the Hegelian trap of declaring himself the last philosopher in the history of philosophy by "adding no other *proposition*" once the destruction of the history of ontology has taken place.[52] By contrast, in the second lecture Derrida questions Heidegger's emphatic rejection at the start of *Being and Time* of "*telling stories*" (*raconter des histoires*) and describes Hegel as one of the "greatest novelists of philosophy."[53] Though Derrida goes on to explain Heidegger's critique of *les romans de Descartes* (the assumption of a self-conscious subject and its narratives as the locus of philosophy), there is already the sense of an equivocal account of Hegel when placed in relation to Heidegger.[54]

The fourth lecture, as we have seen, draws the clear distinction between a historicity that does not require an attendant designation of non-historicity (Heidegger) and one that clearly does (Hegel). Yet even here Derrida's language shows that he is always conscious of the proximity of Heidegger and Hegel.[55] This is partly methodological, as he will not want to claim an absolute difference between the philosophers in the name of a more nuanced concept of difference. However, this resemblance is apparent even when Derrida reiterates that they can never be confused, since Heidegger removes consciousness, self-consciousness and experience from its central place in the philosophical tradition.[56]

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Though Derrida will again insist in the sixth lecture that the absence of any experience of consciousness in *Being and Time* marks a "*decisive*" difference between the two philosophers, we are left with a pervasive intimation of Hegelian gestures in "the proper field of an analytic of the historicity of *Dasein*."[57] The constant return to Heidegger's "dialogue with Hegel" allows Derrida to start to think of the unequivocal in Heidegger.[58] Nine years later, Derrida will start his 1973–1974 seminar on Kant and art by returning to the relation between Hegel and Heidegger.[59] Derrida asks whether Heidegger's "nonidentical" repetition of Hegel's lectures on art runs the risk of only "repeating" Hegel "more profoundly."[60] Although Hegel and Heidegger are "very different in their aim, their procedure [and] their style," he adds, their writings on art still share "a common interest."[61] From the 1980s to his final seminar, this "common interest" becomes more apparent, as Derrida focuses on Heidegger's argument in his 1929–1930 seminar that while the stone has no world (*weltlos*) and the animal is deprived of the world (*weltarm*), man undertakes a world forming (*weltbildend*) domination (*Walten*).[62]

While Derrida reinforces the Heideggerian difference when it comes to the Hegelian opposition of historicity and non-historicity, he is acutely aware of Heidegger's politics.[63] In the eighth lecture, he observes that when Heidegger links *Geschick* (destiny) to his discussion of *Schicksal* (fate) and *Entschlossenheit* (resolute decision) in §74 of *Being and Time*, he also expands the discussion of being-with (*Mitsein*) to the community (*der Gemeinschaft*) and the people (*des Volkes*).[64] As Derrida explains, "And so the historical destiny, historicity, is essentially and originally communitarian. And it is against the structural background of this originary community and this originary historicity that a history can be determined *ontically*, as by *struggle*, recognition, and so forth. *Entschlossenheit*: not heroic individuals but communitarian resolution (support of Nazism [*cohésion au nazisme*])."[65] This can be seen as an early articulation of Derrida's critical treatment of a politics based on community.[66]

The other reference in the lectures to National Socialism is more complex because it is part of Derrida's examination of the relation between language, history and the ontico-ontological difference in Heidegger's thought. It is prompted by Heidegger's insistence in "The Letter on 'Humanism'" (1946) that "language itself" (*die Sprache selbst*)

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registers the essential "nearness" (*Nähe*) and "house" of Being (*Haus des Seins*).[67] Derrida suggests that Heidegger's later work has more obvious political problems, which can be seen in their style and tone. In this case, "there appears what yet again resembles a pure and simple metaphor in the expressionist-romantico-Nazi style."[68] A "non-Heideggerian language" is needed to discuss such works.[69]

However, Derrida follows his critique of this passage in "The Letter on 'Humanism'" with a long parenthetical comment: "there appears what yet again resembles a pure and simple metaphor in the expressionist-romantico-Nazi style (which is perhaps—without a doubt even—*also* romantico-Nazi, but the problem, our problem, is that of knowing if it is *only* a metaphor and if its romantico-Nazi style exhausts it: and if, allowing oneself to be fascinated by this style, one is not missing, through another philological violence, the essential point)."[70] What is the "essential point"? It is likely that Heidegger's critique of thinking language through the essence of man—humanism—itself reflects a "romantico-Nazi" thinking. This political analysis is then complicated because of the question of metaphor.[71]

Derrida had been interested in the problem of metaphor in Heidegger's thought in "Violence and Metaphysics," his long 1964 essay on Levinas. For Heidegger, he had observed, "Being is nothing outside the existent" and it is therefore "impossible to avoid the ontic metaphor in order to articulate Being in language."[72] In the lectures, Derrida explores the possibilities and the limits of the ontic metaphor. Heidegger encourages a new critical level of thinking about metaphors and the best example of this is the analysis in *Being and Time* of the near (*nah*) and far (*fern*). What is "near" for being (ontic) is "far" for Being (ontological).[73] This should allow Heidegger to disrupt the powerful metaphysical metaphor of proximity and its support for self-identity and the "*I am*" as the self-evident affirmation of the presence of the present.[74] The method suggested by the ontico-ontological difference enables us to highlight and "destroy" these persistent metaphors in the philosophical tradition.[75] This gives a context for Derrida's problem when it comes to Heidegger's insistence twenty years later in 1946 that language simply registers the *proximity* of Being.[76] As he remarks in *Of Grammatology*, deconstruction challenges proximity as the basis for "the full continuity of speech."[77]

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At the same time, Derrida reinforces the extraordinary challenge raised by Heidegger's insight into the relation between metaphor, language and history. In "Violence and Metaphysics," he had wagered that "if there is no history, except through language and if language (except when it names Being *itself* or nothing: almost never) is elementally metaphorical" one can then understand Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986) when he suggests, "it may be that universal history is the history of the different intonations given a handful of metaphors."[78] Derrida returns to Borges in his eighth lecture and offers a striking elaboration. There is a "discourse of thought" that grasps "one will only ever destroy metaphors with the help of other metaphors."[79] This is what Derrida himself undertakes in his critique of Levinas: a rubbing together and wearing out of metaphors at work in philosophy, such as finite and infinite, internal and external, same and other, and so forth.[80]

Importantly, Derrida also suggests in the lectures that there can be a different manner of dealing with metaphor from merely "substituting one metaphor for another without knowing it."[81] This difference is precisely the kind of metaphor that is found in the universal history that Borges identifies.[82] One can contrast this perpetual history of metaphors to a thinking that knows "what it is doing" when it comes to destroying metaphor.[83] The key difference is the level of awareness that one has when dealing with metaphor as a problem of language and history. For Derrida, Heidegger prompts a "thinking metaphor in metaphorizing it as such, thinking the essence of metaphor."[84] Derrida implies in the last pages of his lectures that this heightened awareness of metaphor leads to the wider question of thinking Being and historicity, as described in *Being and Time*, as still inherently metaphorical.[85] This is a problem of Heidegger's understanding of language that Derrida will address in *Of Grammatology*.[86]

In his discussion of Heidegger's "romantico-Nazi style" Derrida registers both the magnitude of Heidegger's philosophical insight into metaphor and his profound political failures. Derrida's approach to Heidegger here can be compared to that of his 1965 essay on Antonin Artaud (1896–1948), "La parole soufflée." Reading Artaud "at the limit" (*sur la limite*), Derrida charts both Artaud's adherence to the metaphysical tradition and the points where he exceeds this tradition.[87] Significantly, Derrida relates this style of reading to an interpretation of Heidegger and the problem of history. Heidegger's destruction of the

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history of ontology should not be taken as a "simple surpassing of this history."[88] The challenge is to recognize a "historicity" that is "neither within nor outside this history."[89]

2. DIFFERENCE, REPETITION AND HISTORICITY

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger attempts to establish a new understanding of history that is no longer tied to the metaphysical subject (or the primacy of presence) and that lends itself to a science of history only by first recognizing its possibility in the existential analytic of *Dasein*.[90] This is the heady promise of *historicity* (*Geschichtlichkeit*).[91] As we have seen, to support an account of history that displaces the metaphysical subject as present-at-hand (*vorhanden*) without returning to a self-evident historicism, Heidegger draws an emphatic distinction between historical *events* (*Geschehen*), *history* itself (*Geschichte*) and the science of history or *historiography* (*Histoire*).[92] We will return to this distinction in chapters 8 and 9.

On the basis of his analysis of temporality—which we will come to in a moment—Heidegger describes the historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) of *Dasein* as a "*handing down to oneself*" (*Sichüberliefern*) in which history is no longer tied to the subject as the conduit for what is merely present-at-hand.[93] The challenge here is to dismantle the prevailing view that in a temporal and historical account of a lifespan from birth to death "the Self maintains [*hält*] itself throughout with a certain selfsameness [*Selbigkeit*]."[94] Rather than the conventional sense of the self as a discrete object that is found "in" time and registered in the present or actual moment, Heidegger uses the existential analytic of *Dasein* to overturn the traditional domains of the internal and external in relation to history.[95] The historicity of *Dasein* is therefore found "in Dasein itself."[96]

As a historicity *of* Dasein, the history of the lifespan cannot be registered as a discrete series of points or actualities (*Wirklichkeit*) that are present-at-hand. A historical account of the lifespan cannot treat birth *as* the past and death *as* the future. The "connectedness" (*Zusammenhang*) of a lifespan is therefore registered by *Dasein finding itself* "between" (*zwischen*) birth and death and "*stretching itself along*" (*Sicherstreckens*).[97] For Heidegger, this finding between and stretching-along

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indicates the *first* historical gesture: "das *Geschehen* des Daseins," "the *occurrence* of Da-sein."[98] The historical event therefore leads *directly* to "the question of Dasein's 'connectedness.'"[99] Prompted by being stretched along (*erstreckten*), the *question* of *Dasein*'s connectedness to the span of life *lays bare* (*Freilegung*) the structure of the historical event (*der Geschehensstruktur*) *for Dasein* and indicates its possibility within the wider context of Being.[100] For Heidegger, *historicity* describes *Dasein in relation to* the meaning of the question of Being.

In my own view, Heidegger's problematic insistence on an *absolute distinction* between history itself and the science of history, the *limitation* of the relation between temporality and historicity to the "lifespan" and the *reduction* of history to a historicity of and for *Dasein*, all gesture to the larger problem of the assumption of "*Being*-a-whole" (*Ganz*seins)—the summation of the first four chapters of *Being and Time*—as a structure for *starting* to address the *problem* of history. As Heidegger clearly states, the relation between temporality and historicity is founded on "the whole of Dasein, as regards its authentically *Being*-a-whole [*eigentlichen Ganz*seins]."[101] One could almost say that "*Ganz*seins" acts as a kind of Hegelian *Aufhebung* when it comes to time and history in *Being and Time*, joining them together and raising them up by pushing them apart into a new formation.

Nonetheless, the "enigma" (*das Rätsel*) of the past in *Being and Time* is also partly resolved by Heidegger's remarkable account of temporality being described as "an ecstatical unity" in which time "temporalizes itself as a future which makes itself present in the process of having been" (*zeitigt sich als gewesende-gegenwärtigende Zukunft*).[102] Time should no longer be seen as a linear and spatial succession of past, present and future mirroring what is behind, here and in front. As Heidegger observes, "the future is *not later* than having been, and having been is *not earlier* than the present."[103] To put it in stark terms, Heidegger's account of time is more profound and more radical than his treatment of a historicity that escapes anthropology, historicism—and historiography. As Paul Ricoeur rightly argues, in *Being and Time* Heidegger uses temporality to try to resolve the problem of the relation between history and historiography.[104]

As one might expect, it is the injunction in *Being and Time* to think of a temporality and historicity beyond the assumptions of *presence* (as the principal form of consciousness, the guiding relation to objects in

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the world and the measure of time) that prompts Derrida in his lectures to emphasize his own terminology, notably *difference*, *text*, *trace* and *repetition*. Thanks to the 1964–1965 lectures, we can now treat these terms *as part of* Derrida's early engagement with the problem of history.

One of the most original aspects of *Being and Time* is that it *begins* with metaphysics, with the inauthentic as a necessity: the authentic first is not first.[105] For Derrida, this approach is indicative of an "originary difference" in the ontic-ontological difference that cannot be reduced to a "simple and initial or final unity."[106] This leads Derrida to argue in his final lecture on 29 March 1965 that there must be "an irreducible multiplicity of historicities."[107] According to Derrida, this multiplicity is possible because Heidegger may speak at some length about the historicity of *Dasein* but has comparatively little to say about "*authentic* historicity."[108] Derrida takes this relative absence of authentic (*eigentlich*) historicity as an affirmation that there is no "*historicity in the proper sense*" in *Being and Time*.[109] As we shall see in chapter 3, this is a critical gesture in Derrida's later formulation of what he calls *ex-appropriation* and I would describe it as the starting point for his own philosophy of history.

While Heidegger argues that the historicity of *Dasein* must precede "the history of Being," for Derrida "*the proper sense*" of the authentic historicity is also—to use a phrase that we now understand more readily—*sine die*, adjourned, deferred.[110] One can see this as *différance* in the making. A deconstructive history cannot begin with the unique and assured origin of an authentic historicity, no matter what claims it makes to an exclusive and radical alterity. This is the level of critique that is lacking in the Marxist treatment of history.

A good example of the implications of thinking of history from a more radical notion of difference is Derrida's analysis of not beginning with the assumption of proximity. Derrida explains that in relation to Being, the there or *Da* of *Da-sein*—of being there—is neither near (*proche*) nor far (*lointain*).[111] As a movement between the near and the far that cannot be described as either an initial proximity or distancing, the *Da* of *Dasein* resists a simple spatial or anthropological designation.[112] Derrida links this oscillation to a historicity and difference that makes the ontico-ontological difference possible and exceeds it. The "*pre-ontological*" announces a difference as "the unity of the near and

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the far" that cannot be contained by a metaphysical concept of contradiction.[113] For Derrida, "the contradictions are historicity: that is, the impossibility of a *pure* point of departure in the absolute proximity of the ontic or the ontological."[114]

The definition of historicity as "the impossibility of a *pure* point of departure" in "the absolute proximity" of the ontic-ontological difference may seem a rather formal philosophical gesture. What makes Derrida's engagement with the problem of history in the 1964–1965 lectures so compelling is how he goes on to associate this historicity with *text*, *trace* and, most significantly, *repetition*. Derrida makes the striking case in the fourth lecture for describing *Da-sein* (he retains the hyphen) as *text*, by which he means "a synthetic multiplicity that holds to itself, retaining itself [*se retenant elle-même*]," which precedes the metaphysical soul-body, logos-text opposition.[115] This dynamic retention registers the necessary relation to memory and the "gathering of past meaning."[116] This passage helps us to understand the breadth of Derrida's understanding of the term text before *Of Grammatology*.

Derrida then turns to the relation between text and the trace. The *trace* registers text and can be treated as a necessary retention of the start of any spoken utterance as it reaches its end.[117] While this echoes the well-known treatment of speech and writing in *Of Grammatology*, it also highlights problems that Derrida first gestures to in "Violence and Metaphysics." As he notes in the sixth lecture, Levinas argued that the trace "withdraws from phenomenality and presence" and registers an "absolute past."[118] However, Levinas also insists that this absolute past is "non-history" because the other as infinitely other exceeds the history of the same and history as totality.[119] This rejection of history leaves Derrida with the problem of the trace as an ahistorical absolute past and the evocation of a non-historicity in the name of a radical alterity. Derrida will reaffirm in *Of Grammatology* that the trace must be understood as an absolute past to avoid being taken as a modification of the present.[120] But he will also add that the "strange movement of the trace" defers and differs from the proper sense of the *absolute* past.[121] He returns to this problem in 1968 and argues that *différance* has "its 'history'" and the trace of the absolute past can be no more ahistorical than historicist.[122]

One of the great contributions of the 1964–1965 lectures to Derrida studies is that it foregrounds the importance of Heidegger's treatment

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of *repetition* (*Wiederholung*) as a problem of history.[123] In his final lecture, Derrida goes so far as to claim that repetition is "doubtless the only concept that is truly original and proper to a thematic of historicity in *Sein und Zeit*."[124] It may not be readily apparent that Derrida resolves the problem in *Of Grammatology* of the relation between the trace and history and his treatment of repetition in the lectures can offer some help with this. He argues in a highly condensed passage in *Of Grammatology* that *la trace* marks "the relationship with the other" and that when the other "*announces itself as such*"—the "*as such*" registering the consequent problem of attributing an essence to what precedes and resists a self-presentation—it also accounts for "all *history*" (*toute* l'histoire).[125] But the history that Derrida has in mind here is only history "as such," only the long history shaped by metaphysics in which the other *as* other has been "defined as 'non-living' up to 'consciousness,' passing through all levels of animal organization."[126] Thanks to the lectures, we can now see that Derrida had already addressed Heidegger's notion of repetition as an *auto*-tradition or as the registering of a historical past that is determined neither by its relation to objects nor to the subject, which suggests the possibility of a history that does not require the exclusion and colonization of the other *as* other.

According to Derrida, in *Being and Time* repetition operates as a means of destroying the history of ontology because it avoids the classical metaphysical gesture of "beginning again from zero in the ahistorical style of Descartes."[127] Repetition can therefore be seen as "deepening the enigma of temporality and historicity."[128] Derrida had already noted how Husserl used repetition to secure trans-historical objective idealities such as geometry.[129] In the lectures, he states clearly that in Husserlian phenomenology "the form of historicity is not historical" and therefore "the condition of historicity is a certain ahistoricity of historicity, a certain intemporality of time."[130] Derrida is keenly aware of the impasse of relying on an ahistorical framework to establish a radical historicity.

In contrast, Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology treats repetition as a facet of temporality rather than the means of trans-temporal ideality. As Gerhard Richter observes, for Heidegger *Wiederholung* does "not refer to a renewed processing of some sameness or self-sameness, but rather points to a thinking-retrieving experience of an as-yet undepleted sense of possibility."[131] Ricoeur argues that repetition in

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Being and Time opens "the past again to the future" and therefore registers the *possibility* of historiography.[132] Before singling out repetition, Derrida had accorded a similar status to Heidegger's treatment of the concept of "inheritance and tradition or transmission."[133] He suggests that the relation between repetition, heritage and tradition in *Being and Time* indicates the possibility of a historical *transmission* that does not rely on the ahistorical vantage points of Hegelian self-consciousness or Husserlian consciousness.[134] Derrida would later say that deconstruction is historical because it is concerned with what "leaves traces or legacies beyond the living present of its life."[135]

The critical point is that Heidegger's transmission through repetition is an *auto*-tradition.[136] This *auto*-tradition should not be confused with Derrida's later account in *Voice and Phenomenon* (1967) of a pure auto-affection such as "hearing-oneself-speak."[137] As Derrida explains in the lectures, in *Being and Time* heritage (*Erbe*) and tradition or transmission (*Überlieferung*) provide a structure for "*handing down* to oneself" (*Sichüberlieferung*).[138] Handing-down to oneself can be described as "the self-tradition of an auto-transmission."[139] It is not a self-constituted tradition, as one would find in Husserl's transcendental phenomenology.[140] Handing-down to oneself is constituted by an *auto*-transmission, which arises from Heidegger's treatment of temporality. As we have seen, the "enigma" of the past is placed in relation to a time that "temporalizes itself as a future which makes itself present in the process of having been."[141] For Derrida, the *auto*-transmission that constitutes handing-down to oneself is an "originary historical synthesis" of the ecstatical unities of temporality.[142] Heidegger's notion of auto-tradition registers the compelling link between repetition, temporality and historicity without founding this relation on the consciousness or constituting powers of the subject or a determining empirical context.

For Derrida, the challenge set by Heidegger is to think of a historicity that recognizes "the past of a future."[143] Auto-tradition indicates the repetition of the past that opens the *possibility* of the future *of* the past—the past is not only behind us; it is also coming towards us.[144] One can see this in the 1964–1965 lectures in Derrida's interest in the links between *à-venir* and *Geschehen*, between what is to come and what happens.[145] As he explains in a 1989 interview, without a "simple origin," repetition or "the iterability of the trace" describes the immediacy of both a necessary unity and an unavoidable alteration.[146] As "the con-

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dition of historicity," repetition at once adheres to and exceeds "the unity of a context."[147]

However, the ongoing complexity and difficulty of the Heideggerian legacy for Derrida in addressing the "enigma" of the past is still apparent in a few concise pages from the 1971 interview collected in *Positions* (1972). The problem of history for Derrida is still situated in this period in the political context of French Marxism and Althusser's treatment of history. Derrida argues that the assertion of pluralist and heterogeneous histories—a position he associates with Althusser—inevitably raises "the question of the historicity of history."[148] This question leads to the problem of the *essence* of history, which traditionally culminates in an ontological grounding of historicity. A metaphysical impasse can be avoided if one asks "the question of the history of essence."[149] For Heidegger, one should then turn to the question of "the history of the meaning of Being."[150] However, Derrida implies that this sequence for addressing the problem of historicity—going from essence to the history of essence to the meaning of Being—also demonstrates "the risk of metaphysical reappropriation."[151] We will come back to the question of reappropriation in chapter 3.

Some six years after the lectures, the debt to Heidegger is still evident. But Derrida makes it clear that Heidegger's innovative link between temporality and historicity must be rethought from the vantage point of repetition and *différance*. For Derrida, it is the question of "a history that also implies a new logic of *repetition* and the *trace*, for it is difficult to see how there could be history without it."[152] This "new logic" should explain the enigma of the past, the possibility of the future of the past, and a historicity that is not determined by the classical subject-object relation or the epochs of Being.[153]

3. THE EPOCHS OF HISTORICITY

In *Essential History* (2005), Joshua Kates notes that Derrida still relies on Husserlian frameworks at various strategic moments in *Of Grammatology*, even if he challenges the grounds and aims of phenomenology.[154] As Derrida himself remarked in 1999, he has "always remained faithful" to the phenomenological reduction, Husserl's method for suspending the "natural attitude" to the subject, objects and the world.[155]

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However, one can see how the 1964–1965 lectures alter our understanding of Derrida's treatment of history leading up to *Of Grammatology*, as Kates struggles to give an account of what he sees as an explicit move away from Husserl and towards Heidegger in this period.[156] Kates's conclusion that Derrida "defends" history in "Violence and Metaphysics" in 1964 and "abandons" it three years later in *Of Grammatology* is overstated but understandable.[157]

A striking example of Derrida's increased caution around concepts of history after the Heidegger lectures can be seen in his revisions for the 1967 publication of "Violence and Metaphysics." In his 1964 essay, he offers a provisional alternative to Levinas's ahistorical ethics in *Totality and Infinity* (1961).[158] A philosopher might find him or herself "*within history*," Derrida observes, but only when history is taken as "the history of the departures from totality."[159] There is then both finitude *and* a history that registers "the excess over the totality without which no totality would appear as such."[160] In contrast to Levinas's opposition of totality and infinity, this allows us to think of a history that is not infinite—that is the limitation of any phenomenological history—and which can still be greater than any finite totality.[161]

This elegant argument can be taken as an instance of Derrida outmanoeuvring Levinas but it hardly constitutes a philosophy of history. This is in fact exactly what Derrida does not want to formulate. He is sufficiently concerned that there may be a misunderstanding about this point that he adds three sentences—and two of these in italics—at the end of the 1967 version of his essay.[162] Having taken Levinas's pejorative notion of "economy" as antithetical to the infinitely other, Derrida uses it to offer a limited but practical ethics. Rather than fall prey to the extreme alternatives of an absolute violence or an absolute peace (that can only be secured through an absolute violence), Derrida proposes an "*economy* of violence."[163] By recognizing an originary violence, one cannot avoid violence in relation to the other but one can at least resist "the worst violence."[164] One must recognize that there are irreducible but variable degrees of violence. This is the "*vigilance*" taken by a "philosophy which takes history, that is, finitude, seriously."[165] However, by 1967 Derrida wants it to be understood that "*the economy of which we are speaking does not any longer accommodate the concept of history such as it has always functioned*."[166] This is not an abandonment of history—or the simple affirmation of finitude—but rather an indication

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that by 1967 history has become a pressing and still unresolved problem for Derrida.

This becomes apparent when we turn to *Of Grammatology*. We can now see that there is one direct reference to the 1964–1965 lectures at the start of the second chapter, "Linguistics and Grammatology." Derrida offers a succinct summary of the treatment of history in the Heidegger lectures and reaffirms what he sees as Heidegger's refusal to associate a deficient mode of historicity with non-historicity. What is interesting about this passage is that the more obvious debts to *and* differences from Heidegger have been added for the 1967 revisions to the 1965 article "Of Grammatology."[167] Derrida writes:

> Historicity itself is tied to the possibility of writing; to the possibility of writing in general, beyond those particular forms of writing in the name of which one has long spoken of peoples without writing and without history. [Added in 1967] Before being the object of a history—of an historical science—writing opens the field of history—of historical becoming. And the former (*Historie*, one would say in German) presupposes the latter (*Geschichte*).[168]

The difference from the lectures is that Derrida now explicitly argues that "historicity itself" (*l'historicité elle-même*)—we will come back to Derrida's later critical response to Heidegger's separation and ordering of the relation between "historicity itself" and "an historical science" in chapters 8 and 9—must be thought from "writing in general" (*l'écriture en général*).[169] For Derrida, writing in general or "arche-writing" criticizes the reliance of linguistics in the name of language on traditional and limited models of interiority (speech) and exteriority (writing) and includes both *la trace* as an inscription that is neither simply a sensible mark nor a non-sensible resonance and *différance* as the differing and deferring of an original or reconstituted unity in time becoming space and space becoming time.[170] At the end of the 1964–1965 lectures, he already appears to mark the limits of Heideggerian historicity, observing that it is a historicity *of Dasein* that can only be thought *as* a history of Being.[171]

This implicit critique of Heidegger's framework for history after *Being and Time* helps in part to answer why Derrida all but stops talking about *Geschichtlichkeit* after 1965. In *Of Grammatology*, he argues "the concept of history itself" is found "within a logocentric epoch."[172]

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But he also recognizes a "new mutation in the history of writing, in history as writing."[173] He refers to the limitations of the science of history and to the history of metaphysics, but offers no extended discussion of historicity.[174] Indeed, there are hardly any references to historicity in *Of Grammatology*.[175] It is also remarkable that for a collection of such important papers and essays from 1967–1972 that there are only three references to historicity in *Margins of Philosophy* (1972).[176]

This reticence tells us that Derrida does *not simply take up* Heidegger's terms or their definitions and apply them to his own thought. Derrida turns away from the historicity of *Being and Time*, I think in part because it is a historicity *of* Dasein, founded on and guided by the priority of *Dasein* in relation to the question of the meaning of Being and in part because it is a historicity predicated on the simple opposition or pure difference between historicity and historiography as "the science of history." By 1967 Heidegger's historicity can now be criticized from what amounts to a new "method" for reading *the history of philosophy*.[177]

As is well known, Derrida opens *Of Grammatology* with an unequivocal statement about the limits of history. He calls for a "reading [that] should escape, at least in its axis, from the classical categories of history: of the history of ideas, certainly, and the history of literature, but perhaps above all from the history of philosophy."[178] This is not an outright rejection of the history of philosophy; it is rather the declaration of a new way of treating the history of philosophy that avoids the common terminus of historicism and ahistoricism—*both* of which, Derrida argues in the Heidegger lectures, assume that there is a subject "*in history*."[179]

However, this recognition of the limits of history does suggest that part of Derrida's problem with history in this period is the relation between historicity and the history of philosophy. As we have seen, in his 1963 paper on Foucault's *History of Madness*, Derrida argued that "historicity in general" would be "impossible" without the history of philosophy, but this history should be seen in the "dialogue" or "transition" between finite, "determined historical structures" and a hyperbole that "exceeds" this "closed totality."[180] The history of philosophy contributes to historicity in general by *registering* this transitional "difference" between "history and historicity."[181] In his much-celebrated paper "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sci-

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ences" (1966), Derrida also proposes that it is possible to "de-constitute" the "founding concepts of the entire history of philosophy" without falling back into ahistoricism.[182] One can begin this process, he argues, by interpreting the constant reappearance of the "*non-center*" in the history of philosophy "*otherwise than as the loss of the center*."[183] The result is a different engagement with the history of philosophy, not an abandonment of this history.

Appropriately, Derrida's 1968 essay on Heidegger "*Ousia* and *Grammē*" articulates in more detail this different way of reading the history of philosophy. Derrida argues that Aristotle's account of time does not simply give us "time on the basis of *ousia* as *parousia*" and therefore the seamless metaphysics of "vulgar" time found, according to Heidegger, in both Aristotle and Hegel.[184] Derrida's critique of Heidegger's summation of metaphysical time implies that the *history* of metaphysics can be treated as a deferral of and differing from "*the proper sense*" of this history: one does not need to read the history of metaphysics in a metaphysical manner. As Derrida remarks in a work from 1980, "then there is no longer A metaphysics."[185] In the case of "*Ousia* and *Grammē*," there is a discernable "play of submission and subtraction" in reading Aristotle and other "texts of the history of metaphysics."[186]

As Derrida later notes in *Positions*, avoiding "the *metaphysical* concept of history" requires treating the "closure" of metaphysics not as "a circle surrounding a homogenous field, a field homogenous with itself on its inside, whose outside then would be homogenous also."[187] In a 1992 lecture on Heidegger, Derrida argues that *Being and Time* can be seen as an "event" that no longer submits to the metaphysical "logic, phenomenology, or ontology, which it nonetheless invokes."[188] In this sense, it is a work that it "exceeds its own borders."[189]

It is from this vantage point that we can better understand Derrida's sharpened critique of Heidegger after the 1964–1965 lectures as a criticism of *Geschichtlichkeit* when it is taken as the absolute or pure *other* of history. Significantly, while the lectures emphasized that Heidegger recognizes the derived as a necessity, in "*Ousia* and *Grammē*" Derrida criticizes the metaphysical opposition of the originary and the derived in Heidegger's thought.[190] This suggests that by 1968 Derrida was already questioning how far Heidegger actually avoids the metaphysical opposition between historicity and non-historicity. By the time of *Of*

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Spirit: Heidegger and the Question (1987), Derrida places Heidegger's historicity firmly within the problem of a "privileged relationship" to the question itself and to the German language in particular.[191] It is the privilege in Heidegger's thought of the relation to the question of Being and to a spirit-like gathering and directing of "what is sent" and "destined" (*Geschick*) that allow humans "to be and to have a history."[192]

Derrida's work on Heidegger in the late 1960s and early 1970s also suggests a general reassessment of the relation between an innovative but limited historicity and a philosophically conservative, politically regressive ordering and directing of the history of Being.[193] As we shall see in chapter 3, it is in this context that he will turn to Heidegger's late work "Time and Being" (1962) and the question of the gift or a giving that precedes time, Being and the history of Being. At the same time, the opening and limitations of the *Geschichtlichkeit* of *Dasein* in *Being and Time* is itself one of the casualties of Heidegger's subsequent concentration in his work on the history *of* Being and "the epochality of Being."[194]

In the 1964–1965 lectures, by contrast, Derrida implied that Heidegger has managed to claim an innovative notion of the epoch that is neither tied to history (as with Dilthey) or independent of history (as with Husserl).[195] Historicity would then not be "enclosed in one epoch."[196] Heidegger is able to offer this new understanding of the epoch because he reformulates Husserl's notion of the phenomenological reduction or *épokhē* as a suspension of "the natural attitude." Heidegger treats the epoch as an *épokhē*: the epoch of Being accounts for both a "period and a suspension" in which being "brackets itself in a historical movement."[197] However, Heidegger also insists that the history of philosophy in its entirety is *"the limited history of one epoch of Being."*[198] One can already see that this monumentalization of the history of philosophy contradicts Derrida's careful distinction at the start of *Of Grammatology* between the claims for a homogenous *end* and the permeable *closure* of metaphysics.[199] Derrida's later extended critique of Heidegger's epochs of the history of Being can be taken as an affirmation of an ongoing engagement with a variegated history of philosophy. As Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) remarked in a very different context: "the sum and substance of the yelling are these words: era, epoch, era and epoch, epoch and era, the system."[200]

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When Derrida notes in 1968 that the word history still connotes "the final repression of difference," he most likely has in mind Hegel's history of spirit, which culminates in absolute internal and external knowledge as the end of history.[201] The Hegelian subordination and idealization of writing supports the philosophical determination of "the writing of history"—historiography—as "the infinite spirit relating to itself in its discourse and its culture."[202] But, as we have seen, Derrida is always aware of the proximity of Heidegger and Hegel. He will also argue in 1968 that the history of Being itself is only an "epoch" of *différance*.[203]

Because the Heideggerian epoch has soldered together the historicity and the history of Being, Derrida suggests that the term epoch needs to be rethought as "the play of the trace."[204] In his 1980 paper "Envoi," he contrasts the philosophical and historical limitations of treating the history of Being as "the unity of a destination" to a "multiplicity of *renvois* [referrals]," of "many different traces referring back to other traces."[205] As Derrida had argued in the 1964–1965 lectures, these referrals *back to other traces* is the possibility of history and of a *historicity* that is confined neither to the classical subject, the Hegelian history of spirit nor to the Heideggerian epochs of Being.[206]

In an article from 2001 on Derrida and his early work on history, Peter Fenves (1960–) makes a commendable attempt to define *historicity*. "The historicity of something is whatever makes it historical," he observes.[207] It is difficult to define this term and, in a general sense, Fenves account is very helpful. Historicity describes what *makes* anything historical. However, there are some problems with this general definition. For Heidegger, historicity must account for a history that begins *with Dasein* and the question of the meaning of Being and a fundamental displacement of the self-conscious subject as the center of philosophy. For Husserl, on the other hand, historicity describes the trans-historical ideality of objectivities that are constituted and secured (recovered and recollected) by transcendental consciousness.[208]

For Derrida, in contrast, historicity arises from the play of traces that are neither sensible nor intelligible, nor purely absent or present, as well from the dynamics, which are neither merely active nor passive, of *différance* as the transmission of a repeated "just short of" and "just beyond." As we shall see in chapter 3, historicity registers and is registered by *ex-appropriation*. For Derrida, the relation *between* historicity and temporality must also contend with the "always too soon or too late"

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or the "untimely [*à contretemps*]."[209] Historicity is a question of "untimely histories" (*histoires intempestives*).[210] As Derrida remarks in *The Politics of Friendship* (1988–1994) in what is an explicit political context: "this is no longer the time to take one's time [. . .] as if we had ever been allowed to take our time [*de prendre notre temps*] in history."[211]

Derrida might also question a number of phrases in this definition of historicity. For example, there is the emphasis on "something"—"the historicity of something is whatever makes it historical"—as the subject and object of the sentence, as if historicity is directed to and registered by some *thing*, by the thing itself (*la chose même*) or even "things in themselves" in its Kantian and Husserlian calibrations. Derrida may also have challenged the suggestion here that historicity is only a process of *making*, of production, rather than an inventing that cannot be separated from a discovering.[212] As Derrida suggests in a lecture from 2000 the phrase "what *makes history*" (*fait l'histoire*), which he uses in *The Monolingualism of the Other*, also raises the problem of making or doing (*le faire*) that precedes knowing (*le savoir*) and can remain "heterogenous to it."[213] The "whatever" in this definition also implies an assumed generality or universality, a historicity for all occasions, rather than the difficulty and necessity of a series of stubbornly particular historicities "in" the history of philosophy. As Jacques Le Goff has suggested, *l'historicité*—a term only coined in France in the 1870s—can best be described in historical terms as part the reaction to the historicism of the nineteenth century, a reaction that included both Husserl and Heidegger.[214]

4. HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY AND PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Despite the confident assertion made on Derrida's behalf some thirty years ago by Geoffrey Bennington and Robert Young (1950–) that "*différance* names the historicity of history," the dynamic and elusive variations of *différance* as "(at once) spacing (and) temporization" could be taken as the basis for an ambitious *philosophy of history* that is comparable with Hegel's *Aufhebung*, Husserl's *epokhē*, and Heidegger's history of Being.[215] Derrida's earliest substantial work, his 1954 dissertation on Husserl and the problem of genesis, opens with the

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question of the relation between "history of philosophy and philosophy of history."[216] How far does this relation *remain* a problem for Derrida after the 1964–1965 Heidegger lectures?

In his first comments on the general limitations of history in *Of Grammatology* Derrida does not include the philosophy of history.[217] The only reference to the philosophy of history in *Of Grammatology* appears directly *after* the summary of the 1964–1965 lectures. It is cited as part of series of questions, of problems that still remain to be addressed. As in the previous paragraph, there are notable additions to the 1967 revisions. Derrida writes:

> The science of writing should therefore go look for its object at the roots of scientificity. The history of writing should turn back toward the origin of historicity. Science of the possibility of science? Science of science which would no longer have the form of *logic* but that of *grammatics*? History of the possibility of history [added in 1967] which would no longer be an archaeology, a philosophy of history or a history of philosophy?[218]

This last question, with its significant additions in 1967, highlights the difficulty of thinking of the old pairing of the history of philosophy and the philosophy of history from the perspective of "the history of *différance*, [of] history as *différance*."[219] But it also announces the *challenge* of history for Derrida: how to think the *possibility* of a viable history—and historiography—that is not defined by a logic of origins and by a programmatic teleology?

As we have seen, for Derrida *différance* has "its "history" and therefore cannot be taken as an ahistorical origin for a certain kind of historicity.[220] There is a history *of différance*: its distinctive histories are apparent in Derrida's use of different terms to register its dynamics and shifting contexts or milieus in the history of philosophy, as well as in a wide range of literary, artistic and political works. But when Derrida speaks of history *as différance* to account for the possibility of history, can this also be understood as a pervasive philosophy of history?

Unlike Paul Ricoeur, Derrida did not seek out a hermeneutical philosophy that could embrace a "confrontation with the history of the historians."[221] Derrida also did not follow Heidegger, who, as we have seen, makes rigorous and problematic distinctions in *Being and Time* between the science of history or historiography (*Historie*), history itself

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(*Geschichte*), historical events (*Geschehen*) and historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) *as the basis for* a "concrete working out" (*konkretere Ausarbeitung*) of the question of the meaning of being for *Dasein*.[222] As I noted in the preface, Heidegger "provisionally eliminate[s]" *Historie* in §73 of *Being and Time* in his account of temporality and historicity. What happens to historiography after this?

In §74 Heidegger argues that *Historie* has no place in the primary relation between temporality, historicity and repetition, precisely because repetition is the *pure possibility* of historiography.[223] Heidegger calls this repetition a "fateful repetition" (*schicksalhaften Wiederholung*).[224] No doubt with Hegel in mind, he also leaves *Historie* out of his analysis of historicity and "world-history" in §75.[225] In §76 he turns to the "ontological genesis" of *Historie* as part of his historical "destruction" of "the history of philosophy."[226] However, as he remarks here, "our analysis will acquaint us in outline with the existential source of historiology [*Historie*] only to the extent of bringing still more plainly to light the historicity of Dasein."[227] For Heidegger, the science of history or the problem of historiography can only emerge from and return to the priority of the *Geschichtlichkeit des Daseins*. As he observes, "Dasein, *and only* Dasein, is primordially historical [*ursprünglich geschichtlich*]."[228]

In contrast, Derrida does not *use* history as a "concrete working out" of "the becoming-space of time and the becoming time of space."[229] As Paola Marrati judiciously remarks, for Derrida "if there is a history, it cannot be gathered and thought in terms of the Heideggerian concept of *Geschichte*, in terms of the opposition between *Geschichte* and *Historie*."[230] As we shall see in chapters 8 and 9, from the 1960s to the 1990s Derrida challenged the distinction between narrative (*Historie*) and the historical event (*Geschehen*) as a way of questioning Heidegger's assured sequence of historical possibility in which *Geschichte* must always precede and be entirely distinct from *Historie*.[231]

One can, of course, question the determinations of "philosophy" and "history" as the necessary conditioning for a possible philosophy of history. Derrida himself does this at the end of *Of Grammatology*. If one takes Hegel "literally," Derrida observes, then "history is nothing but the history of philosophy" and "absolute knowledge is fulfilled."[232] Anticipating his later evocation of the quasi-transcendental and "the event of nothing," Derrida goes on to argue "what exceeds this closure is

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nothing [*n'est rien*]: neither the presence of being, nor meaning, neither history nor philosophy; but another thing which has no name, which announces itself within the thought of this closure and guides our writing here."[233] For Derrida, it is a question here of writing in general "within which philosophy is inscribed as a place within a text which it is does not command."[234]

Nonetheless, much as Derrida treats Artaud "at the limit," reading him at once as still inside *and* beyond metaphysics, one can describe Derrida himself *at the limit* in relation to the history of philosophy and the philosophy of history. Derrida speaks in a 1981 interview of attempting to find "a non-philosophical site, from which to question philosophy" so that it can "appear to itself as other than itself."[235] That Derrida's own work can today be taken as part of the history of philosophy perhaps shows that philosophy can expand both its horizons and its many others.

Nonetheless, in Derrida's thought there is the need for some kind of suspension or *epokhē* of history, and especially of its historicist and relativist determinations, even if this placing in parenthesis is itself historical.[236] Marrati describes this gesture as the condition for a "*historicity in general*" that remains neither simply *in* history (as an empirical historicism), nor *outside* of history (as a transcendent ahistorical possibility).[237] This is a very persuasive conclusion; but it can also still be taken as the conditions for a *philosophy of history* that *comprehends the shared possibility and complicity of ahistoricism and historicism*.

I would also argue that Derrida's turning away from Heidegger's definition of historicity in the later 1960s provides the basis for Derrida's own formulation of a distinctive philosophy of history. As we shall see in chapter 3, Derrida's subsequent work in the 1970s—notably on problems of context, memory and narrative—was influenced by his critical reading of Heidegger's "Time and Being." Heidegger uses historicity in this late work to determine and police the difference between *mere* historical events and the *unique* events of Being. Derrida responds to this limited and limiting historicity with an "ex-appropriation" that offers a different relation to both Hegel's philosophy of history and Heidegger's historicity.

At the same time, it is perhaps only when Derrida's seminars have been published in full that we can begin to understand the *political* conditions for a possible deconstructive historicity. Derrida notably

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makes use of the term historicity in his later work on politics. In *Specters of Marx* (1993), he speaks of a "historicity as future-to-come" (*l'historicité comme à-venir*) that differs from concepts of history that are determined by an "onto-theological or teleo-eschatological program or design."[238] He describes this historicity as a kind of "*promise*" or instance of "the messianic without messianism."[239] A decade later in *Rogues* (2002), he speaks of an "*essential historicity of democracy*" and this can be taken as a very appropriate political reorientation of Heidegger's historicity.[240] The most significant legacy for Derrida of the problem of history as raised by Heidegger in *Being and Time* may be the "historicity of the political."[241] As Derrida remarked in an interview given soon after the 2001 attacks in New York, a philosopher "would be someone who analyzes and then draws the practical and effective consequences of the relationship between our philosophical heritage and the structure of the still dominant juridicio-political system that is so clearly undergoing mutation."[242]

These 1964–1965 lectures, delivered by the thirty-four-year-old Derrida at the start of his remarkable career, affirm that Derrida takes from Heidegger what he sees as the innovation of beginning with the question of history by not insisting on a determined non-historicity. For Derrida, such an approach to history will facilitate the common critique of enthnocentrism and logocentrism.[243] Fifty years later, we now know that the ethics and philosophical innovations of this treatment of history were dramatically short-lived in Heidegger's thought. Its true legacy is to be found in *Of Grammatology*.

NOTES

1. *Specters of Marx*, 70.
2. *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy*; *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*; "'Genesis and Structure' and Phenomenology."
3. *Of Grammatology*, lxxxix; Jacques Derrida and Derek Attridge, "'This Strange Institution Called Literature': An Interview with Jacques Derrida," in *Acts of Literature*, ed. Derek Attridge, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (London: Routledge, 1992), 33–75: 54.
4. "Avowing—The Impossible," 27.
5. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology: 40th Anniversary Edition*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, fore. Judith Butler (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins

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University Press, 2016), 3–4. Where the translation of the 1976 edition has been modified, I will use or refer to this new edition.

6. *Of Grammatology*, 27–30, 42, 56.

7. *Of Grammatology*, 23–24. Derrida only uses the term "historiale" on four occasions (12, 24, 71, 92). In both Spivak's first and most recent edition in all but the example I have cited, "historial" is translated as "historical." See *Of Grammatology: 40th Anniversary Edition*, 13, 25, 71, 100. See also "Différance," 22 (translated as "historical").

8. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 96. See also 60, 73, 131, 145, 187, 198, 208, 211. See *Being and Time*, 10 n. 1, 19 n. 1, 375, 378, 392–97.

9. "Privilege," 9–10.

10. "*Ne me raconte plus d'histoires*," 176.

11. Louis Althusser et al., *Reading Capital: The Complete Edition*, trans. Ben Brewster and David Fernbach (London: Verson, 2016), 268–95. See also Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Verso, 2005).

12. *Reading Capital*, 268, 276–86.

13. "Politics and Friendship," 151; *Politique et amitié*, 32. Translation modified.

14. *Specters of Marx*, 68, 159–60, 170.

15. "Politics and Friendship," 151.

16. "The Origin of Geometry," 371.

17. "Politics and Friendship," 152.

18. "Politics and Friendship," 152.

19. Peeters, *Derrida: A Biography*; Edward Baring, *The Young Derrida and French Philosophy, 1945–1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). See also Jacques Derrida, "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," in *Politics, Theory, and Contemporary Culture*, ed. Mark Poster, trans. Mary Quaintaire (New York: Columbia University Press 1993), 197–235: 211, 213.

20. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 23.

21. Dominique Janicaud, *Heidegger in France*, trans. François Raffoul and David Pettigrew (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015).

22. "*Ousia* and *Grammē*," 62 n. 37. See Derrida and Janicaud, "Interviews." See also Ethan Kleinberg, *Generation Existential: Heidegger's Philosophy in France, 1927–1961* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

23. Martin Heidegger, *Überlegungen: Schwarze Hefte 1931–1941*, ed. Peter Trawny, 3 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2014). These have been translated as: *Ponderings II–VI: Black Notebooks 1931–1938*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016); *Ponderings VII–XI: Black Notebooks 1938–1939*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017); *Ponderings XII–XV: Black Notebooks 1939–1941*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press,

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2017). See also *Reading Heidegger's Black Notebooks 1931–1941*, ed. Inigo Farin and Jeff Malpas (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2016).

24. On *Geschichtlichkeit*, see Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 2–3.

25. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Banality of Heidegger*, trans. Jeff Fort (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), 25.

26. *The Banality of Heidegger*, 30. See Heidegger, *Überlegungen: Schwarze Hefte*, II: 99, III: 17, 77, 82, 121.

27. Peter Trawny, *Heidegger and the Myth of a Jewish World Conspiracy*, trans. Andrew J. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The History of a Way of Thinking* (London: Head of Zeus, 2013).

28. Emmanuel Levinas, "Toward the Other," in *Nine Talmudic Readings*, trans. and intro. Annette Aronowicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 12–29: 25.

29. Jacques Derrida, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Philipe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Philosophy and Politics: The Heidelberg Conference*, ed. Mireille Calle-Gruber, fore. Jean-Luc Nancy, trans. Jeff Fort (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016), 35.

30. *The Banality of Heidegger*, 5.

31. Jacques Derrida, "Envoi," in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume 1*, ed. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg, trans. Peter and Mary Ann Caws (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 94–128; Jacques Derrida, "Envois," in *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 3–256; Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 76.

32. Jacques Derrida, "*Geschlecht* I: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference," in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume II*, ed. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg, trans. Ruben Bevezdivin and Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 7–26; "Heidegger's Hand (*Geschlecht* II)," in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume II*, ed. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg, trans. John P. Leavey Jr. and Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 27–62; *Geschlecht III: Sexe, race, nation, humanité*, ed. Geoffrey Bennington, Katie Chenoweth and Rodrigo Therezo (Paris: Seuil, 2018); *Of Spirit*; "Heidegger's Ear: Philopolemology (*Geschlecht* IV)," in *Reading Heidegger: Commemorations*, ed. John Sallis, trans. John P. Leavey Jr. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 163–218; *Aporias*; *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet, trans. David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 141–60; *The Beast and the Sovereign, Volume I*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington, ed. Michel

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Lisse, Marie-Louise Mallet and Ginette Michaud (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 305–49; *The Beast and the Sovereign, Volume II*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington, ed. Michel Lisse, Marie-Louise Mallet and Ginette Michaud (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

33. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 98. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 390; *Sein und Zeit*, 390.

34. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 99.

35. *Being and Time*, 396; *Sein und Zeit*, 396.

36. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 99.

37. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 102.

38. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 102.

39. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 104.

40. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 107–8.

41. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 114. Translation modified.

42. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 104.

43. See *Of Spirit*. See also Jacques Derrida, "Heidegger, the Philosophers' Hell," in *Points . . .: Interviews, 1974–1994*, ed. Elisabeth Weber, trans. John P. Leavey Jr. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 181–90; Trawny, *Heidegger and the Myth of a Jewish World Conspiracy*, 16.

44. "*Geschlecht* I," 11–15. See *The Politics of Friendship*, 292–93. See also Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 136–42.

45. Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, trans. John P. Leavey Jr. and Richard Rand (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 200a.

46. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller, ed. and fore. J. N. Findlay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 488 (§803); *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952), 559. The italicization is in the German text.

47. Raymond Aron, *La philosophie critique de l'histoire* (Paris: Vrin, 1969), 15. My translation. Koselleck notes that the phrase *Geschichtsphilosophie* first appeared in the 1770s, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, 2.

48. *Of Grammatology*, 25.

49. Françoise Dastur, "Heidegger: *Historie* et historicité—le débat avec Dilthey et l'influence de Yorck von Wartenbrg," in *Heidegger en dialogue 1912–1930: Rencontres, affinities et confrontations*, ed. Servanne Jollivet et Claude Romano (Paris: Vrin, 2009), 11–32: 23–24. See G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* I, in *Werke*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel, 20 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Surkamp, 1986), 18: 175; *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, 151. See also Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 370–73.

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50. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 2–6. See also Paul Ricoeur, "The History of Philosophy and the Unity of Truth," in *History and Truth*, trans. Charles A. Kelbley (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965), 41–56: 42–43.

51. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 9.

52. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 9.

53. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 26, 27, 39; *Heidegger: la question de l'Être et l'histoire*, 57. *Being and Time*, 6.

54. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 39. See also Jacques Derrida, "If There Is Cause to Translate II: Descartes' Romances, or The Economy of Words," in *Eyes of the University: Right to Philosophy 2*, ed. Jan Plug, trans. Rebecca Coma (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 20–42.

55. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 99, 174–75.

56. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 100–102.

57. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 150.

58. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 206.

59. Jacques Derrida, "Parergon," in *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 15–147: 21.

60. "Parergon," 30–31. See also Jacques Derrida, "A Time for Farewells: Heidegger (read by) Hegel (read by) Malabou," in *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic* by Catherine Malabou, trans. Lisabeth During (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), vii–xlvii: xviii–xx, xxvi–xxix.

61. "Parergon," 23.

62. *Of Spirit*, 58–72; *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, 141–60; *The Beast and the Sovereign I*: 305–49; *The Beast and the Sovereign II*. See also Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature, Part Two of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830)*, trans. A. V. Miller, fore. J. N. Findlay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

63. See also Janicaud, *Heidegger in France*, 339.

64. *Being and Time*, 384.

65. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 198; *Heidegger: la question de l'Être et l'histoire*, 288.

66. See *The Politics of Friendship*. Derrida returns to this passage in "Heidegger's Ear," 176. See also, "Avowing—The Impossible."

67. Martin Heidegger, "Letter on 'Humanism,'" in *Basic Writings*, ed. and intro. David Farrell Krell, trans. Frank A. Capuzzi, second edition (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), 213–66: 236; "Brief über den 'Humanismus,'" in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1976), 313–64: 333.

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68. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 57.

69. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 58.

70. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 57.

71. See Jacques Derrida, "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 207–72; "The *Retrait* of Metaphor," in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume I*, ed. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 48–80. See also Bennington, "Derridabase," 119–33.

72. "Violence and Metaphysics," 138. See also Michael Naas, "Violence and Historicity: Derrida's Early Reading of Heidegger," *Research in Phenomenology* 45 (2015): 191–213.

73. *Being and Time*, 16.

74. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 52–53.

75. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 53–54.

76. For an extended analysis of proximity and Heidegger see Jacques Derrida, "The Ends of Man," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 109–36: 123–34.

77. *Of Grammatology*, 70.

78. "Violence and Metaphysics," 92. Jorge Luis Borges, "The Fearful Sphere of Pascal," in *Labyrinths*, ed. and trans. Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby, pref. André Maurois (London: Penguin, 1970), 224–28: 227. I used the standard English translation for this passage rather than the English translation taken from the French translation of Borges used in "Violence and Metaphysics."

79. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 189.

80. "Violence and Metaphysics," 112–13.

81. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 190.

82. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 190.

83. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 190.

84. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 190.

85. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 224.

86. *Of Grammatology*, 18–26, 70. See also Jacques Derrida, "On Reading Heidegger: An Outline of Remarks to the Essex Conference," *Research in Phenomenology* 17 (1987): 171–85 (173).

87. Jacques Derrida, "La parole soufflée," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 169–95: 194; "La parole soufflée," in *L'écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), 253–92: 291.

88. "La parole soufflée," 194.

89. "La parole soufflée," 193, 194. Translation modified.

90. *Being and Time*, 372–404.

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91. Marc Goldschmit, "Le mouvement métaphorique de l'histoire sous la peau métaphysique du langage—note sur un cours inédit de Jacques Derrida (Novembre 1964–Mars 1965)," *Revue métaphysique et de morale* 71.3 (2011): 371–84.

92. *Being and Time*, 375, 378; *Sein und Zeit*, 375, 378.

93. *Being and Time*, 382–83; *Sein und Zeit*, 382–83.

94. *Being and Time*, 373; *Sein und Zeit*, 373.

95. *Being and Time*, 373–74; *Sein und Zeit*, 373–74.

96. *Being and Time*, 374; *Sein und Zeit*, 374.

97. *Being and Time*, 374–75; *Sein und Zeit*, 374–75.

98. *Sein und Zeit*, 375. I have used a different translation here: Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: SUNY, 1996), 375.

99. *Being and Time*, 375; *Sein und Zeit*, 375.

100. *Being and Time*, 375; *Sein und Zeit*, 375.

101. *Being and Time*, 372; *Sein und Zeit*, 372.

102. *Being and Time*, 380–81, 365, 350; *Sein und Zeit*, 380–81, 350.

103. *Being and Time*, 350.

104. Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, Volume 3*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauder (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 94–96, 120–24; *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 369–85. See also Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 397.

105. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 165–68.

106. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 208; *Of Grammatology*, 23–24.

107. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 208.

108. *Being and Time*, 376, 385–86. Translation modified.

109. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 164.

110. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 163–64.

111. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 87. See also Jacques Derrida, *Spurs*: *Nietzsche's Styles / Éperons: Les Styles de Nietzsche*, trans. Barbara Harlow, intro. Stefano Agosti (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978) and Jacques Derrida, "*Pa*ce Not(s)," in *Parages*, trans. John Leavey Jr. and others (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 11–102.

112. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 87.

113. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 90.

114. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 90.

115. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 83. On text see also, "Toward An Ethic of Discussion," 148.

116. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 83.

117. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 183.

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118. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 152; Emmanuel Levinas, "The Trace of the Other," in *Deconstruction in Context: Literature and Philosophy*, ed. Mark C. Taylor, trans. A. Lingus (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 345–59.

119. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 152.

120. *Of Grammatology*, 66.

121. *Of Grammatology*, 66. See also *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 96.

122. "Différance," 7.

123. See *Being and Time*, 385–86, 390–95. See also Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 379–85.

124. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 206.

125. *Of Grammatology: 40th Anniversary Edition*, 51; *De la grammatologie* (Paris: Minuit, 1967), 69.

126. *Of Grammatology: 40th Anniversary Edition*, 51.

127. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 24.

128. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 206.

129. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 34, 46–48, 72–74. See also *Voice and Phenomenon*, 44–46.

130. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 140.

131. Gerhard Richter, "The Debt of Inheritance Revisited: Heidegger's Mortgage, Derrida's Appraisal," *Oxford Literary Review* 37.1 (2015): 67–91 (74).

132. *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 380, 382.

133. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 176. On Derrida's concept of heritage see, "Discussion between Jacques Derrida, Philipe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy," in *For Strasbourg: Conversations of Friendship and Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 17–30.

134. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 200–201.

135. *Specters of Marx*, 187 n. 7. See also 107–8.

136. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 179–80, 192–93, 202.

137. *Voice and Phenomenon*, 67–68; *Of Grammatology*, 98.

138. *Being and Time*, 383.

139. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 176.

140. Dermot Moran, *Husserl's Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

141. *Being and Time*, 350, 365, 381.

142. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 176.

143. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 213.

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144. See "P*a*ce Not(s)"; Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law: The 'Mystical Foundation of Authority,'" in *Acts of Religion* ed. and intro. Gil Anidjar, trans. Mary Quaintance (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 228–98: 269 n. 36; *Specters of Marx*, 5–6, 10–11; Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

145. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 95–97, 140, 173.

146. "'This Strange Institution Called Literature,'" 63–64.

147. "'This Strange Institution Called Literature,'" 63.

148. *Positions*, 58.

149. *Positions*, 59.

150. *Positions*, 59.

151. *Positions*, 58.

152. *Positions*, 57.

153. On Heidegger's treatment of the object–subject relation see the excellent summary in Paola Marrati, *Genesis and Trace: Derrida Reading Husserl and Heidegger*, trans. Simon Sparks (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 88–89.

154. *Of Grammatology*, 60–67. Joshua Kates, *Essential History: Jacques Derrida and the Development of Deconstruction* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2005), 160–66, 168–79.

155. Derrida and Janicaud, "Interviews," 341. See also Jacques Derrida, "Et Cetera . . . (and so on, *und so weiter*, and so forth, *et ainsi de suite*, *und so überall*, etc.)," in *Deconstructions: A User's Guide*, ed. Nicholas Royle, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 282–305; Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: First Book—General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, translated by F. Kersten (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983), 51–62, 109–12.

156. *Essential History*, 179, 191, 197.

157. *Essential History*, 200, 209–10.

158. "Violence and Metaphysics," 133–34. See Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Linguis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969).

159. "Violence and Metaphysics," 117.

160. "Violence and Metaphysics," 117.

161. See also *The Gift of Death*, where Derrida explores the phrase "*tout autre est tout autre*," which is aptly translated as "*every other (one) is every (bit) other*," 69, 78, 82–84.

162. Jacques Derrida, "Violence et métaphysique: Essai sur la pensée d'Emmanuel Levinas," *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 69.3–4 (1964): [3] 322–45, [4] 425–73: 467.

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163. "Violence and Metaphysics," 117.
164. "Violence and Metaphysics," 117.
165. "Violence and Metaphysics," 117; *Of Grammatology*, 68.
166. "Violence and Metaphysics," 148.
167. Jacques Derrida, "De la grammatologie (I)," *Critique* 21, no. 233 (1965): 1016–42 (1031). See also "De la grammatologie (II)," *Critique* 21, no. 234 (Janvier 1966): 23–53.
168. *Of Grammatology*, 27; *Of Grammatology: 40th Anniversary Edition*, 30. I have followed some of the corrections for this passage in the new edition.
169. *Of Grammatology*, 27; *De la grammatologie*, 43.
170. *Of Grammatology*, 43–44, 60–73.
171. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 224.
172. *Of Grammatology*, 4.
173. *Of Grammatology*, 8.
174. *Of Grammatology*, 9, 13, 20, 23.
175. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 27, 33, 121, 128, 178, 246, 337 n. 19. While there are more than thirty references to historicity in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), only two of these appear in works written after 1965 (269, 291). See also Geoffrey Bennington, "Derrida's Eighteenth Century," in *Not Half No End: Militantly Melancholic Essays in Memory of Jacques Derrida* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 100–110: 104.
176. Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 64 (on Heidegger), 122–23 (on Husserl).
177. At the start of *Of Grammatology*, Derrida rejects the idea of his work as "a new method" (lxxxix).
178. *Of Grammatology*, lxxxix; *Of Grammatology: 40th Anniversary Edition*, xciii. Translation modified. What kind of "history of ideas" is Derrida criticizing here? Had he come across Lovejoy's work when he was in America in 1956–1957? It is interesting to note that in 1964 Marguerite Derrida translated an article on the history of philosophy in America: Herbert W. Schneider, "Philosophie de l'histoire aux états-unis," *Les Études Philosophiques* 19.2 (1964): 255–64.
179. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 166. See also Baring, "*Ne me raconte plus d'histoires*," 178–80.
180. "Cogito and the History of Madness," 60. See also Bennington, "Derrida's Eighteenth Century," 108. Michael Naas, "Violence and Hyperbole: From 'Cogito and the History of Madness' to *The Death Penalty*," in *Foucault/Derrida: Fifty Years Later—The Futures of Geneaology, Deconstruction and Politics*, ed. Olivia Custer, Penelope Deutscher and Samir Hadad (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 38–59: 50–52.

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181. "Cogito and the History of Madness," 60.
182. "Structure, Sign and Play," 284. Translation modified. See Bennington, "Derridabase," 284–91.
183. "Structure, Sign and Play," 292. Translation modified.
184. "*Ousia* and *Grammē*," 61.
185. "Envois," 66.
186. "*Ousia* and *Grammē*," 62.
187. *Positions*, 56–7.
188. *Aporias*, 32.
189. *Aporias*, 32.
190. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 166; "*Ousia* and *Grammē*," 63.
191. *Of Spirit*, 76.
192. *Of Spirit*, 76.
193. "Envoi," 108–9, 112.
194. "*Ousia* and *Grammē*," 64. See also "On Reading Heidegger," 174.
195. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 129–32.
196. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 133.
197. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 145.
198. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 144. Translation modified.
199. *Of Grammatology*, 4.
200. Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 6.
201. "Différance," 11.
202. *Of Grammatology*, 25.
203. "Différance," 22–23. See Jacques Derrida, "The Crisis in the Teaching of Philosophy," in *Who's Afraid of Philosophy? Right to Philosophy I*, ed. and trans. Jan Plug (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 99–116: 101, 103. The phrase "the era of deconstruction" is a translation of "l'époque de la déconstruction." See "La crise de l'enseignement philosophique," in *Droit à la philosophie* (Paris: Galilée, 1990), 155–80: 159, 160. See also Jacques Derrida, "The Age of Hegel," in *Who's Afraid of Philosophy? Right to Philosophy I*, ed. Jan Plug, trans. Terry Cochran and Samuel Weber (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 117–57: 123.
204. "Différance," 22.
205. "Envoi," 121, 127. On the translation of *renvois* as referral see Geoffrey Bennington, "Embarrassing Ourselves," *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 20 March 2016 (https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/embarrassing-ourselves).
206. "Envoi," 127–28.

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207. Peter Fenves, "Derrida and History: Some Questions Derrida Pursues in his Early Writings," in *Jacques Derrida and the Humanities: A Critical Reader*, ed. Tom Cohen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 271–95: 272.

208. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 86.

209. *Aporias*, 78; *Apories: Mourir—s'attendre aux "limites de la vérité"* (Paris: Galilée, 1996), 136.

210. *Aporias*, 81; *Apories*, 141.

211. *The Politics of Friendship*, 79; *Politiques de l'amitié* (Paris: Galilée, 1994), 97.

212. Jacques Derrida, "Psyche: Invention of the Other," in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume 1*, ed. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg, trans. Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 1–47.

213. "Abraham, the Other," 28.

214. *History and Memory*, 102. See also Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 369–82.

215. Bennington and Young, "Introduction: Posing the Question," 9. Derrida, "Différance," 13. Translation modified. See also Dominick LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 29, 44–45, 140.

216. *The Problem of Genesis*, xvii. See also Baring, *The Young Derrida and French Philosophy*, 136.

217. *Of Grammatology*, lxxxix.

218. *Of Grammatology: 40th Anniversary Edition*, 30; *Of Grammatology*, 27–28. See "De la grammatologie (I)," 1031.

219. Jacques Derrida, "Freud and the Scene of Writing," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 196–231: 197.

220. "Différance," 7.

221. "Husserl and the Sense of History," 169.

222. *Being and Time* 375, 378, 382; *Sein und Zeit*, 375, 378, 382.

223. *Being and Time*, 386, 394–95.

224. *Being and Time*, 395; *Sein und Zeit*, 395.

225. See also *Being and Time*, 394.

226. *Being and Time*, 392.

227. *Being and Time*, 392; *Sein und Zeit*, 392. Translation modified.

228. *Being and Time*, 393; *Sein und Zeit*, 393.

229. *Of Grammatology*, 68.

230. *Genesis and Trace*, 106.

231. Jacques Derrida, *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 121–22; "History of the Lie:

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Prolegomena," in *Without Alibi*, ed., trans. and intro. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 28–70: 38. See also Baring, "*Ne me raconte plus d'histoires*," 180–81. Derrida makes a similar critique in *Aporias* of Heidegger's sequential and hierarchical ordering and assertion of "*uncrossable* edges," 29, 86.

232. *Of Grammatology*, 286.

233. *Of Grammatology*, 286; *De la grammatologie*, 405.

234. *Of Grammatology*, 286.

235. Jacques Derrida and Richard Kearney, "Deconstruction and the Other," in *Dialogues with Contemporary Thinkers: The Phenomenological Heritage*, ed. Richard Kearney (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 105–26: 108.

236. *Of Grammatology*, 7.

237. *Genesis and Trace*, 108. See also Bennington, "Derridabase," 267–84.

238. *Specters of Marx*, 73–75; *Spectres de Marx: L'État de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle Internationale* (Paris: Galilée, 1993), 124. See also *The Politics of Friendship*, 110–11 n. 25.

239. *Specters of Marx*, 74–75. See also Jacques Derrida, *Memoires—for Paul de Man*, trans. Cecile Lindsay, Jonathan Culler and Eduardo Cadava (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986); "Avances," in *Le tombeau du Dieu artisan: sur Platon* by Serge Margel (Paris: Minuit, 1995), 12–43; "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone," in *Acts of Religion*, ed. and intro., Gil Anidjar, trans. Samuel Weber (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 40–101.

240. Jacques Derrida, "The Reason of the Strongest: (Are There Rogue States?)," in *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 6–117: 25, 72, 86–87, 91.

241. Jacques Derrida and Elisabeth Roudinesco, *For What Tomorrow . . . Dialogue*, trans. Jeff Fort (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 127. See also Derrida's comments on the political heritage of Heidegger in *Heidegger, Philosophy and Politics*, 19, 34–35.

242. Jacques Derrida and Giovanna Borradori, "Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides: Dialogue with Jacques Derrida," in *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 85–135: 106.

243. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 310. In "Structure, Sign and Play," Derrida argues that the "ethnologist accepts into his discourse the premises of ethnocentrism at the very moment when he denounces them" (282). This argument is developed in *Of Grammatology*, 39, 76–84, 90–92, 120–21, 211, 221–22.

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3

HISTORY AND DECONSTRUCTION

> Deconstructions are the movements of what I have called "ex-appropriation."
>
> —"Toward an Ethic of Discussion."[1]

I. RICOEUR: A HEGELIAN–PROTESTANT HISTORIOGRAPHY

In his interview with Maurizio Ferraris on 10 November 1994, Derrida once again challenges a common misunderstanding of his work. *Of Grammatology* was not the assertion of language over philosophy, history, politics and ethics. It was rather a critique of the very attempt in the 1960s to privilege language in structuralism, structural linguistics and structural anthropology as "so-called post-philosophical discourses."[2] Derrida's work had been subsequently linked by others to a renewed interest in rhetoric as the basis for tracking the underlying linguistic structure in works of literature and history. As Derrida observes in his interview:

> The first step for me, in the approach to what I proposed to call deconstruction, was a putting into question of the authority of linguistics, of logocentrism. And accordingly, this was a protest against the *Linguistic Turn*, which was already, under the name of structuralism, well on its way. The irony, if one can say, at times painful, of this story [*histoire*] is that often, especially in the United States,

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> because I wrote [in *Of Grammatology*] "il n'y a pas de hors-texte" [there is nothing outside the text], because I deployed a thought of the trace, some people believed they could interpret this as a thought of language: it is exactly the opposite.[3]

For Derrida, as I suggested in the preface, this treatment of his work led to "many misunderstandings" about the relation between deconstruction and history. He goes on to say:

> Deconstruction was inscribed in the *Linguistic Turn*, when it was a protest against linguistics. And this gave rise to a great many misunderstandings, not only in philosophy and literary criticism, but also in history: there are some historians, epistemologists of history (Clifford Geertz, Hayden White, etc.), who have attempted to practice the *Linguistic Turn* in history. And their work has been put together, in my opinion, very unjustly, with what I do—even though, probably, I have more affinity with them than with more classical historians. [. . .] The notion of trace or of text is introduced to mark the limit of the *Linguistic Turn*.[4]

Eight years earlier, in a discussion that took place at the University of Essex on 18 May 1986, Derrida makes it clear that "the notion of trace" should not be confused with the idea of tracks, prints or traces of the past. As Derrida says, "on the contrary, I am trying to deconstruct this model [of 'imprinting, mould'] and even the model of the vestige, the footprint in the sand."[5] He concludes, "I would prefer something that is neither absent nor present: I would prefer *ashes* as the better paradigm for what I call the trace—something which erases itself totally, radically, while presenting itself."[6] Derrida adds later "the trace is nothing."[7] What he means here is not that *la trace* registers a pure absence but that it can no longer support an experience of "the trace *as such*," the "as such" indicating an essence.[8]

As he had observed in 1977 in his long essay "Limited Inc a b c": the mark is "not the contrary of the mark as effacement. Like the trace it is, the mark is neither present nor absent."[9] For Derrida, the trace outmanoeuvres the conventional trade-off between presence and absence. As he remarks elsewhere in 1980, the "paradox" of the trace is that it only *happens* (*arrive*) by *carrying itself away* (*s'emporter*): it effaces itself "in re-marking itself" *as* itself.[10] The implications of resisting the temptation to bestow a "radical" essence on the trace as track *in the name of*

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history raises more questions and difficulties but they do not foreclose the *possibility* of a deconstructive historiography.

Thirty years ago in 1988 as a student studying history at Melbourne University, I was reading the third volume of Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative* (1985) and first came across his brief account of Emmanuel Levinas's 1963 article "The Trace of the Other."[11] For Levinas, the face of the other *as* other "signifies beyond being" in "the trace of the utterly bygone, utterly passed absent."[12] The trace of the other registers an absence that "involves a signifyingness" (*comporte une signifiance*) that cannot be determined as either disclosure or dissimulation.[13] Beyond being, and the Heideggerian co-ordinates of the disclosure of Being through its unique withdrawal and occultation, the trace describes a sign without a signified, "a signifying without making appear" that is primarily an ethical imperative.[14] The trace of the other gestures to an absolute and immemorial past but still marks the relation to the past.[15]

In *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur links Levinas's notion of the trace—which had a direct influence on Derrida's own formulation of *la trace* in *Of Grammatology*—to the historian Marc Bloch's uses of tracks or traces as "vestiges of the past" and "witnesses in spite of themselves."[16] For Ricoeur, the trace can be thought of as a *vestige* or footprint of the "past passage of living beings."[17] These traces can be registered "here" and "now" and function as the "sign-effect" of a casual relation between the "marking thing" (the trace *from* the past) and the "marked thing" (the trace of the past *in* the present).[18]

During this period in the late 1980s, in which I also first began to read Derrida, I thought there was an evident link between Bloch's tracks, Levinas's trace of the other, Derrida's *la trace* and Ricoeur's hermeneutical historiography. Now, I no longer think that Derrida's *la trace* simply lends itself to such a project. At the same time, it stands at once close to *and* at a distance from Ricoeur's attempt to join philosophy and history. I do believe Ricoeur's commanding work on history is indispensable when thinking about Derrida's response to the challenge of history, especially the essays from the 1950s and early 1960s. At the time that I first read *Time and Narrative*, I was also unaware that Derrida had praised the third volume of *Time and Narrative* in an endnote to the 1986 French edition of *Shibboleth–For Paul Celan*. Derrida praises this "great book" and takes note in particular of Ri-

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coeur's "elaboration of a philosophy of the trace, which is both close to and different from that of Levinas."[19]

In *The Historian's Craft* (*Apologie pour l'histoire ou Métier d'historien*, 1941–1942, published posthumously in 1949), a work that Ricoeur never stopped reading and rereading, Marc Bloch linked a certain notion of tracks or traces to the work of historiography. The past and the present, he argues, are constituted by "tracks" or "the mark, perceptible to the senses, which some phenomenon, in itself inaccessible, has left behind."[20] How would Derrida interpret these "tracks" that *give* themselves to the senses, to a perception in the present of the historian but that also do *not give* the phenomenon itself or as a whole but only a trace of this now "inaccessible" phenomenon? I think Derrida would question the link between the trace and historiography on the basis that it both assumes a virtual presence (through the gathering, centering perception of the historian's senses) and evokes a pure absence (as an ideal inaccessibility that still conveys the aura of itself *as* a trace). He would also question Bloch's insistence that these involuntary tracks of the past give the historian a unique access to knowledge and impartiality. Bloch's traces exceed the intentions of what was said in the past but they also "force" the past "to speak" *for* the historian, for the meaning and intention of the historian.[21]

Another book would need to be written to track the long and often contentious proximity that distanced Ricoeur and Derrida. Leonard Lawlor has aptly observed that at times the marked difference between Ricoeur and Derrida is "a barely visible difference."[22] For now, I can only make some brief remarks and suggest some highly condensed hypotheses. Ricoeur and Derrida had a number of public confrontations and articulated different philosophies. But as much as they were opposites, they were also tied together. Both treat the problem of history as a reaction against Husserl, a response to Heidegger and an attempt to go beyond the Hegelian colonization of history. It is by looking at Ricoeur's early work on the problem of history that we can appreciate some of the contexts for Derrida's own philosophy of history and better understand why a different approach is needed for a deconstructive historiography. Derrida does not follow Ricoeur's treatment of history but this does not mean that he has not been influenced by Ricoeur's own questions, methods and problems.

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Ricoeur's influential 1949 article "Husserl and the Sense of History" tracks Husserl's idealization of history in the name of phenomenology and its inability to engage with "the history of the historians" (*l'histoire des historiens*).[23] It emphasizes the Kantian inheritance in phenomenology by turning to Kant's 1784 essay, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim." This remarkable essay has not only Kant's call for a global federation of states but also his nuanced analysis of the unavoidable "*unsociable sociability* of human beings" as a necessary "resistance" in the progression "from crudity toward culture."[24] Kant argues that the "aim of nature," as a progressive, gradual "rational" development seen from a *longue durée*, can be discerned in political, cultural and historical practices. As a "guiding thread," the "final" rational aim of nature can be discerned in a "*universal world history*" that remains open to "a consoling prospect" in the future.[25] For Kant, this is the basis for "a philosophical history."[26]

Ricoeur describes "the idea in the Kantian sense" in Husserl's thought as the framework for a philosophy of history that is marked by "infinite tasks" and recognizes "an unending progress."[27] Husserl refers in *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology* (1913) to the "idea in the Kantian sense" as denoting the "infinite" idea and speaks of "infinite tasks" in *The Crisis of European Sciences*.[28] Derrida himself would consistently describe Husserl's work on history in terms of "infinite tasks" guided by the "Idea in the Kantian sense."[29] Ricoeur's own understanding of a hermeneutics that engages with the "history of the historians" can be seen to develop as a reaction against Husserlian phenomenology. Hermeneutics would then emerge as the asymmetrical *other* of Husserlian phenomenology. But this initial view is complicated by Ricoeur's compelling evocation of aspects of phenomenology in the hermeneutical project while also recognizing the limits of Husserl's work.[30]

From 1960–1964 Derrida worked as an assistant to Ricoeur and others at the Sorbonne and in March 1963 Ricoeur invited Derrida to participate in his seminar on Husserl.[31] Derrida had referred to Ricoeur's "Husserl and the Sense of History" in his 1954 dissertation *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy*.[32] In his 1962 introduction to Husserl's *The Origin of Geometry* Derrida also reiterated its importance. "On the problem of history in Husserl's philosophy," he observed, "we refer particularly to Paul Ricoeur's very fine article."[33] In a

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1980 paper dedicated to Levinas, Ricoeur himself spoke of "the brilliant study on the *Origin of Geometry* by Jacques Derrida."[34]

Nonetheless, their profound philosophical differences became apparent by 1967 and broke into open conflict but also ongoing dialogue in the mid 1970s, notably over the question of metaphor.[35] At the same time, when Ricoeur planned to retire from his post at Nanterre in 1979 he thought that Derrida would be his natural successor and the two exchanged some warm letters.[36] While their philosophical differences remained, on learning of Derrida's terminal illness in 2003, Ricoeur wrote: "I have kept my admiration for your work too silent, and, if you allow me, my friendship, which I have always thought found an echo in you."[37] Ricoeur himself died seven months after Derrida on 20 May 2005.

In "Husserl and the Sense of History" Ricoeur is interested in "the possibility of a *philosophy of history* in general."[38] He summarizes what he sees as the *impasse* of a phenomenological history: history becomes "incomprehensible" if it is "not a unique history unified by a sense," but it also becomes a history without "historicity" if it is "not an unforeseeable adventure."[39] The problem with a philosophy of history governed by the Idea in the Kantian sense is that it leads to the Hegelian sense of the philosopher organizing his or her own history as the culmination and summit of this history: "the rationality of history implies a nascent dogmatism for which history is an Idea and an Idea thinkable by me."[40] Already in 1949 Ricoeur articulates the problem of historicity: "the historicity of history suggest a nascent skepticism for which history is incurably multiple and irrational."[41] As a broad framework, these two "nascent" modes of interpreting history—dogmatism and scepticism—will appear in Ricoeur's later work as the conflict between the hermeneutics of faith and the hermeneutics of suspicion.

In some remarks given in honour of Ricoeur on 31 December 2003, Derrida recalled, "The first time that I saw and heard of Paul Ricoeur, having only read very little of his work, was probably in 1953. [. . .] I was impressed by Ricoeur's discourse: clarity, elegance, demonstrative force, and a thoughtful provoking authority without authority. The topic was history and truth as well as contemporary ethico-political problems."[42] It is most likely that Derrida heard some of the material on history that appeared in Ricoeur's *History and Truth*. After his 1949 essay on Husserl and history, in a number of significant essays and

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papers from the early 1950s Ricoeur attempts to think of philosophy in relation to "the history of the historians."[43] However, he also undertakes this within a larger framework of his abiding preoccupation with Christianity and the Protestant faith.

Ricoeur's early work highlights the challenges of thinking about history in the aftermath of Husserlian phenomenology. "Objectivity and Subjectivity in History" (1952), one of the collected articles in *History and Truth* (first edition 1955, second edition 1964, third edition 1967), touches on many of the themes and questions that will dominate his meditations on history for the next fifty years. Ricoeur is primarily interested in the echoing imperatives, counter claims and shared limits of "the history of the historians" and the various philosophical attempts to evoke a history in the name of philosophy. For our purposes, I want to touch briefly on his treatment of Bloch's traces, his evocation of Husserl and engagement with Hegel's notion of the history of philosophy.

Ricoeur discusses Bloch's insistence that the historian can never be "in front of [*devant*] his past object but only in front of [*devant*] its trace" and this limit only enhances his "*observation*" of the past as a "reconstitution."[44] One can note here that the historian is still *devant* (in front of, before) "its trace" just as he or she is *devant* (in front of, before) its "object." Derrida would most likely challenge the notion that the trace allows the historian to stand in *front of it* without raising the spatial and temporal problem of the trace of the past as that which is *at once* in front of and before (*devant*) the historian and before and preceding (*avant*) the historian—and cannot therefore be taken simply as "in front of" *as* a presence in the present.

Using phenomenological terms, Ricoeur suggests that the historian "institutes," constitutes and reconstitutes the trace of the past *as* a historical document and a historical fact.[45] Bloch's traces establish the historian's objectivity.[46] The foundation of the historian's objectivity is the refusal to "bring the past *back to life*" or to "coincide with the past."[47] The historian must recognize the need to "re-compose," "reconstruct" and to "construct a retrospective sequence."[48] For Ricoeur, Bloch's imperative for analysis leads to a confident historical synthesis of the past as a whole that is in turn based on the idea in the Kantian sense.[49] Bloch's trace takes us back to Kant. The claim to historical objectivity by the historians shares a teleological conceit with Husserlian phenomenology.

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Bloch recognizes what he sees as a variegated historical object in the name of a "rational analysis of human change."[50] At the same time, challenging the tradition of historical periodization based on the reigns of monarchs, the span of centuries or the works of art, literature and the developments of the sciences, Bloch sounds almost Husserlian when he argues that rather than relying on such "general frameworks," we "should look to the phenomena themselves for their proper periods."[51] Ricoeur discerns a series of necessary subjective and theoretical limits in this "objective" historiography.

Ricoeur starts with the need for history to be ordered as a rational continuity and to treat the "integral past" as "the whole network of causal relations."[52] Nonetheless, Ricoeur argues, the historian needs a "subjective" historiography to access this "integral past," which he describes as a "sympathetic effort" that goes beyond mere sympathy: it must be "a genuine transfer into another human life."[53] For Ricoeur, this relation to subjectivity is the necessary intervention of a phenomenological suspension (*epokhē*). "The sympathy proper to the historian," he argues, is the "suspended and neutralized adoption of the beliefs of the past men."[54] In this manner phenomenology can assist "the history of the historians."

In Bloch's case, Ricoeur notes, the promise of the objectivity of history found in the traces and documents of the past rests on a prohibition: it is a "dialogue" in which the "other" does not "*respond*."[55] However, when taken from a perspective informed by phenomenological suspension or bracketing, the historian's subjectivity adds an "intersubjective" possibility to the historical process.[56] For Ricoeur, phenomenology elucidates the possibility of a *quasi*-dialogue in the historical method. At its worst, as he observes in "The History of Philosophy and the Unity of Truth" (1953), history reinforces "a history without dialogue."[57] At its best, history is "always keeping the dialogue open."[58] In this sense, a tempered philosophy can expand the possibilities of a limited historiography founded on the traces of the past.

In his account of the differences between "the history of the historians," the history of philosophy and the philosophy of history, Ricoeur takes a perspective on *both* the historians and the philosophers. This vantage point itself suggests a hermeneutical philosophy of history. While the philosophers search for "a rational meaning" in history, the historians (notably the Annales school) seek "complexity" and "the

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wealth of connections between the geographical, economic, social, and cultural factors."[59] The objections of the historians to Hegel's attempts to secure the "coincidence" of consciousness, reason and history also allow Ricoeur to find a vantage point from which to argue that while philosophy cannot be treated as history, history can challenge the trans-historical or ahistorical positions in philosophy.[60] Nonetheless, the historians in turn must recognize the need for *both* "an event-filled history and a structural history."[61]

When it comes to thinking these two distinct disciplines together, Ricoeur argues that we are left with the necessary recognition of the "gap" between the "*event*" (*événement*) of history and the "*advent*" (*avènement*) of philosophy.[62] Hermeneutics will come to grapple with the unavoidable and productive conflict between these two distinct modes: of history "as a multiple emergence—as a disconnected series of upheavals, each of which has a particular meaning," and of philosophy as "a unique human consciousness whose meaning is in progress as a continuous series of logical moments."[63]

In Ricoeur's work this dual perspective cannot be separated from the question of Christianity or, at the very least, always remains in a compelling and persistent relation to Christianity, often despite Ricoeur's own insistence on the "autonomy of philosophy."[64] Ricoeur was a practising Protestant and wrote extensively on theology throughout his life. In "Objectivity and Subjectivity in History," he suggests that the history of philosophy can be taken as "the bond" (*le lien suture*) between history and philosophy, but it is clear that it is Christianity that can address "the philosophical–theological problem of a total or ultimate significance of history."[65] It is Christianity alone that provides the "total" perspective on the relation between history and philosophy.

In "The History of Philosophy and the Unity of Truth," Ricoeur concludes that the gap between history and truth can be bridged only through the evocation of "an eschatological hope."[66] This sense that theology can provide an answer for the problematic and promisingly vital relation between philosophy and history was already apparent in his 1951 essay "Christianity and the Meaning of History," whose last section is entitled "the level of hope."[67] In thinking of an open historical dialogue with the past and what we have called the future *of* the past, Ricoeur is not that far from either Heidegger or Derrida, but he makes this gesture within an explicit theological framework. For Ricoeur,

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when thought in relation to Christianity, the *meaning* of history is "a sense of the *open*."[68]

Nonetheless, there is more in Ricoeur's early work than the resolution of a philosophical problem by turning to theology. This philosophical response to the challenge of history is apparent in his extended critique of Hegel. As Jacques Le Goff observes, the historian objects to the legacy of a Hegelian philosophy of history because it "tends, in its various forms, to reduce historical explanation to the discovery or application of a single, first cause."[69] In "The History of Philosophy and Historicity" (1961), collected in the second edition of *History and Truth*, Ricoeur argues that one must challenge the Hegelian treatment of the history of philosophy as a progressive sequence that has been predetermined as a "*system*" and a "totality."[70] As much as there is a beguiling call for "totality" in the history of philosophy, for example in seeing history become "self-consciousness, because the order of history coincides with the introduction of the radical teleology of self-consciousness," Ricoeur insists that "the triumph of the system, the triumph of coherence, the triumph of rationality leaves a gigantic loss [*déchet*] in its wake."[71] He adds: "*this loss is precisely history*."[72] One cannot subscribe to a Hegelian history of philosophy, not only because it excludes the so-called non-sense or senseless that is always found in the messiness of history, but also because it forbids "another way of achieving meaning."[73]

As an alternative to this kind of history of philosophy, Ricoeur returns to the relation between phenomenology, the trace and history. Following Husserl, he contrasts the ethics of an open intersubjective communication with the past to the closed totality found in Hegel's history of philosophy. In communicating with a friend, for example, he observes: "I can understand someone only if I, myself, am someone and if I engage in debate. Consequently, there can be no privileged position for interpreting the system, for truth is radically subjective."[74] In this case, "the other responds."[75] On the other hand, when it comes to the history of the historian, "the other does not respond."[76] For Ricoeur, this lack of *response* is the great limitation of historiography.

One cannot get around this limit; but it raises the profound problem of history for a hermeneutical philosophy. The other *as* other *from* the past should speak, should have a voice, and should respond and speak back to the historian. Michel de Certeau addressed this problem by

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treating the past as *a whole* as the other; a gesture that is a helpful corrective to the apparent self-evidence of the past but also too sweeping and too homogenous—the past is not always and only "other." For Ricoeur, the other cannot respond in the work of history because the historian does "not have the presence of the men of the past, only their traces."[77] We have come back to the problem of the trace.

Ricoeur is writing in 1961 and you can imagine his interest when, two years later, Levinas publishes "The Trace of the Other." As Derrida recalled in a tribute to Ricoeur in December 2003, in 1962 it was Ricoeur himself who had prompted Derrida to read Levinas's book *Totality and Infinity*, which led to Derrida's remarkable 1964 essay on Levinas, "Violence and Metaphysics."[78] In 1961 Ricoeur addresses the problem of history as the non-response of the other by turning to the relation between history and philosophy as the chance for a mediated response: "As an historian," he remarks, "I question a work which does not respond. There is, then, unilateralness in the relation; nevertheless, I [as a philosopher] may speak of communication, in the broad sense of the word, in that I, who read and understand the other philosopher, am part of the same history as his. It is within the total movement of consciousness that a consciousness understands others who do not respond."[79] This mediated response is not only a question of consciousness or a contemporary co-presence; it is also a question of a consciousness that is *mediated* by the trace of the past.

As Ricoeur noted many years later in the final volume of *Time and Narrative* (1985), Levinas's notion of the trace is concerned primarily with ethics. It is "not directed at the historian's past."[80] As we saw in chapter 2, Levinas's trace gestures to "the past before history" and this ahistoricism had created a problem for Derrida.[81] As Ricoeur observes, the key aspect for Levinas is that the trace resists the tradition of phenomenality: the trace "signifies something without making it appear."[82] For Levinas, the trace of the other is not a sign but it can be "taken as a sign," as when "a historian discovers ancient civilizations which form the horizon of our world on the basis of the vestiges left by their existence."[83] However, even in this case the trace still "signifies outside of every intention of signalling and outside of every project of which it would be the aim."[84]

Outside of history and beyond appearance and intention, it is hard to see how the trace of the other can be linked to Bloch's notion of the

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documents and detritus of the past that become reliable traces, despite themselves, of a historical past. However fragmented, these traces *show* some aspect of a coherent historical past. Ricoeur is aware, as Derrida noted, that Levinas's understanding of the trace is "very different from my own."[85] But he still attempts to find a *dialogue* between an ahistorical, non-phenomenal and ethical trace *of* the other and a historical, even evidential, trace *of* the past that registers the historical past of others who cannot respond, as one would in a conversation, but who still speak or whisper *from* the past.

Ricoeur suggests that Levinas's trace is indispensable for thinking about historiography because it gives the trace a unique status: "the trace is distinguished from all the signs that get organized into systems" because it resists systematization.[86] The trace is neither a part nor a whole but it is the possibility of the part whole relation. Despite Levinas assigning the trace to "an immemorial past," Ricoeur is interested in "the strangeness of the trace" as something that disarranges and disorders the past.[87] For Levinas, the trace of the other is akin to the thief who wipes away his or her fingerprints but unintentionally leaves traces of wiping away their prints. Such traces have "disturbed the order in an irreparable way."[88]

Bloch's evocation of the trace in historiography as a witness despite itself, as a witness beyond the intentions of the witness, can then be seen as *the call* to *find* an arrangement and order—more or less—from these disordered traces of the past.[89] For a working with traces *as* "witnesses in spite of themselves" to be possible, the historical cannot *already* have its arrangement and order.[90] For Ricoeur, this is testament not to an "absolute Other," as characterized by Levinas, but to "a relative Other, a historical Other," which suggests the possibility that "the remembered past is meaningful on the basis of an immemorial past."[91]

This is a compelling use of Levinas's trace of the other to address the problem of history but I am not entirely persuaded that Ricoeur resolves the issue of treating the trace as the signification of "something without making it appear" *as* the possibility of the relation to the past. As much as this is an affirmation that the trace of the past in the present cannot be reduced to a self-evident presence, it also relies on an assured absence. What is one to do with the traces—or, Derrida might say, the spectres—of the past that are also strange but *keep appearing*,

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as untimely quasi-appearances that keep coming towards us, as if from the future?[92]

In the later 1960s Ricoeur develops a remarkable and distinctive hermeneutical philosophy of history that relies as much on a Hegelian form as on a Protestant sensibility.[93] This Hegelian–Protestant historiography is first articulated in *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (1965) and elaborated in *The Conflict of Interpretations* (1969).[94] Interpretation is necessary, Ricoeur argues, because our relation to reality is mediated by *equivocal* words, signs and texts. There is therefore no "general hermeneutics" but rather an unavoidable *conflict* of interpretations.[95] This conflict of interpretations begins with the recognition that the *symbol*—taken as a "double meaning" that always shows and hides itself and registers for philosophy the problem of the equivocal and the contingent in culture and language—can be treated at once as a *distortion* of an "elementary meaning" for psychoanalysis *and* as the *revelation* of the sacred for a phenomenology of religion.[96]

How does one take account of both of these perspectives? Faced with this "double meaning," Ricoeur argues, two distinctive traditions of interpretation have emerged: on the one hand, there is the "psychoanalytic interpretation, as well as any interpretation conceived as the unmasking, demystification, or reduction of illusions" and, on the other hand, there is the "interpretation conceived as the recollection or restoration of meaning."[97] From the *ideal* vantage point of what Ricoeur calls a "*philosophy of reflection*," it is apparent that this *conflict* of interpretations can be seen as a whole and understood in a dynamic hermeneutical philosophy of history. Starting with an ossified hermeneutics of "faith," in which the symbol has become no more than a reductive *icon*, this perspective of "faith" encounters the hermeneutics of "suspicion" and undergoes a necessary *iconoclasm*.[98] This *shattering* of the icon—the Hegelian evocation of a necessary moment of negation in a productive history of spirit and a Protestant transformation *par excellence*—leads to a third and final stage: a "post-critical faith" (*la foi postcritique*) that gives rise to a *new* symbol, a new hermeneutical *meaning*.[99]

This beguiling Hegelian trinity of stages—an initial reductive icon (thesis)-shattering iconoclasm (antithesis)-new productive symbol (synthesis)—becomes the framework for Ricoeur's later analysis of the productive possibilities of metaphor, narrative and memory. As he explains

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in *Time and Narrative* (1983–1985), when it comes to metaphor and narrative, there is a productive quasi-Hegelian triad that generates a new kind of meaning.[100] In the first volume of *Time and Narrative mimēsis* is characterized in three stages: an initial "pre-understanding" of the "order of action" encounters "the realm of poetic composition" and this, in turn, produces "a new configuration by means of this poetic refiguring of the pre-understood order of action."[101] Ricoeur argues that in this way narrative and its plots help us to "re-figure" our experience of time.[102]

Ricoeur argues in his book on Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) that there is always the possibility "that extreme iconoclasm belongs to the restoration of meaning."[103] It is this *Hegelian difference*—of the use of negation, negativity and absolute difference in the name of generating a new, higher and greater synthesis—that distinguishes Derrida's philosophy of history from that of Ricoeur. In the mid 1960s Derrida was already attentive to the "dialectical and teleological determination of negativity."[104] At the same time, I have focused on Ricoeur's writings from the 1950s and 1960s because it is more than likely that Derrida read these works and that he responded to what he saw as their insights and limitations in his own early writings on the relation between philosophy, history and the history of truth.[105]

In 1953 Ricoeur had argued that it was possible "*to do the history of philosophy without doing the philosophy of history*."[106] Ricoeur's rich and probing engagement with "the history of the historians" did much to move beyond the Hegelian model for a history of philosophy that could only be a philosophy of history. However, his treatment of the history of philosophy as a hermeneutical conflict of interpretations also remains a powerful philosophy of history that relies in part on a Hegelian framework. Nonetheless, Ricoeur questioned the Annales school and its marginalisation of the event in historiography. He also challenged an epistemology of history directed by logical positivism that insisted "the logical definition of event requires that of a singular occurrence, without any intrinsic relation to narrative."[107] From such a philosophical perspective, there would be an absolute difference between understanding an event and explaining or interpreting an event.

Ricoeur's complex dialogue with Derrida continued in *Memory, History and Forgetting*, published in 2000 when he was eighty-seven. Ricoeur returns to Plato's *Phaedrus* and the problem of writing as a *phar-*

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makon (both a remedy and a poison), which Derrida had explored in "Plato's Pharmacy" (1968).[108] For Ricoeur, the question of writing announces the "challenge opposed by the truth claim of history to memory's vow of trustworthiness."[109] As Derrida had remarked in "Plato's Pharmacy," Thoth, the Egyptian "master of writing, numbers, and calculation does not merely write down the weight of dead souls; he first counts out the days of life, *enumerates* history."[110] For Ricoeur, the origin of history—which is not the same as the beginning of historiography—is "the upsurge of the act of taking a distance [*de prise de distance*]" and "the recourse to the exteriority of the archival trace."[111]

2. PROPRIETY AND EX-APPROPRIATION

In 2003 Derrida contributed fourteen short pieces to *Diaspora: Homelands in Exile*, a collection of photos by Frédéric Brenner (1959–) of Jews across the world. These fourteen separate fragments were published together in 2015 under the title "*Révélations* et autres textes."[112] This work is shaped by the response to a wide range of images of Jewish life. In these pieces Derrida offers a striking mixture of autobiography, memory and philosophical reflections on religion, exile, history, politics and photography. This mixture was already apparent in works such as "Envois" (1980), "Circumfession" and *Monolingualism of the Other* and this interweaving and layering of different genres, modes and temporalities is one of the notable aspects of a possible deconstructive historiography.

The first of the fourteen pieces, "Revelations," talks about his visit in 1982 to Mea Shearim, heartland of the Orthodox Jews in Jerusalem.[113] Witnessing and even participating in a Hassidic celebration, Derrida sees a fervent group of the faithful rush to grasp a piece of bread that has been touched by their venerated elderly rabbi. Derrida is led by this display of religious enthusiasm to think of the origins of the Christian Eucharist. In its broad structure, this gesture is not that far from Hegel's philosophical interpretations of the history of religion, which Derrida explored at length in *Glas* (1974) though, as Derrida later notes, Hegel was just in one in a long line of philosophers who were anti-Semites.[114]

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In the second piece, "First Temptation," he talks about the annual festival of Purim, which he had first discussed in the 1970s in "Envois," and remarks that the origins of this festival are probably from the Babylonian exile (c. 586–538 BCE), adding, "Babylon, reappropriation by the Jews, of a non-Jewish history, a result of the triumph of the Maccabees who liberated Judea."[115] In the fifth piece, "Are They Praying?" Derrida makes a brief and striking statement about history and specifically Jewish history: "*Property* [*propriété*], *expropriation, appropriation* (free or forced, one can no longer make the distinction), it is always a matter of a history [*il y va toujours d'une histoire*], here the history of Judaism or Jewishness, as history of the *proper* [*comme histoire du* propre]."[116] For Derrida, the relation between the sequence of terms "*property*, *expropriation, appropriation*" is "always a matter of a history [. . .] as history of the *proper*." It is through examining "a matter of a history" *as* "the history of the proper" that we can best understand Derrida's own philosophy of history.

In *Monolingualism of the Other*, Derrida challenges the idea of the *absolute* expropriation of colonialism and the *absolute* reappropriation of post-colonialism.[117] Derrida had questioned the relation between decolonization and *re*-appropriation as early as 1978.[118] However, he first introduced his critical analysis of the proper, propriety and property (*le propre)* in the mid 1960s in *Writing and Difference* and *Of Grammatology*. This analysis of *le propre* should not be taken merely as a critique of the traditional idea of the self or subject as the propriety of "owning" oneself or of claiming something purely as "itself."

For Derrida, *le propre* certainly provides a different geneaology for these ideas of clear and simple ownership. A good example of this can be found in Derrida's 1990 paper, "The Other Heading: Memoires, Responses, and Responsibilities." "*What is proper to a culture is to not be identical to itself*," he argues. "Not to not have an identity," he goes on to say, "but not to be able to identify itself, to be able to say 'me' or 'we'; to be able to take the form of a subject only in the non-identity to itself or, if you prefer, only in the difference *with itself* [*avec soi*]."[119] *Le propre* therefore treats "monogenealogy" as "a mystification."[120]

Derrida first emphasizes *le propre* in his 1965 essay on Artaud, "La parole soufflée." Speech (*la parole*) is at once stolen, slips away from itself and takes flight (*dérobe*, *se dérobe*, *vol*) when it is inscribed and written down: "It never belongs to [*propre à*] its author or to its ad-

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dressee, and by nature, it never follows the trajectory that leads from subject to subject [*un sujet propre à un sujet propre*]."[121] Still using the terms of structuralism, Derrida describes this process as an instance of the "historicity" of "the autonomy of the signifier."[122] In the mid 1960s Derrida already makes a link between *le propre* and *l'historicité*, at the time of delivering his lectures on Heidegger and history.

As one would expect in an essay on Artaud, Derrida goes on to explore the relation between the proper name, the proper body, a proximity to one's self and a sense of cleanliness or propriety.[123] In Derrida's reading, it is not a matter of an opposition between the proper and the non-proper but of the recognition that the "condition" of the "phenomenon of the proper" is that of "the proper departure from that which is proper to oneself."[124] As Derrida explains in *Of Grammatology*, to register the proper *as* the proper is already to *search for* a helping hand—for a supplement to what should not need to be supplemented—and to encounter what is beyond or just short of the elusive absolute propriety of the proper.[125]

As he puts it some years later, *le propre* is found "between the proper of the other and the other of the proper."[126] It is precisely this sense of *le propre* (*eigentlich*) as "the *near* (proper, *proprius*)," as a claim to "the present in the proximity of self-presence," that Derrida challenges in Heidegger's thought in "*Ousia* and *Grammē*."[127] A different kind of *historicity* is needed when it is apparent that "this value of proximity and of self-presence" is found at the outset in Heidegger's privileging of the question of the meaning of Being as the opening of the existential analytic of Dasein.[128] As Derrida remarks in "Plato's Pharmacy," "no being-there [*être-là*] can be properly *his own* [*en propre*]."[129]

Le propre is therefore not only a challenge to the traditional claim to the propriety of the subject or to the self as propriety, it is also a critique of treating history as a determined historicity. In "*Revelations* and Other Texts," when he writes, "*Property, expropriation, appropriation* (free or forced, one can no longer make the distinction), it is always a matter of a history, here the history of Judaism or Jewishness, as history of the *proper*," Derrida is giving us a kind of general model, structure or sequence for "a history."[130] In this context, it is a matter of the history of Judaism *as* a "history of the *propre*," *as* a history of "*property, expropriation, appropriation*." This apparent triad is itself very close, as Derrida

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is keenly aware, to the Hegelian dialectic—and to Ricoeur's hermeneutical philosophy of history—fuelled by the dynamics of *Aufhebung*.

This Hegelian dialectic would start with the assumption of a property or propriety, an *appropriation* (*thesis*) of the ownership of something that is both owned and in itself proper to itself (present). This first and still limited stage then goes through a necessary experience of *expropriation* (*antithesis*), of a temporary loss of propriety in relation to an other (absent) that is not its "own," which in fact takes place only in order to facilitate the greater progressive development of its enhanced propriety: appropriation as the self-conscious realization of the proper (present as presence). The final state is an ultimate progression or elevation based on a teleologically assured *re-appropriation* (synthesis) through the negation-uplifting (*Aufhebung*) of both the initial appropriation and its expropriation and into a new, higher stage of appropriation. Derrida challenges this formidable Hegelian sequence and its basic metaphysical assumptions and affirms throughout his work its continuing influence in thinking about identity, the self, politics, economics, institutions, culture, nationalism and religion.

Ricoeur had argued that a hermeneutical imperative and a philosophy of reflection are necessary because "the positing of the self is not given," as it is in Descartes, and is better understood as "a task" of interpretation.[131] One does not begin with propriety in hermeneutics but one does begin with *re*-appropriation. As Ricoeur observes: "Why must this recovery be characterized as appropriation or even as reappropriation? I must recover something which has first been lost; I make 'proper to me' [*propre*] what has ceased to be mine, my *propre*."[132] As a hermeneutical task, "positing of self" passes through many others—many "opaque, contingent, and equivocal signs"—in the attempt to reach its goal: the *re*-appropriation of "my *propre*."[133] Ricoeur does not start with *le propre* as thesis. And this is a remarkable gesture. But he does end with *le propre* as a synthesis and a reaffirmation of the Hegelian framework in general to account for a progressive development and compelling transformation. Ricoeur describes this culmination as a *hope*, because a philosophy of reflection must always contend with "the necessity to recover itself by deciphering its own signs lost in the world of culture."[134]

Derrida's treatment in the 1970s of the terms *appropriation*, *expropriation* and *reappropriation* is different, not least because of his read-

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ing of Heidegger's "Time and Being" (1962). But these terms are also found in Derrida's earliest writings on *le propre*. In *Of Grammatology*, "*historia*" is described, along with *epistēmē*, as having been "determined" as "detours *looking toward* the reappropriation of presence."[135] As a form of the aspiration to absolute knowledge, "the reappropriation of difference" registers "*the metaphysics of the proper*."[136] But it is already evident that Derrida is not following the ordering or sequence of the Hegelian dialectic. As he notes at the outset of his reading of Rousseau: "Différance does not *resist* appropriation, it does not impose an exterior limit upon it. Différance began by *broaching* [*entamer*] alienation and it finishes by letting reappropriation be *breached* [*entamée*]."[137] *La différance* does not follow the time and place of the Hegelian antithesis. It does not follow the Hegelian determination of the labour of "the negative."[138] It does not *follow* appropriation (from *appropriare*, making one's own, *propius*) with an *ex*-propriation that will be expected and then domesticated by a final re-appropriation. This expropriation is already "its *own* outside" (*son* propre *dehors*).[139] If there is a deconstructive historiography, it must find a way to out-manoeuver Hegel and his characterization of the relation between philosophy and history. In this way, Derrida can respond to the Hegelian determination of the history of philosophy and the philosophy of history.

As Michael Naas has pointed out, the French verb *entamer* has two distinct meanings as a *broaching* (an inaugural opening) and a *breaching* (a breaking into what is already formed).[140] *La différance* broaches appropriation and breaches re-appropriation.[141] It does this to avoid the Hegelian treatment of difference as an absolute difference. For Rousseau, for example, "total alienation is the total reappropriation of self-presence."[142] As we can now appreciate from the recently published 1975–1976 seminar on theory and practice, by the mid 1970s Derrida was already rethinking the relation between appropriation and expropriation. In this seminar in a reading of Heidegger's 1953 essay "Science and Reflection," Derrida uses the neologism *ex-appropriation*. He argues that there is "a double movement of ex-propriation" in Heidegger's essay that both "swerves [*déporte*] from the *propre*" and calls for a "return or reappropriation."[143] For Derrida, this double movement registers an uncanny "ex-appropriation."[144]

Derrida's interest in the relation between appropriation and expropriation also arises from his close reading of Heidegger. In German,

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Enteignung registers expropriation or dispossession, with the prefix *ent*- marking a negation, a reversal or removal. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger uses *Ent-fernung* to describe the removal of distance as the possibility of proximity.[145] In *Spurs*: *Nietzsche's Styles* (1972), Derrida reconfigures *Ent-fernung* as *é-loignement*, the de-distancing or "de-ferment" of distance when it is taken *as* the possibility of proximity.[146] As Derrida remarks, this is a different kind of negation in which "destruction (*Ent*-) constitutes the distant itself as such, the veiled enigma of proximation."[147] Proximity is strange, uncanny even, because it is made possible by the *distancing* of distance.

Derrida suggests in *Spurs* that the movement of *Ent-fernung* sidesteps propriety or *le propre* as the claim to essence.[148] As he observes in "*Pa*ce Not(s)" (1976): "*Entfernung* de-distances [*é-loigne*] the far by constituting it, brings the far near therefore holding the far far. The eventual propriation (a forced or risky etymology for *Ereignis*) of the far is de-distant from itself."[149] As we saw in chapter 2, Derrida is interested in Heidegger's relation to Hegel because he is tracking the proximity and difference of the two thinkers when it comes to treating negation. The Hegelian *Aufhebung* anticipates, invites and exploits the negative as an essential aspect of the unbroken trajectory of the history of spirit.

3. THE EVENT AND EXPROPRIATION

Derrida tests and probes Heidegger's evocation of the negative in his 1964–1965 lectures noting, as we have seen, that Heidegger does not treat the *non*-historical as the simple negation of the historical but as a necessary aspect of a more nuanced concept of historicity. At the same time, while Heidegger insists that the inauthentic is not the negation or negative other of the authentic, Derrida begins to question Heidegger's emphasis on *Ereignis* as the basis of the proper (*eigentlich*), of one's own (*eigen*), of the appropriate (*eigen*) and of appropriation (*An-eignung*). In German, the prefix *er*- emphasizes the completion of a goal or reaching of a target or aim, giving *Er-eignis* the double weight of owning the successful propriety or *télos* of the proper.

What makes Heidegger's treatment of the relations between *Ereignis* and *Ent-eignis*, or what Derrida calls in his 1973–1974 seminar

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"propriation and dis-propriation [*dé-propriation*]," more complicated is that as a noun *Ereignis* also registers an *event* (*das Ereignis*), taken from the verb *ereignen*, to happen, take place, to occur. This links the relation of appropriation–expropriation to the question of the event and its narrative as problem of history.[150] This is why in "P*a*ce Not(s)" Derrida also speaks of "a coming of the event" as the "de-distancing of the near."[151]

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger links the authenticity (*eigentlich*) of *Dasein* to its having "something of its own [*eigen*]."[152] In his later work, he treats *Ereignis* as propriation and the *event* of propriation and then places this event of propriation in relation to *Enteignis* or *dis*-propriation.[153] In the 1956 appendix to "The Origin of the Work of Art" (1935–1936), Heidegger speaks of "the Event [*das Ereignis*] out of which the 'meaning of being' [. . .] is first determined."[154] In crude terms, the question is to what extent this inaugural determining event reinforces a narrative of *le propre* and appropriation and to what extent it treats an expropriation as a movement that disrupts or reinforces re-appropriation.

In his paper "Of an Apocalyptic Tone Newly Adopted in Philosophy," (1980–1983), Derrida observes that if *both Ereignis* and *Enteignis* "unfold the movement of propriation" one can perhaps describe this as a call "beyond being."[155] This suggests that "the place" where *Ereignis* takes place and displaces itself would no longer be translated simply by "event."[156] As Derrida argues in an interview in 2001, it is important to think of both *Ereignis* as "the *appropriation* of the proper (*eigen*)" *and Enteignis* as "a certain *expropriation*."[157] In this sense, as Derrida suggested in 1992, "a certain expropriation of *Enteignis* will have always inhabited the proper of *Eigentlichkeit* even before being named."[158] *Enteignis* cannot be treated as the simple other of *Ereignis*.

In these passages, covering nearly thirty years, Derrida is interested in what happens when one thinks of these two movements—towards appropriation and towards expropriation—*together*, hence his use of the term *l'ex-appropriation*. In "To Speculate—on 'Freud'" (1980) which contains parts of Derrida's 1975 seminar on *La vie la mort*, he observes, "in the guarding of the proper, beyond the opposition life / death, its privilege is also its vulnerability, one can even say its essential impropriety, the exappropriation (*Enteignis*) which constitutes it."[159] Ex-appropriation puts in question not only the assumption of the pro-

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priety of appropriation but also the absolute negation or *pure* difference of an expropriation that reconfirms the Hegelian colonization of negation in the *Aufhebung*. Heidegger, as ever, seems at once close to and removed from Hegel.

In the eleventh piece in "*Revelations* and Other Texts," entitled "Gathering," Derrida explains the relation between "*property*, *expropriation, appropriation*" by evoking this ex-appropriation. He writes: "The experience of the proper is inseparable, as experience, from expropriation and this from the movement of reappropriation. This irreducible experience of the proper as nonproper (and like the proper name that never properly belongs to the one who bears it [*la porte*], for the proper name is essentially, like the Torah, bearable, portable) is what I call elsewhere ex-appropriation."[160] As the "irreducible experience of the proper as nonproper," ex-appropriation both accounts for *and* dislodges the traditional concept of *le propre*.[161]

The relation of ex-appropriation to the problem of history in Derrida's thought arguably begins in the footnotes on Heidegger to his 1968 essay, "The Ends of Man." These footnotes could also be dated to 1972 when this lecture was first published in *Margins of Philosophy*. It is here that Derrida addresses in his published work the questions of proximity that he raised in his 1964–1965 lectures on Heidegger and history. He notes that Heidegger relates "the *proper*" (*eigen*) to "several modes of to *propriate*," including *Ereignen* and *Ereignis*.[162] What interests Derrida is that Heidegger's emphasis on *le propre* and "ontological proximity" as a mode of appropriation—of having as one's own (*eigen*) as a form of authenticity (*eigentlich*) —is *also* a mode for an event in the sending of Being on its destiny.[163] *Ereignis* is both appropriation and event. As a form of appropriation, *Ereignis* is not an event but the *possibility* of the event in general. Eight years later in "*Pa*ce Not(s)," Derrida offers both a tentative translation of *Ereignis* as "eventual propriation" and reaffirms his critique of proximity by adding that the "eventual propriation" is also "itself de-distanced."[164] As Jean Luc-Nancy aptly states, "*Er-eignis*" is "the appropriating event, which is the depropriating event."[165]

Despite its radical question of the philosophical tradition, as Derrida concludes at the end of his 1975–1976 seminar on theory and practice, Heidegger's thought still evokes "the way back to the proper."[166] *Ex-appropriation* registers Derrida's attempt to retranslate *Ereignis* as a

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re-appropriation of *le propre*. This retranslation is part of Derrida's work in 1970s that challenges Heidegger's emphasis on the sending out of Being and of the history of Being as the articulation of a destination with a destiny. Thinking time *with* Being and the event *with* appropriation is precisely an instance of the double movement that turns the gesture of expropriation as a re-appropriation into an *ex-appropriation*.

Ex-appropriation is therefore not only a question of *le propre*, it is also a question of time and event, of sending off or out from, with and toward the other and registering what is to come, to happen—and what has happened, "in" the past and "from" the past. It is also a response to the problem of history. As Derrida had already suggested in the 1964–1965 lectures, to rethink Heidegger's notion of historicity it is necessary to rethink concepts of tradition and inheritance, of tradition as inheritance. These indicate the possibility of a different kind of historicity. As Derrida explains in June 2004, in one of his last discussions, which took place in Strasbourg with Jean-Luc Nancy and Philipe Lacoue-Labarthe, "what I wished to say with *exappropriation* is that in the gesture of appropriating something for oneself, and thus of being able to keep in one's name, to mark one's name, to leave in one's name, as a testament or an inheritance, one must expropriate this thing, separate oneself from it."[167] As he goes on to say, echoing a passage from his footnote to "The Ends of Man," "we have to lose what we want to keep and we can keep only on condition of losing."[168]

This keeping-losing is not only a means of checking a philosophical tradition that charts with tenacity and dismay the endless appropriations of the self, it is also a way of rethinking the relation both to the self as an archive, as an archival monument, and to the ex-appropriations of the self in relation to the past, to memory and to history. As Derrida remarks in his 2004 discussion:

> And so I know that what is kept is, for me, absolutely lost, though I kept this [his own archive] not for others but also for myself, in order to recall, and thus to keep my experience, my memory, my past [. . .] That's *exappropriation*: I wanted to keep everything in order to appropriate for myself, but in order to keep and appropriate it, it was first of all necessary to put it in a *safe* place. And when one puts something in a safe place, it has to be elsewhere, elsewhere than on oneself.[169]

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Ex-appropriation can therefore be taken not only as the displacement of the subject as the central axis of philosophy but also as a displacement of *history* as a subject from Hegel to Heidegger.[170]

Returning to "Revelations and Other Texts," if ex-appropriation can be taken as something that "*makes history*," it can also give us the practical instance of how to approach a specific context or milieu in the history of Judaism. In his 1991 interview with Elisabeth Weber, Derrida talks about his seminar in the 1980s on "the Judaeo-German psyche," in which figures such as Hermann Cohen (1842–1918), Franz Rosenzweig (1886–1929) and Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) are driven as the "absolutely foreign" Jew in Germany by a "desire for appropriation."[171] Derrida goes on to describe his interest in Judaeo-German figures in the Weimar period as a task of "history":

> It's a history with points of emphasis, of course, it happened in an especially knotted-up way, knotted tightly under Nazism, but the knot was already tied in the time of Nietzsche and Wagner, a knot that had itself got started in another knot at the time of Jewish emancipation. [. . .] But you can't give an account of the history of this knot, as Herman Cohen himself shows [. . .], without going back to the Reformation and to Plato, to Platonism, to the origin of Christianity, to the Hellenistic period, and so on. It's a history with rhythms, nodal points. Each knot has a definite singularity of its own, but you have to pull the whole string![172]

One could take this as a gesture towards a possible historiography that recognizes, in the specific case of Jewish experience in Germany, singular "knots"—rather than periods, epochs, ages—that are part of a larger, perpetually backward-looking, historical series of "rhythms" and "nodal points."[173]

While Heidegger was interested in an event of appropriation and expropriation that registers Being in a unique manner, Derrida treats *ex-appropriation* as an injunction to rethink the event in general. As he remarks in the resonating aftermath of the attacks on the Twin Towers on 11 September 2001: "The undergoing [*l'épreuve*] of the event, that which in the undergoing or in the ordeal [*l'épreuve*] *at once opens itself up to and resists experience*, is, it seems to me, a certain *unappropriability* of what comes or happens [*ce qui arrive*]."[174] *Ex-appropriation* accounts for both the opening *and* the resistance to historical events—

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and to their contexts, their memories and their narratives. Events are marked by their indefatigable movements of appropriation, our necessary attempts to understand them, and our unavoidable recognition of the unforeseeable and "*unappropriability*" in these events. A deconstructive *philosophy of history* is no less rigorous for accepting that *ex-appropriation* is part of both the opening and the resistance that is encountered in historical research and historical writing.

4. THERE IS—IT GIVES—HISTORY

It would be easy to overestimate the influence on Derrida of Heidegger's 1962 lecture "Time and Being," with its resonant title and promise of revisiting *Being and Time*.[175] Nonetheless, it is unique in Derrida studies because it appeared in a 1968 collection of articles dedicated to Jean Beaufret (1907–1982), Heidegger's closest intellectual ally in France, that included Derrida's own essay on Heidegger "*Ousia* and *Grammē*."[176] "Time and Being" and "*Ousia* and *Grammē*" were published *together*: at once close to and far away from each other. Much of Derrida's work in the 1970s, including rethinking the relation between appropriation and expropriation, can be taken as an extended consideration of Heidegger's customarily dense and provoking lecture. It is here that Heidegger links his recasting of the ontological assertion "it is" to "there is" and "it gives" (*es gibt*), first to the sending and destiny of Being, and then to Being as the event of appropriation.[177] Derrida will address these aspects of "Time and Being" in a range of works from the mid to late 1970s, including "*Pa*ce Not(s)," *Given Time* and "Envois," and one can see the influence of the "it gives" in his evocation of *l'arrivant* in *Aporias*, as that which precedes, makes possible *and* exceeds "the characteristic [*le trait*] of belonging" in relation to identity and the "metaphysical determination" in relation to the subject, the self and consciousness.[178]

For Heidegger, thinking Being without beings, Being registers a *giving*: "there is, It gives Being" (*es gibt Sein*) and "there is, It gives time" (*es gibt die Zeit*).[179] Being therefore "does not have a history [*Geschichte*] in the way in which a city or a people have their history."[180] The history *of* Being can only be registered by "the way in which It gives Being" (*es Sein gibt*).[181] The giving (*geben*) of Being is regis-

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tered *uniquely* as a giving that "holds itself back and withdraws" and can therefore be described as a "sending" (*schicken*).[182] This sending as "what is sent forth in destining" determines "what is historical (*Geschichtliche*) in the history of Being."[183]

In "Time and Being" Heidegger also contrasts the "destiny of Being" (*Geschick von Sein*) that registers itself in the compelling "belonging together of the epochs" (*Zusammengehören der Epochen*) to a contingent history that is determined by "an indeterminately thought up occurrence."[184] *Geschehen, Vorkommen* registers what *merely takes place or happens historically*.[185] This distinction between an implicit historicism or relativistic determination and "the fundamental characteristic of sending" as the enduring framework for any history of Being is reinforced when Heidegger turns to *das Ereignis*, which he insists should not be understood as a simple occurrence or mere event.[186]

Before he turns to *Ereignis* and *Enteignis*, Heidegger describes the giving of Being as "the opening up of openness" and "presencing" (*Anwesen*) for the possibility of time and the "interplay" of past-present and future that both "holds them apart" and "holds them toward one another."[187] This leads Heidegger to return to the relation between the near (*Nähe*) and "distancing" (*entfernt*) that he had explored in *Being and Time*.[188] The "giving that determines all," he argues, brings "future, past and present near to one another by distancing them."[189] The near keeps "open" the approach of the future by "withholding the present."[190] In this ordering of time, "nearing nearness" is also a "denial and withholding." [191] The critical point for Heidegger is that the necessary operation of distancing is already encompassed by the operation of "nearing nearness" as it "unifies [*Einheit*] in advance" the relation between past, present and future.[192]

Heidegger then turns to *Ereignis* as the culmination of his account of "Time and Being." In relation to the giving, the sending and destiny of Being, *Ereignis* determines time and Being "in their own" *and* "in their belonging together."[193] In her 1972 translation Joan Stambaugh adds a few sentences to the German text at this point. These additional sentences concern the problem of translating *Ereignis* when Heidegger wants to avoid *das Ereignis* being treated as a *mere historical event*. Being indicates a framework that *always* precedes and exceeds the mere historical event. This can be taken as a critique of historicism but it also places the history of Being, which is made possible by the elab-

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oration of *es gibt Sein*, in opposition to the event as a contingent, determining, historical occurrence. The risk is that if we translate *Ereignis* simply as "event" we will miss that all events arise from Being and this indicates a kind of "event" that can never be taken as a *mere* historical event. Being remains, Heidegger insists, "the highest, most significant event of all."[194] This distinction between mere historical events and "the highest" event *of* Being is the *limit in Heidegger's thought* between philosophy and the problem of history. This limit marks Heidegger's own enduring philosophy of history.

When Heidegger writes, "what determines both, time and Being, in their own, that is, in being together, we shall call: *Ereignis*," the English translation therefore adds the following lines: "*Ereignis*, the event of Appropriation. *Ereignis* will be translated as Appropriation or event of Appropriation. One should bear in mind, however, that 'event' is not simply an occurrence, but that which makes any occurrence possible."[195] It is likely that these additional lines were added by Heidegger himself. What they demonstrate is not so much the problem of translating *Ereignis* as his anxiety that *Ereignis* should ever be taken for what *just* happens or *just* takes place (*Geschehen*, *Vorkommen*). What happens if *Ereignis* is mistaken for what *just* happens or *just* takes place? Is this a return to historicism? Or is this limit the possibility for rethinking the relation between *Dasein*, Being and history as characterized by Heidegger? These questions are raised in Derrida's works from the mid 1970s and revisited in the early 1990s.

In the final pages of his lecture, Heidegger gives *Ereignis* as "appropriation" the central role: the giving of Being is the giving of time and the gift of presence is "the property of Appropriating" (*Eigentum des Ereignens*).[196] This "property" *includes* sending as "keeping back" and "withdrawal" (*den Entzug*) as the *unique* withdrawal "from unconcealment" that registers Being.[197] This inclusion means that Heidegger does not see expropriation (*Enteignis*) as a disruption to "the property of Appropriating."[198] Much like Hegel's evocation of negation, expropriation already "belongs" to appropriation.[199] In a double movement of reinforcement that echoes Hegelianism, expropriation "preserves" propriety, the proper of appropriation itself is appropriated to itself. For Heidegger, this is *the* event that is not a merely historical event and should be taken as the possibility of all historical events.

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As we have seen, Derrida's earliest references to "Time and Being" are found in the notes given to three essays from 1968, "Différance," "The Ends of Man" and "*Ousia* and *Grammē*," when they were published in *Margins of Philosophy* in 1972. In "The Ends of Man," Derrida quotes the critical passage in which Heidegger insists that one should never confuse the event of appropriation with a simple occurrence or happening.[200] Derrida in effect begins his reading of "Time and Being" with the problem of history and Heidegger's distinction between mere history and the unique history of Being.

He also adds a note to "Différance," which is dated "1972," quoting from the final pages of "Time and Being," observing in stark terms: "If the 'gift of presence is the property of Appropriating' [. . .] *différance* is not a process of propriation in any sense whatever."[201] In this footnote from 1972 he goes on to gesture to a link between Hegel and Heidegger and looks to a "future" work: "It [*différance*] is neither position (appropriation) nor negation (expropriation), but rather other. Hence it seems—but here, rather, we are marking the necessity of a future itinerary—that *différance* would be no more a species of the genus *Ereignis* than Being."[202]

It is also in 1972 that Derrida develops this argument in *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, noting that when Heidegger "refers the question of being to the question of the proper-ty (*propre*)," he unsettles his abiding interest in the primacy of the "truth of Being."[203] The truth of Being is inscribed *in* "the process of propriation."[204] Derrida will later describe this process as the relation between appropriation, expropriation *and* ex-appropriation. He also reiterates here that this unsettling of the history of Being should not be taken as a simple reversal. Being cannot be treated as part of the primacy of appropriation or "a mere incident [*un cas*] in the event called *Ereignis*."[205] To privilege the event—even the event in general or the mere event—over Being does not displace but merely repeats the structural primacy given to Being. The challenge, Derrida suggests, is rather to take "the process of propriation" as registering a giving (*donner*, *Geben*) and gift (*le donation*, *Gabe*) that accords neither to a subject or object nor to Being and its truth as its own unique claim to a historicity that is the absolute other of mere history and of historiography.[206]

Derrida's work in the late 1970s demonstrates a persistent interest in how to translate or re-translate—re-configure—the giving and gift of *es*

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gibt into there is—it gives—history.[207] In September 1991 Derrida published his 1977–1978 seminar *Donner–le temps* under the title *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money* (part two has yet to appear, much like part two of *Being and Time*).[208] In an opening footnote, Derrida links the problem of the gift to, among other issues, *le propre* or "appropriation, expropriation, ex-appropriation."[209] He also argues here that in "Time and Being" Heidegger is still directed by *le propre* (*eigen*). "The desire to accede to the proper," he observes, "is already, we could say, surreptitiously ordered by Heidegger according to the dimension of 'giving.'"[210]

Given Time also refers to Derrida's 1977–1978 work "Restitutions of the Truth in Pointing [*pointure*]," on Heidegger and Meyer Schapiro's (1904–1996) treatment of art and, in particular, the painting of Van Gogh.[211] As he remarks in *Given Time*, Derrida is interested here in what we might call a historicity *of* restitution or even historicity *as* restitution, of the "link between the economy of the proper, appropriation, expropriation, exappropriation, and the coming or coming-back [*le re-venir*] of the event as restitution or beyond restitution in the *Ereignis* or in the *Enteignis*."[212] For Derrida, there is a historicity of "the event as restitution" *and* there is a historicity of "the event as restitution or beyond restitution." In relation to *the past*, ex-appropriation resists the easy narratives of appropriation or alienation.[213]

Despite the limits in Heidegger's treatment of the event and history in "Time and Being," we should not minimize Derrida's acute sense that the analysis of time and the gift "displaces all that is determined under the name *Ereignis*."[214] In a footnote to "How To Avoid Speaking" (1986), a lecture on deconstruction and negative theology, Derrida observes that "the thinking of the gift" in Heidegger's lecture has "expressly oriented all the texts I have published since about 1972."[215] At the same time, the "thinking of the gift" for Derrida is also the thinking of ex-appropriation and a re-thinking of the problem of history in Heidegger after his 1964–1965 lectures.

Concerned in part with the Heideggerian difference between sending out or sending off (*Schicken*) and a directed or final historical destination (*Geschick*), "Envois" is written as an incomplete series of lengthy "postcards" dated from 1977 to 1979 and can be treated as Derrida's first attempt—followed eleven years later by "Circumfession"—to write a work of ex-appropriation that engages with *context*, *memory* and *nar-*

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rative as problems of history. As he explains in the note written at the start of "Envois" and dated 7 September 1979, in challenging Heidegger's hostility to technology and to the science of history, "Envois" also refers to "a history and a technology of the *courrier*" and "to some general theory of the *envoi* [a sending out or sending off] and of everything which by means of some telecommunication allegedly *destines* itself."[216] A certain kind of history, the history of the postal services, is one of the contexts of "Envois." At the same time, Derrida is concerned with a sending out and sending off, "with *posts* and *envois*" and its "relays, delay, anticipation, destination, telecommunicating network," which would be "the very possibility" of a "history of the posts," as well as the possibility of "tradition," "transmission," "interruptions" and "going astray."[217]

Prompted by discovering a postcard depicting a thirteenth-century drawing of Socrates writing down the dictation of Plato (a reversal of the traditional view that Socrates never wrote anything), Derrida writes on 5 June 1977 that he would like "to write a grand history, a large encyclopedia of the post and of the cipher."[218] He returns to this "grand" Hegelian ambition on 8 June 1977, reiterating the desire "to reassemble an enormous library on the *courrier*, the postal institutions, the techniques and mores of telecommunication, the networks and epochs of telecommunication throughout [*à travers*] history."[219] This form of history, of a thematic and encyclopedic gathering across and through history, of a history in search of a *trans*-historicity, is immediately undercut as Derrida treats the project of such a grand "history" not as an assured and untouchable external framework but rather as yet another kind of "post" and "sites of passage or of relay among others."[220] A different kind of history is called for.

In his opening note to "Envois," as one would expect, Derrida makes the *dated* work an explicit issue, as he not only dates this preface at the end but also includes the date in the main text, spelling it out as "the seventh of September nineteen seventy-nine."[221] This is a work of many dates, many memories, many layers and many narratives, including Derrida's childhood in the 1930s in Algeria. It is also a work that is keenly aware of the *event* of its narration, as well as its "historical" events. When it was published in early 1980, "Envois" already records a mixture of dated "historical" events—the preface to "Envois" is dated 7 September 1979, the back cover write-up is dated 17 November 1979

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and its postcards are dated from 3 June 1977 to 30 August 1979—as well as an interweaving of a series of private and public events. The problem of the event of the narration of these historical events is marked by Derrida in a number of ways, including "52 mute spaces" where proper names or whole sentences have been removed in the summer of 1979 from the writings dating from 1977 to 1979.[222]

If these "postcards" are taken as a series of actual letters from a correspondence or as accounts or recounted stories of real events and places—such as being at Balliol College and the Bodleian Library in Oxford in early June 1977—and not just an inventive essay constituted by the fictional gathering of postcard-like works, these fifty-two gaps can be taken as discreet acts of privacy and reticence when recounting recent events. It is likely that some of the "postcards," especially those that dwell on the correspondence and telephone calls of an intense love affair, were originally written for the philosopher Sylviane Agacinski (1945–), with whom Derrida had been secretly involved since 1972.[223] At the same time, if these gaps expose the problem of the difference between the event and its subsequent narration and what Derrida calls the ability to "regulate distances," they also highlight the distortion or incompletion of the narration: not everything is given.[224] For Derrida, this limitation curtails the ambition in the history of philosophy, so aptly articulated by Hegel, that everything is given—but not yet.[225] But this also marks another challenge and perhaps another impasse for the historian.

If we treat historiography not as the search for an external framework—as the box into which to gather everything else, as the designation of everything else as being simply *in* history—then history is an architectonic among another architectonics, a tradition among other traditions that *also* addresses the problem of tradition itself. If deconstruction looks at historiography, it sees this long tradition and long temptation of asserting itself as *the* external framework. It also sees that if we treat "history" as a "post" or "relay among others," then historiography must not stop contending with the problem of "distancing." Within "every mark or every trait," Derrida writes on 9 June 1977, "there is distancing [*il y a l'éloignement*]."[226] The legibility of the past is the problem of its *pending* arrival.[227]

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NOTES

1. "Toward an Ethic of Discussion," 141.

2. Jacques Derrida, "Punctuations: The Time of a Thesis," in *Eyes of the University: Right to Philosophy 2*, ed. Jan Plug, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 113–28: 118.

3. *A Taste for the Secret*, 76; *Le goût du secret*, 97. Translation modified. See also *Of Grammatology*, 29–73, 158.

4. *A Taste for the Secret*, 76; *Le goût du secret*, 97. Translation modified.

5. "On Reading Heidegger," 177. In his final seminar in 2003, Derrida returned to the question of the track or trace as a "footprint on the sand" in a reading of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. See *The Beast and the Sovereign*, II: 46–50, 53, 74, 240–41, 247. See also, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*.

6. "On Reading Heidegger," 177. See also Jacques Derrida, *Cinders*, trans. Ned Lukacher, intro. Cary Wolf (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, [1991] 2014), 25.

7. "On Reading Heidegger," 181.

8. "On Reading Heidegger," 181, 173.

9. See Jacques Derrida, "Limited Inc a b c . . .," in *Limited Inc*, ed. Gerald Graff, trans. Samuel Weber (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 29–110: 53.

10. "Punctuations: The Time of a Thesis," 116; "Ponctuations: le temps de la thèse," in *Du droit à la philosophie* (Paris: Galilée, 1990), 439–59: 443–44.

11. *Time and Narrative*, III: 125–26.

12. "The Trace of the Other," 355–56.

13. "The Trace of the Other," 354; "La trace de l'autre," in *En découvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger*, third edition (Paris: Vrin, 2001), 261–82: 275.

14. "The Trace of the Other," 356.

15. "The Trace of the Other," 355–56.

16. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, III: 305–6 n. 4. Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, 44, 51. See also Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 61–73.

17. *Time and Narrative*, III: 120.

18. *Time and Narrative*, III: 120. See also *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 166–76, 418–43.

19. Jacques Derrida, "Shibboleth—For Paul Celan," in *Sovereignties in Question: The Poetics of Paul Celan*, ed. Thomas Dutoit and Outi Pasanen, trans. Joshua Wilner and Thomas Dutoit (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 1–64: 195 (endnote for page 15).

20. *The Historian's Craft*, 45–46.

21. *The Historian's Craft*, 53.

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22. Leonard Lawlor, *Imagination and Chance: The Difference Between the Thought of Ricoeur and Derrida* (New York: SUNY, 1992), 1–8. See also Eftichis Pirovolakis, *Reading Derrida & Ricoeur: Improbable Encounters Between Deconstruction and Hermeneutics* (New York: SUNY, 2010), Johann Michel, *Ricoeur and the Post-Structuralists: Bourdieu, Derrida, Deleuze, Foucault, Castoriadis* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015); Jacques Derrida and Paul Ricoeur, "Philosophy and Communication: Roundtable Discussion between Ricoeur and Derrida," in *Imagination and Chance: The Difference Between the Thought of Ricoeur and Derrida*, trans. Leonard Lawlor (New York: SUNY, 1992), 131–63.

23. "Husserl and the Sense of History," 169; "Husserl et le sens de l'histoire," in *À L'école de la phénoménologie* (Paris: Vrin, 2016), 19–64: 56.

24. Immanuel Kant, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim," in *Anthropology, History, and Education*, ed. Robert B. Louden and Günter Zöller, trans. Allan W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 107–20: 114, 111.

25. "Idea for a Universal History," 118–19.

26. "Idea for a Universal History," 120.

27. "Husserl and the Sense of History," 145.

28. *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology*, 342; *The Crisis of European Sciences*, 293; "The Origin of Geomtery," 128–29 n. 149.

29. See Jacques Derrida, "Interpretations at War: Kant, the Jew, the German," in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume 2*, ed. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg, trans. Moshe Ron and Dana Hollander (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 241–98: 261; "The Other Heading: Memories, Responses, and Responsibilities," in *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today's Europe*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael B. Naas, intro. Michael B. Naas (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 4–83: 78; "The Reason of the Strongest," 15, 37, 82, 85, 87; "The 'World' of the Enlightenment To Come (Exception, Calculation, and Sovereignty)," in *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 118–60: 125, 132.

30. Paul Ricoeur, "Phenomenology and Hermeneutics," in *From Text to Action: Essays in Hermeneutics II*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and John B. Thompson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 25–52.

31. *Derrida: A Biography*, 113–14, 130.

32. *The Problem of Genesis*, 196–97 n. 73.

33. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 29 n. 8.

34. Paul Ricoeur, "L'originaire et la question-en-retour dans la *Krisis* de Husserl," in *À l'école de la phénoménologie* (Paris: Vrin, 2016), 361–78: 361–62. My translation.

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35. *Derrida: A Biography*, 174–75, 226. See Derrida, “White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy”; “The *Retrait* of Metaphor”; Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. Robert Czerny with Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 257–33. See also Lawlor, *Imagination and Chance*.

36. *Derrida: A Biography*, 314–17.

37. Quoted in *Derrida: A Biography*, 527.

38. “Husserl and the Sense of History,” 143; “Husserl et le sens de l’histoire,” 19 (italics in French edition).

39. “Husserl and the Sense of History,” 170.

40. “Husserl and the Sense of History,” 171.

41. “Husserl and the Sense of History,” 171.

42. Jacques Derrida, “The Word: Giving, Naming, Calling,” in *Reading Derrida & Ricoeur: Improbable Encounters Between Deconstruction and Hermeneutics* by Eftichis Pirovolakis, trans. Eftichis Pirovolakis (New York: SUNY, 2010), 167–76: 169–70.

43. *History and Truth*, 5. Translation modified.

44. “Objectivity and Subjectivity in History,” 23; “Objectivité et subjectivité en histoire,” in *Histoire et Vérité* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), 27–50: 29. Translation modified.

45. “Objectivity and Subjectivity in History,” 24. Translation modified.

46. “Objectivity and Subjectivity in History,” 24.

47. “Objectivity and Subjectivity in History,” 23–24. Italics in French edition.

48. “Objectivity and Subjectivity in History,” 23–24. Translation modified.

49. “Objectivity and Subjectivity in History,” 24–25.

50. *The Historian’s Craft*, 154.

51. *The Historian’s Craft*, 148, 151. As Dermot Moran notes, the call to “go back to the ‘things themselves’” was a rejection of a philosophy that was understood as a *history* of philosophy. See Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations, Volume 1*, ed. and intro. Dermot Moran trans. J. N. Findlay, pref. Michael Dummett (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), xxii, 4, 168.

52. “Objectivity and Subjectivity in History,” 28.

53. “Objectivity and Subjectivity in History,” 28. Translation modified.

54. “Objectivity and Subjectivity in History,” 29.

55. “Objectivity and Subjectivity in History,” 29, 37. Translation modified.

56. “Objectivity and Subjectivity in History,” 29.

57. “The History of Philosophy and the Unity of Truth,” 52.

58. “The History of Philosophy and the Unity of Truth,” 55.

59. “Objectivity and Subjectivity in History,” 34.

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60. "Objectivity and Subjectivity in History," 34.
61. "Objectivity and Subjectivity in History," 39.
62. "Objectivity and Subjectivity in History," 36; "Objectivité et subjectivité en histoire," 45.
63. "Objectivity and Subjectivity in History," 37–38.
64. See Charles E. Reagan, *Paul Ricoeur: His Life and His Work* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 125–26. See also Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, 50.
65. "Objectivity and Subjectivity in History," 34; "Objectivité et subjectivité en histoire," 43; *History and Truth*, 3.
66. "The History of Philosophy and the Unity of Truth," 55.
67. Paul Ricoeur, "Christianity and the Meaning of History," in *History and Truth*, trans. Charles A. Kelbley (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965), 81–97: 93–7.
68. "Christianity and the Meaning of History," 96.
69. *History and Memory*, 103.
70. Paul Ricoeur, "The History of Philosophy and Historicity," in *History and Truth*, trans. Charles A. Kelbley (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965), 63–87: 64.
71. "The History of Philosophy and Historicity," 66; "Histoire de la philosophie et historicité," in *Histoire et Vérite* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), 75–91: 79. Translation modified.
72. "The History of Philosophy and Historicity," 66.
73. "The History of Philosophy and Historicity," 66. Translation modified.
74. "The History of Philosophy and Historicity," 67.
75. "The History of Philosophy and Historicity," 68. Translation modified.
76. "The History of Philosophy and Historicity," 68. Translation modified.
77. "The History of Philosophy and Historicity," 68.
78. "The Word: Giving, Naming, Calling," 170.
79. "The History of Philosophy and Historicity," 68. Translation modified.
80. *Time and Narrative*, III: 124.
81. *Time and Narrative*, III: 124.
82. *Time and Narrative*, III: 125.
83. "The Trace of the Other," 356.
84. "The Trace of the Other," 356–57.
85. *Time and Narrative*, III: 125.
86. *Time and Narrative*, III: 125.
87. *Time and Narrative*, III: 125.
88. "The Trace of the Other," 357.
89. *Time and Narrative*, III: 125.
90. *Time and Narrative*, III: 125.

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91. *Time and Narrative*, III: 125.

92. See *Specters of Marx*.

93. See also Paul Ricoeur, "Retour à Hegel (Jean Hyppolite)," in *Lectures 2: La contrée des philosophes* (Paris: Seuil, 1992), 173–88; "Hegel aujourd'hui," in *Esprit* (2006.3 Mars/Avril): 174–94; *Time and Narrative*, III: 193–206.

94. Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970); *The Conflict of Interpretations*, ed. Don Ihde (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974).

95. *Freud and Philosophy*, 26.

96. *Freud and Philosophy*, 7, 41–42.

97. *Freud and Philosophy*, 9. Translation modified.

98. *Freud and Philosophy*, 28, 35–36, 43. See also 230, 543.

99. *Freud and Philosophy*, 28; *De l'interpretation: Essai sur Freud* (Paris: Seuil, 1965), 38.

100. *Time and Narrative*, I: ix–xii.

101. *Time and Narrative*, I: xi.

102. *Time and Narrative*, I: xi.

103. *Freud and Philosophy*, 27.

104. *Of Grammatology*, 40.

105. In the notes to Derrida's sources in her 2016 edition of *Of Grammatology*, Spivak implies that Derrida was still looking at Ricoeur's earliest work in the mid 1960s (17).

106. "The History of Philosophy and the Unity of Truth," 43.

107. *Time and Narrative*, I: 115.

108. Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995), 274b–276d; Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy," in *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 61–171: 70–71, 97–103, 125–26.

109. *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 138.

110. "Plato's Pharmacy," 92.

111. *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 139; *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* (Paris: Seuil, 2000), 174.

112. Jacques Derrida, "Revelations and Other Texts," in *Diaspora: Homelands in Exile – photographs / voices* by Frédéric Brenner, 2 vols. (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), 17, 19, 21, 35, 51, 63, 65, 67, 81, 83, 91, 101, 103, 110–11; "*Révélations* et autres textes: Lectures des photographies de Frédéric Brenner," in *Penser à ne pas voir: Écrits sur les arts du visible 1979–2004*, ed. Ginette Michaud, Joana Masó and Javier Bassas (Paris: La Différence, 2013), 272–98. I have used the proposed title from the French edition for these fourteen pieces.

113. *Diaspora: Homelands in Exile*, 2: 17.

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114. *Diaspora: Homelands in Exile*, 2: 81.

115. *Diaspora: Homelands in Exile*, 2: 21.

116. *Diaspora: Homelands in Exile*, 2: 51; "*Révélations* et autres textes," 280. Translation modified.

117. See also Jacques Derrida, "The Right to Philosophy from a Cosmopolitan Point of View," in *Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews 1971–2001*, ed., trans. and intro. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 329–42: 337. See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, intro. Margaret Canovan, second edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 254–56.

118. "The Crisis in the Teaching of Philosophy," 102–3.

119. "The Other Heading," 9.

120. "The Other Heading," 10–11.

121. "La parole soufflée," 178; "La parole soufflée," 266 [French text].

122. "La parole soufflée," 178.

123. "La parole soufflée," 183.

124. "La parole soufflée," 183.

125. *Of Grammatology*, 15, 49, 89, 106–9, 112, 183–84, 244.

126. Jacques Derrida, "Tympan," in *Margins in Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), ix–xxix: xii.

127. "*Ousia* and *Grammē*," 64 n. 39.

128. "*Ousia* and *Grammē*," 64 n. 39.

129. "Plato's Pharmacy," 93; "La pharmacie de Platon," in *La dissemination* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), 69–167: 116. See also *Spurs*: *Nietzsche's Styles*, 108–23; Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Nancy, "'Eating Well,' or the Calculation of the Subject," in *Points . . .: Interviews, 1974–1994*, ed. Elisabeth Weber, trans. Peter Connor and Avital Ronell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 255–-87: 267–68.

130. *Diaspora: Homelands in Exile*, 2: 51; "*Révélations* et autres textes," 280.

131. *Freud and Philosophy*, 45.

132. *Freud and Philosophy*, 45; *De l'interpretation: Essai sur Freud*, 55. Translation modified.

133. *Freud and Philosophy*, 47.

134. *Freud and Philosophy*, 47.

135. *Of Grammatology: 40th Anniversary Edition*, 10. See also Jacques Derrida, *The Archaeology of the Frivolous: Reading Condillac*, trans. John P. Leavey Jr. (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1980), 48.

136. *Of Grammatology*, 26.

137. *Of Grammatology: 40th Anniversary Edition,* 155; *De la grammatologie*, 206.

138. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 10, 19, 51, 68, 106, 118.

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139. Jacques Derrida, “Outwork: Prefacing,” in *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 1–59: 11; “Hors livre: préfaces,” in *Dissemination* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), 9–76: 18.

140. Michael Naas, “*Entamer*, *Entamé*, To Initiate or Open Up, to Breach or Broach,” in *Reading Derrida’s Of Grammatology*, ed. Sean Gaston and Ian Maclachlan (London: Continuum, 2011), 119–22.

141. “Différance,” 5–6.

142. *Of Grammatology*, 295.

143. *Théorie et pratique*, 136. My translation.

144. *Théorie et pratique*, 136. See also Martin Heidegger, “Science and Reflection,” in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 155–82: 167.

145. *Being and Time*, 105.

146. *Spurs: Nietzsche’s Styles*, 48–51.

147. *Spurs: Nietzsche’s Styles*, 50–51. Translation modified.

148. *Spurs: Nietzsche’s Styles*, 501.

149. “*Pa*ce Not(s),” 17; Jacques Derrida, “Pas,” in *Parages*, *Nouvelle édition revue et augmentée* (Paris: Galilée, 2003), 17–106: 25.

150. “Parergon,” 32; “Parergon,” in *La vérité en peinture* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978), 19–168: 39. Translation modified.

151. “P*a*ce Not(s),” 40.

152. *Being and Time*, 43; *Sein und Zeit*, 43.

153. Albert Hofstadter, Introduction to *Poetry, Language, Thought* by Martin Heidegger, ed. and trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), ix–xxii: xviii–xxi. See also Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell, revised edition (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), 395–96.

154. Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” in *Off the Beaten Track*, ed. and trans. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1–56: 55.

155. “Of an Apocalyptic Tone,” 65.

156. “Of an Apocalyptic Tone,” 65.

157. “Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides,” 90. See also François Raffoul, *The Origins of Responsibility* (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 2010), 281–89; “The Ex-appropriation of Responsibility,” in *Heidegger in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Tzivanis Georgakis and Paul J. Ennis (Dordrecht: Springer, 2015), 83–100.

158. *Aporias*, 77. Translation modified. See *Apories*, 135.

159. Jacques Derrida, “To Speculate—on ‘Freud,’” in *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 257–409: 359. See also 360–62.

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160. *Diaspora: Homelands in Exile*, 2: 101; "*Révélations* et autres textes," 292.

161. "'Eating Well,' or the Calculation of the Subject," 269–71.

162. "The Ends of Man," 129 n. 25.

163. "The Ends of Man," 129–30 n. 25.

164. "*Pa*ce Not(s)," 17.

165. "Discussion between Derrida, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy," 28.

166. *Théorie et pratique*, 156. My translation.

167. "Discussion between Derrida, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy," 24.

168. "Discussion between Derrida, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy," 24. See also, "The Ends of Man," 132 n. 35.

169. "Discussion between Derrida, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy," 26.

170. "'Eating Well,' or the Calculation of the Subject," 270.

171. "A Testimony Given," 46.

172. "A Testimony Given," 47.

173. On strictures and knots see also *Glas* and *The Truth in Painting*.

174. "Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides," 90; "Auto-immunités, suicides reels et symboliques: Un dialogue avec Jacques Derrida," in *Le "Concept" du 11 septembre: Dialgues à New York* (*octobre–décembre 2001*), by Jacques Derrida and Jürgen Haberman with Giovanna Borradori (Paris: Galilée, 2003), 133–196: 139.

175. Martin Heidegger, "Time and Being," in *On Time and Being*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 1–24; "Zeit und Sein," in *Zur Sache des Denkens* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, [1969] 2007), 3–30.

176. Derrida and Janicaud, "Interviews," 342–45.

177. "Time and Being," 5; "Zeit und Sein," 9.

178. *Aporias*, 35; *Apoires*, 68.

179. "Time and Being," 6, 16; "Zeit und Sein," 11, 20.

180. "Time and Being," 8; "Zeit und Sein," 11.

181. "Time and Being," 8; "Zeit und Sein," 11.

182. "Time and Being," 8; "Zeit und Sein," 11.

183. "Time and Being," 8–9; "Zeit und Sein," 12.

184. "Time and Being," 9; "Zeit und Sein," 13.

185. "Time and Being," 9, 20; "Zeit und Sein," 13, 26.

186. "Time and Being," 9.

187. "Time and Being," 15.

188. "Time and Being," 15; "Zeit und Sein," 20.

189. "Time and Being," 15.

190. "Time and Being," 15.

191. "Time and Being," 15.

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192. "Time and Being," 16; "Zeit und Sein," 20.
193. "Time and Being," 19.
194. "Time and Being," 21.
195. "Time and Being," 19.
196. "Time and Being," 22; "Zeit und Sein," 27.
197. "Time and Being," 22; "Zeit und Sein," 27.
198. "Time and Being," 23; "Zeit und Sein," 28.
199. "Time and Being," 23.
200. "The Ends of Man," 132 n. 36, 19–20. See 129 n. 25. See also "*Ousia* and *Grammē*," 7. See *"Time and Being,"* 31.
201. "Différance," 26 n. 26. See also *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, 158, 120–22.
202. "Différance," 26 n. 26. See also *Glas*, 242a.
203. *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, 114–17. Translation modified.
204. *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, 117.
205. *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, 121–22.
206. *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, 120–21. See also *The Politics of Friendship*, 64–65.
207. See "Envois," 31; "Parergon," 27, 49; *Given Time*, 20–1, 22. See also *Memoires*, 147.
208. *Given Time*, 20 n. 10.
209. *Given Time*, 10 n. 1.
210. *Given Time*, 21.
211. Jacques Derrida, "Restitutions of the Truth in Pointing [*pointure*]," in *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 255–382.
212. *Given Time*, 81; *Donner le temps 1. La faussse monnaie* (Paris: Galilée, 1991), 108; "Restitutions of the Truth in Pointing [*pointure*]," 260, 274, 279–81, 291–92, 349, 351, 356, 365, 369.
213. "The Right to Philosophy," 337. See also Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler, *Echographies of Television: Filmed Interviews*, trans. Jennifer Bajorek (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), 111.
214. *Glas*, 242a.
215. Jacques Derrida, "How To Avoid Speaking: Denials," in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume II*, ed. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg, trans. Ken Frieden and Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 143–95: 313, n. 24.
216. "Envois," 3.
217. "Envois," 66.
218. "Envois," 13.
219. "Envois," 27; "Envois," in *La Carte postale—de Socrate à Freud et au–delà* (Paris: Flammarion, 1980), 5–273: 32.

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220. "Envois," 27.
221. "Envois," 3.
222. "Envois," 5.
223. *Derrida: A Biography*, 293.
224. "Envois," 5.
225. As Derrida remarks in *The Politics of Friendship* it is the "contradiction of already-not-yet" (200). See also *Glas*; "A Time for Farewells."
226. "Envois," 29; "Envois," 34 (French text).
227. "Envois," 29.

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Part Two

A Deconstructive Historiography

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4

HISTORY, CONTEXT, AND MI-LIEU

At this very precise moment of History, as one rightly says.
—"Back from Moscow, in the USSR"[1]

I. THE CHALLENGE OF HISTORY

"End of the revolution I noted when I returned from Moscow two weeks ago," Derrida writes on 31 March 1990.[2] The date here and phrase "end of the revolution" leads us to think of a number of political revolutions during a remarkable period in European history, not least the fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 and the so-called Velvet Revolution from 17 November to 29 December 1989 in Czechoslovakia. However, there is another context for Derrida's use of the phrase "the end of the revolution." He is referring to the annual circling and re-circling that has gone on from March 1989 to May 1990 as he has been writing the work "Circumfession" (1991). As we have seen, this is a series of fifty-nine paragraphs each written as a single sentence and interweaving autobiographical passages with diary fragments from the mid to late 1970s and extended quotations from St. Augustine's *Confessions*. At the same time, the reference to Derrida's return from Moscow in March 1990 also places this sentence in the context of the recent momentous events in Europe. We are left with one phrase that has at least two contexts.

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In June 1990, Czechoslovakia would have its first democratic election since 1946. The Soviet Union itself would be dissolved in December 1991, marking the "end" of the Russian Revolution that had begun in October 1917. How did Derrida respond to the historical events that took place in Europe from 1989 to 1991? How did he respond to the challenge of history? And how can this help us to understand Derrida's engagement with the question of history? I would like to examine this period as part of Derrida's engagement with the problem of history after his work on Husserl, Hegel and Heidegger in the 1960s and 1970s. The late 1980s and early 1990s are particularly notable for their emphasis in Derrida's work on the relation between history and context, memory and narrative.

As we have seen, from the 1950s Derrida had been influenced by Husserl's critique of historicism and Derrida himself had been interested in the question of context from at least the early 1970s. He devoted a number of works in the 1970s and 1980s to the relation between language, history, institutions and context. However, there is also a new emphasis in the late 1980s on what Derrida calls a "historical configuration" in his analysis of the political thought in Europe of the 1920s and 1930s.[3] The early 1990s saw a number of works like "Circumfession" and *Monolingualism of the Other* that combine different aspects of context, memory and narrative.

The events of 1989–1991 in Europe were certainly unexpected and can therefore be taken as "events" in Derrida's sense of the term. As he remarked in a talk from 2003, "an event implies surprise, exposure, the unanticipatable."[4] In an interview in New York on 22 September 2001, given in the immediate aftermath of the 11 September attacks, Derrida reiterated that an event "is what comes and, in coming, comes to surprise me, to surprise and to suspend comprehension: the event is first of all *that which* I do not first of all comprehend."[5] The event registers the needful labour of appropriation as it relentlessly encounters what cannot be appropriated.[6] As Derrida remarked elsewhere in 1993, an event—and the event from the past—has a future because there is always the question of "the non-knowledge and non-advent of the an event, of what remains to be."[7]

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the Velvet Revolution in the last months of 1989 had particular significance for Derrida, not least because his wife Marguerite Aucouturier had been born in Prague in

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1932.[8] As Benoît Peeters (1956–) relates in his 2010 biography of Derrida, the death of the Czechoslovakian philosopher Jan Patocka (1907–1977) after a long interrogation for signing the Charter 77 petition led to a group of philosophers at Oxford University founding the Jan Hus Educational Foundation in 1980.[9] In the summer of 1981, Jean-Pierre Vernant was appointed the president of the French branch of the foundation and Derrida the vice president. In the last days of December 1981, Derrida had travelled to Prague to give a "clandestine seminar" on Descartes.[10]

As Derrida later recalled, he soon began to feel as if he was being followed. On 30 December 1981 Derrida was arrested at the airport on charges of drug smuggling. He was interrogated for some seven hours and he was then taken to Ruzyne prison.[11] Having spent hours pounding on the doors of his cell demanding that someone contact the French ambassador, Derrida was joined by a Hungarian gypsy, who could speak neither French nor English; to pass the time they played noughts and crosses on pieces of tissue paper.[12] After being processed and given a prison uniform he learnt that he was facing a two-year prison sentence. As the news spread of his arrest, the French government protested and Derrida was released from prison on 1 January 1982.[13] He returned to Paris on 2 January.[14]

One can certainly treat Derrida's arrest and imprisonment in Prague as one of the relatively rare instances of a philosopher from Western Europe encountering at first hand the political forces and institutions that we now characterize as the history of the Cold War in Europe from 1945 to 1991.[15] One could therefore date the question of Derrida and "the challenge of history" to the events of 1981. However, as I have suggested, it was almost impossible for Derrida not to be involved in politics and their relation to historical events when he was a student at the École normale supérieure in the 1950s, not least because it was dominated at this time by the French Communist Party. On 5 March 1953 a minute of silence was enforced at the ENS to mourn the death of Stalin.[16] At the time, Derrida aligned himself with a group which he later described as "Left or non-Communist extreme Left."[17]

I would date his institutional engagement with questions of political thought and action to the years 1952–1956 when the French Stalinists held sway over the ENS, though this must also be placed within the wider context of the Algerian War (1954–1962).[18] As Derrida observes

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in an interview from April 1989 on his friendship with Louis Althusser, his time at the ENS was very difficult because while he was "anti-Stalinist" and had a view of "the democratic left" that was "incompatible" with the French Communist Party and the Soviet Union, he did not want his objections to be "confused with conservative reticence."[19] A complex political analysis and a difficult negotiation with prevailing political orthodoxies and their relation to wider historical events were already demanded of Derrida in the 1950s.[20]

These difficult negotiations went on into the 1960s. In the mid 1960s Derrida was associated with the Tel Quel group, led by Philippe Sollers (1936–). As Derrida remarks in one of his last talks before his death in 2004, his increasingly difficult relations with the Tel Quel group was dominated by the political events of the late 1960s: the group "put up less and less with my political independence with regard not only to their pro-PCF [Parti Communiste Français, French Communist Party] and pro-Soviet positions in 1968 at the time of the invasion of Prague [in August 1968] but, a bit later, with regard to their conversion, which was just as dogmatic, to a caricatural and blind Maoism accompanied by a somewhat childish intellectual terrorism."[21]

However, as we will see in chapter 6, Derrida was already "challenged" by history in 1942 when, as a Jew living in Vichy Algeria, he was expelled from school and lost his French citizenship.[22] There are, of course, other historical and political events that one could include here, notably the revelations in 1988 that Derrida's colleague and friend Paul de Man (1919–1983) had written for collaborationist and anti-Semitic newspapers in Belgium during World War II.[23] The events of 1989 were only one more challenge by history in the life of Jacques Derrida.

2. HISTORICAL CONFIGURATIONS

How did Derrida respond to the political events in Europe in 1989? In late May 1990 in a conference paper he refers to "what has started, or rather has accelerated, these past few months in the east or at the center of Europe."[24] He goes on to speak of "the tremor that is shaking what are called Central and Eastern Europe under the very problematic names *perestroika*, *democratization*, *reunification*, entry into the *market economy*, access to political and economic liberalisms."[25] Three

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years before the *Specters of Marx* (1993), which is often taken as the announcement of his so-called political turn, Derrida calls for a new reading of Marx.[26] As we have seen, Derrida had been calling for a new reading of Marx since at least the mid 1960s.

It is only a matter of chance that Derrida gave a number of significant "political" lectures just before and soon after the political transformation in Eastern Europe in 1989, including "Of the Right to Justice / From Law to Justice" (*Du droit à la justice*) in October 1989 and its companion piece "First Name of Benjamin" in April 1990. The most notable response to the events of 1989 was Derrida's decision to accept, after many years of refusal, an invitation to go to Moscow in February 1990.[27] It is a sign of how quickly Derrida could work that he followed his visit to Soviet Union from 26 February to 6 March with a paper given later in March in California entitled "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," the title being in part inspired by the Beatles' 1968 song "Back in the USSR."[28]

Derrida begins his paper with saying that he will only be offering "a sort of narrative" about his trip because he "would like to avoid the risks of every travelogue" and he has "never known how to tell stories."[29] As we shall see in chapters 8 and 9, this refusal to "tell stories" reiterates a refrain that he had explored from the mid 1960s to highlight the complex relation between philosophical, autobiographical and historical narratives. In the place of an account—a travel narrative that submits to a rational account or calculation (*logos*)—of his own journey, after returning from Russia Derrida examines three travel narratives written by others: André Gide (1869–1951), Walter Benjamin and René Étiemble (1909–2002). The title of the short book published in France in 1995 with Derrida's paper and a transcript of his discussions in Moscow, *Moscou aller–retour*, emphasises this sense of the travel narrative as a narration of returning, of turning back, of a round-trip that is announced at the outset and in advance.[30]

For Derrida, there is also a third reason why he will not tell his own story. He is concerned about "a certain relation between the literary genre and history, notably political history."[31] Derrida proposes a hypothesis, arguing that there is a tradition when it comes to the USSR of "a certain thematic generality" that is "linked to *a finished sequence* [*une séquence finie*] of history."[32] He suggests that this type of narrative is marked by implicit philosophical positions about the historical nature

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of a political event when it is taken as evidence of "a decisive moment in the history of humanity."[33] In this case, each narrative that he reads assumes that the events of October 1917 in Russia allow for an "*exemplary*" narrative that can only be taken as "a unique, finished, irreversible, and nonrepeatable sequence of a political history."[34]

Derrida goes on to ask if this philosophical critique should also have "counterexamples" of "a more patient historical examination, a more rigorous historiographic reflexion."[35] He is quite clear that his response to his visit to Moscow, and by implication to the events of November–December 1989, is to return to a tradition of literary-historical narratives that share "an essential relation to the singularity of a historical sequence" and are shaped by a series of philosophical or metaphysical presumptions.[36] Derrida is giving us what is in effect a critique of an *unacknowledged* philosophy of history in these travel narratives to the USSR. This was not a "new" aspect of his thought.[37]

In the name of the unique revolutionary political circumstances of Communist Russia each of these travel narratives evoke "the quest for the universal."[38] The sense of visiting a particular country, with its particular problems (not least during the Stalinist era), is transcended by the need to affirm a universal revolutionary imperative for humanity as a whole. As Derrida observes, "and at once the work itself—this event of language, the discourse of testimony, the travel narrative must efface itself in the service of the universal cause."[39] Derrida is concerned with both "the structure and the history" of these distinctive travel narratives.[40] This leads him to note that the structure of these narratives on Soviet Russia either evoke a universal imperative that has been incarnated (and the religious overtones of this term are explicit) in a "'chosen fatherland'" (*patrie d'élection*), or affirm a unique revolutionary universality that is never reduced to a particular nation.[41]

At the same time, Derrida reiterates the importance of going "as far as possible into [the] historical knowledge" of these narratives.[42] Already in March 1990, Derrida criticizes the claims in America that the collapse of the Warsaw Pact announces "the end of history" and the completion of a U.S.-style democracy on a global scale.[43] For Derrida, as he will argue relentlessly over the next decade, democracy is "to *come*" rather than "already given in the presence of its concept, of its fact."[44] He also insists that "the effort at historical knowledge" must be placed in relation—however much tension this produces—to a "inter-

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pretative formalization" which can also address, for example, "the phenomenological motif" in Benjamin's narrative.[45] Benjamin's travel narrative, with its complex creation of "the mythico-historical field"—which sees a revolutionary history supplant an ahistorical epoch of mythology while treating this revolutionary period in terms of "the promised land and the future of a chosen fatherland"—also suggests that Moscow is idealized as the presentation of "the thing itself."[46] This philosophical assumption has consequences both for the historical and political analysis of the Soviet Union in 1926–1927 and for understanding the bright spring of 1990.

Derrida would return to these issues three years later in 1993 in the *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. Examining Francis Fukuyama's (1952–) *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), Derrida argues that there is a profound lack of "thinking of the event" in Fukuyama's popular work.[47] Echoing a Hegelian tradition as interpreted by Kojève, Fukuyama suggests that the collapse of the Soviet Union signals the "end of history," as the liberal democracy and free-market capitalism of the United States is becoming the global norm for political-economic organization. Derrida points out that Fukuyama both wants to account for the actual history of the late twentieth century *and* to make the case for a "regulating ideal" that announces the proclaimed "end" of this history.[48] Fukuyama has confused two different types of event: the event as an empirical "realization" and the event as the ideal possibility or "heralding of the realization."[49] In the name of a thoroughly historical account of the actual "end of history," Fukuyama has relied on "a regulating and trans-historical ideal" to organize his historical narrative.[50] This "trans-historic and natural ideal" can only "discredit" and "suspend" the very authority of the "so-called empirical event."[51] In proclaiming "an *ideal* good news," Fukuyama leaves us with an unconvincing idealization of history and an inadequate philosophical account of the historical event.[52]

There is already an earlier instance in this period of Derrida's critique of the philosophical assumptions that *limit* the treatment of the history, its events and its political narratives. Derrida's lecture "First Name of Benjamin" was first distributed but not delivered in October 1989 at a conference in New York at the Cardozo School of Law and then read with an additional *avant-propos* and postscript on 26 April

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1990, a month after he had given the paper on his trip to Moscow in California. This lecture on Walter Benjamin—and on the resonances between his first name, Walter, and the German verb *walten*, to rule, to govern, to hold sway, prevail or dominate—was then revised and published in 1995 along with "Of the Right to Justice / From Law to Justice" under the title *Force of Law* (*Force de loi*). Focusing on Benjamin's essay "Critique of Violence" (1921) Derrida offers, in addition to an "interpretative formalization," a close analysis of "the historical configuration" (*la configuration historique*) that informed not only Benjamin's essay but also the work of the jurist Carl Schmitt (1888–1985) and of Heidegger "*right before the rise of Nazism*."[53] Derrida argues that in the period 1918–1939, both left-wing and right-wing thinkers in Europe began to criticize the political model of parliamentary democracy.[54]

Derrida would go on to make some critical comments about the use of the term "configuration" in a number of papers and talks in 1990 and 1991. In "'To Do Justice to Freud': The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis," a paper given on 23 November 1991 marking the thirtieth anniversary of the publication of Foucault's *History of Madness* (1961), Derrida highlights the *aporias* found in the use of terms such as "epoch," "age," "paradigm" and "*epistēmē*" in the construction of a "historical configuration."[55] He argues that in varying contexts and in varying degrees each of these terms encounter "the paradox of a serial law."[56] In this case, Foucault's reading of Freud is taken "alternatively or simultaneously" to close one epoch and to open another and this leaves Freud at once "outside the series [*hors-série*]" and "regularly reinscribed within different series."[57] This marking of what is at once "in" and "out" of a series indicates problems for "the constitution of any set or whole [*ensemble*]" such as an age or an epoch.[58]

Derrida had also raised the question about the relation between a "historical configuration" and generalizing terms such as "epoch" and "age" a year earlier in October 1990, six months after the paper on Benjamin. In "We Other Greeks," some brief remarks given at a conference, he criticizes "the apparent unity of an epoch" and challenges the use of Greek words such as *epokhē* and *epistēmē* to account for "these enigmatic or *improbable* groupings, totalities, or configurations."[59] These Greek terms, Derrida argues, are used as quasi nicknames precisely when "the nameable is less assured than ever in its identity, limits, meaning, truth, and its very historicity."[60]

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To return to "First Name of Benjamin," the "historical configuration" that interests Derrida in the 1920s stems from the fact that it was not only Heidegger but also Benjamin who adopted a distinct philosophical-political form of "destruction" (*Zerstörung*) which rejected parliamentary democracy.[61] For Derrida himself, Benjamin's essay on violence is "*too Heideggerian*" and "*messianico-Marxist*."[62] Derrida had already noted in the 1970s that Heidegger's antipathy to representation included parliamentary representation.[63] But what makes "First Name of Benjamin" different is the marked emphasis on the *historical contexts* in Germany after the end of the First World War. As Derrida remarks, in noting the proximity of Benjamin and "a certain Carl Schmitt," we need to take account of "the exorbitant price Germany had to pay for defeat, the Weimar Republic, the crisis and impotence of the new parliamentarism, the failure of pacifism, the aftermath of the October Revolution, competition between the media and parliamentarism, new particulars of international law, and so forth."[64] Derrida also refers here to the debates that arose in the 1980s in Germany over the attempt by some historians to resituate the *Shoah* in relation to the Soviet gulags. He warns against the possibility of a "*historiographical perversion*" and "*the logic of revisionism*."[65]

3. HISTORICAL MI–LIEUS

In 1989–1990 Derrida is concerned with the status, limits and possibilities of a "historical configuration" and he treats this not as a self-evident historical context but as what I would call a *historical mi-lieu*. In "Of the Right to Justice / From Law to Justice," Derrida affirms that the law or right can be deconstructed because it is not natural and "its ultimate foundation is by definition unfounded."[66] There is no ideal point of origin outside of its "interpretable and transformable textual strata."[67] One can therefore also challenge the idea of what Derrida calls in *The Politics of Friendship*—a work published in 1994 and largely based on his 1988–1989 seminar—an "extratextual" history.[68] In a reading of Montaigne (1533–1592) in his 1989 paper, Derrida argues that in the "absence of natural law" there must be "the supplement of historical [. . .] law."[69] The law, the concept of right (*droit*) can be deconstructed because there is "the history of law, its possible and

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necessary transformation, [and] sometimes its amelioration."[70] Derrida had been interested in the question of right and law since at least *Glas* (1974).[71]

Though Derrida's October 1989 paper marks a change in his discussion of politics and ethics, at least in "an American space," Derrida's work in this period also shows a heightened emphasis on the problem of history and context.[72] It is likely that Derrida's work on the historical contexts of 1920s Germany that influenced and linked such disparate figures as Heidegger, Schmitt and Benjamin began with his as-yet unpublished 1986 seminar on "Theology – Political: Philosophical Nationalism and Nationality."[73] The seminar title may be a reference to Carl Schmitt's *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (1922). Today, in part due to the legacy of Derrida's work, it is also easier to challenge Schmitt's account of sovereignty by arguing that what Schmitt describes as the norm is not homogenous but heterogenous. The absolute decision of the sovereign is then not, as Schmitt argues, an epiphany of the heterogenous but the phantasm of the homogenous.

As is apparent in "First Name of Benjamin," Derrida was evidently interested in Schmitt as a figure that engaged both Benjamin on the "left" and Heidegger on the "right." In taking into account the events in Germany after World War I, Derrida's paper acknowledges a common historical *milieu* and its influence on these three distinctive figures of the period. At the same time, in 1971 Derrida had already warned against a historicist reading of Heidegger that assumes "that there is *nothing more* in Heidegger than the German ideology of the period between the two wars."[74] This is why *milieu* is a better term here than *context* and can be taken not as a simple affirmation of being in the midst or a being in the middle of a determining middle as much as in a *mi-lieu*, a half-placing. With such a *mi-lieu*, for example, one cannot merely say that something is "*in history*."[75]

In "Of the Right to Justice / From Law to Justice," Derrida insists that deconstruction must be able to put into question "the questioning form of thought, interrogating without confidence or prejudice the very history of the question and of its philosophical authority."[76] As we have seen, this call for a *history* of the question—rather than just for an analysis of the essence of the question—can be taken as a reference to *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, but we now know that it also

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goes back to Derrida's 1964–1965 lectures on Heidegger. The question of the philosophical privilege given to questioning in *Being and Time*—*Dasein*'s automatic and autonomous right to the question of the meaning of Being as the basis for the historicity of *Dasein*—is also the problem of "the very history of the question."[77] At the same time, Derrida makes it clear that in relation to justice and injustice his work is driven by a "reinterpretation of the whole apparatus of limits within which a history and culture have been able to confine their criteriology."[78] Deconstruction addresses both the history of the question in philosophy and challenges the historical and cultural borders that can *limit* the concepts of justice and injustice. Deconstruction works *with* history, not simply in or outside of history.

As we have seen, since at least his 1964–1965 lectures on Heidegger Derrida had been interested in the status of tradition and the problem of inheritance. The imperative to justice, Derrida remarks in his 1989 paper, is at once "a sense of responsibility without limits, and so necessarily excessive, incalculable, before memory" and "the responsibility in face of [*devant*] a heritage."[79] As Derrida will later observe in *Specters of Marx*, "an inheritance [*un héritage*] is never gathered together, it is never one with itself," and the question of what came before must always engage with "the radical and necessary *heterogeneity* of an inheritance."[80] A "legacy" must always entail a choice between difficult interpretations or a heritage would simply be a "natural or genetic" cause.[81]

In "Force of Law" Derrida sees his work as a process of two interrelated strategies: there is "the demonstrative and apparently ahistorical allure of logico-formal paradoxes," but there is also a gesture "more historical or more anamnesic" that "seems to proceed through readings of texts, meticulous interpretations and genealogies."[82] This leads him to insist that "the very movement of deconstruction," which is already partly "more historical," is not only "at work" in the history of law and political history but also in "history itself."[83] It is not so much a sudden political "turn" but the "return" to history as an indispensable aspect of deconstruction that makes 1989 a significant date in Derrida's work. At the same time, in the name of a possible "intellectual history" and the irrepressible attempt to establish an accurate chronology, it is important to remember that these remarks were made at a symposium held on 1–2 October 1989, some forty days before the fall of the Berlin Wall.[84]

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4. IN AND OUT OF CONTEXT

Derrida's evocation of a historical milieu in his October 1989 paper is not an isolated event. In the lengthy interview "'The Strange Institution Called Literature,'" given six months before this in April 1989, Derrida also counteracts the notion of a timeless essence of literature by arguing that the "institution of literature in the West, in its relatively modern form, is linked to an authorization to say everything, and doubtless too to the coming about of the modern idea of democracy."[85] In this sense, the history of "literature" begins in the mid-nineteenth century.[86] As Derrida goes on to say, "even if a phenomenon called 'literature' appeared historically in Europe, at such and such a date, this does not mean that one can identify the literary object in a rigorous way. It doesn't mean that there is an essence of literature. It even means the opposite."[87] As we have seen, as he first explained in his interview from 1971 when confronted with the assertion of the *essence* of "X," Derrida turns to the attendant problem of the *history* of this essence of "X" to establish that "X" is not simply natural but already marks a dynamic structural relation between nature and culture and can be deconstructed without lending itself to a determined historicism.[88]

In this 1989 interview on literature, Derrida refers to his 1979–1980 seminar, "The Concept of Comparative Literature and the Theoretical Problems of Translation."[89] He also remarks that his analysis of literature in its historical *mi-lieu*, as a form of writing that coincides with the "modern idea of democracy," was first addressed in his still unpublished 1978–1979 seminar "The Right to Literature."[90] This implies, yet again, that any claim to a political or historical "turn" in Derrida's work in the 1990s will find itself *constantly moving backwards* to earlier work, often from the 1970s. The 1978–1979 seminar focused on "the history of literature" and, in particular, on the emergence of the name and "narrow" concept of *la littérature* in the eighteenth century.[91]

In his 1979–1980 lectures Derrida emphasises that a department of comparative literature in a university needs to be understood as an institution that "has a history, a recent and relatively short history in sum, a history and a geography, a juridical or legitimizing process, a politics, a set of conditions that articulate this history with those of all the other disciplines."[92] As we now better appreciate, these steps are part of Derrida's ongoing analysis of the history and politics of institu-

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tions, notably those concerned with teaching philosophy in France. In October 1990, a year after Derrida delivered the paper "Of the Right to Justice / From Law to Justice," he published *The Right to Philosophy* (*Du droit à la philosophie*), a large collection of works on the question of the institution and philosophy from the mid 1970s to the end of the 1980s. We will come back to this important work. For Derrida, the question of the institution is also the question of history.

For now, it is with a general awareness of Derrida's 1978–1980 seminars on the institution of literature that we can better appreciate his emphasis on the history of literature and historicity in his April 1989 interview. For Derrida, it is precisely an issue of awareness. "We should," he remarks, "become aware of the link between literature, a history of literature, and the metaphysical tradition."[93] This prompts Derrida to declare, "I consider myself very much a historian."[94] However, he also adds a warning about not simply relying on a historical or contextual analysis to counteract the claim for an ahistorical essence. In asserting the authority of the history of literature, one must also interrogate this turn to history and "be suspicious of the metaphysical concept of history."[95]

Derrida describes this link between literature, its history and an awareness of the metaphysical tradition as a "historicity."[96] As we would expect, he contrasts this "historicity" to both the history of the historian and to an avowed historicism. But this "historicity" is also a historicity of *ex-appropriation*. He goes on to wonder whether the constant imperative for the literary writer "to invent something new"' does not also indicate a profound engagement with history, tradition and the past.[97] The literary, no more than the philosophical, can simply avoid history.[98] As Derrida observes, "account cannot not be taken, whether one wish it or not, of the past."[99]

As Geoffrey Bennington has wryly noted, if historians are so worried about getting something back "in" context, Derrida might have asked how it got "out" of context in the first place.[100] Derrida's treatment of the relation between literature and history in his 1989 interview brings us to what we can call the difficult imperative to be *at once* "in" context and "out" of context. In the broadest sense, Derrida's style as a writer and reader always raises the problem of context. Unlike many philosophers, Derrida rarely simply elaborates a series of stand-alone ideas, concepts or positions. As he recalled in an interview from 1994, as a

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student in the early 1950s he was influenced by Martial Guéroult (1891–1976), "a historian of philosophy who was very meticulous, [and] very demanding in his reconstruction of internal logic."[101] Derrida observes, "he was a model for many of us at this time; it was necessary to read as Guéroult read."[102]

Though Derrida goes on to say that he would also now question the assumptions in Guéroult's "type of reading that reconstructed the internal concatenation of a system, step by step and as meticulously as possible," this style of reading is apparent in Derrida's writings.[103] Derrida does not work alone, he always works *with others*; their thought, their logic, their words and their contexts. Of course, the context *of* the other then becomes a relentless *problem*. For example, Plato treats the term *pharmakon* as both a poison and remedy and, in "Plato's Pharmacy" Derrida links *pharmakon* to his work on phonocentrism, logocentrism and writing in general.[104] The question of *pharmakon* as an operation of *la trace* and *différance* is placed in *and* out of this Platonic context.

As he suggests in his 1971 interview, Derrida's approach to reading the other also entails what we might call a structural-contextual awareness. The name of a concept, he argues, is not taken as "the punctual simplicity of a concept."[105] The name of a concept rather registers as "a system of predicates defining a concept" and "a conceptual structure *centered* on a given predicate."[106] At the same time, this structural context is counterbalanced by what Derrida calls "lines of force and forces of rupture that are localizable in the discourse to be deconstructed."[107] This context in turn "depends upon an historical analysis."[108] For Derrida, reading the other entails both a structural and a historical context. The imperative for a perspective that recognizes what is "in" *and* "out" of context is also part of his critique of historicism. An emphasis on registering different contexts should also not forbid the *possibility* of what Derrida calls elsewhere "the contextual wilderness" (*le désert contextuel*).[109]

When it comes to the use of context in literary studies and historiography, one could say that Derrida questions the apparently self-evident assumption that there is an event or a work that can be designated as a discrete unity and can then be placed in relation to a context that is somehow both simply external to this unity and able to imply that this unity can be taken as "internal" in relation to the always "external" context. This logic of using what bounds or surrounds a discrete unity

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relies in its most abstract form on a part-whole relation and inductive or deductive forms of historiography.

One way that this commonly implicit and often reductive logic can be challenged is by accepting that a literary work itself has contexts that are both "internal" and "external." Asked about how one would treat a play like Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* (c. 1595) in historical terms, Derrida insists, "it would be necessary to reconstitute in the most informed and intelligible way, if necessary against the usual history of historians, the historical element in a play like this."[110] He goes on to explain that he is thinking not only of "the historicity of its composition by Shakespeare," but also "what is historical in the play itself."[111] Derrida argues that far from denying the validity of "texts fully conditioned by their history," Shakespeare's works attest to the relational mobility of historical contexts or *mi-lieus* since they "offer themselves so well for reading in historical contexts very distant from their time and place of origin."[112] Both in and out of context, a literary work can have more than one context.

For Derrida, the trans-contextual mobility of Shakespeare is part of a larger question of "the structure of a text in relation to history."[113] When addressing the "structure of a text" it is important to reiterate that for Derrida "text" is not merely an assertion of language or even of writing as the alpha and omega of all things. As Dominick LaCapra observes, treating the relation between texts and contexts as "an explicit problem" does "not imply a conventional 'intratextual' perspective or a so-called linguistics turn."[114] Ten years earlier in "Who or What is Compared?" Derrida had situated "text" within questions not only of language but also those of "*traditio*, the translation or the tradition, of meaning beyond and independently of the living intentionality that aims at it [*le vise*], contains or bears it."[115] As we saw in chapter 2, "text" also accounts for the *possibility* of a relation to the *past*, to history *as* a tradition, a heritage, an inheritance.

For Derrida, the possibility of the relation to the past beyond the apparent *imperium* of the presence of the present is found in the dynamics of *repetition* or "iterability." When something is repeated, when it is transmitted, when it is passed on, it does not only repeat what is the one and the same, so it can simply register itself *as* itself *ad infinitum*. Repetition *also* marks an alteration in which the same is still the same but no longer identical with itself: it registers a relation to the other, to

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another context, to the past, to the future *of* the past. As we saw in chapter 1, the history of the same is also the history of the other.

As Derrida observes in his 1979–1980 seminar, "text" has a relation to history because it indicates not only "oral utterance" and the written "document" but also "makes possible this traditioning [*traditionnante*] iterability, being its element and its condition."[116] In this sense, "text" makes different kinds of contexts and historical contexts, both "in" and "outside" of a work or of an event, possible.[117] In "Limited Inc a b c" (1977), Derrida states quite clearly, "the import of context can never be dissociated from the analysis of a text."[118] He adds that this should also lead us to recognize that "a context is always transformative-transformable."[119]

In 1986, ten years after the publication in English of *Of Grammatology*, Derrida was already reiterating "deconstruction is also a certain thinking about tradition and context."[120] To counteract the ghost of the statement *"there is nothing outside of the text"* (*il n'y a pas de hors-texte*), that single phrase from *Of Grammatology* that was taken up and decontextualized by Foucault, Edward Said (1935–2003) and others in the 1970s to assert that for Derrida "texte" is *only* a written text and therefore that there is nothing outside of language—when it was this very assumption of structural linguistics as "the autonomic hegemony of language" that Derrida was challenging in the mid 1960s—in the next chapter we will need to make a detour to explore the ways that Derrida talked about the issue of context in the 1970s before turning to an important precursor of his 1989–1990 paper on Benjamin, his 1988 lecture "Interpretations at War: Kant, the Jew, the German," which was first published in January 1989.[121]

This 1988 lecture given in Jerusalem will also lead to Derrida's work in the 1970s on the historical and *institutional* contexts for philosophy. In trying to grasp the context for Derrida's response to the political events of 1989–1990 in Europe we turn backwards from the late 1980s to the mid 1970s to the early 1970s, suggesting that there is always *more than one context* when it comes to charting the "intellectual history" of Derrida. To start this detour, it will be helpful to begin with this very problem of "intellectual history," a term associated in this case with the historian Quentin Skinner (1940–) and the so-called Cambridge School of history, and a recent account of Derrida's earliest writings as an example of how to treat "ideas in context."[122] The claims made in this

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work for a properly historical account of "ideas in context" touch directly on Derrida's critique in the early 1970s of the use of the concept of context in speech act theory.

NOTES

1. "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," 202.
2. "Circumfession," 230.
3. "Force of Law," 283, 294. See also *Specters of* Marx, 79; Jacques Derrida, "Hostipitality," in *Acts of Religion*, ed., intro. and trans. Gil Anidjar (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 356–420: 366.
4. Jacques Derrida, "A Certain Impossibility of Saying the Event," *Critical Inquiry* 33.2 (2007): 441–61 (441, 443).
5. "Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides," 90.
6. "Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides," 90–91.
7. *Specters of Marx*, 17.
8. *Derrida: A Biography*, 76.
9. *Derrida: A Biography*, 332–33. See Barbara Day, *The Velvet Philosophers* (London: Claridge Press, 1999).
10. *Derrida: A Biography*, 333, 341.
11. *Derrida: A Biography*, 333–35.
12. *Derrida: A Biography*, 335.
13. *Derrida: A Biography*, 335–38.
14. *Derrida: A Biography*, 338–39.
15. *Specters of Marx*, 69–70.
16. *Derrida: A Biography*, 62.
17. *Derrida: A Biography*, 63. Quoting Jacques Derrida, "L'ami d'un ami de la Chine," in *Aux origins de la Chine contemporaine: en homage à Lucien Bianco* (Paris: L'Hartmattan, 2002), viii–ix.
18. Peeters, *Derrida: A Biography*, 57–79; Baring, *The Young Derrida and French Philosophy*, 82–113. On Algeria, see *Derrida: A Biography*, 71, 74, 85–86, 115–18, 120–23. See also the fifty-two-page letter that Derrida wrote to Pierre Nora on 27 April 1961 in response to an essay by Nora on the situation in Algeria. This was only published in 2012. Pierre Nora and Jacques Derrida, *Les Français d'Algérie*, second edition (Paris: Christian Bourgois, 2012). See also Edward Baring, "Liberalism and the Algerian War: The Case of Jacques Derrida," *Critical Inquiry* 36.2 (2010): 239–61.
19. "Politics and Friendship," 163. See also *Specters of Marx*, 90.

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20. See Jacques Derrida, "Negotiations," in *Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews 1971–2001*, ed. and trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 11–40.

21. Jacques Derrida, "The Place Name(s)—Strasbourg," in *For Strasbourg: Conversations of Friendship and Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 1–16: 8. See also *Derrida: A Biography*, 207–55.

22. *Derrida: A Biography*, 19–34.

23. Jacques Derrida, "Like the Sound of the Sea Deep within a Shell: Paul de Man's War," *Critical Inquiry* 14.3 (1988): 590–652; "Biodegradables: Seven Diary Fragments," *Critical Inquiry* 15.4 (1989): 812–73. See Peeters's judicious overview of these events in *Derrida: A Biography*, 389–99. Derrida's responses to the publication of de Man's wartime writings also raise the problem of history and context. On Derrida's sustained attempt to account for "the determined context" and "the *dominant* context" that informed de Man's writings in 1940–1942, as well as the hostile reading of de Man's subsequent work in 1988, see "Like the Sound of the Sea," 591, 600, 615, 623–27, 633, 638, 640–41, 648. See "Biodegradables," especially Derrida's response to charges of "decontextualization," 826–27, 841–43, 852, 859–62, 867. See also Derrida's later essays on de Man, Jacques Derrida, "Typewriter Ribbon: Limited Ink (2)," and "'Le Parjure,' Perhaps: Storytelling and Lying ('abrupt breaches of syntax')," in *Without Alibi*, ed., trans. and intro. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 71–160, 161–201.

24. "The Other Heading," 17.

25. "The Other Heading," 19, 37–38, 62–63.

26. "The Other Heading," 56–58. On Derrida and politics, see for example: Richard Beardsworth, *Derrida and the Political* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996); Geoffrey Bennington, *Interrupting Derrida* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); A. J. P. Thomson, *Deconstruction and Democracy* (London: Continuum, 2005); Pheng Cheah and Suzanne Guerlac, eds., *Derrida and the Time of the Political* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009); Susanne Lüdemann, *Politics of Deconstruction: A New Introduction to Jacques Derrida* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014); Geoffrey Bennington, *Scatter 1: The Politics of Politics in Foucault, Heidegger and Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016).

27. "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," 218.

28. "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," 202.

29. "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," 197–98.

30. Jacques Derrida, "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," in *Moscou aller–retour, suivi d'un entretien avec N. Avtonomova, V. Podoroga and M. Ryklin* (La Tour d'Aigues: L'Aube, 1995), 11–102. Derrida also criticizes Etiemble

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in his 1979–1980 seminar, see Jacques Derrida, "Who or What is Compared? The Concept of Comparative Literature and the Theoretical Problems of Translation," *Discourse* 30.1–2 (2008): 22–53 (31–35, 40–49).

31. "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," 198.
32. "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," 198; *Moscou aller–retour,* 16.
33. "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," 198.
34. "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," 199.
35. "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," 199.
36. "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," 199.
37. "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," 208.
38. "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," 212.
39. "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," 212.
40. "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," 222.
41. "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," 221; *Moscou aller–retour*, 67.
42. "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," 234.
43. "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," 223. On the critique of the "end of history," see *Specters of Marx*, 56–75.
44. "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," 223.
45. "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," 226, 235.
46. "Back from Moscow, in the USSR," 219, 226; "Force of Law," 260.
47. *Specters of Marx*, 63. See also Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and The Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992).
48. *Specters of Marx*, 62.
49. *Specters of Marx*, 63.
50. *Specters of Marx*, 62.
51. *Specters of Marx*, 69.
52. *Specters of Marx*, 64.
53. "Force of Law," 283, 294; *Force de loi: Le "Fondement mystique de l'autorité"* (Paris: Galilée, 1994), 114.
54. "Force of Law," 281–83.
55. Jacques Derrida, " 'To Do Justice to Freud': The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis," in *Resistances of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 70–118: 79. See also the reference to *epistēmē* and Foucault in *The Archaeology of the Frivolous*, 48.
56. "'To Do Justice to Freud,'" 79.
57. "'To Do Justice to Freud,'" 79.
58. "'To Do Justice to Freud,'" 79.
59. Jacques Derrida, "We Other Greeks," in *Derrida and Antiquity*, ed. Miriam Leonard, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 17–42: 21, 21–22 n. 11.

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60. “We Other Greeks,” 21–22 n. 11.

61. “Force of Law,” 292 n. 46.

62. “Force of Law,” 298.

63. “Envoi,” 108–9, 112.

64. “Force of Law,” 283.

65. “Force of Law,” 296. See Dominick LaCapra, “Reflections on the Historians’ Debate,” in *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 43–68.

66. “Force of Law,” 242.

67. “Force of Law,” 242.

68. *The Politics of Friendship*, 81–82.

69. “Force of Law,” 240.

70. “Force of Law,” 242.

71. As Derrida noted in a 1988 interview, from the mid 1970s he had been interested in exploring how “the essence of the law is not necessarily tied to negativity (prohibition, repression, etc.).” See “Limited Inc,” 133.

72. *A Taste for the Secret*, 56.

73. See http://derridaseminars.org/seminars.html. My translation. See also, “Heidegger’s Ear,” 190, 202, 204–5.

74. *Positions*, 55.

75. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 166. My emphasis. See also, “Punctuations: The Time of a Thesis,” 114.

76. “Force of Law,” 236.

77. See also *The Politics of Friendship*, 150.

78. “Force of Law,” 247.

79. “Force of Law,” 247–48; *Force de loi*, 45.

80. *Specters of Marx*, 16; *Spectres de* Marx, 40.

81. *Specters of Marx*, 16.

82. “Force of Law,” 250.

83. “Force of Law,” 254.

84. See *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, ed. Drucilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfeld and David Gray Carlson (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), vii.

85. “‘The Strange Institution Called Literature,’” 37.

86. See also Jacques Derrida, *Demeure—Fiction and Testimony*, with Maurice Blanchot, *The Instant of My Death*, trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 26.

87. “‘The Strange Institution Called Literature,’” 41.

88. *Positions*, 59. See also *The Gift of Death*, 108; *Demeure*, 27–28.

89. “‘The Strange Institution Called Literature,’” 40. See also http://derridaseminars.org/seminars.html.

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90. "'The Strange Institution Called Literature,'" 40. See also http://derrida-seminars.org/seminars.html.

91. "'The Strange Institution Called Literature,'" 34.

92. "Who or What is Compared?" 27.

93. "'The Strange Institution Called Literature,'" 54.

94. "'The Strange Institution Called Literature,'" 54.

95. "'The Strange Institution Called Literature,'" 54.

96. "'The Strange Institution Called Literature,'" 54.

97. "'The Strange Institution Called Literature,'" 55.

98. See also *A Taste for the Secret*, 15.

99. "'The Strange Institution Called Literature,'" 55.

100. "Derrida's Eighteenth Century," 109.

101. *A Taste for the Secret*, 44–45; *Le goût du secret*, 55. Translation modified.

102. *A Taste for the Secret*, 45; *Le goût du secret*, 55. Translation modified.

103. *A Taste for the Secret*, 45; *Le goût du secret*, 55. Translation modified.

104. "Plato's Pharmacy."

105. *Positions*, 71.

106. *Positions*, 71.

107. *Positions*, 82.

108. *Positions*, 82.

109. *Memories*, 102; *Mémoires—pour Paul de Man* (Paris: Galilee, 1988), 105.

110. "'The Strange Institution Called Literature,'" 63.

111. "'The Strange Institution Called Literature,'" 63.

112. "'The Strange Institution Called Literature,'" 63.

113. "'The Strange Institution Called Literature,'" 63.

114. Dominic LaCapra, "Introduction," in *Soundings in Critical Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 1–10: 7.

115. "Who or What is Compared?" 24.

116. "Who or What is Compared?" 24.

117. See also Jacques Derrida, "Living On: *Border lines*," in *Deconstruction and Criticism*, trans. James Hulbert (New York: Continuum, 1979), 75–176: 84. This text is reprinted as "Living On," in *Parages*, trans. James Hulbert, John P. Leavey Jr. and others (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 103–92.

118. "Limited Inc," 79.

119. "Limited Inc," 79.

120. This passage is taken from Derrida's comments on the back cover of Mark C. Taylor, *Deconstruction in Context: Literature and Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

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121. *Of Grammatology*, 158; *Specters of Marx*, 92. "Interpretations at War" is wrongly dated here as being first published in 1990 (241). It was published in French in January 1989 as "Interpretations at War: Kant, le Juif, l'Allemande," in *Phénoménologie et politiques: Mélanges offerts à Jacques Taminiaux*, ed. Danielle Lories and Bernard Stevens (Paris: Vrin, 1989), 209–302. On Foucault and Said, see Sean Gaston, "Punctuations," in *Reading Derrida's Of Grammatology*, ed. Sean Gaston and Ian Maclachlan (London: Continuum, 2011), xiii–xxvii.

122. See Richard Whatmore, "Quentin Skinner and the Relevance of Intellectual History," in *A Companion to Intellectual History*, eds. Richard Whatmore and Brian Young (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 97–112. See also Edward Baring's "Intellectual History and Poststructuralism," in *A Companion to Intellectual History*, eds. Richard Whatmore and Brian Young (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 48–60. "Intellectual history" is of course a contested term and also notably associated since the 1980s with the wide-ranging work of Dominick LaCapra and his own critical analysis of Derrida's thought. See Dominick LaCapra, "Intellectual History and Critical Theory," in *Soundings in Critical Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 182–210.

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5

A HISTORY OF CONTEXTS

> Nothing *exists* outside of context, as I have often said, but also [. . .] the limit of the frame or the border of the context always entails a clause of nonclosure.
>
> —"Toward An Ethic of Discussion"[1]

1. ALL THE VARIOUS CONTEXTS

One of the more striking aspects of Edward Baring's (1980–) *The Young Derrida and French Philosophy 1945–1968*, published in 2011 by Cambridge University Press as part of its "ideas in context" series—which is a remarkable work of archival scholarship and the first to make extensive use of Derrida's earliest writings as a student in the 1940s and 1950s—is its exclusion of all of Derrida's autobiographical writings and interviews. This exclusion is compounded by the absence of any reflection on Derrida's treatment of the work-as-memoir, the problem of historical memory and the question of "Ideas in Context" in relation to Derrida's own writings on history and the issue of context. How can one write a *history* of Derrida's thought or intellectual development without raising the question of memory and, not least, of his own memories? Barings answer is quite simple: he is only concerned with the years 1945–1968 and almost all of this material in Derrida's work appeared well after this period. To use it would be to distort the historical context as it was at the time and to risk a blatant anachronism. However, Baring also only focuses on Derrida's philosophical writings from the 1960s

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and excludes his work on literary figures such as Artaud, leaving us at best with half a historical context of what it was "really like" at the time.

Baring also makes some strong assertions about this non-anachronistic historical context, notably arguing that Derrida had a pronounced and sustained interest in Christian thought in his earliest writings. As he observes, "religious thought was not a new interest for the middle-aged Derrida, but rather the milieu in which deconstruction developed."[2] The problem on historical grounds with this claim is that Baring is not able to establish whether Derrida's earliest essays were a response to set questions or whether other students also wrote very similar or markedly different essays. At times, Baring seems merely to affirm that there were Christians in Catholic France in the 1950s. The point here is that "the milieu in which deconstruction developed" is more accurately a *mi-lieu*, a half-placing and Derrida himself reflects on this issue in his later quasi-autobiographical writings. Baring justifies the exclusion of Derrida's memories and memoirs with an implicit historical flourish that suggests that the proper job of the historian is to dismiss a certain level of subjectivity in studying the "young Derrida." Baring states, "we should treat such autobiographical writings with caution, especially when they serve to bolster the myth Derrida carefully constructed of his own relationship to the French mainstream."[3]

Baring implies that Derrida characterized himself as a uniquely isolated figure in the French academy, a claim that is neither substantiated by Derrida's detailed interviews on his early years nor by Benoît Peeters's extensive account of Derrida's intellectual life in his 2010 biography.[4] Baring argues that the "intellectual historian" needs to respond to an apparent consensus in Derrida studies "to distance Derrida's thought from its context" by reasserting the events, people, institutions and prevailing thoughts that surrounded Derrida—and quite a few others—in France in the 1950s and 1960s.[5] However, this "objective" context is itself in danger of creating a generalized and rather weak historical account of Derrida—the "Christian" Derrida at the "origin" of deconstruction is the most obvious example—not least because Baring wants to reinstate the *proximity* of Derrida's thought to its context while rigorously keeping a *distance* from all of Derrida's own extensive writings and interviews on this very context.[6]

Nonetheless, Baring's wider scholarship on French philosophy and its institutions from 1945–1968 is impressive and, at times, quite illumi-

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nating. His close reading and analysis of Derrida's earliest writings as a student are invaluable and, most notably, have done much to explain how Derrida came to translate and write a long introduction to Husserl's *Origin of Geometry* in 1961. Having tracked Derrida's immersion in the circling eddies of existentialism, Communism and Christianity, Baring charts Derrida's turn to Husserl as part of a political and scientific interest in the phenomenological basis for rationality and objectivity.[7] However, it must be said that Baring's lack of engagement with Derrida's extensive meditations on the problems of context, memory, narrative, biography, autobiography and the institution seems an extraordinary lack of *philosophical* context in a work published under the banner of "ideas in context." Baring's historical work is the most significant use of Derrida's archive to date but it says nothing about Derrida's own "mature" reflections on the archive itself.[8] Is there something in this "ideas in contexts" that prohibits or forbids a sustained philosophical reflection on the problem of context itself?

The Ideas in Context series published by Cambridge University Press is indebted to the historical work of Quentin Skinner and describes its general aims in the following terms:

> The procedures, aims and vocabularies that were generated will be set in the context of the alternatives available within the contemporary framework of ideas and institutions. Through detailed studies of the evolution of such traditions, and their modifications by different audiences, it is hoped that a new picture will form of the development of ideas in their concrete contexts. By this means, artificial distinctions between the history of philosophy, of the various sciences, of society and politics, and of literature may be seen to dissolve.[9]

"Context" is registered here by the "alternatives available" at the time, hence Derrida's apparent sustained interest in Christianity in the 1950s when Christian existentialism was a prevailing "contemporary framework." The "different audiences" in this case are the actual enthusiasts for Christian existentialism that can provide the "context" for the young "Christian" Derrida. These two contextual gestures certainly give us a "new picture" but perhaps not a "concrete" context.

This context for any work published in the "ideas in context" series explains why Baring has said as little as possible about the "later" Derri-

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da reflecting on the "early" Derrida and largely omitted Derrida's work after 1968, even if it focuses on the various methodological problems of the relation between philosophy, history, biography, autobiography and the archive. It is a pity that Baring also neglects the "later" Derrida's interest in anachronism itself, as it is the fear of the "after" being used to understand the context of the "before" that haunts this context for *all* ideas in context.[10] As Rebecca Comay has observed, in responding to the French Revolution even Hegel, the architect of absolute knowledge, could not avoid a persistent anachronism.[11]

The notion of a context that is strictly guided by "the contemporary framework" as the basis for treating "the development of ideas in their concrete contexts" (which might be described as a double context) is indebted to the distinguished work of Quentin Skinner. In an influential essay from 1969, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," Skinner challenged Arthur O. Lovejoy's (1873–1962) account of "the history of ideas." In *The Great Chain of Being: The History of an Idea* (1936) Lovejoy is seen generally to have made the case for hermetically sealed classical ideas gliding through history. However, Lovejoy may have focused on impermeable "unit-ideas" but he also saw these as parts of "unstable," "complex" and "heterogeneous" aggregates that could be contrasted with the smooth homogenous wholes in the history of philosophy.[12] It is important to recall that the "history of ideas" was introduced as a critique of a post-Hegelian understanding of the history of philosophy.[13]

In Derrida's terms, as he suggested in "Violence and Metaphysics," the origin—in this case of the "young" Derrida—would be found not at an ahistorical starting point but in *the midst of* a history that cannot be governed by an ahistorical inauguration: it is "an *inscribed* origin."[14] The origin—and even the context of the origin—can only hope to be reconstituted as a pure origin *retrospectively*. In this instance, the "before" can only be reached by going through the "after" and cannot be scrubbed clean of this temporal, historical and contextual process. The "before" would be marked and re-marked—doubled in its quest to treat itself *as* itself—by the "after." From this perspective, Baring could—and should—have taken account of the "mature" Derrida in his "intellectual history" of the "young" Derrida.[15]

Skinner argues in "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," that the history of ideas encourages an easy disregard for the

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historically actual, accurate and possible contemporary contexts for intellectual thought. The history of ideas must be determined far more rigorously in a comprehensive historical field: an idea must always be taken "in context." The "before" can *only* be contemporary *with itself* or with what has preceded it and can be properly documented *as* contemporary. Skinner quite rightly objects to a prevailing assumption that at various historical periods certain people had read everything and understood everything, most notably the entire surviving corpus of the classical period.[16] Lovejoy's model of the history of ideas relies on a fallacious confidence in the fully and clearly enunciated doctrines of writers in the classical period. The easy assimilation of the past *in toto* can be as historically misleading as the most egregious anachronism.[17] Both errors rely on the present as the measure of the past.

A critique of Skinner's ideas in context must contend with his reliance on a theory of language to articulate a new form of historiography. Skinner turns to J. L. Austin's (1911–1960) interpretation of speech act theory. Austin's *How to Do Things With Words* (1962) makes a distinction between speaking as a "constative" statement of fact (such as "the car is red") and speaking as a "performative" statement (such as "I will be there tomorrow"). Performative statements undertake to do something; they place speaking *in relation to* a *potential situation*. Skinner uses speech act theory to challenge the epistemological idealizations inherent in Lovejoy's history of ideas. We should be asking, he argues, not only what thinkers of the past were "*saying*," confronting their intended "meaning," but also what they were actually "*doing*," and "understanding" the possible contexts and viable reception of their written works at the time of writing.[18] The rigor of this distinction rests on an accurate assessment of the historical context for these written works, hence the emphasis on ideas *in* context. Taken in context, these ideas demonstrate the limits of what could be done or performed in "the contemporary framework." This argument could also be seen as an instance of a circular logic: ideas in context are reinforced *as* performative statements by being taken *in* context because they can be treated *as* limited performative statements.

Can one treat performative statements as the self-evident *confirmation* of an authoritative context? It is this question—which also touches on the assumption of the "ordinary language" philosophers that ordinary language can bring a new veracity to philosophy through an always

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compliant and seemingly transparent context of ordinary usage and meaning—that Derrida asked two years after Skinner's essay in his 1971 paper "Signature Event Context." Skinner's own criticisms of deconstruction seem to rest on Derrida's 1969 article "The Double Session," which offers a sustained critique of the prevailing thematic models of literary criticism.[19] In his 1969 article, Skinner's persuasive refutation of history as the recovery of fundamental unit-ideas is based on Lovejoy's inability to recognize that ideas are often used with "varying and incompatible intentions" and "ambiguous" contexts. Skinner's elegant solution is to call for the study of "all the various contexts."[20] This solution could suggest the tempting dream of history as that which uniquely delivers *all* the contexts. It is the claim to the *pan*-contextual through using a theory of language as the basis for a more rigorous historical interpretation that we need to examine in Derrida's writings from the 1970s, notably "Limited Inc a b c" (1977), an extended response to John R. Searle's (1932–) attack on "Signature Event Context." Searle is best known as the author of *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*—another work from 1969.[21]

At the same time, it is important to note that the "ideas in context" movement has its own shifting contexts. Far from the exact "contemporary framework" of 1969, in some remarks from 2002 Skinner has spoken again of his criticism of Lovejoy by placing more emphasis on an unavoidable "radical contingency in the history of thought."[22] Would we be transgressing the accurate contextual and historical assessment of what was said and done in a series of writings in 1969—in works published that year by Skinner, Derrida and Searle—if we allowed a statement published thirty-three years later to alter the context of Skinner's 1969 essay? Certainly, Skinner in 2002 suggests that we should see a "radical contingency" that is not immediately apparent in his 1969 essay.

What is a contingency "in the history of thought" that is also "radical"? Is this merely a more emphatic injunction to a necessary caution or scepticism? Or is it the claim that contingency alone is not enough when it comes to a historically accurate treatment of "the history of thought"? Is a "history of thought" possible when contingency *must* also be radical? Does this invalidate a contingency that just happens to be non-radical? One could see Skinner's own very understandable performative speech act of retrospection as the affirmation of an unavoidable

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anachronism when it comes to understanding his own article. In retrospect, the "after" alters the context for the "before." As Martin Jay (1944–) argued in 2011, historical events can also be understood as much by their aftermath and legacy as their immediate or preexisting contexts.[23] This takes us back to Derrida's August 1971 paper "Signature Event Context," delivered at a conference in Montreal.

2. MOBILE CONTEXTS

In "Signature Event Context," Derrida is primarily concerned with a series of "very determined philosophical presuppositions" that support general notions of language and communication.[24] The context for his writing on context is the assumption that there is an assured and clearly determined context that can support a philosophy of language that privileges an "ordinary," "everyday" and "natural" language. He is therefore not specifically dealing with the question of a historical context as it is used in the writing of history. However, he is still very much concerned with the treatment of writing in the "entire history of philosophy" as merely an extended or distanced form of communication.[25] In this history, writing is seen "within a milieu that is fundamentally continuous and equal to itself, within a homogeneous element across which the unity and integrity of meaning is not affected in an essential way. Here, all affection is accidental."[26] The "good" context for both ordinary language philosophers and historians is a reliable transportation system that is only beset by the occasional accident on the road or by the vicissitudes of wear and tear over the ages.

Derrida is concerned with the implications of the traditional notion of writing as a viable form of communication that exceeds its initial context. Writing, he observes, "can give rise to an iteration [a repetition] both in the absence of and beyond the presence of the empirically determined subject who, in a given context, has emitted or produced it."[27] As a communication, writing can therefore be taken as "a force of rupture" in relation to its context: something is still readable even when it is no longer clear to whom the writing was originally addressed or what was the meaning, intentions, experience and circumstances of the writer.[28] One could take this as an extreme rejection or confident negation of context, both in communication and in dealing with historical

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documents. And yet no historical document or even a fragment of a document is entirely without some context. But this is not an absolute negation of context. It is not a claim that we are continually confronted by Egyptian hieroglyphs as they were seen before Champollion deciphered the Rosetta stone.

Derrida's point is that this dislocation of context registers the very *possibility* of a writing that can be not only repeatable but also readable in another context, in many other contexts. Derrida's target is the implicit assumption that a concept of context always registers "a set [*ensemble*] of presences which organize the moment of its inscription."[29] This challenges the apparently self-evident and idealized notion of context as an "external" perimeter surrounding an "internal" unity.[30] Derrida argues that both writing and speaking, or communication in general, reiterate "there are only contexts without any center of absolute anchoring (*il n'y a que des contextes sans aucun centre d'ancrage absolu*)."[31] This statement in 1971 can already be taken as an attempt to counterbalance the hostile reading of *Of Grammatology*. *There are contexts*: but one must still question both the "theoretical determination" of the ideal context and the assumption that there is a context that can function as an entirely sufficient "empirical saturation."[32] As Dominick LaCapra has argued, "intellectual history" is still possible if context is treated as a viable but "limited, critical concept in historical research."[33] How often has a work of historiography relied on the great sponge of context to soak up a host of complexities and incompatibilities?

For Derrida the context of this critique of context and communication in 1971 is quite specific and his paper is primarily focused on Austin's speech act theory. Austin's attempt to create a taxonomy for constative and performative statements, Derrida notes, "permanently demand a value of *context*, and even of an exhaustively determinable context, whether de jure or teleologically."[34] This "total context," or "total situation" as Austin himself calls it, reinforces the classical assumptions about the necessary context for communication as "the conscious presence of the intention of the speaking subject for the totality of his locutory act."[35] As with the so-called ordinary language philosophers, in his analysis of the performative Austin privileges and idealizes and even gives an ontological status to what he calls "ordinary circumstances."[36] How "ordinary," we might ask, are the contexts that Skinner evoked in his critique of the history of ideas and how "ordinary" are the

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contexts of an "intellectual history" of Derrida that is situated in the "ideas in context" series? How far does the practice of history as a form of "Ideas in Context" replicate Austin's own assumptions about the philosophical status of a context? As Derrida observes, "for a context to be exhaustively determinable, in the sense demanded by Austin, it at least would be necessary for the conscious intention to be totally present and actually transparent for itself and others, since it is a determining focal point [*foyer*] of the context."[37]

As his title, "Signature Event Context," suggests Derrida also questions the logic of the ordinary and not-ordinary contexts for speech acts by turning to the question of "the eventhood [*l'événementialité*] of an event."[38] What happens, Derrida asks, to the context of a performative speech act when it is quoted or cited in another context or in a series of different contexts?[39] The *possibility* of the speech act is always tied to its iterability, to its repetition and its alteration. As Derrida remarks in "Limited Inc a b c," "iteration alters, something new takes place."[40] However, he goes on to say in "Signature Event Context," this iterability should not invite an opposition between the repeatable and the non-repeatable but rather "a differential typology of forms of iteration," because all general forms of communication that are identifiable, readable, even "ordinary," need to be repeatable in some fashion: the call for conventionality or ordinariness is itself a testament to a differential repetition.[41]

At the same time, it is important to underline the lasting influence of Austin's distinction between the constative and the performative on Derrida's work.[42] As much as Derrida criticized its limits and transformed its possibilities, as he suggests in a paper from 1980 the performative prompts a new way of thinking about the relation between language, events and institutions. As Derrida remarks, "Austin's notion of a speech not confined to stating, describing, saying that which is, but producing or transforming, by itself, under certain conditions, the situation of which it speaks" can be linked directly to the institutional context of performativity in the university as "the output of a technical system, in that place where knowledge and power are no longer distinguished."[43] Placing language in relation to a *potential* situation no doubt raises the problem of either celebrating or limiting the *imperium* of the "linguistic turn." For Derrida, taking up and rethinking the performative was part of the same project he had undertaken in *Of Grammatolo-*

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gy: to criticize the characterization of and the authority given to structural linguistics across the human sciences.

Derrida's 1971 paper led to a polemical exchange with John R. Searle in the 1970s and culminated in Derrida's publication of the long article "Limited Inc a b c" in 1977 and an extended letter to Gerald Graff (1937–), "Toward An Ethic of Discussion," which was included as an afterword when this work was published in 1988 as a book under the title *Limited Inc*.[44] In his detailed and careful response to Searle, which challenges Searle's highly critical account of "Signature Event Context," Derrida questions what he sees as "an entire system of theoretical-methodological idealizations and exclusions" in Searle's theory of speech acts.[45]

For Derrida, iterability is not immune from ideality, as it accounts for the *possibility* of the same *as* the same; but iterability cannot be idealized because it also registers the limit of idealization as *both* "repetition *and* alteration," of the same *as* the same that is *also* non-identical, of the same *as* the other.[46] Derrida's early work on Husserl had alerted him to the possibilities and limitations of all projects of ideality.[47] As he remarks in a paper from May 1990, *ideality* accounts for something that "exceeds the borders of sensible empiricity or of particularity in general in order to open onto the infinite and give rise to the universal."[48]

In his re-elaboration of "Signature Event Context" in 1977, Derrida also argues that "a new logic" is needed for thinking about context.[49] Taken as an aspect of iterability, context should be able to move beyond the *impasse* of two alternatives: either context has an excessive force that "determines what it determines *from within*" and therefore "changes everything," or context lacks this force and leaves "something intact" which can always "separate itself [*s'affranchir*] from the allegedly 'original' context" and can attach and detach itself from a variety of different contexts.[50] One could associate this alternative in very broad terms with the difference between a Marxist historical determinism and the most agile and trans-historical history of ideas.

However, Derrida does not treat either of these traditional positions as points of departure. In the first case, the excessive context already disrupts the notion of a pristine, untouchable a-contextuality, which could be taken as the basic assumption of a history of ideas or a history of philosophy in the Hegelian sense. In the second case, the "something intact" is not an affirmation of a trans-historical idea but rather the

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recognition of the resistance of a differential repetition that exceeds the notion of a first or determinate context and also gives itself to other, new and different contexts. Context can be rethought, and certainly not invalidated, by treating these two alternatives as the dynamics of a disruption of an a-contextual "interiority" and the affirmation of a more mobile and variegated contextual "exteriority." As Derrida concludes, "a context never creates itself *ex nihilo*."[51]

Derrida ends "Signature Event Context" with an affirmation of the link between deconstruction and history. He has kept using "the old name of writing," he explains, precisely because it marks "the transition [*le passage*] and indispensable adherence to an effective *intervention* in the constituted historical field. And it is also to give their chance and their force, their power of *communication*, to everything played out in the operations of deconstruction."[52] The argument that "to be legible" a signature must have "a repeatable, iterable, imitable form" is a question of tradition, of transmission and inheritance.[53] It is a question of history.

In 1988, eleven years after "Limited Inc a b c," Derrida gave the long interview, "Toward An Ethic of Discussion," about his conflict with Searle in the 1970s and in June of that year delivered his paper "Interpretations at War: Kant, the Jew, the German" in Jerusalem. The interview is a series of written responses to Gerald Graff's questions and begins by referring to "the essential predicament [*trouble*] of all speech and of all writing, that of *context* and of *destination*."[54] Derrida's work in the mid 1970s on the problem of *destination* is addressed most obviously in *The Post Card* (1980) and, as we have seen, engages with Heidegger's notion of the history of Being as the sending off or sending out (*Schicken*) that also has a clear destination (*Geschick*). It has perhaps taken longer to appreciate the focus in this period on the problem of *context*.

In "Toward An Ethic of Discussion," Derrida makes a point of linking deconstruction to a relation between tradition and the perspective of a "historian."[55] Speaking about Searle's treatment of "a certain Continental tradition," Derrida suggests that he himself could be seen as "more of a historian" because he is a "less passive, more attentive and more 'deconstructive' heir of that so-called tradition."[56] The question of context for speech act theory is also a question of engaging with the history of philosophy. At the same time, Derrida insists that this gesture is not akin to Hegel's claim to philosophy as a final mastery or *Aufhe-*

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bung of the entire tradition. For Derrida, this attentive relation to tradition could also make one "more foreign to that tradition."[57]

As we saw in chapter 3, in the 1970s Derrida explored a range of movements of re-appropriation, which he challenged not simply with the absolute negation of an expropriation but with the counter-movement of an *ex-appropriation*. In "Toward An Ethic of Discussion," he refers to the problem of the relation between context and re-appropriation as "the reconstitution of a context."[58] The attempt to reconstruct a context is an unavoidable in historiography. Derrida argues that while there is usually "a regulative ideal" in the ethics of such an attempt, one must also recognize that these reconstructions "can never be perfect and irreproachable."[59] This may seem obvious; but it also suggests that Derrida sees the ethics—and politics—of reconstructing a context in terms of a *necessary* ideal, the imperative to be accurate and scrupulous *and* in terms of the recognition of a *limit*, of the possibility of a less than ideal reconstruction. As a problem of re-construction, context becomes a negotiation between the ideal and its limitation.

Derrida argues that the "redetermination" of any context must also take account of the interests and partialities that inform this reconstruction.[60] Echoing Nietzsche, Derrida insists "the simple recalling of a context is never a gesture that is neutral, innocent, transparent, [or] disinterested."[61] The reconstruction of a historical context must contend with at least two contrary imperatives. There must be a responsibility towards an ideal reconstruction of the past "as it was" and there must be a vigilant awareness that any reconstruction—in the past or in the present—is never disinterested. If we take this beyond a sense of declaring one's interests or of discovering the hidden motives of others, it suggests that the ideal to make the context "as it was" is interwoven or interlayered with other interests that want to make the context "as it should have been." The gap between "as it was" and "as it should have been" gives us the challenge of a multi-layered context, of *more than one* context in a work of historiography that resists either appropriation or re-apporiation in its re-construction of context.

Responding once again to the misunderstanding of his use of *text* in *Of Grammatology*, Derrida makes it clear here, "the concept of text or of context which guides me embraces and does not exclude the world, reality, [or] history."[62] Derrida goes out of his way to include context in "one of the definitions of what is called deconstruction."[63] Deconstruc-

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tion can be characterized as the taking account of a "limitless context" (*contexte sans bord*), which invites "the sharpest [*la plus vive*] and broadest attention possible to context, and thus to the incessant movement of recontextualization."[64] For Derrida, the approach to context must always include an awareness of the strategies and limitations of recontextualisation in relation to *ex-appropriation*.

From a political perspective, context then becomes the problem of taking account of "the mobility of contexts [*contextes mobiles*] that are constantly being reframed."[65] The recognition of this mobility is not a rejection of determined contexts. As Derrida observes, "one cannot do anything" without "determining" a context.[66] The awareness of the mobility of contexts enables one to treat "a given context" as "differentiated and mobile."[67] It is a matter of engaging with an *ex-appropriation* or "the *différantial* conditions of determinable history."[68] This history deals with "a certain stability" that is "provisional and finite" and cannot be taken as an "absolute, eternal, intangible, [and] natural" stability.[69] The critical issue is that context has "an essential nontotalization."[70] *There is context* and "the context is only relatively stable"—but it is *relatively* stable. When it approaches the problem of context, deconstruction does not advocate a radical or assured instability.[71]

3. AN INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Derrida's 1988 Jerusalem paper was part of his 1984–1988 seminar on "Philosophical Nationality and Nationalism."[72] In a series of conference papers given in Toronto in 1984, Derrida introduced this seminar by focusing on the relation between philosophical discourses and languages that were seen to be "natural" and "national."[73] As he explained in 1990, these lectures raised "the problem of the historical circumstances and political stakes that constituted the privilege of a natural language in the study of philosophy."[74] This comment is made in a note at the start of the lectures in the French edition. It is particularly odd that it has been left out of the English translation, as Derrida's own lectures open with the omission of a passage by Descartes on translation from subsequent editions of Descartes's work. In Derrida's case, what has been removed is the explicit emphasis on the "*circonstances historiques*" in his 1984 lectures.

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In his first paper, Derrida explores Descartes's arguments for publishing the *Discourse on Method* (1637) in French rather than Latin and focuses on the difficulty in bringing together the imperative for a universal ahistorical sense of natural reason with the call to use a natural language such as French for a philosophy that can only be particular and historical.[75] What interests Derrida is that in Descartes's case between these two versions of the natural there is a historical context or "the historical dimension of a language."[76] He focuses on "a paradigmatic event": the 1539 royal ordinance of Villers-Cotterêtes decreeing that a range of legal processes will henceforth be conducted not in Latin but in French.[77] Derrida offers a historical context for Descartes's decision to publish in French but he also insists that this context remains *insufficient*—the context cannot account in a programmatic fashion for the event itself.[78] Derrida does not see this context as "external" and Descartes's work as "internal." It is rather a question of how, when read together with Descartes's work, this historical context or *mi-lieu* invites a "recontextualization."[79] For Derrida, this recontextualization is apparent in the decision in the 1644 Latin translation of Descartes's work to remove the opening passage from the 1637 edition where Descartes explains his decision to write in French, which is an integral part of his work and of the presentation of the *cogito* as *je pense*, as "I think."[80]

The Jerusalem paper most likely captures the closing stages of this four-year seminar. As Derrida notes, Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814) had argued that the *cogito* "manifests itself to itself originally in its national determination, as belonging to a spirit, a history, [and] a language."[81] For Fichte, the subject is constituted *as* a subject by its relation to the nation. Nationalism raises the problem of the relation between the subject and "a history." For Derrida, this is also a recognition that the "I" appears "to itself in its relation to the other."[82] In time, and after its full publication, we may come to see this four-year seminar from the 1980s as a sustained, complex *enactment* of the link in Derrida's thought between the questions of context, history and politics that began in the mid 1970s with his writings on the institution.

In the *avant-texte* of his Jerusalem paper, Derrida makes it clear that his focus on the thought of Hermann Cohen and Franz Rosenzweig is being addressed "in the politico-institutional context of the 'emancipation,' of the two world wars, of Zionism and Nazism."[83] This context

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leads directly to a series of questions: "What is a context? How does one determine its openness and its closedness? How does one delimit the institutionality of a context? What does it mean to take account of an institutional context in an interpretation, when a context always remains 'open' and unsaturable? stabilizable, but only because it is essentially unstable and labile?"[84]

These general questions about context are related in turn to another context, "an *institutional context*" as found in June 1988 in Jerusalem that takes account of "the one which is determined today, here, now, by a university, a state, an army, a police force, religious authorities, languages, peoples, and nations."[85] Derrida makes a point of adding that this current political focus should not be seen as in any way separated from his "historical reflexion," which addresses both the question of context and of the history of Western philosophy.[86] The politico-institutional question is *also* a question of context and history. As Derrida remarks four years later, in a lecture from July 1992, there are always contexts *and* no context is "absolutely saturable or saturating [*saturable ou saturant*]."[87]

Derrida goes on to say that both Cohen and Rosenzweig "date" their works on the relation between Judaism and Germany to the First World War.[88] This dated context is part of "a highly determined politico-institutional context" that Derrida elaborates in some detail, focusing on the distinctive place that Cohen and Rosenzweig give to Kant and neo-Kantianism at the start of the twentieth century in thinking about Judaism and Germany.[89] This intellectual and institutional *mi-lieu* is given a larger context when Derrida recalls that Heidegger succeeded Cohen in his chair at Marburg. We also know that Heidegger defined his position in the late 1920s with his critique of neo-Kantianism, which culminated in his 1929 work *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*.[90] Derrida's colleague Emmanuel Levinas was witness to the debate between Heidegger and Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945) at Davos in April 1929, which was taken by many as a decisive conflict over neo-Kantianism in German philosophy. In an interview from 1986, Levinas recalled Cassirer as "a humanist of refined and patrician manner, neo-Kantian, [and a] glorious disciple of Hermann Cohen."[91]

Rather than see Derrida's paper as a treatment of the antecedents of later events in Germany philosophy, not least because he challenges models of thought that rely on the *arkhé* and *télos* as their already

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assured points of departure and arrival, we can see "Interpretations at War" as engaging with a series of *spreading* contexts that cross over and drift apart—from Cohen and Rosenzweig dating their work to the 1914–1918 war to Cassirer and Heidegger debating in 1929 to Derrida in Jerusalem in 1988. It is the breadth of context that marks the difference here. As Derrida himself remarks: "It is too often forgotten, when one is interested in Husserl and Heidegger, that this neo-Kantian sequence largely determined the context *in* which, that is to say also *against* which, Husserl's phenomenology, later the phenomenological ontology of the early Heidegger (who moreover succeeded Cohen in his Marburg chair—and this also marks an institutional context in the strictest sense) arose: against neo-Kantianism and in another relation to Kant."[92] It is this sense of *layers* or of different overlapping contexts that distinguishes Derrida's treatment of historiography.

In Derrida's emphasis here on the neo-Kantian context that informed the work of Husserl and Heidegger it is also a matter both of "the context *in* which" (le contexte *dans* lequel) they formulated their ideas and the context "*against* which" (*contre* lequel) these ideas were formed.[93] The problem of context is not only the location of something *in* a static context. It also a question of the reaction *against* this context, which already generates other related contexts. This gives us a sense of *mobile contexts*. For our purposes, the significance of these contexts is that they allow Derrida to mark specific historical contexts, to place these contexts in relation to other contexts and to use these layered contexts to chart a range of theories of history.

For example, noting the militant patriotism of German Jewish philosophers such as Cohen and Husserl during the 1914–1918 war and that "this German culture or society practiced, officially and institutionally, a form of legal anti-Semitism," Derrida also refers to the "*aura*" given to German professors of philosophy—such as Cohen and Heidegger at different periods—who were seen to transcend the limits of academic philosophy.[94] These contexts are then juxtaposed with Cohen's argument that there is a Platonic-Protestant-German-Jewish "spirit" that is manifested at decisive moments in German history.[95] Derrida treats this history of a unifying spirit (*Geist*) as a *trans*-historical ideality. It is precisely a history that either glides through historical contexts or disperses them with its assured teleology. For Derrida, this history *of* spirit and history *as* spirit—with its Hegelian antecedents—can be de-

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constructed because it is constituted by a series of cultural and institutional contexts. Cohen's German-Jewish "psyche" is not based on a question of blood or race and its genealogy is not "natural."[96]

Derrida uses these mobile and layered contexts as a counter narrative to Cohen's history of spirit as trans-historical ideality. Cohen emphasizes a link between Judaism and Protestantism that Derrida describes as "the demand for knowledge and freedom of interpretation without institution."[97] This Lutheran structure of interpretation can be described as a self-institution (*s'instituer*), which is both "anti-institutional and archi-institutional."[98] Derrida notes that in the context of writing to American Jews in 1915 to persuade them to take Germany's side in the war, Cohen treats the institutional anti-Semitism in German universities as only "a contextual and an institutional question" in relation to his account of the "Judeo-Kantian law."[99] Derrida responds by arguing "the choice here is not between an institutional context and a fundamental authority but between two orders of interpretation and institutionality, for what I am calling the Judeo-Kantian also belongs to the order of historical events [*événements historiques*]."[100]

Derrida's 1988 Jerusalem paper employs terms from his earlier critique of an ideal trans-historicity in Husserl but it also differs from the work of the 1960s because it places figures such as Cohen and Heidegger in a historical and *institutional* context.

In his 1975–1976 seminar on theory and practice Derrida had already argued that Heidegger's critique of the modern concept of technology evokes the history of metaphysics as a "philosophical continuum."[101] Derrida takes this as an example of the way in which the "object" of the essay also demonstrates the "effects" of the object on the essay itself.[102] This "effect" is political and contextual. Heidegger's questioning of the "techno-metaphysical" invites the larger question of "the social-political, university-institutional scene."[103] This larger question, which is as much a question of context as of politics, is precisely what Derrida began to focus on from 1974 in a series of seminars, papers and essays that were partially published in 1990 under the title *Right to Philosophy* (*Droit à la philosophie*). This work also emerges after he begins to articulate the dynamics of *ex-appropriation* as his response to the problem of history.

In an essay published in 1976, "Where a Teaching Body Begins and How It Ends," which refers to his 1974–1975 seminar on ideology,

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given as part of the collective of teachers and students known as GREPH (*Groupe de Recherches sur l'Enseignement Philosophique*) responding to proposed changes to the teaching of philosophy in France, Derrida reiterates that deconstruction is concerned with "a—new—modality of the internal self-critique of philosophy."[104] But it is *also* concerned with "the (practical) critique of the philosophical institution as it stands."[105] This "external" focus is explicitly political and contextual. It is focused on a "positive" transformation" in addressing "very concrete forms, the most efficient ones possible in France, in 1975."[106]

What is interesting here is that Derrida associates this political gesture with the need to engage with "a historical and political test."[107] In describing his own place in the teaching body and the university institution Derrida also notes that he works "under the title of maître-assistant of the history of philosophy."[108] The question of the institution, of context, was also for Derrida the problem of carrying the title of teacher of *the history of philosophy*. In his discussion of Hegel's thoughts on the teaching of philosophy, Derrida points out that Hegel specifically argued that the history of philosophy should not be taught at secondary school.[109]

What interests Derrida here is the equivocal influence in the nineteenth century of the ideals of the French Revolution. This influence informs "the entire politico-pedagogical history from the nineteenth century to the present."[110] Derrida therefore proposes a *history* of teaching philosophy from the late eighteenth century to the mid 1970s. This is not a history of ideas, though it clearly involves many philosophical concepts, not least the idealization of the "teaching body" when it comes to teaching philosophy, but rather a history of the institutions *of* philosophy in France in this period.[111] It is an *institutional* history.[112]

For example, in the 1976 paper "The Age of Hegel," Derrida examines an 1822 letter by Hegel on the teaching of philosophy that has been considered a "minor" work through its relation to the "major" works. This context informs the "dominant concept" or institution of philosophy to the extent that this letter on the philosophical and political question of teaching philosophy had not been included in Hegel's published correspondence.[113] Derrida argues that this letter in fact marks "the moment" of "a transition of extreme historical complexity" when the state became involved directly in the teaching of philosophy.[114] He explicitly argues that Hegel's letter must be read in "its

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historical and political context" and "intraphilosophical" context.[115] As part of GREPH, Derrida's work in this period is placed relentlessly in relation to the *problem* of history. The "*avant-project*" for the group asks whether it is possible "to propose a general, critical, and transformative history?"[116]

4. SPREADING AND RECEDING CONTEXTS

The question of history and context in Derrida's work should also be understood in relation to the history of the delivery and publication of Derrida's own writings. As we shall see in chapter 6, the date, the dating and re-dating of Derrida's works signals ongoing problems about autobiography, memory and a public-private history in academic publication. The dating of works also raises new challenges for charting the contexts of a possible "intellectual history." For example, in December 1990, eight months after delivering the extended version of "First Name of Benjamin," Derrida gave a paper that was first published in an edited collection in 1992 and subsequently published seven years later in 1999 in a revised and expanded form as a book under the title *Donner la mort* or *The Gift of Death*, as it was translated into English.[117] This work, which focuses in part on Jan Patocka's *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History* (1975) and in part on Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* (1843), appears at the start of the 1990s and has numerous references in its revised form to Derrida's work throughout the 1990s. It should therefore be dated as a work with range of dates: 1990–1999.[118]

As Derrida himself noted at the start of his 1987 collection of essays, *Psyche: Inventions of the Other*, when it comes to the various essays and papers in this book, "these texts never conform exactly to their first versions, whose place of publication is noted each time."[119] This suggests that any "intellectual history" of Derrida would need to take account of both the first date of delivery or publication of a work and its later date of republication in a revised form. The contexts for these works are, unavoidably, mobile. These works then not only have two dates—in the case of *Donner la mort* it is actually three dates, 1990, 1992 and 1999—but also a range of dates, since we usually do not know when these revisions were made and there are often explicit references

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to ongoing work after the initial delivery or publication of the first version of the work.

Donner la mort has a *history* of delivery, publication and revision that "covers" most of the 1990s and alerts us to the fact that many of Derrida's works have a comparable extended or spread-out history. In this particular case, Derrida adds footnotes to other works published after 1990 and incorporates arguments and areas of interest from the mid to late 1990s in a work that was also, most likely, written in 1990. Any "intellectual history" of Derrida therefore needs to confront the particular problem of dating works from their first appearance to their final publication (often after extensive revisions and publication in more than one language). There is a complex relation here between "before" and "after" that exceeds, or at least complicates, the strictures of the "Ideas in Context" series and its "contemporary framework[s]." *Donner la mort* is a work *of* the 1990s. Its dating to the range of almost a decade gives it an extended and mobile context.

However, even this type of context must recognize its own limitations. For all we know, the paper in 1990 was itself a development of an idea from a decade earlier. The work declared to be *of* the 1990s, could be a work *of* the 1980s or the 1970s. As Derrida himself noted in an interview with Maurizio Ferraris on 25–26 January 1994, "If anyone found it amusing to follow this game or this necessity, they would discover that there is not a single text of mine that was not very precisely and literally announced ten to twenty years beforehand."[120] A good example of this is Derrida's article in 2000, "*Et Cetera* . . . (and so on, *und so weiter*, and so forth, *et ainsi de suite*, und so überall, *etc.*)", which was first announced in a footnote on the idealization of the infinite in phenomenology in his introduction to Husserl's *The Origin of Geometry* in 1961.[121] It is a thirty-nine-year-old footnote extended into a long, complex essay.

In addition to the problem of what we might call the *spreading context*, a context that must always open and stretch out beyond a single date, such as in Derrida's decision in June 1990 to describe his earliest extended work, *The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy*, as "dating from 1953–1954," we also have the challenge of the *receding context*, such as a work from 2000 that can also be dated to 1961.[122] Any attempt to situate Derrida's works from 1989–1991 in a historical context that is seen as an immediate or a direct response to the political

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events of 1989–1991 must take account of these spreading and receding contexts. These contexts are *spreading* and *receding* constantly and generate the very problem of an "intellectual history" based on a chronological account of a series of writings written during a finite historical period and governed by the ideal of a "contemporary framework." When it comes to thinking about Derrida and the revolutions of 1989, there is always another revolution, the rolling back, before and after the revolution.

To conclude: at the start of *Specters of Marx*, Derrida observes, "but a context, always, remains open, [and] thus fallible and insufficient."[123] We need to take this injunction seriously and, perhaps most of all, when it comes to the *Specters of Marx* itself. Did the events in Europe in 1989–1991 change Derrida's relation to history? The introduction to the 1994 English translation of Derrida's work by Bernd Magnus (1937–2014) and Stephen Cullenberg make a clear link between the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the holding of a conference in California on 22–24 April 1993 where Derrida delivered the first version of what would become the book *Spectres de Marx*, which was published in Paris in October 1993.[124]

However, the very spreading and receding contexts that we have followed in this chapter already show how difficult it is to reduce the event and its lingering repercussions to a cause and effect relation. To start with, how do we date this work? The conference paper was delivered in two parts on 22 and 23 April 1993 and was then significantly expanded for publication as a book, so we already need to date this work to April 1993–October 1993 and Derrida himself says that he had conceived the title of his of conference paper "more than a year ago," and the convenors say that the conference itself was first planned "in October 1991," so one can date this work from at least April 1992 to October 1993 if not from October 1991 to October 1993.[125]

Nonetheless, it is most likely that the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the short-lived, triumphalist claim that "Marx is dead, communism is dead, very dead, and along with it its hopes, its discourse, its theories, and its practices," did contribute to the writing of *Specters of Marx*. But the contexts for this work also go back, at the very least, to the mid 1960s and to Derrida's criticisms of Althusser's attempts to separate Marxism from historicism.[126] Derrida had also focused on Marxism in a number of seminars in the mid 1970s on

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ideology and the relation between theory and practice.[127] We could even go back to Derrida's formative experience of French Communism at the ENS and the aggressive enthusiasm for Stalin in the early 1950s.

While one cannot diminish the immediate political events of the late 1980s and early 1990s, including not only the events in Europe but also Nelson Mandela's release from prison in February 1990, the outbreak of the first Gulf War in January 1991 and the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in February 1992, as the context for Derrida's book it is also evident that in this case there is more than one context. We must also take account of the seminars on Marx in the mid 1970s, the critique of Althusser in the mid 1960s and the political atmosphere on the Left in Paris in the 1950s, especially during the Algerian War. There may be an immediate context to the writing of this work and there is also a *history of contexts* when it comes to *Specters of Marx*.

There is a context, there is a history of contexts and the context is still insufficient. This is not only a matter of weighing up the historical contexts; it is also apparent in Derrida's own work. As he remarks in the opening paragraph, when it comes to saying something about Marx "now"—in April 1993—there is "a disjointed now [*maintenant*] that always risks maintaining nothing together in the assured conjunction of some context whose border would still be determinable."[128] For Derrida, to speak about Marx is also to speak about the problem of context, both its necessity and its attendant dangers as an implicit gesture of historicism and a reconfirmation of a metaphysical opposition between the "external" and "internal."

Specters of Marx opens with an explicit engagement with "a *politics* of memory, of inheritance, and of generations."[129] But this is also a work about Derrida's own inheritance and memory. These issues *as* questions of history long precede Derrida's 1993 work. Nor is the ethical relation to the phantoms or specters of the past, declared in the name of justice, the relation to those who are no longer living, no longer registered in the present and yet who communicate without rest and call for a *response*, a response to the past, to the past that is already looking ahead to the future, to the future *of* the past, to the past that is not behind but relentlessly in front of us, "new" to Derrida's work in 1993.[130]

It is again probably only chance that led to Derrida's 1989–1990 conference papers on the relation between law and justice to be pub-

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lished in France the year after—in October 1994—the appearance of the *Specters of Marx*, but this also gives the book on Marx a belated sense of preceding the very works that seemed to mark Derrida's political "turn," as if it was always first and foremost the question of the Marx that had to be addressed in the aftermath of the Soviet Union and its empire.[131] As Derrida observes, the response to the events of 1989–1991 already seems *anachronistic* as debates about Marx and "the end of history" had dominated French philosophy in the 1950s.[132] One cannot avoid this anachronism.

Derrida makes a point in *Spectres of Marx* of linking the phantoms and specters of the future *of* the past to a "haunting" that is "historical" but which is "not dated" in the sense that it is "never docilely given a date in the chain of presents, day after day, according to the instituted order of a calendar."[133] And yet, as we shall see in the next chapter, the date and the memory of the date, the dates of the annual calendar, are extremely important in Derrida's work. He is constantly dating, recording a span and sequence of days and dates, with all the gaps and lacunae that such an effort entails.

NOTES

1. "Toward An Ethic of Discussion," 152.
2. *The Young Derrida and French Philosophy*, 5.
3. *The Young Derrida and French Philosophy*, 10, 221–22.
4. *The Young Derrida and French Philosophy*, 221–22. See Derrida and Skinner, "Politics and Friendship"; Derrida and Janicaud, "Interviews"; Derrida and Roudinesco, *For What Tomorrow*; Peeters, *Derrida: A Biography*.
5. *The Young Derrida and French Philosophy*, 11.
6. *The Young Derrida and French Philosophy*, 12, 16.
7. *The Young Derrida and French Philosophy*, 41–42, 106, 146–70.
8. See Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
9. Quoted at the front of *The Young Derrida and French Philosophy*.
10. See for example, Jacques Derrida, "Aphorism Countertime," in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume 2*, ed. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg, trans. Nicholas Royle (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 127–42. See also Sean Gaston, "Enter TIME," in *Starting With Derrida: Plato, Aristotle and Hegel* (London: Continuum, 2007), 60–80.

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11. *Mourning Sickness*, 4–6, 144–45.

12. Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: The Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), 3. See also Maurice Mandelbaum, "The History of Ideas, Intellectual History, and the History of Philosophy," *History and Theory* 5 (*Beiheft* 5) (1965): 33–66; Richard Macksey, "The History of Ideas at 80," *MLN* 117.5 (2002): 1083–97; Timothy Bahti, "Literary Criticism and the History of Ideas," in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism: Twentieth Century Historical, Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives*, ed. Christa Knellwolf and Christopher Norris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 31–42.

13. See G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825–1826: Volume 1—Introduction and Oriental Philosophy*, ed. Robert F. Brown, trans. Robert F. Brown and J. M. Stewart with H. S. Harris (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009).

14. "Violence and Metaphysics," 115.

15. *The Young Derrida and French Philosophy*, 12.

16. Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," in *Visions of Politics: Volume I Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 57–89: 60.

17. "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," 59.

18. "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," 83.

19. Jacques Derrida, "The Double Session," in *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 173–285; Quentin Skinner, "Motives, Intentions and Interpretation," in *Visions of Politics: Volume I Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 90–102: 91; "Introduction: The Return of Grand Theory," in *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences*, ed. Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1–20: 8. See also Michael Drolet, "Quentin Skinner and Jacques Derrida on Power and the State," *History of European Ideas* 33.2 (2007): 234–55.

20. "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," 84.

21. John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

22. Quentin Skinner, "Retrospect: Studying Rhetoric and Conceptual Change," in *Visions of Politics: Volume I Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 175–87: 176.

23. Martin Jay, "Historical Explanation and the Event: Reflections on the Limits of Contextualization," *New Literary History* 42.4 (2011): 557–71. See also Jay's valuable article, "Intention and Irony: The Missed Encounter Between Hayden White and Quentin Skinner," *History and Theory* 52.1 (2013): 32–48.

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24. Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 309–30: 310.

25. "Signature Event Context," 311.

26. "Signature Event Context," 311.

27. "Signature Event Context," 317.

28. "Signature Event Context," 317. Translation modified.

29. "Signature Event Context," 317; "Signature événement contexte," in *Marges—de la philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972), 365–93: 377.

30. "Signature Event Context," 318.

31. "Signature Event Context," 320; "Signature événement contexte," 381.

32. "Signature Event Context," 316.

33. *Rethinking Intellectual History*, 16. See also Dominick LaCapra, "Canons, Texts, and Contexts," in *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994): 19–43.

34. "Signature Event Context," 322.

35. John Austin, *How To Do Things With Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, [1962] 1975), 52; Derrida, "Signature Event Context," 322.

36. *How To Do Things With Words*, 22.

37. "Signature Event Context," 327; "Signature événement contexte," 389.

38. "Signature Event Context," 326; "Signature événement contexte," 388.

39. "Signature Event Context," 326–27.

40. "Limited Inc," 40.

41. "Signature Event Context," 326.

42. See "Limited Inc," 85–86, 130; "Typewriter Ribbon," 123, 127–28; "History of the Lie," 61, 291 n. 23. See also Jacques Derrida, "Declarations of Independence," in *Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews 1971–2001*, ed. and intro. Elizabeth Rottenberg, trans. Tom Keenan and Tom Pepper (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 46–54.

43. Jacques Derrida, "Mochlos, or The Conflict of the Faculties," in *Eyes of the University: Right to Philosophy 2*, ed. Jan Plug, trans. Richard Rand and Amy Wygant (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 83–112: 100.

44. For a broad overview see Raoul Moati, *Derrida / Searle: Deconstruction and Ordinary Language*, fore. Jean-Michel Rabaté, trans. Timothy Attanucci and Maureen Chun (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014). See also J. Hillis Miller, *Speech Acts in Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

45. "Limited Inc," 69. See also 93–94, 97.

46. "Limited Inc," 71, 118–19. See also *The Politics of Friendship*, 216.

47. "Punctuations: The Time of a Thesis," 115–16.

48. "The Other Heading," 68.

49. "Limited Inc," 78.

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50. “Limited Inc,” 78; Jacques Derrida, “Limited Inc a b c,” in *Limited Inc. Présentations et traductions par Elisabeth Weber* (Paris: Galilée, 1990), 61–198: 148. Translation modified.

51. “Limited Inc,” 79.

52. “Signature Event Context,” 330; “Signature événement contexte,” 393.

53. “Signature Event Context,” 328; “Limited Inc,” 136.

54. “Toward An Ethic of Discussion,” 112.

55. “Toward An Ethic of Discussion,” 131.

56. “Toward An Ethic of Discussion,” 130–31.

57. “Toward An Ethic of Discussion,” 131.

58. “Toward An Ethic of Discussion,” 131.

59. “Toward An Ethic of Discussion,” 131.

60. “Toward An Ethic of Discussion,” 131.

61. “Toward An Ethic of Discussion,” 131.

62. “Toward An Ethic of Discussion,” 137. See “Biodegradables,” 873.

63. “Toward An Ethic of Discussion,” 136. See also Geoffrey Bennington, “Deconstruction and the Philosophers (The Very Idea),” in *Legislations: The Politics of Deconstruction* (London: Verso, 1994), 11–60: 18–24.

64. “Toward An Ethic of Discussion,” 136; “Vers une éthique de la discussion,” 252.

65. “Toward An Ethic of Discussion,” 135; “Vers une éthique de la discussion,” 250.

66. “Toward An Ethic of Discussion,” 136.

67. “Toward An Ethic of Discussion,” 137.

68. “Toward An Ethic of Discussion,” 145.

69. “Toward An Ethic of Discussion,” 150–51.

70. “Toward An Ethic of Discussion,” 137.

71. “Toward An Ethic of Discussion,” 151. See also Derrida, “Living On,” 81. Derrida observes here, “no meaning can be determined out of context, no context permits saturation.”

72. “Interpretations at War,” 241.

73. Jacques Derrida, “S’il y a lieu de traduire: La philosophie dans sa langue nationale (vers une ‘licterature en françois’),” in *Droit à la philosophie* (Paris: Galilée, 1990), 283–309: 283. This opening note has been partially transferred to the second paragraph of the translator’s foreword in the English translation, Jan Plug, “Translator’s Foreword,” in *Eyes of the University: Right to Philosophy 2*, by Jacques Derrida, ed. Jan Plug (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), ix–xi: ix.

74. “S’il y a lieu de traduire,” 283. My translation.

75. Jacques Derrida, “If There is Cause to Translate I: Philosophy in its National Language (Toward a ‘licerature en françois’),” in *Eyes of the Univer-*

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sity: Right to Philosophy 2, ed. Jan Plug, trans. Sylvia Söderlind (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 1–19: 2.

76. "If There is Cause to Translate I," 2.

77. "If There is Cause to Translate I," 12.

78. "If There is Cause to Translate I," 15–16.

79. "If There is Cause to Translate I," 16.

80. "If There is Cause to Translate I," 18–19.

81. "Interpretations at War," 283. See also Jacques Derrida, "Onto-Theology of National Humanism (Prolegomena to a Hypothesis)," in *Oxford Literary Review* 14.1–2 (1992): 3–24.

82. "Interpretations at War," 283.

83. "Interpretations at War," 325 n. 1.

84. "Interpretations at War," 325 n. 1.

85. "Interpretations at War," 242.

86. "Interpretations at War," 243, 325–26 n. 1.

87. *Aporias*, 9; *Apories*, 27.

88. "Interpretations at War," 244.

89. "Interpretations at War," 243.

90. Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft, 5th edition (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).

91. Emmanuel Levinas, "Interview with François Poirié," in *Is It Righteous To Be? Interviews with Emmanuel Levinas*, ed. Jill Robbins, trans. Jill Robbins, Marcus Coelen and Thomas Loebel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 23–83: 34.

92. "Interpretations at War," 244.

93. Jacques Derrida, "Interpretations at War: Kant, le Juif, l'Allemand," in *Psyché: Inventions de l'autre II, nouvelle édition revue et augmentée* (Paris: Galilée, 1987–2003), 249–305: 253.

94. "Interpretations at War," 273, 245. "*Aura*" is in italics in the original French text.

95. "Interpretations at War," 253–63.

96. "Interpretations at War," 254.

97. "Interpretations at War," 263.

98. "Interpretations at War," 266–67; "Interpretations at War," 274 [French text].

99. "Interpretations at War," 274.

100. "Interpretations at War," 274–75; "Interpretations at War," 282 [French text].

101. *Théorie et pratique*, 145. My translation.

102. *Théorie et pratique*, 146. My translation.

103. *Théorie et pratique*, 145–46. My translation.

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104. Jacques Derrida, "Where a Teaching Body Begins and How It Ends," in *Who's Afraid of Philosophy? Right to Philosophy I*, ed. and trans. Jan Plug (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 67–98: 72. See also Vivienne Orchard, *Jacques Derrida and the Institution of French Philosophy* (Abingdon: Legenda, 2011).

105. "Where a Teaching Body Begins," 74.

106. "Where a Teaching Body Begins," 74.

107. "Where a Teaching Body Begins," 73.

108. "Where a Teaching Body Begins," 75.

109. "Where a Teaching Body Begins," 75.

110. "Where a Teaching Body Begins," 85.

111. "The Age of Hegel," 137–45.

112. See Samuel Weber, *Institution and Interpretation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987); Simon Morgan-Wortham, *Counter-Institutions: Jacques Derrida and the Question of the University* (New York: Fordham, 2006).

113. "The Age of Hegel," 135.

114. "The Age of Hegel," 136.

115. "The Age of Hegel," 144.

116. "Where a Teaching Body Begins," 93.

117. Jacques Derrida, *Donner la mort* (Paris: Galilée, 1999); *The Gift of Death and Literature in Secret*.

118. Jan Patocka, *Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History*, ed. James Dodd, trans. Reazim Kohák (Chicago: Open Court, 1996); Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983). See also Rodolphe Gasché, "European Memories," in *Europe, or The Infinite Task: A Study of a Philosophical Concept* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 265–86.

119. Jacques Derrida, "Author's Preface," in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume 1*, ed. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), xii–xiv, 411 n. 2.

120. *A Taste For the Secret*, 46; *Le goût du secret*, 57. Translation modified.

121. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 135 n. 161; "Et Cetera."

122. *The Problem of Genesis*, xiii.

123. *Specters of Marx*, xvii.

124. Bernd Magnus and Stephen Cullenberg, "Editor's Introduction," in *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, by Jacques Derrida, trans. Peggy Kamuf (London: Routledge, 1994), vii–xi.

125. *Spectres of Marx*, ix, 4.

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126. *Specters of Marx*, 52, 89–90. See also Bennington, "Demanding History."

127. See http://derridaseminars.org/seminars.html.

128. *Specters of Marx*, 3; *Spectres de Marx*, 21.

129. *Specters of Marx*, xix, 54.

130. *Specters of Marx*, xix–xx. See also Derrida's own comments on the twenty-year antecedents to this work, 178 n. 3.

131. *Specters of Marx*, 177 n. 4.

132. *Specters of Marx*, 14–16. See also 56–75.

133. *Specters of Marx*, 4.

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6

HISTORY, MEMORY, AND MEMOIR

> The ear of the other says me to me and constitutes the *autos* of my autobiography.
>
> —*The Ear of the Other*[1]

I. MEMORIALS

Derrida's *Monolingualism of the Other or the Prosthesis of the Origin* (1996) can be taken not as an example of "exemplarity in testimony," since an example assumes that the singular can have the status of the universal, but as part of a series of works that Derrida produced in the 1980s and 1990s that address the problem of telling a story, especially one's "own" story, and of the relation between autobiography, biography, memory, historical memory and history.[2] *Monolingualism of the Other* was published in French as a short book in September 1996 as the revision and extension of a paper given in America in April 1992. This 1992 paper was itself a revision of an undated lecture delivered at the Sorbonne (perhaps in late 1991 or early 1992). As we have seen with many of Derrida's publications, the dating of the work—especially if one wants to create a chronological narrative—often raises the issue of spreading and receding contexts.

Monolingualism of the Other has a spreading context because it can be dated as a work of 1992–1996. It also has a receding context because it includes a very long footnote (it covers twenty-three pages in the French edition) that most likely refers to material from Derrida's

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1984–1988 seminar on "Philosophical Nationalism and Nationality."[3] And these spreading-receding contexts are based only on the most obvious indications; no doubt there are more links to earlier works and other references to later works. In addition to this spreading and receding contexts, there is also the problem of what can be called the *auto*-context. As Simon Cooke has aptly noted, the writer W. G. Sebald (1944–2001) often included the date of his own birthday in his quasi-fictional works.[4] Derrida's later writings are usually dated by a year, a month and often a day. His weekly seminars were always dated by the day on which they were delivered.[5] However, in some of his works there is also an oblique or explicit association with the date of his own birth, 15 July 1930. This auto-context is part of a larger question that I will address in chapters 6 and 7 on the relation between memory and historical memory.[6]

In a paper from 1998 Derrida argued that the "alterity of the past" is registered by "the irreducible experience of memory" as a "*rupture*."[7] Derrida had long been interested in the problem of memory.[8] In his early work, he examined the ways in which memory reinforces or reconstitutes the classical subject, notably in Husserl's emphasis on a passive memory of a "meaning-origin" that can be actively reactivated (*Rückfrage*) and in Hegel's use of *Erinnerung* as an interiorizing recollection in the teleological development of self-consciousness and absolute knowledge.[9] Derrida started to challenge the traditional characterization of memory as interiorization in "Freud and the Scene of Writing" (1966), a seminar given in March 1966 and published later that year, focusing on Freud's use of the "memory-trace" (*Erinnerungs-spur*) to describe the complex relation between consciousness, memory and traces of the past in the unconscious.[10]

Following Freud's use of a metaphor of inscription to account for the opposition between a durable and repeatable mark or trace (memory) and an assured clean slate (conscious perception), Derrida argues "trace as memory is not a pure breaching that might be reappropriated at any time as simple presence; it is rather the ungraspable and indivisible difference between breaches."[11] The trace registers the *possibility* of both "repetition *and* erasure."[12] The "double force" of the memory-trace therefore "supplements perception before perception even appears to itself [is conscious of itself]."[13] In the discussions in the same year after his influential paper at Johns Hopkins University in October

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1966, Derrida remarks, "I don't believe that anything like perception exists."[14]

Freudian psychoanalysis, Derrida goes on to say in his 1966 seminar, suggests that "the text we call present may be deciphered only at the bottom of the page, in a footnote or postscript" and, therefore, "the present in general is not primal but, rather, reconstituted."[15] This challenges the traditional treatment of memory as an image or imprint that only serves the restitution of the presence of the past. "The postscript," Derrida observes, "which constitutes the past present as such is not satisfied, as Plato, Hegel, and Proust perhaps thought, with reawakening or revealing the present past in its truth. It produces the present past."[16] He develops this argument a few years later in his reading of Plato's treatment of writing as that which both assists and harms memory in "Plato's Pharmacy" (1968).

In his extended readings of Hegel in "The Pit and the Pyramid: Introduction to Hegel's Semiology" (1968) and *Glas* (1974), Derrida also focuses on Hegelian memory as *Erinnerung*.[17] For Hegel, *Erinnerung* is part of the larger movement of the *Aufhebung* in the history of spirit as a progressive and assured retention and re-internalization of exteriority.[18] Derrida subsequently explored the relation between memory as re-internalization or idealization of the other in the work of mourning in "Fors" (1976), which was prompted by the psychoanalytic studies of Nicholas Abraham (1919–1975) and Mária Török (1925–1998).[19] In his 1984 memorial lectures on Paul de Man, he returned to the Hegelian opposition of "remembrance as interiorization" (*Erinnerung*) and "thinking memory" (*Gedächtnis*).[20] As we have seen, from the mid 1970s Derrida was also interested in the problem of institutional memory, of the contexts, memories and histories of institutions.

Plato had argued that there were only two kinds of memory: an everyday memory (*mnēmē*) and an active recollection (*hypomnēsis*).[21] In "Plato's Pharmacy," Derrida questions the traditional relation between writing and memory as "re-memoration, recollection" or *hypomnēsis*.[22] In Plato's terms, Derrida notes, writing is an ambivalent support or supplement for *mnēmē*, for "living, knowing memory."[23] As an "auxiliary aide-mémoire," writing both assists in preserving "living memory" and facilitates the loss and forgetting of "living memory."[24] Writing—and we could add, the writing of history—both gathers to-

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gether, re-collects "living memory" and displaces and even effaces this "memory." In this Platonic impasse, written history destroys memory as it preserves it. The Platonic tradition is left, not least in its effort to record the thought, words, and life of Socrates (who never wrote), haunted by the possibility that *mnēmē* is already an *hypomnēsis*.

Derrida argues that the anxious Platonic claim for an ideal "living memory" only registers memory as a fractured re-collection that cannot be unified into a *present* past. It is an original displacement that prompts an elusive idealization.[25] As he observes, "the outside is already *within* the work of memory."[26] Plato dreams of "*mnēmē* with no *hypomnēsis*."[27] For Plato, therefore "monuments (*hypomnēmata*), inventories, archives, citations, copies, accounts, tales [*les récits*], lists, notes, duplicates, chronicles, genealogies, [and] references" always come *after* "memory itself (*mnēmē*)."[28] In the name of an idealized memory, Plato treats historical memory and history as a secondary derivation or deviation. Derrida argues, in contrast, that theses "memorials" (*les mémoires*) precede, make possible and already mark the impossibility of an idealized "memory."[29]

For Derrida, what is at stake here is the tradition in philosophy of an idealized, trans-historical or metaphysical memory. The "other" of philosophy in this context is historical memory and history. In contrast to Plato, one could also say that there is a different tradition of memory: there is a fragmented but insistent memory hampered by a stubborn past, a past that resists re-collection and idealization. For example, Fyodor Dostoevsky's (1821–1881) description of Father Zosima's earliest memories in *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) could be taken as the structure of all memories. "They only emerge," Father Zosima says, "throughout one's life as specks of light, as it were, against the darkness, as a corner torn from a huge picture, which has all faded and disappeared except for that little corner."[30]

Sixteen years after "Plato's Pharmacy," Derrida addressed the problem of an ahistorical memory as the *other* of history in his January–February 1984 lectures on Paul de Man, given after de Man's death in December 1983 and first published in English in 1986 under the title *Memoires—for Paul De Man*.[31] Derrida argues in *Memoires* that Heidegger is also part of this Platonic tradition when it comes to the status of memory as a re-collecting and re-gathering of the past. "For Heidegger," Derrida observes, "the essence of memory resides primarily, origi-

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nally, in gathering (*Versammlung*)."[32] At the same time, as we have seen, Derrida suggests that that there is a history—a history of philosophy and a philosophy of history—that resists this idealizing memory of philosophy without becoming an avowed historicism.

Les mémoires or memorials, the inscribed and written historical memories and history that Derrida had emphasized in "Plato's Pharmacy" in 1968, is also used for the title of his 1984 lectures on de Man: *Mémoires—pour Paul de Man*.[33] It was also in 1968, in his paper "The Pit and the Pyramid," that Derrida first linked the problem of "les mémoires"—the monuments, the archives and the narratives (*les récits*) of memory—to Hegel's treatment of memory as an act of interiorization (*Erinnerung*).[34] The "decisive" Hegelian movement of *Erinnerung*, he argues, describes a memory that retains, transfers, internalizes and idealizes.[35] *Erinnerung* facilitates the movement from the external to the internal, the sensible to the intelligible and the subjective to the objective.[36] Hegelian memory describes a one-way transport system; it accounts for "the interiorization of the past."[37] From Plato to Hegel, philosophy *swallows* history.[38]

2. ALL THE DATES

As I suggested at the end of chapter 5, Derrida was very attentive to the *dated work*, to giving the work a date, to sending it out with a date, and this act of dating is found in his varied writings from the mid 1970s to the early 1990s on autobiography, memoir, memory and historical memory. As he observed in "Shibboleth—for Paul Celan" (1984–1986), the very phrase "dated" work registers both a date that is attached to a work and a *dating*, an ageing of a work that "has a history and is of a certain age."[39] Like the proper name, which can outlive and live on beyond the finite life of the individual that has been named, the work with a date is marked by a finitude and an excess.[40] In Paul Celan's (1920–1970) case, it is also apparent that the dates that are given to his poems were not simply registering an "external" moment of completion; these dates are also "internal" as they are often addressed within the poems themselves.[41] For Derrida, there are also other kinds of dating: an "internal dating" that not only records the days and years of

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the calendar but also marks "a memory, sometimes several memories in one, the mark of a provenance, of a place and of a time."[42]

"Shibboleth" examines Paul Celan's extended mediation on the dating of a poem and irreplaceable and "*unrepeatable* events" that are registered and repeated in the writing and reading of the poem and still remain "singular" events.[43] The date marks an event that took place *only once* but it also marks an event that is marked again each year. The dated event is singular and it is repeated. For Derrida, the date is therefore "what *comes down* to marking itself as the one-and-only time."[44] In the context of reading Celan's work, this leads Derrida to argue that an absolute and idealized notion of the singular date—the date as a trans-historical ideality or "ideal object" of the history of the same in the Husserlian sense—must suspend or efface itself to the extent that the absolutely private date would remain "unreadable" if it did not expose itself to the possibility of being repeated and becoming "readable."[45] The date is unavoidably quasi-private and quasi-public and an idealized memory must give way to some extent to a historical memory. The dated poem therefore takes the poem—or any dated work, including Derrida's own dated works—beyond the ideal confines of its own apparent propriety or self-enclosure.[46] As we have seen, Derrida calls this *ex-appropriation*.

In more general terms, the dating of a letter, a poem, a journal or diary entry or even a philosophical work marks what may be a private moment or secret event that can never be recovered or known by others. But the very dating of these works is also an invitation: it *adds* the question of that date to the work and it invites others in the future to address the problems of chronology, context and *mil-lieu*.[47] It also opens a relation to other dates, "other memories, other histories" and other contexts.[48] The same date, such as a birthday, can mark a series of different and heterogeneous events.[49] The dates that mark the wider question of the relation between autobiography, memoir and historical memory raise the *shared* problem of what Derrida calls "the date of the other."[50] Historiography is always confronted by the challenge of interpreting and verifying "the date of the other."

Derrida's first publication, his introduction to Husserl's *The Origin of Geometry* is dated "July 1961."[51] The specific day of completion in July 1961 is not given, but the month of July 1961 is also the month that marked Derrida's thirty-first birthday. Is there a tension between the

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avowed mobility of the spreading-receding contexts generated by dating Derrida's works as they were delivered, revised and published and the apparent need to fix a specific and unique date to a work that also registers the annual return of the date of Derrida's own birth, 15 July 1930? Derrida's first book may be "born" on the same date but not the same year as its author. The "birth" of the book and its author mark the same *and* the other.

As far as I am aware, the first quasi-personal date in Derrida's published works is the "July 1961" for the book on Husserl. It is nearly ten years before such "personal" or rather quasi-private quasi-public dates reappear in Derrida's published work.[52] Most works before this are given dates that may have a personal significance other than Derrida's birthday or merely register the month or day when the work was ready to go to press. *Writing and Difference*, Derrida's first collection of articles and papers dating from 1959–1966 ends with a brief note from "December 1966," while *Positions*, a collection of interviews from 1967–1971, is simply dated "May 1972."[53] *Dissemination* (1972), a collection of essays from 1968–1969 with an introductory work, "Outwork: Prefacing," on the preface in the history of philosophy, ends with a final page devoted to a brief dedication that is followed by "December 1971."[54] *Margins of Philosophy* (1972), a collection of papers and articles from 1967–1971, opens with "Tympan," which is placed and dated "Prinsengracht, eight–twelve May 1972."[55] This is the first dating by Derrida of a work with a span or range of days, marking not only the date of finishing but also the period and place or places of composition, a gesture which recalls James Joyce's (1882–1941) conclusion to *Ulysses* (1922): "*Trieste-Zürich-Paris*, 1914–1921."[56]

In the bibliography of *Writing and Difference,* Derrida gives a day, month and year for only two of the five works collected in this book, noting that "Cogito and the History of Madness," his paper on Foucault and Descartes, was given on 4 March 1963 and "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourses of the Human Sciences," his conference paper in Baltimore, was given 21 October 1966.[57] Both of the papers given on these dates were much celebrated at the time and this may be why the specific dates of their delivery are recorded. Why does he only give the year or month and year for the other three papers? It may be that he revised these to such an extent for the 1967 publication that he no longer sees them as "events" of the day on which they were delivered.

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For example, "'Genesis and Structure' and Phenomenology" was given as a paper in 1959 at a conference held from 24 July–3 August at Cerisy-la-Salle and significantly revised for its publication in 1965.[58] It is certainly the case that by the time he publishes *Margins of Philosophy* in 1972, Derrida takes care to give the day, month, year and context for each work.[59] The 1970s mark a notable change in the way that Derrida published his writings: almost every work is dated.

There is of course a risk with assuming that one date might be "private" and another date "public." For example, once you know that Derrida's birthday is 15 July, works with this date or close to this date can be seen as at once private and public or a secret that can only be registered *as* a secret by being publically declared. However, in his paper "The Ends of Man," delivered in "October 1968," Derrida also uses the date explicitly to link his work to current political events.[60] The essay is dated "May 12, 1968" and Derrida talks about this date *in the midst of* the paper.[61] This date is therefore not merely an "exterior" post-paper epigraph; it is also an "internal" intervention that "dates" the public, political moment of the paper.

The dating *of* and the dating *in* "The Ends of Man" is both an act of memory and a gesture towards a historical memory: it is *already* engaged with what will become "dated" and treated as *historical* events. Derrida includes "the historical circumstances" (*les circonstances historiques*) of the assassination of Martin Luther King on 4 April 1968 and the events in the universities in Paris in May 1968 in a philosophical paper being given in New York in October 1968.[62] The way that Derrida does this is "to mark" and "date" these political events.[63] Derrida would do this—marking the introduction of current political events into a paper given to a philosophy conference—many times in the future. As we have seen, he does this in his 1988 Jerusalem paper. We can describe this as both a "historical and political" intervention through the use of dates. By October 1968, it is also already an act of historical memory. As Derrida concludes, "This historical and political horizon would call for a long analysis. I have simply found it necessary to mark, date, [*les marquer, les dater*] and make known to you the historical circumstances [*les circonstances historiques*] in which I prepared this communication."[64]

Derrida's *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, originally given as a paper at a conference at Cerisy 10–20 July 1972 and published in different for-

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mats in 1973, 1976 and as a book in 1978, and *The Truth in Painting*, comprising fragments of a seminar, articles and papers ranging from 1973–1978, are among the first books to contain more obvious "personal" dates in the form of notes and journal or diary entries. This style of dating would reach its culmination in "Envois" (1980). As we have seen, this is a work of some two hundred pages entirely written as dated (and quite lengthy) "postcards" from 3 June 1977 to 30 August 1979.

Derrida also insists in "Envois" on the right to withhold or suppress many of the "figures," "dates" and "places" found in this quasi-private, quasi-public work.[65] In the mediated autobiography of a letter, a diary or a journal entry that is published, the date remains only *quasi*-public and does not give itself to full public disclosure or to an assured historicism. The date both invites the question of the date of the other and raises the problem of historical memory. It can mark a *limit* to a historical project, as it also "shows that there is something not shown."[66] As Derrida observes in "Shibboleth," "the date is a witness, but one may very well bless it without knowing all of that for which and of those for whom it bears witness."[67] In its very possibility, the date can always become "the date of nothing and of no one."[68]

In a postcard from "Envois," dated 27 September 1977, Derrida remarks, "I'm not feeling well, too much memory, too many memories [*trop de mémoire*] which overlap and excluded each other without mercy."[69] Without getting "too much" into the pathos of this passage, as Derrida suggests in his reading of Celan, there is something disturbing, torturous, irresistible and uncanny about "too many memories," not least when "a discontinuous swarm of events" are "commemorated all at once, *at the same date*."[70] Rather than take these many, many dates merely as a series of personal dates, it could be argued that "Envois" includes all the kinds of dating that we have looked at so far—spreading and receding contexts, auto-contexts and historical and political interventions and historical memories—and no doubt many other ways of treating the date. However, as we shall see, a diary passage from 1976 in "Circumfession," the year before the dates begin in "Envois," also shows that Derrida was already interested in events of the past that were "without memory," such as his own circumcision. Such events can be dated but they also *open* the question of the relation between memory and historical memory.

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But why does Derrida start dating his works? Why in the mid 1970s does the dated work emerge as an integral aspect of Derrida's publications? What does it mean to integrate the date into the midst of a work of philosophy? I believe this is in part an indication of Derrida's growing interest in the relation between memory and history. At first, it seems that Derrida wants to date any additional comments after he has delivered a paper. Both *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles* and *Signsponge*, on the work of the poet and writer Francis Ponge (1899–1988), were given as papers as part of the Colloques de Cerisy-la-Salle. The conference "*Nietzsche aujourd'hui?*" ran from 10–20 July 1972, running across the date of Derrida's forty-second birthday.[71] From the conference programme it looks as if Derrida gave his paper on 16 July 1972, the day after his birthday.[72] In the 1978 publication of *Spurs*, Derrida adds a "P.S." dated 1 April 1973 and a second "P.S." dated 17 May 1973.[73] What makes this paper different? It is in part that Derrida makes use of Nietzsche's letters and makes a point of including the date of these letters in his paper, so it is already work *with* a date, with a series of dates.[74] Derrida's 1971–1972 seminar, "Hegel's Family" (*La Famille de Hegel*), was also focused on the private letters of Hegel and this dated material, notably on Hegel's relationship to his sister, is included in *Glas* (1974).[75] Again, this coincides with Derrida's formulation of *ex-appropriation*. As Derrida observes in "Envois," the "history of philosophy" has both rejected and tried to regulate the letters of philosophers.[76]

Signsponge was delivered on 5 August 1975 at Cerisy-la-Salle and ends with two notes: "Afterpiece (Proofs)," which is dated and timed, "Written in all good faith on July 23, 1975, at 5:30 PM," and "Afterpiece (II)," which is dated "August 10, 1975."[77] What is going on here? There certainly seems to be more to these "afterpieces" than a mere noting of the date. Not only is the first one timed, it also dated and timed *before* the paper, while the second note is dated *after* the paper. This may in part be a reference to "Outwork: Prefacing," which focuses on Hegel's difficulty in placing a long preface at the *start* of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* even though it has been written *after the end* of a teleological work that concludes with absolute knowledge *as* the end of history.[78] The preface "follows" the end—at the start—when nothing strictly speaking should take place after the "end" of history.[79]

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After the oblique reference to "July 1961," the month of Derrida's birth date in his introduction to Husserl's *The Origin of Geometry*, as far as I can tell the next explicit citation of Derrida's birthday is given in the last letter that closes *Positions* (1972), a collection of interviews. The "Fragment of a Letter from Jacques Derrida to Jean-Louis Houdebine" is dated "July 15, 1971," Derrida's forty-first birthday.[80] After this, in "Telepathy" (1981), which is presented as a series of diary fragments that were accidentally misplaced and thus left out of "Envois," Derrida ends with a final diary entry dated "15 July, 1979," Derrida's forty-ninth birthday.[81] Of course, by chance, Derrida's birthday also falls one day after 14 July, which is Bastille Day in France, marking the start of the French Revolution in the summer of 1789. Derrida's birthday was always the day after the annual national celebration. In "Shibboleth" Derrida notes Celan's citation of "Julys 14"—in the plural—and observes that this plurality is indicative of "anniversaries" that do not refer only to "the same, original July 14," but also to "other events, more or less secret, other rings, anniversaries, and alliances."[82]

The most public or quasi private-public dating of a work with the personal date of Derrida's birthday, 15 July, are the three Cerisy-la-Salle papers that he gave in 1992, 1997 and 2002 at conferences devoted to his work: "Le passage des frontières (around Jacques Derrida)," 11–21 July 1992; "The Autobiographical Animal (around Jacques Derrida)," 11–21 July 1997; "Democracy to Come (around Jacques Derrida)," 8–18 July 2002.[83] These lectures, respectively on Heidegger's treatment of death, on the animal and on democracy, were delivered on Derrida's sixty-second, sixty-seventh and seventy-second birthday. It is more than likely that all the participants knew that it was Derrida's birthday and these events were both public celebrations and the marking—or re-marking—of Derrida's birth date with their later publication. In *Counterpath: Traveling with Jacques Derrida* (1999), co-authored with the philosopher Catherine Malabou (1959–), Derrida includes a letter written to Malabou on the day of his second conference paper, 15 July 1997.[84]

However, there are also other more oblique examples that suggest a more occulted, more private and less public, link between the dating of work and Derrida's birthday. For example, in *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self Portrait and Other Ruins* (1990), a work written to accompany the exhibition of a collection of prints and drawings from the Louvre from

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26 October 1990 to 21 January 1991, Derrida speaks of a dream of duelling blind men on "the night of 16th July last year"—the day after Derrida's fifty-ninth birthday on 15 July 1989.[85] Some years later, Derrida delivered the paper "Psychoanalysis Searches the States of Its Soul" on 10 July 2000, five days before his seventieth birthday. There is a post-scriptum to the published text, which is dated "16 July, 2000," the day after Derrida's seventieth birthday.[86] In *The Work of Mourning* (2001), a collection of Derrida's tributes to his dead friends and colleagues, we see that Derrida's friend Max Loreau (1928–1990) died on 7 January 1990. Derrida then writes a letter to Loreau's widow, Francine Loreau on "15 July, 1991," Derrida's sixty-first birthday.[87] In a note at the start of his lecture "Interpretations at War," which was delivered in Jerusalem at a conference that ran from 5–11 June 1988, Derrida also refers to the closing of Palestinian schools in the Occupied Territories during the First Intifada on "15 July, 1988."[88]

How are we to interpret these very different instances of Derrida dating works around his birthday? The hardly simple but probably unavoidable answer is that these oblique actions use the date of his annual return of the date of his birthday to mark a *limit*; they are a private and autobiographical act of the work-as-memoir that will most likely resist interpretation but which, by their very publication, also become public dates and historical dates and a public *act of memory*, a promise to the future and to an archive that will outlive Jacques Derrida. These many archived dates "around Jacques Derrida" are testament not to some narcissistic attempt to mark one's own birthday but rather to an abiding interest in the tangled and persistent relation in written works between a "private" personal, even secret, memory and a "public," widely shared, historical memory.[89]

3. DATING PHILOSOPHY

The works of Derrida that are written as journals or diaries, with multiple and successive dates that punctuate every page, mark a passage of time that is quite different from noting a significant personal date or recording the completion of a work. The first of these, "Cartouches," on an exhibition by the artist Gérard Titus-Carmel (1942–) that includes works dated by day, month and year, appeared in 1977 and was fol-

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lowed by "Living On: *Border Lines*" in 1979, "Envois" in 1980 and "Circumfession" in 1991.[90] These works are akin to personal letters or private diaries but also public communications, since there is always the chance that anyone can read these letters and, in Derrida's case, they are evidently written or rewritten to be published, to be made public and to be read by many.

But these works are also *dated* and invariably marked with a day, a month and a year. What does it mean to date a work of philosophy, to treat it as one would treat a letter, a journal or a postcard? No doubt, as "Envois" and "Circumfession" would later suggest, it allows the philosopher to explore the porous borders between a public career and a private life or between that so-called domain or continuum of ideas and concepts and all the events, chances and mundane activities that take place in the life of the writer at the time and in the space of writing. The traditional "outside" of philosophical writing is included in these works, leaving philosophy to expose the problem of the "internal" and the "external."

The work written in the form of a diary, a journal or a postcard also raises the question of dating, timing, fixing and even "historicizing" philosophy. Hegel does not date *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, nor does Husserl date *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology*. Heidegger dates *Being and Time* in an opening dedication (8 April 1926), as does Kant in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (29 March 1781), but these dedications are both placed at the front and almost "outside" of these works, preceding prefaces and introductions.[91] The dedication, often to an aristocratic patron, had long been a way for philosophers to give a time and place to their treatises. Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) dedicates, dates and places *Leviathan*, "Paris, April 15 / 25 1651" (taking account of the ten day difference at the time between the French and English calendars), as does John Locke (1632–1704) for *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, "Dorset Court 24th of May 1689."[92]

It was probably Kierkegaard and Nietzsche who first challenged the traditional decorum of dating. Victor Eremita, the "editor" of Kierkegaard's *Either / Or: A Fragment of Life*, dates his preface to "November 1842."[93] Nietzsche was a great dater and placer of works. The prefaces to his principal works from the 1880s are dated by month and year and most often placed at "Sils-Maria, Upper Engadine" or "Ruta, near Ge-

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noa."[94] As Anthony Jensen observes, Nietzsche was a "philosopher *of* history" who also formulated a historiography "that denies absolute interpretations of history."[95] His advocacy of a philosophy that includes "autobiography as history" had an evident influence on Derrida and it is fitting that works such as *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles* in 1972 and the 1979 paper "Otobiographies: The Teaching of Nietzsche and the Politics of the Proper Name" were part of Derrida's exploration of the problem of autobiography, biography, memory and historical memory.[96]

But could Descartes date his *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641), especially if philosophy claims access to timeless truths?[97] Derrida would perhaps say that the inclusion of a date or a series of dates *within* a work—so it is not just the date at the end of the preface—disrupts both the claim of philosophy to timeless truths and to a secure historicizing. Like history, philosophy must also contend with the mess of "other" dates. Placed within the work, the date retains something that always points "outside" of the work, to the many others of philosophy. However, within the work of philosophy these dates also interact with the form and content of the work. These are instances of treating the "philosophical" work as a quasi-private memoir, as an inadvertent and unavoidable act of autobiography. Far from excluding the biography of a philosopher, Derrida was always interested in his or her life and his or her "other" writings.

With the passing of time, these dates also become *historical*: they are little historical "markers" that note a day, a month and year and even, in some cases, a time of day. They mark a finitude that is also overwhelmed by a kind of "living on" or "living over" in some quasi-spectral fashion as a day of the dead that lives on and that was already written with this excessive finitude as its possibility. Derrida writes about this in "Living On," or "Survivre," an extended close reading of quasi-fictional narratives of Maurice Blanchot (1907–2003) that includes a "border" work on the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822).[98]

A notable example of a dated work in the history of literature is Laurence Sterne's (1713–1768) inclusion of the date of his writing *Tristram Shandy* (1759–1767) in the midst of his wandering fictional narrative and proliferating engagement with other historical events and fictional characters. Shandy or Sterne observes:

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> This strange irregularity in our climate, producing so strange an irregularity in our characters,—doth thereby, in some sort, make us amends, by giving us somewhat to make us merry with when the weather will not suffer us to go out of doors,—that observation is my own;—and was struck out by me this very rainy day, March 6, 1759, and betwixt the hours of nine and ten in the morning.[99]

The Shandy example also raises a problem: the use of the date to record that right now, "here I am." This union of time, place and self-consciousness is precisely what Derrida challenges as the metaphysical claim that one can use a written work to maintain or preserve an idealized self-presence in the present. "I am" also registers "I am dead," as Derrida observed in a work on Husserl in 1967.[100] Derrida also alludes to this issue in the title of a 1980 essay on Levinas, "At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am," which was published the same year as "Envois."[101]

Ancient Greek historiography emerged in the fifth century BCE with a series of simple but innovative propositions that included recording events "with a chronological framework" and recognizing that "events must be dated."[102] It may seem surprising but this is precisely what Derrida does in his first work with multiple sequential dates, "Cartouches." "Cartouches" has a series of dated entries, in the form of a diary or journal, that run sequentially with many gaps and pauses, with non dates and the undated entry amidst a series of dates, from 30 November 1977 to 11–12 January 1978. A work of *many* dates also encounters the challenge of the *undated*. Ricoeur suggested that there is a discernable transition "from memory to historiography" when a "system of places and dates" emerges.[103] This is apparent in a number of Derrida's works.

As Derrida later argued in "The Other Heading: Memories, Responses, and Responsibilities," a paper given on 20 May 1990 soon after his return from Soviet Russia and published as a short book in February 1991, any claim to this moment, this sequential period here and now, also cannot avoid becoming anachronistic because it uses dates: it is *dated* and already exposed to history and memory by using the date. There is a tradition of speaking of Europe, Derrida observes in this paper, as the embodiment of "the *modern* Western world," which claims Europe as the essence of the actual.[104] For Derrida, the works in this idiom constitute "a *traditional discourse of modernity*" not least

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because "it dates, it is dated" (*il date*).[105] "It is the most current, nothing is more current," he remarks, "but already it dates back [*déjà il date*]."[106] A work that uses dates cannot avoid "an anachrony that marks the day of all our days."[107]

4. THE WORK-AS-MEMOIR

Monolingualism of the Other is chiefly concerned with exploring the cultural and political implications of the hypothesis that I might only have access to one language but this cannot be *my* language. As Derrida remarks, "my language, the only one I hear myself speak and agree to speak, is the language of the other."[108] In this context Derrida talks about his own experiences as an Algerian-born Jew in the 1930s and 1940s, which included having his French citizenship taken away by the Vichy government in 1942.[109] He also addresses a wider discussion about colonialism and the impossibility of both an absolute "colonial expropriation" and an absolute appropriation or reappropriation of a mother tongue (*langage maternelle*).[110] He also makes a distinction for any autobiographical project between an assured or assumed identity and "the interminable [. . .] process of identification."[111] Derrida describes the recounting of the events from his early life in Algeria as the challenge of narrating or telling a "story" (*histoire*).[112] As we shall see in chapters 8 and 9, he had long been interested in how "the relation" of a story or a history can be understood as a narration or narrative (*le récit*).[113]

Derrida's own narratives about the events of 1940–1942 proliferate from at least *The Post Card* in 1980 until his last published works during his lifetime twenty-four years later. The citation of what happened to Derrida in Algeria during the Second World War becomes a re-citation of the relation of an event. In "Envois," Derrida writes on 9 September 1977: "France now, the French university. You accuse me of being pitiless, and above all unjust with it (scores to be settled perhaps: did they not expel me from school when I was 11, no German having set foot in Algeria? [. . .])."[114] What makes *Monolingualism of the Other* different from the writings on narrative and history in the 1970s is the explicit focus on the problem of the witness and of testimony. Before we reach the example of Derrida's own story from the past, there is the

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larger question of an *exemplary* memory as testimony to "the *reality* of political and historical terror."[115] Is an exemplary memory a *historical* memory? Before he can relate his own memories, Derrida needs to address the question of history.

In the context of the problem of treating an example—one memory, my memory— as exemplary, as speaking of or standing for a general or even universal experience of a historical event, Derrida begins with a series of more obvious philosophical gestures. He argues that such an exemplary testimony cannot be taken as one example in a series of examples (as in a Kantian conditioned series). It is rather indicative of "the truth of a universal necessity."[116] Derrida's language evidently suggests the Kantian distinction between nature (what is inside a conditioned series) and freedom (what is outside this series or the unconditioned). However, Derrida is not simply reinhabiting this commanding internal-external opposition in the history of philosophy; he is gesturing to a rethinking of the unconditioned and the empirical and the need for a *quasi*-transcendentality when someone relates their *own* memories of traumatic experiences in relation to historical events during World War II.[117] For now, we can say that Derrida is trying to evoke a larger framework to suspend or put into parenthesis the self-evident immediacy of telling one's *own* story as "history" in this context.

Though he does not make this explicit, Derrida's own story of his experiences as a Jew in Algeria during the Second World War is on the margins of witnessing the *Shoah*.[118] In an interview from September 1991, Derrida remarks that he is concerned that he has already made "too much" of these events in previous interviews, not least "because measured on the scale of pains, wounds, and crimes of that time—because you do have to measure as well—it would be indecent to stress it."[119] As Derrida would later remark in "Abraham, the Other," a paper given in December 2000, this terrible and incomparable measurement haunted him and prompted the search for the widest, most *universal* response:

> In spite of the painful gravity of it, all this was in no way comparable to the tragedy of European Jews or even French Jews, a monstrous tragedy of which we knew nothing and about which later, for this very reason, my compassion and my horrified indignation were and remain such as must move a universal conscience rather than that of a Jew affected in his own kin [*un Juif touché dans les siens*].[120]

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In starting to the address the difficulty of relating his own memories in relation to the historical events of the *Shoah*, Derrida both recognizes a universal imperative that exceeds or disrupts the possible easy good conscience of speaking of such memories and evokes what I would call the *weight* of history. In *Monolingualism of the Other*, he links "the *reality* of political and historical terror" to "the scope [*portée*] of any *férance*, of any reference as différance."[121] A few years earlier in "Heidegger's Ear," a paper given in Chicago in September 1989, Derrida had linked the French verb to carry (*porter*) and the noun for a range or a carrying-distance (*portée*) to the German verbs *tragen* and *austragen* and to Heidegger's redefinition of difference as *Unter-schied* or "dif-ference."[122]

In French, in such terms as rapport, relation and difference "there is a reference to *ference*, to carrying" (*portée*).[123] This echoes the association of the Greek *phéro* and Latin *fero* to the Greek *diaphorá* (difference). For Derrida, to carry-distance (*porter-portée*) is therefore part of a chain that links to *différance*: "I differ, I defer, I separate, and I carry, I bear, to the end" (*je diffère, je sépare et je porte jusqu'au bout*).[124] Derrida is in part responding to Heidegger's link between carrying and carrying to term as a gestation or birth.[125] Three years later in *Monolingualism of the Other*, Derrida links "the *reality* of political and historical terror" with "any reference as différance."[126] Derrida places the *différance* of carrying, of carrying the range of what remains at a distance, in relation to memory and history, to carrying the *weight* of history.[127] It is from here that we can begin to think more about the problem of *historical memory*.

In *Monolingualism of the Other*, Derrida follows this reference to the differential weight of history with a brief discussion of the *re-mark*.[128] Twenty-three years earlier in "The Double Session" (1969), Derrida had argued that what is marked as itself must be *re*-marked or repeated to mark itself *as* itself.[129] This doubling—akin to saying "I am myself," which Descartes searches for in the cogito and Hegel takes as the basis for the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness by recognizing that "I am not the other"—also exposes the project of *self*-consciousness to an alteration and puts the idealizing act of self-identification in unavoidable relation to what is other, to what cannot be idealized. The structure of the re-mark already displaces the attempt to idealize the act of memory as a confirmation of an ideal, trans-historical,

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self-identity. As Derrida observes in *Monolingualism of the Other*, the re-mark accounts for a *history* not of identity but of "the interminable [. . .] process of identification."[130]

In terms of the problem of an *exemplary* testimony, the singular witness or individual narration of the memory of a historical event can then be taken not merely as an example of the universal—and of the a-historical—but as an instance of a quasi-historical *dissemination* (a scattering beyond the singular and the plural that cannot be gathered back into an original unity).[131] The re-mark registers *both* the empirical example and the "re-application of the quasi-transcendental" without returning to a customary metaphysical treatment of empiricism or reconfirming a reductive historicism.[132] The challenge here is to think of a historical memory beyond the traditional philosophical determinations of the singular, the plural and the universal without relying on a self-evident empiricism. The *weight* of history confronts us with the distance and difference of memories that are always more than my own memory: an *ex-appropriation*.

After this careful delineation of the wider relation to history and marking the limits of an idealizing subject, or what he himself calls "a rather abstract way to narrate a story," Derrida turns to his narrative of his memory of the events in Algeria in 1940–1942.[133] He is relating his story in 1992 of events that took place in 1942. As we shall see in chapters 8 and 9, for Derrida every telling is a *re*-telling, a recitation making the problem of narration—or the *event* of the narrative itself—intertwine with the historical event. This intertwining of the historical event and its narrative does not invalidate the historical event; but it does recognize that historical events are also remembered, recalled and reordered and then reordered as *the memory of the other* in works of historiography. Derrida's re-telling of this event fifty years later is marked by many philosophical precautions and warnings about taking his own memories as a straightforward autobiographical statement on a historical event because he is also concerned with the national and cultural politics of language. This political framework is inseparable from the problem of the relation between the articulation of self-identity and language as that which comes from and returns to the other and precedes and exceeds the project of self-identification.[134]

In October 1940, when Derrida was ten years old, the Jews of Algeria lost their French citizenship—which had only been given in 1870—

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and all the rights and protections given by the state to a citizen, when the collaborationist Vichy government led by Marshal Pétain took control of France.[135] The Vichy regime in Algeria ended in November 1942 after the successful Allied invasion of North Africa. The Jews only regained their citizenship in 1943. In September 1941, the number of Jews in Algeria attending primary and secondary school was severely restricted.[136] Derrida himself was expelled from his school in October 1942.[137]

Derrida begins his own memories of this wartime period with an account of the culture of colonial educational *institutions*.[138] As we have seen, this gesture is indicative of the importance of historical context or *mi-lieu* in deconstruction. For Derrida, this institutional colonial culture reinforces the general plight of the Algerian Jews, who were often so assimilated that they were disconnected "from Jewish memory, and from the history and language that one must presume to be their own."[139] In this specific cultural and historical *mi-lieu*, the relation between memory and historical memory must also address the disconnection from "Jewish memory."

Derrida then returns to what remains for him the primary problem: how is it possible "to tell ourselves our own history [*propre histoire*]?"[140] It is the assumption of the *le propre*, of this story, of these memories, as one's *own* property or self-enabling appropriation and idealizing propriety, which Derrida wants to challenge. Does this mean that a narrative of autobiography placed *in relation to* historical events is impossible from the outset? I do not think so. A story has been *openly* told *in public* and a series of memories recalled that also relate to wider historical events and, if anything, what have been held back or suspended have been the personal and the confessional. What interests Derrida here is the *possibility* of a historical memory as *ex-appropriation*.

When *Monolingualism of the Other* was given as a paper in April 1992, Derrida had already addressed the question of his personal and confessional memories of his own childhood in Algeria in "Circumfession," which had been published in March 1991. In *Monolingualism of the Other*, the historical, the legal, the institutional and the cultural aspects of the situation in 1930s–1940s Algeria is examined in relation to the problem of individual memory.

When Derrida refers directly to history it is to acknowledge that he himself is not giving a history of the Algerian Jews in this period.[141] He

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is not engaged with the "history of the historians." But he is concerned with a history and memory that is entangled with the traditional philosophical problem of the relation between the singular and the universal and the transcendental and the empirical. In the last sections of the book Derrida once again insists that the re-telling his own memory of the events in 1940–1942 should be distinguished from the familiar terminus of the "transcendental or ontological universality and phenomenal empiricity."[142] Derrida argues that these old oppositions in the history of philosophy are always re-marking themselves *as* themselves by perpetually folding in and out of their opposite terms.[143]

In challenging the philosophical tradition of metaphysics, it is seemingly easy to refute claims to the "transcendental" (such as the concept of "the soul") but the "empirical" (such as the concept of "the body") is also as much a product of the history of metaphysics. For Derrida, the "quasi-transcendental" acknowledges that the tenacious claim to an empirical or phenomenal singularity—the relating or retelling of my memories of a historical event—always invites its own absolute other or *reconfirmation* in the transcendental, unless one recognizes the excess and pull of the *quasi*-transcendental. This gesture is as much about relating a specific *historical* event as reconfiguring a powerful trope in the history of philosophy.

This is why *Monolingualism of the Other* is particularly concerned with "the enigmatic articulation between a universal structure and its idiomatic testimony."[144] The subtitle of Derrida's book is "the prosthesis of the origin" and he also evokes the *quasi*-transcendental to reject the colonial or postcolonial model of a "mother tongue"—that is often either fully claimed by the indigenous population or entirely appropriated by the colonizing powers—founded on the metaphysical assumption of a simple empirical origin. Derrida counters this traditional model with a quasi-empirical–quasi-transcendental structure that involves the invention or construction of an origin (hence the origin as a prosthesis) that goes beyond any possible empirical reconstitution of an original or absolute natural heritage.[145] In my view, it is precisely this provocative sequence of deconstruction that makes Derrida a philosopher who never stopped responding to the challenge of history.

In Derrida's terms, "the desire of the idiom" generates the construction—and therefore the possibility of a deconstruction because this language is not merely natural—of a "first" or "*prior-to-the-first* [avant-

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première] language," the so-called mother tongue.[146] The invention of the "mother tongue" still registers the traces, spectres, phantoms and translated memories "of what, precisely, did not take place."[147] The quasi-transcendental is not a pure invention or fiction; it is also *quasi*-empirical, as it registers a "past" that already exceeds the metaphysical categories of a single point of origin or an assured self-identity. The "mother tongue" therefore has a *history*, even if this is not a history founded on the "natural" origin of a colonial or postcolonial history.

This leads Derrida to one of the most significant observations in the book about history and its relation to memory. He writes: "Invented for the geneaology of what did not happen and whose event will have been absent, leaving only negative traces of itself in what *makes history* [dans ce qui *fait l'histoire*], such a *prior-to-the-first* language does not exist."[148] As we have seen, for Derrida the "mother tongue" as a natural origin, as the trans-historical origin of the colonial and postcolonial narrative in Algeria, "does not exist." However, there is a history of this claimed natural origin *as* a "prosthesis," as a historical, cultural and political construction. This history can be deconstructed. But Derrida also adds that this natural, ahistorical "mother tongue" cannot be described as an *event*. So what in this *mi-lieu* constitutes an event? The origin as a prosthesis leaves "negative traces of itself in what *makes history*." What is striking here is that these "negative traces" are described as being found "in [*dans*] what *makes history*." The "in" here is worth noting because in his earlier work Derrida was always careful to call attention to the assumption that something is automatically "in" history.[149] In this specific case, the evocation of the quasi-transcendental outmanoeuvres the traditional taxonomy of the empirical as the "embedded" and the transcendental as the "escape."

Derrida perhaps came closer to addressing the problem of "what *makes history*" in relation to the events of 1942 two years later in an interview from 25–26 January 1994 with Maurizo Ferraris. Derrida remarks:

> The date you have privileged, 1942, for me denotes a wound or a trauma. Most likely an unconscious sedimentation was formed there, but also—in way also unconscious—an intellectual determination, even if I didn't understand much about what was going on in 1942, when the little Jew from Algiers that I was, with the onset of anti-Semitism—French, not Nazi—had been expelled from school. [. . .]

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> From that point on, it is no longer possible to distinguish —for me or for anybody else-—between the biographical and the intellectual, the non-intellectual biography and the intellectual biography, the conscious and the unconscious.[150]

In this particular case, history is "made" when the biographical *cannot be separated* from the intellectual. At the same time, Derrida adds, this gesture must do "something else than just tell stories [*raconteur des histoires*]."[151] The historical event is not just about a private intellectual history. Derrida makes a point here of linking the question of biographical to the institutions and conventions of "academic philosophy."[152]

Derrida also suggests in his interview with Ferraris that a work of memory is always troubled by the historical memory. Any projected work-as-memoir, he argues, would need "to find new categories, to invent an extremely refined instrument that is at once diegetical, phenomenological and psychoanalytical."[153] Why does Derrida use the term *diēgēsis* here to account for the narrative of this possible new kind of memoir? In *Dissemination*, Derrida had noted that Plato opposes *mimēsis* or imitation to *diēgēsis* or "simple narrative" in *The Republic*.[154] This may also be a reference to Gérard Genette's (1930–2018) influential work *Narrative Discourse* (*Discours du récit*) (1972).[155] Genette points out that Plato's distinction marks the difference between a narrator that speaks in his or her own voice (*diēgēsis*) and a narrator that imitates the voice of someone else (*mimēsis*).[156] Derrida uses the term "diegetical" in this 1994 interview precisely to account for the problem of speaking only in one's own voice in a new kind of memoir that is situated in the difficult relation *between* personal memory and historical memory.

The next term in the triad of terms from the interview, the "phenomenological," can be taken as indicative Derrida's enduring interest in the phenomenological reduction or the Husserlian suspension of the "natural attitude." As he observes in 2000 in "Abraham, the Other," in his previous works that have touched on his own complex relation to Judaism or Jewishness he has often had recourse to "the detour of more or less calculated ruses, of generally deliberate ellipses, which were intended to be learned, by the way of a phenomenological play of suspension, quotation marks and parentheses."[157] By suspending the "natural attitude" towards the memoir as a self-evident presentation or regathering into presence of the self *to* itself as it "was" and as it "is" now,

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the phenomenological reinforces the *possibility* of the diegetical as the encounter with my memories of an historical event with *other* voices, *other* memories and *other* witnesses.

Derrida's final term for this possible new kind of memoir placed between memory and historical memory is the "psychoanalytical," which hardly plays the Hegelian role of the third term as synthesizer and fuel for the elevation and progression of the *Aufhebung*. In the broadest sense of Derrida's readings of Freud, Jacques Lacan (1901–1981) and others, the psychoanalytical complicates both the diegetical and phenomenological.[158] Having mentioned at the outset his reading of Freud in 1966, we would need to explore Derrida's numerous works on psychoanalysis in detail to grasp the possibilities and limits of this new kind of diegetical-phenomenological-psychoanalytical memoir.[159] Something I cannot do here. But we will come back to Derrida's treatment of psychoanalysis in relation to historiography.

In early December 2000, six years after the 1994 interview with Maurizo Ferraris, Derrida gave the paper "Abraham, the Other" for a conference held in Paris under the title "Judeities: Questions for Jacques Derrida." One of the notable additions to this remarkable paper, which includes Derrida's recollection that the first time he heard the word Jew (*Juif*) as a child was when he was called "dirty Jew!" in the street, is an important qualification to the treatment of the events of 1942 as the "first" event in Derrida's own prospective memoir.[160] This was not the "first" event when the event is taken as an aspect of a memoir situated between history and memory. Before the expulsion from school was the trauma of the first day at school and before this was the un-recollected but marked event of his circumcision.[161] For Derrida, in addition to the avowedly *historical* event, such as the treatment of the Jews in Algeria in 1942, there are other kinds of events that should also be addressed in the work-as-memoir. We will come back to this "memory without memory" in the next chapter.

For now, it is important to emphasize that for Derrida there is no smooth transition or clear break between the work-as-memoir and the narration of the historical event. This was already apparent in Derrida's lecture "Otobiographies: The Teaching of Nietzsche and the Politics of the Proper Name," which was delivered in Montréal on 22 October 1979. As Derrida observes in the discussion after his paper, Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo* (1888) invites a reinterpretation of autobiography as a nar-

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rative that not only covers the life of the writer but also the posthumous *thanatography* of the proper name and works of the writer.[162] Nietzsche, as Stendhal (1783–1842) before him, often addresses his work to his future readers, giving the work-as-memoir a future tense and an open relation to the still unforeseen event and its narration.[163] As Nietzsche writes in the preface for *The Anti-Christ* (1888): "This book belongs to the very few. Perhaps none of them are even alive yet. [. . .] My day won't come until the day after tomorrow. Some people are born posthumously."[164]

Derrida uses the example of the appropriation of Nietzsche's works by the Nazis as a disturbing instance of the political *after-life* of Nietzsche's proper name and his written works, though he recognizes that there are aspects in Nietzsche's work that both resist and invite this reappropriation.[165] Challenging the conventional borders between the life, the proper name that is both attached and detached from the life (the name can "exist without the bearer of the name"), and the relation to the works that "live on" after the end of the writer's life, Derrida treats Nietzsche's work-as-memoir as a work that also addresses the "legacy" or *historical* transmission of his thought.[166] As much as it engages with a past before memory, the memoir also has a future *as* a problem of history.

As Derrida remarks, "the future of the Nietzsche text is not closed."[167] "The structure of the textuality in general," he observes, indicates that the relation between a life, a proper name and written works is "signed only much later by the other" and this "testamentary structure doesn't befall a text by accident, but constructs it."[168] For Derrida, this is a general structure for all works; but it is most apparent with the work-as-memoir. The work-as-memoir is sent out, dated, handed over and registered by the other who comes later and this work is marked with the passing of time as both an event and as a historical testament or transmission.[169] Written for a posthumous future, it arrives with a future from the past.

NOTES

1. Jacques Derrida, "Roundtable on Autobiography," in *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation—Texts and Discussions with*

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Jacques Derrida, ed. Christie McDonald, trans. Avital Ronell and Peggy Kamuf (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 41–92: 51.

2. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 19.

3. *Monolingualism of the Other*, n. 9, 78–93.

4. Simon Cooke, "The 'ghost of repetition': On the Recurrence and Correspondences of Sebald's Date of Birth in the Poetry and Prose Fictions," in *Narrative and Identity: Theoretical Approaches and Critical Analysis*, ed. A. Nuenning, B. Neumann and B. Petterson (Trier: WVT, 2008), 191–205.

5. See for example Jacques Derrida, *The Death Penalty, Volume 1*, ed. Geoffrey Bennington, Marc Crépon and Thomas Dutoit, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014). This seminar is dated from 8 December 1999 to 22 March 2000, with the dates for each weekly session serving as part of the title for each session.

6. See the comments on the work as memoir in *Memoires*, 102–5. See also Jacques Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993) and the collected pieces in Jacques Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, trans. Anne Pascale-Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

7. "Avowing—The Impossible," 21.

8. See David Farrell Krell, *Of Memory, Reminiscence, and Writing* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

9. *The Problem of Genesis*, 164; *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 102; Jacques Derrida, "From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism Without Reserve," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 251–77: 259, 265; *Of Grammatology*, 24.

10. "Freud and the Scene of Writing," 214. See also Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis,* trans. Daniel Lagache, intro. Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Hogarth Press, 1973), 247–49. On the context for Derrida's seminar, see Baring, *The Young Derrida and French Philosophy*, 203–20.

11. "Freud and the Scene of Writing," 201, 206, 211.

12. "Freud and the Scene of Writing," 226. My emphasis.

13. "Freud and the Scene of Writing," 226, 224.

14. Jacques Derrida and others, "Discussion," in *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man*, ed. Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 265–72: 272.

15. "Freud and the Scene of Writing," 212.

16. "Freud and the Scene of Writing," 214.

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17. Jacques Derrida, "The Pit and the Pyramid: Introduction to Hegel's Semiology," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 69–108; *Glas*.

18. "The Pit and the Pyramid," 76–77, 87, 105; The Ends of Man," 121; "The Double Session," 221.

19. Jacques Derrida, "*Fors*: The Anglish Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok," Introduction to *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy* by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, trans. Nicholas Rand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), xi–xlviii.

20. *Memoires*, 35–38.

21. *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 4, 17–19.

22. "Plato's Pharmacy," 91.

23. "Plato's Pharmacy," 91.

24. *Of Grammatology*, 37.

25. "Plato's Pharmacy," 100, 111.

26. "Plato's Pharmacy," 109.

27. "Plato's Pharmacy," 109.

28. "Plato's Pharmacy," 107; "La pharmacie de Platon," 132. Translation modified.

29. "Plato's Pharmacy," 107; "La pharmacie de Platon," 132.

30. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (London: Vintage, 1992), 18.

31. *Memoires*, xi.

32. *Memoires*, 141. See also 146.

33. On Derrida's title see *Memoires*, xiv, 11.

34. "The Pit and the Pyramid," 87.

35. "The Pit and the Pyramid," 77, 87.

36. "The Pit and the Pyramid," 77.

37. "The Pit and the Pyramid," 105.

38. "White Mythology," 226.

39. "Shibboleth," 15.

40. "Shibboleth," 15–16.

41. "Shibboleth," 16.

42. "Shibboleth," 18.

43. "Shibboleth," 2.

44. "Shibboleth," 2. Translation modified. See also the note on the translation of this passage (189).

45. "Shibboleth," 15, 35, 40.

46. "Shibboleth," 5–6.

47. "Shibboleth," 8–9, 16–17.

48. "Envois," 51.

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49. “Shibboleth,” 10.

50. “Shibboleth,” 7. See also Robert Smith, *Derrida and Autobiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

51. *Edmund Husserl’s The Origin of Geometry*, 153.

52. On the relation between the public and the private in Derrida’s work, see Sean Gaston, “The Ruins of Disinterest,” in *Derrida and Disinterest* (London: Continuum, 2006), 1–18.

53. Jacques Derrida, *L’écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), 437. This note is quoted in French by the translator at the start of *Writing and Difference* (ix); *Positions*, vii.

54. Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 366. See also “Outwork: Prefacing.”

55. “Tympan,” xxix.

56. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, intro. Declan Kiberd (London: Penguin, 1992), 933. See also Jacques Derrida, “Ulysses Gramophone: Two Words for Joyce,” in *Derrida and Joyce: Texts and Contexts*, ed. Andrew J. Mitchell and Sam Slote, trans. François Raffoul and Geoffrey Bennington (New York: SUNY, 2013), 19–86.

57. Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 341–42. See also “Cogito and the History of Madness,” 307 n. 1; “Structure, Sign and Play.”

58. Derrida incorrectly dates this work as being published in 1964. See Maurice de Gandillac, Lucien Goldman and Jean Piaget, eds., *Entretiens sur les notions de Genèse et de Structure* (Paris: Mouton, 1965). See also Lawlor, *Derrida and Husserl*, 24–33.

59. *Margins of Philosophy*, xxix, 1, 29, 69, 109, 136, 137, 155, 175, 207, 273.

60. “The Ends of Man,” 109.

61. “The Ends of Man,” 136, 114.

62. “The Ends of Man,” 114. “Les fins de l’homme,” in *Marges—de la philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972), 129–164: 135.

63. “The Ends of Man,” 114.

64. “The Ends of Man,” 114; “Les fins de l’homme,” 135.

65. “Envois,” 5. See also on the date and the “undated,” 131, 135, 137, 143, 169, 195.

66. “Shibboleth,” 33. See also 40–43.

67. “Shibboleth,” 32.

68. “Shibboleth,” 36. Translation modified. See also Jacques Derrida, “Poetics and Politics of Witnessing,” in *Sovereignties in Question: The Poetics of Paul Celan*, ed. Thomas Dutoit and Outi Pasanen, trans. Outi Pasanen (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 65–96.

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69. "Envois," 114; "Envois," 126 [French text]. See also on memory, 18, 40, 246.

70. "Shibboleth," 24.

71. See http://www.ccic–cerisy.asso.fr/colloques3.html#1972.

72. See http://www.ccic–cerisy.asso.fr/nietzsche1TM73.html.

73. *Spurs*: *Nietzsche's Styles*, 141–43.

74. *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, 35.

75. *Glas*, 166a–210a.

76. "Envois," 62.

77. Jacques Derrida, *Singnéponge / Signsponge*, trans. Richard Rand (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 148–53.

78. Derrida, "Outwork," See also Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 1–45.

79. "Outwork," 27 n. 27; "Hors livre," 31, 34.

80. *Positions*, 93.

81. Jacques Derrida, "Telepathy," in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume 1*, ed. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg, trans. Nicholas Royle (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 226–61: 259–61.

82. "Shibboleth," 34.

83. *Aporias*, ix; *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, ix; *Rogues*, 161–62.

84. Jacques Derrida and Catherine Malabou, *Counterpath: Traveling with Jacques Derrida*, trans. David Wills (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 41.

85. *Memoirs of the Blind*, vii, 16.

86. Jacques Derrida, "Psychoanalysis Searches the States of Its Soul: The Impossible Beyond of a Sovereign Cruelty," in *Without Alibi*, ed., trans. and intro. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 238–80: 280; *États d'âme de la psychanalyse: Adresse aux États Généraux de la Psychanalyse* (Paris: Galilée, 2000), 8.

87. *The Work of Mourning*, 94.

88. "Interpretations at War," 241.

89. Jacques Derrida, "'There Is No One Narcissism': (Autobiophotographies)," in *Points . . .: Interviews, 1974–1994*, ed. Elisabeth Weber, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 196–215.

90. Jacques Derrida, "Cartouches," in *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 183–254: 205, 213, 239, 240. The text "*Border Lines*" runs along the bottom of each page of "Living On," and is dated from 10 November 1977 to 20–27 March 1978.

91. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 5. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 95.

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92. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 4; John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* ed. and intro. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 5.

93. Søren Kierkegaard, *Either / Or: A Fragment of Life,* ed., trans. and intro. Alistair Hannay (London: Penguin, 1992), 37.

94. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, ed. Rolf-Peter Horstmann and Judith Norman, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 4; *On the Genealogy of Morals*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 9; *The Gay Science*, ed. Bernard Williams, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff and Adrain Del Caro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 9.

95. Anthony K. Jensen, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1, 172. See also Derrida's comments in *The Politics of Friendship* on a "genealogical deconstruction" that would include "a deconstruction of *the* genealogical schema, a paradoxical deconstruction—a deconstruction, at once genealogical and a-genealogical, of *the* genealogical" (105). See also 91–93.

96. Jensen, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of History*, 181–204; Smith, *Derrida and Autobiography*, 75–96.

97. René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, ed. and trans. John Cottingham, intro. Bernard Williams, revised edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

98. "Living On"; "Survivre," in *Parages: Nouvelle édition revue et augmentée* (Paris: Galilée, 1986–2003), 109–203.

99. Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, ed. Melvyn New and Joan New (London: Penguin, 2003), 57. See also 339.

100. See *Voice and Phenomenon*, 46–47, 79–83.

101. Jacques Derrida, "At This Very Moment in This Work Here I Am," in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume 1*, ed. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg, trans. Ruben Berezdivin and Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 143–90.

102. Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, fore. Riccardo Di Donato (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 30, 18–19.

103. *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 148, 154.

104. "The Other Heading," 27. Translation modified.

105. "The Other Heading," 27; "L'Autre Cap: Mémoires, réponses et responsabilités," in *L'Autre Cap* (Paris: Minuit, 1991), 11–101: 31.

106. "The Other Heading," 27; *L'Autre Cap*, 31–32.

107. "The Other Heading," 27–28.

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108. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 25.
109. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 15–18.
110. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 22–24, 33, 42, 53, 58.
111. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 28.
112. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 9, 13, 35; *Le monolinguisme de l'autre*, 24, 31, 64.
113. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 19.
114. "Envois," 87.
115. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 26. Translation modified. My emphasis. The French text reads "la réalité de la terreur politique et historique," the English, "political and historical terror." See *Le monolinguisme de l'autre*, 48.
116. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 26.
117. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 26. See also Dominick LaCapra, *History and Memory After Auschwitz* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).
118. See also "Avowing—The Impossible."
119. "A Testimony Given," 55.
120. "Abraham, the Other," 14–15.
121. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 26.
122. "Heidegger's Ear," 168–71. See Martin Heidegger, "Language," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, ed. and trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 187–210: 200–210.
123. "Heidegger's Ear," 168. See also *Specters of Marx*, 154; Jacques Derrida, *Athens, Still Remains: The Photographs of Jean-François Bonhomme*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 2–3.
124. "Heidegger's Ear," 168; "L'oreille de Heidegger: Philopolémologie (*Geschlecht* IV)," in *Politiques de l'amitié* (Paris: Galilée, 1994), 341–419: 349.
125. "Heidegger's Ear," 168.
126. In his later work, Derrida will turn to Paul Celan's use of *tragen* and explore the relation between carrying and the death of the other, see Jacques Derrida, "Rams: Uninterrupted Dialogue—between Two Infinities, the Poem," in *Sovereignties in Question: The Poetics of Paul Celan*, ed. and trans. Thomas Dutoit and Outi Pasanen (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 135–63.
127. On the question of "weight," see also Jacques Derrida, *On Touching—Jean-Luc Nancy*, trans. Christine Irizarry (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 71–74, 85, 295–301.
128. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 26.
129. "The Double Session," 237, 245, 251, 270.
130. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 28.
131. See also *A Taste for the Secret*, 41.

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132. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 26.

133. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 28.

134. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 38–40.

135. See Sophie B. Roberts, *Citizenship and Antisemitism in French Colonial Algeria 1870–1962* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

136. *Derrida: A Biography*, 17.

137. Peteers, *Derrida: A Biography*, 18–22. On Derrida's time in Algeria see, Jacques Derrida and Saffa Fathy, *Tourner les mots: Au bord d'un film* (Paris: Galilée, 2000); Mustapha Chérif, ed., *Derrida à Alger: un regard sur le monde* (Arles: Actes sud; Alger: Barzakh, 2008); *Counterpath: Traveling with Jacques Derrida*, 75–92; Jacques Derrida, "Taking Sides for Algeria," in *Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews, 1971–2001*, ed., trans. and intro. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 117–24. See also Nora and Derrida, *Les Français d'Algérie*.

138. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 38, 42–43.

139. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 55.

140. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 55; *Le monolinguisme de l'autre*, 96.

141. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 53–54.

142. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 59.

143. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 60.

144. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 59.

145. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 59–61.

146. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 60–61.

147. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 61.

148. *Monolingualism of the Other*, 61; *Le monolinguisme de l'autre*, 118. See also *Given Time*, 120; *The Politics of Friendship*, 81. On the phrase "faire de l'histoire," see also Michel De Certeau, "Making History," in *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 19–55.

149. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 166.

150. *A Taste for the Secret*, 37; *Le goût du secret*, 47. I have revised this translation.

151. *A Taste for the Secret*, 37; *Le goût du secret*, 47. Translation modified.

152. *A Taste for the Secret*, 41.

153. *A Taste for the Secret*, 37; *Le goût du secret*, 47. Translation modified.

154. Plato, *The Republic*, 393d; Derrida, "The Double Session," 186.

155. Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin, fore. Jonathan Culler (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980).

156. *Narrative Discourse*, 162.

157. "Abraham, the Other," 9.

158. "A Testimony Given," 44–45.

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159. To only cite the most obvious works see: "Freud and the Scene of Writing"; "*Fors*"; *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); "Me—Psychoanalysis," in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume 1*, ed. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg, trans. Richard Klein (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 129–42; "Telepathy"; "Geopsychoanalysis 'and the rest of the world,'" in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume 1*, ed. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 318–43; "My Chances / *Mes chances*: A Rendezvous with Some Epicurean Stereophonies," in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume 1*, ed. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg, trans. Irene Harvey and Avital Ronell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 344–76; *Resistances of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); *Archive Fever*; "Psychoanalysis Searches the States of Its Soul."

160. "Abraham, the Other," 10.

161. *A Taste for the Secret*, 39–40.

162. Jacques Derrida, "Otobiographies: The Teaching of Nietzsche and the Politics of the Proper Name," in *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation—Texts and Discussions with Jacques Derrida*, ed. Christie McDonald, trans. Avital Ronell and Peggy Kamuf (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 1–38: 6–7. See also, "Roundtable on Autobiography," 45.

163. "Roundtable on Autobiography," 51.

164. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ*, in *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols: And Other Writings*, ed. Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1–68: 3.

165. "Otobiographies," 22–24, 30–32.

166. "Roundtable on Autobiography," 53, 51; "Otobiographies," 5–6.

167. "Otobiographies," 31.

168. "Roundtable on Autobiography," 51.

169. "Roundtable on Autobiography," 84, 88–89.

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7

THE PROBLEM OF HISTORICAL MEMORY

> The *task* of a historical and interpretative memory is at the heart of deconstruction.
>
> —"Force of Law"[1]

1. HISTORY AND MEMORY

The question of the memoir as works that are registered by the other and that can become, to use Marc Bloch's redolent phrase, "witnesses in spite of themselves" (*les témoins malgré eux*), leads us from Derrida's memories of his childhood in Algeria to the problem of a tangled double injunction: one can forgot an individual memory *and* one should always remember a historical memory.[2] What is a historical memory? It is something more than just an approximate designation for a general, shared or common memory of historical events that are considered as "significant" in some fashion. Is it, as Plato suggested, the written, recorded and archived memories, the memories *of others* from the past? Derrida suggests that the heart of the work-as-memoir encounters a *limit*: there are events "without memory" and these are both part of my memories, my autobiography, and part of the relation to the already there, to the past that precedes me. This is a memory that is already marked by a relation to *tekhnē*; it is a taught memory, a memory of what preceded me that can only be learnt from others, from family, friends, school, novels, photographs, films, newspapers, archives, monuments, and works of history. It is a constructed memory. It is a memory that is

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mine *and* a memory of the other. How does memory remember what is *already there*?

In "A Testimony Given . . .," an interview from September 1991, Derrida argues, "remembering does not consist only in unveiling and making explicit what is already there."[3] This notion of memory is based on the common assumption that the past is always placed "behind us" in a neat linear ordering of time and space. Memory is also an unforeseen event in relation to a narrative. Derrida goes on to say:

> You have to produce new events. Deconstruction is not a memory that simply recalls to mind what is already there. The act of memory is also an unpredictable event, an event that calls forth a responsibility and also gestures and actions. But that "doing" is caught in a double bind. The more you remember, the more you risk deleting, and vice versa. Deconstruction cannot get out of this *aporia*, this double bind, in a secure way. I don't think there's a rule or imperative here that could give us an assurance.[4]

Any attempt to resolve the tangled relation between remembering and forgetting through the construction of an assured or invulnerable archive for memory would only culminate in a "present monument, a present stone that would have no relationship to memory."[5]

Derrida is perhaps touching here on a very specific historical question in France, raised by Maurice Halbwachs (1877–1945) and Pierre Nora (1931–): the relation between the public monument, memory and forgetting in which the erection of the grand monument can also secure a profound amnesia.[6] The institutionalization of memory and commemoration can be taken as an assertion of the present over the complex demands of the past and the persistent "'uncanniness' of history," as Ricoeur calls it.[7] In his 1991 interview Derrida concludes, "you cannot and should not avoid the risk of forgetting if you want to remember."[8] As he had suggested a decade earlier in *Cinders*, exploring the phrase "*il y a là cendre*," "cinders there are" or "there are cinders there," ashes register "a lost memory of what is no longer here."[9] The memory of the past itself is lost but one can still register the memory *as* lost. "Someone vanished," Derrida observes, "but something preserved her trace and at the same time lost it."[10] This is the effacement or "slow decomposition" of a memory that cannot be petrified in "the memory of a cenotaph."[11] In this sense, historiography always has to negotiate *with*

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ashes, with the witness whose testimony is recorded as a testament but whose words have been lost or forgotten: the silent witness, the unreadable name.[12]

At the same time, in "The Other Heading: Memories, Responses, and Responsibilities," Derrida reaffirms the injunction to remember. When addressing the question of Europe "today," we need to remember the older narratives of "*Eurocentrism*" and "*anti-Eurocentrism*": "we cannot and must not forget them since they do not forget us."[13] Memory must also take account of what comes from the past and cannot or will not forget "us." Is the encounter with the unforgettable and unforgetting past a link between memory and history? I may myself forget but the *weight* of the historical event or historical memory that lingers or encroaches in the present will not be forgotten, even if I fail to remember it. Derrida will return to the political relation between memory and forgetting in *Specters of Marx*, noting that Marx's politics is driven by a complex double injunction: in the name of revolution, one must both forget *and* recall enough of the past to change the present.[14]

Derrida goes on to ask in this paper, given in May 1990, "before what memory" must we respond when raising the question of Europe "today"?[15] In the context of "the history" of European culture, Derrida suggests not only that can it most likely not be treated "as one, as the same," but also not have "a memory of itself" *as* a monoculture.[16] There is a difference between the history and the memory of Europe. This history may be the history of a monoculture but still not be remembered as a monoculture. "Every history," Derrida argues, "presupposes" a *télos* that memory "dreams of gathering."[17]

As Geoffrey Bennington has observed, Derrida is always concerned with the "hard question" for advocates of history of "the deconstruction of the *télos*."[18] Historical memory dreams, chases after history and seeks to unify itself, hopes for a future reunion, with "the movement" or progressive momentum of history.[19] However, history also "presupposes" what cannot be anticipated or can only be "anticipated *as* the unforeseeable, the *unanticipatable*, the non-masterable."[20] Derrida characterizes this other history as a history *in search of* memory, "as that of which one does not yet have a memory."[21]

A teleological history, as exemplified by Hegel, is a history with a future that is already apparent in its past. This programmatic history, a history that always knows where it is going, is not only chased by histori-

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cal memory; it also facilitates a memory of the past that can reside in the present and anticipate the future. This kind of history serves historical memory as cohesive circle, giving it access to what has not yet happened but has happened before. As Derrida notes, this form of "old memory" is of course critical in supporting an informed awareness of the past and encountering the unforgettable.[22] In contrast, the other history, a history of what is not "identifiable in advance and once and for all," cannot be equated with or mapped onto memory.[23] It is a history with a future and a history that "does not yet have a memory."[24] This "not yet" (*pas encore*) suspends but does not preclude historical memory; but it does mark a limit or point of resistance to the idealized and trans-historical understanding of historical memory as a gathering into unity or perpetual re-union.

In the context of this paper from May 1990, which links historical memory to responding and responsibility, Derrida closes a brief passage on the relation between history and memory with the *challenge* of a double injunction: "We must thus be suspicious of *both* repetitive memory *and* the completely other of the absolutely new; of *both* anamnestic capitalization *and* the amnesic exposure to what would no longer be identifiable at all."[25] Derrida characterizes a responsible approach to the relation between the historical memory and historical events as the recognition of these different injunctions. One must watch out for memory as the confirmation of the same in history and for the new, for a break with history, as the end of memory. One must also avoid a history that advocates an all-encompassing memory and be aware of the ever-present threat of amnesia in relation to the past. Derrida suggests that memory and history are always *entangled* and cannot simply be separated as two distinct movements or categories.

Significantly, Derrida suggests in "The Other Heading" that one can respond to— but not resolve—the "*double bind*" of both keeping with and breaking from a traditional idea of Europe by turning to memory.[26] What is needed in Europe *today*, 20 May 1990, Derrida argues, picking up on a tradition of referring to Europe as the head or capital or principal heading of the world, is an "act of memory that consists in betraying a certain order of capital in order to be faithful to the other heading and to the other of the heading."[27] At the end of his paper, Derrida describes this faithful betrayal as a memory that can be open to what remains to come (*à venir*), in the sense of "the structure of a promise."[28]

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It is a matter of the weight of historical memory that is as open to the "not yet" as much as to the "just passed," of "*the memory of that which carries* [porte] *the future, the to-come, here and now*."[29] A memory that is open to the future *of* the past is a memory encountered in relation to a historicity that registers the past as that which *remains* to come.[30]

2. HISTORICAL MEMORY

The historical memory raises the question of the archive, of what Derrida calls as early as 1979 "an institution that institutes above all the transmission of what has been inherited, the conversation and the interpretation of the archive."[31] Four years after "The Other Heading," on 5 June 1994 Derrida explored the problem of the archive as an institution of a selected, selective and apparently exemplary historical memory in *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, a lecture given at Freud's house in London. The revised lecture was published as a book in 1995. It addresses not only the issue of "private" memory and the institution of "public" archives but also of the archive as a troubled source for "what *makes history*" in relation to Freudian psychoanalysis, the history of Judaism and Jewishness. This work from 1994–1995 develops Derrida's exploration of his own memories in relation to Judaism but it places the general question of memory in relation to the unconscious, history and historical memory. It also examines the proposition that there is a memory that resists history.

There is an *archival imperative* in Derrida's thought, which is at once personal—all the diaries, letters, papers that he himself preserved with such care—and historical. Derrida's own archive was established while he was still alive at the Langston Library in the University of California, Irvine, and at IMEC (Institut Mémoires de l'Édition Contemporaine) in France.[32] Derrida does not entertain the idea that one could dispense with this personal or historical archive, that the possible risk of the loss of documents and papers would not be a profound loss. There is no sense of a heady liberation from the archive in Derrida's thought. The *weight* of the archive is always apparent.

Five years before the lecture in London, in the extended interview "'This Strange Institution Called Literature'" (1989), Derrida had affirmed the importance of memory in thinking about the history of liter-

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ature. As we have seen, this is not a question of an ahistorical essence of literature or even of a trans-historical ideality (as suggested by Husserl). The history of literature is not a history of nature but of something that has been constructed. It can then be deconstructed. As Derrida observes: "Its history is *constructed* like the ruin of a monument which basically never existed. It is the history of a ruin, the narrative of a memory which produces the event to be told and which will have never been present."[33] Derrida would eloquently say that same year in "Force of Law" that we can only *love* ruins. A monument or an institution is finite, "it has not always been there, it will not always be there."[34] A history of literature is already marked by this temporality and finitude.

Derrida describes this "history of a ruin" as "the narrative of a memory which produces the event to be told." As we shall see in the next chapter, Derrida had long been interested in the relation between a narration narrating itself (*du récit récitant*) and a narration that is narrated (*du récit récité*). He uses this distinction to refer to the relation between a prior narrative and its later narration. As one might expect, this does not provide a fixed relation between the past and the present. In some cases the "narrated" is in the past and its later "narration" is in the present. In other cases, the "narration" is in the past and the "narrated" account is in the present. Derrida suggests here that in contrast to the historical event, such as the French Revolution and its subsequent historical narrations, the history of literature can be understood as a narrative that *produces* an event. For the history of literature, the event in question is itself a work of narration.

At the same time, it is the "narrative" of a *historical memory* that registers the history of literature as "the history of a ruin" and "produces the event to be told." Historical memory here describes an ability to register a wider or larger perspective *on the archive*. In this case, it leads us to treat the *history* of literature as "the history of a ruin." Countering the idealization of the literary object—as either a trans-historical essence or an object that can be entirely historicized like a table or a chair—Derrida implies that as a finite historical construct the history of literature is also "the narrative of a memory which produces the event to be told." The historical memory is not just a certain kind of object *in* the past; it also challenges the traditional or metaphysical organization of the past, the present and the future. It appears that the *narration* of a memory (a present tense for what is in the past) produces

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an event *to be* told (a past tense that is also a future conditional). In a history of literature, historical memory produces an event *as* the future of the past. As Derrida observes in "Force of Law," "the *task* of a historical and interpretative memory is at the heart of deconstruction."[35]

Four years later in the *Spectres of Marx*, Derrida speaks of the "historical memory" of the name of Marx and of Marxism and its unique relation to "history in general."[36] The "event" of Marxism announced a new kind of "messianic promise" in relation to "worldwide forms of social organization."[37] In this *mi-lieu*, the "historical memory" marks a specific historical "event" that takes place on a scale of a general memory that is addressed precisely at the time when Marxism is being forgotten or declared "dead" in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union.[38] In his *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time* (2002, second edition 2011), François Hartog suggests that this very period—the 1980s and early 1990s—was marked by a new emphasis on memory, as the "shock waves of memory" from the "mass murders and monstrous industry of death" in the twentieth century "finally caught up with our contemporary societies."[39] For Hartog, in this period memory becomes a "metahistorical" category that can threaten a certain tradition of historiography.[40] As he observes, in its varied uses memory can denote a way of "translating, refracting, obeying, or obstructing the order of time."[41] As we have seen, for Derrida, the *spectres* of Marx—spectres that are neither simply sensible nor intelligible—highlight the very problem, the risk and the chance, of the irrepressible relation between memory, historical memory and history.

A year later, Derrida begins *Archive Fever* (*Mal d'archive*) with the traditional metaphysical opposition of nature and history.[42] The Greek word and concept of archive registers a beginning, a natural commencement or point of origin *and* a commandment, an expression of a law, of a constructed or instituted historical event. From the outset, the concept of the archive appears to replicate the opposition between nature and its many others. Derrida's earlier work suggests that we can treat this apparent opposition at the heart of the concept of the archive as an instance of a concept of nature treating itself *as* natural that is already marked by the possibility—and the inherent instability—of the differing from and the deferring of a concept of history.

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At least as early as 1965 Derrida had been interested in how history was often determined by the classical opposition of *phúsis* (most often translated as nature) and a series of its "others," including *nómos* (law), *tekhnē* (art, craft) and *thésis* (placing). As he observes in the final lecture of his 1964–1965 seminar on Heidegger, both Hegel and Husserl argued "nature has no history" and is "at bottom the non-historical itself."[43] In his celebrated October 1966 paper "Structure, Sign and Play," Derrida notes that Levi-Strauss's structural anthropology has replicated "the opposition between nature and culture" and that this has a long philosophical pedigree going back to Plato.[44] As he remarks, "Since the statement of the opposition *phúsis/nómos*, *phúsis/tekhnē*, it has been relayed to us by means of a whole historical chain which opposes 'nature' to law, to education, to art, to technics—but also to liberty, to the arbitrary, to history, to society, to the mind [*esprit*], and so on."[45] Derrida suggests here that there is a "historical chain" which can show how the opposition in classical Greek thought between nature, law and craft can be seen as a basis for Hegel and Husserl's opposition between nature and history.

The opposition between nature and culture is of course a key aspect of *Of Grammatology*. Derrida argues at one point that the "ultimate function" of this classical opposition is "perhaps to *derive* historicity."[46] As Catherine Malabou has shown in *Counterpath* (1997), *dériver* is an important verb, word and concept in Derrida's thought, as it describes both what is considered to be derivative and always derived *from* something else (such as the treatment of writing as secondary in relation to the primacy of speech) *and* what deviates in another direction, drifts or *wanders away*, which gives it a link to *différance*.[47]

As Derrida suggests in his January1968 paper "Différance," as "the displaced and equivocal passage of one different thing to another," *différance* registers "the other different and deferred [*différé*] in the economy of the same."[48] It therefore registers "culture as nature different and deferred, differing-deferring [*différée, différante*]" and "all the others of *phúsis—tekhnē*, *nómos*, *thésis*, society, freedom, history, mind [*esprit*], etc.—as *phúsis* different and deferred, or as *phúsis* differing and deferring."[49] Derrida therefore suggests in *Of Grammatology* that the use of the opposition of nature and its "others" to account for history reinforces a limited concept of history. History only follows on and falls from nature. It is defined by its failure *to be* nature.[50] At the

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same time, Derrida implies that there can be another kind of historicity, which drifts away from this inaugural opposition and precedes and exceeds the "old couple" nature and culture.[51]

At the start of "Parergon" (1974–1978), the opening work of *The Truth in Painting* (1978), which includes material from his 1973–1974 seminar "Art (Kant)," Derrida turns to the common notion that art passes "*through* history" and examines this in relation to the differing claims of the philosophy of art and of the history of art.[52] He notes that this sense of art passing "*through* history" confirms the traditional terminus of the problem of history as either an ahistoricism (art as a timeless beauty or intelligible truth that glides unchanged through history) or as a historicism (art passes *through* history, which is defined as a sensible, material determination of epochs, ages, periods and contexts).[53] What is needed, Derrida argues in 1974, in relation to the philosophy of art and the history of art is "the transformation of the concept of history."[54] He adds, this "will be the work of this seminar."[55] As "Parergon" gives us fragments of Derrida's seminar, we only get an intimation of this promised transformation. We will have to wait until this seminar is published in full to better understand Derrida's call in the early 1970s for "the transformation of the concept of history."

Twenty years later in *Archive Fever* Derrida returns to this problem by focusing directly on the relation between historiography and memory. As part of his discussion of the archive as both an archive in an institution and as part of Freud's reconfiguration of memory, Derrida states at the outset that his lecture will focus on the question of "historiography."[56] He goes on to say, and "not only on historiography in general, not only on the history of the concept of the archive, but perhaps also on the history of the formation of a *concept in general*."[57] It is at this point of general interest in historiography that Derrida turns to Freud and to a recent work that critically examines Freud's writing on Judaism in relation to the wider characterization of the history of Judaism itself as an implacable and long-standing opposition between theological-cultural memory and the writing of history.

In *Archive Fever* Derrida concentrates on *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable* (1991) by the historian Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi. *Freud's Moses* offers a close and nuanced historical study and innovative treatment of Freud's *Moses the Man and Monotheistic Religion* (1936–1939), a work notable for its argument that Moses was

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an Egyptian and that Judaism has its forgotten or repressed origins in the radical Egyptian monotheism of Akhenaton, the murder of Moses and the subsequent adoption of a Midianite religion.[58] Freud's work suggests that a religious tradition distinguished by the imperative to remember was also founded on a profound loss of memory.[59] Judaism begins as a "screen memory," the mundane first fragments of memory covering up earlier, deeper traumas.[60] History is marked by "unconscious memory-traces" and the "restorations of things past, [and the] recurrence of things forgotten."[61]

For Freud, the earliest surviving writings of Judaism therefore registers "two mutually conflicting" treatments or traditions: vested mutilation and pious preservation.[62] As a result of this conflict of traditions or of tradition as a conflict of interpretations, the origins of Judaism is a history of "obvious gaps, awkward repetitions, and tangible contradictions."[63] As Samuel Weber has noted, in Freud's account we are confronted with the *history* of a textual tradition that registers both distortion and displacement (*Entstellung*).[64] But it is also a "*tradition*" that survived and flourished.[65] For Yerushalmi, Freud's work "offers a singular vision of history as essentially a story of remembering and forgetting" that is "strangely analogous [. . .] to the biblical conception of history."[66] *Freud's Moses* ends with Yerushalmi writing a remarkable quasi-fictional letter to Freud on the question of the psychoanalyst's relation to Judaism.[67] Derrida also refers in his lecture to another book by Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (1982). Rather than concentrating on *Freud's Moses*, I would like to examine *Zakhor* in some detail, as it touches directly on the wider problem of the historical memory.

3. MEMORY WITHOUT HISTORY

Yerushalmi argues in *Zakhor* that the emphasis on memory in the Jewish tradition, and especially "collective memory," explains why there was almost no significant Jewish historiography until the early nineteenth century.[68] In broad terms, this suggests that there is a certain kind of memory that negates or disenables historiography and resists or reconfigures historical memory. At the same time, as Yerushalmi himself notes with "ironic awareness," in *Zakhor* he offers a "history" of

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Jewish memory to register its lack of history and recognizes that these terms cannot simply be separated or be easily opposed.[69] We could say that *Zakhor* addresses the *problem* of history and memory as the inability to untangle a relation between memory and history that cannot either be synthesized into a unified history-memory or separated into a simple or pure difference that can stand outside of a simple and pure historiography. Somewhat like the Platonic equation of writing with the *pharmakon* (both a cure and a poison), in this context memory both assists and threatens history.[70]

In one sense, Yerushalmi's recognizes that his own history of an ahistorical memory "represents a decisive break with that past."[71] Nonetheless, he argues that it is a historical and archival fact that there were a series of historical practices, starting with "an actual recording of historical events," that are found in classical Greece and Rome and in early and Medieval Europe that are not found in the Jewish tradition.[72] Yerushalmi also points out that the Torah and the Tanakh are "saturated" with "the historical past" and "inconceivable apart from it."[73] God is even "known only insofar as he reveals himself 'historically.'"[74] This conjunction of the theological and historical, somewhat paradoxically, produces an injunction to remember inaugural events that in turn become *trans*-historical and ahistorical.[75] As Yerushalimi observes, this tradition is "if not anti-historical, then at least ahistorical."[76] "We have learned, in effect," Yerushalmi concludes, "that meaning in history, memory of that past, and the writing of history are by no means to be equated."[77] In the postbiblical Jewish tradition, most notably the Talmud and the Midrash, events were not recorded but rather conflated with prior biblical narratives.[78] Even today, he remarks, those who live a religious life "within the enchanted circle of tradition" still seek the "eternal contemporaneity" of "the historicity of the past."[79]

Despite this apparent lack of interest in recording historical events, Yerushalmi is at pains to emphasize that this "did not inhibit the transmission of a vital Jewish past from one generation to the next, and Judaism neither lost its links to history nor its fundamentally historical orientation."[80] He suggests that the dominance of the collective memory of biblical events creates an ahistorical tradition but that the constant reorientation of present events to an index from the past does not in itself break the link to history. The historical memory cannot simply be ahistorical. For example, the events of the day, most profoundly the

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Jewish expulsion from Spain in 1492, are recorded in some fashion but their essential meaning is found through the historical memory of biblical narratives. Yerushalmi describes this as a way of treating history as a form of "*repetition*."[81] New or present events are understood and given meaning in the way that they are seen to repeat an event from the past. It is the repetition that registers the memory of a present event *as* historical.

Jewish historiography finally emerges in the early nineteenth century as part of the *Haskalah* (the Jewish Enlightenment). The writing of history is intertwined with "crisis of Jewish emancipation" from the ghetto and a questioning of the meaning of Judaism itself.[82] Yerusalami implies in his final chapter that modern Jewish historiography is defined by its *break* with the traditional relation to memory. Much as his own historiographical project marks "a decisive break" with the past as a collective memory, history breaks with tradition *as* it attempts to record it.[83] It is here that we get closer to Derrida's understanding of the *aporia* of historical memory and his critique in *Archive Fever* of Yerushalami's claim for a unique "Jewish" memory that can be treated as a pure difference or absolute other of history.[84]

For Yerushalami, the nineteenth-century Jewish historiography that shatters the very thing it wants to discover is part of an "ever-growing decay of Jewish group memory."[85] History has become "the faith of fallen Jews."[86] The imperatives that arise from *die Wissenschaft des Judentums* (the scientific study of Judaism) are antithetical to Jewish tradition and challenge the very assumption of "the uniqueness of Jewish history itself" as a history of active, divine providence.[87] In the "modern era," historiography then becomes the engine of secularization and "divorced from collective memory."[88] For Yerushalami, Judaism remains marked by a necessary, gaping and agonizing, difference between memory and history not only because it reflects the splits between the theological and secular but also because historiography becomes part of a general loss of tradition, of memory. It appears in *Zakhor* that memory cannot avoid a necessary link with history but that history *as a science* threatens to dissolve a unique non-historical memory.

What kind of history is at stake here? Yerushalami argues that history is "not an attempt at a restoration of memory"; it must rather be seen as a "truly new kind of recollection" because it "recreates an ever more

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detailed past whose shapes and textures memory does not recognize."[89] History searches for "a total past" in contrast to the "drastically selective" forms of memory.[90] This suggests that there is a certain kind of memory and a certain kind of history that must remain incompatible. But is there any place here for a historical memory? Is there not a historical memory that is at once an attempted "restoration of memory" and an attempted recreation of "an ever more detailed past" that exceeds the limited perspective of the memoir? Why should history search for a "total past"? Why should memory be "drastically selective"? The historical memory engages with the ongoing problem of the memory of the other; there are always other memories when it comes to historical events and historiography can neither dispense with a series of selective viewpoints nor claim a total vantage point beyond the memoirs and archives of the past.

Despite this declaration of the necessary "divorce" between memory and history, there is the intimation in Yerushalmi's book that he himself recognizes both the *anguish* of the division *and* the *necessary* connection between a faithful memory and unfaithful history, not least when it comes to the profound imperative in the twentieth century not to forget the *Shoah*.[91] The historical memory becomes both the challenge *of* history and a challenge *for* history. It is the ongoing problem of the division *and* connection between memory and history. Yerushalmi ends *Zakhor* by arguing for a "reorientation" of Jewish historiography so that it will no longer only seek continuities between the present and its ruptured past but "look more closely at ruptures, breaches, breaks" and see that what was truly "lost" in these events "can become, through our retrieval, meaningful to us."[92] This recognition of a *history* of breaks and ruptures *with* memory anticipates his later book on Freud. While such a history still raises the problem of an ideal "retrieval" of the "lost" past, Yerushalmi concludes his remarkable book by noting that "the modern Jewish historian" must recognize that he or she is "a product of this rupture."[93]

4. MEMORY WITHOUT MEMORY

As we have seen, two years before his 1994 lecture on Freud and the archive, Derrida had offered some brief but critical comments in *Apor-*

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ias on the historian Philippe Ariès and his attempts to construct a history *of* death. Derrida questioned Ariès's reliance on terms like "*collective unconscious*," noting that such terms "cover up mountains of archives that up to this day and for some time still to come have not been classified and are unclassifiable."[94] Derrida concluded that Ariès's history of death cannot avoid a "certain anachronism" in its "intra-historical delimitations [*découpages*]."[95] This reference to an interminable archive in relation to the non-historical limits for a historiographical project anticipates Derrida's critical reading of Yerushalmi's attempts to construct a history *of* psychoanalysis and, in particular, a Jewish history of psychoanalysis. The problem is how historians deal with or do not deal with what is outside of memory: there is no memory of death, while there are incessant memories of dying. Is it possible to have a history *of* the unconscious? As Derrida asks, can a historian address Freud's insistence from a psychoanalytical perspective that there are events that should be treated *as if* they took place, as if they are true, even when they have no factual basis, precisely because they have been repressed or forgotten but still register the workings of the unconscious?[96] Can such events be described as "historical" or as instances of historical memory?[97]

In a paper from 1987 that is included in the second edition of *Zakhor*, Yerushalmi makes a distinction between memory (*mnēmē*) and recollection (*anamnēsis*). He argues that memory is "that which is essentially unbroken, continuous," while recollection is "that which has been forgotten."[98] As we have seen, in "Plato's Pharmacy," Derrida had already questioned the Platonic characterization of the difference between speech and writing as the simple difference between an internal continuity (memory) and external discontinuity (recollection). In this context, Derrida would challenge Yerushalmi's own definitions of the opposing terms of "memory" and "history" in *Zakhor*. As part of the question of the archive, and specifically the question of the Freudian archive with all its *impedimenta* of forgetting, remembering, repressing, recalling, covering and obliterating, in *Archive Fever* Derrida is interested in the problem of "the history of history, the history of historiography."[99] This problem cannot be reduced to a traditional metaphysical opposition between the internal and external, or between the internal as continuous and the external as discontinuous, especially when it comes to a history of psychoanalysis that includes a distinctive psycho-

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analytical "history" of the origins of Mosaic Judaism. There are other kinds of historiography at stake here.

For Derrida, the concept of archive is therefore not only concerned with the past: "as much as and more than a thing of the past, before such a thing, the archive should *call into question* the coming of the future."[100] In a 1984 review of *Zakhor*, the historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet (1930–2006) had observed that after the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem (70 CE), for the Jews "the future, barring some intervention by the messiah, was dead" and the future could only be "a repetition of the past."[101] Yerushalmi describes a non-historical or quasi-historical Jewish memory in which present and future historical events can only be registered as "a repetition of the past." In contrast, Derrida is interested in the future *of* the past as a historical problem. The historical memory must always contend with the future of the past, with a past that is not finished, with a past that has other memories, with a past that is not behind us but in front of us. The fever or ill-ease of the archive, *the mal d'archive*, is in part caused by its open relation to the future of the past.

At the same time, Derrida is also interested in the *limit* of the event of the past that is "the memory without memory" (*la mémoire sans mémoire*), such as a circumcision that leaves a mark of its having taken place but remains outside of the memory of the individual concerned.[102] The memory without memory troubles the archive. Freud himself suggests that circumcision is the memory without memory of the Egyptian origins of the Mosaic faith.[103] For Derrida, the event without memory forms a "singular archive" and is part of the wider problem of the "history of historiography."[104] As Derrida had observed ten years earlier in *Memoires—for Paul de Man*, the event "without memory" also registers a "historicity."[105]

Beyond his own complex relation to Judaism during his childhood in Algeria, where a male child is marked on his body as a newborn baby as belonging to a religious tradition and culture or a community that one doesn't necessary understand or identify as one's "own," it is important to stress that Derrida treats circumcision as a more general index of the experience—"something that happens in all cultures"—of the "already-being-there."[106] Language, he observes in a 1991 interview, "precedes us, governs our thoughts, gives us names for things, etc.," but how does my memory relate to the "already-being-there," to a past that *always*

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precedes individual memory?[107] In this way, circumcision is both part of Derrida's exploration of the work-as-memoir and part of his wider examination of the historical questions of heritage, inheritance and archive and of the past as that which is already there *in the midst of* my many and irrepressible claims to this time and this present as my own time. For Derrida, such events are "without memory" and yet they also open the unavoidable relation to the historical memory. As he observed in an interview from September 2001, his 1991 work "Circumfession" is concerned with "the history of circumcision" *as* a question of history and of "historical work."[108]

It is sometimes overlooked that Derrida often speaks about the temptations of metaphysics. It too easy just to set up a clever calibration of words and concepts and declare that the temptation for presence, self-presence or pure absence has simply disappeared. As Derrida observes in "Abraham, the Other," there is always "the temptation, the impossible desire" to "identify a *first time*."[109] Derrida goes on to explain:

> Something in me was already living the wound and the retreat of which I just spoke—the first event of which I located in the experience of anti-Semitic violence in the French Algeria of the 1940s—already living these as a trauma at once decisive, determining, inaugural, and already secondary, I mean to say already second, already consecutive and assigned by a law, that is to say, by a nonmemorable and immemorial repetition.[110]

For Derrida, the question "what *makes history*" is also part of the problem of addressing events such as "the event called 'circumcision,'" which entails "the memory without memory [*la mémoire sans mémoire*] of circumcision."[111] This is not only a matter of how to register a "personal" event that is beyond my possible conscious memory; it is also a question of how such an event "took place only once" and yet "inscribed repetition from its first act."[112] This also links the event beyond memory to the wider question of the historical event and its historical narration, which we will examine in detail in the next chapter.

If there is a unique notion of a "Jewish" archive—an attack that was often made against Freud and psychoanalysis as a "Jewish science" and a proposition that fascinates Yerushalmi as he attempts to recalibrate Freud's own relation to his "Jewishness"—Derrida is interested in how

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it would be possible to have a historical "science" based, for example, on the "singular archive named 'circumcision'" and on an event "without memory."[113] Rather than a memory *without* history, identified by Yerushalmi as a unique aspect of Judaism, Derrida raises the problem of the archive in relation to a *history* of a memory *without* memory, especially without a memory that is, as Yerushalmi claims, "essentially unbroken, [and] continuous."[114] For example, following Freud, Derrida argues the repression of memory can also be part of the archive, especially when one thinks of the archive beyond the classical categories of absence or presence.[115] While the *trace* of a repressed memory is part of the Freudian apparatus, this could suggest a limit for the historian, though Michel de Certeau makes an eloquent case for interweaving psychoanalysis and historiography and the treatment of history as a history of "*displacements*."[116]

Following Yerushalmi's claim that Judaism or Jewishness have a unique relation to the past (as memory) and to the future (as eschatological promise), Derrida argues that these two gestures are reliant on each other: the imperative to archive an event is also an injunction to "remember to remember the future."[117] For Derrida, "historical memory" (*la mémoire historique*) is "already" engaged with an archive that remains "to come," with an "open" archive.[118] Beyond Derrida's reading of Yerushalmi's account of Jewish history, the general point is that the archive must also contend with a past that is *coming towards it* and not only with the past that has somehow been boxed, stored and filed away in an archive, as if the archive alone reinforces that the past is well and truly "behind us." As Derrida suggests, this raises political and ethical questions for any archive and the institutions that create and maintain the archive. But this problem of the "open" archive, of the archive that *cannot close itself*, also indicates the *limits* of the idealization of memory, of a trans-historical memory. As much as Derrida will criticize historicism, he also challenges ahistorical memory when it is treated as the *other* of history.

Archive Fever or *Mal d'Archive* confronts the problem of what remains "in" the archive and what is held at bay or excluded from the archive by a particular institutional context or *mi-lieu*. As Derrida observes in July 1990 in "Privilege," the introduction to *Right to Philosophy*, the "institution as archive," or "what historians, in short, call history," must "sometimes remember what it *excludes* and selectively

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attempts to doom [*vouer*] to being forgotten."[119] In this sense, history *as* an instituted archive, as a specifically gathered and delineated historical memory, is also "marked by what it keeps outside": it can also be "drastically selective."[120] To mark itself *as* itself, it cannot avoid being marked by what has been placed outside the archive. History-as-archive remembers what it has tried to remember only to forget. The "traits" of what are "outside" the archive are therefore "deeply engraved in the hollows of the archive, imprinted right on the institutional support or surface."[121] As Derrida says, this type of exclusion is found in the history of the "violent" founding of nations but it also registers the *mal d'archive* of all historiography.[122]

Memories haunt the historical project as it makes its procedural, methodological—artificial but necessary—borders, and constructs its narratives, its thematics and its epochs that reinforce its "institution as archive." There is a historical memory that disturbs the necessary artifice of historiography, that confronts the historian not only with the excess that defies the chosen format or focus but also the echo of what remains "outside" the archive at the heart of the archive. In this sense, as Derrida suggests, perhaps the *history* of philosophy, as a history of philosophical institutions, of legitimate and authorized archives that have reinforced a history of selective inclusions and exclusions, could also be recast as the *memory* of philosophy, of the *mal d'archive* of philosophy.[123]

For Derrida, there is also an important link between memory and the necessary repetition-alteration in self-identification or what he calls in *Dissemination* the structure of the "re-mark."[124] From the mid 1970s he had emphasized an affirmation in deconstruction: the "*yes*" that is "a non-active act," and therefore avoids reconstituting the classical subject, affirms what will "come from the future."[125] However, as he suggests in the early 1980s, the engagement of this "*yes*" must also have a *memory* and become a "*yes, yes*," as "it must preserve memory; it must commit itself to keeping its own memory; it must promise itself to itself; it must bind itself to memory for memory, if anything is ever to come from the future."[126] This affirmation, this engagement with what *remains* to come allows deconstruction to address the relation between memory, historical memory and history. My memory, my memoirs and the historical memory that in part constitutes the historiographical work remain distinct and yet share what Derrida describes as "the finitude of

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memory."[127] This finitude is unavoidable because memory is structured "as memory of the other."[128] With historical memory, memory is always the *memory of the other* and marked by the problem of the memory of others.

For Derrida, *my own* memory is also structured "as memory of the other."[129] Before the relation to self, before treating my self as my self, before remembering my self *as* my self, there is my relation to the others who have died and whom I carry in myself as other. It is this carrying of others, this "weight" in ourselves, which precedes and makes possible the ongoing process of self-identification. This is not an internalization or idealization of the other as much a recognition that "the finitude of memory" registers "the trace of the other."[130] The memory and the trace of the other "in us" reiterates the trace of the many others "in history." Memory cannot be relegated to a past that is simply "behind" us. Memory is the *possibility* of the relation of presence to the present.[131] The historical memory therefore disrupts the idealization of the presence of the present. Historical memory is an engagement with the "trace of the future."[132] The historical memory registers the *problem* of the "memory of the other" for historiography.[133]

We can conclude this examination of memory and history with a "practical" example. Derrida's work "Circumfession," published in March 1991, is a striking challenge to treat memory in a different way in relation to philosophy, autobiography and historiography. It is made up of fifty-nine pieces (Derrida was fifty-nine years old while writing it), each written in one long sentence of some six hundred words, which are variously called "periods," "periphrases" or "prayer bands."[134] Each of these fifty-nine pieces interweave writings in the "present" from March 1989 to May 1990 with writings on circumcision in the "past" from 1976 to 1981. Added to these two layers of writings is a third layer of extended quotations in Latin from St. Augustine's *Confessions* (c. 400 BCE).[135]

This interweaving and interlayering of writings from different periods takes its dates very seriously. All of the writings from 1976 to 1981 are given specific dates and we are reminded of various dates from March 1989 to May 1990: it is a *dated* work, a *historical* work. In each piece, we are given a sort of palimpsest of distinct periods but these are interweaved into the *same* ongoing sentence, as are the Latin quotations from St. Augustine. The writings of 1989–1990 focus broadly on

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the final illness of Derrida's mother in Nice but they also act as a memoir-with-limits, as both a "confession" and "circumvention" of the memories and secrets of childhood in Algeria in the 1930s and the 1940s. These quasi-confessions are interwoven with passages from St. Augustine's confessions and own memoirs of his early life in Algeria in 460–480 CE before his conversion. The diary or journal writings by Derrida from 1976–1981 address the question of circumcision and his quasi-confessions on Judaism and certain key events in his life at the time of writing.

Derrida both recognizes and resists the possibility of writing one's own confession as an instance when "the inside of my life [is] exhibiting itself outside."[136] However, "Circumfession" is also a work that is concerned with an event that is "outside" the confessional mode. Derrida's circumcision took place in July 1930 but he cannot register it as an event that he has witnessed. As he observes in "Shibboleth," this event took place *only once* but at the same time it *keeps taking place* "only once" as the *date* of this event is marked each subsequent year.[137] The circumcision as an event-before-memory has left a mark of what took place beyond the memory, consciousness or experience of Jacques or Jackie Élie Derrida in El Biar on 23 July 1930, but it is also a historical memory, *an event in his past* that is also a *memory of others*, a memory of the other.[138] This gives the event-beyond memory a paradoxical status: it is both an event *and* a non-event. As Derrida observes, circumcision is therefore a matter of "what I have turned around, from one periphrasis to the next, knowing that it took place but never, according to the strange turn of the event of nothing [*l'étrange tournure de l'événement de rien*], what can be got around [*le contournable*] or not which comes back to me without ever having taken place."[139] In the *milieu* of a quasi-autobiography or non-idealized memoir, Derrida examines "the moment of the event without memory of me."[140]

This places the event "beyond or just short of" (*au-delà ou en deçà*) the subject and its use of memory as an index of self-consciousness regathering and re-ordering its prior experience.[141] The event "without memory of me" is driven by the desire "to re-member myself around a single event" and the recognition that this desire will always be frustrated by the degrees of "non-knowledge" that occur in any event (which must be unforeseeable to some extent) and the loose strands and shifting traces of the all archives and witnesses that have already given this

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event from the past "without memory" *to the other*.[142] For Derrida, the circling and re-circling around this event does not have the comforting presumption of the Hegelian history of spirit, which ensures that every return and every restart will come back to a complete knowledge.[143] "All that turning around nothing," he observes.[144]

The "strange turn of the event of nothing" in "Circumfession" marks a limit to the act of memory as an idealization, as an assertion of a trans-historical memory that transcends the historical memory or the unavoidable entanglement of history and memory. It marks a limit *with* many memories as the *possibility* of the historical memory. It marks the possibility of historiography.

NOTES

1. "Force of Law," 248.
2. *The Historian's Craft*, 51; *Apologie pour l'histoire ou Métier d'historien*, pref. Jacques Le Goff (Paris: Armand Colin, [1949], 1997), 75.
3. "A Testimony Given," 50.
4. "A Testimony Given," 50.
5. "A Testimony Given," 51.
6. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Pierre Nora, ed., *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, 3 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996–1998). See also Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity*, 101–48.
7. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 120–24, 393–411.
8. "A Testimony Given," 51. See also on forgetting, *Given Time*, 16–18.
9. *Cinders*, 13. See also, 63.
10. *Cinders*, 15.
11. *Cinders*, 37, 35. See also 24–26.
12. *Cinders*, 17.
13. "The Other Heading," 12–13.
14. *Specters of Marx*, 109–10.
15. "The Other Heading," 13.
16. "The Other Heading," 16–17.
17. "The Other Heading," 17–18.
18. Geoffrey Bennington, "Jacques Derrida in America," in *Not Half No End: Militantly Melancholic Essays in Memory of Jacques Derrida* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 144–48: 146.

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19. "The Other Heading," 18, 24.
20. "The Other Heading," 18.
21. "The Other Heading," 18.
22. "The Other Heading," 18.
23. "The Other Heading," 18.
24. "The Other Heading," 18; "L'Autre Cap," 23.
25. "The Other Heading," 19.
26. "The Other Heading," 29.
27. "The Other Heading," 31.
28. "The Other Heading," 78.
29. "The Other Heading," 78; 'L'Autre Cap," 76.
30. "The Other Heading," 31–34, 62–63.
31. "Roundtable on Autobiography," 51.
32. For the Irvine archive see: http://hydra.humanities.uci.edu/derrida/uci. For the IMEC archive see: http://www.imec-archives.com/fonds/derrida-jacques/. See also Peeters, *Derrida: A Biography*, 456–57, 534–36, 499–501. In 2015 Princeton acquired Derrida's library. See Katie Chenoweth's remarkable site http://derridas-margins.princeton.edu.
33. " 'This Strange Institution Called Literature,'" 42.
34. "Force of Law," 278.
35. "Force of Law," 248.
36. *Specters of Marx*, 91.
37. *Specters of Marx*, 91.
38. See also *The Politics of Friendship*, 76–77.
39. *Regimes of* Historicity, 7. See also 116–17.
40. *Regimes of Historicity*, 7. See also on history and memory, Allan Megill, *Historical Knowledge, Historical Error: A Contemporary Guide to Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 17–40; Pierre Nora, *Présent, nation, mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 2011).
41. *Regimes of Historicity*, 11.
42. *Archive Fever*, 1–2. See also Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, intro. Jerome Kohn (London: Penguin, 2006), 48.
43. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 208.
44. "Structure, Sign and Play," 282.
45. "Structure, Sign, and Play," 283. Translation modified.
46. *Of Grammatology*, 33.
47. See *Counterpath*.
48. "Différance," 17; "La différance," in *Marges—de la philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972), 1–29: 18. Translation modified.
49. "Différance," 17; "La différance," 18.

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50. *Of Grammatology*, 50. See also See Jacques Derrida, "The Law of Genre," trans. Avital Ronell, *Critical Inquiry* 7.1 (1980): 55–81: 60–62. This work is reprinted in Jacques Derrida, "The Law of Genre," in *Parages*, trans. Avital Ronell, John P. Leavey Jr. and others (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 217–50.

51. "Avowing—The Impossible." 27.

52. "Parergon," 20. See also *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 147–48.

53. "Parergon," 20.

54. "Parergon," 21.

55. "Parergon," 21

56. *Archive Fever*, 5.

57. *Archive Fever*, 5.

58. Sigmund Freud, "Moses the Man and Monotheistic Religion," in *Mass Psychology and Other Writings*, trans. J. A. Underwood, intro. Jacqueline Rose (London: Penguin, 2004), 165–300; Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable*, new edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, [1991] 1993). See also Derrida, "Freud and the Scene of Writing," 203.

59. "Moses the Man and Monotheistic Religion," 231–33.

60. "Moses the Man and Monotheistic Religion," 237–38, 243–44. See also Sigmund Freud, "Screen Memories," in *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock, intro. Hugh Haughton (London: Penguin, 2003), 1–22.

61. "Moses the Man and Monotheistic Religion," 256, 247.

62. "Moses the Man and Monotheistic Religion," 201–2.

63. "Moses the Man and Monotheistic Religion," 202.

64. "Moses the Man and Monotheistic Religion," 202, 232. See Samuel Weber, "The Blindness of the Seeing Eye: Psychoanalysis, Hermeneutics and *Entstellung*," in *Institution and Interpretation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 73–84; "Doing Away with Freud's Moses," in *Targets of Opportunity: On the Militarization of Thinking* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 63–89.

65. "Moses the Man and Monotheistic Religion," 208–9.

66. *Freud's Moses*, 34.

67. *Freud's Moses*, 81–100. See also Kleinberg, *Haunting History*, 8–12.

68. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, fore. Harold Bloom (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996), xxxiv, xxv.

69. *Zakhor*, 5, 81.

70. "Plato's Pharmacy," 70–119.

71. *Zakhor*, 81.

72. *Zakhor*, 5.

73. *Zakhor*, 9.

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74. *Zakhor*, 9.
75. *Zakhor*, 10–13.
76. *Zakhor*, 26.
77. *Zakhor*, 14.
78. *Zakhor*, 18.
79. *Zakhor*, 96.
80. *Zakhor*, 26.
81. *Zakhor*, 49.
82. *Zakhor*, 82–83, 85, 86.
83. *Zakhor*, 81, 89, 91.
84. See Derrida and Roudinesco, *For What Tomorrow*, 188–89.
85. *Zakhor*, 86.
86. *Zakhor*, 86.
87. *Zakhor*, 89.
88. *Zakhor*, 93.
89. *Zakhor*, 94.
90. *Zakhor*, 94–95.
91. *Zakhor*, 97–103, 115–16.
92. *Zakhor*, 101.
93. *Zakhor*, 101.
94. *Aporias*, 47.
95. *Aporias*, 48–49; *Apoires*, 91.
96. *Archive Fever*, 59–60, 67, 78, 89; *Freud's Moses*, 17–18, 38–39, 78. See also Derrida and Roudinesco, *For What Tomorrow*, 188–89.
97. See Dominick LaCapra, "History and Psychoanalysis," in *Soundings in Critical Theory* (Ithaca: Cornel University Press, 1989), 30–66.
98. *Zakhor*, 107.
99. *Archive Fever*, 30.
100. *Archive Fever*, 33–34.
101. Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *The Jews: History, Memory and the Present*, trans. David Ames Curtis, fore. Paul Berman, new edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 59.
102. *Archive Fever*, 42; *Mal d'Archive: Une impression Freudienne* (Paris: Galilée, 1995), 69.
103. "Moses the Man and Monotheistic Religion," 187, 190, 198.
104. *Archive Fever*, 42.
105. *Memoires*, 95.
106. "A Testimony Given," 43.
107. "A Testimony Given," 43.
108. Jacques Derrida, "Confessions and 'Circumfession': A Roundtable Discussion with Jacques Derrida," in *Augustine and Postmodernism: Confessions*

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and Circumfession, ed. John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005): 28–52: 32.

109. "Abraham, the Other," 9.

110. "Abraham, the Other," 16–17.

111. "Abraham, the Other," 17; "Abraham, l'autre." in *Judéités: Questions pour Jacques Derrida*, sous la direction de Joseph Cohen and Raphael Zagury-Orly (Paris: Galilée, 2003), 11–42: 25.

112. "Abraham, the Other," 17.

113. *Archive Fever*, 42, 46.

114. *Zakhor*, 120.

115. *Archive Fever*, 64.

116. See Michel de Certeau, "The Fiction of History: The Writing of *Moses and Monotheism*," in *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 308–54: 316, 340–41.

117. *Archive Fever*, 76.

118. *Archive Fever*, 76, 68; *Mal d'Archive*, 121.

119. "Privilege," 5; "Privilège: Titre justificatif et Remarques introductives," in *Droit à la philosophie* (Paris: Galilée, 1990), 9–108: 17.

120. "Privilege," 5.

121. "Privilege," 5.

122. "Privilege," 5.

123. "Privilege," 12–13. See also, "Avowing—The Impossible," 31.

124. See *Dissemination*, 21, 25, 54, 222, 231, 237–38, 245–46, 251–54.

125. *Memoires* , 20.

126. *Memoires*, 20. See also "*Pa*ce Not(s)," 11–102; Jacques Derrida, "A Number of Yes," in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other, Volume* 2, ed. Peggy Kamuf and Elizabeth Rottenberg, trans. Brian Holmes (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 231–240.

127. *Memoires*, 29.

128. *Memoires*, 29. Translation modified.

129. *Memoires*, 29–33.

130. *Memoires*, 29, 33–35.

131. *Memoires*, 56–58.

132. *Memoires*, 66.

133. *Memoires*, 79.

134. "Circumfession," 33, 258.

135. See "Confessions and 'Circumfession.'"

136. "Circumfession," 10.

137. "Shibboleth," 53–64.

138. *Derrida: A Biography*, 13.

139. "Circumfession," 13–14; "Circonfession," 16.

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140. "Circumfession," 94.
141. "Circumfession," 206; "Circonfession," 194.
142. "Circumfession," 57, 204, 276.
143. "Circumfession," 237, 281.
144. "Circumfession," 271.

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8

HISTORY, EVENT, AND NARRATIVE

> I want, in a more or less continuous way, but why, to do things, to tell stories (*raconteur des histoires*).
>
> —11 October 1977 "Circumfession"[1]

1. *GESCHICHTE* AND *HISTORIE*

In his lectures on the philosophy of world history, written and delivered between 1822 and 1831, Hegel argued that history begins when a historical event *coincides* with its historical narration. World history, which is primarily the history of states and nations, invites a happy comparison between the grandeur of imperial Rome and the nascent rise of post-Napoleonic Germany. Just as classical Latin registers the link between *events* (*res gestae*) and the *narration* of these events (*historiam rerum gestarum*), the German word for history, *Geschichte*, contains the "double meaning" of both the event, the happening or what takes place (*das Geschehene*), and the relation, account or narrative of this event (*die Geschichtserzählung*).[2] For Hegel, this "union" (*Vereinigung*) of meanings reinforces that the events and narratives that constitute world history "appear simultaneously" (*gleichzeitig erscheine*).[3] World history treats the historical event and its narrative as a confirmation of the *contemporary*. History is registered as being contemporary *with itself*.

There have, of course, been many historical events that precede the unique conditions for Hegelian world history. These events have occurred before the formation of the state or lacked the wider progressive

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goals of self-consciousness and individual freedom. And despite Hegel reinforcing the common need in the nineteenth century to deny history to some and to bequeath it to others, his insistence that actual events and their historical narrative can occur *at the same time* may be easier for us to understand in the twenty-first century. One only has to think of the shorted-lived Arab Spring and the role played by social media in both recording and participating in these events to appreciate how the "televisual media coverage of the event," as Derrida described it in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks, has allowed us without too much difficulty to treat the event and its narration as contemporaneous or even synchronous.[4] "What," Derrida asks, "would 'September 11' have been without television?"[5]

We are perpetually confronted by a quasi-virtual present because, as Jacques Le Goff observed, "since the present cannot be limited to a single instant or point of time, the definition of the duration of the present constitutes an initial problem for the historian."[6] And yet even in this apparent simultaneous co-presence of event and narrative—its *happening* live, in real time, right before our eyes—there would still be a necessary division between the present and its archive, between the event and its narration. As Derrida argues in an interview from 1992, if a photograph claims "an archive that is somehow immediate, a present that *consists* of its memory," it is "therefore necessary that the present, in its structure, be divisible even while remaining unique, irreplaceable and self-identical."[7] This division ensures that "even as the present is lost, the archive remains."[8] The event and its narrative, a narration at the very moment of the event that can also be repeated after the event, cannot simply coincide or be conflated. They are not, to use Derrida's phrase, "self-contemporary" (*contemporain de soi-même*).[9]

Turning to Derrida's own archive, it is thanks to the efforts of a number of hardy souls who have been able to decipher Derrida's notoriously quicksilver, gnomic handwriting that we now know that Derrida devoted much of his early seminars to the problem of history and narrative. This can be placed in relation to Derrida's work on the event and narrative in the 1970s and the witness and testimony in the 1990s. We now know that Derrida first addressed Hegel's treatment of the relation between the event and the historical narrative in a 1964 seminar on history and truth and returned to it in his 1964–1965 seminar on Heidegger and history. It is only when the other seminars have been pub-

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lished in full that we can grasp the extent of Derrida's engagement with the problem of history and narrative. However, we already know that Derrida remained interested in Hegel's account of history and narrative and returns to it in at least two others seminars, one from the late 1970s and another in mid 1990s.

In the context of the debates in French historiography about the *longue durée*, structuralism and a historical writing that moved beyond a history of events and narratives, for more than thirty years Derrida responded to Hegel's remarkable proposition that the historical event and its historical narrative can and should appear *at the same time* on the basis of a distinction that facilitates an abiding "union." The emphasis on their simultaneous *appearance* (*gleichzeitig erscheine*) raises a challenge for a reader of Husserlian phenomenology. It is one thing to claim that the event and the historical narrative can happen at the same time; it is quite another to insist that this interweaving of event and narrative is founded on the phenomenality—general appearing and particular appearance, sense, essence, presence and co-presence—of the event and the historical narrative.[10] Hegel's insistence that world history, the highest and most universal form of history, rests on an affirmation of the same, the identical and coincident (*gleich*), of the simultaneous, contemporaneous and the contemporary (*gleichzeitig*), reinforces that the claims for the "self-contemporary," or what is contemporary *with itself*, is a good place to start in addressing the problem of history and its narratives.

In his notable 2014 article "*Ne me raconte plus d'histoires*: Derrida and the Problem of the History of Philosophy," Edward Baring gives us some tantalizing glimpses of Derrida's as-yet unpublished 1964 seminar "History and Truth." Baring informs us that Derrida begins with Hegel's distinction between event and historical narrative (*le récit*).[11] Derrida repeats Hegel's claim that the historical event and its narrative share a common "condition of possibility."[12] The most interesting aspect, noted by Baring, is Derrida's argument that the historical event can only be registered *as* a historical event if it can "give place to a transmission."[13] This is an early articulation of Derrida's long-standing interest in the necessity of the singular to give itself over to the repeatable to register itself *as* abidingly singular, not least when this repetition or transmission does not just repeat the same as the identical but exposes it to an unavoidable alteration. The historical event *as* historical event

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gives itself to be transmitted, to be passed on, to others, to other times and places.

However, Baring's all-too-brief comments on this seminar from the spring of 1964 also raise a problem. He describes both Derrida and Hegel's distinctions between the historical event and the historical narrative in terms of the German distinction between *Geschichte* and *Historie*. The passage that Baring cites from Hegel's lectures—the same that I opened with—actually draws a contrast between *Geschichte* and *die Geschichtserzählung*. Hegel's lectures have come down to us in different versions and fragments that have been written and delivered at different times. In his inaugural lecture in 1822, Hegel adds the marginal note to this passage, "to be examined later—*historia*, *res gesta*—the objective history proper of a people begins for the first time when they have a historical record [*Historie*]."[14] This raises the difficult question of whether Hegel saw any difference in the use of *Historie* and *die Geschichtserzählung*?

Like its English and French cousins, *Historie* describes a history and a story and accounts for both a historical narrative and a fictional narrative. This suggests that with *Historie*, narrative itself becomes the problem when one wants to draw a clear distinction between the account or record of an actual, real historical event and relating a fictional story. A marginal note that is probably from his 1828 lectures suggests that Hegel may have used *Historie* in this passage in his later lectures after 1822.[15] However, in his 1830–1831 lectures he uses *die Geschichtserzählung*. Does Hegel's choice of *die Geschichtserzählung* in the place of *Historie* offer a solution to this ambiguity or does it add further complications? Unsurprisingly, the answer is yes to both questions. The compound word *Geschichts-erzählung* joins or solders together, as only German can do, the word for history (*Geschichte*) and the word for story, tale, written narrative, oral narration, written or oral account (*Erzählung*). The use of *die Geschichtserzählung* in the 1830–1831 lectures can be taken as Hegel's final decision that this term best guarantees that in a philosophy of world history a written narrative can only be based on a historical event.

At the same time, this apparent solution reinforces a wider problem. The German verb *erzählen*, to tell, relate, narrate, recount and the related noun *Erzählen*, narration, recital, relation, suggest a narrating or relating that is less tied to a historical narrative than the word *Historie*.

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As Baring suggests, as early as this 1964 seminar Derrida was particularly interested in the French word *le récit*, which describes a relation, account or narrative that can be either true or fictional. In the 1964 seminar Derrida appears to associate *le récit* with the historical narrative rather than the historical event.[16] In addressing the relation between history and truth in his seminar, Derrida highlights the tension in the French word *la histoire*, which refers both to a "true" history or story and mere stories or lies.[17] What then is the relation between *le récit*, *la histoire*, *Historie* and *die Geschichtserzählung*? This is the question that begins Derrida's thirty-year engagement with history and narrative.

Derrida's 1964–1965 lectures on Heidegger show that at this time Derrida was also interested in the relation between philosophy, narrative and "telling stories." As we saw in chapter 2, in his treatment of history in *Being and Time* Heidegger offers a series of clear distinctions and starts his work by excluding a certain kind of "telling stories."[18] The "science of history" or traditional historiography (*Historie*), he argues, must be separated from both *history itself* (*Geschichte*), with its historical events (*Geschehen*), and a *historicity* (*Geschichtlichkeit*) that has liberated itself from the metaphysical subject.[19] Heidegger also opens *Being and Time* by insisting that his work will not follow the Cartesian tradition of "telling stories" by centering philosophy on the self-evident assumption of the self-consciousness and experience of the philosopher as subject.[20] Descartes begins the *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641) by remarking, "I am here, sitting by the fire, wearing a winter dressing-gown, holding this piece of paper in my hands."[21] For Heidegger, this is "telling stories."

Heidegger argues that the first "philosophical step consists [. . .] in not 'telling a story'—that is to say, in not defining entities as entities by tracing them back to their origins to some other entities, as if Being had the character of some possible entity."[22] The clarity of the ontico-ontological difference, the distinction between an ontic entity or being and Being itself, rests on "not telling a story." He repeats this injunction at the end of the introduction.[23] Heidegger uses the phrase *keine Geschichte erzählen* in §6 of *Being and Time* as a translation of a phrase from Plato's *Sophist*, *muthon tina dihgensthai*.[24] This takes us back to Hegel's use of the compound *Geschichts-erzählung*. Heidegger's radical hermeneutical phenomenology will not tell, relate or narrate

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(*erzählen*) the history of Being *as* stories (*Geschichte*) of being. Heidegger implies that the ontico-ontological difference itself is reinforced by the clear distinction between telling stories—lies, myths, fictional narratives—and history.

Heidegger's rejection of a philosophy that tells stories dominates Derrida's second lecture, delivered at the École normale supérieure on 30 November 1964. As Derrida comments, according to Heidegger there has always been an "easy" form of narration in philosophy and the challenge now is "to break with the philosophical novel."[25] This involves a style of history of philosophy that merely relates the various views and opinions of philosophers across the ages.[26] More profoundly, Heidegger claims that it is only by rejecting a certain kind of "philosophical narration" that one can truly disrupt metaphysical ontology.[27] This implies that there is some kind of opposition between *Geschichte* and *Erzählen* in *Being and Time*. Telling stories, which Derrida translates as *raconteur des histoires*, is the practice in metaphysics that ignores the difference between beings and Being.[28] It is, Derrida remarks, closer to "a mythological discourse," which is why Heidegger quotes the *Sophist* and its dismissal of telling stories or myths in the midst of a discussion about being.[29] Socrates and Heidegger agree on the necessary expulsion from philosophy of "telling stories."

In his lecture Derrida reiterates that Heidegger treats the erasure of the ontico-ontological difference and alterity of Being as a form of "mythology."[30] This suggests that the opposition between history and narrative in *Being and Time* can be treated as the difference between history and myth. In this sense, the refusal to treat philosophy as the narration of a story is to take "a step beyond ontic history."[31] This step is not an ahistorical gesture on Heidegger's part, Derrida argues, but rather "the condition of access to a radicalization of the thinking of history as *history of being itself*."[32]

In this effort to draw a clear distinction between a limited, subject-centered form of narrating and a radical historicity, there are two significant implicit distinctions.[33] Derrida always translates telling stories as *raconteur des histoires*, so *la histoire* in this context should not be confused with *le récit*. Telling a mere metaphysical story should not be confused with a possible historical narrative. However, Derrida does not mention Heidegger's problematic equation of *Geschichte* with *muthon*. Is a history (*Geschichte*) that can also be a non-historical story,

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tale or narrative the same thing as a story, tale or narration (*muthos*) that can also be a myth, a legend or a fable? What happens if one treats *Geschichte* as *der Mythus*? This is precisely what Peter Trawny has argued is to be found in Heidegger's later anti-Semitic writings, which were published after Derrida's death.[34]

When Derrida turns to Heidegger's treatment of history in the 1964–1965 lectures he does acknowledge the serious implications of Heidegger's insistence that the historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) of *Dasein* is the *precondition* for any possible historical science or historiography (*Historie*). As Derrida succinctly states: "no *Historie* without *Geschichte*."[35] As we have seen, by the 1970s in starting to treat *ex-appropriation* as the *possibility* of a deconstructive historiography Derrida will challenge this emphatic order or sequence for thinking about the relation between the historical event and the historical narrative. After noting that Heidegger treats *Geschehen* as the pre-*gathering* of events that make history (*Geschichte*) possible and any subsequent historiography (*Historie*), Derrida contrasts Heidegger's approach to history with that of Hegel.[36] For Hegel, *Geschichte* and *Historie* are tied together, so the lack of historical narrative also indicates a lack of history, of truly historical events.[37] Derrida's treatment of history and narrative is worked out between a critical reading of Hegel and Heidegger.

For Derrida in 1965, the problem with the Hegelian *merging* (*confond*) of the historical event with its historical narration is that it also presupposes a non-historicity (*Geschichtslosigkeit*).[38] In contrast, as we have seen, Heidegger's separation of historical event and historical narration implies that a deficiency in historical awareness is not an absence of history.[39] This aspect would seem to give Heidegger a clear advantage over Hegel, suggesting that a proper ordering of the relation between event (first) and narrative (unambiguously second) ensures a more nuanced concept of history. Nonetheless, in contrast to Heidegger's assertion, Derrida goes on to note that the Greek word for history (*historia*) first signified an inquiry and that the *science* of history therefore appears to have preceded the later designation of history as "both event and narrative at once."[40] As in his many later writings on Heidegger, Derrida is always attentive to Heidegger's need to treat science and technology as a belated external addition that should be, if not excluded, at least relegated to its proper place. As we have seen, *ex-appropriation* is formulated in part in reaction to Heidegger's insis-

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tence in "Time and Being" on the absolute difference between the *mere* events of historiography and the *unique* events of Being.

If history as a "Greco-Latin concept" privileged the science of history, Hegel's insistence that the historical event and narrative must coincide is remarkable, Derrida argues, because if they are "inseparable" then neither the historical event or the narrative of the event have the "privilege of originarity" and are "not derived one from the other."[41] Heidegger, on the other hand, insists that any science of history can only immerge from a pre-scientific historical origin. The notable point is that both Hegel and Heidegger are offering a radical challenge to *historia* as *epistēmē* or a "*metaphysical* conception of history."[42] Both Hegel and Heidegger believe that the German language has provided a unique conduit for rethinking history. It is at this stage that Derrida quotes the passage from Hegel's lectures on the word *Geschichte* that we began with and follows it with the passage from §73 of *Being and Time* I cited in the preface that acknowledges that the apparent "ambiguity" of *Geschichte* is in truth very clear as it denotes both actual historical events and historical narratives and one can "provisionally" eliminate *Historie* and historiography from the analysis of temporality and historicity.[43]

Derrida's early account of Hegel anticipates his later treatment of logocentrism: there is an underlying gathering force or centralizing conceit but this can be deconstructed because it relies on a form of necessary repetition that alters and reconfigures as it repeats itself to unify itself. Hegel argues that "historical effectivity," the "possibility of narrative" and "historical science" are "contemporary and consubstantial."[44] To register that one is "living historically," there is the need for language, consciousness, memory and, above all, spirit (*Geist*) as "the power to gather oneself, to inherit from oneself."[45] However, Derrida adds, this "power of gathering and summation" is also the power of "re-citing" (*ré-cit*).[46] The approach to narrative (*le récit*) as a movement that is already a *re*-citing (*ré-cit*) will play a prominent part in Derrida's later work. In "Living On" (1979), Derrida reiterated his interest in *le récit* rather than *la narration* precisely because it places the problem of *re*-citation in relation to "the narrative [*récit*] of an event, the event of a narrative, [and] the narrative as the structure of an event."[47]

"Living On," or "Survivre," is part of a series of works by Derrida from the 1970s collected in 1986 under the title *Parages*—vicinities—

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that focuses on a number of *récits* or quasi-fictions by Maurice Blanchot. For Derrida, Blanchot's writings register the question of *le récit* as something that is at once external and internal to the work itself. As we have seen, for Derrida there is an affirmation to engage with memory in a repeated "*yes*, *yes*," and this engagement is re-affirmed by the citation that is *re*-cited.[48] In this sense, *le récit* is a narrative *with* memory. For Hegel, Derrida notes, this power of re-citing announces the political configuration of the state and an "objective *a priori*" that occurs when the experience of a people "is in a position to recite itself" and "produce itself in works."[49] The Hegelian historical narration of the contemporary event reaffirms the power of both gathering and re-citation.

In "Signature Event Context" Derrida had linked the prefix *re-* to his use of "iterability," emphasizing the importance of the citation that can also be re-cited elsewhere in a different context. As he observes in "Limited Inc a b c," iterability registers "that the identity of the *selfsame* be repeatable [. . .] *in*, *through*, and even in *view of* its alteration."[50] Derrida situates iterability in the relation between "the *re-* of the repeated [*répété*] and the *re-* of the repeating [*répétant*]."[51] As we shall see, this temporal—and spatial—distinction between the repeated and the repeating, between the past and the present tense, plays a significant role in Derrida's treatment of the historical event and its narrative. *Le récit récitant* and *le récit récité* will describe a *historical* difference.

In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, Hegel's "original history" (*die ursprüngliche Geschichte*) describes a historiography founded on the historian as witness and even participant in the historical events that are narrated.[52] At the start of his 1822–1823 lectures, this type of history is distinguished both from a "reflective history," where the historian is not contemporary with the events recorded, and a "philosophical history," which attempts to use history as part of philosophical inquiry. Hegel argues that these three "customary ways" of writing history should be distinguished from his own philosophy of world history.[53] However, he also suggests that the word for history in the German language (*Geschichte*) means that *all* German history entails a form of "original history" since it recognizes that the historical event and historical narrative share a common linguistic and social-political origin and appear simultaneously.

This intermixing of "original history" and the possibility of Hegel's German world history clearly privileges the contemporary as the meas-

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ure and framework for history. Even if the historian is not an actual witness to events, the German language encourages the recognition of what is "present and alive" (*gegenwärtig und lebendig*).[54] To borrow a Kantian phrase, the German historian can act *as if* the historical event and historical narrative coexist. In view of Derrida's critique of a phenomenology of self-evidence or the assumption of the presence of the present as some kind of fixed terminus, it should not be surprising that in his 1964–1965 lectures he treats Hegel's claim for the simultaneous appearance of event and narrative as a profound example of "showing the absolute Present to be the condition of historical concatenation and traditionality."[55] For Derrida, Hegel and Husserl use the privilege of presence as a form of "summing history [*résume l'histoire*]."[56] What is striking about this phrase—"summing history"—is that Derrida first uses it when he discusses re-citation (*ré-cit*) and writes it as "ré-sumer."[57] The Hegelian gathering and summing up of history as an expression of presence is already marked by the prefix *ré-* as a necessary re-doubling or re-marking—x marking itself *as* itself—that ruptures any assured teleology and any claims for a spatio-temporal stasis or ideality.

The legacy of Hegelian historiography can be seen in Quentin Skinner's argument that the past must be treated in the name of a rigorous historiography as being *only* contemporary *with itself*. As we have seen, in an interview from 1993 Derrida challenges this logic, arguing that Kierkegaard and Nietzsche—those philosophers who dated their works—put in question "the interpretation of history as development, in which something that is contemporary to itself—self-contemporary [*contemporain de soi-même*]—can succeed to a past."[58] The notion of the "self-contemporary," Derrida argues, "as a relationship reconciled with itself in the now of a present" has its philosophical origins in Plato and Hegel.[59] As Derrida reiterates that same year in *Spectres of Marx*, this logic "relies on a general temporality or an historical temporality made up of the *successive* linking of presents identical to themselves and contemporary with themselves."[60] Derrida had offered a compelling counter-narrative to this contemporary imperative in historical narration in "Circumfession," which was published in a series called *les contemporains*.

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2. NOT CONTEMPORARY

One of the ways that we can challenge the equation of history and narrative with history and the contemporary is through a brief detour to examine Hegel's treatment in *The Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* of Herodotus (c. 490–c. 420–25 BCE) and Thucydides (460–395 BCE), the "fathers" of Greek historiography. At the outset Hegel makes a distinction between his own focus on "world history itself" and the "other methods" of historiography.[61] As we have seen, the first of these "other methods" is what Hegel calls "original history."[62] Original history describes a history that is written by its contemporary participants and witnesses. "Thus Herodotus, Thucydides, and other such historians," Hegel observes, "primarily describe the actions, events, and situations they themselves have witnessed, and whose spirit they shared in."[63]

Hegel goes on to say that "the essential material" of both Herodotus and Thucydides "is what is present and alive in their surrounding world."[64] Their works are testament to a history that has "more or less" (*mehr oder weniger*) been seen at first hand or "at least lived through."[65] This linking of Herodotus and Thucydides as two of the earliest surviving historians of the classical period may seem straightforward. However, it contradicts a long tradition of historiography that saw Thucydides as the embodiment of "contemporary" political and military history and Herodotus as an example of treating *historia* as something that had a far wider scope and concerned itself with non-contemporaneous events or the "remote past."

Hegel contrasts "original history" to "reflective history," a history "whose presentation goes beyond the present in spirit, and does not refer to the historian's own time" and chooses Livy (59 BCE–17 CE) as a prime example of this non-contemporary history writing.[66] Herodotus was born c. 490 and died c. 420–25 BCE and the greater part of *The Histories* is devoted to the Persian Wars that took place in 490 and 480–78 BCE. Herodotus's researches or *historia* were most likely conducted from the 450s to the 420s.[67] One could just about accept that Herodotus "lived through" these events and should therefore be in the "original" rather than the "reflective" category. But he also devotes his researches to events from the sixth and seventh century BCE in Persia, Lydia, Egypt, which would place him clearly in the same category as

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Livy, who is best known for the first five books of his history on the early foundations of Rome.[68] Part of Hegel's problem is that he wants the "first" Greek historians to fit into a common category, into an "original history" that is also contemporary and essentially the same in its form and content.

The need to equate Herodotus and Thucydides, to couple them together, highlights the limitations of a Hegelian philosophy of history. Having used Herodotus and Thucydides as examples of one of the "other methods" of history writing, Hegel also later uses them as an example of his *own* form of "world history." It is only an implicit example, but still suggests that "original" and "world" history share one fundamental aspect: the ability to create a history that is itself "present and alive" to the contemporary. It is helpful to recall the passage that we began this chapter with:

> In German, the term for "history" (*Geschichte*) is derived from the verb "to happen" (*geschehen*). Thus the term combines the objective and subjective sides: it denotes the actual events [*das Geschehene*] (in Latin, *res gestae*) as well as the narration of the events [*die Geschichtserzählung*] (in Latin, *historiam rerum gestarum*). This union [*Vereinigung*] of the two meanings must be regarded as something of a higher order than mere chance. We must therefore say that the narration of history is born at the same time [*gleichzeitig erscheine*] as the first actions and events that are properly historical. A shared inner source produces history in both senses at the same time.[69]

Hegel will describe "the Greek world" as only the first stage of "world history"; it is a stage that must be superseded by "the Roman world" and, of course, culminate in "the German world." However, with the emergence of the Greek world, he observes, "we find ourselves immediately at home, for we are in the region of Spirit."[70] It is apparent in his introduction that Hegel needs "the *beginnings* of world history" to incorporate the beginning of historiography itself, both chronologically and conceptually, as a *contemporary*, present, living form of history that is embodied in the works of its most prominent historians, Herodotus and Thucydides.[71]

And yet Hegel's own work is unable to maintain this equation between Herodotus and Thucydides. There are three times more refer-

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ences to Herodotus than to Thucydides in his lectures. It is Thucydides and not Herodotus who is chosen as an individual who embodies or represents "the Spirit of the Nation" and "the general idea and conception of what the Greeks were."[72] It is Thucydides who is used to introduce the "Greek world."[73] Herodotus, on the other hand, is primarily a source for Hegel's account of the classical "Oriental world."[74] This is hardly surprising, as Herodotus's work has such an extensive interest in the "great and marvelous deeds" of both Greeks and non-Greeks or "barbarians" that Plutarch (45–127 CE) was prompted to attack him for being "pro-barbarian."[75]

In a number of influential articles and lectures in the 1950s and early 1960s, Arnaldo Momigliano undertook an examination—as the title of his 1958 paper shows—of "The Place of Herodotus in the History of Historiography." This interest in the history of historiography not only offers a welcome historical corrective to Hegel's heavy-handed philosophy of history, it also emphasizes that, as a form of "original history," *historia* already had a heterogeneous range and temporal complexity that made it difficult to treat history as a *contemporary* expression of the synthesis of event and narrative.

As Momigliano notes, as the so-called origin of Western historiography, Herodotus has troubled historiography until the mid twentieth century. When Cicero (106 BCE–43B CE) characterized Herodotus as the father of history (*patrem historie*) *and* the father of lies (*fablae*), labelling him both a historian and a "story teller," he was already reflecting a common view in the classical world.[76] As Momigliano remarks, Herodotus's "bad reputation in the ancient world is something exceptional that requires explanation."[77] Beyond the extraordinary feat of combining the accurate account of the Persian Wars with extensive travels to the East and accounts of "present conditions and past events in those countries," Herodotus was judged in the classical period by his immediate successor Thucydides's decision to offer a very different kind of history.[78]

Momigliano states the difference between Herodotus and Thucydides in stark terms. For Thucydides, "serious history [. . .] was not concerned with the past, but with the present" and rarely moved beyond the parameters of its own geography and language: it was contemporary, military and political.[79] This led to a tradition that equated "historical reliability" with what Momigliano calls the "narrow patch of

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contemporary events."[80] For Momigliano, the antipathy to Herodotus marked a profound *limit* in ancient historiography: it led to "the paramouncy of contemporary history."[81] This limit was only broken in the nineteenth century when historians turned in earnest to the archive as the basis for writing about the distant past.[82] David Hume reflected a common view of the eighteenth century when he announced, "The first page of Thucydides is, in my opinion, the commencement of real history."[83]

Herodotus also posed a problem for classical philosophers. As Momigliano notes, "even Aristotle" went out of his way to attack Herodotus on grounds of natural science and historical reliability.[84] In the *Generation of Animals*, he calls Herodotus "the story-teller" (*muthológos*).[85] Thucydides himself insisted that his history had no stories, myths or fables.[86] It is only in the sixteenth century that Herodotus began to be taken as a model for historical research that recognizes the value of travel narratives, oral traditions and myths.[87] As Momigliano remarks, once again "one could travel abroad, tell strange stories, enquire into past events, without necessarily being a liar."[88]

Writing in the 1950s, Momigliano concludes "trust in Herodotus has been the first condition for the fruitful exploration of our remote past."[89] Momigliano is referring specifically to ancient Greek and "Oriental" history but we could also extend this claim to the "remote past" in general. The variety of methods and approaches in Herodotus give us an indication of how to address the problem of the *remote* past. The recognition that the past *remains* remote does not negate the good practices of the historian; rather, it reinforces that the past always remains a problem. The past does not efface itself—or it effaces itself and leaves traces—when confronted by the historian's apparatus.

Momigliano returned to the relation between Herodotus and Thucydides in his 1961–1962 Sather Classical Lectures. In *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, he notes that historians in the twentieth century "can explore any period of the past as if it were contemporary history in the Thucydidean sense."[90] The "types of evidence" for political and military history can be gleaned to construct an almost virtual recreation of "the contemporary" in "any period of the past." Thucydides's legacy allows the historian to treat the past "as if" it were the present. This emphasis on virtuality is striking as it implies that any attempt to make the remote or recent past *seem* present in the

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name of historical accuracy must still rely to some degree on treating the past as a regulative idea in the Kantian sense.[91] The past-contemporary cannot simply be actually contemporary: it must be a *mixture* of the actual and the virtual. In an interview from 1994 Derrida referred to this interweaving of the actual and the virtual as "virtuactuality."[92]

In discussing the antecedents to the "Herdotean tradition," Momigliano argues that Greek historiography combined the recording of events and the use of a chronological framework with "the development of critical methods [. . .] to distinguish between facts and fancies."[93] With its "rebellion against tradition, the search for new principles of explanation, [and] the rise of doubt as an intellectual stimulus to new discoveries," the historiography of the fifth century BCE marked a "philosophical" revolution.[94] In this context, it is apparent that "a comparison between different national traditions helps to establish the truth."[95] What distinguishes Herodotus is the imperative to remember the *difference* between the recent and the remote past in the face of "the ephemeral character of human actions."[96] He combines this imperative with a critical method that he attempted to apply to "both the very ancient and the fairly recent."[97]

As Momigliano implies, Herodotus associates *historia* not with the contemporary but with *two types* of the past: the remote and the recent past. History is concerned with the difficult relation between these different types of the past. Herodotus then applies these two versions of the past to "both the Greek and the foreign."[98] It is this double relation between the remote *and* recent past and the familiar *and* the foreign that defines "the Herodotean tradition."[99] As Herodotus had to rely on what others had seen, he also needed to establish new criteria for the "reliability of evidence" that often rests on "the cross-examination of witnesses."[100] The problem of narrative and testimony, of the witness and truth becomes part of Herodotus's understanding of *historia*.

3. THE EVENT AND ITS NARRATIVE

There are traces of Derrida's interest in Hegel's celebration of the "double meaning" of *Geschichte* in his earliest published work from the 1960s. These passages suggest that Derrida was using Hegel to question the concept of history in the work of Husserl, Heidegger and Levinas.

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In his introduction to Husserl's "The Origin of Geometry," Derrida notes that Husserl is emphatic that "the origin of historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) will never be dependent on a history (*Historie*)."[101] A historicity that secures and carries ideal objectivities, such as the trans-historical truths of geometry, cannot rely on an equivocal complicity between history and historical narrative. In "Violence and Metaphysics," Derrida's formidable 1964 essay on Levinas, Derrida uses the "two meanings" of *Geschichte* to demonstrate that Hegel recognizes a "duplicity and difference" in the language of philosophy that Levinas rejects in his emphatic denial of any relation between absolute alterity and Hegelian history.[102]

As we have seen, in his 1964–1965 seminar on Heidegger, Derrida refers to Heidegger's own ordering of historicity: historical events (*Geschehen*, *Geschichte*) must always *precede* and be *entirely separated from* historical narratives or a science of history (*Historie*). In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida registers that claim that *Historie* always "supposes" or "presupposes" *Geschichte*, which can also be taken as the assertion of both a determined *structural* sequence and a clear-cut *historical* order.[103] He goes on to argue that "writing in general" precedes, accounts for and complicates the distinction between *Geschichte* and *Historie*.[104]

What does it mean if "writing in general" precedes and takes account of *Geschichte* and *Historie*? Rather than adopting Heidegger's vision of an authentic historicity of *Da-sein*, or a "historical becoming" that always separates itself from and comes before a mere "historical science" or *tekhnē* of history, Derrida implies that a certain kind of historical narrative can neither be separated from nor simply placed after a historical event. In this context, we are not talking about some kind of fictionalization of history but about Heidegger's need to separate authentic historicity from historical *science*.[105] One could argue that the inability to separate historicity from historical science is *very the possibility* of a viable historiography.

Some ten years later, in the mid 1970s, Derrida "returned" to this problem. As I have argued, this "new" emphasis on the relation between historical events and historical narratives in the 1970s is part of Derrida's engagement with the problem of history in the 1960s and his focus on *ex-appropriation* in the early 1970s as the basis for a different kind of philosophy of history. Derrida's seminars from the mid 1970s suggest that he was already thinking about the relation between decon-

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struction and the *event* as an affirmation of an interest in *practical* rather than merely theoretical concerns. As Derrida later remarks, "deconstruction is not, in the last analysis, a methodological or theoretical procedure. In its possibility, as in the experience of the impossible that will have always constituted it, it is never a stranger to the event, that is, very simply, to the coming of that which happens [*à la venue de ce qui arrive*]."[106]

As Derrida would note in *Spectres of Marx*, the question of *the event* is also complicated by a Marxist inheritance.[107] In "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" (1852), Marx had argued that there could be a "history without events" and that this history should be condemned since the "event" that was properly historical was properly revolutionary in the Marxist sense.[108] For an event to be historical it must be special, unique and charged with a specific *political* resonance. Alain Badiou's (1937–) *Being and Event* (1988) is a notable example of this tradition in twentieth-century French philosophy.[109] But can there be a "history without events" and who or what is to regulate the difference between the true event and the many non-events of history? One can place this problematic political claim to the "exemplary" event in a wider religious and historical context. As Marc Bloch astutely observed, Christianity is "essentially a historical religion: a religion, that is, whose prime dogmas are based on events."[110]

To follow Derrida's return, at least in his published work at the time, to the relation between *Geschichte* and *Historie*, I would like first to focus on a *series* of passages or "events" from the 1970s and 1990s. Most of these passages come from the published fragments of Derrida's seminars and reinforce that we must wait until these are published in full to gauge the extent of Derrida's work on history in this period. The first of these passages is found in "To Speculate—on 'Freud,'" which was published in 1980 as part of *The Post Card* and comes from the last part of Derrida's 1974–1975 seminar "La vie la mort."[111] The second comes from *Given Time: 1. Counterfeit Money*, which appeared in 1991 and "corresponds faithfully," Derrida tells us, to his 1977–1978 seminar "Donner—le temps."[112]

These two passages, which can be dated between 1975–1980 and 1977–1991, are quite similar and equally difficult. From the vantage point of some forty years, they give us a complex history of philosophy. Derrida himself notes in an article from this period that Hegel argued

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that the history of philosophy, especially one informed by his own ideas, should not be "a simple narrative (*Erzählung*)."[113] For Hegel, a true philosophy of history must begin *with* its culmination, it proper end or goal.[114] Part of our challenge here is to create a *narrative*—a historical narrative—that resists this teleological pull without losing its rigour and clarity in relation to the "double" problem of recounting a history of philosophy that is itself focused on the relation between history and its narratives.

I will start with the second passage, from *Given Time*, as it is perhaps more readily accessible:

> In every situation where the possibility of narration [*récit*] is the condition of the story, of history [*de l'histoire*], of the historical event, one ought to be able to say that the condition of knowing or the desire to know (*epistēmē*, *historia rerum gestarum*, *Historie*) gives rise to history itself (*res gestae*, *Geschehen*, *Geschichte*), which could complicate, if not contradict, finally, many of the argumentations of the Hegelian or Heideggerian type that always seem to require the inverse order (no *Historie* without *Geschichte*), although it is true they do so only after having first integrated the possibility of narration [*récit*] or of the relation [*relation*] to knowing into that of the event.[115]

Derrida offers a wider discussion on the event and narrative before this passage. He is in the midst of exploring the problem of the gift in relation to *La fausse monnaie*, a "brief story" (*bref récit*) by Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867) published as part of his *Le Spleen de Paris* in 1869.[116] As Derrida explains, *le récit* is a kind of narrative that is neither simply a work of fiction nor simply a factual account.[117] The *récit* is somewhere between fiction and fact. It can itself therefore be described as a form of counterfeit money (*la fausse monnaie*).[118] This suggests that Baudelaire's work is also "a fiction on the subject of fiction."[119] In the context of this specific kind of narrative, Derrida reflects on both the counterfeit money in a fictional story (*histoire*) *and* the history (*histoire*) of counterfeit money that is given in this *récit*.[120] He adds to this the question of the narrator in Baudelaire's narrative, who may or may not be Baudelaire. A quasi-fiction on the fiction of counterfeit money can also describe the *récit* as a narration on narrative itself.[121]

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It is this relating or narrating that also *puts into question* the fictional narrative—it does not just simply celebrate the fictional—that leads to Derrida's earlier suggestion in the 1960s that narration has a "thickness" (*épaisseur*) that entangles the historical event and the historical narrative.[122] Baudelaire's *bref récit* places an emphasis not simply on the content of the narrative (in the sense that one can be *in* a story or even *in* history) but also on the action of narration.[123] The *récit* is then concerned as much with the relation *between* the narration and the narrative.[124] Derrida was aware of Gérard Genette's use of this distinction and states in *Given Time* that the relation between *l'histoire* (narrative) and *le récit* (narration) is itself exposed to the process of re-marking or dissemination.[125] As we have seen, *le récit* is also *le ré-cit*, a narration as re-lation or re-counting that registers a necessary repetition and marks the difference between the narrative event and the *event* of its narration.

For Derrida, it is not a matter here of the difference between the time or duration of the plot and the narrative (it can take a long time to tell a short story), but rather how the act of narration entails an *event*. The content of the narrative describes events but the action of narration also describes an event.[126] This suggests that the relation between a historical event and a historical narrative can also be thought of as the relation between an event *and* the event of the narrative. As Derrida observes, "what happens happens to the narration."[127] Treating the narration as an event means that one cannot blithely assume that "narrative discourse" simply "reports events that have taken place outside and before it."[128] This could also be understood as a necessary question for historiography: the recording and re-telling of events in the past must be part of the problem of writing history. By raising this issue, one does not diminish historical veracity; one recognizes the strengths and limits of any historical project. It is a question of not only of who told the story but also how he or she told the story and how much of it was indeed a "story."

In *Being and Time* Heidegger appears to subscribe to a far more reductive and even anti-historiographical view when he insists that *Geschichte* always precedes and absolutely differentiates itself from *Historie*. Hegel, on the other hand, seems to already accept this crossing of the "interior" and "exterior" boundaries of the historical event and its narration when he argues that they can be contemporaneous and hap-

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pen "at the same time." But what Hegel does not recognize is that this simultaneous event and narrative *already* entails the problem of the event of the narration itself. And this added layer of complexity does not just give itself to the happy conclusion of everything happening *at the same time*. As Derrida remarks, in Baudelaire's *récit*, it is "*as if* the narrative produced the event it is supposed to report."[129] It is only *as if* the possibility of "the recounted event" relies on its narration.[130] This complicity should not invalidate the event as a *historical* event—something has happened in the past and the historian's task is to validate what happened, how it was reported and understood at the time and how it can be understood today. But it does make us think with more care about how we relate that something has happened. It is not Derrida who opens this question about history and its narrative; it is Hegel and his love of German words that can mean different things at the same time.

In the first passage, from "To Speculate—on 'Freud,'" which precedes the text in *Given Time* by three years, it is not Baudelaire's *bref récit* but Freud's "small story" (*petite histoire*) of his grandson playing the game *fort/da* with a spool in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) that leads to the problem of the relation between event and narration.[131] Once again, the narration is not a transparent facilitator that merely records the event in its summative aftermath. As Derrida observes, "the related is related to the relating" (*on rapporte donc le rapporté sur le rapportant*).[132] This leaves us with the complicity of "the absolute singular event" and "its double relation."[133] The singular event can only be related by being repeated.[134] The event is still singular but its necessary relation splits this event into the challenge of the event of a narrated-event: the *possibility* of historiography.

While *Given Time* speaks of narration (*le récit*) and its relation (*relation*), "To Speculate" refers to the story (*l'histoire*) that is related (*rapportée*). The difference between *la relation* and *le rapport*—not least the sexual difference—is lost in the English translation of "To Speculate." Both French verbs *relater* and *rapporter* can be seen as translations of the German verb *erzählen*, to tell, relate, narrate, recount. But the contexts are different and the terms register the differences between Baudelaire and Freud. *Relater* means to relate, recount, record, but *rapporter* means not only to report but also to quote as well as to retrieve, bring back and to make a profit or a yield on a return. *Rapport-*

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er is redolent with the problems of a Freudian and psychoanalytical event and its relation.

Nonetheless, Derrida can still observe in general terms that there is "the writing of the relation (let us say the history, *Historie*, of the relation [*rapport*], and even the history, *Geschichte*, of the relator relating it [*du rapporteur la rapportant*])."[135] In Derrida's own narrative, *Historie* precedes *Geschichte*. Has Derrida inverted the terms here? I think not, because he goes on to insist that in the Freudian context these terms are entangled: "the related is related to the relating."[136] The relation itself registers an entanglement of *both* "the writing of the relation" as "the history [. . .] of the relation" and "the history [. . .] of the relator relating it." Again, this is a specific response to the interaction between the methods of psychoanalytical therapy and Freud's own writings but it also raises a larger point. In taking account of not only the historical event but also of the event of the narrative of this historical event, both the event and the narrative of the event must to some extent be "carried away with itself" (*s'y emporte*).[137] What does this mean? In part, that neither the event nor the narrative can be treated as autonomous, self-contemporary or as a meta-discourse. The event is mediated, differentiated by its narratives. The narrative is also mediated and differentiated by its events.

4. A SERIES OF EVENTS

How does Derrida treat *Geschichte* and *Historie* after the 1970s? The occasional reference in the 1980s in works on Heidegger is followed by what could be seen as a concentrated period of renewed interest, which shadows Derrida's 1991–1992 seminar on responsibility and the secret and his 1992–1995 seminar on witnessing and testimony (*le témoignage*) both of which were part of his long-running seminar on "Questions of Responsibility."[138] Indeed, one could create a *narrative* from all of this, in the sense of telling a story based on a series of fragmentary events. The temptation for such a narrative is the assumption of the cohesive, the sequential and the linear. This is perhaps more than a temptation; it may even be a necessity. How far can or should one avoid the *epistēmē* when it comes to historiography? At the same time, as we have seen, Derrida asked in a talk from October 1990 why do we still use these

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Greek terms to give an apparently assured identity to complex historical configurations?[139]

There are at least five "philosophical events" between 1991 and 1994 that include an explicit reference to *Geschichte* and *Historie*.[140]

FIRST EVENT. In April 1991, Derrida delivers the Carpenter Lectures as *Given Time* and either revived an argument from his 1977–1978 seminar *Donner—le temps* on history and narrative or introduces it into his reshaping of older material. This return to the Hegelian and Heideggerian treatment of *Geschichte* and *Historie* either announces or reaffirms a new hypothesis: no *Geschichte* without *Historie*.

SECOND EVENT. A month later in May 1991, Derrida gives a paper at a UNESCO conference, "The Right to Philosophy from a Cosmopolitan Point of View," in which he offers a brief analysis of Kant's 1784 essay "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim," the essay that Ricoeur used in 1949 to describe the "idea in the Kantian sense" in Husserl's treatment of history.[141] Derrida points out here that in proposing his "idea," Kant attempts to contrast philosophical reason and a novelistic fiction by turning to classical Greek history.[142] This history is itself confirmed by a "ruse of nature," in which the primitive unsociability of man leads to a reliance on the artifices of culture to reach its natural and rational ends.[143] For Kant, it is possible to think of a philosophy and a history of the universal political unity of man thanks to "Greek historiographicity."[144] Derrida notes that this ideal Greek history should be understood "both in the sense of *Geschichte* and of *Historie*, of history in the sense of the event and in the sense of the narrative, of the documented relation, of historical science."[145]

What is interesting here is that Derrida introduces Hegelian and Heideggerian terms into a reading of Kant. This idealization of Greek and European history as the grounding of a claim to a universality that can be applied to the rest of the world recalls Derrida's critical reading of Husserl's "The Origin of Geometry." As Derrida goes on to observe: "the teleological axis of this discourse has become the tradition of European modernity. We find it intact, unchanged through variations as important as those that distinguish Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger, [Paul] Valéry."[146] This tradition is indicative of a wider challenge to find a critical basis for a cosmopolitanism that can be thought beyond the "opposition between Eurocentrism and anti-Eurocentrism."[147]

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In this specific context, Kant's treatment of the historical event and its narrative remain part of a tradition that includes Hegel and Heidegger. However, in his broader discussion of a philosophy that has always had more than one language, one culture and one people as its point of origin, Derrida gestures to a different kind of history and history of philosophy: "Philosophy does not just have one memory. Under its Greek name and in its European memory, it has always been bastard, hybrid, grafted, multilinear, polyglot, and we must adjust our practice of the history of philosophy, of history and of philosophy, to this reality which was also a chance and which remains more than ever a chance."[148]

THIRD EVENT. Two months later, in "Passions," which first appeared as an article in English in 1992, was published in French in January 1993 as a small book and dated by Derrida as being written in "July 1991," Derrida speaks about the secret that remains "foreign to every history, as much in the sense of *Geschichte* or *res gestae* as of knowledge and of historical narrative (*epistēmē*, *historia rerum gestarum*)."[149] This suggests that the secret as a secret resists a certain determination of *Geschichte* and *Historie*, even if registering a private secret *as* a secret already makes it public or quasi-public. In this case, both *Geschichte* and *Historie*—and their customary opposition by Heidegger—are put into question by the secret.

FOURTH EVENT. Four months later, in November 1991, Derrida gives a paper "'To Do Justice to Freud': The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis," revisiting to his well-known critique of Foucault in the March 1963 paper "Cogito and the History of Madness."[150] Derrida points out that his reference to "The History of Madness" in the title of his lecture should be taken as if it were in quotation marks, since it refers to Foucault's written work (*Historie*) rather than the thing itself (*Geschichte*).[151] We will come back to this 1991 paper in more detail.

FIFTH EVENT. In "History of the Lie: Prolegomena," a lecture from 1995 that introduces Derrida's 1994–1995 seminar on testimony and the witness, Derrida raises three problems that he places in the framework of the relation between *Geschichte* and *Historie*:

> Will it ever be possible to distinguish among the following *three things*, namely: (1) a history (*Historie*) of the concept of the lie [*mensonge*], (2) a history (*Geschichte*) of the lie, made up of all the events that have happened *to the* lie or *by way of* the lie and, finally, (3) a

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> true history that orders the narrative [*le récit*] (*Historie*, *historia rerum gestarum*) of these lies or of the lie in general? How is one to dissociate or alternate these three tasks?[152]

This paper on "History of the Lie" was given thirty-one years after Derrida's 1964 seminar on "History and Truth" and twenty-two years after his 1972 paper *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, which includes a section on Nietzsche's "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fable: The History of an Error" and Heidegger's problematic reading of this work.[153]

Looking at these five "events," as tempting as it would be, rather than try to create a cohesive, synchronous or diachronic narrative—a simple structure or a simple history for history and narrative out of Derrida's works—part of the challenge of history, even for some kind of "intellectual history," is to grapple with the fragments and discontinuities of the published works. One can treat the yearly seminars as the solid background to a series of partial elaborations or compressed strategic responses in the lectures, articles and books (most of which are collections of essays and papers). But this approach can place too much emphasis on the posthumously published seminars and negate the many and varied *choices* for publication during the life of an intellectual. For whatever reason, Derrida chose not to publish the 1964–1965 seminar on Heidegger and history, which may have changed how his subsequent treatment of history was understood, and left us with a vast array of works that contain traces and retracings of earlier questions and problems on the status of history from this seminar.

For example, it was also only after the publication of the 1964–1965 seminar in 2013 that Derrida's later references to not "telling a story" became something more than just a modest or playful rhetorical gesture or an oblique meditation on literary fiction.[154] When Derrida opens his 1984 memorial lectures for Paul de Man, he starts by saying "I have never know how to tell a story" (*Je n'ai jamais su raconteur une histoire*).[155] This may be a refusal to tell personal stories about de Man or an acknowledgment that much of their debates concerned the relation between philosophy and literature. But it now can also be treated as a return to Heidegger's quotation of Plato at the start of *Being and Time* and the emphatic rejection of a certain kind of narration or of a problematic historical-mythical story in the name of the ontico-ontological

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difference. How does one tell a story *of* the past? As Derrida suggests in the de Man lectures, one must always begin by recognizing a powerful temptation: to establish "the exhaustive narrative" and "the total absorption [*la consumation*] of a memory."[156]

As Michel de Certeau observes, when it comes to the writing of history, there is always "the demand for *order*."[157] What are the contexts or *mi-leus* for these five "events" from the 1990s? Derrida's response to the significant political events of the time is, of course, only part of what makes the years 1989–1991 so interesting. As we have seen, these are also the years that he wrote a number of quasi-memoirs such as "Circumfession" and *Monolingualism of the Other* that address the problem of relating one's "own" life to wider historical and cultural memories and responding to what is pre-given or always already there. Derrida also turned sixty in July 1990 and there is a sense in many of the works of this period of being more explicit in looking back to both historical events and their narratives—such as his conflict with Foucault in 1963—and to the memory of personal experiences in the past. At the same time, both of these aspects—the historical and the personal—were apparent in Derrida's earlier work, notably from the mid 1970s. "Envois" (1977–1980) explores the fractures of the autobiographical in a dramatic and engaging intellectual manner with an elusive quasi-private quasi-public personal narrative.

The selection of various passages from the 1970s and 1990s has shaped the "story" that I would like to tell. I wanted to find a narrative to order these historical events in Derrida's work. Such steps may be unavoidable. But there is also a historical training or reticence, which I myself had as an undergraduate, that cautions against this easy extrapolation. It may well be, for example, that when Derrida decided to write on works by Kant and Foucault (in the second and fourth events) that had the word "history" in their title he was merely once again noting the difference between event and narrative that had been an aspect of his approach to the problem of history in general since the early 1960s. One could say the same about the brief reference to history in the discussion of the secret in "Passions" (the third event). The first event from 1991 may also be no more than a re-reading of work dating from 1977–1978 and the fifth event in "History of the Lie" could be said to repeat a series of problems first explored in the 1964 seminar. So, these five "events" could be said to resist the narrative order that I am looking

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for and frustrate my attempts to tell a story that ultimately wants to believe that history was important for Derrida in a "new" way in the early 1990s after the political events of 1989.

Nonetheless, I may be right and the relative insistence—rather than relative proximity—of these five "events" does signal Derrida's renewed interest in the early 1990s in history and the problem of the relation between the historical event and its narration in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is also likely that I have made an egregious assumption by treating narrative as something that simply *orders* events. This is why Derrida's question in "History of the Lie"—how does a history *order* its "true" narrative—is significant. Beyond any easy claim that the sheer number of Derrida's writings makes any complete or total account impossible, what is at stake here is the unavoidable rhythm and narrative that emerges—despite oneself—when trying to create an "intellectual history" for Derrida. One work invariably refers to another, which requires a turning back to a previous work and so on. These are the spreading and receding contexts.

As I read and then write on one text by Derrida, I am pulled towards a series of other texts and "events" often by the hope that a passage from some prior work will provide the "first word" or primary "order" to the matter at hand. But each work has its own contexts and narratives and resists providing an anticipatory "last word" for later works. The more I read, the more I am pulled away from one work towards another, jumping back and forth from the mid 1970s to the mid 1990s. And there are so many works by Derrida!

NOTES

1. "Circumfession," 196; "Circonfession," 182.

2. *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, 133, 115; *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, 83.

3. *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, 115; *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, 83.

4. "Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides," 189 n. 9.

5. "Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides," 108.

6. *History and Memory*, 1. Derrida briefly discusses Le Goff's work in "Globalization, Peace, and Cosmopolitanism," in *Negotiations: Interventions*

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and Interviews 1971–2001, ed., trans. and intro. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 371–86: 381; "The University Without Condition," in *Without Alibi*, ed., trans. and intro. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 202–37: 228–29.

7. Jacques Derrida, *Copy, Archive, Signature: A Conversation on Photography*, ed. and intro. Gerhard Richter, trans. Jeff Fort (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 3.

8. *Copy, Archive, Signature*, 3.

9. *A Taste for the Secret*, 6. *Le goût du secret*, 11. Translation modified.

10. *Of Grammatology*, 64–68.

11. Baring, *"Ne me raconte plus d'histoires,"* 180–81.

12. *"Ne me raconte plus d'histoires,"* 181.

13. *"Ne me raconte plus d'histoires,"* 181.

14. *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, 68 n. 5.

15. *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, 2.

16. *"Ne me raconte plus d'histoires,"* 181.

17. *"Ne me raconte plus d'histoires,"* 182.

18. See also Derrida's comments on truth in *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 65, 73–74, 78, 90, 93, 95.

19. *Being and Time*, 10, 19–20, 372–403.

20. *Being and Time*, 6.

21. *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 13.

22. *Being and Time*, 6.

23. *Being and Time*, 39.

24. Plato, *The Sophist*, in *Theaetetus and Sophist*, ed. and trans. Christopher Rowe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 242c. For the Greek, see Plato, *Theaetetus, Sophist*, ed. and trans. Harold North Fowler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921).

25. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 26.

26. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 26.

27. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 26.

28. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 29; *Heidegger: la question de l'Être et l'Histoire*, 61.

29. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 31.

30. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 34.

31. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 39.

32. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 39.

33. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 56.

34. See Trawny, *Heidegger and the Myth of a Jewish World Conspiracy*.

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35. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 80. See also Reinhart Koselleck, "Le concept d'histoire," in *L'Expérience de l'histoire* by Reinhart Koselleck, trans. Alexandre Escudier (Paris: Seuil, 1997), 15–99.

36. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 96.

37. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 99.

38. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 99; *Heidegger: la question de l'Être et l'Histoire*, 155.

39. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 99.

40. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 99.

41. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 99; Baring, "*Ne me raconte plus d'histoires*," 181.

42. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 100.

43. *Being and Time*, 378.

44. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 101.

45. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 101.

46. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 101; *Heidegger: la question de l'Être et l'Histoire*, 158.

47. "Living On," 85; "Survivre," 119.

48. *Memoires*, 20; "Living On," 104.

49. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 101–2.

50. "Limited Inc," 53.

51. "Limited Inc," 53; "Limited Inc," 106 [French text].

52. *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, 133; *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, 11.

53. *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, 133

54. *Introduction to The Philosophy of History*, 4 [Rauch translation]; *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, 12.

55. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 142.

56. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 142, 214.

57. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, 101 ("sum up" in English); *Heidegger: la question de l'Être et l'Histoire*, 157.

58. *A Taste for the Secret*, 6; *Le goût du secret*, 11. Translation modified.

59. *A Taste for the Secret*, 6; *Le goût du secret*, 11. Translation modified.

60. *Specters of Marx*, 70.

61. *Introduction to The Philosophy of History*, 3.

62. *Introduction to The Philosophy of History*, 3.

63. *Introduction to The Philosophy of History*, 3.

64. *Introduction to The Philosophy of History*, 4.

65. *Introduction to The Philosophy of History*, 4; *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, 12.

66. *Introduction to The Philosophy of History*, 6.

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67. Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. Aubrey de Sélincourt and John Marincola, intro. John Marincola (London: Penguin, 2003), xiii.

68. Livy, *The Early History of Rome: Books I–V of The History of Rome from its Foundation*, trans. Aubrey de Sélincourt, intro. R. M. Ogilvie (London: Penguin, 1971).

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70. *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, 223.

71. *Introduction to The Philosophy of History*, 67.

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73. *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, 226–33.

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75. Herodotus, *Histories*, 3 [I:1]; Plutarch, "On the Malice of Herodotus," in *Moralia*, trans. Lionel Person, 17 vols. (London: Heinemann, 1965), XI: 2–132.

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77. "The Place of Herodotus,"128.

78. "The Place of Herodotus,"128.

79. "The Place of Herodotus,"130.

80. "The Place of Herodotus,"130.

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82. "The Place of Herodotus," 136.

83. David Hume, "Of the Populousness of Ancient Nations," in *Essays: Moral, Political and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller, revised edition (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1985), 377–464: 422.

84. "The Place of Herodotus," 133; Aristotle, *History of Animals*, trans. A. L. Peck, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), I: 3.22.

85. Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, trans. A. L. Peck (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), 3.5.6 (756 b).

86. Thucydides, *The War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians*, ed. and trans. Jeremy Mynott (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 14–15 (21.1–2, 22.4).

87. "The Place of Herodotus," 137

88. "The Place of Herodotus," 137.

89. "The Place of Herodotus," 141.

90. *Classical Foundations*, 1.

91. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 508–10, 643 / B 536–38, 671.

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92. Jacques Derrida, "The Deconstruction of Actuality," in *Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews, 1971–2001*, ed., trans. and intro. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 85–116: 110.

93. *Classical Foundations*, 30.

94. *Classical Foundations*, 31.

95. *Classical Foundations*, 34.

96. *Classical Foundations*, 34.

97. *Classical Foundations*, 35.

98. *Classical Foundations*, 35.

99. *Classical Foundations*, 37–39.

100. *Classical Foundations*, 37. See also François Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representations of the Other in the Writing of History*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

101. *Edmund Husserl's The Origin of Geometry*, 132. See also 27 n. 3, 174, 176, 179.

102. "Violence and Metaphysics," 113–14.

103. *Of Grammatology*, 27. The recently revised translation of this passage reads: "the former (*Historie*, one would say in German) [pre]supposes the latter (*Geschichte*)," *Of Grammatology: 40th Anniversary Edition*, 30. See also *Being and Time*, 392.

104. *Of Grammatology*, 43–44.

105. See also Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," in *Untimely Meditations*, ed. Daniel Breazeale, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 57–124. Heidegger refers to this work in *Being and Time* (396). See Jensen, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of History*, 81–118.

106. *Specters of Marx*, 89; *Spectres de Marx,* 147.

107. *Specters of Marx*, 127.

108. Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in *Collected Works, Volume 11: Marx and Engels 1851–1853* by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (New York: International Publishers, 1979), 99–198: 125.

109. Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham (London: Continuum, 2005).

110. *The Historian's Craft*, 26.

111. *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History*, xi.

112. *Heidegger: Given Time*, ix.

113. "The Age of Hegel," 146.

114. "The Age of Hegel," 146–47.

115. *Given Time*, 122; *Donner le temps*, 155–56.

116. *Given Time*, 31; *Donner le temps*, 48. Charles Baudelaire, "Counterfeit Coin," in *Paris Spleen*, trans. Martin Sorrell (London: Alma, 2010), 58–60.

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117. *Given Time*, 85–86.
118. *Given Time*, 86.
119. *Given Time*, 85.
120. *Given Time*, 86.
121. *Given Time*, 94.
122. See Baring, "*Ne me raconte plus d'histoires*," 181.
123. *Given Time*, 119–20.
124. *Given Time*, 120.
125. *Given Time*, 145. See also "The Law of Genre," 60–63, 66.
126. *Given Time*, 119–21.
127. *Given Time*, 121.
128. *Given Time*, 121.
129. *Given Time*, 122.
130. *Given Time*, 122.
131. Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Other Writings*, trans. John Reddick, intro. Mark Edmundson (London: Penguin, 2003), 43–102.
132. "To Speculate—on 'Freud,'" 304; "Spéculer—sur 'Freud,'" in *La carte postale: de Socrate à Freud et au–delà* (Paris: Flammarion, 2003), 275–437: 325.
133. "To Speculate," 305.
134. "To Speculate," 305.
135. "To Speculate," 304; "Spéculer," 325.
136. "To Speculate," 304.
137. "To Speculate," 304; "Spéculer," 325.
138. "Envoi," 108, 110; *The Death Penalty* I, x; "Heidegger's Ear," 177, 179–80.
139. "We Other Greeks," 21–22 n. 11.
140. "The Right to Philosophy," 338.
141. Kant, "Idea for a Universal History"; Ricoeur, "Husserl and the Sense of History."
142. "The Right to Philosophy," 334.
143. "The Right to Philosophy," 335.
144. "The Right to Philosophy," 335.
145. "The Right to Philosophy," 335.
146. "The Right to Philosophy," 336. See also "The Other Heading."
147. "The Right to Philosophy," 336.
148. "The Right to Philosophy," 337.
149. Jacques Derrida, "Passions: 'An Oblique Offering,'" in *Derrida: A Critical Reader*, ed. and trans. David Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 5–35: 22.

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The text is dated July 1991 in the French edition, *Passions* (Paris: Galilée, 1993), 71.

150. "'To Do Justice to Freud,'" 75–76.

151. "'To Do Justice to Freud,'" 75–76.

152. "History of the Lie: Prolegomena," 38; "Histoire du mensonge. Prolégomènes," in *L'Herne Derrida,* ed. Marie-Louise Mallet and Ginette Michaud (Paris: Herne, 2004), 495–520: 500.

153. *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles,* 69, 71–83, 87. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, in *The Anti–Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols: And Other Writings*, ed. Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 153–230: 171; Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche, Volume 1: The Will to Power as Art*, in *Nietzsche: Volumes One and Two*, trans. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), 214–220. See also Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*, 278.

154. *Cinders*, 13.

155. *Memoires*, 3; *Memoires*, 27 [French text].

156. *Memoires*, 11; *Memoires*, 34 [French text].

157. Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 12. Translation modified.

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9

A WITNESS OF A WITNESS

> Testimony always goes hand in hand with at least the *possibility* of fiction, perjury, and lie. Were this possibility to be eliminated, no testimony would be possible any longer.
>
> —*Demeure*[1]

1. LE RÉCIT RÉCITANT AND LE RÉCIT RÉCITÉ

In "Cogito and the History of Madness," Derrida criticizes a "structuralist totalitarianism" that overlooks a dynamic relation in Descartes's argument between everything that "can be reduced to a determined historical totality" and "the hyperbolical project" that exceeds this determination.[2] In emphasizing that Descartes's excessive method of radical doubt is part of the claims for the absolute authority of the cogito, Derrida does not reject the possibility, the historical veracity and philosophical need for determined historical totalities. What he does object to is that this determination of a totality—a structure—*in the name of history* can account for the total possibilities of both a work in the history of philosophy and a historical event and its narrative. In March 1963, a year before his seminar on history and truth, Derrida already treats Foucault's reading of Descartes as a *problem* of narrative. The "hyperbolical project," he observes, in Descartes's *Meditations* belongs "to the narration narrating itself [*du récit récitant*] and not to the narration narrated [*du récit récité*] by Foucault." "It cannot be recounted,"

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Derrida argues, "cannot be objectified as an event in a determined history."[3]

It is perhaps easier to assume that we understand what "a determined historical totality" entails. Beyond the structuralist imperative for a necessary synchronic "cake slice" into a domain that does not offer an accessible diachronic historical chain of developments, this can be taken as an exhaustive level of research, of gathering facts and accounts, of synthesizing and summarizing to offer a persuasive conclusion that this event or these events in history were seen and can now be seen in this way. This is truly how it happened. This is truly what was going on. This is the wider context or accurate relation that few or none of the historical "actors" or "agents" could see or give at the time. However, the obvious problem here is the difference that Derrida targets in his reading of Foucault's magisterial history of madness between "the narration narrating itself" in Descartes's work and "the narration narrated" in Foucault's reading of Descartes. But again, Derrida sees this as a problem for *both* the necessary historical determination and the hyperbolical project.

From the perspective of the excess that exceeds the "closed" totality, this problem is compounded by Derrida's insistence that "the narration narrating itself" cannot "be objectified as an event in a determined history." How does one "*make history*" with a historical "narration narrating itself" that cannot be "objectified" *as* "an event in a determined history"?[4] How does one objectify a *narrative* and then treat it as "an event" and place this objectified narrative-event *in* "a determined history"? One answer is to follow Hegel. The narrative of historical events happens simultaneously because these event-narratives are already "objectified" as the history *of* the nation and *of* the state.

Derrida returns to this distinction between a narrating that is narrating and narrated in later works. For example, in *Geneses, Genealogies, Genres, and Genius: The Secrets of the Archive* (2003), he offers an extended reading of the writings of his friend Hélène Cixous (1937–). At one point, he draws a distinction between the two dates of work by Cixous: "the passage in italics thus opens with a date [Monday 2 April 2001] which interrupts the calendar of the tale told [*du récit récité*], that is, what is supposed to have happened *in reality* in 1964, so as to come back to the present, the here and now of the tale telling itself [*du récit récitant*] or of the writing writing itself [*l'écriture s'écrivant*]."[5]

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The distinction here between the "tale told" and the "tale telling itself" marks the difference between past events in 1964 and the later recounting of these past events in the present of April 2001. This reverses Derrida's terms from his 1963 paper on Foucault, where it is Descartes's 1641 work that is *narrating* itself and Foucault's 1961 book that *narrated* this narration. In 1963, it is the text from the past that is narrating itself (in the present tense), while the work from the present has narrated this narration (in the past tense). In his 2003 lecture on Cixous's work, the past event is narrated and the present narration of this is narrating.

This difference is partly explained by Derrida's emphasis in 2003 on the act of narrating as a bringing "back to the present, the here and now." In Derrida's terms, the "writing writing *itself*" or the "tale telling *itself*" already introduces a shifting relation between absence and presence that would dislocate any notion of this "narration narrating itself" *as* the realization of a presence that is present to itself in a complete and sustained moment of presence ("the here and now"). This is precisely what the "hyperbolical project" does in Descartes's work. This so-called reversal of present and past tenses in narrative is not really a reversal then as much as an indication that this excess, this narration narrating itself on the *difference* between the determined historical totality and what exceeds this totality, can be found both in texts from the historical past and in the present moment (especially when this present moment is written and dated and, already, in 2003 is a present moment—2 April 2001—that is also a moment of the past).

The second use of these distinctions from 1963 appears in another paper that is also concerned with a work from the year 1964. In this case it is a novel by the French writer Henri Thomas (1912–1993), *La Parjure* (1964), that may have been inspired by Paul de Man's bigamous marriage. Derrida's 2002 paper, "'Le Parjure,' Perhaps: Storytelling and Lying ('abrupt breaches of syntax')" offers a close reading of this novel. Derrida returns to the redolent phrases of "Cogito and the History of Madness" in the midst of a discussion about the inability of the narrator of the novel—Thomas was a friend of De Man and directly involved in the events surrounding the discovery of the bigamous marriage—"to avoid perjury, in effect, to tell the truth."[6] The narrator therefore "must expose while dissimulating, encrypt while unveiling, stifle a 'great secret' even as he tells it, and finally betray, precisely because he is a

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witness, denounce, disavow the very thing and those whom he accompanies as witness (virtually a witness at a marriage ceremony)."[7] The "narrator-witness," Derrida concludes, is "too implicated in the narration [*le récit*]."[8]

Derrida goes on to observe in Thomas's novel "here then, on the side of the narrating narration [*récit récitant*] and not only on the side of the narrated narration [*récit récité*], the anacoluthon gives rise to fictions or *perhaps*, even, to lies by the narrator himself."[9] In the specific case of a fictional narrative with likely antecedents in actual events the distinction between the *récit récitant* and the *récit récité* still marks the temporal or historical difference between what took place once, in the past, and the recounting or relating of this at a later date. Derrida returns to the problem of the relation between the historical event and its narrative (in this case of a fictional narrative). Most significantly, from 1963 to 2003 this distinction consistently marks the possibility of a *historical difference* in the work of Derrida.

While there are no doubt other instances of Derrida employing this distinction between the narrated and that narrating, the three examples that I have cited attest to the fluidity of these terms: one can have a *récit récitant* that is a historical narration which is then narrated at a later date; one can also have a *récit récité* that is the narrated events of the past that are part of a narration at a later date. The third example suggests that the *anacoluthon*—a disjunction or interruption marked by a grammatical "jump"—for example the shift from "I" to "she" in one sentence—in Thomas's novel can be found in both the *récit récitant* and the *récit récité*. This variety is not an erasure of the distinction between a historical past and its narrative, but rather a general recognition—in quite different and specific contexts—of the problem of the entanglement of historical events that are *at once* narrating and narrated.

In "'To Do Justice to Freud': The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis," Derrida's lecture on 23 November 1991 marking the thirtieth anniversary of the publication of Foucault's *History of Madness*, which also partly revisits Foucault's work and his own paper on Foucault from 1963, Derrida includes the question of his 1991 paper in relation to what can be seen now, "today," as an event from the early 1960s. Derrida is treating his own intervention in the reception of Foucault's book as a narrated-narrating historical event. As Derrida re-

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marks, "the title I have proposed for the few reflections I will risk today, 'The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis,' clearly indicates a change—a change in tense, in mode, or in voice."[10] Derrida is also challenging here Foucault's use in his own title of the phrase "the Classical Age." As Ian Hacking notes, Foucault himself shifted this phrase in his title from the subtitle in the 1961 edition to the title of the 1972 edition: *Madness and Unreason: History of Madness in the Classical Age* became *History of Madness in the Classical Age*.[11]

For Derrida, the first problem with Foucault's revised work, which included a highly polemical attack on Derrida's 1963 paper and his work in general, is the assertion in the name of history of a discrete period or epoch: History and Madness *in* the Classical Age.[12] It is to explain the different use of the phrase "in the age of Psychoanalysis" in his own title that Derrida returns to a variation of his 1963 distinction between a *récit récitant* and a *récit récité*. He writes:

> It is no longer a question of the age *described* [décrit] by a *History of Madness*. It is no longer a question of an epoch or period, such as the classical age, that would, inasmuch as it is its very object, stand before the history of madness as Foucault writes it. It is a question today of the age to which the book itself belongs, the age out of which it takes place, the age that provides its situation; it is a question of the age that is *describing* [décrivant] rather than the age that is *described* [décrit].[13]

In this instance, Derrida is using the present tense narrating-describing to account for what is today in 1991 the historical moment of 1961 when Foucault himself wrote of "the classical age." This is also a question of how a historical *epoch* is formed in a historical narration. Derrida adds that his own subtitle, "the history of madness in the age of psychoanalysis," should not be taken as the confirmation of a discrete historical epoch of psychoanalysis, in this case both the early 1960s and the early 1990s. As we have seen, since the mid 1960s Derrida had criticized the relation between a "historical configuration" and the use of often ahistorical terms such as "epoch" or "age." For Derrida, the problem with Foucault's book is a problem of *historical* narration, of how one treats history in forming the narrative *of* an age or an epoch.

In his treatment of a narration that addressees what is "describing" rather than "described" in Foucault's book, Derrida's use of "in the age

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of" (*à l'âge de*) in his title marks a return to the Hegelian distinction-connection between history and narrative that he had first addressed in the 1960s. Derrida goes on to say:

> In my title, "the history of madness" must be in quotation marks since the title designates the age of the book, *The History* (*historia rerum gestarum*) of *Madness*—as a book—in "the age of psychoanalysis" and not the history (*res gestae*) of madness, of madness itself, in the age of psychoanalysis, even though, as we will see, Foucault regularly attempts to objectify psychoanalysis and to reduce it to that of which he speaks rather than to that out of which he speaks [*à ce dont il parle plutôt qu'à ce depuis quoi il parle*]. What will interest me will thus to be the time and historical terrain [*le temps et le terrain historiques*] in which the book is rooted or takes as its point of departure [*s'enracine ou prend son départ*], and not so much the history or histories [*l'histoire ou les histoires*] that it recounts and tries in a certain sense to objectify (translation modified).[14]

This is a difficult and quite remarkable passage. Derrida insists on a contextual and historical difference: Foucault's "history" of madness should be treated as a book written in the late 1950s and early 1960s, which was a period after the emergence of Freudian psychoanalysis. Foucault has attempted to "objectify" or idealize or even erase a historical *mi-lieu*. Derrida is explicitly interested in "the time and historical terrain" *from* which or "out of which" (*à ce depuis*) Foucault was writing. The phrase "historical terrain" (*le terrain historiques*), translated as "historical conditions" in the English translation, is notable and distinctive enough in Derrida's work to retain the wider sense of ground, field, formation. This does not mean that Derrida subscribes to some metaphysically assured notion of "ground" but it does suggest that there is a *historical* difference and a *historical* context that informs a work to the extent that it can be said to be "rooted or takes" X "as its point of departure."

In the specific context of Derrida's argument that Foucault did not take sufficient account of the *mi-lieu* of psychoanalysis as a *problem* when he wrote his book, Derrida is not interested in the "history or histories," the *narratives* of Foucault, as much as the "historical terrain," the historical *events* at the time. This passage from "To Do Justice to Freud" is important because it highlights that Derrida can also use

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historical events and contexts to challenge certain historical narratives and not simply privilege the complexities of narrative in relation to historical events. Derrida returns to Foucault's book after thirty years by focusing on its narrative (*historia rerum gestarum*), rather than its treatment of historical events (*res gestae*), precisely to draw attention to its inadequate attention to its *own* historical context and *mi-lieu*. This can be treated as a very "practical" instance of a deconstructive historiography.

Derrida goes on to make a point of calling Foucault a "historian" and he challenges the assumptions that inform what is in effect Foucault's *philosophy of history* and, specifically, "the very possibility of a history of madness."[15] He focuses on Foucault's treatment of Freud and argues that because Foucault's Freud appears to belong to both the "classical age" and the rupture of the "classical age," this ambivalence about psychoanalysis in general demonstrates the limitation of Foucault's history of madness *as* a narrative of "the classical age." It is the narration that shows the limits of the historiographical work. Freud's position on the "borderline" in Foucault's book shows the difficulty for the historian of assigning such liminal figures in "the taking place of a determinable event."[16] In this case, a narrative that constructs a monolithic and homogenous classical age or epoch of madness in the name of history will always have a problem with where exactly to place Freud. Derrida suggests that there can be better historical narratives to take account of the "ambiguity" of the history of psychoanalysis.[17]

For Derrida, the reliance on such terms in historiography construct narratives in which "all the historical or archaeological categories" promise us "the determinable stability of a configurable whole."[18] These narratives in turn treat historical events as events that can be gathered and organized into such narratives, leaving us with something like a narratological circle. Despite Foucault's innovative emphasis on the history of unreason and madness, as a historian he offers very traditional moments where the hinges or turning points from one "epoch" to another allow for generalized statements about ideas that stand on an apparent threshold and return to what has yet to come or announce and prefigure what is not yet to come, giving the impression of a historical narrative that aspires to a linear succession and sequence that its own narrative cannot sustain.[19]

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2. HISTORY AND THE WITNESS

It should not surprise us that in *Memoires—for Paul de Man* a few pages after declaring his difficulty in telling a story Derrida returns to the problem of *Geschichte* and *Historie*. In the context of this 1984 memorial lecture, Derrida raises some new questions. He begins once again with his opening phrase:

> I have never known how to tell a story. Why didn't I receive this gift from Mnemosyne? From this complaint, and probably to protect myself before it, a suspicion continually steals into my thinking: who can really tell a story? Is narrative possible? Who can claim to know what a narrative [*récit*] entails? Or, before that, the memory it lays claim to? What is memory?[20]

Derrida ends this paragraph of questions by turning to what "links memory to narrative or to all the uses of the word '*histoire*' (story, history, *Historie, Geschichte*, etc.)."[21]

The 1984 lectures raise the problem of memory, but also touch on the problem that Derrida will explore in his seminars throughout the 1990s: the veracity of the witness, of testimony and the construction of a "true" narrative. As he remarks in *The Gift of Death* (1990–1999), the witness registers "an ethical or political act, for today and for tomorrow."[22] At the same time, as he observes in a paper from July 1992, the "logic of testimony" is not the logic of "irrecusable or uncontested" "proof."[23] And yet the witness, the eyewitness account, is indispensable to the historical narrative and for the truth of historiography in general.

In an interview from December 1993, Derrida reiterates that "a testimony has never been or should never be mistaken for evidence."[24] As Marc Bloch had observed, "there is no reliable witness in the absolute sense," "there is only more or less reliable testimony."[25] This is the case, Bloch notes, because the historian must contend with the "confused vocabulary of daily life."[26] One can, of course, still make judgments within this measure of "the more or less." As Bloch argues, we know that Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo but we also know that two eyewitness accounts of the battle cannot be exactly the same; their differences and limitations are indicative of their veracity.[27] The event may be the same but the narrative cannot be the same.[28] And yet, for all its limitations, the testimony of the witness is the *possibility* of relating,

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transmitting and repeating the historical event.[29] In the search for veracity, the historian can only turn to other witnesses of the event and to "other evidences."[30] Hegel himself had recognized in his lectures on the philosophy of history that the work of Herodotus and Thucydides could only be taken as an example of a history that had "more or less" been seen at firsthand.[31]

Responding to Bloch in the 1950s, Ricoeur had observed: "History is the realm of the inexact. This discovery does not discredit the historian's craft but actually justifies him."[32] As Carlo Ginzburg has suggested, to discern the true and the false, history also relies on a methodology of clues, traces and evidence.[33] The historical case and its veracity must be made: *it is not given*. Ginzburg himself has included Derrida in his wide-ranging attack on "postmodern scepticism" as a dangerous confusion of the difference between fictional narrative and historical evidence.[34] Ginzburg describes himself as a historian who uses "traces" to "narrate true stories" especially when these stories have "falsehoods as their object."[35] Ginzburg has said that his outspoken opposition to Hayden White's analysis of rhetorical tropes and quasi-fictional gestures in the historiographical tradition was prompted by Arnaldo Momigliano questioning his "friend" White's project.[36] With forceful clarity, Momigliano argues that archival research and primary evidence is still the proper domain of historiography.[37]

In my own view, which is closer to that of Dominick LaCapra, White's work recognizes a hitherto unaddressed problem in the history of historiography, namely the abiding influence of classical models of rhetoric and the difficult proximity between history and story, and this can be seen not as a simple rejection of the rigors of historical scholarship based on the highest possible veracity of evidence and good judgment, but his work also overemphasizes the role played by narration in the many duties of reliable historical scholarship.[38] As Martin Jay has noted, in contrast to Derrida, White is not interested in the *problem* of context as an attendant issue in thinking about the relation between history and narrative.[39]

I also think White is wrong when he argues in a piece from 2000 that "Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida" all "stressed the status of historiography as discourse rather than as discipline and featured the constitutive nature of historical discourse as against its claims to literal truthfulness."[40] Beyond the very problematic coupling of Foucault and Derrida

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on the question of history and the use of "discourse" as an umbrella term, I do not know which of Derrida's works White believes supports these claims. In 1976 White himself published an article, "The Absurdist Moment in Contemporary Literary Theory," that does not suggest a very detailed understanding of Derrida's thought.[41] In his extensive writings on the relation between philosophy and history, Ricoeur sees White as part of a "dynamic structuralism" and a "linguistic turn" in the 1960s and 1970s that was primarily concerned with the "style" of a historical work.[42] Ricoeur appreciates White's innovative attention to the relation between "formalism and historicity" but also criticizes White's inability to "draw a clear line between historical and fictional narrative."[43]

As Edward Baring suggests in his fine analysis of Derrida's 1964 seminar on history and truth, a proposed history of the lie creates a series of problems for history itself. Following Baring's summary, it appears that in the early 1960s Derrida placed the question of truth between *Geschichte* and *Historie*.[44] It is the veracity of the relation of the actual event that establishes the conditions for truth. As Derrida will suggest on a number of later occasions, it is a matter here of the "truth of the *relation*, and not of the thing *itself*."[45] This is the same distinction he makes in his 1991 paper on Foucault. The "thing *itself*" is of course a resonant term both for Kant (as something that is beyond our possible experience) and for Husserl (as something that can only be properly grasped through a phenomenological analysis).[46] As Baring rightly comments, if the truth now resides *in* the relation this indicates a difference that requires at once that the true relation is the same as the true event and that it is different, since it is only the relation and not the event itself.[47] Derrida goes on to argue that if the relation were absolutely true and indistinguishable from the true event—akin to Jorge Luis Borges's short narrative on a map that is the same size as the country that it represents—it would erase the difference between the true event and its accurate relation.[48] This tension or limit is registered in the word *l'histoire* describing both history and story. Thinking of Hegel, Derrida also argues that the historical narrative must to some extent negate its own ambitions to claim such an absolute difference.[49]

From this brief account of the 1964 seminar it appears that thirty years later in "History of the Lie" Derrida is *still interested* in the problem of the necessary difference between *Historie* as the truthful

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but always limited (or differential) relation of *Geschichte*. This problem is doubly compounded by asking about *Historie* and the *truthful* relation of a history (*Geschichte*) of lies. If there is no *Geschichte* without *Historie*, the limit of the historical narrative as a faithful or true account of the non-true determines the possibility of a history of lies. However, "History of the Lie" is more cautious in readdressing this problem. Is it possible, asks Derrida, to distinguish a history (*Geschichte*) of the lie from a history (*Historie*) of the lie? How can the non-true historical event be separated entirely from its historical narrative? Derrida introduces the question of the narrative (*le récit*) announcing, once again, that he is using this term to rethink the legacy of Hegel and Heidegger. How does "a true history" (*une histoire vraie*), he asks, order the narrative (*le récit*) of a history of lies?[50]

Derrida's emphasis on the risk of the false when addressing the true should not be taken as some easy dismissal of the truth or the vigilant need for veracity. For Derrida, the philosophical problem remains a wider ethical and political problem: one cannot rule out the possibility of the false in the midst of the claim to the truth. The relation between the true and the false remains a problem but this does not invalidate the truth of a historical event or the need to question, challenge and refute a "false" history, especially the forms that for vested interests deny that historical events of the past took place.

In addressing the problem of relying on the measure of "the more or less," Bloch argues in his account of the history of historical forgeries, deceptions and historiographical errors that "historical criticism" must rely on "the royal highway of the theory of probabilities" to find its way through to the most likely, most truthful account of events.[51] Writing in 1941–1942 in occupied France, Bloch had every reason to affirm "the right of disbelief."[52] For his activities with the French Resistance, Marc Bloch was murdered in 1944 by the occupying Germans.[53]

I myself was *a kind of witness*, a partial witness, to a certain period in Derrida's work attending, quite by chance, the launch in Paris of the book *Jacques Derrida* by Geoffrey Bennington, which included Derrida's "Circumfession," on 15 March 1991 at the brasserie La Coupole on the Boulevard Montparnasse. Earlier that day I had stumbled upon a reference to the launch in *Le Magazine littéraire*.[54] The launch itself was a strange affair, held in the underground ballroom of La Coupole, with recorded voices and actors reading the various voices in the text,

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including St. Augustine. What I didn't understand at the time was its significance. It was only years later that I appreciated how "Circumfession" interlaced in quite new ways in Derrida's work the problems of autobiography, memory, testimony and history. No doubt, there were already other witnesses that day that saw this work from an informed and authoritative vantage point; but it was also only after the publication of other autobiographical texts from this period, such as *Monolingualism of the Other*, which was published five years later, in September 1996, that one could appreciate the wider perspective of Derrida's interests in the early 1990s, including the relation of history to issues of context, memory and narrative.

So I was only *a kind of witness* in Paris in March 1991. From September 1992 to March 1993, I was again in Paris and attending Derrida's weekly seminar. It is only now that I can see that this was a remarkable moment in Derrida's intellectual history. In April 1992 he had given the first version of *Monolingualism of the Other* at a conference in America. In July 1992 he had participated in the ten-day conference at Cerisy-la-Salle devoted to his work and delivered the paper *Aporias* on 15 July 1992, his sixty-second birthday. In April 1993 in California he would deliver the lectures that would become the *Spectres of Marx*, which was published in October 1993. Of course, I had no idea that Derrida was most likely writing this important work while attending his seminars on the witness, responsibility and the secret, which included a session on the Rodney King (1965–2012) beatings in Los Angeles in March 1991.

A few weeks after I arrived in Paris in September 1992 *Points de suspension*, a collection of interviews with Derrida from 1976 to 1990, was published. Again, perhaps others saw at the time that this fertile period was the culmination of a whole series of works that had been published in the early 1990s, often with the editorial help of Elisabeth Weber, which brought to light much of Derrida's work from the mid 1970s, including his more obvious political writings. One can see many of these works, not least the appearance of his 1953–1954 thesis on Husserl, published in 1990, as a sorting of the archives at the time that Derrida reached his sixtieth birthday in July 1990. During my stay in Paris, "'To Do Justice to Freud': The History of Madness in the Age of Psychoanalysis" (September 1992), *The Gift of Death* (December

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1992), *Sauf le nom* (January 1993), *Passions* (January 1993) and *Khôra* (February 1993) were also published.[55]

When I bought *Le Magazine littéraire* on 15 March 1991 devoted to Derrida, marking the publication of "Circumfession" and full of many splendid photos of Derrida, I also had no idea that, as Benoît Peeters observes, this moment "marked a new stage in the reception of Derrida's work" in France.[56] When I saw a whole table of works in the Presses Universitaires de France bookshop in the Place de la Sorbonne by Derrida and devoted to Derrida, I assumed that was part of the normal treatment of Derrida in France (which was not the case). As Peeters tells us, this period was marked by Derrida's unsuccessful attempts to get a prestigious post at the Collège de France.[57] It was also from March to May 1992 that Derrida was awarded an honorary degree at Cambridge University, which was then forced to a rare second vote and much controversy, before the degree was conferred.[58] On 14 July 1992, the day before his sixty-second birthday, Derrida received the Légion d'honneur.[59] As a kind of witness, who sat each week in Derrida's seminar in 1992–1993, which was itself focused on *the problem of testimony*, I was an *eyewitness* but not a *witness* who could construct a simultaneous historical narrative to this time, either in Derrida's life or on his intellectual work.

3. HISTORY AND TRUTH

On 24 July 1995, Derrida gave a paper in Louvain that was provisionally entitled "Fiction and Testimony."[60] Revised and expanded, this paper was published as a book in 1996 under the title *Demeure—Maurice Blanchot*. As we have seen, Derrida had already devoted a book in the 1980s to the literary writings or quasi-fictional *récits* of Blanchot. *Parages* (1986) focuses on Blanchot's literary writings as a challenge to conventional literary narratives, theories and genres. Derrida's interest in the status of *le récit* is prompted by Blanchot's choice to publish a work in 1949 under the title "Un récit"—which was republished in 1973 as *La folie du jour* (*The Madness of the Day*)—that opens with a paragraph which is then partly recited again at the end of the work with the narrator concluding: "I should have realized that I was incapable of composing an account [*récit*] of these events. I had lost the sense of the

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story [*l'histoire*]." Blanchot's "Un récit" ends: "An account [*récit*]? No, no account, nevermore."[61] For Derrida, Blanchot's literary fictions register the question of the *récit* itself as something that is at once external and internal to the work itself and entangled with the event that it relates. As Derrida observes, in Blanchot's literary work "it is thus impossible to decide whether an event, account, account of event, or event of accounting took place."[62]

I have emphasised that *Parages* is concerned with Blanchot's *literary* works because Derrida's 1995 lecture was prompted by the recent publication of Blanchot's short work, *L'instant de ma mort*. As Derrida himself remarks, this late work by Blanchot is a different kind of *récit*. This *récit* tells what might be the true narrative or the elaborate interweaving of an autobiographical testament and heightened fiction of an event in France during World War II when the narrator—Blanchot—was put up before a firing squad to be executed by the Germans and saved at last moment from being shot by a chance event. But it is different from the earlier literary works because its context or *mi-lieu* is different: this *récit* stands at once inside and outside of the work *and* it also stands as testament to *a historical event that is dated* and confirmed as a historical event in other works and in the historical testament of others.

As Christophe Bidnet, a biographer of Blanchot, states, the narrative in *L'instant de ma mort* is most likely an authentic account of Blanchot's own experience on 20 July 1944 when he was nearly killed while working with the French Resistance.[63] At the same time, this narrative has a distinguished pedigree in the history of literature, not least Dostoyevsky's mock execution in 1849.[64] This is not a matter of a fiction in the history of literature, but of a historical event in the life of a writer and literary critic in the history of literature. Blanchot's work is therefore at once the narrative of an actual historical event and a carefully wrought literary fiction.[65] As Derrida notes, *le récit* is given in the third person.[66] At the same time, Derrida adds, one of the things that fiction can do here is to enable the narrator to become "the witness *for* the witness."[67]

In his reading of Blanchot's *récit*, Derrida is interested primarily in "the relations between fiction and autobiographical truth."[68] As the witness (*le témoin*) promises "to *make truth*" (*de faire la vérité*) and often calls upon "faith without proof," testimony always has a relation to "the *possibility* at least of fiction, perjury and lie."[69] As Derrida explained in

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a 1993 interview, testimony can be "corroborated" by evidence, by the "technical archive," but evidence can never "replace" testimony.[70] Testimony is "absolutely heterogeneous" to evidence because it is structured by "faith, belief, sworn faith, [and] the pledge to tell the truth."[71] In this sense, as Derrida observes in his lecture on Blanchot, testimony cannot avoid being "haunted" by "the possibility" of literature.[72] Between truth and falsehood, it marks a "limit" that is at once "a chance and a threat."[73] This limit also informs false testimony, since it can only be registered *as* testimony if it is understood and presented in a form that is not a fiction, a story or a lie.[74] For a literary fiction, on the other hand, to avoid the charge of false testimony it must present itself openly and in public *as* a story.[75] For Derrida, Blanchot's *récit* engages with the problem of this "limit" that separates and links testimony and fiction.[76]

Derrida also relates this limit between testimony and fiction to the wider issue of the witness—we can think of the witness of the historical event in Hegel's philosophy of history that we started with, as well being myself a kind of witness to Derrida's 1992–1993 seminar on testimony—that must be the unique, irreplaceable and singular witness and, at the same time, be taken as an exemplary witness, as a universally understood instance of relating and sharing the truth.[77] For the witness of a historical event to be at once "singular *and* universal, singular *and* universalizable" testimony has to be experienced only once *and* to be repeated once again, to be communicable and intelligible for others.[78] With this "universalizable singularity," the event can have a narrative that is historical, the event *of* the past can be related to others, to those who live today and who will live tomorrow.[79]

For Derrida, this relation also exposes testimony to the unavoidable structures of idealization, of an ideality that also gives itself to the other, to a repetition that maintains the same as the same and ensures that the same can never be identical to itself.[80] This is, once again, the "chance" and "menace" for all testimony. The relation, the narration, the narrative or *récit* registers this limit, this possibility for truth and this risk for something less than the truth, for other truths. In "History of the Lie" Derrida argues that if there can be a truthful history of the lie it cannot be taken as a history of error but rather as a history "of false witness and of perjury."[81] Derrida's 1994–1995 seminar was devoted to a question that remains as urgent today—in March 2018—as it was in the mid

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1990s. "Is there," he asks, "practically and theoretically, a prevalent concept of the lie in our culture?"[82] In response, he argues that there must be a heightened awareness of the "performative dimension that *makes the truth*" in the name of a political construction of opportune and often mendacious legal and public truths.[83]

Derrida also insists that a proposed "history of the lie" would have to distinguish between "the history of the concept of the lie" and "a history of a culture that affect the practice of the lie."[84] A history of the lie therefore entails an engagement with "a practical, social, political, juridical [and] technical historicity."[85] For Derrida, this emphasis on a "practical" historicity of the lie includes recognition of the relation between the historical event and the event of its narration. Derrida addresses the relation between *Historie* and *Geschichte* in "History of the Lie" *after* he makes this distinction between the concept of the history of the lie and a practical historicity of the lie.

The recognition of this context can help us to see the fifth "event" that I quoted earlier with a bit more clarity. Derrida asks in "History of the Lie":

> Will it ever be possible to distinguish among the following *three things*, namely: (1) a history (*Historie*) of the concept of the lie, (2) a history (*Geschichte*) of the lie, made up of all the events that have happened *to the* lie or *by way of* the lie and, finally, (3) a true history that orders the narrative (*Historie*, *historia rerum gestarum*) of these lies or of the lie in general? How is one to dissociate or alternate these three tasks?[86]

Here, *Historie* addresses the "concept" of the lie, which requires an engagement with the history of philosophy, the status of trans-historical concepts and the "theoretical" problem of the lie in general. *Geschichte*, in contrast, addresses varied instances of the lie in the *history* of the lie, the status of specific historical contexts or *mi-lieus*, "singular and novel historical situations" and "the practical" problem of the lie.[87]

For Derrida, these two aspects or gestures of what we can call a deconstructive "history of the lie" can each be distinguished *and* are entangled together. This can be seen in his subsequent readings of Kant, Alexandre Koyré (1892–1964), Hannah Arendt (1906–1975) and his refutation of a historically incorrect charge by Tony Judt (1948–2010) that Derrida himself had not publically called for the

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French government to acknowledge that the arrest and deportation of French Jews in 1942 was undertaken on the authority of the French Vichy government itself.[88] It is by raising the problem of how these "tasks" can be alternated, of the relation and order between these three "tasks" in a "history," that Derrida gives the *event* of the narrative of "a true history" a critical place in responding to the historical event. For Derrida, one does not just attempt "to tell this history," one also attempts to "listen" to this history, to respond.[89]

As Marc Bloch remarked, for the historian the traces of the past—its documents and detritus—are often "witnesses in spite of themselves."[90] For Bloch, these inadvertent witnesses are the promise of the historian's impartiality, of history as *the promise of a witness against false witness*.[91] A witness cannot always hope to control his or her own testimony, especially as it becomes a historical narrative of a historical event. This is both a profound danger for recording "with integrity, with truth" the worst crimes of the past—as we have seen, in speaking about the *Shoah* in the late 1980s Derrida had warned against the possibility of "historiographical perversion" and "the logic of revisionism"—and the possibility for historians to see more and to see beyond what the witness sees in his or her own narrative.[92] For the historian, it is the possibility of the loss of truth in the name of a historical truth. As Derrida observes in a late paper on Paul Celan, no one can or should bear witness in the place of another; and yet one can and should bear witness before, in front of, another.[93] The historian, like a judge, is not a witness among other witnesses, but he or she is a witness to the *testimony* of others.[94] For Derrida, "the historian also remains a witness, a witness of a witness."[95]

4. A HISTORICAL CONCEPT

In concluding this book, I would argue that from Derrida's earliest writings in the 1960s on the limitations of ahistoricism and trans-historical idealities, the costs of a Hegelian philosophy of history and the need for a necessary excess in relation to historical determinism, to his careful examination in the mid 1960s of the limits and politics of a historicity of Dasein and history of Being and his strategic use in the early 1970s of *ex-appropriation*, Derrida's fifty years of work give us if not an estab-

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lished framework for a philosophy of history then at least a provocative *history* of philosophical engagement with the problem of history in the twentieth century. I have argued that this history can also be seen as the possibility of a historiography, notably through Derrida's ongoing interest in the problems of context, memory and narrative as problems of history.

As Derrida observed, in the history of philosophy "philosophers continually outdo one another in advocating ahistoricism."[96] There is no memory in Descartes or Kant, Hegel advocates history but rejects empiricism and both Plato and Heidegger argue that philosophy must stop "telling stories" (*raconteur des histoires*).[97] Derrida's persistent interest in context, memory and narrative can be seen in a remarkable range of various and varied works from the mid 1970s to the mid 1990s that gesture to an *ongoing investigation* into the limits and possibilities of a different interaction between philosophy and history.

At the same time, one must keep in mind Derrida's own repeated insistence that deconstruction cannot be taken as either yet another "philosophy" nor simply as part of the "history of philosophy." As he remarks in 1990, deconstruction responds to a thinking that is "faithful to an affirmation whose responsibility places it *before* [*devant*] philosophy but also always *before* [*avant*] there was philosophy, thus short of and beyond philosophy."[98] In my own view, for this very reason Derrida's work does constitute a unique *philosophical* vantage point on the problems of history. It is to be celebrated as a philosophy of history.

On occasion, Derrida follows Ricoeur and speaks of something akin to the "history of historians."[99] This could suggest a monolithic, homogenous notion of history as seen from the perspective of two philosophers. But Derrida also shows a lifetime of thought in trying to understand a more nuanced relation between philosophy and history. The critical point is the history *remained* a problem. Derrida always engaged with "the question of the history of concepts" as a question of history.[100] His work can be understood as a step towards a philosophy of history that challenges the customary external borders and limits of philosophy and still focuses on the history of philosophy.

At the same time, one should not underestimate Derrida's own insistence that deconstruction *resists* the sway of philosophy and history. As he said to Maurizio Ferraris on 25 May 1994, where there is a philosophy of history that gathers, foresees and prepares in advance, "there is

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no longer history."[101] In the name of history, Derrida's philosophical work resists this powerful presumption. The limit of a traditional philosophy of history is found in the imperative in deconstruction to register "*what happens*" as the possibility of theoretical–practical events that trouble and exceed anticipated or programmed narratives.[102] Deconstruction could then be seen as merely a gesture of resistance. But this book has argued that these strategies also constitute a different kind of philosophy of history, not least because Derrida's own work turns to the problem of the relation between "*what happens*" and context, memory and narrative. It is possible to have a philosophy of history that lets history register the unforeseen, the improbable and even the impossible.

Nonetheless, Derrida also said to Maurizo Ferraris that while he believed that "in effect all philosophers are historians and speculative thinkers," he still needed to reiterate that deconstruction also resists the fulsome demands of history and the historian.[103] There are limits and impasses in Derrida's thought for the historian. As Derrida remarks: "In my own case, I'd say that I am incapable of distinguishing in what I do between the taking into account of the history of philosophy and a gesture that is not purely and simply historical. The concept of deconstruction is a historical concept, and at the same time it puts into question the concepts of historicity, of the history of truth."[104] There will always be significant aspects of Derrida's thought that will not work for historiography. But this resistance is not incompatible with recognizing a distinctive and perhaps limited historiography that emerges from a fifty-year attempt to rethink the boundaries and histories of philosophy.

One could see Derrida's work as the *cautious* imperative for a new kind of historiography, for a deconstructive historiography that recognizes the traditions and protocols of historical writing and yet calls for other vantage points, new critical questions and new strategies of resistance that come from rethinking philosophy and history together. But history still remains a problem.

NOTES

1. *Demeure*, 27.
2. "Cogito and the History of Madness," 57.

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3. “Cogito and the History of Madness,” 57–8; “Cogito et histoire de la folie,” 88.

4. “Cogito and the History of Madness,” 58.

5. Jacques Derrida, *Geneses, Genealogies, Genres, and Genius: The Secrets of the Archive*, trans. Beverley Bie Brachic (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 36–37; *Genèses, généalogies, genres et le génie: Les secrets de l'archive* (Paris: Galilée, 2003), 47.

6. “‘Le Parjure, Perhaps,” 182.

7. “‘Le Parjure,’ Perhaps,” 182.

8. “‘Le Parjure,’ Perhaps,” 183; *Le parjure, peut-être* (“*Brusques sautés de syntaxe*”) (Paris: Galilée, 2017), 69.

9. “‘Le Parjure,’ Perhaps,” 183; *Le parjure, peut-être*, 69–70.

10. “‘To Do Justice to Freud,’” 75.

11. *The History of Madness*, ix, x.

12. *The History of Madness*, 550–74.

13. “‘To Do Justice to Freud,’” 75; “‘Être juste avec Freud’: L'histoire de la folie à l'âge de la psychanalyse,” in *Résistances—de la psychoanalyse* (Paris: Galilée, 1996), 89–146: 99.

14. “‘To Do Justice to Freud,’” 75–76; “‘Être juste avec Freud’,” 99. Translation modified.

15. “‘To Do Justice to Freud,’” 77, 79, 72.

16. “‘To Do Justice to Freud,’” 77.

17. “‘To Do Justice to Freud,’” 78.

18. “‘To Do Justice to Freud,’” 109.

19. “‘To Do Justice to Freud,’” 79–80.

20. *Memoires*, 10; *Memoires*, 33 [French text].

21. *Memoires*, 11.

22. *The Gift of Death*, 36.

23. *Aporias*, 53. Translation modified.

24. *Echographies of Television*, 93.

25. *The Historian's Craft*, 84.

26. *The Historian's Craft*, 141.

27. *The Historian's Craft*, 95–96.

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29. *The Historian's Craft*, 46–47.

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31. *Introduction to The Philosophy of History*, 4.

32. “The History of Philosophy and Historicity,” 76.

33. Carlo Ginzburg, *Threads and Trace: True False Fictive*, trans. Anne C. Tedeschi and John Tedeschi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

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45. *"Ne me raconte plus d'histoires,"* 181.

46. *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology*, 34–37.

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49. *"Ne me raconte plus d'histoires,"* 181.

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60. *Demeure*, 111 n. 1.

61. "Law of Genre," 69. I have taken the translation of the passages from Blanchot from Derrida's article. See also Maurice Blanchot, *Madness of the Day*, trans. Lydia Davis (New York: Station Hill, 1985).

62. "Law of Genre," 71.

63. *Demeure*, 52. Christophe Bident, *Maurice Blanchot—Partenaire invisible: Essai biographique* (Paris: Champ Vallon, 1998), 228–32.

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65. *Demeure*, 53.

66. *Demeure*, 53–54.

67. *Demeure*, 61.

68. *Demeure*, 15.

69. *Demeure*, 27, 49; *Demeure—Maurice Blanchot* (Paris: Galilée, 1998), 28. Translation modified.

70. *Echographies of Television*, 94.

71. *Echographies of Television*, 94.

72. *Demeure*, 30.

73. *Demeure*, 30.

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80. *Demeure*, 41–42.
81. "History of the Lie," 31. See also *The Politics of Friendship*, 274–75.
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86. "History of the Lie," 38; "Histoire du mensonge," 500.
87. "History of the Lie," 59. On memory and the archive see also 52, 58.
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94. "Poetics and Politics of Witnessing," 89.
95. "Poetics and Politics of Witnessing," 90.
96. *A Taste for the Secret*, 66.
97. *A Taste for the Secret*, 66; *Le goût du secret*, 79. Translation modified.
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