

**The Death and Return of the Author**



This thesis proposes that the death of the author is neither a desirable, nor properly attainable goal of criticism, and that the concept of the author remained profoundly active even - and especially - as its disappearance was being articulated.

As the phrase implies, the death of the author is seen to repeat the Nietzschean deicide. In Barthes, the idea of the author is explicitly connected to that of God, for Foucault and Derrida, to that of the transcendental subject of knowledge. Nowhere, however, is any demonstration forwarded as to why we must conceive author, transcendental subject, and divinity as specifications of the same subject, and therefore implicated in a common closure. Always and everywhere, the death of the author proceeds on the basis of an idealized conception of authorship.

In practical terms, such are the pressures exerted upon critical discourse by the death of the author that the return of the author is implied from the outset. Barthes will insist that the authorial subject is constituted in and through language, whilst also recommending that we should regard certain authors as "founders of languages". With Foucault, the requisite trans-individuality of archaeology is subverted by the absolutely privileged, meta-historical status it bestows upon Nietzsche. Derrida's history of logocentrism denies the author precisely because of the exorbitant recourse it must make to Rousseau as the single systematized instance of an age of logocentric metaphysics.

The placement of the author reflects the experience of these critics in writing their texts. In Barthes, the return of the author is inseparable from his own autobiographical project; with Foucault, it relates to the rejection of the transcendental detachment of the archaeologist in favour of the engaged subjectivity of the genealogist; in Derrida, authorial reinscription coincides with his attempt to move beyond critical reading toward autobiographical literature. With hindsight, it appears that it is the becoming-author of the critic that is actually at issue.

However, this revisionary phase has been largely neglected, and Barthes, Foucault and Derrida are continually invoked to underwrite critical resistance to the author. From the Russian Formalists onward, literary theory has shown itself incapable of accommodating authorial subjectivity. As such, the question of the author increasingly presents itself as the question of theory, of its adequacy as a descriptive science of literature and discourse in general.

**The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism  
and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida**

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## Introduction

*A damsel with a dulcimer  
In a vision once I saw:  
It was an Abyssinian maid;  
And on her dulcimer she played,  
Singing of Mount Abora.  
Could I revive within me  
Her symphony and song,  
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,  
That with music loud and long,  
I would build that dome in air,  
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!  
And all who heard should see them there,  
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!  
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!  
Weave a circle round him thrice,  
And close your eyes with holy dread,  
For he on honey-dew hath fed,  
And drunk the milk of Paradise.*

Samuel Taylor Coleridge<sup>1</sup>

In the *Timaeus*, Plato distinguishes between the *eon* or primary agent of creation, and the demiurge, the secondary, executant agent.<sup>2</sup> Within romanticism these two roles are affirmed of the poet, often simultaneously. A transcendent, supernal privilege is accorded to the poetic imagination, and yet, whilst the poet is conceived as a free standing creative potency, romanticism also insists that the imagination is itself the product of other forces; the idea of poetic transcendence is allied with the gift of a supreme or divine charisma. In ordinary discourse we have little or no difficulty with the idea of an inspired creator, indeed the notions of inspiration and creative genius are usually held to be interlocked and mutually dependent. However, perused to any depth, these concepts become difficult to reconcile. The poet clearly

cannot be the absolute creator of his work, and a medium for otherly voices: if not wholly one or the other, he must be partially the creator of the poem, and partially the recipient of another language. Like the notion of influence, an aesthetic of inspiration at once acknowledges the necessity and actuality of the author, but devolves some of the authority for the work away from its author, and onto prior causes.

"Kubla Khan" dramatizes this uncertainty. Part of the enduring fascination of Coleridge's poem resides in the fact that it is of mysterious authorship. But the uncertainty is not that of the relatively simpler case of a work such as the *Odyssey* where we are unable to furnish the empirical identity of its writer(s). Rather the problem of "Kubla Khan" is that we do not know if it is properly attributable to the author through whose agency it emerged. We have it on Coleridge's testimony that, after having taken a few grains of opium:

The Author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence, that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as *things*, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort.<sup>3</sup>

The poem arrives without any conscious will or imagination on the part of the author, it would seem to be an instance of what we nowadays call an authorless text. Yet from such inspiration - presented here in its most extreme form - the romantics did not call into question the power and necessity of imagination. "Kubla Khan" itself closes by hearkening for a state whereby the poet can reclaim control over his poem, a state of energy and inspiration mastered, for the reconciliation of the form-giving Apollonian artist with the ecstatic transport of the Dionysian Muse. The poet is conceived as both a figure of more than capable imagination, a transcendent creator of

the work and recreator of the world of the senses, and as an avatar of the absolute, the divine writing. Romanticism will therefore speak, without apparent contradiction, about afflatus and the "shaping spirit of imagination", about poetry as inspiration and poetry as creation. The view of the poet moves productively, and without resolution between these cosmogonies; the subject and his alterity are not set in opposition by the act of creation. Even when inspired to the extent that the poem thoroughly writes itself through the poet, the poet remains a celebrated, shamanistic figure, more than man, less than god, like the ancient heroes through whom the great destinies spoke. The hiatus between self and other, so characteristic of twentieth century thought, had yet to open in the manner of profound crisis within romantic discourse.<sup>4</sup>

In the wake of romanticism, two sharply distinct conceptions of the genesis and genealogy of the poetic text grew out of the conceptions of author as creator and author as privileged medium. In nineteenth century critical orthodoxy, the author or poet was widely regarded as the transcendental source of the work. A mixed and rhapsodic discourse was practiced which sought to retrace the work to its wellsprings in the biography and psyche of the poet, a practice which - curiously - sought therein to explain and laud the immortal genius of the poet. The idea of other voices speaking through the poet was downplayed, literary meaning being conceived not as belonging to the public domain, but rather to the interiority of individual consciousness. However, amongst French writers in the second half of the century, the impact of romanticism was of a very different order, setting in motion a movement in thought which has culminated in the contemporary notion of the death of the author.

As is well known, due to the enormous wealth of its classical tradition, French thought did not experience romanticism with anything like the in-

tensity or immediacy of its eruption in England and Germany. Indeed, by the time French romanticism began to produce works of lasting value, it had essentially become post-romantic, symbolist. The figure of Baudelaire here stands at the crossing, for whilst he continued to extol the virtues of imagination, in his work far greater stress is laid upon the ideal of the author as the *point de passage* through which other forces articulate themselves. Later symbolists, Rimbaud and - in particular - Mallarmé, came to view the poetic act as one in which the poet submits more or less entirely to energies and dictates beyond his conscious control. For Mallarmé, as for the Coleridge of "Kubla Khan", the poem simply comes upon the poet, it does not discover its origin in the conscious mind of its creator, nor does it remain there. The poem is the eloquent voice of an Otherness which proceeds any will or design on the part of its author. The poet exists simply that the poem be written through him as agency. However, instead of attributing this transport or possession to ideas of the absolute, of the Muse or of divinity, Mallarmé sought this principle of alterity in the very resource of writing itself - language:

The pure work implies the disappearance of the poet-speaker who yields the initiative to words animated by the inequality revealed in their collision with one another; they illuminate one another and pass like a trail of fire over precious stones, replacing the audible breathing of earlier lyrical verse or the exalted personality which directed the phrase.

The structure of a book of verse must arise throughout from internal necessity - in this way both chance and the author will be excluded ... some symmetry, which will arise from the relation of lines within the poem and poems within the volume, will reach out beyond the volume to other poets who will themselves inscribe on spiritual space the expanding paraph of genius, anonymous and perfect like a work of art.<sup>5</sup>

A numinous order of language is supposed, a belief in the power of language to organize and orchestrate itself without any subjective intervention whatsoever. Poetry begins in an act of textual dispossession; a crystalline, austere-ly dispassionate writing is liberated which thenceforth tells only of its own

unfolding intricacies. Unleashed from subjective, expressive or mimetic obligations, language wells its own story, cleansed of all referentiality or empirical concern. The sublime origin of literature which the romantics sought alternately in imagination, or in the Muse, is now discovered within language itself, freed from its author. Following upon Mallarmé, this theme of surrendering authorial control to the vagaries and vicissitudes of language unmediated has been a recurrent theme within French literature:

In France, Mallarmé was doubtless the first to see and foresee in its full extent the necessity to substitute language itself for the person who until then had been supposed to be its owner. For him, for us too, it is language which speaks, not the author; to write is, through a prerequisite impersonality ... to reach that point where only language acts, "performs", and not "me". Mallarmé's entire poetics consists in suppressing the author in the interests of writing (which is, as will be seen, to restore the place of the reader). Valéry ... never stopped calling into question and deriding the Author; he stressed the linguistic and, as it were, "hazardous" nature of his activity, and throughout his prose works he militated in favour of the essentially verbal condition of literature, in the face of which all recourse to the interiority of the writer seemed to him pure superstition. Proust ... was visibly concerned with the task of inexorably blurring, by an extreme subtilization, the relation between the writer and his characters ... Lastly, to go no further than this prehistory of modernity, Surrealism ... contributed to the desacralization of the image of the Author by ceaselessly recommending the abrupt disappointment of expectations of meaning ... by entrusting the hand with the task of writing as quickly as possible what the head itself is unaware of (automatic writing), by accepting the principle and the experience of several people writing together.<sup>6</sup>

The essay from which this citation is drawn - Roland Barthes's "The Death of the Author" - is quite consciously tendered as the culmination of this line of thought. As Barthes strongly implies throughout his monogram, French thought in the 1960s had finally answered the question as to who or what writes the text. Drawing upon a daunting variety of pre-texts - the structural linguistics of Saussure, the cultural anthropology of Lévi-Strauss, Jacques Lacan's restructuring of the Freudian unconscious around language, Heideggerian ontology, amongst others - French theory, in its transition from struc-

turalism to poststructuralism,<sup>7</sup> was now in a position to declare the removal of the author not only as an aesthetic ideal but as the truth of writing. As we notice from Barthes's list of precursors, authorial purgation had been primarily mooted by writers and artists, and whilst Mallarmé and Valéry had produced a considerable amount of critical prose to developing a language-centred approach to literature, such deauthorization remained essentially marginal to the critical tradition, being generally treated as a form of literary or aestheticist experimentation with no real significance for the ways in which we read texts. However, in the France of the 1960s this movement against the author had gained sufficient impetus for criticism to declare the necessary and inevitable disappearance of the author from literature and from discourse in general. Opening "The Death of the Author", Barthes writes:

In his story *Sarrasine* Balzac, describing a castrato disguised as a woman, writes the following sentence: "*This was woman herself, with her sudden fears, her irrational whims, her instinctive worries, her impetuous boldness, her fussings, and her delicious sensibility.*" Who is speaking thus? Is it the hero of the story bent on remaining ignorant of the castrato hidden beneath the woman? Is it Balzac the individual, furnished by his personal experience with a philosophy of Woman? Is it Balzac the author professing "literary" ideas on femininity? Is it Universal Wisdom? Romantic psychology? We shall never know, for the good reason that writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin. Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing.<sup>8</sup>

What was for Mallarmé a willed act of authorial disengagement put to the service a specifically literary, specifically poetic purity of language, has become an anonymity that inheres in the very existence and possibility of writing in all its modes. We have departed from the realm of an aestheticism which measures itself against standards of ideal poetic value, and have come to make the much stronger claim that the writer has always already disappeared or departed from language itself. Whether registered in this lapidary

Barthesian manner, or in Derrida's painstaking philosophical attempts to demonstrate that all speech, all writing is a ceaseless braiding of differences wherein no unitary subjectivity can maintain its identity, or in Foucauldian terms as a highly intricate pre-determination of discursive matrices, language is fundamentally conceived as the "destroyer of all subject".<sup>9</sup> An era of theory is underway which takes as its first and last principle the Heideggerian contention that "Language speaks, not man".<sup>10</sup>

This removal of the subject from the space of language is seen to extend right across the field of the human sciences, and to call into question the very idea that man himself knows anything. For should it be, as the structuralists and poststructuralists insist, that all thought proceeds necessarily by way and by virtue of language, then the absence of the subject from language perforce translates into the absence of the subject or consciousness from knowledge. If knowledge itself, or what we take to be knowledge, is entirely intra-discursive, and if, as it is claimed, the subject has no anchorage within discourse, then man as the subject of knowledge is thoroughly displaced and dislodged. Cognition and consciousness arise as intralinguistic effects or metaphors, contingent by-products, as it were, of a linguistic order that has evolved for thousands of years before any subject comes to speak. Man can no longer be conceived as the subject of his works, for to be the subject of a text, or of knowledge is to assume a post ideally exterior to language. There can thus be no such thing as subjectivity whilst the subject or author - as has classically been the case - is conceived as prior to a language which exists as an entirely transparent vehicle or medium for his uses, his designs. As Foucault predicts, man as the subject and object of his own knowledge "is in the process of perishing as the being of language continues to shine ever brighter upon our horizon".<sup>11</sup> The idea of authorial absence thereby connects with the epistemological upheaval in the Western *episteme* which the

theorists of the 1960s believed to be underway in the linguistic deconstruction of subject-centred philosophies. Where thought had registered man, or the subject as the necessary beginning and end of knowledge, knowledge and the subject are seen to be fictive emanations of a language and a writing which endlessly subvert all attempts by the human agent to assert any degree of mastery or control over their workings.

Clearly, this movement is more than a simple extension or development of earlier literary-critical opposition to the author. Whilst the New Critical and Russian Formalist projects sought to remove the author in the interests of exclusively literary concerns, the refusal amongst structuralists and poststructuralists to strictly demarcate modes of writing, their anti-formalist insistence on a broad field of intertextuality which the discourses of literature, philosophy, and science traverse on an equal footing, means that the removal of the authorial subject is no longer to be retained simply as a point of intradisciplinary methodology. Furthermore, as enounced by Barthes, Foucault and Derrida, the removal of the author is not to be seen as a strategy, a means toward an end, but as a primary truth claim in itself. Within Russian Formalism and the New Criticism, anti-authorialism appeared as a reaction to biographical positivism. In order to establish a coherent field of critical study, it was necessary to extricate the literary object from the mass of biographical and psychological speculation within which it had been submerged in the homespun eclecticism of nineteenth century criticism. Consequently, the question of the author - along with that of the extratextual referent in general (history, society, the world) - was sidelined or bracketed as the preliminary step toward evolving a formal, internal and rhetorical approach to the text. The exclusion of the author functioned quite simply as an exclusion, a methodological gambit within a system which did not pose the questions of the origins and determinants of the text.

The *death or disappearance* of the author was not at issue but rather the incompatibility of authorial categories with immanent analyses.

Within the discourse of the death of the author, however, it is not enough to exclude the author but to recognize that the author has always been absent, that there never could be an author in the first place. Barthes, Foucault and Derrida thus take anti-authorialism to the extreme of promoting authorial exclusion from a methodological prescription to an ontological statement about the very essence of discourse itself. The appearance of writing is *a priori* identifiable with the disappearance of the author: "As soon as a fact is *narrated* no longer with a view to acting directly on reality but intransitively, that is to say, finally outside of any function other than that of the very practice of the symbol itself, this disconnection occurs, the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins."<sup>12</sup> Likewise, Foucault claims that in fabricating a text an individual can do no more and no less than create a space into which the writing subject continually disappears. The "mark of the writer", he contends, "is reduced to nothing more than the singularity of his absence; he must assume the role of the dead man in the game of writing".<sup>13</sup> Such contentions mark a considerable advance on formalist positions which generally seek only to remove the author in the offices of increasing refinement of critical apparatuses for addressing the text on an internal plane. Within modern French theory, however, so far from functioning as a working methodological hypothesis, the absence or demise of the author is seen as "indubitably the *proof* of writing"<sup>14</sup> in all its manifestations:

Leaving aside literature itself (such distinctions really becoming invalid) ... the whole of the enunciation is an empty process, functioning perfectly without there being any need for it to be filled with the persons of the interlocutors. Linguistically, the author is never more than the instance writing, just as *I* is nothing other than the instance saying *I*: language knows a "subject" not a "person", and this subject, empty

outside of the very enunciation which defines it, suffices to make language 'hold together', suffices, that is to say, to exhaust it.<sup>15</sup>

Statements of this cast - characteristically of modern anti-authorialism - are not made in a conventionally expository or discursive framework. What is presented is not offered as though it were open to question. The reader is asked to either accept the truth of what is being said, as no less than a fact of writing, or to turn back nostalgically upon a humanism no longer tenable within this age of theory. And such indeed has been the general pattern of responses to the annunciation of the author's death. On the one hand, authorial disappearance has been accepted by structuralist and poststructuralist critics almost as an article of faith. Barthes, Foucault and Derrida are invoked as though - individually or concertedly - they have indeed "proved" the necessary decease of the author. Recourse to the author is deemed palaeocritical, the sanctuary of an establishment hearkening back to an illusory innocence of criticism before contemporary theorists uncovered the absence of human and expressive qualities in the literary text. On the other hand, such defences as have been made of the author have tended to rest upon a fundamentally unargued humanist objection to the reduction of literature to an impersonal play of signification.<sup>16</sup> In more or less moralistic cadences, the idea of the death of the author is dismissed as having no serious claim upon our attention, being best accounted for as yet another conceit of a continental avant-gardism which delights in mystificatory paradox. Between these two positions - which play somewhat conveniently into one another's hands - there is little or no compromise or cogent debate, neither side showing itself prepared to argue or justify its root presuppositions. The problem of the author is therefore sustained as a source of deep controversy, but it does not surface as the site of common discussion, and the chimerical body of texts which constitutes the discourse of the death of the author is not

analysed or interrogated either by its partisans or detractors. The result of which is that the author-question has been largely lost in the perpetuation of this divide.

What is proposed here, by contrast, is a close reading of anti-authorial discourses, an inquiry into how authorial absence is elaborated as a point of theory, and how it is put to practice as a guiding principle of interpretation and critical histories. On the basis of what conceptual structures is the death of the author articulated? What reasons are proffered such that we might be led to see authorial absence as the precondition of discourse? How does the theme of the death of the author intersect with that of the death of subjectivity in general? What implications does the death of the author have for the discourses within which it is promulgated? Who or what speaks in the discourse of the death of the author? How can there be readers without there being writers? These are the questions which will concern us here, questions whose import cannot be circumvented for the question of the author prescribes not only the ways in which we theorize, but the ways in which we read, and in which we do or do not write. The primary aim of this thesis is therefore to open the texts in which the death of the author receives its definitive formulations, beginning with the work of Roland Barthes whose essay "The Death of the Author" has been the single most influential meditation on the question of authorship in modern times.

## Chapter One

# The Birth Of The Reader

*Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world  
Like a Colossus; and we petty men  
Walk under his huge legs, and peep about  
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.*

William Shakespeare<sup>1</sup>

It is the exclusion of the author rather than his death that is to be found in *On Racine* and *Criticism and Truth*.<sup>2</sup> Barthes called for the displacement of the author not as a value in itself, but as the inaugural move toward the development of a more historical and scientific approach to the study of literature. As such it remains within an inductionist itinerary; the author question is placed within parentheses so as to facilitate the emergence of an experimental methodology. The broader questions of literary causality and epistemology are thereby shifted to focus on an epistemology of the text itself. As *Criticism and Truth* put it: "... there cannot be a science of Dante, Shakespeare or Racine but only a science of discourse".<sup>3</sup> In "The Death of the Author", however, Barthes is no longer content to see the removal of the author as a means to an end, a strategy, but as a property of discourse itself: "The removal of the Author (one could talk here with Brecht of a veritable 'distancing', the Author diminishing like a figurine at the far end of the literary stage) is not merely an historical fact or an act of writing; it utterly transforms the modern text (or - which is the same thing - the text is henceforth made and read in such a way that at all levels its author is absent)."<sup>4</sup>

As we have said, the vatic and hortatory nature of such statements, their very weight and magnitude, have resulted in "The Death of the Author" becoming the centre of a controversy. What it has not become, though, is the centre of a debate or discussion. On the one hand its dictates have been accepted unreflectively, numerous texts appearing since "The Death of the Author" which adduce its thesis as though within seven pages it had been 'proved'.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, and perhaps more unfortunately, Barthes's essay has seldom provoked more than derisory dismissal from its opponents. Critics who have passionately contested its thesis have rarely so much as disturbed its smooth surface. Many, many readers have been convinced that - even taken on the level of its own premises - "The Death of the Author" is quite *wrong* and yet have been stymied by their inability to say quite *why*. Little is gained, for instance, when a critic writes: "As Barthes makes explicit, his attack on the author is an attack on reason itself; and it is at least consistent that his attack is irrational"<sup>6</sup>. And still less is to be achieved by the *argumentum ad hominem* which is doubly self-defeating in a discussion of authorship since it implicates itself in the second fallacy of begging the question. Nevertheless, so it is said. A review of Malcolm Bradbury's *Mensonge* puts the case thus:

The comedy has its basis in one of the loonier tenets of Deconstruction - that we do not control language: language (that impersonal, endless play of signifiers) controls us. It (rather than writers) writes books. But, though Deconstructionists may confidently proclaim the Death of the Author, they have never evinced much difficulty in reconciling this view with the scooping up of advances and royalty cheques made out to them personally, not (as you might logically suppose) to the English or French language. When it suits them, it seems, the Author turns out not to be an absolute goner, but just someone on the critical list.<sup>7</sup>

Even William Gass is not above taking such a passing pot-shot: "Popular wisdom warns us that we frequently substitute the wish for the deed, and when, in 1968, Roland Barthes announced the death of the author, he was actual-

ly calling for it. Nor did Roland Barthes himself sign up for suicide, but wrote his way into the College of France where he performed *volte-faces* for an admiring audience."<sup>8</sup> The essay of Gass's that this commences (likewise called "The Death of the Author") is without doubt the most considered and articulate redress to "The Death of the Author", and as a meditation on the question of authorship in general more than has its weight against Barthes's text. Gass forwards an account of why authors are alive rather than why they did not die, an altogether admirable strategy, and certainly the most positive form of challenge that can be made to the death of the author. Gass, in fact, comes as close as is possible to demonstrating the implausibility of the thesis that the author is dead. Yet, as with other, more exiguous rejoinders, it leaves us not a whit the wiser as to the extraordinarily persuasive power of the essay that carries the thesis. Something of the answer to this may lie not in the manner of the author's death but in the nature of the author who apparently dies.

Like many other works, "The Death of the Author" establishes a preface in its title. The reference is quite clearly to Nietzsche's celebrated "The Death of God" heralded by The Madman in *The Joyful Wisdom*.<sup>9</sup> Barthes will also reinforce this pretext: referring to the "Author-God" and claiming that the death of the author "liberates what may be called an anti-theological activity, an activity that is truly revolutionary since to refuse to fix meaning is, in the end, to refuse God and his hypostases - reason, science, law". (147) It is in this dramatic and iconoclastic light that "The Death of the Author" beseeches to be read: figures of usurpation, conspiracy, assassination assist its swift momentum; the reader is rarely allowed to forget the 1968 *événements* against whose background the paper was initially delivered. Its tone, its format and *ethos* all suggest that a gesture of radical significance is being undertaken, that we are witness to an important moment in the transvaluation

of Western values. But the deicidal metaphor is not stressed merely to heighten the impact of this pronouncement, to charge the act with a significance it might not have assumed in more modest presentation. Far from it, a definite homology informs this co-implication of the writer and divinity, one which tacitly expatiates and enlivens this discussion.

The author is to his text as God, the *auctor vitae*, is to his world: the unitary cause, source and master to whom the chain of textual effects must be traced, and in whom they find their genesis, meaning, goal and justification. The author thus becomes, in Derrida's words, the "transcendental signified" and attains the supernal privilege of being at once the beginning and end of his text.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly criticism accepts the role of passive exegete to the author's intentions. The text is read as natural theologians read nature for marks of design, signs of purpose. Where there is design there must be a designer, where there is the appearance of meaning there must be intention. *Post hoc, ergo propter hoc*; the old fallacy is enshrined as the universal law of literary causality. As Barthes has said elsewhere: "*Nothing is created out of nothing*; this law of organic nature is shifted without the shadow of a doubt to literary creation ...".<sup>11</sup> The author also acquires the further divine attribute of omnipresence within this scheme, since at every stage of textual meaning it is assumed that his designs are incarnate. Not only does the author become the cosmological and teleological principle of the text, he is made its *eschaton* also, its end understood as both goal and cessation. The text is related to a pre-established conception of the author which is both discovered and recovered within the text itself, and, by a circular determinism, the more authoritative reading is that which consorts most harmoniously with the prior model:

Once the author is removed, the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile. To give a text an author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing. Such a conception

suits criticism very well, the latter then allotting to itself the important task of discovering the Author (or its hypostases: society, history, psyche, liberty) beneath the work: when the Author has been found, the text is 'explained' - victory to the critic. (147)

With the author all differences and conflicts are neutralized; polysemia is cancelled. Like the God of Christianity, the author does not equivocate or beguile: man, as Milton and the Bible tell us, only fell from grace with the advent of ambiguity. The "Author-God" of criticism is thus the univocal, absolute subject of his work: he who precedes, directs and exceeds the writing that bears his name. Correspondingly, then, the liberation of the text from its author is to reiterate the liberation of the world from God. Elsewhere in *The Joyful Wisdom*, Nietzsche writes:

In fact, we philosophers and "free spirits" feel ourselves irradiated as by a new dawn by the report that the "old God is dead"; our hearts overflow with gratitude, astonishment, presentiment and expectation. At last the horizon seems open once more, granting even that it is not bright; our ships can at last put out to sea in face of every danger; every hazard is again permitted to the discerners; the sea, *our* sea, again lies open before us; perhaps never before did such an "open sea" exist.<sup>12</sup>

Freed from the author, the text too becomes an "open sea", a space of "manifestly relative significations, no longer tricked out in the colors of an eternal nature".<sup>13</sup> The death of the author is the first and sufficient step towards "refusing to assign a 'secret', an ultimate meaning, to the text (and to the world as text)". (147) In this deliverance - which Barthes later characterizes as the passage from a Newtonian to an Einsteinian universe<sup>14</sup> - the text becomes a *jouissant* affirmation of indeterminacy, a dance of the pen, a Dionysian threshing floor. To impose an author on a text is to impose an archaic monism on a brave new pluralistic world; it is to seal over the ceaseless play of differences that the death of God has opened in its wake: "We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash." (146)

Not for nothing does Barthes invoke the Nietzschean *deicide*: the analogy informs both the author-representation that Barthes wishes to evacuate and the liberating consequences of abandoning an author-centric apprehension of the text.

This analogy - resonant and illuminating as it is in many respects - is askew in one very broad sense. The attributes of omnipotence, omnipresence, of being the first uncaused cause, purpose and end of the world are all affirmed *a priori* of the Christian God: they inhere in his definition, without them He is not God. Not so for the author though: we can, without contradiction, conceive of authors who do not issue "single theological messages", who do not hold a univocal mastery over their texts. There are indeed even conceptions of authorship that are determinately anti-theological. Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the dialogic author, for example, is constructed precisely in opposition to the univocity of epic monologism.<sup>15</sup> But Barthes does not seem to be concerned with particular instances of author-representations in this essay, but rather with the general attitude of criticism to the author question. As "The Death of the Author" repeatedly implies, critical approaches to the text have been in essence theocentric, the history of literary criticism has for the most part been the history of the glorification of the author.

However, taking this claim at face value, it is not easy to see how the theologizing of the author can be affirmed as a characteristic of twentieth century literary critical discourse. Certainly, Anglo-American criticism offers no obvious examples of this phenomenon. For a tradition suffused with notions such as the intentional fallacy, the unreliable narrator, the implied author, Barthes's essay might well seem aimed at a target that had long since retreated out of range. Whilst the work of Eliot, Crowe Ransom, Wimsatt etc., certainly left fissures by which the author might reenter New Critical

discourse, there is no question that injunctions such as the intentional fallacy, and that criticism should limit itself to the "words on the page" sufficed to thoroughly distance their activities from any form of theocentric *auteurism*, however tepid such an approach might seem by comparison with the work of French structuralists and poststructuralists. Similarly, within twentieth century Russian literary criticism, the hegemony of the author had been enduringly undermined by the Formalist movement. As early as 1916, Osip Brik and *Opoyaz* had stressed: "The social role of the poet cannot be understood by an analysis of his individual qualities and habits. It is essential to study on a mass scale the devices of poetic craft, what distinguishes them from adjacent domains of human labour, and to study the laws of their historical development".<sup>16</sup> A similar disregard for authorial subjectivity also characterized the work of the Prague Structuralists who sought to continue the Formalists' programme for establishing a science of literature.

Moreover, within twentieth century French thought itself, it is not at all clear that the author has always been an exorbitantly privileged figure. As "The Death of the Author" makes clear, there is a clearly discernible lineage of anti-authorialism running through French literature and art from Mallarmé down to the present day. Yet again, even within the broader, and largely pro-authorial movements in the modern French tradition it is by no means always the case that the author is apotheosized or granted inordinate privileges. Sartrean existentialism, for all its humanistic insistence upon the creativity of the individual, does not sacralize the author. Rather, for Sartre, the author is to be conceived as a firmly rooted historical being, a *engage* figure who speaks not only for himself but through whom historical forces speak. Indeed, it might even be necessary to go back to the positivisms of Hippolyte Taine and Saint Beuve to discover the kind of devotional critical practice which "The Death of the Author" erects into a critical norm, and yet

even here, with Taine, the author is neither the original nor the final term of analysis, but the opening to the race, the milieu, the moment. For sure, critics can be found to fit any description, and an extensive foray might reveal any number of texts in which the author is deified.<sup>17</sup> But what is absent is the all-pervasiveness of theo-*auteurist* criticism from which "The Death of the Author" takes its directions. Rather, the *auteurist* position which Barthes takes arms against is itself largely hypostasized. The large body of critics who work with a more modest conception of authorship are not considered, nor the apotropaic influence such studies bring to bear upon the role of the author in literary studies. All author-positions are subsumed under an essentially nineteenth-century theocentrism, one which naturally lends to the death of the author a greater urgency, a more direful necessity.

In appraising an essentially iconoclastic work, the most telling questions are often not to be addressed to the operations performed on the object, nor to the conclusions thereby reached, but rather to the manner of the representation of the object to be destroyed. How much, we should ask, of the joyous work of destruction consists in badly constructing the house? How much more suasive, more joyous, how much more effortless and apocalyptic is the demolition of an edifice built on the shakiest of foundations? Roland Barthes in "The Death of the Author" does not so much destroy the "Author-God", but participates in its construction. He must create a king worthy of the killing. Not only is the author to be compared with a tyrannical deity, but also with bourgeois man himself: it is, Barthes writes, "the epitome and culmination of of capitalist ideology ... which has attached the greatest importance to the 'person' of the author". (143) Hence, too, the comparisons with the capitalist, with the repressive forces outside the universities that very year; and the capitalizations ("sway of the Author", "Author diminishing", "reign of the Author") prime for decapitation. The liberation of writing atten-

dant upon the death of the author is all the more acutely registered if the author is reputed the Father to which the book is the child.<sup>18</sup> In seeking to dethrone the author, Barthes is led to a deification that outpaces anything to be found in a Jean Paul Sartre, a Raymond Picard. This procedure, equivocal and beguiling as it is, is also firmly anchored in the false assumption that the principle of the author becomes otiose if the property of an oppressive paternalism is denied to it. In an identical spirit, Gayatri Spivak pronounces that "The text belongs to language, and not to the sovereign and generating author"<sup>19</sup> but provides no vindication for proceeding (as she does) from this calm insight to the claim that the author has no part to play in the processes of text formation and reception. It would make little more sense to dismiss Brendel's interpretation of the *Hammerklavier Sonata* on the grounds that he neither owned the score nor the Steinway on which it was performed. That an entity is not the *causa sine qua non* does not proscribe against its being the *causa causans*. Observing light passing through a prism (though "we know" that the prism is not the absolute origin of the resplendent spectacle before us) we do not deny its effect upon the light, still less call for the death of the prism. That the author can only be conceived as a manifestation of the Absolute Subject, this is the root message of every authocide. One must, at bottom, be deeply *auteurist* to call for the Death of the Author.

"The Death of the Author" is simultaneously the invention of a certain author, a transcendent being who is condemned to death in the very moment that brings him to being. Like the reader whom Barthes would instate in his stead - "the reader is without history, biography, psychology; he is simply that *someone* who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted" (148) - Barthes's Author is a reification, a Platonic type, a fiction of the absolute. This "monster of totality" is to haunt Barthes's subsequent writing.<sup>20</sup>

## From Work to Life

*Lowry could not invent at the level of language, only at the level of life, so that having lied life into a condition suitable for fiction, he would then faithfully and truthfully record it. No wonder he felt enmeshed. No wonder, too, that he had to revisit in order to revise; repeat the same difficult passage of existence in order to plunge further into it, make the necessary changes, get it right; and this meant only too often that he had to drink himself back into madness again, to resee what was to be rewritten; to fall down in a ditch, to find vultures perched on the washbasin, fold fearfully up in a corner like a pair of discarded trousers, or bruise his head between toilet and sink in some dirty anonymous john.*

William Gass<sup>21</sup>

As Barthes makes clear, the death of the author did not occur prior to 1968. Nor, though, is it an entirely novel idea, but is to be discerned, by degrees, in the work of Mallarmé, Valéry, the Surrealists and Proust.<sup>22</sup> Of the latter, "The Death of the Author" declares: "By a radical reversal, instead of putting his life into his novel, as is so often maintained, he made of his very life a work for which his own book was the model: it is clear to us that Charlus does not imitate Montesquiou but that Montesquiou - in his anecdotal, historical reality - is no more than a secondary fragment, derived from Charlus." (144) Barthes neglects, however, to explain why this reversal of customary literary causality should imply - or even tend toward - the diminution of the author. No less intimacy and engagement with the author is effected by reversing his place on the causal chain, nor indeed any curtailment of authorial control since this is, we are told, Proust's conscious intention. In subsequent texts Barthes will reiterate this insight, though it will be put to a very different end.

"The Death of the Author" grew out of the early stages of Barthes's struggle with Balzac. Indeed, we have seen that it opens with a quote from "Sarrasine" which is held to enact the anomie proper to all writing. Commentators on Barthes's career are united in seeing a decisive change in direction as oc-

curing in the late 1960s and all-but united in seeing that change as occurring decisively with *S/Z*. *S/Z* also constitutes a certain crossroads for Barthes in terms of his attitude to authorship in that it at once puts into practice the principles of "The Death of the Author", and at the same time willingly relinquishes some of the ground that the essay hoped to gain. This process is dramatically registered in one Janiform passage. Just as we are becoming convinced that "Barthes" will start a spirit as soon as "Balzac", just as the author seems well and truly buried under the weight of this monumental reading, the critic recalls the author with the hauteur kings reserve for their vanquished:-

The Author himself- that somewhat decrepit deity of the old criticism - can or could someday become a text like any other: he has only to avoid making his person the subject, the impulse, the origin, the authority, the Father, whence his work would proceed, by a channel of *expression*; he has only to see himself as a being on paper and his life as a bio-graphy (in the etymological sense of the word), a writing without referent, substance of a *connection* and not of a *filiation*: the critical undertaking (if we can still speak of criticism) will then consist in *returning* the documentary figure of the author into a novelistic, irretrievable, irresponsible figure, caught up in the plural of its own text: a task whose adventure has already been recounted, not by critics, but by authors themselves, a Proust, a Jean Genet.<sup>23</sup>

This passage - unrequired by anything in his analysis, and ushered in via the most casual of pretexts<sup>24</sup> - would seem to presuppose a prior reading of "The Death of the Author". As we have stressed, Barthes is careful to point out that "The Death of the Author" is a call to arms and not a funeral oration, that "the sway of the Author remains powerful". (143) Yet here, in extending a certain conditional clemency to the author - as in "From Work to Text" and *Sade Fourier Loyola* where he speaks of "the return of the author" - it is implied that the death of the author is in some sense a thing achieved; there is, after all, no return without a departure. Later, in *The Pleasure of the Text*, Barthes will say: "As institution, the author is dead: his civic status,

his biographical person have disappeared ... ".<sup>25</sup> Needless to say, as institution the author is not dead, nor was then, neither have his civic status and biographical person disappeared - agreement on this matter would not seem difficult. But the interest of this statement is more performative than constative. Again a disclaimer is the necessary prelude to the call for the author's renewal - " ... but in the text, in a way, I *desire* the author: I need his figure ... as he needs mine ... "<sup>26</sup> - and again it is assumed that the death of the author has in some sense, and at some time, been realized. Yet "The Death of the Author", at its own testament, is not the description of an "event" prior to itself, and only the most spellbound of readers could conclude that it "occurs" in the course of the seven pages that Barthes devotes to the subject. And indeed, if what "The Death of the Author" describes is an ongoing process, then a year or two's additional unfolding is surely insufficient time for its fulfillment. The revision of an event that has not occurred is of course an oddity, but this is what seems to be happening here. A sympathetic critic might see this as an instance of Barthes's charming contrariety, a more suspicious mind would view it as the recognition of a gross exaggeration that refuses to confess itself. In all events, the course to be steered is the same. Now that the author is dead, now that the lesson has been learnt, let us return the author to our circle as a guest whose past transgressions have been forgiven but not entirely forgotten. This is the rhetorical format of the above passage, as it is, too, of its restatement in "From Work to Text":

It is not that the Author may not 'come back' in the Text, in his text, but he then does so as a 'guest'. If he is a novelist, he is inscribed in the novel like one of his characters, figured in the carpet; no longer privileged, paternal, aletheological, his inscription is ludic. He becomes, as it were, a paper-author: his life is no longer the origin of his fictions but a fiction contributing to his work; there is a reversion of the work on to the life (and no longer the contrary); it is the work of Proust, of Genet which allows their lives to be read as text. The word 'bio-graphy' re-acquires a strong, etymological sense, at the same time as the sincerity of the enunciation - veritable 'cross' borne by literary

morality - becomes a false problem: the *I* which writes the text, it too, is never more than a paper *I*. (161)

The point-for-point resemblances between this and the *S/Z* declaration hardly need be elucidated: in different circumstances, textual scholars could make a powerful case for these being two translations of the same passage. The similarities do tend to enhance the sense of a "new manifesto" based upon the return of the author. Here again the same two balls must be kept in the air: the author will return, but the death of the author must stand. This is to be achieved by a remoulding of his ideas of authorship in such a way that the return does not impinge on that most constative of statements: "... the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author." (148) Thus the author will appear in *The Pleasure of the Text* as a desire of the reader's, as he will too in *Sade Fourier Loyola* where the refrain from *S/Z* recurs a second time (and where the relationship of capitalization - "Author" and "text" - is reversed):-

The pleasure of the Text also includes the amicable return of the author. Of course, the author who returns is not the one identified by our institutions (history and courses in literature, philosophy, church discourse); he is not even the biographical hero. The author who leaves his text and comes into our life has no unity; he is a mere plural of "charms", the site of a few tenuous details, yet the source of vivid novelistic glimmerings, a discontinuous chant of amiabilities, in which we nevertheless read death more certainly than in the epic of a fate; he is not a (civil, moral) person, he is a body ... For if, through a twisted dialectic, the Text, destroyer of all subject, contains a subject to love, that subject is dispersed, somewhat like the ashes we strew into the wind after death ...<sup>27</sup>

The pleasure of the text is itself evident in the felicity of such a presentation. Yet this wonderful simile - "somewhat like the ashes we strew into the wind after death" - has its place in the *arrière pensée* of which we have been talking. A little like Dionysus, or Christ, the author must be dead before he can return. In a sense too, he must continue to be dead though he has returned. The text remains the "destroyer of all subject" yet, through the twists of a

silent dialectic, it also might contain a "subject to love". What "twists" motivate this dialectic which, on the face of it, makes no sense at all? If the text is "destroyer of all subject" - and this is asserted unconditionally - then it can contain *no* subject, much less one to love. If this dialectic is twisted it is because it is no dialectic at all: the statements remain flatly contradictory, they are party to no synthesis whatsoever, whether Hegelian or otherwise. There is no possibility of dialectic sublation between A and not-A whatever the reservations we might have about the law of non-contradiction. Besides which, we are only given two terms in this dialectic, no subject and subject, and the idea of a dyadic dialectic is as absurd as it sounds. What is called a "twisted dialectic" is in its operation far from dialectic, being rather a piece of logodaedaly, a legerdemain that seeks to screen the kind of double postulate that Barthes is usually so quick (and so right) to deprecate. These manoeuvres, though, are to lead Barthes into areas that a simple palinode might have bypassed.

The author returns on condition that his life is discontinuous, fictive; that he 'puts the work into the life'. Unfortunately, though much is staked on this idea little is stated of it, and Proust is left to stand as its guarantor: " ... a task whose adventure has already been recounted, not by critics but by authors themselves, a Proust, a Jean Genet ... "; " ... it is the work of Proust, of Genet which allows their lives to be read as a text..."; "... a marked life, in sum, as Proust succeeded in writing his ..." <sup>28</sup>; " ... it is clear to us that Charlus does not imitate Montesquiou but that Montesquiou - in his anecdotal, historical reality - is no more than a secondary fragment, derived from Charlus ... " (144). As is well known, Proust made the early, programmatic notes for the *Recherche* in the mid 1890s and only then did he embark on the arduous round of Parisian high society which was to bring us Charlus, Swann and the Verdurins. He was to also establish its theoretical basis in *Contre*

*Saint Beuve*, and to compose *Jean Santeuil* as a preliminary writing exercise.<sup>29</sup> The work of the *Recherche* was to direct Proust's life long before the actual writing of it whereafter it became his sole occupation. That the work can transmigrate into the life can be asserted *a fortiori* of the case of Proust. But it can also be asserted of other writers or other moments in the continuum of a writer's life and work. Barthes adduces Genet as well but the idea's antecedents stretch back at least as far as the Romantic movement and the Lord George Byron who himself personified the storm-tossed Byronic hero of his poems, not to mention the aestheticism of Wilde and Villiers de <sup>Adam</sup> l'Isle for whom it was *raison d'être* itself.<sup>30</sup> Certainly, too, it would seem that any writer who dedicates his creative life to one great work will experience something of this.<sup>31</sup>

Biographical discourse has taken note of this phenomenon intermittently, describing the processes of persona construction, of how authors come to identify obsessively with their characters, how the mask comes to wear the man etc. Theorists too, the Russian Formalists, Boris Tomashevsky and Boris Eikhenbaum and, more recently, Foucault and Paul de Man, have accepted that the fictional project can of occasion outpace the life-work. Tomashevsky argues that Pushkin "poetically fostered certain facts of his life", that he invented the story of a doomed love as a background against which his Southern poems would be read, and that this biographeme played an essential role in structural juxtaposition with the poems themselves.<sup>32</sup> Foucault, in *Pierre Rivière*, examines the case history of a 19th century Norman peasant who wrote a 40-page confession entitled "I, Pierre Rivière, having slaughtered my mother, my sister and my brother ... " and *then* determined to commit the deed: " ... author of it all in a dual sense", Foucault says, "author of the crime and author of the text".<sup>33</sup>

Barthes however is not content to see the reversion of the work onto the life in its particularity; rather he makes it the universal law of literary causality and the *sine qua non* of the reintroduction of the author. For Barthes, far from being an aestheticist conceit, or merely a means of adding a dash of *ostranenie* to 'man and the work' criticism, the chiasmic movement from life-into-work to work-into-life is addressed to the question of priority. Structuralist thought had defended language against reduction to a technicianist epistemology by excluding the author: this exclusion accepted, the labour of validating the irreducibility of language to experience, subjectivity, psychobiographical factors, or any pre-textual drive, became effortless, tautological. Thus a Tzvetan Todorov could blithely declare:

Art therefore is not the reproduction of a given 'reality', nor is it created through the imitation of such a reality. It demands quite different qualities; to be 'real' can even ... be harmful. In the realms of art there is nothing preliminary to the work, nothing which constitutes its origin. It is the work of art itself that is original; the secondary becomes primary.<sup>34</sup>

Barthes, perhaps more than any other theorist, is aware of the threat that the author poses to the immediacy of language. Thus if the author is to return he can only do so as the progeny of his text for in this way the anteriority of *écriture* remains vouchsafed. And, assuredly, Barthes would seem to have negotiated an ingenious route around this problem. The possibility of a transversal movement from work to life is not one which admits of easy refutation. The problem is that Barthes demands too much of it. Paul de Man asks: "We assume that life *produces* the autobiography as an act produces its consequences, but can we not suggest, with equal justice, that the autobiographical project may itself produce and determine the life and that whatever the writer *does* is in fact governed by the technical demands of self-portraiture and thus determined, in all its aspects, by the resources of his

medium?"<sup>35</sup> And de Man is right to ask the question. We can suggest this, perhaps even assert it, but "with equal justice".

What the insinuation of the *graphê* into the *bios* discloses is that work and life commute through a channel which can be traversed in both directions and not, as has been traditionally supposed, only in the direction author-to-text. The idea of fictional imperatives dictating the course of a life is therefore more than a simple *hysteron proteron*, but it does not, by any means, amount to an argument for the priority of the writing scene. Once the route has been opened, once communication has been established between an author's writing, on the one hand, and his biography, on the other, then any power of legislation against the life also influencing the work has been abdicated. At most, the notion of putting-the-work-into-the-life unsettles or tropes the mimetic tradition, but without at all departing from the essential interconnectedness of life and work. The reversal is always open to reversal, and so on, *ad infinitum*. As implied in the epigraph we have drawn from William Gass, the relationship between work and life is one of a ceaseless and reactive interplay in which neither life *nor work* has any claim to necessary priority.

This notion of work-into-life does not figure greatly in *Sade Fourier Loyola* nor elsewhere in Barthes's corpus, and it is most certainly nowhere argued in the manner by which Derrida has attempted to trace a primal scene of writing. What it does *do*, though, at this particular juncture in Barthes's career, is to provide a point of return for the author, one which allows the reader to take biographical issues on board whilst maintaining that "life never does more than imitate the book, and the book itself is only a tissue of signs, an imitation that is lost, infinitely deferred." (147) The return of the author thus does not reopen the closed-casket case of his death. The author can be at once both dead and alive. The task here accomplished is that of

returning the author to the house without shaking its foundations, quietly, inconspicuously, an author who can leave by the front door only if he enters from the back: the uncanniest of guests.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, once the guest is within his walls the host can have what he wishes of him. And this is what *Sade Fourier Loyola* will do.

### The Founders of Languages

Sade, Fourier and Loyola are not brought together to pursue the pleasure of linking antithetical writers. That Sade and Fourier should be concatenated is not, in any case, at all unusual. It is only with the addition of Ignatius Loyola that the grouping seems in any sense peculiar. For certain, the alliance of the founder of the Jesuits with the Satanic Marquis and the hedonistic socialist might constitute some cause for consternation, in Catholic France at least. Neither, though, is this *épater* exploited as it might have been done by the Barthes of *Mythologies*.<sup>37</sup> *Sade Fourier Loyola*, to the contrary, seeks to nullify the grounds on which such a sense of sacrilege might be based. The 'content' of their work is relegated to the point of triviality, ornamentation, a frippery of the writing process. Writing, rather than debauchery, divinity, passion, becomes the significance of what they have written. Accordingly part of this text's aim is to "dissipate or elude the moral discourse that has been held on each of them; working, as they themselves worked, only on languages ...".<sup>38</sup> This is not to "suppress... the text's social responsibility", if anything it is to "accentuate" it. (9)

Such an itinerary recalls that of *Writing Degree Zero* where it is said: "What separates the 'thought' of a Balzac from that of a Flaubert is a variation within the same school; what contrasts their modes of writing is an essential break ...".<sup>39</sup> Here, however, their work with language is what unites

Sade, Fourier and Loyola. All three are obsessive classifiers, subdivisionists, their true passions are not God, man, and the body, but the inventory. Thus Sade will set the *120 Days of Sodom* the task of discovering, naming and describing the 600 perversions proper to mankind, Fourier the 1,680 passions, Loyola the minute subdivisions to which the exercitant's first week of devotion is subject. They are constructors of vast programmes, systematizers, combinatory analysts *par excellence*. As such they would seem manifestations of the scriptor: "operators" of the writing machine, assemblers and rearrangers of codes, lexicologists like the young de Quincey invoked in "The Death of the Author".<sup>40</sup> Sade, Fourier and Loyola might then seem to be writers who have worked through the principles of a deauthorized *écriture*, subjects who have opened themselves to languages' great plural and allowed it to encrypt itself in them. Yet, from the outset, Barthes declares that they are not merely writers, nor merely authors or philosophers, savants or thinkers. Sade Fourier and Loyola are "logothetes", "founders of languages" and *Sade Fourier Loyola* is "the book of Logothetes".(3) They are initiators of writing, artificers of closed languages engaged in "the enormous and yet uncertain task of a constructor of language, of a logo-technician".(44) Charles Fourier is not just an inventive writer, he is an inventor of writing;<sup>41</sup> the *Spiritual Exercises* of Loyola have as their object "the invention of a language"(48); "Sade's greatness lies not in having celebrated crime, perversion, nor in having employed in this celebration a radical language; it is in having invented a vast discourse founded in its own repetitions (and not those of others)..."(126)

This idea of the "founder of language" will give considerable pause to anyone familiar with Barthes's earlier work. The conviction that language, any language, however idiosyncratic it might appear in particular hands, invariably precedes and indeed determines the subject of its utterance is seen

to be a constant from *On Racine* onwards. And, of course, it is the fundamental tenet of "The Death of the Author". But with the concept of "the founder of language" he would seem to subvert its entire thesis. At every point at which "The Death of the Author" attempts to justify itself, it has immediate recourse to the priority of writing: "The text is a place where...a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash"; "the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original".<sup>42</sup> Yet *Sade Fourier Loyola* states, in full confidence: "The language they found is obviously not linguistic, a language of communication. It is a new language..."(3) True enough, it could be held that the logothete stays within language, and that it is only the transgressive power of his reconfigurations and "theatricalizing" of the pre-existent system that gives to his text the appearance of a new language. But *Sade Fourier Loyola* does not say this: nothing of the earlier position can be recuperated from this depiction. If Sade Fourier and Loyola remain within language as inscribed subjects then they do so at its outermost limit: the logothete will not deign to speak any language not uniquely his own. He does what "The Death of the Author" claimed no writer could do - that is, to exorcise the anterior language and stage an entirely hermetic and idiorhythmic scene of writing.

Accordingly, the first act of logothesis is a withdrawal from the sociolect, a voiding of the linguistic past. Barthes insists upon this: "The new language must arise from a material vacuum; an anterior space must separate it from the other common, idle, outmoded language, whose "noise" might hinder it".(4) Within this "material vacuum" the logothete is at the crossing, both outside and betwixt languages. Hence Barthes will stress the importance of the self-isolations, the retirements and preparations of these "founders". Like the Author, the logothete "nourishes" the book: "All these preparatory protocols, by eliminating from the field of the retreat worldly, idle, physical,

natural language, in short *other* languages, are aimed at achieving the homogeneity of the language to be constructed, in a word, its pertinence...".(52) To invent language it is necessary to refuse it: "All these protocols have the function of creating in the exercitant a kind of linguistic vacuum necessary for the elaboration and for the triumph of the new language".(49) A linguistic break is thus achieved by the logothete, one that does not constitute a mutation of the system but the evolution of a truly closed and original writing practice. That such a desire for a new language should exist is no cause for surprise. What is unusual is Barthes's confidence that Sade, Fourier and Loyola all succeeded in this immense undertaking.

In a way, *Sade Fourier Loyola* can be seen to continue the project of *écriture blanche* so hauntingly proposed in *Writing Degree Zero*. Barthes had argued - pace Lukács and Sartre - that writing realizes its true political status through its formal and stylistic structures: the manner rather than the content of what is written constitutes its praxis: a mode of writing springs directly from "the writer's consideration of the social use which he has chosen for his form, and his commitment to this choice".<sup>43</sup> The dream of the *écrivain* is to break with the language of his time, to evolve a colourless writing devolved of ideology, cleansed of institutional traces. Such a quest involves an absolute purgation of the encratic bourgeois language, since to break with the values of a society is most importantly to break with its modes of expression. However, *Writing Degree Zero*, so full of promise and prospect for the future of writing finally presents the *écrivain* as the unhappiest of consciousnesses, and the dream of *écriture blanche* as condemned in advance. Every assertion of freedom invariably falls prey to the snares of recuperation. Impelled by History to a commitment he cannot make, forced to choose between modes of writing that are destined to be classicized, the modern writer is forever caught on the wrong side of both freedom and necessity: "Writing, free in its

beginnings, is finally the bond which links the writer to a History which is itself in chains: society stamps upon him the unmistakable signs of art so as to draw him along the more inescapably in its own process of alienation."<sup>44</sup> What *Sade Fourier Loyola* presents are writers who have indeed succeeded in stepping out of the languages of their times, anchorite figures who have defended their texts against the incursion of the language of the other. Unlike *écriture* (as understood by *Writing Degree Zero*) logothesis is not obliged to "borrow, from what it wants to destroy, the very image of what it wants to possess"<sup>45</sup>; like the language of madness it rejects the sociolect, it becomes *sui generis*.

Viewed from any standpoint, the idea of the logothete forces some revelation of the author-question both in Barthes's work and within the poststructuralist movement in general. The description is too powerful, too unsettling, to be glossed away as another instance of the loss of the subject in language. The critics Barthes took issue with in *On Racine* talked of the Racinian universe, Racine's genius, (Barthes talks of "Sade's genius") but nowhere do they talk of a "founder of language".<sup>46</sup> The logothete is present at every stage of the textual process: inventor of the writing machine, its product (as biographical *emanation*), its "operator", he is the ghost within it too: he who "does not disappear but displaces himself in the thing, like the hashish smoker totally caught up in the smoke from his pipe, who 'smokes himself'"(64); director of the fantasy in which "we know, by definition, the subject must be present"(63), he who "disperses himself across the framework he sets up and arranges *ad infinitum*."(6) If anything, the logothetic description belongs to what we might call a "meta-authorial" perspective. That is to say, one which characterizes certain authors as having exceeded the parameters of conventional author-text relations. This is not an isolated aberration in the poststructuralist canon but a theme that is to

occur in Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida as well as in the work of avowedly author-centred critics such as Harold Bloom. These theorists will forward powerful accounts of how influence and inscription can overrun even the most generous of geneticist models.

The idea of the logothete also necessitates the renewal of the concept of the oeuvre. "Text" in *Sade Fourier Loyola*, we soon notice, means oeuvre. Specific citations themselves are rare: throughout Barthes talks of the "Sadian text" as though *Justine*, *Philosophy in the Boudoir*, *The 120 Days of Sodom* etc., all form one indissoluble writing. And well he might. One of the principal theses of *Sade Fourier Loyola* is that the logothete is continually involved in a single project, that of constructing an autarkic language, and not least among Sade's achievements is its discovery of a manner of speaking about a body of writing without relapse to conceptual mapping or reduction to an arid homogeneity: the logothetic work, as Barthes describes and enacts it, is that of ceaseless difference within a single project. A recursive writing almost: infinitely generative of its own elements but closed and oblivious to anything outside of itself. Indeed this closure has been affirmed not only of the outcasts Sade, Fourier and Loyola, but as the condition of all writing: "All modes of writing have in common the fact of being 'closed' ... writing is a hardened language which is self-contained ...".<sup>47</sup> If indeed the logothetic language is closed - and *Sade Fourier Loyola* cannot work without this premise - then the possibility of its establishing a broad intertext is precluded, and it is perforce located firmly within the space of the oeuvre. For logothesis to make any sense at all, "text" in *Sade Fourier Loyola* must mean oeuvre.

Of course, faith in the oeuvre is nothing less than faith in the author, or in his signature at least, and the constants and correspondences thereby contracted. In absolutely minimalist terms, the author is that principle which

unites the objects - whether collusive or discrete - that gather under his proper name. And indeed a certain suspicion of the oeuvre is to be found in many forms of traditional criticism. Propositions of the order, 'the Ludwig Wittgenstein who wrote the *Tractatus* is not the Ludwig Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations*' are commonplace amongst commentators who otherwise have no particular hostility to the institution of the author. Yet Barthes, author of the author's death, has evinced considerable faith in the oeuvre, not only in the special cases of Sade, Fourier and Loyola, but at many points within his own oeuvre, and often with supreme indifference to disparities of content, ideas, positions. In *Writing Degree Zero* style is proposed and the *etymon*, the silver thread which both unites a writer's work, and sets it off against that of others: a "self sufficient language" which "has its roots only in the depths of the author's personal and secret mythology, that substance of expression where the first coition of words and things takes place, where once and for all the great verbal themes of his existence come to be installed".<sup>48</sup> *Michelet* set out to "restore to this man his coherence",<sup>49</sup> while *On Racine*, although reluctant to ground the oeuvre in the creativity and cohesion of the individual subject, nevertheless sought for structural and thematic unity within the Racinian tragedies. *S/Z* quite freely accepts the Balzacian text, while *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, for all its attempts to displace the identity of *autos* and the *bios* in the autobiographical act, is nonetheless concerned with not just the past of the Barthesian text but its future also: "... it is a book of learning and of writing ... a summa of intelligence and of pleasure, a vengeful and tender book ... it has all the qualities of a hero in a novel: it is the one coming (the *adventure*), and I herald this book that makes me my own John the Baptist, I prophesy, I announce ..." <sup>50</sup>, a book that was to be *A Lover's Discourse*. In "From Work to Text" Barthes wrote: "How do you classify a writer like Georges Bataille? Novelist, poet, es-

sayist, economist, philosopher, mystic? The answer is so difficult that the literary manuals generally prefer to forget about Bataille who, in fact, wrote texts, perhaps continuously one single text".<sup>51</sup> Barthes himself, like Bataille, like Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, is the most protean of writers, yet nevertheless - or perhaps because of this - he attracts more oeuvre-centred readings than any other post-War European writer. Steven Ungar in *Roland Barthes: the Professor of Desire* introduces Barthes's adolescent pastiche on Socrates to the canon, and sees in it the first step on the long road to *Camera Lucida*. Roland Champagne too will utilize this piece of juvenilia, and argue that the "new humanism" in *Writing Degree Zero* is the ground traversed in the quarter-century that separates it from Barthes's inaugural address to the College of France in 1977. For Annette Lavers there is a Barthesian "voyage". Thody and Culler make no secret of their belief in "Roland Barthes" as the central and operative subject of the texts that bear that signature.<sup>52</sup>

Not surprisingly, this tendency meets with some opposition amongst those who wish to retain something of Barthes's earlier anti-subjectivism. Tim Clark, reviewing Lavers's book in an article called "Roland Barthes: Dead and Alive", challenges the notion of the Barthesian oeuvre.<sup>53</sup> Unfortunately, as with most (perhaps all) responses of this sort, he flits about between Barthes's texts establishing what amounts to the oeuvre's objection to the notion of the oeuvre, a procedure in which the greater consistency remains on Lavers's side. Indeed it is impossible to deny the oeuvre without lapsing into a moribund formalism which sees a mysterious forcefield around the covers of each individual text. Once any measure of intertextuality is accepted it becomes impossible to proscribe against intertextual currents and channels opening up within a writer's corpus. It would be absurd to allow intertextual commerce between *Ulysses* and the "Good Friday Liturgy" and to deny it to *Ulysses* and *A Portrait of the Artist*. Barthes deploys a similar ar-

gument in favour of the Balzacian text: " ... There is no reason not to include the Sarrasinean text within the Balzacian text ... by degrees, a text can come into contact with any other system: the inter-text is subject to no law but the infinitude of its reprises."<sup>54</sup>

Not to say that the notion of the oeuvre is unproblematic in Barthes, far from it, but that the problems that it raises do not stem from what Clark takes to be the impossibility of any such thing existing. "Roland Barthes, Dead and Alive" concludes: "The greatest danger ... would be the reduction of 'Barthes' to the title of an oeuvre",<sup>55</sup> and we must agree provided that the word stressed here is "reduction". What *Sade Fourier Loyola*, as well as *Michelet, On Racine* and *Roland Barthes by Barthes*, bespeaks is an acceptance of the oeuvre subject to a certain revaluation. This revaluation consists in releasing the life's work from the wearisome and laborious chronological considerations of conventional oeuvre criticism. Barthes treats the oeuvre as an everpresent intertext, a space to be ranged forwards and backwards without progressional responsibilities or conceptual warrants for reading nodes, clusters, constellations within it. The oeuvre is thus relieved of the programmatics of anteriority, development: the general organicist and teleological rationales which have formerly stood its surety are displaced by a fecund space, a space of coherencies but not of syntagmatic order. Likewise the flattening out of apparent contradictions, or the synthetic process of their assimilation into a greater whole have no place in this form of oeuvre reading. No longer a forward march from fledgling texts to mature thought, the oeuvre becomes an arena or ellipse in which everything is rhapsodic, nothing sequential, in which themes and figures twist round upon each other like the motifs of a fugue. Thus there is no call to begin with the first version of *Justine* and to end with the last surviving work at Charenton, nor to take account of the two decades of revolution and counterrevolution that inter-

vened between them: they belong to a common self-identical site, the site of their own recursive and idiorhythmic language which eludes the regimens of the linear, the temporal. What is augured here is (by an interesting reversal which combines concepts traditionally set at odds with each other) an *intertextualizing of the oeuvre*, a freedom to traffic between an author's works that is perversely delimited by the narrative conventions of customary oeuvre reading. Under the heading "Rhapsody", Barthes writes of the "Sadian novel":

Little studied by narrative grammarians (e.g. Propp), there is a rhapsodic structure of narrative, especially proper to the picaresque novel (and perhaps to the Proustian novel). To recount, here, does not consist in developing a story and then untangling it, adhering to an infinitely organic model (to be born, to live, to die), i.e., to subject the series of episodes to a natural (or logical) order, which becomes the meaning imposed by "Fate" on every life, every journey, but in purely and simply juxtaposing iterative and mobile fragments: then the continuum is merely a series of bits and pieces, a baroque fabric of odds and ends. The Sadian rhapsody thus unfolds without order: voyages, thefts, murders, philosophical dissertations, libidinous scenes, escapes, secondary narratives, schedules of orgies, descriptions of machines, etc. This construction frustrates the paradigmatic structure of the narrative (in which each episode has its "correspondent" somewhere further on which counterbalances or rectifies it) and thereby, eluding the structuralist reading of the narration, it constitutes an outrage of meaning: the rhapsodic (Sadian) novel has no *meaning* or *direction*, nothing compels it to progress, develop, end. (140)

This passage speaks well also for the biographical innovations that *Sade Fourier Loyola* suggests. Barthes adds the author's life to the oeuvre in the "Lives" section just as elsewhere he joins corpus to corpus by reading the body writing into the body of writing. Tomashevsky had proposed the legend created by the author as "literary fact"<sup>56</sup>; Barthes makes the biographeme the basis of his writing of a life.

In the second preface to "Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks", Nietzsche wrote: "... in systems that have been refuted it is only [the] personal element that can still interest us, for this alone is eternally irrefutable.

It is possible to shape the picture of a man out of three anecdotes. I endeavor to bring into relief three anecdotes out of every system and abandon the remainder."<sup>57</sup> In *Sade Fourier Loyola*, Barthes presents the life of Fourier in twelve anecdotes that span less than two pages. Like the Nietzschean biographer, he makes do with very little:

1. Fourier: a *shop steward* ("A shop steward who will refute political and moral libraries, the shameful fruit of ancient and modern quackeries"). At Besançon, his parents ran a cloth and spice store: *trade*, execrated, *spice*, adored in the form of a *body*, the aromale which (among other things) will perfume the seas; at the court of the King of Morocco, there is said to be a Director of the Royal Scents: aside from the monarchy, and the director, Fourier would have been enchanted by this title ...

4. Fourier hated old cities: Rouen

5. At Lyons, Fourier learned trade: he was ruined by the shipwreck of a boat at Leghorn (maritime trade in Harmony: cargoes of rainets and lemons, the barter of wheat and sugar) ...

8. Fourier experienced *reversals*: ruined, he took subordinate employments, interspersed with living by his wits; a writer, he lived off others, and was put up for long periods of time by his family and friends in Bugey and in the Jura.

9. His knowledge: mathematical and experimental sciences, music, geography, astronomy.

10. His old age: he surrounded himself with cats and flowers.

11. His concierge found him dead in his dressing gown, kneeling among the flowerpots.

12. Fourier had read Sade. (182-4)

The longer life of Sade consists of twenty-two entries which span material as diverse as the etymology of Sade's name, the wigs worn by his enemy Police Lieutenant Sartine, a declaration of the priority of the writing scene, as well as floccinaucities such as "Suddenly transferred from Vincennes to the Bastille, Sade made a great fuss because he had not been allowed to bring his *big pillow...*"The barbarians!".(181) As the morpheme is to the linguistic analysis, the mytheme to myth, so the biographeme is the minimal unit of biographical discourse. As is apparent, though, despite these scientific consonances, the biographical procedures it heralds are as far removed from

structuralist methodologies as they are from documentary positivism. If anything it is a poet's conception.

The biographeme obviously need not be an incident central to the life of the subject. As the "Preface" to *Sade Fourier Loyola* says, Barthes is not concerned with the "pilgrimages, visions, mortifications and constitutions" of the Ignatian life but with the saint's "beautiful eyes, always a little filled with tears".(8)<sup>58</sup> Often the biographeme would seem entirely tangential, not only to the life but to the episode in which it occurs. Whereas, traditional Sadian biographers marshal evidence from every quarter in order to determine exactly what happened during Sade's accosting of Rose Keller, Barthes's interest is in the "white muff" he wore at the time, "an article obviously donned to satisfy the *principle of tact* which seems to have presided over the Marquis's sadistic activity".(174) Similarly it is with "that Provençal way in which Sade says 'milli'",(8) with Charles Fourier's liking for "little Parisian spice cakes" called "mirlitons". This is the "chant of amiabilities", the "plural of charms". Yet the biographeme achieves more than Barthes says it will. These details - Fourier's cats and flowers, Sade's dislike of the sea - are crystalline moments in lives whose motion and totality are necessarily irrecoverable. While the conventional biographer will seek to mimic the impetus of a life, to register it according to certain representative proportions, the biographeme breaks with the teleology implicit in this lambent narrative movement. Events are not connected to imply any destiny or purpose in the course of a life, rather the biographemes are the shards of any such forward movement, those velleities that are passed over in the more frenetic, directed movement of the footprint-following biographer. The biographeme arrests the progressional narrative of biography proper, its insistence on reading themes of development and decline into the empirical contents of an author's life.

Consequently Barthes is not concerned with Sade's life as evil *grand seigneur* and *sansculotte*, viewed in all its tragic resonances as "a man oppressed by an entire society because of his passion" nor with the "solemn contemplation of a fate".(8) The biographeme suspends narrative time and the *telos* that only such time can insure. Its *ethos* has affinities with the Proustian concept of "involuntary memory" as it has too with the repertoires of ordinary memory. Those who have lost their nearest and dearest do not recall their departed in the manner of the monumental biographer, but through discrete images, a love of cats and flowers, a liking for particular cakes, watery eyes like Ignatius of Loyola. And those images, sufficient to themselves are yet images that (in the words of Yeats); "fresh images beget"; they refer or expand to other images not by syntagmatic structuring but by association, invocatively. For Barthes, never far from Proust, the biographeme reverberates with the pathos of lost time, and yet participates in its recovery. Barthes makes this clear in *Camera Lucida*: "... I like certain features which, in a writer's life, delight me as much as certain photographs; I have called these features 'biographemes'; Photography has the same relation to History that the biographeme has to biography."<sup>59</sup> Like the photograph of his mother so beautifully described later in that text, the biographeme is all that endures once a life has run its course: those moments that can be stilled, pictured - a bloated eunuch in a prison cell, a man dead among his flowerpots, a white muff worn on a night in 1768. What is modestly adumbrated here is a revaluation of biography, a new form of its writing which does not lie against temporality but accepts its conditions in a spirit of melancholy defiance.

In the preface to *Sade Fourier Loyola*, Barthes writes: "... were I a writer, and dead, how I would love it if my life, through the pains of some friendly and detached biographer, were to reduce itself to a few details, a few preferences, a few inflections, let us say: to "biographemes" whose distinction and

mobility might go beyond any fate and come to touch, like Epicurean atoms, some future body, destined to the same dispersion..."(9) This as we know is a task he was to set himself. In *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* the biographeme is conjoined with an autobiographical practice subject to a similar but more extensive reevaluation.

*Sade Fourier Loyola* is the decisive step away from the structuralist position Barthes adhered to in the 1960s, and along with *The Pleasure of the Text* makes a theoretical clearing for *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, *A Lover's Discourse* and *Camera Lucida*.<sup>60</sup> A rejuvenated conception of the author is the first move in this direction. To reintroduce the author and the author's life is to create a thaw in the cold dream of structuralist objectivity. Indeed, as the eudaemonist aesthetic comes to supplant the structural categories, the cohabitation of author and reader in the text becomes not only part of the text's pleasure but its "index":

Nothing is more depressing than to imagine the Text as an intellectual object (for reflection, analysis, comparison, mirroring, etc.). The text is an object of pleasure. The bliss of the text is often only stylistic: there are expressive felicities, and neither Sade nor Fourier lacks them. However, at times the pleasure of the Text is achieved more deeply (and then is when we can truly say there is a Text): whenever the "literary" Text (the Book) transmigrates into our life, whenever another writing (the Other's writing) succeeds in writing fragments of our own daily lives, in short, whenever a *co-existence* occurs. The index of the pleasure of the Text, then, is when we are able to live with Fourier, with Sade. To live with an author does not necessarily mean to achieve in our life the program that the author has traced in his books ... it is not a matter of making operative what has been represented, not a matter of becoming sadistic or orgiastic with Sade, a phalansterian with Fourier, of praying with Loyola; it is a matter of bringing into our daily life the fragments of the unintelligible ("formulae") that emanate from a text we admire ... it is a matter of speaking this text, not making it act, by allowing it the distance of a citation, the eruptive force of a coined word, of a language truth; our daily life then itself becomes a theater whose scenery is our own social habitat; to live with Sade is, at times, to speak Sadian, to live with Fourier is to speak in Fourier ... (7-8)

Much indeed is staked on the return of the author to this stage. With the founder of language, the acceptance of the author's life and *corpus*, "The Death of the Author" seems almost to belong to a different era. Yet, of course, it does not. In many respects they are contemporaries.<sup>61</sup> It is perhaps because of the disruptions that these two texts work upon each other that they rarely if ever meet in readings of Barthes. Little in fact tends to be written about *Sade Fourier Loyola*. Commentators have generally been happy to move from *S/Z* to *The Pleasure of the Text* thereby sidestepping the reopening of the authorship question that this text beseeches. Those that do alight here do so only briefly, and in order to focus on the "plural of charms" section which (as we noted above) involves only the gentlest of recantations, the most balletic *volte-face*. And when the idea of the logothete is addressed (as here under the imperatives of a review article) a distinguished theorist can proclaim, in the face of all that *Sade Fourier Loyola* says and does: "The author is no more than a mythic narrator to whom we attribute the meanings that successive generations have found in his text".<sup>62</sup> And the sole basis for this in the text? A footnote in which Barthes makes the commonplace observation that Sade cannot be held responsible for the effects his texts have had since he could not divine their destiny.<sup>63</sup> Contrariwise, on the few occasions when logothesis is given a fair hearing, "The Death of the Author" is nowhere to be found. Roland Champagne gives some space to the logothete, but only at the price of utterly suppressing "The Death of the Author". True enough, he does quote once from the essay, but in a manner that is far from faithful to context:

... Barthes began to realize ... that writing is an attempt by a writer to make his or her body perpetual in time. And Barthes would have all readers acknowledge that semiosis entails a plural mingling of components focused in a single gaze: "a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestations, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader..."<sup>64</sup>

Champagne breaks off the quote as though what follows is superfluous or irrelevant to the point being made. There are, however, only seven words needed to complete the sentence from which this is drawn. These are - "not, as was hitherto supposed, the author". Seven words, we note, which subvert Champagne's thesis here. Champagne also departs from his customary practice with *Image-Music-Text* and other collections of disclosing the essay or article in which his citation appeared. The note thus reads "30. *Image-Music-Text*, p.48", thereby avoiding any mention of "The Death of the Author". Annette Lavers in *Roland Barthes: Structuralism and After*, and Steven Ungar in *Roland Barthes: the Professor of Desire*, make no mention of "The Death of the Author" though, admittedly, neither do they devote any time to logothete. Phillip Thody mentions "The Death of the Author" twice, and calls a chapter "Logothetes, Pleasure and Sisyphus" though he evinces more interest in how the logothetes would behave at a cocktail party than in their activities as founders of language,<sup>65</sup> while Edith Kurzweil is driven to attribute the "new language" *Sade Fourier Loyola* speaks of to Barthes himself, and not to the logothetes: "... Barthes introduces his organizing codes in 'a new language that is traversed by natural language, but open to the semiological definition of a text...'"<sup>66</sup> As we know, the passage she cites runs: "The language they found is ... a new language, but open only to the semiological definition of Text."(3)

Commentators will not confront "The Death of the Author" and *Sade Fourier Loyola* because to do so would seem to risk running into aporia or incoherence. There is an unwillingness here to accept the very antilogism that is so lauded in Barthes, an unwillingness to relinquish the idea of order in his discourse. A discourse which, let it be remembered, could quite conceivably be grounded in uncertainty, in the confusion of a mind before the contradictory possibilities that its unbridled intelligence has opened up. Little heed is

thus taken of that maxim of Andre Gide's which Barthes claimed has governed his own writing life - "incoherence is preferable to a distorting order".<sup>67</sup> There is, though, one very important sense in which the logothetic description is faithful to everything Barthes has written, a sense in which we might discover what is meant by the death of the author and his precipitous return.

### Mimesis and the Author

Little is denied the logothete: an irreducible singularity, the power to found languages, a biography, an oeuvre, all fall to his bailiwick. What Barthes will not allow to his founders, however, is any representational significance in their discourses, any content: Sade without evil, Fourier without socialism, Loyola without God, these are the postulates upon which the study commences. In this we might find an explanation of Barthes's seemingly insurmountable inconsistencies on the author question. Why is it that he will allow full authorial rights to some authors - a class to which belong the logothetes, Michelet, Proust, Bataille - and deny it to others, most notably Balzac? Why is it that he can disparagingly write "The *author* still reigns in histories of literature, biographies of writers, interviews, magazines",<sup>68</sup> and yet praise Painter's biography of Proust saying, "I was very impressed by his Proust because Painter was the first to rehabilitate a real interest in the private life of Proust himself and no longer simply in the characters of his novel"?<sup>69</sup> Of Sade, Barthes writes:

Although every creation is of necessity combinative, society, by virtue of the old romantic myth of "inspiration", cannot stand being told so. Yet this is what Sade has done: he has opened up and revealed his work (his "world") like the interior of a language ... the Sadian combinative (which is in no way, as has been said, that of *all* erotic literature) can seem monotonous to us only if we arbitrarily shift our reading from the Sadian discourse to the "reality" it is supposed to represent

or imagine: Sade is boring only if we fix our gaze on the crimes being reported and not on the performances of the discourse.

Likewise, when, no longer invoking the monotony of Sadian criticism, but more frankly the "monstrous turpitudes" of an "abominable author", we come, as does the law, to ban Sade for moral reasons, it is because we refuse to enter the sole Sadian universe, which is the universe of the discourse. Yet on every page of his work, Sade provides us with evidence of concerted "irrealism" ... Being a writer and not a realistic author, Sade always chooses the discourse over the referent; he always sides with *semiosis* rather than *mimesis*: what he "represents" is constantly being deformed by the meaning, and it is on the level of the meaning, not of the referent that we should read him. (36-7)

And in the "Preface" it is underlined that " ... if Sade, Fourier, and Loyola are founders of a language, and only that, it is precisely in order to say nothing, to observe a vacancy (if they wanted to say *something*, linguistic language, the language of communication and philosophy, would suffice: they could be *summarized*, which is not the case with any one of them)." (6) Barthes, here as everywhere, is denying the reduction of language to any representational aesthetic. In *Criticism and Truth*, in "The Death of the Author", in *S/Z* too, indeed whenever the removal, death or diminution of the author was called for, the disavowal of an instrumentalist conception of language was not far behind. Nor is this unique to Barthes. Historically, the death of the author has always found itself in complicity with anti-representational poetics. For Mallarmé the two movements were contiguous, as for the Russian Formalists and New Critics who also saw the removal of the author as part of the process which disemburdened literature of any dependence on extratextual contexts. In the structuralist movement this collusion is taken to the further stage of seeing language as constitutive of both the 'reality' the text feigns to represent and the authorial subject who purports to be its source. The reasons why the death of the author should be caught up on the closure of representation are often not as explicitly stated as might be wished.

The concept of the author is by no means static, immutable. Not only the much cited case of the Medieval conception of authorship but those of 2nd century B.C. Alexandria and the exegeses of the Early Church Fathers testify to this.<sup>70</sup> Likewise, the placement of the author within a representational aesthetic is not at all the same in an era in which representational modes are not in the ascendent. Within the thought of representation the author is called upon to perform certain specific functions. A text viewed as the achievement of a particular representational aim is necessarily tethered to its author in that it must pass thorough his figure to be referred to its alleged objects. A scene of representation is thus predicated of the text which becomes its adjunct and often the model by means of which commentary or explication is judged to have succeeded or failed in its operations. Thus *Oliver Twist* is referred to the Poor Laws, *Bleak House* to Chancery, a model of intention is extracted from Dickens's life as it is adumbrated in his letters, his activities in the law are researched and conjectures are made as to his state of mind at the time of writing. In this way criticism is forced to be perpetually lagging behind the designs and dictates of the author whilst the work's language is seen as the simple means towards a referential end. Language, in this process, is devalued to the status of an instrument, a passive, mediative phenomenon which has no part to play in the construction of this anterior realm of reality-as-given. Correspondingly, the break with the author effects a severance of the text from its putative referential obligations, and allows language to become the primary point of departure and return for textual apprehension and analysis. No longer reduced to a unilateral system of conformities with the "world", no longer reduced to a "single message", the text is opened to an unlimited variety of interpretations. It becomes, in short, *irresponsible*, a ceaseless braiding of differences in which any sense of "the truth of the text", its original meaning in the world,

is overrun by untrammelled significative possibilities. This is the message - indeed the "single message" of "The Death of the Author". To wit, that the abolition of the author is the necessary and sufficient step to bring about the end of a representational view of language, for it is only through the function of the author as the possessor of meaning that textual language is made obeisant to an extratextual reality. Barthes states this quite dramatically in *S/Z* under the rubric of "The Mastery of Meaning":

The *author* is always supposed to go from signified to signifier, from content to form, from idea to text, from passion to expression; and, in contrast, the *critic* goes in the other direction, works back from signifiers to signified. The *mastery of meaning*, a veritable semiurgism, is a divine attribute, once this meaning is defined as the discharge, the emanation, the spiritual effluvium overflowing from the signified toward the signifier: the *author* is a god (his place of origin is the signified); as for the *critic*, he is the priest whose task is to decipher the Writing of the god.<sup>71</sup>

- and nicely describes the futile shuttling between author and critic, encoder and decoder when it operates in this rudimentary manner. But here, as in other instances, he must overstate his case, and, again, theological overtones supervene upon the author question. The acme of representation, the ideal of verisimilitude hearkened towards by the proponents of "pure realism", casts the author in a role far removed from that of the divinity. As we have said, mimeticist criticism must pass through the figure of the author in order to arrive at the objects of representation. Yet, in a purely mimeticist view, these objects are sufficient to themselves: the author is merely the conduit or point of passage in this procedure, that neutral someone who records and observes without subjective biases or predilections of any kind. Marks of intention and desire will perforce taint this process which aspires to a state of pure immediacy, perfect translation, to the realization of a language which acts innocently as a window onto the world. Authorial presence here constitutes a transgression, it can only cast a shadow on the text of *vraisembl-*

*able*, can only colour the window through which it looks. The purely mimeticist text could certainly do without the author; indeed its greatest good might be something like the self-effacement of the author in the act of writing. Witness Émile Zola formulating the theory of pure realism:

The novelist is but a recorder who is forbidden to judge and to conclude. The strict role of a savant is to expose the facts, to go to the end of analysis without venturing into synthesis; the facts are thus: experiment tried in such and such conditions gives such and such results; and he stops there; for if he wishes to go beyond the phenomena he will enter into hypothesis; we shall have probabilities, not science. Well! the novelist should keep equally to known facts, to the scrupulous study of nature, if he does not wish to stray among lying conclusions. He himself disappears, he keeps his emotion well in hand, he simply shows what he has seen. Here is the truth; shiver or laugh before it, draw from it whatever lesson you please, the only task of the author has been to put before you the true data ... One cannot well imagine a chemist becoming incensed with a zote, because this body is injurious to life, or sympathizing with oxygen for the contrary reason. In the same way, a novelist who feels the need of becoming indignant with vice, or applauding virtue, not only spoils the data he produces, for his intervention is as trying as it is useless, but the work loses its strength; it is no longer a marble page, hewn from the block of reality; it is matter worked up, kneaded by the emotions of the author, and such emotions are always subject to prejudices and errors. A true work will be eternal, while an impressionable work can at best tickle only the sentiment of a certain age.<sup>72</sup>

Indeed realist theory only comes to assign a significant role to the author when it has drifted from the ideal of pure mimesis, as the represented field opens to admit the moods, personality and experiences of the author as subjective being. Nor, indeed, is it difficult to imagine arguments to the effect that the decline of representation opens a space of greater authorial creativity as the writer becomes less and less bound to the objects of representation. We are, after all, more inclined to see creativity in a Picasso than in a Turner. Descriptive language, as Barthes is quick to point out, is an obstacle to creativity. Sade read for "contents" becomes "tedious" or "abominable". We could also, with little effort, imagine Barthes arguing for subjectivity against Zola's scientific realism, arguing, that is, for the author

against the kind of authorial abnegation promoted by *The Experimental Novel*.<sup>73</sup>

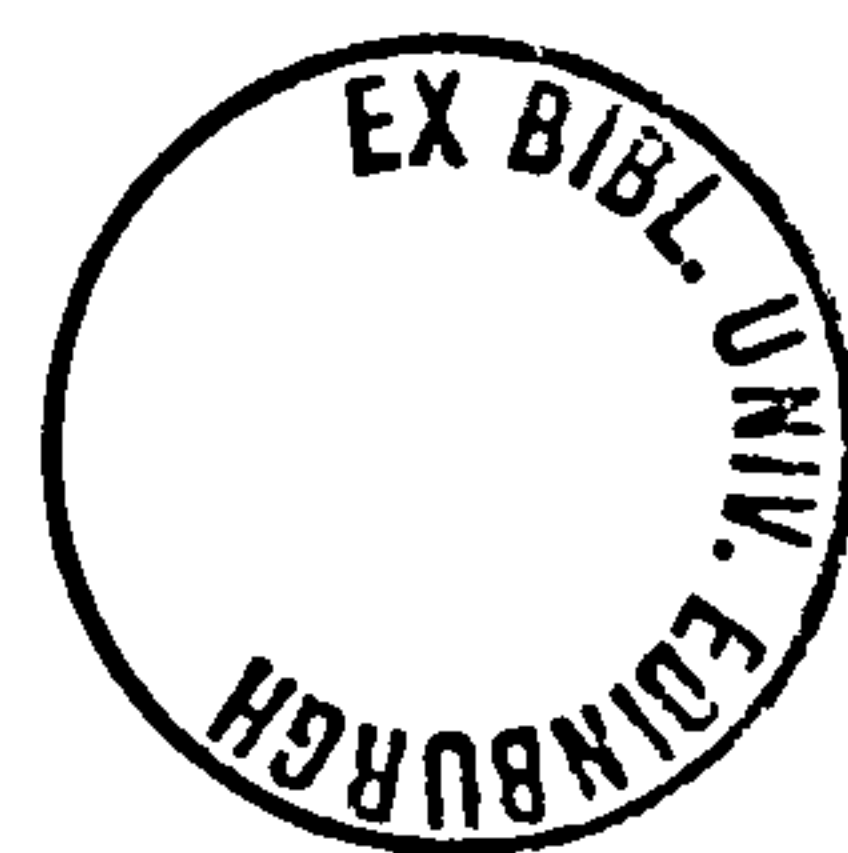
It is not meant to suggest here that the concept of the author does not endorse a representationalist view of the text. What is clear, however, is that the author is not the *cause* of a representational apprehension of literature - this cause is, at risk of sounding imbecilic, an instrumentalist conception of language. Rather the authorial role is mediative in this process, that of a bridge or portal between text and world. Quite apart from being the God who dwells in the signified, he is merely the *agent of verisimilitude*. This should give some pause to those - Barthes is by no means alone here - who would justify the death of the author in terms of the closure of representation. Given the secondariness of the author in this referential process, might not the proposition be reversed? Might not it be claimed, *a fortiori*, that the abandonment of a representationalist aesthetic renders the death of the author needless? Or, to put it another way, that the concept of the author exceeds the functions given within a representationalist aesthetic? Certainly, this would seem to be part of the meaning of the death and return of the author in Barthes's work. As we know, the deconstruction of verisimilitude continues long after the return of the author has been announced, author and Text being no longer set in opposition to one another. Moreover, the authors of texts which make no claim to a representational "truth" - Mallarmé, Sollers, Bataille, Robbe Grillet, etc. - are accepted without reserve. Their work is seen as the product of an intention to create the discontinuous, a-referential, pluralistic text. While Barthes will berate recourse to the intentions of a Balzac, he will accept the intentions of others while they are directed toward the creation of non-naturalistic modes of writing:

... one can according to one's mood read Sade, Proust, by "skipping", according to the moment, this or that of their languages ... the plural of the text is based on the multiplicity of the codes, but it is ultimate-

ly achieved by the ease with which the reader can "ignore" certain pages, this ignoring somehow being prepared for and legalized beforehand by the author himself who has taken pains to produce a *perforated* text so that anyone "skipping" the Sadian dissertations will stay within the truth of the Sadian text. (135)

The dangers of intention, as those of author-centred criticism in general, are not intrinsic but in its objects. The text in which Barthes realized that the idea of the author is not an evil in itself is also the text in which the deconstruction of *vraisemblable* reaches its apogee. It is for this reason that *S/Z* is the text of the death and the return of the author.

"The Death of the Author", as we have remarked, was the early programme of *S/Z*. Indeed it might have been called "The Death of Balzac" or "The Death of the Realist Author". In *S/Z*, the death of the author consists in reading against Balzac's intention to foist the illusion of the real upon the baroque and abyssal tale of the castrato and the sculptor. To this end, Barthes uses the considerable powers at his disposal to denature and denude "Sarrasine", to unveil all the artifices and ruses by way of which it lies its way to "naturalness". Very much has been written about the strategies Barthes deploys in this reading, and he is often called to account for the vagueness of the distinction between the readerly and the writerly, the lack of specificity in his articulation of the five codes, their overlapping, inexhaustiveness, etc. But such criticisms are for most part cavils. That *S/Z* is a successful reading is borne out by the fact that it is impossible to read "Sarrasine" innocently after Barthes. We might read Jacques Lacan's "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'", and admire its thesis (or, for that matter, Derrida and Barbara Johnson in reply to Lacan), but it is not difficult thereafter to approach Poe's tale from a non-psychoanalytic purview, Lacanian or otherwise.<sup>74</sup> With *S/Z*, however, Barthes justifies his opening hyperbole: "We shall therefore star the text, separating, in the manner of a minor



earthquake, the blocks of signification of which reading grasps only the smooth surface, imperceptibly soldered by the movement of sentences, the flowing discourse of narration, the 'naturalness' of ordinary language ... ".<sup>75</sup>

Unlike any other of Barthes's texts, *S/Z* works accretively: it is a war of attrition against the "reality effect" in "Sarrasine". It is perhaps because of inexorable forward momentum that commentary on *S/Z* rarely rises above the level of merely "adding pitiful graffiti to an immense poem"<sup>76</sup> The best commentary on *S/Z* would indeed be its reproduction; it belongs to that class of writing that precludes any sort of faithful summary. What is interesting from our point of view, however, is that *S/Z* conjoins the two enduring principles of "The Death of the Author", these being the refusal of an instrumentalist conception of language, and the promise of the "birth of the reader", though it does so with unexpected results. As Barthes journeys through "Sarrasine" exposing the devices and conventions and the vast network of cultural assumptions that underpin and generate the 'naturalness' of Balzac's tale, he reveals that that which calls itself the classic or readerly is a writerliness that dare not speak its name. What is also revealed here is that in removing "Sarrasine" from its scene of representation and in lodging it in the realm of the "already written", Barthes is, as he pledged, producing the text, rewriting it, so to speak, before Balzac, before the dead hand of the author began to naturalize it. The deconstruction of representation and the birth of the reader thus run concurrently. What is retrieved from the real is rendered unto the reader; as the reading grows, representation recedes. And when Barthes has come as far as he can toward demonstrating that "it is no longer possible to *represent*, to make things *representative*",<sup>77</sup> when he has come as close as anyone has to fulfilling the promise of the birth of the reader that closes "The Death of the Author", we might be forgiven for anticipating the

triumphal declaration of the death of the author as achieved both in theory and in practice.

Yet, this is precisely what does not occur. As with other mythical sacrifices, resurrection and rebirth are not long in coming. When a text no longer speaks the language of representation, the death of the author becomes gratuitous. This is why the death of the author need never be raised in connection with writerly texts, why Barthes does not explain what purpose authorial extirpation might serve in the cases of Genet, the later Joyce, Proust, Bataille etc. This is why, too, *Sade Fourier Loyola* can attempt to "release Sade, Fourier, and Loyola from their bonds (religion, utopia, sadism)", (9) and talk about the return of the author in the same breath; why Sade, "a writer and not a realistic author", Sade who "always sides with *semiosis* rather than *mimesis*" is such an exemplary figure in the renewal of the author. If a text has been "unglued" of its referentiality, its author need not die; to the contrary, he can flourish, become an object of biographical pleasure, perhaps even a "founder of language". What Roland Barthes has been talking of all along is not the death of the author, but the closure of representation. We need not be surprised, then, that "The Death of the Author" belongs to the early stages of *S/Z*. Nor that it is at the end of *S/Z* - when Barthes has amassed 210 pages and 89 divigations devoted to returning the readerly to the writerly, the real to the unreal - that the return of the author is announced. When the scene of representation has dissolved around him, Balzac can come back, an author of texts, no longer a scribe of reality. His work no more "a channel of expression" but a "writing without referent".<sup>78</sup> It is for this reason that the death of the author and the annunciation of his return can occur in such perversely close proximity. With representation annulled, the crimes of the author are absolved, and even the arch-realist Honoré Balzac can receive a stay of execution. Barthes recognized as much over the course of a "two-year

seminar ... at the Ecole pratique des Hautes Etudes",<sup>79</sup> a seminar that is itself the time of the death of the author, the interregnum between *S/Z* as work-in-progress and realized project; the time spanning divigation 74 ("The Mastery of Meaning"), and divigation 90 ("The Balzacian Text"), a mere moment.

Like Barthes, the Russian critic, Mikhail Bakhtin clearly saw the need to oppose representational and theocentric conceptions of the text. For Bakhtin, the traditional idea of authorship was entirely inapposite to the work of writers such as Rabelais, Swift and Dostoyevsky, whose novels he characterized as polyphonic, i.e. novels in which the authorial voice does not dominate other textual voices. Bakhtin did not therefore proclaim the death of the author, however, but instead rewrote the idea and function of the author in accordance with the modalities and structures of the polyphonic novel. The author, in this pluralistic mode of writing, was not to be conceived as an extratextual, annunciative being, but rather as that voice amongst the many which holds together the polyphonic strands of the text's composition; an author who "resides within the controlling center constituted by the intersection of the surfaces".<sup>80</sup> Nor, either, is the dialogic author in any way estranged from the workings of his text: "Our point of view is not at all tantamount to asserting a kind of passivity on the part of the author ... The author is profoundly active, but this action takes on a specific dialogic character".<sup>81</sup> The author does not need to be the God of epic monologism to be an author. One can be the author of one's own undoing, and no less an author thereby: "Dostoyevsky, like Goethe's Prometheus, creates not voiceless slaves (as does Zeus), but rather free people who are capable of standing beside their creator, of disagreeing with him, and even of rebelling against him."<sup>82</sup> And Dostoyevsky, surely, is not a lesser creator as a consequence.

Bakhtin's revision of the conception of authorship is by no means exhaustive, in particular no account is taken of the relationship between an author's work and life, and even as an intratextual picture, dialogic theory has only a limited applicability. However, in recognizing that a deist representation of the author was no longer tenable, and in reworking the idea of the authorship in terms of this carnivalesque and proto-modernist writing, Bakhtin evolved a sense of the author which kept pace with a changing literary situation. Crucially, he thus admitted a principle which is all-too-often absent in discussions of the author question. To wit, that author-text relations are subject to variations both historical and structural, an acceptance which obviously tends away from the crudely universalist assumptions on which "The Death of the Author" is predicated. Barthes, in saying that the death of the author is true for all authors and all writing had spoken truly - not for all authors and all writing - but for the underlying *raisonne* of the structuralist movement in general.

The removal of the author and the subject was at once the gesture which allowed structuralism to flourish, and condemned it to fail in its avowed aims. The dream of universal structural categories could only be pursued at the cost of denying subjectivity outright, the authorial subject had to be removed from the field of discourse entirely. Structuralism thus assigned itself to a perpetually foredoomed quest, forever aspiring to say "this is what the world and its language are like" when all it had permitted itself to venture was "this is what the world and its language would be like if there were not subjectivity". The deaths of the author and subject are by no means certified through this procedure. Quite to the contrary, that which was to be proved assumed the status of a given within this eristic itinerary, one no less inductionist than the very empiricisms structuralism set out to supplant.<sup>83</sup> And in attempting, in "The Death of the Author" to dignify this exclusion, to con-

firm and justify it as a necessary absence which inheres in the world and the text, Barthes essentially could find no path upon which to strike out. How could the removal of the author function as anything other than a provisional reduction, how could it be asserted other than in the manner that a speculative science prescribes only what is true and not true *of itself*? Speaking for the sister science of semiotics, Umberto Eco admits that the exclusion of the subject cannot rise above the level of being a simple exigency:

Semiosis is the process by which empirical subjects communicate, communication processes being made possible by the organization of signification systems. Empirical subjects, from a semiotic point of view, can only be defined and isolated as manifestations of this double (systematic and processual) aspect of semiosis. This is not a metaphysical statement, but a methodological one; physics knows Caesar and Brutus as spatio-temporal events defined by an interrelationship of elementary particles and must not be concerned with the motivation of their acts, nor with ethical evaluation of the result of these acts. Semiosis treats subjects of semiotic acts in the same way: either they can be defined in terms of semiotic structures or - from this point of view - they do not exist at all.<sup>84</sup>

The absence of the subject, as Eco suggests, is true only to the extent that it is required in order that the semiotic science may be founded and elaborated. And, as Eco is well aware, the subject, in its absence, will always be the blind-spot in semiotic theory, which will henceforth justify itself by its results rather than in terms of its grounding premises.

In an era in which a new methodology announces itself, there is doubtless a need to clear the ground, to establish the space of its emergence, and this necessity will often take the form of an iconoclasy that believes that it is breaking irrevocably with preceding institutions. So it was with the new criticisms of the 1960s: the author and its hypostates - biography, the oeuvre, autobiography - are outlawed to make way for a lingocentric theory and reading practice, just as semiotics was obliged to dispense with the complex problems of the speaking subject in order to get itself off the ground. Tenets

such as the death of the author, the death of the subject, are presented as truths, "truths" which are nothing more than the spur and wager of their necessity to a movement that is not absolute but part of a broader process of reevaluation, reappraisal. The Russian Formalists forbade recourse to the author likewise in the interests of founding a science of literature. By this exclusion they hoped to disburden the text and criticism of the text of any answerability to "contents", of any obligations to the aesthetics of representation. However, the further they progressed in the direction of a non-representational theory and criticism, the more they came to find that their researches put the validity, and even the efficacy of authorial exclusion under question. Thus, in time, the Russian Formalists were to seek ways of reinscribing the author without default on their commitment to the autonomy of literary language. What Barthes and the Russian Formalists came to realize is this: that the closure of representation neither necessitates the exclusion of the author, nor can be achieved on its basis. The removal of the author opens a provisional space wherein the methodology can be developed, but once the methodology has been established, it must either return to take stock of that which it has excluded, make reparations, revisions, or continue to neglect the question of the author<sup>at</sup> the cost of remaining regional, selective, inadequate to the literary object.

The representational aesthetic has been under attack at least since the time of Mallarmé, and the more radical critical schools to appear during this century, those of the Russian Formalists, the Anglo-American New Critics, the structuralists and deconstructionists, have - to greater and lesser degrees - rejected mimesis in favour of the textual language in and for itself. Indeed, it would not be the boldest stroke to suggest that we have entered a postrepresentational era: certainly, in any case, no-one any longer takes seriously the ideal of pure realism. Correspondingly modernist and

postmodernist fiction has moved further and further from realist modes.<sup>85</sup> The theoretical recognition of this development has not only proceeded on the high roads of structuralism and poststructuralism, but is also to be found in the quieter work of conventional aestheticians. John Hospers' *Meaning and Truth in the Arts* is as good a guide as any to the inherent contradictions in the doctrine of representation.<sup>86</sup> The decline of representation has been signaled also in the reworkings to which Marxist critical theory has been subject in the last quarter-century. Having moved beyond Lukács's reflection model, Marxist thought has come to assert that language is not so much expressive as constitutive of social and cultural realities, thereby maintaining the text's interaction with its historical and infrastructural conditions whilst avoiding the corollary obligation to discover the principles of that interaction in the representational function of textual language. The later work of Michel Foucault is also of the greatest significance in the quest for non-representational structures by which textuality can be related to the social and ideological ground of its determination. With Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man the denial of representation takes the form of a thoroughgoing epistemological skepticism which relentlessly questions the basis and validity of imputing any properties of presence or re-presentation to textuality.

Barthes began his career by radically redefining the Marxist relation to textuality, and the work of recent Marxist revisionists is retraceable to *Writing Degree Zero*, as to the moment at which language rather than its objects was introduced as the determining factor in a literary text's engagement with the social and historical conditions of its emergence. Later in his career Barthes's lifelong hostility to representation began to ally itself cursorily with the conclusions reached by Derrida and de Man, yet the reasons for Barthes's espousal of a language of pure differences could scarcely themselves be more different. As we have seen, Barthes's concerns are far from epis-

temological; if anything, his objection to representation is moralistic. That is to say, that what he spent a writing life challenging is what we might call the ethics of representation, the ways in which a society transforms culture into nature and thereby stamps its products with the seal of authenticity. Accordingly, he works to expose the concealed mechanisms by which representational ethos imposes itself, to dissipate *vraisemblable*, rather than to subject the philosophy of language underpinning such an aesthetic to rigorous scrutiny. This is the burden, too, of texts which have not concerned us here, *Mythologies* in particular. Advance pointing to your mask (*larvatus prodeo*), this is all Barthes finally asks of any system, any work of art or literature, and it is for this reason that his labours are more disentropic than iconoclastic.

In *On Racine* he had looked to criticism of the author, and had disputed its validity not on the grounds that the author was dead or irrelevant to criticism, but in point of its dishonesty in concealing the essentially subjective nature of such an activity. Author-centred criticism, he concluded, was as admissible as any other form of criticism provided that it no longer contorted in empty posturings of self-justification, so long as it became "the mask of several living obsessions".<sup>87</sup> In a way, the return of the author traces such an itinerary, a movement toward a freer, more figurative reading practice in which the former categories of consciousness, narrative, imagination and the real are displaced by the body, the fragment, the imaginary and the unreal, in which criticism of the author no longer foists the illusion of the natural upon itself and its readers. Like Bakhtin before him, Barthes's return of the author takes the form of a certain rewriting of our conceptions of authorship, but one which does not prescribe what can and cannot be said about the author, but rather calls into question the manner of our saying. Hence the return of the author can be a return to the cardinal points of auteurist

criticism - creativity in language, the author's life and work. And Barthes was to submit the autobiographical to this revaluation as the birth of the reader and the *return* of the author came to find themselves in yet further complicity.

## Autobiographies

*... today the subject apprehends himself elsewhere, and "subjectivity" can return at another place on the spiral: deconstructed, taken apart, shifted, without anchorage: why should I not speak of "myself" since this "my" is no longer "the self"?*

Roland Barthes<sup>88</sup>

In the parable "Borges and I", Jorge Luis Borges describes a division between person and author, private and public self. The tale is ostensibly told from the point of view of the "I" its title, the everyday, empirical self, he who will "walk through the streets of Buenos Aires and stop for a moment, perhaps mechanically now, to look at the arch of an entrance hall and the grillwork on the gate."<sup>89</sup> This narrator regards Borges as the "other one", the one who exists "on a list of professors or in a biographical dictionary".<sup>90</sup> He confesses that he lives "only so Borges may contrive his literature".<sup>91</sup> The parable ends as though these two aspects of the self, at once so near and so alien to one another, have finally come together: "Years ago I tried to free myself from him and went from the mythologies of the suburbs to the games with time and infinity, but those games belong to Borges now and I shall have to imagine other things. Thus my life is a flight and I lose everything and everything belongs to oblivion or to him. I do not know which of us has written this page."<sup>92</sup> And this ending contains a further twist. Perhaps, as with "the games with time and infinity", Borges has wrested from the narrator the last

of his belongings, the very voice of his autumnal lament as "Borges and I" becomes yet another work of the author, Jorge Luis Borges.

All this takes place over the course of a single page. *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* signals a similar division in its title, and strives to maintain it over 188 pages. There is the Barthes who will "eat a plum, take a piss", there is the Barthes who appears in the form of a *curriculum vitae* at the end of the book, there is the "R.B.", the "he", and the "I". Much is made of these four selves, but in essence *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* the book of the two subjects of its title - the Roland Barthes who is writing, and the Roland Barthes who is written about (the "he" and the "R.B." belonging to this later, written subject). Throughout, Barthes takes great pains to prevent the writer of the autobiography from merging with his subject/object: "I had no other solution other than to *rewrite* myself - at a distance - a great distance, here and now ... Far from reaching the core of the matter, I remain on the surface, for this time it is a matter of 'myself' (of the Ego); reaching the core, depth, profundity, belongs to others." (142) In insisting upon, in cultivating this dehiscence, *Roland Barthes* would seem to be breaking the timehonoured autobiographical contract - that the self writing and the self written on should be one and the same self. This has led many to see Roland Barthes as "pseudo-autobiography", or as announcing the end of autobiography. The fragment, "The Natural", relays this troublesome divergence of subjects as well as any other:

The illusion of the natural is constantly denounced ...

We might see the origin of such a critique in the minority situation of R.B. himself; he has always belonged to some minority, to some margin - of society, of language, of desire, of profession, and even of religion ... who does not feel how *natural* it is, in France, to be Catholic, married, and properly accredited with the right degrees? ...

Against this "natural", I can rebel in two ways: by arguing, like a jurist, against a law elaborated without me and against me ... or by wrecking the majority's Law by a transgressive avant-garde action. But he seems to remain strangely at the intersection of these two rejec-

tions: he has complicities of transgressive and individualist moods. This produces a philosophy of the anti-Nature which remains rational, and the *Sign* is an ideal object for such a philosophy: for it is possible to denounce and/or celebrate its arbitrariness; it is possible to enjoy the codes even while nostalgically imagining that someday they will be abolished: like an intermittent *outsider*, I can enter into or emerge from the burdensome sociality, depending on my mood - of insertion or of distance. (130-1)

This passage certainly poses a problem of reading in that it would appear to posit a multiplicity of subjects. Yet, were we to substitute first-person pronouns for the third person, and to convert reported speech into direct speech, the above fragment would read quite simply as an autobiographical meditation distinguished mainly by its author's acuity, and gift for self-analysis. It is, therefore, in its pronominal economy that *Roland Barthes* is most markedly set off from conventional forms of autobiography: "The so-called personal pronouns: everything happens here, I am forever enclosed within the pronominal lists: 'I' mobilize the image-repertoire, 'you' and 'he' mobilize paranoia ... ". (168) However, in subverting this autobiographical etiquette, *Roland Barthes* does not break with the deep structures of the autobiographical *récit*. Rather, it engages with them in a more direct manner than does the customary autobiographer. That the author of the autobiography and the subject of the autobiography should cleave from one another is little to wonder at. The author of an autobiography cannot plainly *be* the subject of his past. As Mikhail Bakhtin puts it:

Even if the author-creator had created the most perfect autobiography, or confession, he would, nonetheless have remained, in so far as he had produced it, outside of the universe represented within it. If I tell (orally or in writing) an event that I have just lived, in so far as *I am telling* (orally or in writing) this event, I find myself already outside of the time-space in which the event occurred. To identify oneself absolutely with oneself, to identify one's "I" with the "I" that I tell is as impossible as to lift oneself up by one's hair ... <sup>93</sup>

Even given an ideal autobiographical scenario - that of the author who is engaged in a continual and self-reflexive autobiographical writing, a peren-

nial diarist whose only concern is with the act of diarizing - there would always be a hiatus, both spatio-temporal and ontological between he who writes, and what is written. This division is inescapable. Obviously, this is not to say that there is no possibility of commerce between the two subjects - far from it - only that these two subjects cannot be regarded as consubstantial in space and time. Bakhtin is not the first to realize this, nor is Barthes the first to incorporate this problematic division into the actual act of writing an autobiography. The great autobiographers, Augustine, Montaigne, Rousseau, Voltaire, all took some account of this bifurcation. Montaigne writes:

I cannot fix my subject. He is always restless, and reels with a natural intoxication. I catch him here, as he is at the moment when I turn my attention to him. I do not portray his being; I portray his passage; not a passage from one age to another or ... from seven years to seven years, but from day to day, from minute to minute. I must suit my story to the hour, for soon I may change, not only by chance but also by intention. It is a record of various and variable occurrences, an account of thoughts that are unsettled and, as chance will have it, at times contradictory, either because I am then another self, or because I approach my subject under different circumstances and with other considerations. Hence it is that I may well contradict myself, but the truth ... I do not contradict<sup>94</sup>

In order to stay within the truth of self-writing, Montaigne must accept that the self written about is no longer present to the self writing. If we take account of the personal pronouns in this passage, it is quickly apparent that they twist between Montaigne the author, and Montaigne the subject of the autobiography. The only substantial difference between this operation and those of *Roland Barthes* is that Montaigne does not deem it necessary to telegraph this separation by replacing "he" or "M.M." for those personal pronouns that signify the Montaigne as theme of the *Essays*. That Montaigne then sought to bring these two subjects into a certain accord does not mean that he had become any less aware of their requisite divergence, no more

than Augustine ever lost sight of the fact that the writer of the *Confessions* was not homoiousian with the seventeen year-old who entered the cauldron of Carthage.<sup>95</sup> But whilst Montaigne sought to think his way through this division, and Augustine contained it within a narratorial distance, Barthes directs all energies to maintaining this breach at the level of the utmost visibility. The fragments or (auto)biographemes are subjected to the strategy of alphabetical ordering, and the alphabetical sequence is syncopated so as to ward off the possibility of any unintentional narrative emerging from the concatenation of fragments. This regimen of randomness is programmed to prevent any naive identification of the Bartheses. Yet the text admits that this strategy is not successful:

I have the illusion to suppose that by breaking up my discourse I cease to discourse in terms of the imaginary about myself, attenuating the risk of transcendence; but since the fragment ... is *finally* a rhetorical genre and since rhetoric is that layer of language which best presents itself to interpretation, by supposing I disperse myself I merely return, quite docilely, to the bed of the imaginary. (95)

It is only at the close of *Roland Barthes*, however, that Barthes's text can relax its vigilance, and allow its two subjects to converge. Like virtually all autobiographies, *Roland Barthes* offers a final and dwindling promise of assignation, much like the one intimated at the end of "Borges and I". Conventionally, as the tale's telling draws to a close, the past of the subject and the present of the writing draw ever closer, the text begins to talk of here, now, for the future. Yet this moment is always already in recession, the vanishing point at which the two subjects meet and as soon slip away, as in the *Recherche* which closes as its writing begins. This is one convention that *Roland Barthes* cannot but affirm:

And afterward?

- What to write now? Can you still write anything?
- One writes with one's desire, and I am not through desiring. (188)

It is at this point, and only at this point, that we can confidently say that we do not know which subject has written this page, as it is, too, when Augustine commends himself to his Lord God at the end of the *Confessions*, or Stephen Dedalus journeys into the exile in which James Joyce was to write *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.<sup>96</sup>

This division of subjects does precisely the opposite of disqualifying *Roland Barthes* as autobiography. The only autobiographies that can elude this division are those that proceed according to the conviction that all time is everpresent.<sup>97</sup> "What right", Barthes asks, "does my present have to speak of my past?"(121), and answers this question at another point in the text via another question: "... why should I not speak of 'myself' since this 'my' is no longer 'the self'?" (168) As with biography, as with the idea of the oeuvre, Barthes has no objection to autobiography when it is uprooted from its naturalistic setting, whilst it is accepted that the past subject of the text cannot be spirited *in all its reality* into the here and now of the text's composition. It is again the duplicities of representation that are put under question. In this case, the legerdemain by which the hand that writes seeks to efface itself in the interests of re-presenting the past as an immediate reality. To see the demise of autobiography in *Roland Barthes* is quite simply to affirm a greatly simplified conception of the autobiographical act, as though once the autobiographical becomes troublesome it disappears, as though when a genre or mode of writing advertizes its inherent problematics it is thereby denying or destroying itself. The foregrounding of the artifice in *Tristram Shandy* did not lead Victor Shklovsky to infer the death of the novel, rather he proclaimed Sterne's work "the most typical novel in world literature".<sup>98</sup> Jacques Derrida, in his more recent work, has warned against the tendency to confuse the complexities of autobiography with its "impossibility" or "death":

... the line that could separate an author's life from his work ... becomes unclear. Its mark becomes divided; its unity, its identity be-

comes dislocated. When this identity is dislocated, then the problem of the *autos*, of the autobiographical, has to be totally redistributed ... if one gets around to wondering ... about the status of the autobiographical, then one has to ask whether one will understand the autobiographical in terms of this internal border ... or instead rely on the standard concepts prevailing throughout tradition. Once again, one is faced with a division of the *autos*, of the autobiographical, but this doesn't mean that one has to dissolve the value of the autobiographical récit. Rather, one must restructure it otherwise on the basis of a project that is also biographical or thanatographical.<sup>99</sup>

Derrida made these remarks at a "Roundtable on Autobiography" following a paper he delivered on Nietzsche, and, indeed, it is unfortunate that neither he nor any other of the participants got around to mentioning Barthes's text here, since *Roland Barthes* would seem to match, point for point the revaluation outlined: the division of the *autos*, the redistribution of the autobiographical in terms of the biographical and thanatographical - "*I am speaking about myself as though I were more or less dead*" (168) - and the crosscutting of *corpora*, the body of work and body of the writer. Indeed, this text would seem to be leading the way in the theory of the autobiographical, since, in raising rather than seeking to solve the problems of self-life-writing, it allows those problems to emerge with clarity, a clarity which is not to be found in attempts to submit the autobiographical to rigid generic definitions nor in the resistance of those who find the problems of the autobiographical so vertiginous that they are led to conclude that no such thing exists. And where Barthes will always be a little ahead of the pure theoreticians of autobiography is in producing a text which is at once a rigorous critique of the conventions and undergirding assumptions of autobiographical discourse, and itself an autobiography of peculiar economy and richness. Those who are interested will discover that Barthes has never read the Hegel to whom his theoretical discourse made recourse, that he likes salad, cinnamon, Glenn Gould, having loose change, walking in sandals, that he doesn't like white Pomeranians, women in slacks, Miro, tautologies,

telephoning; that he had at one time intended to write books with the titles *The Discourse of Homosexuality, A Life of Illustrious Men, Incidents*; that, for him, there is never self-restoration only self-writing, that several episodes of pre-pubescent sexuality occurred in his garden at Bayonne, that he dreams of arising in the early morning. All this, and more, without ever, finally, writing *Roland Barthes par lui-même*.

Derrida might also have had *Roland Barthes* in mind when he wrote of the enigmatic connection and separation that pertains between the writer's life and work: "This divisible borderline traverses two different 'bodies', the corpus and the body, in accordance with laws we are only beginning to catch sight of."<sup>100</sup> From the first written page of *Roland Barthes*, where it is said - " ... you will find here, mingled with the 'family romance', only the figurations of the body's prehistory - of that body making its way toward the labor and the pleasure of writing" - to the concluding "Anatomie", the ideas of writing the body, and the body writing, dominate the discourse. However, somewhat typically, Barthes, refuses to clarify either what is meant or at issue here. The fragment "Ellipsis" is both a beautifully direct and elliptical example of this:

Someone questions him: "You wrote somewhere that *writing proceeds through the body*: can you explain what you meant?"

He realizes then how obscure such statements, clear as they are to him, must be for many others. Yet the phrase is anything but meaningless, merely elliptical: it is an ellipsis which is not supported. To which may be added here a less formal resistance: public opinion has a reduced conception of the body; it is always, apparently, what is opposed to the soul: any somewhat metonymic extension of the body is taboo. (80)

The idea of the body of the writer had been with Barthes from the outset. In *Writing Degree Zero* it is said that style is biological;<sup>101</sup> *Michelet* is concerned with the themes of body in the historian's work; in *Sade Fourier Loyola*, the oeuvre is seen as a body of pleasure, and the biographeme is likened to crema-

tion ashes; in *The Pleasure of the Text*, textuality is seen as the site of an erotic communion of the bodies of reader and writer. Barthes is well aware that this theme varies dramatically from text to text, though this instability, he feels, is an index of its significance:

In an author's lexicon, will there not always be a word-as-mana, a word whose ardent, complex, ineffable, and somehow sacred signification gives the illusion that by this word one might answer for everything? Such a word is neither eccentric nor central; it is motionless and carried, floating, never *pigeonholed*, always atopic (escaping any topic), at once remainder and supplement, a signifier taking up the place of every signified. The word has gradually appeared in his work; at first it was masked by the instance of Truth (that of history), then by that of Validity (that of systems and structures); now it blossoms, it flourishes; this word-as-mana is the word "body". (129)

Yet no sooner does Barthes disallow the word any fixed meaning than he makes the most daringly constative claim on its behalf: "How does the word become value? At the level of the body." (130) Once again "body" arises via an "ellipsis which is not supported": once again Barthes cunningly tempts us to ask what the "body" means or what it does in his discourse.

Barthes declares that the prime influence on (or "intertext of") *Roland Barthes* is Nietzsche, and the most influential Nietzschean text will be *Ecce Homo* with which Barthes's autobiography has decidedly elective affinities.<sup>102</sup> *Ecce Homo*, as well as being a text which forces a serious generic reevaluation of the autobiographical, is also the text in which Nietzsche repeatedly recapitulates his insistence on the biologicistic, physiological basis of the drive to knowledge. For Nietzsche, the emphasis on the body is avowedly autobiographical, as it is with Barthes, but it is also firmly tied to a primary philosophical objective. Nietzsche utilized the theme of the body to conduct a biologicistic challenge to Christian idealism which he characterized as a slave morality, a fettering of the strong in health by the weak via the erection of otherworldly, spiritual ideals. Part of the reevaluation of all values, as Nietzsche conceived it, was to deconstruct the duality mind-body, to assert

the biological as the source of all thought, of all values and judgements. Barthes, too, in asserting the body as the source of value, in mooted a "materialist theory of the subject" in *The Pleasure of the Text* would seem to be continuing this aspect of the Nietzschean revaluation, the assertion of an epiphenomenalism which sees consciousness as a by-product of matter and thereby refuses the mind-body distinction. Yet, even on this point, Barthes is thoroughly inconsistent. Within *The Pleasure of the Text*, he maintains the opposition between mind and body which no materialism can suffer: "The pleasure of the text is that moment when my body pursues its own ideas - for my body does not have the same ideas I do",<sup>103</sup> an idea that is perpetuated in various ways in *Roland Barthes*. Roland Champagne suggests that the insistence upon the body is an attempt to reverse the traditional privileging of consciousness over unconscious determinations in literature, as indeed we might expect it to be.<sup>104</sup> However, again nothing is to be that simple, for, of all contemporary theorists, Barthes is peculiarly uninterested in the unconscious, his concerns being rather with the surface play of signification rather than the depths from which it may have emerged. Furthermore, the body in his works, dictates conscious scenarios, the fantasy rather than the dream. Champagne, though, we recall, does say that "Barthes came to realize that writing is an attempt by the writer to make his body perpetual in time", and this is far more persuasive, particularly since *Roland Barthes* is the epic fulfillment of *Sade Fourier Loyola's* desire: "... were I a writer, and dead, how I would love it if my life, through the pains of some friendly and detached biographer, were to reduce itself to a few details, a few preferences, a few inflections, let us say: to 'biographemes' whose distinction and mobility might go beyond any fate and come to touch, like Epicurean atoms, some future body, destined to the same dispersion ...".<sup>105</sup>

We notice that the return of the author came to be associated with the mortality of the author, just as "The Death of the Author" never took account of the author as anything other than a strange deist abstraction inimical to high (post)structuralism. In attempting to conjoin the body of writing to the body writing - "The *corpus*: what a splendid idea! Provided one was willing to read *the body* in the corpus ... " (161) - *Roland Barthes*, for an instant, brings together those parts of the author that are destined to the most irrevocable sundering. And so it was to be with Roland Barthes. Were we friendly, detached and painstaking enough, and were we to have written a "Life of Barthes", we might at some point have said:

*His body*: subject of inscriptions, of desire, of discourse, "mana-word"; this body expired a few weeks after being run down by a laundry truck on a pedestrian crossing outside the Sorbonne.

Barthes's *corpus* is as alive and as well as that of any post-War writer, as is his biography. The author of the author's death became a celebrity in France, an enthusiastic interviewee on television, the radio, for newspapers; he went on to write two confidently autobiographical works, texts which were not autobiographies but autobiographical, books of feeling, impressions, of the self; he talked, we know, of writing a novel, a "Proustian novel".<sup>106</sup> Upon his death he became the subject of many obituaries, most gracefully those written by Susan Sontag who described his later work as "the most elegant, the most subtle and gallant of autobiographical projects."<sup>107</sup> Sontag, too, who had twelve years earlier declared that "... only if the ideal of criticism is enlarged to take in a wide variety of discourse, both theoretical and descriptive, about culture, language and contemporary consciousness, can Barthes be plausibly called a critic."<sup>108</sup> Balzac did not die as a result of *S/Z*. He is as alive now as he ever has been since his death in 1850, yet - through *S/Z* - the idea of the reader as producer of the text was born. Harold Bloom may or may not be right when he says that personality "cannot be voided except

by personality, it being an oddity (perhaps) that Eliot and Barthes matter as critics because they are indeed critical personalities",<sup>109</sup> just as Oscar Wilde may or may not have been right when he proposed that criticism is the only civilized form of autobiography.<sup>110</sup> Yet might we not venture that the birth of the reader is not achieved at the cost of the death of the author, but rather at that of showing how the critic *too* becomes an author?

## Chapter Two

# The Author and the Death of Man

Critical positions which argue the irrelevance of the author will invariably propose determinist theories if they are concerned to discover alternative models of the constitution of discourse. The work of Michel Foucault is no exception. Within his prodigious text, *The Order of Things*, Foucault attempts the formidable task of presenting a history of thought within which the role of individual thinkers over some 450 years of discourse is entirely subject to impersonal forces.<sup>1</sup> The determinism that Foucault promulgates is, superficially at least, akin to Marxist critique in that it is periodized into self-regulating historical structures. The statements, the texts, the philosophical systems and sciences of any given era will obey a prediscursive network of coherencies and rules of formation which constitutes the most fundamental level of knowledge. The congruences and isomorphisms which we perceive in an epoch, and which we rather vaguely experience as the spirit or common purpose of an age, are, in fact, emanations of a strict, rigid, epistemological substructure which undergirds and delimits the entire historical ensembles under survey.

This configuration is not to be confused with *zeitgeist* or *weltanschauung*, which are simply its visible emanations, in the form of the atmosphere in which thought is conducted, or the community of moral, ethical and metaphysical perspectives at a particular time. So far from being a supervenient paradigm, or analytic reduction of the mass of discourse, the epis-

temological arrangement is the ground and possibility of thought itself, the potency of which the discourse of the age is an actualization. To this system of relations Foucault gave the name *episteme*; to the science of its recovery, "archaeology". It is not the surface structures of history that are the object of study, but the epistemological substrates upon which the great spectacle of Western discourse has been constructed. At this level, the role of individual authors is no more than that of epistemic functionaries. Their work will not just be subject to a profound and subterranean influence, its very essence and existence is determined by the epistemic configuration:

... it was the sign system that linked all knowledge to a language, and sought to replace all languages with a system of artificial symbols and operations of a logical nature. At the level of the history of opinions, all this would appear, no doubt, as a tangled network of influences in which the individual parts played by Hobbes, Berkeley, Leibniz, Condillac, and the "Ideologues" would be revealed. But if we question Classical thought at the level of what, archaeologically, made it possible, we perceive that the dissociation of the sign and resemblance in the early seventeenth century caused these new forms - probability, analysis, combination, and universal language system - to emerge, not as successive themes engendering one another or driving one another out, but as a single network of necessities. And it was this network that made possible the individuals we term Hobbes, Berkeley, Hume, or Condillac. (63)

Like *Madness and Civilization* before it, *The Order of Things* accepts the conventional demarcation of post-Medieval history into the Renaissance, the Classical age, and the modern age.<sup>2</sup> Nor, of itself, is Foucault's determination of the essential structures of knowledge in these eras particularly radical. The Renaissance is seen to be constructed around the scholastic theory of resemblances; the Classical age around the theory of representation and the system of signs; the modern age to be compassed by the ethic of subjectivity. What distinguishes Foucault's treatment is the absolute and reciprocal impenetrability he assumes between these eras, his refusal of the possibility of any significant influence carrying over from one *episteme* to

another. The *epistemi* are fully coherent within themselves, and yet entirely discontinuous with each other. The homogeneity of the *episteme* is therefore a factor of the heterogeneity of the *epistemi*, and vice versa. There can be no thought of man in the Classical era, as equally there can be no thought within the modern age which is not, at base, thinking of man.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, the *episteme* of the Renaissance is constituted by the impossibility of thinking within the categories of representation, just as the Classical era is formed by the complete disappearance of the theory of resemblances from its horizons. Consequently, just as the epistemic arrangement exercises absolute determinative power during the era which it undergirds, so too, when it disappears, it disappears entirely, leaving no residue but the remotest nostalgia for a lost order. It is here that *The Order of Things* swerves signally from dialectical histories in that such models imply some conservation of the forms of the superseded era through the synthesis of its contradictions, or the negation of the negation. For Foucault, however, the hiatus is absolute, irresolvable, acausal. Each *episteme* is the complete cancellation of the previous *episteme*. This point is axial, and all the more so in that it forms the basis for *The Order of Things*' most audacious and most memorable proposition.

Man only came into being as the subject of knowledge in 1800, and this opening is marked by Kant who introduced the anthropological question to philosophical reflection.<sup>4</sup> However, the centrality accorded to man in the new arrangement of knowledge established not the unity of the subject but his division. Indeed this division arises as soon as the Kantian question "What is man?" is asked, for both an interrogated and an interrogating subject are immediately and inherently posited. The subjects occupy, respectively, the roles of the empirical object of knowledge, and the elevated subject who is the house or the condition of possibility for that knowledge. Man thus becomes "a strange empirico-transcendental doublet... a being such that

knowledge will be attained in him of what renders all knowledge possible".  
(318)

This conflict between the transcendental and the intraworldly is also reflected in man's precarious relationship with the unthought, for the further modern consciousness has probed the underlying reality of things, the more it has unearthed of its other in the forms of the in-itself, social determinations, and the unconscious. Through its advances, the sovereign *cogito* serves to illumine ever greater reaches of the darkness within which it is engulfed.<sup>5</sup> As Foucault puts it, in a sublime formula: "... modern thought is advancing towards that region where man's Other must become the Same as himself". (328) And there is no doubt that this contradictory and hubristic situation is described with a detached savour; the implication is there for all to see that the collapse of confident humanist categories is augured. But Foucault does not actually argue the end of man on the basis of these intrinsic contradictions in the anthropological arrangement: rather such contradictions are held to be inaugurally constitutive of the era of man. The argument for the death of man is to proceed on quite different lines. Simple lines, which run as follows. If man was only constituted in 1800, if he is a "recent invention" contemporaneous with the modern *episteme*, then (archaeologically) it must be that once the modern *episteme* is over, man will disappear every bit as surely as did the Classical theory of representation at the end of the eighteenth century. In the "Preface" this is stated directly:

Strangely enough, man - the study of whom is supposed by the naive to be the oldest investigation since Socrates - is probably no more than a kind of rift in the order of things, or, in any case, a configuration whose outlines are determined by the new position he has so recently taken up in the field of knowledge. Whence all the chimeras of the new humanisms, all the facile solutions of an "anthropology" understood as a universal reflection on man, half-empirical, half-philosophical. It is comforting, however, and a source of profound relief to think that man is only a recent invention, a figure not yet two centuries old, a

new wrinkle in our knowledge, and that he will disappear again as soon as that knowledge has discovered a new form. (xxiii)

However, this proleptic summary neglects to mention the force of implication in Foucault's text, its consistently subtle and guarded hints that this disappearance is here, now and today in the offing. Even as he writes, signs are abroad (the unification of language in structural analyses against its dispersion in subjectivity, together with more enigmatic portents such as the irruption of desire and death into discourse) that another epistemic cataclysm is brewing, that the ground is once more stirring under our feet. If this is so - and Foucault does everything to *suggest* that it is - then man will be lost to knowledge in a movement not only inevitable but expeditious. Indeed at one point the text is moved so far as to say that: "It is no longer possible to think in our day other than in the void left by man's disappearance." (342) The thought of the 1960s thus finds itself at the crossing, poised in prospect of the end of anthropocentrism and the beginning of a counterhumanist age. It is at this point that the story of *The Order of Things* ends, and its writing begins.

The idea of man as the author of his own works is hereby prey to a double assault. In the first place, the role of individuals in the production of discourse is considered the purest of contingencies in respect of the immanent rules of formation which govern the parameters and systematicity of the entire archive of a given historical period. For the second, the recently-constituted *episteme* in which man is figured as the subject of his knowledge, of his writing, of his actions and their history, is seen to be coming to a close: "Man", conceived of as subject or object, is "in the process of perishing".(386) Our concern will be with these two deaths, and later with the question as to whether they are one and the same death. Initially, though, we will be concerned to follow the transindividual precept as it functions within *The Order*

*of Things*, and then to chart a re-entry of the author into this text. Two operations involving the author are thereby postulated, those of exclusion and inclusion, operations which we will mark by the indices "Descartes" and "Nietzsche" respectively. We will also attempt to argue that these operations - in principle so different - work toward a common end.

### *Cogito and the Birth of Man*

*Up to Merleau-Ponty there is almost no French philosopher of the modern period who was not, in the most fundamental sense, "Cartesian".*

James Edie<sup>6</sup>

*Discourse ... is so complex a reality that we not only can, but should, approach it at different levels and with different methods.*

Michel Foucault<sup>7</sup>

Upon publication of *The Order of Things*, one of its passages in particular attracted considerable attention, an attention certainly in excess of its content and, perhaps also, of the seriousness with which it was intended. "At the deepest level of Western knowledge", Foucault wrote, "Marxism introduced no real discontinuity ... Marxism exists in nineteenth-century thought like a fish in water; that is, it is unable to breath anywhere else." (261-2) Marxism, he continues, "may have stirred up a few waves and caused a few surface ripples; but they are no more than storms in a children's paddling pool." (262) And, Lord knows, these contentions swiftly met with ample and indignant redress from the French left, as, too, Hegel's absence from archaeology was contested by certain parties. Foucault's dismissive treatment of Descartes, too, has often been noted, but has yet to be subjected to serious scrutiny.

Approaching *The Order of Things*, a central text by a thinker who - in his opposition to the constitutive role of consciousness, dualism, rationalism, the autonomy of the subject - is so manifestly anti-Cartesian, we might be forgiven for anticipating some declaration of the necessity of breaking with the

Cartesian influence that has for so long held sway over French philosophy. A rupture, too, not dissimilar from the closure of the Platonic era that Jacques Derrida at that time was cautiously advocating. But such grandly epochical thought is precisely what *The Order of Things* is contracted to resist at every turn. Descartes is a figure constituted in the interstices of a specific configuration of knowledge, the Classical system of representation, and there can be no transposition of the ideas of the *Discourse on Method* or the *Meditations* into any era not governed by this arrangement. The philosophy of Descartes is separated from the modern *episteme* by an unbridgeable rift in the order of things which occurred at the beginning of the nineteenth century when Classical representation disintegrated allowing the anthropological era to commence. If the thought of *The Order of Things* is then anti-Cartesian, it is not so in the sense of discovering a form of thought which evades or challenges the Cartesian epistemology, but rather in that it denies that there is any such thing as Cartesianism at all. It is, we might say, "aCartesian".

Foucault does pay a certain tribute to Descartes, though strictly as his discourse flourished *in situ*. The criticism, in the *Regulae*, of the Renaissance theory of resemblances is seen as an important and exemplary moment in the transition to the Classical system of representations.<sup>8</sup> But Descartes' contribution to the Classical order itself is held to be of no especial significance: "This new configuration may, I suppose, be called 'rationalism'; one might say, if one's mind is filled with ready-made concepts, that the seventeenth century marks the disappearance of the old superstitious or magical beliefs and the entry of nature, at long last, into the scientific order." (54) Two pages later Foucault writes: "Under cover of the empty and obscurely incantatory phrases 'Cartesian influence' or 'Newtonian model', our historians of ideas are in the habit of ... defining Classical rationalism as the

tendency to make nature mechanical and calculable." (56) The Cartesian and Newtonian discourses, so far from being central to an understanding of the Classical science of order are rather considered to be obstacles to the study of this arrangement at its deepest level. Foucault then proceeds to depose Descartes and Newton at a single stroke. Mathematics and mechanics, it is argued, had little impact on Classical science of order. What is claimed, simply, is that since there are no traces of mathematicization or mechanization in the emergent empirical sciences of general grammar, natural history, and the analysis of wealth, and since these discourses did reflect the science of order, then the mathematics and mechanics of Descartes and Newton are lateral and nugatory in respect of the fundamental structure of classical science.<sup>9</sup> Foucault's reasoning here is plainly exiguous, and it is easy to see how this syllogism could be reversed in favour of Descartes and Newton with equally desultory and repressive results for the new empiricisms.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless (however tardily) this disengagement is achieved and Foucault develops his brilliant analysis of the Classical Age untroubled by the Cartesian question.

As it would happen, it is only when Foucault comes to depict the modern era that the ghost of this repression comes to haunt *The Order of Things*. This may seem surprising in that archaeology canonically rejects the possibility of conceptual exchange between *epistemi*, and the more so since Descartes belongs to the earliest stages of the Classical period and is therefore as far removed from modernity as a Classical thinker might be. Yet while it is ambitious enough to disconnect Cartesianism from the founding of a Classical science of order, it is still more so to declare its irrelevance to the narrative that is imposed upon the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. What does it mean, in a text concerned with the birth and death of the subject of knowledge to disregard the Cartesian *cogito*? To talk of man arriving - as

sovereign and transcendental subject - *only* in 1800 and with the Kantian analytic? To disconnect the *cogito* from any ideas we might have had about man-as-subject? Absent throughout the discussion of the Classical *episteme*, the *cogito* is at last brought forward as Foucault locates the place of the King, the enthronement of man as sovereign subject and spectator within the lacuna left by the breakdown of Classical representation. But brought forth not as that which lay dormant for one and a half centuries, not as a principle that might have guided Immanuel Kant in his search for the transcendental conditions of knowledge: rather, these two subjects, *cogito* and transcendental ego, are to be regarded as radically other, formulations whose similarities are entirely superficial:

... Classical language, as the *common discourse* of representation and things, as the place within which nature and human nature intersect, absolutely excludes anything that could be a "science of man". As long as that language was spoken in Western culture it was not possible for human existence to be called in question on its own account, since it contained the nexus of representation and being. The discourse that, in the seventeenth century, provided the link between the "I think" and the "I am" was accomplished in the light of evidence, within a discourse whose whole domain and functioning consisted in articulating one upon the other what one represents to oneself and what is. It cannot therefore be objected to this transition either that being in general is not contained in thought, or that the singular being as designated by the "I am" has not been interrogated or analysed on his own account. Or rather, these objections may well arise and command respect, but only on the basis of a discourse which is profoundly other, and which does not have for its *raison d'être* the link between representation and being. (311-12)

Given the immense difficulties of perpetrating an absolute dissociation of the Cartesian *cogito* and the modern idea of the subject of knowledge, and given the haste with which this thesis is dispensed, Foucault writes with considerable felicity. His argument, too, is clear. "I think" is equivalent to representation; "I am", naturally, to being. In the Classical *episteme* representations were inseparable from "the living, sharp, perceptible

presence of what they represent" (262), the order of words was fully transparent to the order of things, the structures of perception one with the forms of their percepts. In linking the *cogito* to the *sum*, Descartes is doing no more than link that which the *historical a priori* of Classical thought had conjoined in advance and in anticipation of Descartes, and of his "Second Meditation". For Kant, however, the situation was of a completely different order. The transcendental subject arose from the abrupt, profound and irrevocable divorce between representation and being, consciousness and its objects. Thus any judgement passed upon the *cogito* which assumes a hiatus between the representing subject and the alleged objects of its representation belongs to a Kantian or post-Kantian epistemology, and thus thoroughly contravenes the essential epistemic conditions of the *cogito's* articulation. For we of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, we who live far beyond the unity of representation and being, our thought is no longer able to conceive or imaginatively recapture such an order. To see any appurtenance between the *cogito* and the transcendental subject of Kantian analytics is to haplessly concatenate modernity and a radical, antediluvian alterity. Kant's critique submitted what was unproblematically assumed in Cartesianism - that "nature and human nature intersect" - to the most emphatic scepticism. For Descartes, for whom representation and being, nature and human nature, were one, problems of this order did not exist. Not, that is, until we turn to the pages in which the *cogito* was first constructed.

The pages that form Descartes' "Second Meditation" are probably the most scrutinized of all philosophical demonstrations, and it is therefore very perplexing that Michel Foucault should work this particular interpretation upon them. Far from resting on the simple identity of representation and being, the formulation of the *cogito* begins from subjecting the assumption that the mind has any objects to represent to absolute scepticism: "Everyth-

ing I have accepted up to now as being absolutely true and assured, I have learned from or through the senses. But I have sometimes found that these senses played me false, and it is prudent never to trust entirely those who have once deceived us." <sup>11</sup> Such a scepticism does not halt at questioning the existence of the exterior world but elicits doubt as to the existence of the subject who doubts. But this second phase of doubt, in many respects the more drastic of the two, is the more remediable within the Cartesian theory of knowledge. The evil demon, as we know so well, is eluded because his deceits can only take effect upon a being who is being deceived; even if I am deluded as to the existence of everything around me, and to the form, nature and quality of my own existence, I am nonetheless the being which subsists, suffers and perpetuates in its delusion. As it is written:

... I had persuaded myself that there was nothing at all in the world: no sky no earth, no minds or bodies; was I not therefore, also persuaded that I did not exist? No indeed; I existed without doubt, by the fact that I was persuaded, or indeed by the mere fact that I thought at all. But there is some deceiver both very powerful and very cunning, who constantly uses all his wiles to deceive me. There is therefore no doubt that I exist if he deceives me; and let him deceive me as much as he likes, he can never cause me to be nothing, so long as I think I am something. So that, after having thought carefully about it, and having scrupulously examined everything, one must then, in conclusion, take as assured that the proposition: *I am, I exist*, is necessarily true, every time I express it or conceive of it in my mind. <sup>12</sup>

Nothing, whatsoever, is herein presupposed of the connection between representation and being. What the conjunction of the "I think" and the "I am" attests is that existence can be validated in complete independence of the veracity (or falsity) or existence of any representations at all. Even if this world, these hands, these eyes, this chair-beside-the-fire in which I sit, are all void, I nonetheless, as thinking subject, exist. The *cogito* does not begin from the connection between representation and being, nor does it (of itself) link representation and being. For this immense - if not impossible - task, an

agency vastly more powerful is summoned, and it is thus that the meditating subject proceeds to construct an ontological argument for the existence of God.<sup>13</sup> Yet even from here, having established these two mighty certitudes, Descartes still did not feel that his representations were to be trusted. Only innate ideas, self-evident truths, those of mathematics, and ideas that possessed clarity and distinctness such as the laws of physical bodies, are vouchsafed by, and for, the subject; the senses are "accustomed to pervert and confound the order of nature, the world which they indicate remaining, *a profundis*, "most obscure and confused", and necessarily unknown to the knower.<sup>14</sup>

As is evident, the inverse of Foucault's proposition not only can, but must be averred by a reading of the *Meditations*: only a discourse which could not assume the unity of representation and being could be driven to link the "I think" and the "I am", for if representation and being were one, there could be no doubt as to the verity of the representations that the meditating subject makes to himself, and thus no necessity for the work of the *cogito* to get underway. Neither, if what Foucault says were the case, would the *cogito* require the *deus ex machina* to guarantee its representations, nor would non-representational truths be the only truths thus guaranteed. Indeed the *cogito*, in itself, questions whether there is any such thing as representation.<sup>15</sup> The subject doubts the existence of all phenomena outside itself, even the body in which it is purportedly housed, and representation, understood in whatever sense, obviously cannot be in the absence of objects. As *The Order of Things* itself prescribes: "... only judgements derived from experience or empirical observations can be based upon the contents of representation."(242) One is left to question the intelligibility of statements such as the "discourse that in, the seventeenth century, provided the link between the 'I think' and the 'I am' was accomplished in the light of evidence,

within a discourse whose whole domain and functioning consisted in articulating one upon the other what one represents to oneself and what is." Evidence, the empirical, is what the *Meditations* refuses at every stage. It is, Descartes says, by "the light of reason" that he attempts throughout to proceed, a strictly non-empirical, self-evidencing reason which neither trusts nor recurses to the contents of representation. It is no coincidence either that, in seeking to prove the existence of God, the arguments forwarded by the "Third Meditation" were not *a posteriori* - such as the argument from design by which it is asserted that God represents himself in the world - but *a priori* formulations.<sup>16</sup>

*The Order of Things* thus delivers a reading of the Cartesian *cogito* quite at variance with its construction in the *Meditations*. The "I think" is connected with representation when, in the Cartesian demonstration, the "I think" is deprived of any necessary connection with its (presuppositional) objects of representation. Foucault knows these things as well as any, yet to grant Cartesianism its customary dues, to connect, as in the mass of philosophical histories, the Cartesian and Kantian subjects would disturb both the integrity of the Classical *episteme* in which the subject is necessarily absent, and that of the modern *episteme* in which sovereign subject "Man" arrives as an absolutely unprecedented figure. If any continuity were to be allowed between the two subjects then either certain premonitory privileges would be accorded to Descartes, or the *epistemi* would relinquish their status as founding, entirely distinct, historical structures: both of which, on the face of it, would seem to amount to one and the same concession. But Descartes, so casually passed over in the era to which he belonged, is to appear once more in Foucault's account of modernity. And we should not be surprised that this reappearance takes place in the context of Husserlian phenomenology, nor that it is the differences rather than the similarities between the *cogito*

of Descartes and that of Husserl which *The Order of Things* is destined to declare:

It may seem that phenomenology has effected a union between the Cartesian theme of the *cogito* and the transcendental motif that Kant had derived from Hume's critique; according to this view, Husserl has revived the deepest vocation of the Western *ratio*, bending it back upon itself in a reflection which is a radicalization of pure philosophy and a basis for the possibility of its own history. In fact, Husserl was able to effect this union only in so far as transcendental analysis had changed its point of application (the latter has shifted from the possibility of a science of nature to the possibility for man to conceive of himself), and in so far as the *cogito* had modified its function (which is no longer to lead to an apodictic existence, starting from a thought that affirms itself wherever it thinks, but to show how thought can elude itself and thus lead to a many-sided and proliferating interrogation concerning being). Phenomenology is therefore much less the resumption of an old rational goal of the West than the sensitive and precisely formulated acknowledgement of the great hiatus that occurred in the modern *episteme* at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. If phenomenology has any allegiance, it is to the discovery of life, work and language; and also to the new figure which, under the old name of man, first appeared less than two centuries ago; it is to interrogation concerning man's mode of being and his relation to the unthought. (325)

Like so much of *The Order of Things* this passage is compact, beautifully sculpted, and seemingly brimful with significance. However, the litotic argument is far from achieving the finality which it arrogates to itself. Adapted to syllogism, it states that: (1) what appears to be a Kantian legacy "has shifted from the possibility of a science of nature to the possibility for man to conceive of himself"; (2) the Husserlian *cogito* differs essentially from that of Descartes in that it no longer leads "to an apodictic existence" but to a "many-sided and proliferating interrogation concerning being"; (3) "therefore" phenomenology does not repeat or synthesize Cartesian and Kantian themes, and has far more in common with the discourse on life, labour and language which appeared at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Thus we are to think that what was said earlier - "... the modern *cogito* is as different from Descartes' as our notion of transcendence is remote

from Kantian analysis ... " (324) - has been demonstrated. Yet even given these questionable premises, it is difficult to see how they could necessitate the conclusion, to see why we must therefore regard Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* as having more common ground with the work of Cuvier, Bopp and Ricardo than with the *Meditations* of Descartes. A great deal more in the way of explanation is required, but what is offered is a further "conclusion" from the above. Foucault directly continues:

This is why phenomenology - even though it was first suggested by way of anti-psychologism, or, rather, precisely in so far as, in opposition to anti-psychologism, it revived the problem of the *a priori* and the transcendental motif - has never been able to exorcise its insidious kinship, its simultaneously promising and threatening proximity, to empirical analyses of man; it is also why, though it was inaugurated by a reduction to the *cogito*, it has always been led to questions, to *the* question of ontology. The phenomenological project continually resolves itself, before our eyes, into a description - empirical despite itself - of actual experience, and into an ontology of the unthought that automatically short-circuits the primacy of the "I think". (325-6)

The inference we are to make here is, presumably, that since the intentionality of consciousness, as understood by Husserl, must be consciousness of something, then phenomenology was bound to predicate an extramental, empirical realm. But the predication of such a realm is by no means tantamount to its empirical description, and to call a system "empirical" which (however unsuccessfully) brackets off that realm in the interests of elaborating a pure philosophy of consciousness, involves a considerable extension of what we understand by an empirical science. By the same criteria, any system which incorporates some acceptance of a real, physical world exterior to consciousness would be empirical, or nearly so. Only pure mathematics, formal logic and extreme immaterialist and solipsistic theories would elude this definition. And Foucault shows no interest in explaining quite what is meant here; as earlier, the dissociation is hurried and didactic. Certainly there is nothing in this passage (whose two parts we have divided above) to suggest

that phenomenology has any stronger allegiances than to the scheme of *The Order of Things*. Phenomenology is akin to the empirical sciences, and not to the *cogito* of Descartes, *because* man and his empirical study commenced in 1800: beneath the curliques and clauses, there is no other proposition.

This is not to say that it is mistaken, or wayward to point up the differences between the *cogito* of Husserl and that of Descartes. It would, indeed, be naively ahistorical to regard transcendental phenomenology as a simple continuation, or worse, completion of the Cartesian project, and to thereby seal over the vast interregnum that separates the seventeenth century of the *Meditations* from the twentieth century of Husserlian phenomenology. And it would be equally foolish to suppose that the problem of the unthought that faced Descartes was of the same cast as those confronting theories of consciousness today. Yet to question this continuity is not to erase the wealth of compelling similarities that persists: that both begin from the assumption that consciousness is, and then proceed to ask what consciousness can determine of the conscious being and its other: that eidetic intuition and clarity and distinctness, Husserlian bracketing and Cartesian doubt perform powerfully analogous functions. And, most decisively, it does not prohibit the acceptance of differences far beyond those adduced by Foucault whilst articulating them on the basis of revisionism. A revisionism, moreover, expressed in all its aberrant fidelity by the founder of phenomenology himself: " ... one might almost call transcendental phenomenology a neo-Cartesianism, even though it is obliged - and precisely by its radical development of Cartesian motifs - to reject nearly all the well-known doctrinal content of the Cartesian philosophy".<sup>17</sup>

This inability to brook any degree of revisionism or influence outwith *epistemi* strikes at the heart of *The Order of Things*. Since Foucault cannot contain the homologues between the Cartesian *cogito* and the subjects of Kant

and Husserl within a modest paradigm of essential conceptual appurtenances (and no less essential historical differences) he is obliged to pursue drastic strategies of dissociation. Phenomenology must be called an empirical science in order not to be Cartesian, the *cogito* must be misread in terms of representationalism in order not to be Kantian. These difficulties stem from archaeology's determination - at this stage - to promulgate absolutely rigid, internally coherent and reciprocally exclusive historical/epistemic structures. During its period of experimental development, the science of archaeology - like so many other emergent methodologies - attempts to totalize its own inceptive operations. In order to stake its ground, archaeology must refuse to confer, in whatever spirit of supersessive cooperation, with traditional approaches to the history-writing of ideas, though, in so doing, it is led to remould that history in a less persuasive way than if it had made certain, limited concessions to conventional notions such as influence, revision.

The phenomenological issue exemplifies these difficulties acutely. Foucault is, on the one hand, contracted to review the phenomenological enterprise since it is the most splendid efflorescence of the subject in the modern, anthropological era and, at the same time, it is poised over the immense and threatening abyss of the unthought. The phenomenological *cogito* is thus at the pinnacle of the anthropological *episteme* yet perched before the greatest descent, thus speaking most acutely for the contradictory and hubristic situation in which modern man discovers himself. However, the Cartesian inheritance unsettles the very ground of the epistemic determinism upon which these beautiful and tenebrous formulations rest. Particularly so here as the further we move into modernity the greater the threat of Cartesianism becomes, a Cartesianism which can not only be taken up 150 years after its founding in the form of a transcendental subject of knowledge, but also survives another century to be revived with Edmund Husserl. And

this is still further compounded by the fact that Descartes also has some stake in Renaissance thought. For Foucault, the Renaissance began in 1500 and ended in 1660. 1650, we recall, was not the year Descartes was born but the year in which he died. If the *epistemi* are not vague conceptual abstractions but, as *The Order of Things* everywhere insists, firmly anchored historical units, then Descartes, as a matter of historical and archaeological necessity, belongs to the Renaissance and his thought - in so far as it is Classical - will therefore again be premonitory and precocious.<sup>18</sup> The author of the *cogito*, as critic of scholastic resemblance, as Classical rationalist, as harbinger of the Age of Man, would then impinge upon each and every one of the *epistemi*. Were this not ominous enough, there are further reasons why Cartesianism must be repelled.

For one - though this may seem somewhat incidental - the autobiographical framework within which the *cogito* is elaborated would pose certain problems for Foucault. The *Meditations* requires that for the time of the demonstration the reading subject insert himself into the Cartesian biography, that he follow Descartes in his quest of certainty, that he sit within that uncertain body by that uncertain fire and confront the evil demon. As Descartes suggests, the trials and triumphs of the *Meditations* are experiences which the reader must make his own. And indeed it is this purely autobiographical structure - which is the structure also of *The Discourse on Method* - that delivers the *cogito* from the brink of solipsism. If the reading subject installs himself within the meditating subject, if he becomes Cartesian, then the *cogito* effectively declares "I think, therefore we exist" While the *cogito* is true for Descartes then it is also true for anyone who wishes to faithfully participate in its unfolding. And that an inalienably autobiographical act should become founding act of the sciences of consciousness, this is an archetype that archaeology can scarcely afford to acknowledge. Jacques

Derrida asks of Freud and psychoanalysis: "... how can an autobiographical writing, in the abyss of an unterminated self-analysis, give to a worldwide institution *its* birth?".<sup>19</sup> A similar question could be put to Descartes and the sciences of the subject.

Moreover, in lodging the philosophical dissertation within an autobiographical narrative, Descartes was not propagating an eccentric or eclectic mode. To the contrary, he was writing within a well-established discursive tradition, one which not only found monumental expression in the *Essays* of Montaigne, but informed the whole host of *mémoires* that appeared in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This phenomenon, or discursive field, cannot (archaeologically or otherwise) be detached from the post-Medieval insurgence of interest in man, in bringing scientific and philosophical knowledge into harmony with personal experience and practical conduct. It also coincides with the seminally ethnological studies to be found in the records of generals, missionaries and explorers, an ethnologism which appears in Descartes' own work, particularly in this "Second Discourse". This is a rich area for archaeological delving, one which we might have expected Foucault to excavate. However, within the economy of *The Order of Things*, to do so would involve opening the very issue of Renaissance humanism which the text is determined to bypass.<sup>20</sup>

But the most serious threat that Descartes poses to *The Order of Things* concerns the death of man, for which his birth is perhaps only a preparation. If the ground of knowledge can only be changed by a sudden, seismic upheaval which entirely evacuates the previous *episteme* and provides the clearing for its successor, then the death of man - as the event that attends the close of the modern *episteme* - can only occur in like fashion. Just as man had no precedent in the Classical *episteme* so too will he be irretrievably lost to futurity like a prisoner trapped in a forgotten tower. Even at the end of

the text, when this point has been spelled out again and again, Foucault still deems it necessary to stress that the appearance of man:

... was not the liberation of an old anxiety, the transition into luminous consciousness of an age-old concern, the entry into objectivity of something that had long remained trapped within beliefs and philosophies: it was the effect of a change in the fundamental arrangements of knowledge. As the archaeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end. If those arrangements were to disappear as they appeared, if some event of which we can at the moment do no more than sense the possibility - without knowing either what its form will be or what it promises - were to cause them to crumble, as the ground of Classical thought did, at the end of the eighteenth century, then one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea. (387)

We cannot know how, when, or why the next cataclysm will take place, but we can "certainly wager", and wager, too, with a quiet certainty, what its outcome will be. And on the basis of what? Of man's absolute absence before 1800, of his absolutely unique arrival with the modern *episteme*. As with all deaths, birth is the first, the necessary, and the sufficient condition, but with Foucault the precise date of parturition is also essential. Since, if man were as old as Descartes, if man dwelt where he did not (archaeologically) belong, what is to prevent him from perpetuating? If he lived before the last flood, how are we to know that he will not survive the next? Epistemic seclusion, epistemic coherence is - at this stage - all that indicates that man will disappear; and this seclusion is purchased at the price of the vigilant suppression of anything that could be called Cartesianism. It is for the same reason that there is no archaeological space for David Hume's still-radical proposal that the idea of the self has no epistemological foundation and denotes at best a mere consecution of sensations: for between Descartes and Hume, the birth and death of the subject of knowledge would seem to have been rehearsed long before the promised collapse of anthropologism.<sup>21</sup> And as the counter-humanist theme comes more and more to dominate *The Order of Things*,

Foucault shows himself strangely willing to sacrifice the corollary principle that no author can transcend epistemic determinations. To what end? That of man.

### The Founder of Discursivity

*Beware when the great God lets loose a thinker on this planet. Then all things are at risk. It is as when a conflagration has broken out in a great city, and no man knows what is safe, or where it will end. There is not a piece of science but its flank may be turned tomorrow; there is not any literary reputation, not the so-called eternal names of fame, that may not be revised and condemned ... The things which are dear to men at this hour are so on account of the ideas which have emerged on their mental horizon, and which cause the present order of things as a tree bears its apples. A new degree of culture would instantly revolutionize the entire system of human pursuits.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson<sup>22</sup>

*"I have come too early", he then said, "I am not yet at the right time. This prodigious event is still on its way, and is travelling..."*

Friedrich Nietzsche<sup>23</sup>

In a text which purports to be written neither by a subject, nor about subjects, who or what motivates its narrative, stands authority for its claims? By what means might such a text propose or dispose at all? How, indeed, is it possible for that text to say or do anything? And who or what, in this particular case, might narrate or author the death of man?

In an article entitled "The Subject of Archaeology or the Sovereignty of the *Episteme*", David Carroll contends that *The Order of Things* is in fact organized around a subject, that in eliminating the subject, Foucault is led to make of the *episteme* itself a transcendental subject.<sup>24</sup> As Carroll sees it, the *episteme* is a presence, a consciousness, the constitutive ground of all events, and the encapsulation of "pure experience". Carroll's demonstration is saline, persuasive and perspicacious. It draws out the futility of dethroning one sovereignty only to coronate another in its stead. However, two points are

neglected, and indeed must be neglected in this demonstration. Firstly, within Foucault's analysis of modernity, the idea of the death of man has no less claim to sovereignty. Why else should Foucault regularly reiterate the necessity of this theme when it has no place within the modern *episteme*? Why not be content to simply describe the modern arrangement of knowledge without prolepsis or prophecy? Secondly, *The Order of Things* does contain a subject in the traditional sense, a subject to whom, moreover, is accredited a sovereignty rare in any history of modern thought.

The central dilemma facing Foucault in his account of modernity is to find support for the theme of the death of man. That the death of man is a desideratum we can have no doubt. Foucault makes this very clear on numerous occasions. As one example among many:

To all those who still wish to talk about man, about his reign or his liberation, to all those who still ask themselves questions about what man is in his essence, to all those who wish to take him as their starting-point in their attempts to reach the truth, to all those who, on the other hand, refer all knowledge back to the truths of man himself, to all those who refuse to formalize without anthropologizing, who refuse to mythologize without demystifying, who refuse to think without immediately thinking that it is man who is thinking, to all these warped and twisted forms of reflection we can answer only with a philosophical laugh - which means, to a certain extent, a silent one. (342-3)

However, it is not for nothing that the archaeologist answers with a laugh, and a laugh that must be "to a certain extent a silent one", for while archaeology might have drawn Foucault to the conclusion that man must soon disappear, it has also generated certain obstacles to the articulation of this inevitability.

Foucault's archaeology cannot but recall the historical dialectics of Hegel and Marx. In particular, *The Order of Things* will echo Marxist analyses in that it divides recent world-history into determined, self-regulating epochs, and anticipates the closure of the present epoch as a prospective consequence of the ruptures it has discovered in the past. History is periodized, these

periods are seen to have been separated by cataclasms or cataclysms, and the existence of ruptures in the past is taken to perforce imply that ruptures of equal or greater force will occur in the future. However, though archaeology repeats this fundamental procedure, it differs from both the Marxist and Hegelian systems in one profoundly significant respect. Archaeology is anti-dialectical, which is to say that it is also ateleological. Although the Marxist and Hegelian dialectics assert that historical change occurs oppositionally, nevertheless, every era contains, *in statu nascendi*, the elements which will participate synthetically in its supersession. Thus did Marx argue that bourgeois society, in its fissures, contradictions and internal weaknesses, encompasses the forces whose full realization will result in a globally communistic society. It is therefore only through an analysis of the structures and instabilities of bourgeois society that the dialectical materialist can divine the forms, qualities and historical necessity of the coming epoch. The same economy is at work for the dialectical idealist. Within Hegel's *The Philosophy of World History*, the three great ages preceding the modern, and final age, contain within themselves the patterns and dynamics of their simultaneous closure and sublation.<sup>25</sup> For Foucault, though, epistemic change is blind, acausal and discontinuous, "a profound breach in the expanse of continuities".(217) Nothing in the modern *episteme* can be said to prefigure, or even insinuate the organization of the succeeding *episteme*. Archaeology is contracted to inhabit a space outside all teleologies, and consequently must reject even the antithetical development of dialectic.

It is thus that Foucault cannot fully utilize his anthropological doubles, since any argument which sees the *cogito* becoming swamped in the unthought implies that the very force which is to be constitutive of the counter-human future was already profoundly active within the Age of Man. Indeed, the burgeoning ascendancy over the *cogito* is itself characteristic of the Age

of Man. The necessity of avoiding dialectical models becomes all the more urgent here, since, as Foucault stresses, along with anthropology, dialectic is the characteristic figure of the modern *episteme*. Having been constituted at the turn of the eighteenth century when dialectical and anthropological models supplanted the Classical arrangement, the figure of man can only disappear when dialectic has run its course.<sup>26</sup> Thus, whilst the double postulates, and inherent contradictions of anthropology may be registered, and drawn out at a certain length, they cannot be pressed in the counterhumanist direction in which they seem to be headed, for it would make little sense to drive man out of existence on the distaff end of the very *progressus* which brought him into being. To do so would only be to testify to the ubiquity and perdurance of the very system of knowledge which Foucault seeks to think beyond. Moreover, and according to the same exigencies, there is no succour or support to be found in the fact that for every asseveration of a transcendental subjectivity over the last one hundred and fifty years, there is an equal if not greater weight of counterassertion.<sup>27</sup> Quite to the contrary, the existence of anything resembling a counterhumanist tradition so far from consolidating Foucault's thesis, unsettles its very foundations. A reading which sees a developing counterhumanism in Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Heidegger, Lacan, Lévi-Strauss would not only reawaken an inimical dialecticism, but jeopardize the idea that it is not possible to think in terms other than those of a transcendental anthropology in the modern *episteme*.

By this stage the archaeological axioms have begun to crowd in upon each other, and we might note the essential perversity of a antihumanist methodology which legislates against the factors most auspicious to its articulation. Foucault cannot base the death of man upon the contents of the modern *episteme*, for, as we have said, the death of man is most assuredly not an epistimeme, nor can he admit the existence of a powerful counter-

movement against the transcendental subject within the epoch of subjectivity. The only authority that Foucault can fall back on is the suspect and inadequate proposition which underlies the *grandezza* of the book's close: man was born circa 1800 as the child of a particular configuration of knowledge, when that configuration disappears (as it surely will do, soon), then man will be no more. This proposition - which holds only if we see nothing of man in Renaissance humanism, in the *cogito*, in antiquity even, if we consent to the absolute alterity of *epistemi* to each other - is scarcely sufficient, of itself, to persuade the most awe-struck archaeological votary of the imminent and inevitable demise of man.

It is at this point, and into this implex, that Nietzsche enters *The Order of Things*. Having devoted so much energy to resisting the insistent pressure that Cartesianism exerts on the borders of his text, having bound archaeology to study the discourses of particular authors as circumscribed and delimited by the arrangement of knowledge in which they emerge, Foucault nevertheless declares:

Nietzsche ... took the end of time and transformed it into the death of God and the odyssey of the last man; he took up anthropological finitude once again, but in order to use it as the basis for the prodigious leap of the superman; he took up once again the great continuous chain of History, but in order to bend it round into the infinity of the eternal return. It is in vain that the death of God, the imminence of the superman, and the promise and terror of the great year take up once more, as it were term by term, the elements that are arranged in nineteenth-century thought and form its archaeological framework. The fact remains that they sent all these stable forms up in flames, that they used their charred remains to draw strange and perhaps impossible faces; and by a light that may be either - we do not yet know which - the reviving flame of the last great fire or an indication of the dawn, we see the emergence of what may perhaps be the space of contemporary thought. It was Nietzsche, in any case, who burned for us, even before we were born, the intermingled promises of the dialectic and anthropology. (263)

This depiction is quite obviously in the sharpest contradistinction to the central archaeological prescription that all discourses are epistemically determined. So far is Nietzsche from being enmeshed in the network of nineteenth century thought, that his texts do not merely question, contest or undermine that order, but anticipate a new and ulterior configuration of knowledge which had not yet confidently begun in the middle of the twentieth century, and which is, it would seem, still to come. Nietzsche does not reject or bypass dialectic and anthropology, he sends them up in flames; the death of God, the superman and the eternal return do not merely throw down a challenge to Hegelian and Kantian conceptions of man and time, they represent the most significant signposts for the future of thought itself. This passage is to recur four times in Foucault's text, and always at critical junctures. Early on in "Man and his Doubles" Foucault asks of the contemporary preoccupation with language: "Is it a sign ... that thought ... is about to re-apprehend itself in its entirety, and to illumine itself once more in the lightning flash of being? Is that not what Nietzsche was paving the way for when, in the interior space of his language, he killed man and God both at the same time, and thereby promised with the Return the multiple and re-illuminated light of the gods?" (306) Midway through "Man and his Doubles", as Foucault closes the decisive chapter "The Empirical and the Transcendental", he does not allow his analysis to move directly to the natural conclusion that this dual and contradictory conception of man signals an inherent instability in the anthropological conception of the subject. Rather, we find his text saying:

It is easy to see why Nietzsche's thought should have had, and still has for us, such a disturbing power when it introduced in the form of an imminent event, the Promise-Threat, the notion that man would soon be no more - but would be replaced by the superman; in a philosophy of the Return, this meant that man had long since disappeared and would continue to disappear, and that our modern thought about man, our concern for him, our humanism, were all sleeping serenely over the threatening rumble of his non-existence. Ought we not to remind ourselves - we who believe ourselves bound to a finitude

which belongs only to us, and which opens up the truth of the world to us by means of our cognition - ought we not to remind ourselves that we are bound to the back of a tiger?" (322)

And this recourse to Nietzsche is presented as the immediate answer to the question "Does man really exist? which Foucault has just previously posed. At the end of "Man and his Doubles", whilst stressing the necessity of thinking beyond anthropological constraints and categories, Foucault issues the following statement:

... Nietzsche rediscovered the point at which man and God belong to one another, at which the death of the second is synonymous with the disappearance of the first, and at which the promise of the superman signifies first and foremost the imminence of the death of man. In this, Nietzsche, offering this future to us as both promise and task, marks the threshold beyond which contemporary philosophy can begin thinking again; and he will no doubt continue for a long while to dominate its advance. If the discovery of the Return is indeed the end of philosophy, then the end of man, for its part, is the return of the beginning of philosophy. It is no longer possible to think in our day other than in the void left by man's disappearance. For this void does not create a deficiency; it does not constitute a lacuna that must be filled. It is nothing more, and nothing less, than the unfolding of a space in which it is once more possible to think. (342)

In each of these passages, the package is the same. Firstly, in killing God, Nietzsche also killed man. Secondly, that the superman signals not the zenith of man but his death. Thirdly, that the eternal return dissolves man. Fourthly, that we are at the threshold of a Nietzschean *episteme*, that the mission of contemporary thought is to become Nietzschean. And this passage occurs at every point where Foucault directly declares the disappearance of man. Even the famous words that end *The Order of Things* cannot get along without the voice of the master. Settling his accounts, the archaeologist's invocation to Nietzsche takes its most confident form yet:

Rather than the death of God - or, rather, in the wake of that death and in a profound correlation with it - what Nietzsche's thought heralds is the end of his murderer; it is the explosion of man's face in laughter, and the return of masks; it is the scattering of the profound stream of time by which he felt himself carried along and whose pressure he suspected in the very being of things; it is the identity of the

Return of the Same with the absolute dispersion of man. Throughout the nineteenth century, the end of philosophy and the promise of an approaching culture were no doubt one and the same thing as the thought of finitude and the appearance of man in the field of knowledge; in our day, the fact that philosophy is still - and again - in the process of coming to an end, and the fact that in it perhaps, though even more outside and against it, in literature as well as in formal reflection, the question of language is being posed, prove no doubt that man is in the process of disappearing. (385)

What "absolute dispersion of man" could mean here is difficult to imagine, and is made no clearer by its identification with the eternal return. Moreover, how this summary and lyrical train of interpretation could ever "prove no doubt, that man is in the process of disappearing" is inconceivable. But even more troublesome is that Foucault could quite easily have brought Nietzsche into line with his principle of epistemic determinism.

Foucault is not compelled to read Nietzsche's texts as announcing the death of man, if anything the greater weight of interpretation and textual evidence tends in the opposite direction. What Foucault presents is a brief but ingenious inversion of customary Nietzschean exegesis, which has traditionally seen not the death of man as attendant upon the death of God, but the liberation of man from enslavement to an antithetical, otherworldly ideal. Similarly, the superman has been seen as the most strenuous awakening of the potential and propensities that have lain dormant within man during the Christian era. Is the superman the first appearance of man in his untrammelled essentiality? His fulfillment understood as triumph or cessation? His apotheosis? Antithesis? Closure? All of these? None of these? We have no final answer to these questions for the good reason that Nietzsche implies that the superman both is and is not man. At one moment Zarathustra will say "*I teach you the Superman. Man is something that should be overcome.*",<sup>28</sup> at another that the superman is the realization of all that is best in man. And later, in *The Genealogy of Morals*, that the su-

perman is "a man who will justify the existence of mankind, for whose sake one may continue to believe in mankind!".<sup>29</sup>

Yet Foucault decides unilaterally and absolutely in favour of the anti-subjectivist reading which puts Nietzsche well beyond the pale of epistemic consistency. The eternal return, he claims (with a philosophic naivete scarcely credible), means that "man had long since disappeared and would continue to disappear" (322), when - as the recurrence of everything that has been, is, and will be - the eternal return equally means that man will reappear and continue to reappear, even given that he will disappear. "Alas, man recurs eternally", Zarathustra laments.<sup>30</sup> Likewise, little obliges Foucault to heap such literalism upon the idea of the last man. This notion occurs but once in Nietzsche, in "Zarathustra's Prologue" and suggests entirely the opposite of the connotations which Foucault imposes. "*The last man lives longest*", Zarathustra announces, implying that the liberal-Darwinist man here indicated outlives both the death of God and the superman.<sup>31</sup>

This is not so much to gainsay Foucault's reading here, still less to recommend that Nietzschean exegesis be returned to an aristocratic radicalism, or to existentialist interpretation. Foucault's counterhumanist appropriation, though partial and hyperbolic, has played its part in opening up the problematic of man and the subject in Nietzsche, a problematic within whose specific contours so much of the contemporary humanist-antihumanist debate has been conducted.<sup>32</sup> What is telling, though, in terms of *The Order of Things*, is that Foucault could well have read Nietzsche as confirming rather than subverting the modern analytic. For one, the fact that the idea of the death of God did not originate with Nietzsche, but is indeed part of a general movement in nineteenth century thought would seem to be very important from the perspective of an analysis contracted to study discourse in terms of clusters and networks rather than on the level of individual achieve-

ment. Yet Nietzsche is presented as the sole author of this idea, in despite of its emergence in situations so various as the discourses of Sade, Heine, Stirner and the Russian nihilists. Furthermore, if the general notion of the death of God intersecting with a certain death of man is to be asserted of Nietzsche, does this connection not emerge with every bit as much clarity in Marx?<sup>33</sup> Secondly, Nietzsche's ideas on the superman, on the higher and lower men, on the species ideal, on the religion of man and the earth, would appear to belong just as surely to the nineteenth century preoccupation with the destiny and fulfillment of man as to any era outside this arrangement, *even if it was Nietzsche's intention to proclaim the death of man*. Why then, we might ask, when numerous pathways were open to Foucault by which Nietzsche might be consistently and productively lodged within the archaeological description of the modern *episteme*, does he follow a reading entirely ruinous to the requisite transindividuality of his analyses?

As we have said, by this stage in his text, Foucault has written away almost all authority for the contention that the figure of man is disappearing. Such a thesis would present enormous difficulties to a methodology which had the full array of dialectical anticipation and teleology at its disposal, but in a text which has legislated against seeing the structures, instabilities and general tendencies of the past as indicative of the future configuration of knowledge, the redoubtable problematics of prediction become still greater again.

The most convincing demonstration of the necessity of the disappearance of man will always be that which exposes the contradictions and instabilities of the humanist discourse within which his figure is constituted. And Foucault's account of the anthropological doubles moves a good way in that direction. Yet it is here, precisely at the point where archaeology's counter-humanism is at its strongest, that Foucault is compelled to forestall his

analysis, to fudge the issue as to whether the separation of man into distinct and incompatible characterizations does indeed prefigure the arrival of a de-anthropologized *episteme*. Thus it is that at this stage the figure of Nietzsche proves of particular strategic significance. In grounding the entire counter-humanist thrust of the last hundred years or so in the solitary persona of Nietzsche, Foucault avoids the progressional series running from Marx through Nietzsche, Freud, Heidegger, Lacan, Lévi-Strauss, Foucault, a series which would strike at both the epistemic and anti-teleological bases of archaeology. In order to consolidate his thesis, Foucault resorts to a transepistemic author through whom he provides warrants for the death of man without sacrificing the coherence and autonomy of the *epistemi*; the notion of a transepistemic author possessing, as it will, the peculiar and strategic property of preserving the *episteme* whilst licensing departures from its determinations.

It is in this sense that the valorization of Nietzsche's discourse belong to same economy that has suppressed the Cartesian *cogito*. Nietzsche's premonitions preside over the death of man in the same way as the deracination of the Cartesian influence ensures his unique birth with Kant. And the question of the death of man is, as we know, inseparable from the question of his birth: "... man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end". (387) The absence of Descartes facilitates the first proposition, the presence of Nietzsche motivates the second. Indeed, as regards these two figures, the transindividual postulate of *The Order of Things* collapses on both fronts. Descartes and Nietzsche attest - by counterpoint - to the irresistibility of the author. The Cartesianism which Foucault denies can only be muffled not silenced; the Nietzscheanism he espouses will not make itself heard without the voice of the master.

This is neither the first, nor will it be the last time that Foucault will have recourse to Nietzsche in this precursive and foundational manner. Throughout Foucault's writing life the name of Nietzsche will always be that of the most important signposts for future work, that of the most significant point of return for modern thought. In *Madness and Civilization*, Nietzsche is presented as the great harbinger of the life of unreason, a modern hero who resists the "gigantic moral imprisonment" of Western rationality.<sup>34</sup> Even *The Birth of the Clinic* turns to Nietzsche at a crucial point in its denouement.<sup>35</sup> In a "Preface to Transgression", transgression itself- the thought of a futurity of which we can only glimpse the "calcinated roots, ... promising ashes" is "that form of thought to which Nietzsche dedicated us from the beginning of his works and one which would be, absolutely and in the same motion, a Critique and an Ontology, an understanding that comprehends both finitude and being ...".<sup>36</sup> Indeed, this essay presents, in crystalline form, the dominant thesis of *The Order of Things*:

... Kant ... ultimately relegated all critical investigations to an anthropological question; and undoubtedly, we have subsequently interpreted Kant's action as the granting of an indefinite respite to metaphysics, because dialectics substituted for the questioning of being and limits the play of contradiction and totality. To awaken us from the confused sleep of dialectics and of anthropology, we required the Nietzschean figures of tragedy, of Dionysus, of the death of God, of the philosopher's hammer, of the Superman approaching with the steps of a dove, of the Return.<sup>37</sup>

Here again Foucault's attitude to Nietzsche is completely uncritical. It is assumed that Nietzsche achieved his intention to break with the Kantian system, and that in so doing he opened up the space of a non-metaphysical critique. As everywhere else, Foucault does not trouble to ask exactly what form such a critique might take, how Nietzsche actually "within the interior of his language killed God and man both", nor does he wonder whether or not Nietzsche might have remained enmeshed within the categories he

sought to escape, how there can be a Dionysianism without any of its dialectical counterparts (Apollonianism, Socratism, Christianity), and so on. But then Foucault does not regard such questions as particularly compelling, since, when Nietzsche is not being held up as a systematic philosophical critic of origins, dialectic, and anthropology, he is being resorted to as mystical poet of futurity. At one time, Nietzsche is a mad transgressor of limits, at another a patient, rigorous genealogist who soberly propounds the *philosophical* necessity of the end of subject-centered philosophies. Which of these two functions Nietzsche is serving in Foucault's work is usually signaled by the authors beside whom he is summoned. When it is a question of the transgressive Nietzsche, the names of Sade, Artaud and Bataille will be quick in coming, when it is that of Nietzsche as the formulator of a radical and counterhumanist hermeneutic system, he will be invoked in the company of Marx and Freud.

Not that Foucault deems these two functions incompatible. Deleuze, another elect author in Foucault's work, is seen in both transgressive, anti-rationalist terms, and as a philosophical critic of such importance that "perhaps, one day, this century will be known as Deleuzian", that through his labours "new thought is possible. Thought itself is again possible."<sup>38</sup> In *The Order of Things*, Nietzsche plays both these roles simultaneously. On the one hand, the death of God and man, the thought of the eternal return and the superman are blinding poetic flashes, figures of an essentially lyrical and Delphic vision, on the other elements of a critique which razes both dialectic and anthropology. Naturally, the result of this dual privilege is a valorization of the Nietzschean discourse far in excess of anything to be found in traditional Nietzschean exegesis. Essentially, Foucault seems to be saying of Nietzsche what Nietzsche's final megalomania was saying of Nietzsche: to wit, that he is a destiny, will be born posthumously etc. Indeed, we might say

that Foucault is never so Nietzschean as when he invokes Nietzsche, not on account of the thought thereby represented, but by the manner of his invoking, for Nietzsche throughout celebrated the view of history which sees great men - Socrates, Luther, Goethe, Napoleon, etc. - succeeding each other across epochs. Every age, he will insist, is meaningful only in terms of its higher types. And it is these higher types who carry with them the promise of the superman. First and foremost, the superman is the untimely one, he who cannot be contained by his times, still less by an organizing centre of prediscursive regularities. Within Foucault's textual history, something of this privileged, transhistorical status is bestowed upon Nietzsche.

Foucault nowhere considers why Nietzsche should be archaeologically unconstrainable, why there should be a thinker whose insights structuralism, hermeneutics and archaeology do not simply take up, revise and deploy, but to whose promise they hasten. Such a description would be troublesome enough to the most bountiful auteurism, let alone to a transindividual history of discourse. With a theorist often so meticulous before methodology and its aberrations some explanation might be expected, but none whatever is proffered. But then this is a problem which invades Foucault's thought at every stage. In one breath he presents discourse as entirely subject to the rule, as thoroughly determined, constituted and circumscribed by the epistemic conditions of its emergence; in another, he wishes to sponsor, endorse and liberate a revolutionary or transgressive literature, a thought which defies any repressive system, which would break free of any categories, even those which archaeology has imposed upon discourse.

This tension is itself apparent in the tempers of his own writing, and the ways in which he structures his texts and their chapters. More often than not his method is to work from a cool, careful analysis toward hierophantic

prognostications on the destiny of human knowledge. Even in a text like *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, which would seem entirely given over to the rule, Foucault will still conclude by seeing his elaboration of the enunciative function and rules of formation for statements as a challenge to the "great historico-transcendental destiny of the West".<sup>39</sup> This is perhaps what Gilles Deleuze meant in a wonderful oxymoron when he called Foucault a "romantic positivist".<sup>40</sup> As with the work of Marx, the most patient documentary analysis is driven to prophetic, even of occasion, heterotopian conclusions.<sup>41</sup> But whereas these forces achieve a certain fruitful tension in Marx, with Foucault the romantic and the positivist remain essentially impenetrable and occult to one another, so that as often as not it seems that either Foucault's visionary lyricism disrupts his coolly formalist analyses or, in another context, that he is the prisoner of his own archaeological categories. Nowhere is this inconsistency more keenly registered than in *The Order of Things*, where, on the one hand, we might wish that Foucault had dedicated more energy to describing the conditions of knowledge within the modern *episteme* than to preparing the stage for its disappearance, and on the other that he had relaxed his epistemic structures to allow for obvious noetic ap-purtenances, an aetiology of concepts from one era to another, phylogenetic analyses, etc. Certainly, in any case, little would have been lost by accepting a general principle of reciprocal interplay between what determines authors and what authors determine, even if this relationship were to be weighted heavily in favour of deep-lying rules of discursive emergence.

Of course, there are many reasons why Foucault should have encountered insurmountable difficulties in this text. *The Order of Things* is, after all, among the most ambitious histories attempted since Hegel, and is all the more ambitious in that it attempts to tell the story of four centuries without recourse to the idea of history itself, to the extent that history implies teleol-

ogy, aetiology and influence, notions which not only provide the ground principles of historicity in general, but which also greatly facilitate the imposition of some form of narrative upon the proliferation of discourses. And we cannot but feel that had Foucault separated his epistemic researches from his attack upon the subject, perhaps even in the form of two discrete texts, that both theses would have gained in consistency from this distance. But then *The Order of Things* belongs to that category of texts whose grandiloquent failure is worth its weight against a multitude of minor successes.

As might be expected, *The Order of Things* became the subject of intense controversy. Yet Foucault, generally so passionate in defence of his labours, tended to agree with many of his detractor's judgments. In the "Foreword to the English Edition" of *The Order of Things* he isolated three problems to which his text had no satisfactory answers: the problems of change, causality and the authorial subject. Of these problems, it was the latter which seemed to have troubled Foucault most, and he returned to the author-question at length in a paper entitled "What is an Author?".<sup>42</sup> In the preamble to this monograph, Foucault explained the necessity for a reevaluation of his approach in *The Order of Things*:

In proposing this slightly odd question, I am conscious of the need for an explanation. To this day, the "author" remains an open question both with respect to its general function within discourse and in my own writings; that is, this question permits me to return to certain aspects of my work which now appear ill-advised and misleading. In this regard, I wish to propose a necessary criticism and reevaluation.

For instance, my objective in *The Order of Things* had been to analyse verbal clusters as discursive layers which fall outside the familiar categories of a book, a work, or an author. But while I considered "natural history", the "analysis of wealth", and "political economy" in general terms, I neglected a similar analysis of the author and his works; it is perhaps due to this omission that I employed the names of authors throughout this book in a naive and often crude fashion. I spoke of Buffon, Cuvier, Ricardo, and others as well, but failed to realize that I had allowed their names to function ambiguously.<sup>43</sup>

Yet, from the list of examples Foucault forwards, it is clear that "What is an Author?" is not destined to be an entirely open and candid critical reevaluation of *The Order of Things*. If, in fact, the names Buffon, Cuvier and Ricardo do function ambiguously in this text they scarcely do so with a breath of the mystery which surrounds that of Nietzsche. Indeed, "What is an Author?" repeats many of the ambiguities that it seeks to dispel. As in *The Order of Things*, a spirit of hostility to the author is to encase a meta-authorial description. The essay proper opens with a line from Beckett, "What does it matter who is speaking?", a line which reappears at the close as the indifferent answer to its own question, as Foucault hopefully envisions a society in which the author-function will have disappeared.<sup>44</sup> Indeed were we only to read the beginning and end of the text proper, we should be forgiven for assuming "What is an Author?" to be a no less intransigently anti-authorial tract than "The Death of the Author". Yet having made a number of preliminary and schematic observations on the author function, Foucault introduces the centrepiece of his discussion:

Up to this point I have unjustifiably limited my subject. Certainly the author-function in painting, music, and other arts should have been discussed, but even supposing that we remain within the world of discourse, as I want to do, I seem to have given the term "author" much too narrow a meaning. I have discussed the author only in the limited sense of a person to whom the production of a text, a book, or a work can be legitimately attributed. It is easy to see that in the sphere of discourse one can be the author of much more than a book - one can be the author of a theory, tradition, or discipline in which other books and authors will in their turn find a place. These authors are in a position which we shall call "transdiscursive". This is a recurring phenomenon - certainly as old as our civilization. Homer, Aristotle, and the Church Fathers, as well as the first mathematicians and the originators of the Hippocratic tradition, all played this role. (153)

Foucault is here suggesting that the principle of authorship exceeds the bounds of the body of texts which bear his name. Thus the idea of an author exercising a jurisdiction over his own texts has not only been accepted in

principle but is seen to be too narrow and restrictive in particular cases: Aristotle is, in a sense, the author of Aristotelianism, Euclid the author of geometry. It is easy to see that many authors could lay claim to a transdiscursive status. What is true of Aristotle in this context will be no less true of Plato, whilst Aquinas, Ptolemy and Descartes would all seem to have given rise to ideational spaces "in which other books and authors will in their turn find a place". Indeed, wherever an "ism" attaches itself to a proper name, there some degree of transdiscursivity has arisen. Of course, in modern times, Marx and Freud are the most obvious examples of this phenomenon, but for Foucault they exert a still greater protectorship over the discourses they commence:

Furthermore, in the course of the nineteenth century, there appeared in Europe another, more uncommon, kind of author, whom one should confuse with neither the "great" literary authors, nor the authors of religious texts, nor the founders of science. In a somewhat arbitrary way we shall call those who belong in this last group "founders of discursivity". They are unique in that they are not just the authors of their own works. They have produced something else: the possibilities and the rules for the formation of other texts. In this sense, they are very different, for example, from a novelist, who is, in fact, nothing more than the author of his own text. Freud is not just the author of *The Interpretation of Dreams or Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*; Marx is not just the author of the *Communist Manifesto* or *Capital*; they both have established an endless possibility of discourse. (154)<sup>45</sup>

Like "founders of languages" in Barthes, the phrase "founders of discursivity" will sound strangely here, for it is the concept of the subject as founder which has earned Foucault's most consistent and enduring disapprobation. And Foucault is not merely acknowledging that Freud and Marx simply founded psychoanalysis and Marxism in the sense that they provided the concepts and procedures with which these discursivities could get underway, but that, as disciplines, dialectical materialism and psychoanalysis cannot go beyond the inceptive texts. However powerful or radical the work subsequent Mar-

xists or psychoanalysts, their revisions will always be legislated for within the primal *corpus*.

It is in this sense that the founding of a discursivity is to be distinguished from the initiation of a science. Whereas the history of a science tends to be that of one paradigm replacing another in a linear or progressive series which moves ever further from the inaugural theorems or discoveries, that of the Marxist and Freudian discursivities takes the form of a perpetual return to the founder. Thus whilst the founding act of a science becomes inscribed as a necessary but now obsolescent stage within the development of the scientific field, "the initiation of a discursive practice does not participate in its later transformations". (156) As Foucault puts it, in a remarkable schema: "... the work of initiators of discursivity is not situated in the space that science defines; rather, it is the science or the discursivity which refers back to their work as primary coordinates".(156) We have therefore come to a position diametrically opposed to the archaeological thesis. So far from the work of authors being determined in their nature and very existence by the discursive formation, the entire discursive formation is hereby dependent on the work of an individual author. Foucault continues:

In this way we can understand the inevitable necessity, within these fields of discursivity, for a "return to the origin". This return, which is part of the discursive field itself, never stops modifying it. The return is not a historical supplement which would be added to the discursivity, or merely an ornament; on the contrary, it constitutes an effective and necessary task of transforming the discursive practice itself. Re-examination of Galileo's text may well change our knowledge of the history of mechanics, but it will never be able to change mechanics itself. On the other hand, re-examining Freud's texts modifies psychoanalysis itself just as a re-examination of Marx's would modify Marxism. (157)

The phrase "return to the origin" has its surprises also, and the quotation marks with which it is surrounded are unaccompanied by any precautions.

As a direct consequence of these returns:

To define these returns more clearly, one must also emphasize that they tend to reinforce the enigmatic link between an author and his works. A text has an inaugurative value precisely because it is the work of a particular author, and our returns are conditioned by this knowledge. As in the case of Galileo, there is no possibility that the rediscovery of an unknown text by Newton or Cantor will modify classical cosmology or set theory as we know them (at best, such an exhumation might modify our historical knowledge of their genesis). On the other hand, the discovery of a text like Freud's "Project for a Scientific Psychology" - insofar as it is a text by Freud - always threatens to modify not the historical knowledge of psychoanalysis, but its theoretical field, even if only by shifting the accentuation or the center of gravity.(157)<sup>46</sup>

Despite beginning "What is an Author?" with the question "What does it matter who is speaking?" and concluding with the answer that it shouldn't really matter at all, Foucault here provides the most extreme example of why it does matter. The discovery of a text like Freud's "Project for a Scientific Psychology" will modify psychoanalysis if and only if it is a text by Freud. Over and above the text's contents, the fact of attribution - in and of itself - is the primary factor in establishing its significance for the psychoanalytic field. Indeed so powerful is the disjunction between the declarations that surround "What is an Author?", and the descriptions it makes, that it almost seems a Kierkegaardian exercise in collating antithetical texts. On the one hand, Foucault is seeking out the specific conditions under which "something like a subject [can] appear in the order of discourse", (158) whilst, on the other, he is presenting a meta-authorial figure who founds and endlessly circumscribes an entire discursivity.<sup>47</sup>

Something of the contradictory format of *The Order of Things* is certainly repeated in this paper, though Foucault does not, as promised, confront the ambiguous status of the author in that text. Surely in a discussion which sought to propose "a necessary criticism and reevaluation" of the role of the author in *The Order of Things*, some mention of the Nietzsche who offered the archaeological "future to us as both promise and task" might have been

anticipated in the neighbourhood of a meta-authorial characterization. But the name of Nietzsche appears but once, earlier, parenthetically, with no connection to the questions of either the transdiscursive author, or the founder of discursivity.<sup>48</sup> Foucault, too, has implied that Marx and Freud need not be the only examples, and he nowhere says that discursive initiation need be restricted to the human or social sciences. Furthermore, more than once, Foucault has grouped together Nietzsche, Marx and Freud as the founders of modern discourse. In particular, the essay "Nietzsche, Marx, Freud" had not so long ago argued that these three figures opened up the entire field of modern hermeneutics, that they have established infinite interpretative possibilities.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, everything should have drawn Foucault to Nietzsche at this juncture. In the discussion that followed the presentation of "What is an Author?", when Maurice de Gandillac questioned Foucault on whether he considered Nietzsche to be a founder, the question was completely side-stepped.<sup>50</sup>

Naturally, there are many reasons why Foucault should wish to avoid the Nietzschean question in this context, for whatever statement he might make about the status of Nietzsche's authorship would necessarily raise the question of the authority of the archaeological discourse itself. On the one hand, were Foucault to present Nietzsche as a founder, or as a transdiscursive author, where is archaeology, with its complex system of Nietzschean inheritances and dependencies, to be then situated?<sup>51</sup> Is Foucault's work not to be seen in the same context of affiliation to the Nietzschean discourse as, say, the work of epigonous psychoanalysts entertains towards that of Freud? Does not Foucault aver the necessity of a return to the Nietzschean origin? Does he not refer back to the simultaneous deaths of God and man, to the superman, to the eternal return, as to "primary coordinates"? In short, could

it not be that the great labour of archaeology is but one fold within a generalized Nietzscheanism?

On the other hand, were we not to regard Nietzsche as a founding author, the problem of the archaeological recourse to Nietzsche would take on a particularly worrying aspect. For, if archaeology is not to be situated within the space of the Nietzschean discursivity, then what might the name Nietzsche signify in Foucault's project? Would not the superinscription of the Nietzschean subject appear as the most flagrant of (mis)appropriations, an appeal to authority - virtually an argument *from* authority - in the prosecution of the idea of the death of man? And like all appeals to authority, might not the appeal itself mask a more fundamental will-to-authority? Indeed, along such lines, might we not begin to read the archaeology of the human sciences as Nietzsche reread his essay, "Schopenhauer as Educator": "... what is being spoken of is fundamentally not 'Schopenhauer as Educator' but his *opposite*, 'Nietzsche as Educator'."?<sup>52</sup>

### Allegories of Misreading

*... I believe that it is better to try to understand that someone who is a writer is not simply doing his work in his books, in what he publishes, but that his major work is, in the end, himself in the process of writing his books ... The work is more than the work: the subject who is writing is part of the work.*

Michel Foucault<sup>53</sup>

*... I am told of a man who sets out to make a picture of the universe. After many years, he has covered a blank wall with images ... only to find at the moment of death that he has drawn a likeness of his own face. This may be the case of all books; it is certainly the case of this particular book.*

Jorge Luis Borges<sup>54</sup>

Foucault was to say that the "only valid tribute to thought such as Nietzsche's is precisely to use it, to deform it, to make it groan and protest", and that "if the commentators say I am being unfaithful to Nietzsche that is of absolute-

ly no interest".<sup>55</sup> It is, of course, no source of wonderment that commentators should make this observation of Foucault's work. His revision or misprision of Nietzsche is often so extreme as to be barely recognizable as Nietzschean at all. In the essay "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History", for example, Foucault directly quotes Nietzsche some fifty times, and yet succeeds in presenting a Nietzschean history and genealogy almost entirely at variance with the careful explications of Sterne, Danto and Kaufmann.<sup>56</sup> Naturally, it would be churlish, and scarcely justifiable to call Foucault to account over this. Firstly, because at a very significant level this is entirely faithful to Nietzsche's ideas of strong revisionism, to the exhortations in *Zarathustra* that the faithful pupil repays his teacher poorly.<sup>57</sup> Secondly, because, as is so very often noted, the Nietzschean texts open themselves to antithetical interpretations on an astonishing number and variety of issues - on history, on genealogy, on politics, on women, on the Semitic question, on tragedy and so on. And also, as we have been concerned to stress, on the question of man.

As we have said, nothing compels Foucault to interpret Nietzsche as the avatar of a post-anthropological *episteme*, and from first archaeological principles, the reading of Nietzsche in terms of a radical and darkling humanism would seem positively *de rigeur*. Nor need Foucault have allowed Nietzsche to figure so largely here. *The Order of Things* shows no qualms before suppressing the anti-subjectivist elements in Marx, Freud and Heidegger. Yet Foucault presents an untimely Nietzsche who is absolutely identical with the counterhuman thesis of his text. In this sense, might we not wonder wherein the essential difference is to be discovered between the voice of Nietzsche in *The Order of Things* and that text's highest hope? Is Foucault not, here as elsewhere, using and (in suppressing the intrinsic undecidability of Nietzsche and the question of man) deforming Nietzsche's thought when, at every point at which archaeology announces the comfort, the profound

sense of relief that accompanies the disappearance of man, he makes Nietzsche stand its surety? In the last analysis, as the author of archaeology himself would probably say, it is of absolutely no matter if Foucault is really and truly presenting a revisionist Nietzscheanism, or whether he is using the name of the forefather in the manner of those Early Church authors who claimed as the work of John, doctrines they had themselves formulated.<sup>58</sup> In both cases, the ideas of "Nietzsche" are those of the archaeologist.

Within *The Order of Things*, more than in any other text, it was necessary for Foucault to deflect attention from his own status as its author. By the very act of constructing the discourse of the prediscursive ground, archaeology indemnifies itself against the system of constraints which it enforces upon all other discourses. The archaeologist will therefore always be a detached overseer, and never part of the discursive configuration itself; as a matter of structural necessity he will be outside of time. This situation differs with respect to the descriptions of the Classical and modern *epistemi*, though only to the point of modifying the quality of temporal transcendence which the archaeological discourse perforce arrogates to its practitioner. Obviously, the description of the classical era will of necessity take place outside that arrangement of knowledge, but neither can it issue from the vantage point of modernity, for Foucault would then be presenting not an understanding of the deepest stratum of Classical thought, but a history of the present as it views the past. An operation in which what are called the elements of Classical thought would be no more merely material for allegory, for a revaluation of how our modern habits of thought negotiate the long distant past. No account of a past *episteme* can bring to it the presuppositions of another *episteme*, particularly when the modern *episteme* is the complete evacuation of the Classical *episteme*. Moreover, the archaeological discourse of the modern *episteme* cannot itself belong to the modern *episteme*, for then

it could only speak *for*, and not *about* the rules of formation for the anthropological arrangement. Did it form a part of the modern configuration, *The Order of Things*, even were its characterization of modernity correct to the letter, would represent another monument to the anthropological era, to the discourse on man, his destiny and ends. Kant writes of man as the end of all nature, Hegel of the end and fulfillment of man as that mystical journey of mind toward itself in time, Marx of the simultaneous dissolution and beatitude of man in classless society, Nietzsche of the *Übermensch*, Husserl of an ultimate intersubjectivity, Heidegger of the shepherd of being - there would then be no reason not to see Michel Foucault's thesis of the-death-of-man-as-the-end-of-man as the latest instance of the modern preoccupation with the eschatological horizons of humanity.<sup>59</sup>

Yet Foucault insists that this is not the case. Archaeology is a radical break with anthropologism, it transgresses the limits of this era. What he does not say, however, is that in order to transgress these limits, it must also transcend the formal conditions which dictate to all other discourses the ground and limit of their possibility. The *episteme* must be described from the point of view of an ideal exteriority. Only from a mystical and privileged continuum anterior to all *epistemi* can the archaeologist range, circumscribe and re-present discursive history, and only from this place can he proscribe its future.<sup>60</sup> It is thus that Foucault is always already in possession of the transcendence which he dispenses to Nietzsche, and thus that this diversion will always reflect the more fundamental authority, for in the last analysis, it is still Foucault who has unique access to the true historical mission and significance of the Nietzschean discourse, he who has ultimate powers of appropriation within an archaeology of the human sciences which is all his own. His is the discourse of all discourses, the one site from which the rules of formation of four centuries of writing can be revealed. Foucault therefore can-

not avoid becoming the author of his own text, and it is precisely the monumental and totalizing nature of that text which conspires to make the authority of the archaeologist unconscionably problematic.<sup>61</sup>

The whole range of texts which make more modest or local claims, those which are avowedly impressionistic, fictional or *subjective* will not imply transcendently remote authors; rather such a subject tends to arise from high philosophical or theoretical texts, particularly in the case of texts which - like Foucault's, like Hegel's - attempt to tell the truth of history, for such a tale can only be told from the annex of a pure distance, an ahistorical alterity. And where the problems of ideal detachment are grave enough for Hegelian history, they are entirely calamitous for a text which seeks to lay the ghost of the idealist subject. Prime amongst the ironies of Foucault's project is that, even supposing that it had succeeded in its aim, history would still have been left to depose the subject of archaeology. Foucault has little enough success in ousting those authors whose influence he wished to deny. The one subject he could never in principle dislodge is Michel Foucault.

Archaeology offered no ways around this dilemma. Whilst Hegelian history might attempt to devolve its authority onto the world-animating *Geist*, in the archaeological science there can be no such *telos* which could assume the burden of its historical narrative: history, in its ruptures, its transformations, unfolds in the mind of the archaeologist, the mind which sees, recounts and motivates the story of language, knowledge, the birth and disappearance of man. Foucault might only have resisted becoming the transcendental subject of *The Order of Things* by inscribing his text within the determinism it promulgates. As such, this would require Foucault to constitute the archaeologist as a historical being responding to the circumstances of his day, on the understanding that the past, as he presents it, is delivered *sub specia modernus*, and not from the sanctity of an ideal omniscience. It would in-

volve, that is, a situating of the speaker, an engagement with his material and his times, a perspectivism in the Nietzschean sense.<sup>62</sup> Yet to have done so would have been to admit the impossibility of there ever existing anything like an archaeology of the human sciences as *The Order of Things* construes this mission.

Ironically, however, it is as a historical document rather than as *the* text of documentary history that *The Order of Things* seems to have resolved itself. Foucault developed as an intellectual in an environment of intense neo-Cartesianism. Husserl's reformulation of the Cartesian *cogito* had an impact upon French thought comparable to that of Hegel upon German philosophy a century prior.<sup>63</sup> Recalling this era, Foucault has said:

As all of my generation, I was ... formed by the school of phenomenology ... And I believe that, as for all of those in my generation, between 1950 and 1955 I experienced a kind of conversion ... we reexamined the Husserlian idea that there is meaning everywhere ... And from 1955 we dedicated ourselves to the study of the formal conditions of the appearance of meaning.<sup>64</sup>

And we might wonder to what extent *The Order of Things*, in presenting a language-centered, subjectless era as in process of supplanting philosophies of consciousness, is the record of that conversion. Indeed, we have it on the best authority that the original subtitle of the work was *An Archaeology of Structuralism*.<sup>65</sup> Certainly, to us today, it will read more persuasively as an allegory of the transition from French phenomenologies and existentialisms to French structuralism than as an archaeology of the three great epochs of post Medieval discourse. And like all allegories, its characters are proxy. For "Kantian anthropology" we might read neo-Cartesianism, or even Sartre, for "Nietzsche" Foucault.<sup>66</sup> The story of *The Order of Things* is the story of the triumph of Nietzsche over Kantian anthropology, and the stations of this antagonism are precisely those taken up by Foucault and Sartre in their famous controversy following its publication.<sup>67</sup> Stephen Albert, in Borges's "The

Garden of Forking Paths", asks: "In the riddle whose answer is chess, what is the only prohibited word?".<sup>68</sup> Foucault, we know, was ever anxious to deny any complicity with structuralism, and in response to one such charge replied that not once did he use the word "structure" in *The Order of Things*.<sup>69</sup> Neither is the name of Sartre to be found among its pages.

After the work of "What is an Author?", Foucault withdrew into a kind of *askesis*. When he reemerged, it was as a genealogist, a scientist of the self who no longer wished to dispense with the question of man under the rule of his disappearance, but rather to inquire into what makes man "Man". This decision was correspondent with a revision of his own relationship to knowledge. The genealogist speaks *dans le vrai* of his times (however stridently he might speak against it), he knows that he is part of the history he is writing. Foucault also came to reread his earlier work in these terms, saying:

Each time I have attempted to do theoretical work, it has been on the basis of elements from my own experience - always in relation to processes that I saw taking place around me. It is in fact because I thought I recognized something cracked, dully jarring, or disfunctioning in things I saw, in the institutions with which I dealt, in my relations with others, that I undertook a particular piece of work, several fragments of an autobiography.<sup>70</sup>

This decision is the decision between two conceptions of authorship, two conceptions of man.

## Subjectivities

*The theory of meaning now stands at a cross-roads: either it will remain an attempt at formalizing meaning-systems by increasing sophistication of the logico-mathematical tools which enable it to formulate models on the basis of a conception (already rather dated) of meaning as the act of a transcendental ego, cut off from its body, its unconscious, and also its history; or else it will attune itself to the theory of the speaking subject as a divided subject (conscious/unconscious) and go on to attempt to specify the types of operation characteristic of the two sides of this split; thereby exposing them, that is to say, on the one hand, to bio-physiological processes (themselves al-*

*ready an inescapable part of signifying processes: what Freud labelled "drives"), and, on the other hand, to social constraints (family structures, modes of production etc.).*

Julia Kristeva<sup>71</sup>

The theme of the death of the author has taken its place within a greater closure, that of the era of subjectivity itself. Yet though Foucault's archaeology is seen to to be exemplary in signalling this common closure, he nowhere directly associates the issues of man and the author. Indeed, when pressed on this issue he categorically stressed that the death of man and the question of the author are not to be hastily assimilated to one another.<sup>72</sup> To be sure, there are strategic reasons why Foucault should wish to avoid this assimilation. Not least among these is that Foucault had said at one point, and without promptings, that the author was constituted when Western culture became a world of representations.<sup>73</sup> There could then be no question of associating the deaths of author and man on the basis of the epistemic economy of *The Order of Things*. Besides which, as archaeology passed over into genealogy, these sepulchral themes ceased to hold any interest for Foucault. This might not seem of any particular significance, but when we consider that few, if any other of the precursors of the death of man - not Lévi-Strauss, Lacan, Althusser, and emphatically not Nietzsche and Freud - make this connection, then we might urge a little reserve and inspection before assuming that the author is always and everywhere simply a specific instance of generic "Man". All the more so since, when the proponents an authorless literature look beyond formalist protocols for a justification of the death of the author, it is to the closure of subjectivity in general that they turn. Speaking for a revolution in thought, Jean-Marie Benoist declares,

If the freedom of the text is asserted against the almighty rule of the "author-generator", and the meaning is accepted as being simply relational, the inevitable result is a challenge to the very notion of the *subject*. The subjectivity of the author becomes of minor importance in the elucidation of the text, and the supposed subject of the work - "what

it is about" - disappears when the signifying plane is brought into the foreground. This threat to subjectivity must however be seen outside the particular field of literary criticism. It relates to a widespread reaction on the philosophical level against a particular interpretation of the philosophy of Descartes. We might recognize in this modern tendency the "end" or at least the exhaustion of the "cogito epoch".<sup>74</sup>

Benoist summarizes this development as well as can be expected, yet in summarizing he repeats the unreflective attitude which criticism and theory have brought to this issue. That is to say, it is always assumed, and never in any way demonstrated that the author is a simple subaltern or manifestation of the subject, and is therefore inscribed within the same finitude. For sure, this would seem obvious: both the author and the philosophical subject can be seen to enforce the primacy of human consciousness over the inhuman, the unthought; both play the role of the primary creative force, in respect of which language and the world of the in-itself are secondary, passive material. Furthermore, notions such as that of the omniscient author partake of the same sovereign detachment that is the first condition of a transcendental subjectivity. Indeed, the connection between these subjects will seem so obvious that it will be said, with the consonances of platitude: "... 'man' and 'author' go hand in hand, the latter a particular instance of the former."<sup>75</sup> That the destinies of man and author are entwined - and that they will become all the more inextricably so as our ideas of world and text increasingly cohere - is incontestable. What is by no means certain is that always and everywhere they are unproblematically reducible to one another.

The first meeting point of man and author in critical discourse is within the word "subject". And it is within the peculiar virtualities of this term itself that the commonality of their fate can be seen to unfold, since so much of contemporary thought seems to be directed toward restoring to the word its etymological purity - (*subjectus*: *sub*-under; *jacere*-thrown), the one thrown under, the one who owes fealty to a greater power, be that power lan-

guage, culture, discourse, history. Over the course of time, the word subject has acquired the status of an *enantioseme*, denoting the sovereignty of the transcendental ego of philosophies of consciousness, whilst retaining the original sense of vassalage, subordination, etc. We might even say that no other word - in its plurisignificant fragility - has so enigmatically held the crises of an era within its semantic horizons. *Cogito*, logos, transcendental ego, self, topic, author, psychobiographical signified, even *episteme*, fall inside its compass. Correspondingly, we might expect, adjectival precautions, qualifications, refinements, specifications as the precise designation intended etc, to herald its more portentous appearances in formulations of the order that "recent poststructuralists have systematically deconstructed all received notions of the subject",<sup>76</sup> and indeed the occasional thinker will show himself scrupulous to alert their readers to the meaning ascribed in different contexts. All-too-often, however, we will find that the word has been used, over the course of a few short pages, to denote logos, *cogito*, and biographical subject, and used in such a way as to suggest that the attack by Derrida on the first, and by Lacan on the second, leads to a dismissal of the third as though there has only ever been one subject in question. What is at work in this slippage is an egregious simplification of the immense problematics of the relations between self, ego, transcendental ego, consciousness, knowledge, and creativity, a simplification such as that Nero dreamt of when he asked that his subjects have but one neck so that he might dispose of them all at a single strike. Some will extend this still further, saying that the subject should be placed alongside "God, logos, ousia, reason, being and so forth".<sup>77</sup> Even, however, if divinity and reason are omitted, the amalgam is formidable. The death of the transcendental subject is concomitant with the death of the subject of knowledge, is in turn concomitant with the death of the author as a formal principle of textual meaning which

is again consecretaneous with the disappearance of the psychobiographical signified. This chain of inferences is the "philosophical" grounding of the death of the author. What it states, at base, is that the denial of the *cogito* implicates the widest scope of subjectivity in its erasures. Certainly, it is undeniable that Lévi-Strauss, Lacan, Althusser, Derrida, Barthes, Foucault, have brought a concerted and epochistical force to bear against the idea of an *a priori* subject situated outside the play of space and time, language, history, culture and *différance*. But does this onslaught collapse all senses of the subject as some will say? Is the concept of the author only tenable if a transcendental subjectivity is thereby designated? Or, to ask the unmasked question: how is the concept of the author distributed on the basis of a transcendental subjectivity?

First and foremost, any criticism which sees the author as a specification of the transcendental subject must detach the author as an empirical agency from the author as the purely ontological principle of the text. To be conceived in transcendental terms the author must be emptied out of all psychological and biographical content. There is no transcendental subject which is not non-empirical: a personalized, psychobiographically constituted transcendental subject is unthinkable. The classic formulations of transcendental subjectivity legislate against this naive misreading at every turn. The subject of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* is transcendental apperception, the *a priori* unity of consciousness, a purely formal guarantee of objective knowledge: "We can assign no other basis ... than the simple, and in itself completely empty, representation 'I'; and we cannot even say that this is a concept, but only that it is a bare consciousness which accompanies all concepts. Through this I or he or it (the thing) which thinks, nothing further is represented than a transcendental subject of thoughts = X"<sup>78</sup> The "I" makes no claim to existence in the phenomenal world: it is a purely logical subject.

Likewise the subject of transcendental phenomenology can have no empirical or psychological content, and perforce lies outside of space and time. It must be extrawordly in order to be a transcendental subjectivity:

Psychical subjectivity, the "I" and "we" of everyday intent, may be as it is in itself under the phenomenological-psychological reduction, and being eidetically treated, may establish a phenomenological psychology. But the transcendental subjectivity which for want of language we can only call again, "I myself", "we ourselves", cannot be found under the attitude of psychological or natural science, being no part at all of the objective world, but that subjective conscious life, itself wherein the world and all its content is made for "us", for "me".<sup>79</sup>

A transcendental phenomenology is, therefore, to be distinguished from all psychologism: "It would be much too great a mistake ... to make *psychological descriptions* based on purely internal experience ... a great mistake because a *purely descriptive psychology of consciousness is not itself transcendental phenomenology* as we have defined the latter, in terms of the transcendental phenomenological reduction."<sup>80</sup> Of course, as it has been translated onto the plane of literary criticism, phenomenological method has often failed to maintain the rigorous and austere purity of the transpersonal Husserlian subject, and has drifted into precisely the kind of psychologism that Husserl warned against. As Paul de Man says, in his earlier work: "Some of the difficulties of contemporary criticism can be traced back to a tendency to forsake the barren world of ontological reduction for the wealth of lived experience."<sup>81</sup> De Man urges a greater austerity among critics, a concerted vigilance against the "almost irresistible tendency to relapse unwittingly into the concerns of the self as they exist in the empirical world".<sup>82</sup> It is, however, possible to discern the influence of the Kantian and Husserlian subjects in certain operations to which the author is put, as a purely formal principle, in the verification of textual meaning. The work of E. D. Hirsch is instructive here.

Faithful to Husserl, Hirsch firmly opposes that scion of phenomenological criticism which "mistakenly identifies meaning with mental processes rather than with an object of those processes", and sets about constructing a defence of the author which eludes a subjectivist psychologism.<sup>83</sup> For Hirsch, the author is a normative principle which ensures the objectivity of meaning. Along a somewhat circular path, Hirsch argues that since verbal meaning is determinate and determinable, then the postulate of a determining will is necessarily required, for in the absence of any such will there would be no distinction between what *is* meant, and what *might* be meant by a word sequence: "meaning", he says, "is an affair of consciousness", and there is no verbal meaning which is not "*a willed type*".<sup>84</sup> Consequently, the author is necessary to the grounding of textual meaning in principles of validation, to the establishment of objective criteria in the work of interpretation: "The determinacy and sharability of verbal meaning resides in its being a type. The particular type that it is resides in the author's determining will."<sup>85</sup>

Kant and Husserl both found the postulate of a transcendental ego necessary to guarantee the objectivity of our knowledge about the world; only through such a postulate could individual knowledge be reconciled to the universal. It is easy to see how, in minuscule, Hirsch's use of authorial will as the ultimate principle of textual validation repeats this logic. Given the indeterminacy of textual meaning in the absence of any adjudicating norm, the premise of authorial will is a necessary epistemological condition of the existence of objective meaning. The author thus constituted is neither a locus of forces or a psychobiographical site, but a metaphor for the text operating at the most consistent and plausible level of interpretation, a purely formal principle of the determinacy of textual knowledge. Intention is not here a vivid or agonistic struggle of an author with his material, but rather the ultimate tribunal at which criticisms vie, lay claim to their truths, and consent

to be judged. The place of the author is therefore above and beyond the level at which textual meanings conflict and contest, and it is through his omnified agency that these conflicts can be neutralized in the interests of a higher, self-verifying "truth", or determinate meaning.

Such a depiction can be said to be transcendental both in the sense that it is consistently non-empirical, and in that it asserts the authorial will as an absolute standard of authentication. It is to this aspect of the author-function, and the circularity implicit in its operation, that the movement against the author takes its strongest and most justified exception. As Barthes says, "when the Author has been found, the text is 'explained' - victory to the critic."<sup>86</sup> For Foucault, too, the greatest reductions reside here: "The author is the principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning."<sup>87</sup> Yet, whilst these objections warrant considerable respect, to affirm the counter-ideal of impersonality is to fall back into the very transcendental suppositions that Barthes and Foucault wish to evade. To repeat what was said above: there is no question of a transcendental author without the total abjuration of the psychobiographical signified. It is for this reason that the transcendental and the impersonal will always find a common purpose, a common absence. Despite their antithetical starting-points, both positions resolve in a shared ascetism. In Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Stephen Dedalus explains to Cranly:

The personality of the artist, at first a cry or a cadence or a mood and then a fluid and lambent narrative, finally refines itself out of existence, impersonalizes itself, so to speak ... The artist, like the God of the creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails.<sup>88</sup>

It is easy to see how readily the "author-God" and the absence of the author meet one another, easy to see how this transcendental depiction could equally describe the disappearance of the poet-speaker in Mallarmé, the imper-

sonalities of Eliot and Valéry. Similarly, but conversely, it is apparent how the doctrine of impersonality might imply the idea of a transcendently remote author. Foucault himself warns against the transcendental idealism recrudescing in the concept of *écriture*: "... the notion of writing seems to transpose the empirical characteristics of the author into a transcendental anonymity".<sup>89</sup> As it is, with the impersonalist text, it is impossible to determine whether what arises is the transcendence of language or the transcendence of its author. "Nearly every time you use the word *language*, I could replace it by the word *thought* almost without incongruity",<sup>90</sup> the phenomenologist Georges Poulet could say to Barthes, precisely because phenomenological subjectivity is conceived as an omnipresence of intentional consciousness which is superimposed upon the text like an invisible and perfectly isomorphic map onto the contours of a country. An ideal subject is posited in both cases, one under the auspices of a putative presence, the other as a no less artificial absence. From the point of view of interpretation, it matters little whether the author disappears into a transcendental annex or into the void: the text to be read is one in which the personality of the author is nowhere figured.

It would be the truest of truisms to say that impersonalist and biographicist conceptions of the text stand in resolute opposition. Yet given the proximity in which the impersonal and the transcendental must find themselves, it follows that not only are the biographical and the transcendental thoroughly distinct, but that these conceptions will also court a similar enmity. To constitute a biographical subject, or a subject of desire within a text which posits the transcendental uninvolvedness of its author disrupts not only his sovereign detachment, but the very truth claims and objectivity that such detachment reinforces. As we have said, it is Foucault's failure to inscribe himself within the history he recounts which leads to the constitu-

tion of a transcendental subjectivity within *The Order of Things*. As we also remarked, the implication of authorial transcendence is all the more pronounced within texts whose aims are specifically constative. This is particularly true of philosophical discourse wherein impersonality tends to be a coefficient of the truth value of a system or critique. Philosophers such as Montaigne, Descartes, and, to a lesser extent, Hume have attempted to narrow this distance by introducing autobiographical frames for the their discourses, conversational intimacies, historical locales, and so forth. In modern times, Nietzsche, more than any other philosopher, has been keenly aware of these problems. The autobiographical in his text, his eccentric and highly personalized divigations and detours work against the philosophical ideal of lofty disinterestedness.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, Nietzsche did not just apply this strategy to his own texts, but sought to disillusion the transcendental anonymity of philosophical discourse by opposing the personality and prejudices of the philosophical author to the ostensible objectivity of his system:

What makes one regard philosophers half mistrustfully and half mockingly is not that one again and again detects how innocent they are ... but that they display altogether insufficient honesty, while making a mighty and virtuous noise as soon as the problem of truthfulness is even remotely touched on. They pose as having discovered and attained their real opinions through the self-evolution of a cold, pure, divinely unperturbed dialectic ... while what happens at bottom is that a prejudice, a notion, an "inspiration", generally a desire of the heart sifted and made abstract, is defended by them with reasons sought after the event - they are one and all advocates who do not want to be regarded as such, and for the most part no better than cunning pleaders for their prejudices which they baptize "truths" ...<sup>92</sup>

Of course it is inconceivable that the philosophical labour could get underway without some attempt at disinterestedness. How indeed could a groundwork of the metaphysic of morals proceed along conative lines and still possess value and credibility as a contribution to the discipline of moral

philosophy? But this is not Nietzsche's point. Philosophers present their conclusions as the outcome of strictly disinterested inquiries into the problems of truth, knowledge and morality, as consequences absolutely necessitated by purely rational procedures. In Nietzsche's view, however, this bourne is established from the outset. The text is written backwards; the philosopher reasons from conclusions to premises. Schopenhauer is by nature moribund and misanthropic, *thereafter* he weaves that wonderful vindication of pessimism and resignation known to us as *The World as Will and Representation*; Kant is a religious moralist, *therefore* he seeks to prove the existence of the "starry heavens above and the moral law within". For the critic of philosophical disinterestedness, the art of reading becomes that of retracing this primordial itinerary over and against the manifest structures of the text. To utilize such a strategy, to reread the author, his desires, prejudices, and drives, into the philosophical text, so far from consolidating the idea of the philosopher as the suzerain subject of his text, works rather to dismantle any such privilege. This insistence on the inescapably autobiographical element in any philosophy leads Nietzsche directly to the anti-transcendental theories of will-to-power and genealogy:

It has gradually become clear to me what every great philosophy has hitherto been: a confession on the part of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir; moreover, that the moral (or immoral) intentions in every philosophy have every time constituted the real germ of life out of which the entire plant has grown. To explain how a philosopher's most remote metaphysical assertions have actually been arrived at, it is always well (and wise) to ask oneself first: what morality does this (does *he* - ) aim at? I accordingly do not believe a "drive to knowledge" to be the father of philosophy, but that another drive has, here as elsewhere, only employed knowledge (and false knowledge!) as a tool. But anyone who looks at the basic drives of mankind to see what extent they may in precisely this connection have come into play as *inspirational* spirits ... will discover that they have all at some time or other practised philosophy - and that each one of them would be only too glad to present *itself* as the ultimate goal of existence and as the legitimate *master* of all the other drives ... In the philosopher ... there is nothing whatever impersonal; and, above all,

his morality bears decided and decisive testimony to *who he is* - that is to say, to the order of rank the innermost drives of his nature stand in relative to one another.<sup>93</sup>

As Nietzsche understood, perhaps better than any other, to affirm the impersonality of a philosophical system is the first step toward ascribing that system a transcendental value and vice versa. Consequently, Nietzsche rigorously inscribed the authorial subject within the system. Any criticism, and any theory which seeks to challenge the transcendence of a discourse will thus eventually find itself drawn to a form of *retrospective inference* "from the work to its author, from the deed to its doer, from the ideal to him who *needs*, it from every mode of thinking and valuing to the imperative *want* behind it".<sup>94</sup> So far from endorsing one another, from belonging to one another as aspects of the same subject, the transcendental subjectivity of philosophical systems, and the subjectivity of the author work against each other: the inscription of a biography, a biographical and biological desire within the text resists any theology of the idealist subject. Two markedly distinct subjectivities are in opposition: the one, transpersonal, extrawordly, normative and formal; the other intrawordly, biographical, a subject of desire, for want of a better word, a "material" subject. The misreception of Nietzsche as a proto-deconstructionist who advocates the disappearance of the author is the direct result of neglecting this distinction. Indeed, that segment of *The Will to Power* upon which the anti-authorial appropriation of Nietzsche is based, is directed exclusively against the Cartesian and Kantian subjects: an intensely focused philosophical critique of the onto-theological egology of philosophies of consciousness is directly misprized as an attack upon the author.<sup>95</sup> Indeed, no reading could be so erroneous, for - virtually alone amongst philosophers - Nietzsche insisted upon the most intimate links between man and his works, even, indeed, to the extent of seeing this connection as an index of the value of a system of thought:

It makes the most material difference whether a thinker stands personally related to his problems, having his fate, his need, and even his highest happiness therein; or merely impersonally, that is to say, if he can only feel and grasp them with the tentacles of cold, prying thought. In the latter case ... nothing comes of it: for the great problems, granting that they let themselves be grasped at all, do not let themselves be *held* by toads and weaklings ...<sup>96</sup>

The reinforcement of this connection, the *humanizing* of knowledge, delivers thought from transcendental presuppositions; knowledge becomes relative, mediated, perspectival. This critique, whether it be thought as anti-humanist or as a new humanism, was continued by Freud and Heidegger, who in very different ways, deconstructed the idea of a reified, unitary subjectivity in the interests not of the death of man or of the author, but of re-perceiving human subjectivity outside the domain of a transcendental subjectivity. For Heidegger, the rejection of humanism did not extend to anything resembling a rejection of the question of man. To the contrary, the question of man remained *the* question of philosophy; what is required, rather, is the redistribution of this question on the basis of a non-transcendental ontology "in which the essence of man, determined by Being itself is at home ...".<sup>97</sup> Such a redistribution does not involve the broad curtailment that humanists and anti-humanist alike stake as the ground of their confrontation: "Man is not the lord of beings. Man is the shepherd of being. Man loses nothing in this 'less'; rather he gains in that he attains the truth of Being."<sup>98</sup> No impoverishment of man's unique existence, his rationality, is implied here, quite the reverse: "Humanism is opposed because it does not set the *humanitas* of man high enough."<sup>99</sup> Even Lacan, who will seem the most inveterate of anti-humanists is nonetheless concerned to locate his anti-subjectivism within very specific confines:

... with the term "subject", we do not designate the living substratum necessary for the subjective phenomenon, nor any other kind of substance, nor any being of knowledge in its primary or secondary affectivity ... nor even in the logos which is supposedly incarnated

somewhere, but the Cartesian subject which appears the moment when doubt recognizes itself as certitude - with this difference, that from our perspective, the foundations of this subject are seen to be much broader, but at the same time more subservient with respect to the certitude which escapes him.<sup>100</sup>

The residual and enduring demand of these discourses is not to think without man but to rethink the question of man within a post-metaphysical ontology. The work of Nietzsche, Freud, Heidegger - Marx also - opens out onto a sense of the subject, of the author, which is no longer normative but disclosive, not timeless but rootedly historical, not an *aeterna veritas* but mutable, in process of becoming, not transcendent but immanent in its texts, its time and world.

Indeed it would seem that all antihumanist discourse finally makes overture to a new form of humanism, that the rejection of the subject functions as a passageway between conceptions of subjectivity. As the most recent representation of the movement against man, Foucault's work no less escapes the question of man than did that of Nietzsche, Marx, Freud or Heidegger. From *Madness and Civilization* where he attempted to give voice to unreason in man's experience, through his studies of the constitution of the subject in power to *The History of Sexuality* in which discourse is recentred on the subject as a subject of desire,<sup>101</sup> Foucault's corpus unfurls as a prolonged meditation on the question of subjectivity rather than on the absence of the subject; a mediation in which the death of man functions as a phase of hyperbolic doubt wherefrom the problem of man can be reassessed in the absence of transcendental presuppositions.

In "The Subject and Power" Foucault in fact says that the goal of contemporary thought is "to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of the kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries".<sup>102</sup> When we consider that *The Order of Things* had construed this

individuality as essentially divided, not only from others but from itself, this task may well be read as that of promoting a de-alienated subjectivity no longer split between transcendental and empirical essences, between a sovereign *cogito* on the one hand and an impenetrable unthought on the other. Along these lines, we might even view Foucault's statement in *The Order of Things* that "modern thought is advancing towards that region where man's Other must become the Same as himself" with a different eye, as the messianic mission of the Foucauldian project.<sup>103</sup> Certainly, from the vantage of any future humanism, Foucault's analyses of psychiatric, political, sexual and carceral modes of subjection, his genealogical sciences of the self - along with the thought of the "antihumanist" movement in general - will seem of immeasurably greater value than the summary "humanist" objections with which they have been confronted. There may be a certain irony in the fact that antihumanist discourse has provided the most significant directions in the theory of the subject, but there is not paradox: for the thought of the death of man cannot but be - in the most insistent, engaged form - the thinking *of man about man*.

## Chapter Three

# Misread Intentions

As is well known, Jacques Derrida's work in the 1960s concerned itself primarily with one issue, the repression of writing in the Western philosophical tradition. In order to uncover and contest this repression, Derrida undertook a series of profoundly intrinsic readings of philosophers such as Plato, Rousseau, Hegel and Husserl, destined to show that every attempt to subordinate writing to the immediate expressiveness and full self-presence of speech was obliged to presuppose a prior system of graphicity entirely at odds with the declared intent. In each of these cases Derrida's method was to remain painstakingly faithful to the letter of the text, and the result was invariably a highly technical, inward analysis within which the relationship of these texts to the general history of metaphysics was constantly implied, but never stated in any systematic fashion. In *Of Grammatology*, however, Derrida locates his readings of Saussure, Lévi-Strauss and Rousseau within a historical and structural narrative of the metaphysical privilege accorded to speech over writing.<sup>1</sup> Within this text, and we shall argue, because of its concern with broad historical structures, the question of the author becomes most visible within the classic deconstructive period.<sup>2</sup> Naturally, if we are even to approach the philosophical context in which the author problematic is here inserted, then it will be necessary to depart initially from specifically literary-critical issues. Furthermore, it is only against the background of

the deconstruction of metaphysics that Derrida's opposition to the author in *Of Grammatology* can be clearly appraised.

The project of deconstructing metaphysics is by no means new with Derrida, indeed it has been a recurrent theme in modern philosophy. Both Nietzsche and Heidegger attempted to unsettle metaphysical conceptuality at its very foundations, and Derrida's project is to be understood as a radical continuation of their work, particularly so in the case of Heidegger whose questioning of the history of philosophy functions as a continually invoked pre-text for the Derridean deconstruction. Following upon Nietzsche's identification of all metaphysical systems with the theological question, Heidegger extended the Nietzschean critique to conceive of metaphysics as onto-theology, the determination of being as presence. From Parmenides and Plato onward, says Heidegger, being has been conceived as a simple unity, a fully self-present origin and ground.<sup>3</sup> Heidegger accordingly saw the task of deconstructing metaphysics as a relentless interrogation of the notion of being such as it had been rendered by onto-theology, and the pursuit of a grounding of being more primordial than that of unitary and indivisible self-presence.

In his work subsequent to *Being and Time*, Heidegger explicitly sought this prior (and ungrounding) ground of being in what he called the ontological difference, or the difference between being and beings.<sup>4</sup> What the thought of being as presence neglects is that being in the abstract is not the same as the things-that-are, that existence is not one and the same as existents. Being is something toward which beings maintain a relationship, onto whose promise they open. The difference is both spatial and temporal. Spatial because whilst we can say that beings are here and there, being itself is never anywhere, but beyond and transcendent of beings; temporal because being is conceived as the timeless essence of beings whilst beings themself-

ves are always subject to temporality in that they can pass in and out of existence at any time. This difference is then distributed into the difference between presence and the present in accordance with the ever-presentness of being and the finitude of beings. Ontological difference, Heidegger insists, is the primary unthought of metaphysics such that it cannot be thought within the horizons of Western onto-theology. To think the difference, therefore, is to think the end of metaphysics, of being-as-presence: "The essence of presencing, and with it the distinction between presencing and what is present, remains forgotten. *The oblivion of Being is oblivion of the distinction between Being and beings*".<sup>5</sup>

What for Heidegger is the finishing post is for Derrida somewhere near the start, in that Derrida accepts the force and validity of both Heidegger's history of metaphysics as the history of the determination of being as presence, and the pursuit of a breach with that tradition via the uncovering of an originary difference. The Derridean deconstruction then becomes, and remains, the task of radicalizing these two phases of the Heideggerian critique. Derrida's first step along this road is to rework the history of presence in terms of the privileging of speech over writing. According to Derrida, the notion of speech, as it has been always and everywhere been identified with fully self-present meaning, is related primally to the notion of presence in general: "The system of language associated with phonetic-alphabetic writing is that within which logocentric metaphysics, determining the sense of being as presence, has been produced. This logocentrism, the *epoch* of the full speech, has always placed in parenthesis, *suspended*, and suppressed for essential reasons, all free reflection on the origin and status of writing ...". (43) The basis of this system resides in the association of the signified with presence, and the signifier with the absence of a signified presence: "The for-

mal essence of the signified is *presence*", Derrida writes, "and the privilege of its proximity to the logos as *phonè* is is the privilege of *presence*". (18)

As its coinage suggests, logocentrism designates thought centred upon the logos, whereby logos designates not only the word of God, as ultimate self-presence, science, logic, but the entire conceptual system of Western metaphysics: the thing in itself, essence, origin, pure consciousness, identity, presence, being as presence. Where Derrida's thought here goes beyond Heidegger is in asserting that the the metaphysical determination of being as presence could only have been produced as the outcome of the repression of writing, and that logocentrism is therefore the prior condition of onto-theology, the latter being produced as an effect of the valorization of the logos or fully self-present meaning. Metaphysics could not have begun to install the thought of presence at the origin without having always already repressed the primacy of the signifier over the signified, the primacy of the sign representing presence-in-its-absence over presence itself. Logocentrism is not part itself of the metaphysics of presence, the metaphysics of presence is the effect of logocentrism. The reduction of writing is the necessary and sufficient condition, of the epoch of onto-theology; it has produced "*the greatest totality* ... within which are produced, without ever posing the radical question of writing, all the Western methods of analysis, explication, reading, or interpretation". (46)

This recognition then prepares the way for the second phase of Derrida's passage through and beyond Heideggerian de(con)struction.<sup>6</sup> If the forgetting of writing, the sign, or "trace" as Derrida often calls it, is the precondition of the epoch of metaphysics - behind and before the determination of being as presence - then the liberation of the signifier will unleash a pre-originary difference still more pristine than that between being and beings. Whilst it must be that all metaphysics rests upon the privileging of the *phonè*

via the erasure of writing, then the breaching of metaphysics will consist in the propagation of writing as a difference which precedes ontological difference as the unthought of metaphysics; a writing which, as we know, is thought as *différance*, a differing and deferring (non)principle which produces not only the illusion of presence, but the very possibility of differentiation in the first place. Such a writing, if it could be thought, if it could be written, would represent a breach with metaphysics, more powerful, more fundamental than the ontological difference which would then take its place as the final limit of metaphysical conceptuality and the first of the "intra-metaphysical effects of *différance*"<sup>7</sup>:

... the determinations which name difference always come from the metaphysical order. This holds not only for the determination of difference as the difference between presence and the present (*Anwesen/Anwesend*), but also for the determination of difference as the difference between Being and beings ... There may be a difference still more unthought than the difference between Being and beings. We certainly can go further toward naming it in our language. Beyond Being and beings, this difference, ceaselessly differing from and deferring (itself), would trace (itself) (by itself) - this *différance* would be the first or last trace if one could still speak, here, of origin and end.

Such a *différance* would at once, again, give us to think a writing without presence and without absence, without history, without cause, without *archia*, without *telos*, a writing that absolutely upsets all dialectics, all theology, all teleology, all ontology.<sup>8</sup>

Much then is at stake in the forgetting and remembering of writing. In the *Grammatology*, Derrida proposes a "theoretical matrix" - a "*structural figure* as much as a *historical totality*" (*lxxxix*) - of this repression. And Derrida does not use the word "*totality*" lightly here. Logocentrism, we are told, has controlled "in one and the same *order*":

1. *the concept of writing* in a world where the phoneticization of writing must dissimulate its own history as it is produced;
2. *the history of* (the only) *metaphysics*, which has, in spite of all differences, not only from Plato to Hegel (even including Leibniz) but also, beyond these apparent limits, from the pre-Socratics to Heidegger, always assigned the origin of truth in general to the logos: the his-

tory of truth, of the truth of truth, has always been ... the debasement of writing, and its repression outside "full" speech.

3. *the concept of science* or the scientificity of science - what has always been determined as *logic* ... (3)

And, over the page, Derrida says that the subordination of speech to writing is "the historical origin and structural possibility of philosophy as of science, the condition of the *episteme*." (4) Within such a vast, unified, and all-inclusive *episteme*, the work of individual authors will serve merely as indices, as regional instances of the infrastructural network of logocentric determinations. Thus, though half of the text is given over to a massively detailed reading of Rousseau, no especial significance is accorded Rousseau's text as such; the reading is, as Derrida says, "the moment, as it were, of the example" (*lxxxix*); what we are reading is not a text by a particular author, but one meeting point amongst so many others of the logocentric metaphysics which has governed Western thought from its beginnings down to the present-day:

... before asking the necessary questions about the historical situation of Rousseau's text, we must locate all the signs of its appurtenance to the metaphysics of presence, from Plato to Hegel, rhythmized by the articulation of presence upon self-presence. The unity of this metaphysical tradition should be respected in its general permanence through all the marks of appurtenance, the genealogical sequences, the stricter routes of causality that organize Rousseau's text. We must recognize, prudently and as a preliminary, what this historicity amounts to; without this, what one would inscribe within a narrower structure would not be a text and above all not Rousseau's text ... There is not, strictly speaking, a text whose author or subject is Jean-Jacques Rousseau. (246)

The proper name is an improper variation on the common name. That the text has even to make provisional recourse to the names of authors is a regrettable expedience. For entirely preliminary purposes of concision and clarity we locate a body of texts arbitrarily assembled under the signature "Rousseau", but we do so on the understanding that the name "Rousseau" is under erasure throughout, that, strictly speaking, it has no meaning, signifies nothing.

Yet, from the very first, the *Grammatology* cannot be entirely secure on this issue. For is there not (even with the necessary precautions) a contradiction involved in continuing over hundreds of pages to talk about a Rousseauian text when no such thing properly exists? How can we, in all consistency, utilize that whose existence we contest "at root"? As we know, Derrida has inherited from Heidegger numerous strategies with which to negotiate the saying of the strictly unsayable. Most notably the practice of writing under erasure (in tandem with the vigilant use of parentheses, quotation-marks) whereby words such as "is", "presence", continue to be deployed, not because we wish to reconfirm the metaphysic always inherent in their enunciation, but in despair of any other language with which to speak. And it would seem entirely *de règle* to allow this concession, for without it there would be either no possibility of Heidegger and Derrida writing, or of our reading their work. Yet to extend this concession to the *Grammatology's* appropriation of Rousseau is not the same thing at all, for nothing in principle compels Derrida to the vast and disproportionate attention bestowed upon this single author. Within the "age of metaphysics" he demarcates (Descartes to Hegel), he could have read the works of Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, Berkeley, Hume *et al*, etc., etc., and not exclusively those of Rousseau on trust that they most revealingly represent this epoch of logocentrism. And there is far greater unease on this issue than any other in the *Grammatology*. If we follow this important paragraph - which belongs to the "Introduction to the 'Age of Rousseau' - in its shifting moods:

The names of authors or doctrines have here no substantial value. They indicate neither identities nor causes. It would be frivolous to think that "Descartes", "Leibniz", "Rousseau", "Hegel", etc., are names of authors, of the authors of movements or displacements that we thus designate. The indicative value that I attribute to them is first the name of a problem. If I provisionally authorize myself to treat this historical structure by fixing my attention on philosophical or literary texts, it is not for the sake of identifying in them the origin, cause, or equilibrium of the structure. But as I also do not think that these texts

are the simple *effects* of structure, in any sense of the word; as I think that *all concepts hitherto proposed in order to think the articulation of a discourse and of an historical totality are caught within the metaphysical closure that I question here*, as we do not know of any other concepts and cannot produce any others, and indeed shall not produce so long as this closure limits our discourse; as the primordial and indispensable phase, in fact and in principle, of the development of this problematic, consists in questioning the internal structure of these texts as symptoms; as that is the only condition for determining these symptoms *themselves* in the totality of their metaphysical ap-purtenance; I draw my argument from them in order to isolate Rousseau, and, in Rousseauism, the theory of writing. Besides, this abstraction is partial, and it remains, in my view, provisional. Further on, I shall directly approach the problem within a "question of method". (99)

Singular difficulties have begun to emerge. What begins as a confident disclaimer of the author gradually lurches into hesitation and postponement. Though the passage seems to be asserting the redundancy of the author it finally issues as an apology for the uses the *Grammatology* is subsequently to make of Rousseau. Not that the problem is sufficiently treated here - as Derrida says, its direct address is to be awaited. But nevertheless, we are asked to accept a text which will appear for all the world to be Rousseauian, and of unique importance in the history of logocentrism, on the conditions that it is not a text whose author and subject is Rousseau, and that it is no more than a mere instance of logocentrism. The duplicity involved here generates numerous contradictory statements throughout the *Grammatology*. Introducing the "Age of Rousseau", we are told that Rousseau's text occupies "a singular position" (97) in the history of metaphysics, whilst later it is said: "Rousseau, as I have already suggested, has only a very relative privilege in the history that interests us". (162) Similarly, though there is no text whose author is Jean-Jacques Rousseau, we are informed that "something irreducibly Rousseauist is captured" (161) in Derrida's analysis of the counter-logic of supplementarity. Furthermore, when Derrida approaches the issue with a "question of method", though much else besides is discussed,

the question of Rousseau's status is treated still more exiguously, and is effectively closed no sooner than it is opened.<sup>9</sup>

What exigencies force Derrida into this awkward, as he would say, embarrassed position *vis a vis* Rousseau? Why does he never attempt an answer to this question which everywhere bears upon the *Grammatology*? Another way of presenting this dilemma would be to ask: if logocentrism is all-pervasive why make one author stand surety for "the reduction of writing profoundly implied by the entire age"(98), and examine this repression in the innermost recesses of his *corpus*? Derrida could surely have traced the logocentric arrangement symptomatically across that age of metaphysics between Descartes and Hegel. Not that there is insufficient space for such an undertaking. After all, a large section of the analysis of this age is given over to Lévi-Strauss, *on account of his fidelity to Rousseau*.<sup>10</sup> And, for that matter, why Lévi-Strauss rather than Descartes, Leibniz, or any other of those thinkers who actually belonged to the classical age? Answers to these questions are pledged but postponed; much in the manner that impossible promises find their fulfillment assigned to the distant future in the hope they will then be forgotten. And for good reason, since these questions bear not only upon the deconstruction of logocentrism, but more primally upon its construction. What, then, is the status of Rousseau as an instance of logocentricity? What are the uses to which he is put in the *Grammatology*?

### *Hors-Texte*

Derrida's analysis of Rousseau has become one of the classics of critical history. No other essay in modern times has found itself more replayed and discussed. And indeed, Derrida here presented the critical establishment with a formidable and unprecedented model of reading, whereby the critic

demonstrates at great length, and with exemplary rigour, that a text everywhere says quite the reverse of what its author intended. Rousseau's theory of language entirely turns back upon itself, his conception of writing as the supplement of speech issues, within the text itself, as more originary than speech both in spite, and because of its author's determination to say exactly the opposite. A logic of supplementarity, traced with tenacious intricacy throughout the Rousseauian text, everywhere undermines the romantic thesis of a pure, immediate vocality prior to all inscription. While Rousseau wants to say that writing is an exterior addition to the self-presence of speech, his text continually presupposes that writing is also the supplement of speech in a second sense whereby it is seen to compensate for a lack which has already appeared in the notion of originary presence. These two contradictory meanings or virtualities of the word supplement co-inhere throughout Rousseau's analyses with an effect so disruptive that what his text inscribes at the origin of languages is a supplement *at* the origin, a "writing that takes place *before* and within *speech*". (315)

Within the course of this serpentine, and profoundly inward interpretation, Derrida also presented the critical establishment with method of reading which combined the technical resources of both philosophical and literary criticism in a particularly fertile, sophisticated and challenging manner. Equally at ease with Rousseau's fiction and his philosophical discourses, the *Grammatology* takes up a unique position at the enigmatic threshold between literary and philosophical analysis, between these two disciplines which are so near and so occulted to one another. As we know, this significant achievement has had regrettable consequences for Derrida's reception in the philosophical community, but it has signally contributed to the excitement and enthusiasm which his work has inspired in literature departments. Yet, mirroring its divided reception, the text tends to be read too literally in two

halves. Particularly in that the interpretation of Rousseau is often read aside from its context, as though it did not form "Part II" of a text called *Of Grammatology*, as though it were not, as Derrida insists, to be connected to the theoretical proposals presented in the first half of the text. Moreover, the interpretation itself tends to be received primarily in terms of the deconstruction of Rousseauian intent, and to the exclusion of other problematics.

Derrida opens his reading in a manner which will seem most unlikely if we consider the foregoing prescriptions, and the theoretical thrust of the first half of the text. So far from commencing with an analysis of the supplement as it unhinges Rousseau's theory of language, Derrida traces its labyrinthine working within Rousseau's experience. Indeed the two, life and work, are to be thought as one:

... we must ... think Rousseau's experience and his theory of writing together, the accord and the discord that, under the name of writing, relate Jean-Jacques to Rousseau, uniting and dividing his proper name. On the side of experience, a recourse to literature as reappropriation of presence, that is to say, as we shall see, of Nature; on the side of theory, an indictment against the negativity of the letter, in which must be read the degeneracy of culture and the disruption of the community. (144)

Accordingly, "That Dangerous Supplement" begins by endorsing the traditional psychobiographical interpretation which sees Rousseau's turn to writing as a means of compensating (supplementing) for his feelings of inadequacy in normal social life. That this is as *auteurist* an itinerary as can be followed does not detain or perturb Derrida, and he quickens his step along this path by connecting the psychopathological impulse that drives Rousseau to write with his masturbatory practices. Like writing, masturbation (when accompanied by object-fantasy) is a supplement or proxy of lived experience, an imago of an unattainable or unmasterable presence: in Rousseau's case of a morbidly feared plenitude enshrouded in the acts of speech and copulation. Writing and masturbation alike are methods of mastering presence in the

mode of absence, and with Rousseau they are so indissolubly linked that we can say: "It is from a certain determined representation of 'cohabitation with women' that Rousseau had to have recourse throughout his life to that type of dangerous supplement that is called masturbation and that cannot be separated from his activity as a writer. To the end" (155)

But the supplementary chain linking Rousseau's experience to his philosophy of language does not end here. Derrida then proceeds to co-implicate the absence of a "real" mother in Rousseau's life within the logic of deferral and substitution. Having (it is widely supposed) lost his real mother in childbirth, Rousseau's life was thereafter populated by a chain of surrogates. In his relationship with Thérèse, which is itself supplemented via the dangerous vice of masturbation, Rousseau also discovers the supplement of his adoptive mother who is herself the supplement of the "true" mother. And yet, for Derrida, even this natural mother is not outside the chain of supplementary substitutions: "Jean-Jacques could thus look for a supplement to Thérèse only on one condition: that ... *Thérèse herself be already a supplement*. As Mamma was already the supplement of an unknown mother, and as the 'true mother' herself, at whom the known 'psychoanalyses' of the case of Jean-Jacques Rousseau stop, was also in a certain way a supplement..."(156)

The attempt to retrace this chain to any "natural", or "first" mother is therefore condemned in advance to the vain regress that Rousseau's text encounters in attempts to uncover the origin of language. At the wellspring there will always be another source, a pre-originary substitution, a further supplement of a presence itself irremediably absent like the lost mother. And it is easy to see how this endless and hollow supplementarity will resonate at the heart of Rousseau's political philosophy, wherein the quest of a pure state of nature will ceaselessly run up against proto-cultural forces. In all

these areas, the thought of an originary presence is destined to discover a supplement at the origin, the supplement of an origin itself supplementary, a presencing absence, an absencing presence.

Naturally such an interpretation assumes the greatest degree of communication between Rousseau's life and work. Indeed its strength resides in the felicity with which Derrida evokes a purely Rousseauian world wherein sexual, social, and maternal neuroses, an essay on the origin languages, and a political philosophy of uncorrupted origins are patterned and figured around the deviant logic of the supplement. As such, "That Dangerous Supplement" repeats not only the content but the format and ethos of traditional psychobiography. But such an excursion is the last thing we have been prepared to expect from the *Grammatology*, or Derridean deconstruction in general. How is this chapter, with its troupe of biographical figures, to be reconciled to the injunction that "the names of authors ... have here no substantial value", that they "indicate neither identities or causes"? No sooner does Derrida depart from the psychobiographical locale of the supplement than he raises a question of method.

Reading Rousseau in terms of autoeroticism and mother-substitutions cannot, we are told, be deemed psychoanalytic in the customary sense. Here Derrida's accents are distinctly Lacanian:

Although it is not commentary, our reading must be intrinsic and remain within the text. That is why, in spite of certain appearances, the locating of the word *supplement* is here not at all psychoanalytical, if by that we understand an interpretation that takes us outside of the writing toward a psychobiographical signified, or even toward a general psychological structure that could rightly be separated from the signifier.(159)

On one level this means, quite simply, that we are to regard the psychobiographical as but one form of writing or signification amongst others. No particular privilege, or change of perspective is due, for when we

read biography or autobiography we are reading, as everywhere we must, nothing other than writing. And for all its banality, this is a necessary point, in that it provides the most direct route of return for the author as a biographical figure in criticism. The writer's (auto)biography is writing, and there is therefore no reason to either valorize its significance in the act of interpretation, or to outlaw its deployment on the grounds that it is somehow an improper form of textuality. Thus we can re-mobilize the autobiographical without lapsing once more into positivist or geneticist assumptions. Yet Derrida wants to take this further. In its most infamous hour, the text declares:

*There is nothing outside the text* [there is no outside-text; *il n'y a pas de hors-texte*]. And that is neither because Jean Jacques' life or the existence of Mamma or Thérèse themselves, is not of prime interest to us, nor because we have access to their so-called "real" existence only in the text and we have neither any means of altering this, nor any right to neglect this limitation. All reasons of this type would already be sufficient, to be sure, but there are more radical reasons. What we have tried to show by following the guiding line of the "dangerous supplement", is that in what one calls the real life of these existences "of flesh and bone", beyond and behind what one believes can be circumscribed as Rousseau's text, there has never been anything but writing; there have never been anything but supplements, substitutional significations which could only come forth in a chain of differential references, the "real" supervening, and being added only while taking on meaning from a trace and from an invocation of the supplement, etc. And thus to infinity, for we have read, *in the text*, that the absolute present, Nature, that which words like "real mother" name, have always already escaped, have never existed; that what opens meaning and language is writing as the disappearance of natural presence. (158-9)

Derrida never quite says so, but he irresistibly implies it: life itself, in its materiality, even as it was lived, is writing. Subsequently, Derrida has on several occasions gone out of his way to correct the reading of this statement, to refuse the idea that "there is nothing beyond language ... and other stupidities of that sort."<sup>11</sup> Yet unjust as this idealist representation is, it does not take place on the basis of nothing, for Derrida is at his most ambiguous

here, and all the important questions are left in suspension. What are these more radical reasons? Certainly they go beyond the commonplace assertion that the *Confessions* is a written text, and that therefore there is no question of sustaining Mamma and Thérèse as natural, empirical presences in writing.<sup>12</sup> But where might we go beyond this? In declaring that there is nothing behind Rousseau's text are we saying that Mamma and Thérèse never existed except as textual figures even when they were alive? That for Rousseau they were supplements, and never presences, never more than textual figures even as he walked in their midst? And, most important of all, is this to be taken as peculiar to Rousseau, or as a principle of reading and writing in general? The text provides no elucidation here, even as it directly confronts its own methodological status. Once more, also, the unanswered question bears upon Rousseau's role as an instance of logocentrism.

Though it is not at all clear what Derrida means by this passage, what it does in the *Grammatology* is quite clear. Once again it allows the text to thoroughly utilize resources whose validity it disputes. We may pursue the most generous psychobiographical thesis provided we bear in mind that the psychobiographical signified has never existed, just as we may have disproportionate recourse to the texts of Jean-Jacques Rousseau so long it is recalled that there is "no text whose author and subject is Jean-Jacques Rousseau". That we summon Rousseau's autoeroticism, his relationship with Thérèse, Mamma, his discomfiture with the spoken word does not return us to the precepts of man-and-the-work criticism, for we are only dealing with writing, and here only with a certain collocation of texts which arbitrarily bear the name Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and whose very place in the reading is determined solely by their metaphysical and epistemic appurtenance. Yet in "That Dangerous Supplement", so far from presenting that in Rousseau which is common to the age and to the *episteme*, Derrida is drawing upon a

highly idiosyncratic network of circumstances in which an essay on the origin of languages, a political philosophy of uncorrupted origins, an obsessive autoeroticism and a psychopathology of mother-substitution all manifestly coincide with an exaltation of natural presence and a denunciation of supplementarity as negativity, evil, exteriority. The fortuities of this situation are not the stuff and substance of epistemic exemplarity, yet they have been proffered as such. In accordance with the classic deconstructive trope we could say that a lacuna has opened up between statement and gesture here. The "Introduction to the 'age of Rousseau'" has told us that Rousseau is simply an example of the logocentric ensemble. "That Dangerous Supplement" has shown us that what the author of the *Essay on the Origin of Languages* exemplifies most perfectly is the psychopathology of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The next move which the *Grammatology* makes is still more unlikely.

## A History of Silence

*But, first of all, is there a history of silence?*

Jacques Derrida<sup>13</sup>

The succeeding chapter is entitled "Genesis and Structure of the *Essay on the Origin of Languages*". "Genesis" will be a peculiar word in the *Grammatology* since the weight of its thesis is directed toward problematizing the existence of anything like genesis, whether it be that of language, society, humanity. But the genesis Derrida has here in mind is extremely narrow and local. His concern is with the precise date of the composition of the *Essay*,<sup>14</sup> and he analyses this question over the course of a long subsection entitled "The Place of the *Essay*". In the absence of any absolutely authoritative external evidence as to the time of its composition, Rousseau scholars have been divided as to whether the *Essay* was written before or after the *Dis-*

*course on Inequality*.<sup>15</sup> Speculation ranges over a period of 13 years, the mid-1740s being the earliest possible time, 1761 the latest. The reason why the second *Discourse* (1754) occupies such prominence is not purely due to the fact that it is placed at the mean of the two extremes, but also because this discourse is considered the first of the great Rousseauian works, and thus forms the opening of the primary canon. Scholars have largely consented in the view that the *Essay* is not the equal of these great discourses, that a certain want of structure, and immaturity of philosophical reasoning are incompatible with the later work. Correspondingly, the themes of the later works have been discovered in inchoate and fledgling form in the *Essay*. This position has also the added advantage of explaining why the text was never published during Rousseau's lifetime. Publication was withheld, it is assumed, because the author realized that this work would not do justice to the great philosophical project he was poised before undertaking.<sup>16</sup>

Derrida contests this position vigorously, and in an argument that throughout respects all the protocols of classical textual scholarship. With an attentiveness and rigour all his own, he argues that in terms of external evidence, there is no progression in philosophic thematics between the *Essay* and the second *Discourse*, if anything the reverse. There is thus no question of the *Essay* predating the second *Discourse* on these counts. With regard to the external question, Derrida claims that the debate was settled in favour of the posteriority of the *Essay* as long ago as 1913, and quotes a Rousseau scholar at great length to this effect.<sup>17</sup> The intricacies of Derrida's argument are of no especial interest here. The more compelling question is why the *Grammatology* should concern itself with this issue at all. What motivates Derrida to depart from the theme of the supplement for a full and valuable twenty-five pages immediately after having introduced it in the most spellbinding fashion? And to do so in the interest of pursuing the most

*auteurist* and positivistic of exercises? What could be more irrelevant to a broad-based intertextuality than the question of whether the *Essay* was written five years before the second *Discourse* or five years after?

Derrida's commentators are silent on this issue. As well they might be, for not only does this section command precious little interest for anyone who is not a Rousseau scholar, but it would appear, also, to be thoroughly counterintuitive. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is rare, perhaps alone, in mentioning "The Place of the *Essay*", and she does so only in the offices of a translator's introduction. For her, it "is engrossing to watch the bold argument operating in the service of a conventional debate", an opportunity to savour the "taste of a rather special early Derrida", and the section is to be read as a piece of "rather endearing conservatism".<sup>18</sup> However, true as this may be, the implication is that we are to regard the relationship of "The Place of the *Essay*" to the rest of the *Grammatology* as purely contingent. As an aberration to be relished by the conservative still within us all, but an exercise entirely irrelevant to the grammatological project. Yet one thing we quickly learn from reading Derrida is that nothing is a simple digression, undertaken for no apparent reason. Rather such moments, like fault-lines in the text, will appear marginal and extrinsic, but to rigorous investigation in fact reveal an economy, or strategic wager, vital to the entire system. It is upon such moments, a footnote, a harmless *entr'acte*, a casual metaphor, a seemingly directionless chapter, that deconstructive reading will begin its work of unsettling the structures and presuppositions of the text. Why then does Derrida want us to agree that the *Essay* postdates the second *Discourse*? Gayatri Spivak also says: "I do not believe that Derrida ever again devotes himself to this sort of textual scholarship".<sup>19</sup> However, when we consider that Derrida undertakes a very similar mission in "Plato's Pharmacy", the necessities which dictate "The Place of the *Essay*" begin to emerge.<sup>20</sup>

By a coincidence, perhaps uncanny, Plato's *Phaedrus* has also been relegated by tradition to a place among the works of its author's immaturity.<sup>21</sup> The use of myth to illustrate the problem of writing (an explanatory tactic generally censured by Plato), and ill-construction in the exchanges between Phaedrus and Socrates, have led scholars to suppose that it was Plato's first dialogue. In the twentieth century this view persisted but took a curious turn as scholars now began to assert that it was Plato's last work, the same defects now explicable in terms of declining rather than nascent critical powers. Here again Derrida plays the dutiful advocate: "We are speaking of the *Phaedrus* that was obliged to wait almost twenty-five centuries before anyone gave up the idea that it was a badly composed dialogue ... We are no longer at that point. The hypothesis of a rigorous, sure, and subtle form is naturally more fertile. It discovers new chords, new consonances ... patiently interlacing the arguments."<sup>22</sup> To sufficiently sensitive expiscation, Derrida argues, the *Phaedrus* will surrender all the logical rigour of the great Platonic dialogues. It is only really necessary to *read* this text to see that, in its denunciation of writing, is not only compatible with the Platonic system in general, but actively and urgently necessitated by that system. "Plato's Pharmacy" thus gives over its first twenty pages to defending the *Phaedrus* against the tradition: "Our intention has only been to sow the idea that the spontaneity, freedom, and fantasy attributed to Plato in his legend of Threuth were actually supervised and limited by rigorous necessities."<sup>23</sup>

Of course this will seem a little puzzling, since from a *prima facie* point of view, the tradition is very much in agreement with what we might expect deconstruction to avouch here. Platonic scholars themselves, far from upholding Plato's denunciation of writing have found it somewhat inconsistent, and in explicit contradiction with Plato's own practices as a writer. Indeed, we might say, that in certain respects, the critical basis on which

deconstruction might take place here has been prepared long in advance. Yet what presents itself as the deconstruction of logocentrism here, is in fact responding to the far more onerous pressures of constructing that tradition.

Over and above the necessities of undoing the text, and as their indispensable condition, the *Phaedrus* must be seen to belong fully to the great Platonic metaphysics, for within the deconstructive narrative this text - the scant four pages of which deal with the question of writing - forms the fabulous origin of logocentrism. And the stacks are laid high against Derrida here, since it is not just that the *Phaedrus* as a whole is thought to belong to a prodigal immaturity, but it is thought to do so primarily on account of the very section "On the Inferiority of the Written to the Spoken Word" which introduces the myth of Threuth to illustrate the argument that writing, as an artificial mnemonic device, would subvert the living presence of natural memory.<sup>24</sup> The denunciation of writing is considered to be the least typical, least relevant moment in the least typical, least relevant of the Platonic dialogues. And furthermore, the other place in which Plato brings up the question of writing - in the "Seventh Letter", which surprisingly or not, Derrida does not draw upon - is considered quite so unintelligible as to be the interpolation of someone other than Plato.<sup>25</sup> It is thus that Derrida *must* insist upon the "rigorous, sure, and subtle form" of the *Phaedrus*, thus that he *must* argue with a supremely patient vigour, that the *Phaedrus* is absolutely essential and axial to the primary Platonic canon, that the very system of Platonic idealism relates *eo ipso* to the repression of writing, for it is only from this point that the seemingly lateral question of the priority of speech can be wedded to the vast tradition of Western metaphysics. Only from here that Derrida can say that the metaphysics of presence came into its being with the repression of writing, only from here that his text can begin to use these terms interchangeably within its history of Western thought.

Likewise, in the case of Rousseau's text. Having allotted to a short, little read and posthumously published tract the onus of representing an entire age of metaphysics between Descartes and Hegel, the redoubtable problems of exemplarity<sup>26</sup> that this raises would be still further compounded if - following tradition - we were to see in the *Essay* a work not even itself properly Rousseauian.<sup>27</sup> This would not have presented such problems to Derrida had he merely wished to discuss the *Essay* on its own terms, as though it could have come from anywhere. But in order to lend the theme of supplementarity its full breadth the *Grammatology* has been obliged to trace it across Rousseau's entire *corpus*, and to read it in the deepest reserves of his experience, thereby evolving a Rousseauism from which the *Essay* is thenceforth in principle inextricable. Furthermore, within the complex economy of the *Grammatology*, supplementarity must be connected to the *Confessions* if it is to be a determinant psychic force; as, too, the *Essay* must intertextualize from a position of parity with the great discourses, for it is in this hour that the question of writing as supplementarity conjoins itself to the discourses on nature, culture, politics. Having established the posteriority of the *Essay* to the second *Discourse*, grammatology will spare no effort in reading the question of writing as tacitly implied in the entire Rousseauian philosophy.<sup>28</sup>

There is then a very definite sense in which deconstruction is in complicity with the texts it deconstructs. As a general principle, preparatory labours of construction must accompany any deconstructive act, for the reading must propose a model of order even if only in the interests of finally unsettling that order; and in this sense Derrida's work acquires a rare analogue in its industrial counterpart, for which a certain work of consolidation is sometimes necessary if the building is to collapse according to pre-established patterns. Yet, though this initial phase of constructivity is common to all the

deconstructive readings, its urgency is somewhat greater in the cases of the *Phaedrus* and the *Essay* than elsewhere. That Derrida will exert such efforts of sponsorship on their behalf is primarily due to the peculiar fragility of the history he recounts. For this reason too that he has no answers to the question of Rousseau's exemplarity.

If we reconstitute the history of logocentrism, we will see that - in its exemplary moments - it leaps directly from antiquity to Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages*. And it is not in the interests of brevity or momentum that Derrida should move so expeditiously between the *Phaedrus* and the Rousseauist dream of a pure, originary voice. "If the history of metaphysics is the history of a determination of being as presence, if its adventure merges with that of logocentrism, and if it is produced wholly as the reduction of the trace, Rousseau's work seems to me to occupy, between Plato's *Phaedrus* and Hegel's *Encyclopaedia*, a singular position." (97) Yet the singularity of Rousseau's position is determined by the singular silence of the Classical age on the priority of speech, repression of writing: "Within this age of metaphysics, between Descartes and Hegel, Rousseau is undoubtedly the only one or the first one to make a theme or system of the reduction of writing", the text says, but feels compelled to add that this reduction was "profoundly implied by the entire age". (98) However, Derrida does not show how the reduction of writing was profoundly implied by Descartes, nor any other of the philosophers of the classical era. Indeed, *Of Grammatology* is here forced into a position exactly the reverse of Foucault's analysis of the Classical *episteme*. Whilst *The Order of Things* devotes its longest, most evidenced and persuasive analyses to demonstrating the Classical preoccupation with the system of signs, *Of Grammatology* must enforce the repression of the sign during this epoch, and on the basis of very little evidence or argumentation. Furthermore, this "age of metaphysics" becomes all the less

propitious to the logocentric thesis in that those areas in which the question of writing was raised - general grammar, the Leibnizian project of the *characteris universalis* - exerted energies more accommodating to a nascent grammatology than metaphysical phonocentrism. Indeed, addressing this era, we would anticipate that grammatology, as the science of writing, would do everything to draw forth the efflorescence of interest in the sign system, the mathematicization of knowledge, in the Chinese ideogram, the burgeoning disciplines of pasigraphy etc., rather than pressing the dour and negative thesis that we behold here only the appearance of writing's liberation, that at the most fundamental level writing was still shackled, lateralized, debased. Yet Derrida is contracted to this position, since as the classical era represents the great epoch of metaphysics - untroubled by either the Kantian critique or the Nietzschean deconstruction - it is essential that the logocentric arrangement will be seen to hold undivided sway during this period. Not surprisingly, Derrida is forced into defensive, almost rearguard actions here. Most markedly in the case of Leibniz:

In spite of all the differences that separate the projects of universal language or writing at this time (notably with respect to history and language), the concept of the simple absolute is always necessarily and indispensably involved. It would be easy to show that it always leads to an infinitist theology and to the logos or the infinite understanding of God. That is why, appearances to the contrary, and in spite of all the seduction that it can legitimately exercise on our epoch, the Leibnizian project of a universal characteristic that is not essentially phonetic does not interrupt logocentrism in any way. On the contrary, universal logic confirms logocentrism, is produced within it and with its help, exactly like the Hegelian critique to which it will be subjected. I emphasize the complicity of these two contradictory movements ... (78-9)

Putting to one side the question of whether the simple absolute or characteristic does lead so easily to infinitist theology,<sup>29</sup> as well as the suspicion of circularity in his argument here (that universal logic is produced within logocentrism is precisely what is in question), it is clear that the terms of the

grammatological thesis have been deftly shifted at this point. The principal contention of the *Grammatology* has been that the repression of writing is the universally prior condition of the logocentric *episteme*, as we recall, " ... the historical origin and structural possibility of philosophy as of science, the condition of the *episteme*". (4) Now, however, Derrida is saying that the Leibnizian sign system is logocentric even though it does not privilege the *phonè*. Even if we accede to everything Derrida says about the connection between the simple absolute and infinitist theology, nothing is redeemed in this respect; if anything the questions raised take on a still more worrying aspect. How is it that a universal language which privileges neither speech nor writing, and which is proposed in the form an arche-writing logically prior to both, should, indeed *could* be logocentric without respecting the sole and sufficient condition of that *episteme*. Are we to accept a logocentrism which is not phonocentric? How, in grammatological terms, is that possible? *Of Grammatology* has much to clarify at this point, but the text moves quickly away from the Leibnizian question, as also from the issue of the widespread classical research into Chinese writing, a project which is dismissed as "a sort of European hallucination". (80)

The problems that the classical era present to grammatology, then, are immense, for not only are overtly logocentric texts conspicuous in their absence, but Derrida has also to contend with a movement in thought which appears, for all the world, to interrupt or breach the great epoch of logocentrism. Of course it might be said that such a silence consolidates the deconstructive insistence on the presuppositional inherence of logocentrism in Western discourse, that though so much in this epoch would suggest the contrary, these forces merely register superficial or illusory displacements, and that the repression of writing continued to operate at the deepest level. And this is not quite as eristic a point as it might seem. The agency of repres-

sion, as we know, is at its strongest when it operates unawares. But since logocentrism can, and does surface every now and then, we might expect some historical account of why it enters discourse at a manifest level at some times and does not at others. Moreover, even if we allow the verity of each and every grammatological proposition, the absence of explicitly logocentric texts will still present Derrida with enormous expository difficulties in that there are precious few points at which deconstruction can seize upon logocentricity and contest its assumptions.

That deconstruction must take place upon a construct is obvious, and to oppose a tacit and sedimented nexus of phonocentric assumptions across an *episteme* as old as thought itself would be a task so problematic as to be all-but-inconceivable. As a result, Derrida is obliged to exalt those brief and historically isolated moments of logocentric clarity in which the grounding assumptions of two-and-a-half millennia surface as a theory of the primacy of speech over writing. Indeed, the tendency of deconstruction to work so assiduously on the margins - with four pages of the *Phaedrus*, a hybrid text like the *Essay*, the tiny "Note on the Mystic Writing Pad", a footnote to *Being and Time*, with one citation from *De Interpretatione*, with the implicit, the scarcely said, the *lapsus scribendi*, etc - all this may well be largely attributable to the fact that the question of speech's ascendancy over writing had never entered the philosophical mainframe. From Rousseau onward, it is true, phonocentrism becomes a little more explicit in the philosophical text, and we owe it to Jacques Derrida that we now know exactly where to look in Hegel, Husserl, Saussure and Heidegger to find its express formulations. Yet even here it does not force a dominant theme at any obvious level: not a text, nor a chapter of a text is given over to the subject in any direct manner. Thus to the questions Derrida asks - "Why accord an 'exemplary' value to the 'age of Rousseau'? What privileged place does Jean-Jacques Rousseau occupy in

the history of logocentrism?" (97) - we might reply that without Rousseau there would be neither a single example of logocentrism between Plato and Hegel, nor a logocentric text of any length in the history of logocentrism. Indeed, we might wonder if it is correct even to talk of privilege in this context. When a text is *sui generis*, there is no valorization, only tautology involved in allotting it a unique class. What we can say, though, is that without the *Essay*, the history of logocentrism would be all-but-inaudible. Whether it is possible to write a history of silence is extremely doubtful. Certainly it would not have the density imposed upon it by *Of Grammatology*.

The *Grammatology* catches Derrida in a position of unaccustomed vulnerability, since rather than interrogating the systems of others, we find him constructing a certain theoretical structure and history of his own. And, in important respects, he is obliged to do so if the more specific analyses of logocentrism are to have anything more than a regional significance. All the other works of this period constantly presuppose the necessity of the logocentric *episteme*, but nowhere do they forward any substantial account of its constitution and history. Everything proceeds as though this history were given, and the deconstructor bringing a decisive moment in its articulation into the sharpest focus. The *Grammatology* therefore functions very much as the groundwork since it stands reference for the *episteme* to which these essays have constant recourse. Thus the *episteme* acquires an indispensability in deconstruction which it does not have in Foucault's thought, since Foucault could abandon the concept as an explanatory device whilst continuing his project of seeking out the rules of formation for discourse.

For Derrida, however, logocentrism must be the condition of two-and-a-half thousand years of metaphysical thought if the thought of writing as *dif-férance* is to have the power to force some sort of breach in the metaphysical enclosure. And the difficulties facing Derrida here are immense, not only for

the reasons cited above. For unlike Nietzsche and Heidegger, the Derridean deconstruction of metaphysics does not proceed from an easily communicable or comprehensible characterization of metaphysics: the definition of metaphysics as the privileging of the *phonè* has no support in the movement against metaphysics and very little within the thought of metaphysicians themselves. Indeed prior to Derrida, the question of writing would seem lateral, extrinsic, even trifling within the philosophical tradition, and it is due to Derrida's single-handed efforts that we can now see the philosophical significance that the privileging of voice can acquire. Yet what Derrida, for all his labours, cannot establish is why the opposition speech-writing is anything more than one opposition amongst others, why, that is, it should have inaugural and all-institutive status within the history of metaphysics. It is easy enough to follow Derrida in seeing that the speech-writing opposition repeats the presence-absence polarity in which Heidegger discovered the first characteristic of all metaphysical thought, but it is not clear why it should do so as the condition of the metaphysical tradition rather than as its effect. And Derrida would seem, against his interests, to confirm that the logocentric question is secondary or subordinate to that of presence, since in showing that speech is always determined as full presence to itself, and is *therefore* metaphysical, the idea of presence is from the outset assumed to be logically prior to the idea of speech. It is difficult to see how, from this position, Derrida can convincingly argue for the logical priority of speech. At very most, the deconstructive critique might open up a certain undecidability on this question, yet even in so doing, the central claim that logocentrism is the primal condition of the *episteme* would remain unsatisfied.<sup>30</sup>

Naturally, that Derrida cannot produce transcendental arguments for the priority of logocentrism should not deter or invalidate the grammatological project. But what it does do is to place the burden of the demonstration on

the role of logocentrism within the historical development of metaphysics. Which is to say, that the text must furnish examples of the repression of writing if deconstruction is to have any leverage within the elusive tradition which it opposes. But examples, as we have seen, are at a premium, and, needless to say, when the number and range of instances of what is held to be a general phenomenon are severely limited then the problems of exemplarity are redoubled. And when the weight of exemplifying an age falls so heavily upon one author, then it is questionable whether we are dealing with exemplarity at all. Is Rousseau an example? Can one example represent an age? Precisely because it is the key issue of the *Grammatology*, the question of exemplarity must be short-circuited whenever it arises, and most commonly and conveniently in the shape of denying that "Jean-Jacques Rousseau" means anything. Doubtless the problem of exemplarity is one facet of the problem of the author. The need to instantiate will exert signal stresses on any deauthorized history, particularly when one or two authors will serve to exemplify what thousands cannot. However, in the *Grammatology*, quite apart from this constituting a reason for accepting the role of individual authors in the history of discourse, it forces Derrida into the most awkward of positions whereby his text must deny the author precisely *because* of the exorbitant recourse it makes to Jean-Jacques Rousseau as author, logocentrist.

The claim that the author does not exist is unique to the *Grammatology*, and subsequently Derrida has made every effort to say the opposite on this question.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, with this in mind, we might wonder if the opposition to the author in the *Grammatology* has anything more than a strategic value. There is, however, one area, in which deconstruction will seem to consistently confront the author. This area is of course that of intention. Things here will not be as clear-cut as many wish to suppose, but the necessity of

deconstructing intention is to be found in all Derrida's readings, not only as a principle of method, but as their remainder, their justification.

### Doubling the Text: Intention and its Other

*The gain-of-anxiety, for the strong poet and the strong reader, is the certain location of a place, even though the place be an absence, the place-of-a-voice, for this setting of a topos makes a poem possible. 'We only know what we ourselves have made' is the great Vichian adage, and if we know both a place and a father, it is because we have made them both, and then turned from and against them in the ambivalence of synechdote, the vicissitudes of drive. We mark the spot by wishing to slay the father, there, at that crossing, and we then know the spot because it becomes the place where the voice of the dead father breaks through. The marking, the will-to- inscribe, is the ethos of writing that our most advanced philosophers of rhetoric trace, but the knowing is itself a voicing, a pathos, and leads us back to the theme of presence that, in a strong poem, persuades us ever afresh, even as the illusions of a tired metaphysics cannot.*

Harold Bloom<sup>32</sup>

*In a certain way ... I am within Rousseau's text.*

Jacques Derrida<sup>33</sup>

Since the publication of Wimsatt and Beardsley's article "The Intentional Fallacy", the Anglo-American critical tradition has been divided on the question as to what relevance authorial intention has to the interpretation of the text. In many respects, the article was not as straightforward a statement as is usually supposed, particularly in that the authors took issue with a number of personalist heresies which do not necessarily belong within the orbit of authorial intention.<sup>34</sup> But the essay is doubtless more significant today in terms of its effect, since it contributed greatly to a critical deadlock on the question of intentionality which has persisted over the last forty years. On the one hand, New Critical, Structuralist, and practical schools of criticism have generally assumed that authorial intent is ruled out of court from the start, leaving the critic free to pursue immanent readings without any regard for what the author might have meant-to-say. On the other,

phenomenologically influenced critics such as E.D. Hirsch have elevated authorial intention to the highest interpretive norm, and have found considerable support in the work of speech act theoreticians such as J.L. Austin and John Searle who have insisted that the speaker's intentions are the indispensable condition of any meaningful communicative act.<sup>35</sup> Between these two positions there is little or no compromise, and the question of intention has rarely been distributed in terms of a middle ground. At its simplest, intention is deemed either necessary or unnecessary, and absolutely so in both cases.

Derrida's reception on the issue of intention has tended to reflect this divide. Both those critics who would uphold intention and those who would do away with it altogether have assumed that his work denies the category of intention outright, and often this assumption has been made in overtly polemical interests. For deconstructive anti-intentionalists, this construal of Derrida's work has often served as an expedient justification for abandoning interpretive norms in the pursuit of abyssal or freeplaying criticism, whilst for proponents of a more orthodox and *auteurist* criticism it has constituted one more reason to dismiss deconstruction as a kind of rootless textual nihilism. On the stage of contemporary critical debate these positions have, in their conflict, a certain reciprocity, the one gaining strength from the other, whilst the actual, literal and reiterated statements Derrida has made about authorial intention have been neglected. Indeed, when the opportunity for debate clearly arose in the famous exchange between Derrida and John Searle in 1977, it misfired largely as a consequence of the Anglo-American tendency to take up absolutist positions on intention. In a somewhat acrimonious paper, Searle claimed that from Derrida's text we must infer that intentionality is "entirely absent from written communication".<sup>36</sup>

However, if, as Derrida prompts us, we return to "Signature, Event, Context", we find something quite different:

Rather than oppose citation or iteration to the non-iteration of an event, one ought to construct a differential typology of forms of iteration, assuming that such a project is tenable and can result in an exhaustive program ... In such a typology, the category of intention will not disappear; it will have its place, but from that place it will no longer be able to govern the entire scene and system of utterance.<sup>37</sup>

As is abundantly clear, this is not at all the same thing as disputing the actuality or necessity of intention, rather what is put in question is the absolutely determinative hegemony of intention over the communicative act. Intention is to be recognized, and respected, but on condition that we accept that its structures will not be fully and ideally homogeneous with what is said or written, that it is not always and everywhere completely adequate to the communicative act. There will be times at which crevices appear in its hold, at which language resists, or wanders away from the speaker's determinate meaning. Consequently, though the dominion of intention over the textual process is to be rigorously refused, intention itself is not thereby cancelled but rather lodged within a broader signifying process. Intention is within signification, and as a powerful and necessary agency, but it does not command this space in the manner of an organizing *telos*, or transcendental subjectivity. That Searle should so misread Derrida on this issue is only explicable in terms of the common mistake by which the denial of absolute authority to a category is confused with that category's total evacuation.

Of course another explanation might be that Searle was not sufficiently familiar with Derrida's work, for this medial position on intention also coincides at the most apparent level with the practice of many of the deconstructive readings. In the *Grammatology*, for instance, it is written: "Rousseau's discourse lets itself be constrained by a complexity which always has the form of the supplement of or from the origin. His declared intention is not

annulled by this but rather *inscribed* within a system which it no longer dominates." (243) Indeed, even at the stage of the preliminary acquaintance with Derrida's work, it is clear that intention is not opposed in the classic New Critical manner of asserting that it is irrelevant and unknowable. Quite the reverse: if authorial intentions are to be deconstructed it must be accepted that they are cardinally relevant and recognizable. The deconstructor must assume that he or she has the clearest conception of what the author wanted to say if the work of deconstruction is to get underway. The model of intention culled from the text must be especially confident and sharply defined since the critic undertakes not only to reconstitute the intentional forces within the text, but also to assign their proper limits. It is only in terms of this reconstruction that the deconstructor can begin to separate that which belongs to authorial design from that which eludes or unsettles its prescriptions. Accordingly, deconstructive procedure takes the form of following the line of authorial intention up to the point at which it encountered resistance within the text itself: from this position the resistance can then be turned back against the author to show that his text differs from itself, that what he wished to say does not dominate what the text says, but is rather inscribed within (or in more radical cases, engulfed by) the larger signifying structure. Again the *Grammatology* states this with perfect transparency:

... the writer writes *in* a language and *in* a logic whose proper system, laws, and life his discourse by definition cannot dominate absolutely. He uses them only by letting himself, after a fashion and up to a point, be governed by the system. And the reading must always aim at a certain relationship, unperceived by the writer, between what he commands and what he does not command of the patterns of the language that he uses. (158)

The text is thereby stratified into declarative and descriptive layers,<sup>38</sup> the former relating to what the author wanted to say and the latter to that which escapes intention, a division which might be expressed in other critical lan-

guages, *mutatis mutandis*, as that between the constative and performative, the manifest and the latent, or in contemporary parlance, as the difference between the programmatic intention (what the author set out to say) and the operative intention (what his text ends up saying).<sup>39</sup> This stratification then in turn relates to the critical text itself which is necessarily divided into explicative and deconstructive phases, whereby authorial intention is first reconstructed and then deconstructed via that which has escaped its jurisdiction.<sup>40</sup>

Derrida thus recommends an interesting compromise between intentionalist and anti-intentionalist views, since he neither identifies intention with the entirety of textual effects, nor moves to the other extreme of denying the necessity of intention as a factor in generating and shaping what is written. There is, therefore, no way in which Derrida can be assimilated to anti-intentionalism as it is commonly conceived. However, the Derridean position will seem anti-intentionalist in a second and less severe sense, since as a practice of reading, the critic sees it as his responsibility to turn the text against its author's programmatic intentions, thus establishing an opposition between the reader and writer. Furthermore, as part of the same movement, the author is estranged from a specifically demarcated area of his text, for whilst the authority of the writer is accepted over the declarative aspect of what he writes, he is allowed no say in the descriptions he makes.

We find ourselves therefore still in a certain sense within the movement against the author but no longer in the mode of his death or disappearance. The author is to be opposed, but not dismissed: a somewhat dramatic scene of criticism is set in which the critic sets out to show that he or she is a better reader of the text than its author ever was; that the critic will not only outpace the author along his or her pathways, but will turn those very pathways back on themselves, thereby discovering within the text all the reser-

ves by which its author is to be opposed. Intention will be vital, vivid, but the respect due it only prelude to its dismantling. Deconstruction will evoke in order to revoke, accepts the author, but on condition that the critic can produce the text as a broader signifying structure within which the author's determining will is inscribed as one factor amongst others. The critic thus establishes a constant priority over the author. No longer is it a question of the critic seeking to adequate his intentions to those of the author, but of the author finding his intentions allowed only on condition that they will be secondary, nowhere equal to the writing which wrote itself through and against him. That this is a profound reversal is undeniable. How true it is of the deconstructive critiques in general is, however, another matter, as are the exigencies by which this doubling of the text is sometimes motivated.

Derrida does not always and everywhere rigidly adhere to this model, but the variations he makes tend not to further circumscribe the role of intention but to accommodate a greater acceptance of the validity and force of what the author wanted to say. In fact, in many instances Derrida is not deconstructing authorial intentions but the received interpretation of a work, and his itinerary is here classically intentionalist in that the reading proposes to restore the first intention against reductive construals put upon it by the critical tradition.<sup>41</sup> In still other cases, when addressing thinkers whose aims are largely consistent with the deconstructive enterprise - Nietzsche, Freud, Levinas, and most especially Heidegger - what is forwarded is not at all the deconstruction of the primary intent but its radicalization, the interrogation not so much of what they wanted to say as what they failed to say. Deconstruction will here take the text beyond itself not in the interests of overhauling the intent with which it was written, but in those of showing how it stopped short of pursuing its most radical directions.<sup>42</sup> In such places, Derrida's work bespeaks a distinctly revisionary im-

petus, opposing Heidegger in those places where Heidegger is insufficiently Heideggerian, taking the further step on the countermetaphysical pathways cleared by the Heideggerian project.

Two distinct attitudes to intention thus prevail, depending on whether Derrida is reading one of two broad categories of text. On the one hand, it can be said that the intention is not adequate to the text, that the text says things which cannot be encompassed by the author's determinate designs (the pattern which Derrida adopts with metaphysical writers such as Rousseau, Hegel, Plato). On the other hand, the inverse is avouched, in that it can be said that the text itself is not adequate to its governing intent (the pattern Derrida adopts with counter-metaphysical writers such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, Levinas). The same basic premise that the author does not have full control over his language is constant in both cases, but the latter approach cannot be readily reconciled to an anti-authorial position, since it conforms to a classically revisionist paradigm whereby the aims and conceptual resources of a precursor are inherited, and carried forward in accordance with new conditions and imperatives. To see anything of the death of the author in Derrida's work here is to utterly misconstrue the nature of revisionism for which a certain conflict of means is necessary if thought is to continue toward the same ends. It is, for example, only through showing how the Heideggerian intent was not fully effectuated by the work of *Being and Time, Identity and Difference*, that is to say, *exhausted* by him, that deconstruction can inherit from his legacy, that the intentions of the Heideggerian project can have a life beyond the death of their author. Derrida himself makes this clear on numerous occasions.<sup>43</sup>

In the former case, though, deconstruction remains in strict opposition to authorial intention, and once more it is in the *Grammatology* that this opposition is at its most vigorous. Indeed, the critique of Rousseau differs from

Derrida's work on other metaphysicians, if not in kind, then certainly in the intensity with which the critic pursues the author into antinomy and aporia. It is here, too, that Derrida found it necessary to incorporate the theory of intention into the reading at the most explicit level, and to enforce the hiatus between meaning-to-say and saying on virtually every page of the deconstructive reading. Rousseau *declares*, but Rousseau *describes*, this formulation dominates the text from "The Place of the *Essay*" onwards. And the inflexible urgency with which the distinction is prosecuted is at all times apparent. Every priority which Rousseau attempts to set up, whether it be that of speech over writing, nature over culture, melody over harmony, literal over figural meaning, the languages of the South over those of the North - is seen to be expressly contradicted in his text.

Derrida employs numerous strategies to open up this gap between gesture and statement. At one time he will look to the figurative and metaphorical in Rousseau's text as to guilty locutions which betray the repression of writing, at another to the modes and tenses of Rousseau's verbs, at yet another he will produce classically consequential arguments to show that Rousseau's presuppositions logically entail conclusions at odds with the manifestly intended conclusion. Indeed the *apparatus criticus* Derrida brings to Rousseau is wide-ranging, concerted, even awesome in its relentless invagination. The text is cleaved throughout:

*Articulation is the becoming-writing of language. Rousseau, who would like to say that this becoming-writing comes upon the origin unexpectedly, takes it as his premise, and according to it describes in fact the way in which that becoming-writing encroaches upon the origin, and arises from the origin. The becoming-writing of language is the becoming-language of language. He declares what he wishes to say, that is to say that articulation and writing are a post-originary malady of language; he says or describes that which he does not wish to say: articulation and therefore the space of writing operates at the origin of language. (229)*

Rousseau *would wish* the opposition between southern and northern in order to place a natural frontier between types of languages. However, what he *describes* forbids us to think it ... the languages of the north are *on the whole* languages of need, the languages of the south, to which Rousseau devotes ten times the space in his description, are *on the whole* languages of passion. But this *description* does not prevent Rousseau from *declaring* that the one group is born of passion, the other of need ... (216-17)

... Rousseau's entire text *describes* origin as the beginning of the end, as the inaugural decadence. Yet, in spite of that *description*, the text twists about in a sort of oblique effort to act *as if* degeneration were not already prescribed in the genesis, and as if evil *supervened upon* a good origin. (199)

Rousseau saw without seeing, said without saying.<sup>44</sup> For all his attempts to gain control, Rousseau's *Essay* inexorably plunges into contradictions which it cannot circumvent. And all of this confirms what Derrida has said. The text recoils from its author's control: the further intention pushes against its marches the more it engenders of its other; contradictions and impasses emerge which problematize and finally overhaul its thesis.

Yet often in the *Grammatology* this division seems forced, arbitrary of occasion, insecure even. Rather than allow the reading to progress at its own pace, Derrida takes every conceivable opportunity to remind us that Rousseau is not saying what he wants to say, that what the *Grammatology* is saying is entirely irreducible to the intentional structure of the *Essay*. And this reminder is obsessively italicized, well beyond the point at which it has become repetitiously clear. Furthermore, there are times at which Derrida exaggerates the distinction, and not only by his critical inventiveness in teasing out hidden implications of what the text also says, but also via a somewhat rigid and constraining interpretation of what Rousseau actually means to say. That there might be a speculative side to the *Essay*, that Rousseau might be asking that we chance a journey to the origin of languages, and in the expectation of discovering all sorts of things on the way, is never taken

into account. Rather the text must always and everywhere be interpreted with an ungenerous, and intractable literalism; Rousseau's failure to perceive the supplementary threadwork in his text must be absolute, never partial, and the *Grammatology* never once questions the status of its ascription to Rousseau of such regimented and unilinear designs. Neither does Derrida once venture why it is so important, why it is *the issue* of the reading that Rousseau is unaware of what his text is saying. Of what account is it that Rousseau did not know that he was describing the play of a supplementarity prior and catastrophic to all origins? Why insist upon so rigorously policing this border between statement and gesture? Even to the extent, as we shall see, of ending his text by contrasting the oneirism of the logocentrist with the wakefulness of the deconstructor? Something of the answer to these questions lies not in the distance that separates Derrida and Rousseau, but in the closeness of their conflict. Were we to cancel the gap between declaration and description in the manner of an experiment, we would find not a different story, but exactly the same story. At the same time, however, the roles of its protagonists would be significantly altered. For, like the *pharmakon*, Rousseauism is the cure for its own poison.<sup>45</sup>

Systems, Hegel says, sow the seeds of their own destruction, and though the *Essay* is tendered as the logocentrist text *par excellence*, it is also the first serious and sustained meditation *on writing*. Rousseau's text marks a considerable advance on the *Phaedrus* not only because of its length and focus, but also because of its radicality. Whilst Plato takes it somewhat for granted that writing is derivative of speech, seeking primarily to demonstrate the moral and ethical superiority of the spoken word, the *Essay* refuses the assumption of speech's priority at least whilst it remains an assumption. That Rousseau does everything to confirm the logocentric prejudice alters nothing in this respect. The possibility that it might be otherwise has been ad-

mitted. And it is within this very possibility, and according to its specific terms, modalities and irresolutions that the entire grammatological critique unfurls.

It is not that Rousseau argues badly in the *Essay*, had he done so his work would not have the fecund grammatological significance that Derrida discovers. Rather, his attempts to discover the origin of languages are driven from problematic to problematic, and if Rousseau's text runs into difficulties, it is because of its author's refusal to suppress the growing menace of supplementarity to the integrity of the origin. And it is precisely through the ardour with which he pursues an infinitely regressing origin through layers of supplementarity that Rousseau uncovers all the resources with which the *Grammatology* opposes the manifest drift of the *Essay*. Both Derrida and Rousseau inquire into the origin of languages and uncover a voice without grain, a writing before the letter. Rousseau describes a voice within whose warp and woof a system of pre-vocal articulation is already inscribed, Derrida describes what Rousseau describes and calls this voice which has never spoken, this writing which has never been written "arche-writing". That Derrida's term for this matinal language prejudices "writing" and Rousseau's "speech" is not so great a difference as it might seem, if indeed it is a difference at all.

For Derrida is not to be construed, here or anywhere else, as asserting the primacy of writing in so far as writing is commonly conceived as words upon a page. What Derrida attempts to show, rather, is that any detailed argument for the priority of speech is compelled to presuppose a system of prior differences which cannot be circumscribed by the category of speech or that of writing whilst the latter is conceived in opposition to the former. As is obvious, an argument for writing would be destined to the same impasses as that for the *de jure* priority of speech.<sup>46</sup> That which is named "arche-writ-

ing" could equally be called "arche-speech" for it precedes speech, writing and their opposition. And as Derrida insists, this arche-writing is to be found in Rousseau's text itself. It is another name for the logic of the supplement, for *différance*: "Rousseau does not declare it, but we have seen that he describes it. From here on, I shall constantly reconfirm that writing is the other name of this *différance*". (268)

The situation regarding intention is therefore double-edged, for, looking in another light, we could say that Derrida is opposing Rousseau at those points where the deconstructor and logocentrist are at their closest, where the one is most in danger of being taken for the other, there where Rousseau "... *declares* the absolute exteriority of writing but *describes* the interiority of the principle of writing to language." (313) It is thus that the question of intention takes on such significance within the reading, for since Derrida insists upon inscribing nothing that is not to be found always already in Rousseau, then it is only through doubling Rousseau's text into intention and its other that the *Grammatology* can carve out its own precarious self-identity. Should it have been that Rousseau saw *whilst* seeing, said *whilst* saying, then the logocentrist would have prepared in advance everything that the grammatologue himself wishes to say: "... Rousseau ... says what he does not wish to say, describes what he does not wish to conclude: that the positive (is) the negative, life (is) death, presence (is) absence ..." (246) Viewed in this way, the reading would no longer be production but explication, however novel a form that explication might seem to have taken. The distinction between meaning-to-say and saying, the doubling of text between critic and author is thus indispensable if the commentary and text are not to reverse into one another, if the critic is to have a guard against the threat of the autodeconstructive text, if it is not at least to *seem* that the "critic ... has his uses, though this use may be no more than to identify an act of deconstruc-

tion which has always already, in each case differently, been performed by the text on itself."<sup>47</sup>

The idea of the autodeconstructive text is most easily associated with the identification of authorial intention with the text in its totality, with the assertion that everything within is circumscribed by what the author wanted to say. But the complete evacuation of intent promotes the idea of autodeconstruction every bit as surely, for without the category of intention there is nothing whatsoever to proscribe against the recuperation of all textual effects for the text itself over and above its interpretation.<sup>48</sup> In the former case, everything in the deconstructed text belongs to the author's intention, in the latter, the deconstruction belongs to neither author nor critic but to the text itself. In both cases, however, there is nothing that can properly be appropriated for the critic. Consequently, whilst the rigid and rigorous division of the text into two stratas, or textual voices, serves to steer a path between the transcendental presence of intention and its no less transcendental absence, it simultaneously demarcates a space of criticism protected against reappropriation for either author or text. Through introducing the author, via intention, and through then setting very specific limitations on what authorial intention can govern, Derrida guards against the threat of autodeconstruction, and against the corresponding domestication or neutralization of his own labours: the *Essay* can be read as neither the product of an idealized author, nor as an ideal structure which always and everywhere takes account of its own operations. The critic here needs intention, but no longer as a yardstick by which to evaluate his interpretation, but because he needs its other, something to oppose to it, to say to his own account.

The undoing of intention in the *Grammatology* therewith inhabits an almost paradoxical structure of conflict and complicity in that those times at

which Rousseauian intention is most vulnerable to deconstruction are also those at which the *Grammatology* is most at risk of losing itself in the *Essay*. Which is not at all to say that Derrida's text is indefinitely recuperable for Rousseauian intention,<sup>49</sup> but that once again opposition to Rousseau signifies nothing so clearly as the massive recourse made to Rousseau; as logocentric exemplar, and, in Derrida's hands, proto-deconstructionist. What offers itself in the form of aggression will at one and the same time be a distancing and defensive process, the repulsion of a dangerous proximity, sundering Rousseau and Derrida when their texts are most reconciled. The distinction between declaration and description effects first and foremost the division of textual voices in a critical area of reading so introjective that there is often no immediate way of telling text and interpretation apart: everywhere it underscores that what we are reading at these times is a production and not a reproduction.

Earlier in the text Derrida had said that the work of deconstruction implies "neither an unconsciousness nor a lucidity on the part of the author", and that reading "should ... abandon these categories - which are also ... the founding categories of metaphysics". (163) In the very next sentence he says that the *Grammatology* is not a doubling commentary but is "certainly a production because I do not simply duplicate what Rousseau thought ... ". (163) As the reading ploughs deeper and deeper into the Rousseauian text, this second sentiment progressively overwhelms the first, since it is only through insisting that the reader is more conscious of what the text was doing that the *Grammatology* can mark its advance on Rousseau. With heavier and heavier stresses the text must tell us that Rousseau declares but Rousseau describes, and in statements which often have recourse to the rhetoric of consciousness and unconsciousness, of Rousseau "travelling along the system of supplementarity with a blind infallibility, and the sure foot of the

sleepwalker".(203) At the close of the *Grammatology*, when this monumental critical agon finally comes to a close, Derrida writes:

... Rousseau could not think this writing that takes place *before* and *within* speech ... Rousseau's *dream* consisted of making the supplement enter metaphysics by force. But what does that mean? The opposition of dream to wakefulness, is not that a representation of metaphysics as well? And what should dream or writing be if, as we know now, one may dream while writing? And if the scene of dream is always a scene of writing? At the bottom of a page of *Émile* ... Rousseau adds a note: "... the dreams of a bad night are given to us as philosophy. You will say I too am a dreamer; I admit it, but I do what others fail to do, I give my dreams as dreams, and leave the reader to discover whether there is anything in them which might prove useful to those who are awake". (315-6)

Has deconstruction forced a breach in the metaphysics of presence, and thus awoken from Rousseauism? Or merely pursued the dream of an origin of languages a little more consciously, in the manner of reverie? So much Derridean work issues in this uncertain hour, balanced between revision and rupture, when the voices of critic and author vie and coalesce in such a way that we are never sure who is speaking or if the reader has ever emerged from the text he was reading.

### Reading and (Self-) Writing

Harold Bloom claims that all reading is "defensive warfare", and whatever validity this statement possesses in general, it would certainly serve as an accurate description of the *Grammatology*.<sup>50</sup> What deconstructive opposition to the author reveals as it conceals, in its double figure of conflict and complicity, is that primarily Derrida's work is revisionist, and like all revisionism, its highest stake is that of marking some advance upon the revised text. And the distance to be marked - as Derrida sometimes concedes - is often all-but-imperceptible, regardless of whether deconstruction is reading the texts of metaphysicians or counter-metaphysicians. With Hegel, for

Derrida the most typical of metaphysicians, it can nonetheless be said that the thought of *différance* works an "infinitesimal and radical displacement" on the Hegelian difference.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, but from the other direction, Derrida's rereading of Heidegger is at once a radicalization and a scarcely audible refinement of ontological difference, moving beyond Heideggerian (and Hegelian) difference only by a hair's breadth, the silent "a" of *différance*. And the same again is true of the Freudian and Levinasian notions of the trace,<sup>52</sup> of Plato's *pharmakon* and Rousseau's supplement. All Derrida's readings of the 1960s reflect this basic principle: that the deconstructive and deconstructed texts will find themselves - like *différance* and Hegelian difference - at "a point of almost absolute proximity".<sup>53</sup>

What distinguishes Derridean revisionism from any other, however, is that this proximity is not necessarily the outcome of a continuity between Derrida's "ideas" (if indeed there are such things), and those of the authors he reads, but that it arises rather from a unique approach to the act of philosophizing. If Derrida is to be remembered as a great philosopher, it will be as the figure in whom, for the first time, the philosopher becomes exclusively a reader-critic. All philosophy begins with the reading of philosophy, most philosophers take the work of another philosopher and begin their careers with a critique of that work even if it is not explicitly proffered in this form. Yet, with Derrida, the task of philosophy is an interminable rereading in the closest possible manner, a constant working into the already-written. Unlike the philosophers he deconstructs, Derrida never elects to reach that stage when his texts discuss problematics on their own terms, but rather must formulate, interrogate, and deconstruct those problematics through other eyes, hear their resonances with another ear. Even the essay "Différance", which appears to be offered up without anchors, finally issues as a reading of Heidegger, grounded in a number of subordinate readings (that of Saussure

most notably).<sup>54</sup> Indeed, Derrida has himself said that his work is "entirely consumed in the reading of other texts", and the word "consumed" should be given its full emphasis here, for no other philosopher, or critic even, has ever buried his work so deeply in the resources, conceptuality, and language of the texts he reads.<sup>55</sup> In boring so far within, in taking up so fully the terms, strategies and aporias of the authors with whom he contends, in refusing to bring external criteria to bear, in respecting "as rigorously as possible the internal, regulated play of philosophemes"<sup>56</sup>, all in all, through the thoroughly *empathetic* quality of his deconstructions, the Derridean text is always at risk of disappearance into the world of the other. Opening "Cogito and the History of Madness", Derrida writes: "The disciple must break the glass, or better the mirror, the reflection, his infinite speculation on the master. And start to speak."<sup>57</sup> But this, to "start to speak", with a voice of his own, is what Derrida never does; and as a failure which arises directly out of the strength of his reading. Rather his text *liaises*, speaks in tongues, folds over the voices of critic and author like the figures of a fugue, at times ventriloquizing, at others miming the voice of the author it reads, whether this takes the form of a thoroughly Husserlian refutation of Husserl, a supra-Heideggerian Heideggerianism, or Plato's deconstructive dialogue with himself in the pharmacy.<sup>58</sup> For deconstruction, as criticism, never speaks *in propria persona*, but only with a voice borrowed from the author. Or, put differently, finds its own voice in the hollow of an Other's.

After the arduous, and exhaustive philosophical readings of the 1960s, Derrida's work took a distinct turn, not a break in his thought such as that which separates, say, the early from the later Wittgenstein, but a change in mood, approach, outlook and style. His reading becomes less inward, delving, and is happy to play around the fringes of the text, to glance off its surfaces. He becomes preoccupied with the question of signatures.<sup>59</sup> The

philosopher of language who had said that the "names of authors ... have here no substantial value" devotes himself obsessively to autography, to the paraph, the signet and seal. *Glas* is concerned with Hegel (eagle/*aigle*) and Genet (flowers/*genista*), *Dissemination* with Sollers (sun/*soleil*), *Signsponge* with Ponge (sponge/*éponge*).<sup>60</sup> He presents a lecture entitled "Otobiographies: Nietzsche and the Politics of the Proper Name", and in the midst of the most exorbitantly *auteurist* reading in the recent history of criticism, *The Post Card* announces its thesis that psychoanalysis is the science of Freud's proper name.<sup>61</sup> In these texts, he proposes interpretations of Nietzsche and Freud in terms of the inter-penetration of work and life, and calls for deconstruction to take itself to the enigmatic line between these *corpora*.<sup>62</sup> Having asked, in the "Freud and the Scene of Writing", 'what is the scene of writing?' he answers a decade later that it is signed, sealed and delivered as the scene of autobiography, of desire, of the subject.

This movement in turn communicates with Derrida's increasingly explicit investment in his own texts. He devises manifold ways of encrypting his name in the texts he writes. In *Glas* he inserts fragments from his own biography between the columns; *The Post Card* tenders a cautiously autobiographical "satire of epistolary literature".<sup>63</sup> Indeed, in these texts, Derrida seems to hold himself at the limit of criticism and the opening of literature. *Glas*, in particular, displays a scintillating inventiveness with language, but everything must be overlaid upon, or realized through, Hegel and Genet. As Derrida's commentators are fond of saying, this is a tactic which prevents any one authorial voice from gaining control, as indeed it is.<sup>64</sup> But does it not also, simultaneously, indicate a reticence about taking control, about risking the proper name? The need to *approach* literature through criticism, writing through reading? In an interview given a few years ago, Derrida intimates:

... since I've always been interested in literature - my deepest desire being to write literature, to write fictions - I've the feeling that philosophy has been a detour for me to come back to literature. Perhaps I'll never reach this point, but that was my desire even when I was very young. So, the problematics of writing, the philosophical problematics of writing, was a detour to ask the question, "What is literature?" But even this question - "What is literature?" - was a mediation towards writing literature ... And then I had the feeling that I could write differently. Which I did, to some extent, in writing *Glas* or *La Carte Postale*. But right now I have the feeling that I'm always in that preliminary stage or moment, and I would like to write differently again. Differently: that would mean in a more fictional, and a more (so to speak, in quotation marks, many quotation marks) "autobiographical" way.<sup>65</sup>

Are we then to see Derrida as Foucault saw Barthes: "I do believe that in his eyes, his critical works, his essays, were the preliminary sketches of something which would have been very important and interesting."<sup>66</sup> Unlike Barthes and Foucault, Derrida's canon is not yet closed, and we have no way of knowing if he will ever pass beyond this "preliminary stage". But might not the *desire* to do so be interpreted as the search for a voice, for a form of expressiveness no longer tied to the programmatic of reading, and those of reading over the author's shoulder? In other words, is it, strictly speaking, impossible to read *The Post Card* literally when it declares to its anonymous addressee: "I have never had anything to write. You are the only one to understand why it really was necessary that I write exactly the opposite, as concerns axiomatics of what I know my desire to be, in other words you: living speech, presence itself ... "<sup>67</sup> Or to hear a lament in the opening words of *Mémoires*: "I have never known how to tell a story?"<sup>68</sup>

## Conclusion: Critic and Author

*... when what has been repressed returns, it emerges from the repressing force itself ...*

Sigmund Freud<sup>1</sup>

Like the Greek courier who died an hour before he ran into Athens, the author lives on whilst dead.<sup>2</sup> The death of the author emerges as a blind-spot in the work of Barthes, Foucault and Derrida, an absence they seek to create and explore, but one which is always already filled with the idea of the author. A massive disjunction opens up between the theoretical gambit of authorial disappearance and the project of reading without the author. What their texts say about the author, and what they do with the author issue at such an express level of contradiction that the performative aspects utterly overwhelms the declaration of authorial disappearance. Everywhere, under the auspices of its absence, the concept of the author remains powerfully active, the notion of the return of the author being simply a belated recognition of this critical blindness. A similar pattern of inscription under erasure could be traced in other deauthorizing texts. The work of Lacan, for example, is entirely organized around the enigma of subjectivity even as the subject is declared absent; Paul de Man's *Allegories of Reading* harbours a massively inscribed Rousseauian subject quite against its stated anti-authorialism.<sup>3</sup> In texts which had somehow passed beyond the author, the death of the author would not be at issue. Direct resistance to the author demonstrates little so much as the resistance of the author.

It may well be that the question of the author is not a special case in this regard. Every theory will be haunted to some extent by that which it seeks

to methodologically exclude.<sup>4</sup> The question of history will always exert signal stresses on any formalism; all historicisms will eventually have to confront the problem of form. However, what distinguishes the death of the author as a particularly acute form of critical blindness is that the arguments proposed for the eradication of the author often have very little bearing on the problem of authorship *per se*. So much in deauthorizing discourse takes place at a remove, the death or disappearance of the author finds its justification only in the manner of an epiphenomenal consequence of other epochal "events". If we are witnessing the deaths of God, Man, representation, metaphysics, the book, bourgeois humanism, then the death of the author will necessarily follow as an inevitable result of these closures. Everything takes place as though the author was simply identifiable with God, Man etc., that authorship can only be conceived on a plane of metaphysical and idealist abstraction, as if these closures are in process of occurring, and as if we can clear the horizons of Western knowledge in one concerted movement of thought. A vast and bewildering chain of entailment is implied wherein nothing whatever is certain, nor are the connections made necessary or irrefragable. It is assumed that the notion of authorship cannot be reconsidered outside of the determinations of metaphysical or idealist abstraction, that it is quite impossible to arrive at a de-idealized conception of authorship. Within the work of Barthes, Foucault and Derrida the return of the author is therefore commensurate with the extrication of the author-issue from these closures, with the realization that the death of the author does not necessarily belong to the deconstructions of representation, of philosophies of consciousness, of metaphysics.

Even when the question of the author is addressed somewhat more directly, when specific contentions are tendered as to why we should no longer regard the author as a relevant category of modern thought, anti-authorial

positions founder on unwarrantable suppositions and false antinomies. As often as not, the conceptual network proposed in the stead of *auteurist* criticism serves to reawaken the very categories it would vitiate. Intertextuality, for example, as it has been formulated and put into practice, returns quite compliantly to notions of influence and revision. The field of intertextuality is not generalized and unfurrowed: it exists by virtue of constellations, overlap, relays. Nietzsche never read Kierkegaard, and it would doubtless be possible to read him as though he had, but immeasurably stronger intertextual currents open up between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, Nietzsche and Heidegger, precisely because there is influence, continuity, succession, recession and revision, withal, an act of strong reading between their work.

Within the archaeological version of intertextuality, as we have seen, the artificial distance between author and *episteme* cannot long be sustained. It is not enough to read Schopenhauer on the will as merely epistemically coincident with Nietzsche on the will, thus discounting Nietzsche's reading of Schopenhauer, his debate and dialogue with *The World as Will and Representation*, any more than it would be sufficient to see Nietzsche's doctrine of the will solely in terms of the Schopenhauerian influence, and in hermetic independence of historical and epistemic contexts. At a broader level of interpretation, the insights of archaeology cannot but rejoin those which they set out to supplant. Even whilst we accept the hardest deterministic arguments of archaeology, that individual discourses are purely the product of anonymous epistemic forces, nothing within archaeology can outlaw the subsequent influence of the discourses thus constituted. Should it be that the Kantian discourse is simply an epistemic event perchance articulated through a particular Königsbergian citizen, we are still forthwith left with the question of the Kantian influence over modern philosophy, with the

problem that the Kantian discourse was constituted in such a profound and inaugural fashion that the thought of two centuries has discovered so many of its most significant directions, and points of departure from that discourse. This influence, however it may have originally been wrought, remains as something to be assessed, considered, explained.

In many respects, it matters little what species of determinism is used to argue the death of the author. Whether we see the subject as constituted in and through language, history or *episteme*, the postulation of a prior constitutive cause does not deny the constituted entity its existence or potency, nor does it prevent that entity in turn causing something else. Joyce is not the father of *logos*, but this does not mean that in *Finnegans Wake*, he did not abuse, pervert, and reconfigure language in a textual construct without precedent in the history of writing. Naturally, we must agree with Barthes, Lacan, etc., that no subjectivity precedes a language that has evolved for millennia before the subject utters its first inchoate words, but this in no way impedes the ability of an author to work - like the logothete - creatively with and within language.

The blindness of all determinist models of the literary text is that they eschew any possibility of compatibilism, that they refuse the continuation of the causal chain beyond the ground prescribed. Once something is identified as an effect of language, the *episteme*, or whatever, the possibility of that effect becoming a cause at a later stage of development, of its engendering significant events in its train is abjured, even to the point of calling into question the very existence of that effect on the ground that it is an effect. Yet whilst subjectivity is the outcome, the effect of the impersonal Other, it still remains as subjectivity, as something to be located and specified. Nor is there indeed any reason why the subjectivity thus constituted need be uniform or purely functional. If the author is the site of a collision between language, culture,

class, history, *episteme*, there is still every reason to assume that the resultant subject should be constructed in each case differently, the psyche thus forged being irreducible to any one of those forces in particular. Short of taking this line of reasoning to the ludicrous extreme of asserting that subjects are constituted homogeneously, the difference between subjects remains to be explained. Despite all attempts to foreclose the question, within every determinism - and according to its own structures - the field of subjectivity remains essentially open and entirely unexplored.

Of course all such arguments represent an attempt by critical theorists to promote authorial absence as an inherent property of discourse rather than as merely one approach amongst others to the problems of reading and interpretation. The general aim of extreme anti-authorial discourses to show how the absence of the author can be upheld not only as a stipulation but also as a descriptive definition of the discursive field. Much confusion, in fact, arises from the neglect of this distinction, from confounding the death of the author as a speculative experimental approach to discourse with authorial absence as the truth of writing itself. Two statements drawn from Barthes serve aptly to illustrate this difference:

We must ... decide to rearrange the objects of literary science. The author and the work are only the starting-points of an analysis whose horizon is a language: there cannot be a science of Dante, Shakespeare or Racine but only a science of discourse.<sup>5</sup>

Flaubert, ... working with an irony impregnated with uncertainty, achieves a salutary discomfort of writing: he does not stop the play of codes (or stops it only partially), so that (and this is indubitably the *proof of writing*) *one never knows if he is responsible for what he writes* (if there is a subject *behind* his language); for the very being of writing (the meaning of the labor that constitutes it) is to keep the question *Who is speaking?* from ever being answered.<sup>6</sup>

The first statement is *ad hoc*, heuristic. Given that we wish to found a science of literature, and given that the institution of such a science is feasible and

desirable, then we will be compelled to put the question of authorial involvement within parentheses. In the manner of classical science, we will circumscribe and delimit the field, reduce it to manageable proportions, thereby opening our analyses only to those objects which admit of scientific description. Having thus established our object, and the range of our investigations, we will have nothing to say about what lies outside the scientific domain, whether it exists or does not exist, what properties or qualities the excluded phenomena may or may not possess. The second statement is of a completely different order. The death or disappearance of the author is no longer a point of method but the proof of writing, its revealed truth, a matter of cognitive certitude rather than a strategic hypothesis.

The death of the author operates in the hiatus between these two statements, its goal being to bridge the distance between the methodological and ontological questions of authorial disappearance. Yet faced with this challenge, proponents of the death of the author have done little but blur the distinction altogether. The critic will say that we *might* productively explore the openings made by removing the author, and this proposition will slide - over a certain distance - into the claim that the text *demand*s to be read without an author. In an interesting reversal of the old fallacy, critics move from the *de jure* to the *de facto*, from a point of principle to a point of fact. Thus Barthes will suggest that we bracket the question of the author awhile, and will then say that writing is in essence the "space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost ...".<sup>7</sup> Foucault will provisionally recommend an anonymous history of discourse by way of an alternative to positivist history, only then to announce - *in medias res* - that anonymity is the proper essence of discourse and its history. A predilection becomes an edict which solidifies into a truth claim. Anti-authorialism begins the manner of a scientific reduction, and reemerges as the truth it set out to discover,

as the end to which it purported to be the means. The death of the author "proves" the death of the author: subjectivity is put to one side, therefore subjectivity does not exist. What such positions themselves prove, or reconfirm, is that there are no "proofs" of writing which necessitate authorial disappearance, that the death of the author can never be anything more than an act of critical choice governed by the pragmatics of a certain way of reading, rather than by any necessary correspondence to its objects. Which is to say that the death of the author can never become a cognitive statement about literature and discourse in general, being destined, rather, to remain an intra-critical statement, an affair of critical self-consciousness. Which is itself another way of saying that the death of the author has very little to declare about authors except in so far as the idea of authorship reflects on the activity and status of the critic.

### Critic and Author?

The Yale critic, and *poet manqué*, Harold Bloom has devoted a career to the development of a theory of the poetic anxiety of influence.<sup>8</sup> Every poet of the post-Miltonic era, he contends, begins his poetic life in dread of having nothing to say. Confronted by the grand and oppressive tradition, the newcomer senses his harrowing belatedness before the enormous weight of the already-written. In an attempt to discover a poetic voice, the newcomer or ephebe cathects onto the work of a great precursor, and - whether consciously or not - begins producing imitations of the predecessor's work. A scene of instruction is underway which will remain with the ephebe throughout his poetic life, one which at various stages the ephebe will attempt to break free of, seeking here to withdraw entirely from the precursor's work, there to discover ways in which this work might be continued in an original or deviant

manner. Caught within an essentially Oedipal, psychopoetic pattern of enthrallment and denegation, affirmation and denial, the ephebe will at some stage attempt the symbolic, ritual slaying of the Father in an attempt to carve out a space of authentic self-expression. But as with all gestures of this kind, the rejection of the precursor serves only to reconfirm the influence of the precursor. The only outroute for the ephebe is to reach a stage of poetic maturity in which the influence of the poetic father can be channelled and mastered through the rewriting of the primal work in such a powerfully revisionist fashion that it comes to seem the ephebe's own. Thereafter, and only thereafter, the *agon* abates, the newcomer becomes a poet in his own right, a strong poet.

It is not difficult to see how Bloom's theory maps every bit as comfortably - if not more so - onto the relationship between critic and author such as it has been played out in recent times. We have seen that the death of the author is promulgated in agonistic terms, in the form of usurpation, as we have seen also that it is inseparable from a strong act of rewriting by all these critics: Barthes rewriting Balzac, Foucault making literally what he will of four hundred years of philosophical thought, Derrida rewriting Rousseau. The seizure, from the author, of the right to produce the text is the motivating thrust behind all these extirpations, and their justification. Yet in all these cases - that of Barthes in *S/Z* most immediately - once the act of rewriting has been achieved, the desire to eradicate the authorial subject recedes, the author is returned. So far from consolidating anti-authorialism, this rewriting leads in its turn to a certain distancing of these critics from the critical field itself. Barthes more or less abandons reading to produce his own forms of autobiographical fictions, Derrida departs from philosophical criticism to interscribe autobiography with Joycean tapestries on writers

such as Hegel, Genet, Ponge. Having rewritten the canonical text, the critic goes on to produce texts of his own.

This development from strong reader to rewriter to writer has led many to see in the work of Barthes, Foucault and Derrida as heralding the ascension of criticism to the status of a primary discourse. And this notion commands a certain respect, for the problematizing of the boundaries between creative and critical is not only a development within criticism, but also a powerful and necessary extension of modernism in general. As the literary text becomes more self-reflexive, as its artifices and narratological structures are more and more foregrounded, as the work of fiction becomes autocritical, autodeconstructive even, it is entirely concinnous that the critical text should become increasingly creative, interpretable, and like the work of Wilde and Mallarmé, a realm with charms, mazes, and mysteries of its own.<sup>9</sup> However, what has opened up as the space of a possible convergence between literature and certain forms of literary criticism has been pushed to the limit by some theorists - the Yale deconstructionists, de Man, Hillis Miller and Hartman, most notably - who see, in Derrida's work especially, evidence that criticism, whatever its cast or quality, can be no longer demarcated from primary discourses, that it can no longer be constrained within a passive, handmaidenly capacity, that source and commentary, origin and supplement, traverse the discursive field on an equal footing. The boundary is no longer operative; the secondary becomes primary, the supplement is at the origin; criticism finds itself within literature.

Yet, whilst acknowledging the force and enticements of such an idea, when turned against the author this line of argument becomes entirely self-defeating. Barthes, Foucault and Derrida have not problematized the distinction between primary and secondary discourses by diminishing the primary text to a state of servile dependence. Quite the contrary. If anything

their readings restore to us the adventure of reading these source texts. Barthes on Sade, Derrida on Husserl, open and revivify the text, uncover layers of significance, draw forth possibilities of reading and rereading that a more humble criticism would surely bypass. But more importantly still, in this context, it is only by elevating their own work to such a pitch of creativity with language that they resisted - and continue to resist - domestication as secondary writers. They *created* oeuvres of great resonance, scope and variety. They became more than critics: a vast body of secondary literature has grown up around their work, one which has sought not to contest or deconstruct what they say, but rather has reenacted precisely the predominance of source over supplement, master over disciple, primary over secondary. They have been accorded all the privileges traditionally bestowed upon the great author. No contemporary author can lay claim to anything approaching the authority that their texts have enjoyed over the critical establishment in the last twenty years or so. Indeed, were we in search of the most flagrant abuses of critical *auteurism* in recent times then we need look no further than the secondary literature on Barthes, Foucault and Derrida, which is for the most part given over to scrupulously faithful and entirely uncritical reconstitutions of their thought.<sup>10</sup>

Even such a strong-minded critic as Geoffrey Hartman is prey to this tendency, and in the course of critical discussions wherein he seeks to challenge the primacy of the creative over the critical text. In many of his texts - "Literary Commentary as Literature" in particular - Hartman takes *Glas* as an exemplary text in the dissolution of the distinction between literature and criticism.<sup>11</sup> From the outset therefore, Hartman's case is suspect, for no work could be any more untypical of criticism either at its best, worst, or most journeyman. Hartman then proceeds to argue as though this monumental, ageneric, thoroughly maverick text imports criticism-in-general into the

primary sphere. And he does so by means of a polemic whose terms are, as they must be, unremittingly axiological, i.e. hierarchical. *Glas*, for Hartman, is plainly *too* creative, *too* labyrinthine, *too good* to be a distant cousin of literature, so much so that he predicts for it a destiny comparable only to *Finnegans Wake*.<sup>12</sup> Derrida's text, in short, possesses all the attributes by which we have conventionally recognized the great author. In his fervour to dissolve this distinction, Hartman plays squarely back into its clutches. By writing so sensitively, so well, so explicatively about *Glas*, he makes of it a canonical text but only at the price of declaring his own work secondary, parasitic, sponsorial. Hartman's position thus leads in one of two parallel directions. Either we accept that Derrida's work has left the homelands of criticism, has passed over into literature - as Hartman contends, he speaks even of "crossing the line"<sup>13</sup> - or we evolve a tripartite distinction between authors, primary critics, and deuterocritics. In other words, we ask: is the Overreader an author? If we answer in the affirmative we maintain the distinction between the primary and the secondary via admitting the elect amongst the latter into the former: if in the negative, then we are faced with a certain refinement in our classifications. In all events, this is not an argument - nor even the ghost of one - for the death of the author.

Whether Derrida, Foucault and Barthes are authors is prohibitively difficult to determine and, in many respects, beside the point. Certainly, they would seem to be neither authors nor readers in any stable sense, in so far as we might say that their work passes between these categories at different stages of development. *A Lover's Discourse* and *Camera Lucida* are undoubtedly works of an author, *On Racine*, a critical text written by a critic. Derrida, introducing Husserl's *Origin of Geometry*, or reading Edmund Jabès<sup>14</sup> is functioning as a critic, whilst writing *Glas* he plays the roles of critic and author simultaneously. Foucault, promoting the work of the Surrealist

author, Raymond Roussel, is quite consciously and deliberately writing in the service of his chosen author,<sup>15</sup> though when criticizing the vast matrix of power systems his work departs entirely from criticism understood as an intersubjective process. There would seem no way of doing justice to the life's work of these three writers via either term. Critic or author? Critic *and* author? It might be necessary to arrive at a new writerly category, or to revive the notion of a classical pedagogy in order to adequately describe their situation. What is assured, though, is that they did not force this rethinking of the relationship between critic and author through declaring the death of the author. Rather, they have expanded and revised our notions of both criticism and authorship by writing their way out of criticism in the only way one can: that is, toward authorship.

### Misreceptions: Phenomenology into Deconstruction

Naturally, the question remains to be asked as to why the death of the author should have exercised an influence so far in advance of its articulation. Its appeal to a criticism eager to elevate itself to a point of parity with primary discourses is immediately apparent, but such an explanation falls short of accounting for the widespread impact that radical anti-authorialism has exerted, particularly upon the Anglo-American tradition.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, the reception of the death of the author has been a profoundly complicated and confused affair. In America especially, many critics have responded to the death of the author in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida as though it were amongst the most compelling statements that their discourses have to offer, and the prevailing weight of counterassertion has been all-but-ignored. Moreover, as replayed by American critics, the death of the author has an unmistakably belated quality, being evoked in the manner of a distant event

whose original import and energy have been lost in transition. In this received form, the death of the author has retained its characteristic hyperbole without recapturing the sense of epochal necessity which motivated its initial formulations. The specific historical and ethnological circumstances in which Barthes, Foucault and Derrida promulgated extreme anti-subjectivism have not been taken into account, and the discourse of the death of the author has been imported into the Anglo-American critical programme without essential modifications, without having been *translated* in the broader sense of that term. As such, the death of the author has shown itself another casualty of the stammered and asymmetrical exchange between continental and Anglo-American thought.

The death of the author - as we have argued - is inseparable from the massive reaction in France against the resuscitation of the Cartesian *cogito* in Husserlian phenomenology, it being only as a particularly vigorous form of anti-phenomenologism that French structuralism and post-structuralism can be properly understood. However, the situation in the Anglo-American tradition during the during the 1960s could not have been more different. While Derrida, Foucault, Lacan and others sensed the exhaustion of phenomenological categories, and whilst Barthes was urging the necessity of breaking the traditionally strong institutional hold of the author in the French academies, anti-subjectivism was somewhat etiolated in Anglo-American scholarship due to the long ascendancy of the New Criticism. For the younger generation of critics eager to move beyond the by then rather tired ideas of the intentional fallacy, the aesthetic monad, words on the page etc., phenomenology had a completely different aspect: exotic, juvenescent, systematically intentional and oeuvre-centred, it represented the most challenging outroute from formalism. Largely through the mediative figure of Georges Poulet, the avant garde at Yale was introduced to a philosophically

based criticism of consciousness, centred upon an all-inaugurating authorial *cogito*, a methodology which in the sharpest contradiction to New Critical objectivity, chose to "annihilate ... the objective contents of the work, and to elevate itself to the apprehension of a subjectivity without objectivity".<sup>17</sup> Nowadays it might be difficult to imagine the exciting promise of a phenomenological criticism, but for a tradition which had worked under the influence of Eliotism for more than thirty years, it was received in the manner of a liberation. Under the tutelage of Poulet, two of the most influential critics in the recent history of American criticism - Paul de Man and J. Hillis Miller - began the movement out of the formalist impasse and toward the apprehension of a transcendental subjectivity conceived, in Poulet's words, as ideally "anterior and posterior to any object".<sup>18</sup>

Paul de Man, whose links with continental philosophy were obviously well-developed, devoted much of his work in the 1960s to arguing against the New Criticism from a phenomenological perspective. Chief amongst de Man's contentions are the neglect of the self in formalism and its refusal to allow for the determining role of intention in the literary act. The New Criticism only succeeded in treating the poem *qua* object through ruling intentionality out of court: the "partial failure of American formalism, which has not produced works of major magnitude, is due to its lack of awareness of the intentional structure of literary form".<sup>19</sup> For de Man, intentionality, like subjectivity, is transcendental: "... the concept of intentionality is neither physical nor psychological in its nature, but structural, involving the activity of a subject regardless of its empirical concerns, except as far as they relate to the intentionality of the structure".<sup>20</sup> In direct opposition to the New Criticism, the intentionality of a transcendental consciousness is proposed as *the* question of literature. Through establishing the distinction between an empirical and an ontological self, phenomenological criticism, de Man claims,

"participates in some of the most audacious and advanced forms of contemporary thought".<sup>21</sup> Even the formalist doctrine of impersonality is to be read as another expression of this purging from the self of all empirical content in the constitution of a purely ontological literary selfhood.<sup>22</sup>

The phenomenological orientation of Hillis Miller's work during this period is no less explicit. Over the course of a few years, he shifted from fledgling New Critic to critic of consciousness, producing interesting studies of Dickens and Hardy in terms of the most thoroughgoing transcendental *auteurism*. Literature is defined as "a form of consciousness, and literary criticism is the analysis of this form in all its varieties."<sup>23</sup> The role of the critic, Miller declared, is to penetrate the authorial *cogito* as profoundly as possible, to mould his consciousness in the likeness of that of the author. The "genius" of the critic resides in the "extreme inner plasticity" whereby he can "duplicate within himself the affective quality of the mind of each of his authors".<sup>24</sup> The author, conceived as a "naked presence of consciousness to itself", becomes the "true beginning ... the ground or foundation of everything else",<sup>25</sup> the critic a self-immolating figure entirely in thrall to this primary *cogito*. Reading, at its best, can aspire to,

glimpse the original unity of a creative mind. For all the works of a single writer form a unity, a unity in which a thousand paths radiate from the same center. At the heart of a writer's successive works, revealed in glimpses through each event and image, is an impalpable organizing form, constantly presiding over the choice of words.<sup>26</sup>

Within American criticism, Miller's work seemed to represent the beginnings of a massive upheaval, the introduction of continental philosophies of consciousness into a tradition whose philosophy and criticism had never before seriously engaged with the idea of transcendental subjectivity. Miller's role in this movement was ambassadorial, seeking at once to educate the critical establishment as to how the ideas of phenomenology could be transposed

onto the critical plane, and to urge a new receptivity of American thought to continental influences. To this end, Miller published an important essay in 1966 entitled "The Geneva School", an accessible introduction of the ideas of the European phenomenologists, which was eagerly ingested by critics seeking to gain an understanding of continental philosophy and its pertinence to the study of literature.<sup>27</sup> And, in the same year - 1966 - the opening of channels of communication between continental and American thought was marked by an event whose effects are still being felt today - the establishment of the Johns Hopkins symposium on "The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man".<sup>28</sup>

The event was planned as an exchange between continental and American thought, but the influence was entirely one-way, as the vast preponderance of French speakers itself testifies. Furthermore, the Anglo-American critical scene was completely ill-equipped for what was in store, for not only had French theory effectively passed over into a structuralist methodology largely unknown outside Europe, but certain of the participants - Derrida and Lacan in particular, but also, to a lesser extent, Barthes - were taken up with the necessity of moving beyond both phenomenology *and* structuralism. Of the very many and startlingly varied papers delivered, it was Derrida's "Structure, Sign, and Play" which was destined to have the greatest impact upon subsequent American theory.<sup>29</sup> In his paper, Derrida managed, with an incomparable deftness, to unsettle the concept of centre both as it operated as the anonymous mainstay of structural analyses, and as appears in the form of an all-organizing phenomenological *cogito*. To a critic such as Miller, the twin themes of decentring and interpretative freedom which "Structure Sign and Play" argued must have seemed an uncannily prescient deconstruction of the tenets of authorial centre, and absolute critical fidelity to the *cogito* upon which his work was consolidated. Consequently, as

American criticism was taking its first uncertain steps toward comprehending a recently arrived phenomenological criticism, it was presented with the most powerful, well informed and technically intimidating critique of Husserlian phenomenology, and the structural anthropology of Lévi-Strauss. The challenge with which Derrida confronted the American avant-garde was to think through and beyond a phenomenological methodology which had not yet been properly assimilated or understood, and to do so not in the interests of passing into structural analyses, but in pursuit of that critique of metaphysical conceptuality known to us now as deconstruction.

The effect of Derrida's arrival was massive, devastating we might almost say. Paul de Man began to rewrite his position, claiming that the Pouletian subjectivity he had previously adhered to was only, in reality, a metaphor for language.<sup>30</sup> In "The Rhetoric of Blindness" he conducted a rearguard attack upon Derrida's reading of Rousseau in terms of a transcendental conception of intentionality, an attack however which confirmed little so much as the growing influence of deconstruction upon his criticism.<sup>31</sup> A few years later, de Man emerged as a frontline deconstructionist, producing a massive reading of Rousseau according to anti-intentionalist strategies culled directly from the *Grammatology*.<sup>32</sup> For Hillis Miller, Derrida's influence was radical in the extreme. In the space of a few years, and in what must appear today as a virtual allegory of the changing lights of American criticism, he inverted his entire itinerary. He now emphasized a freeplaying and insurgent subjectivity where before he had insisted upon the utmost fidelity to the authorial *cogito*. Where the author had functioned as an all-centring presence, he now posited a vast absence, a presence lost and retreating *en abîme*. Where before he had declared the ideal transparency of language to authorial intention, he now denied the ability of mind to exercise any authoritative control whatsoever over textual effects; rather the critic puts

"the notions of mind and of the self" under the most emphatic erasure, "and sees them as linguistic fictions, as functions in a system of words without base in the logos of any substantial mind".<sup>33</sup> Absolute centre reverses into absolute absence of centre, the text is entirely governed by centre or it is entirely ungoverned and ungovernable. The idea of the author - we note once again - must be that of total centre or no idea at all.

What the alacrity and extremism of Miller's reversal of perspective illustrate is how the ascription of total control to the authorial centre necessitates that any displacement of the centre is experienced as total, infinitely abyssal. Such is the consequence of failing to recognize that the denial of an absolute authorial centre implies not the necessary absence of the author, but the redistribution of authorial subjectivity within a textual *mise en scène* which it does not command entirely. That deauthorization and a vulgar idea of decentring should have been taken up so enthusiastically by Miller, and the American deconstructionists generally, is the outcome of espousing an anti-phenomenological poststructuralism without properly thinking through Husserlian phenomenology or structuralism. Decentring takes place so joyously, so blithely because the centre has not been fully comprehended: the unsettling of centre is misconstrued as erasure rather than as displacement and relocation. Explaining his position in the discussion following "Structure, Sign and Play", Derrida insisted: "The subject is absolutely indispensable. I don't destroy the subject; I situate it ... I believe that at a certain level both of experience and of philosophical and scientific discourse one cannot get along without the notion of the subject. It is a question of knowing where it comes from and how it functions".<sup>34</sup> Indeed, in the paper itself Derrida had said that deconstruction "*determines the non-center otherwise than as loss of the center*".<sup>35</sup> What is at issue, rather, is rethinking the question of the subject outside the realm of a transcendental phenomenology, of seeing

the subject actively engaged as one principle amongst others in the evolution of discourse. As Derrida says, in a much mis-cited passage: "The 'subject' of writing does not not exist if we mean by that some sovereign solitude of the author. The subject of writing is a *system* of relations between strata: the Mystic Pad, the psyche, society, the world. Within that scene, on that stage, the punctual simplicity of the classical subject is not to be found".<sup>36</sup>

What has occurred in the American reception of Derrida's thought is that the deconstruction of the ideal, extrawordly self-presence of the Husserlian transcendental ego has been hastily misconceived as an attack upon subjectivity in general, and the subjectivity of the author in particular. Fragments of a specifically directed, rigorous, and highly technical critique have been put to the service of a freeplaying literary criticism eager to sideline the question of the author rather than to debate and contest the issues it raises. The crossing over, not only from one intellectual culture, one "region of historicity" to another, but from one discipline, one set of critical problematics to another, has been achieved only at the inevitable cost of distortion and misappraisal.<sup>37</sup> Commenting upon the precipitous effects of Derrida's arrival on the American critical forum, Christopher Norris writes:

The result has been a kind of radical euphoria, much like the consequence of reading Nietzsche before one got round to reading either Kant or Hegel. It has also produced a one-sided account of Derrida's texts whose partiality can best be shown up by returning to those texts and reading them afresh with a view to what is often passed over on the standard "deconstructionist" view. Then ... there emerges the outline of a counter-interpretation more rigorous in its 'philosophic' bearing and far less amenable to the purposes of straightforward literary-critical use.<sup>38</sup>

And in transposing the Derridean critique of philosophical conceptuality onto the literary-critical plane, the euphoric American deconstruction loses much of the radicality of the Derridean interrogation, for there is considerably less at stake in exposing the rhetorical ruses and metaphoricity of a medium such

as literature which is often concerned to foreground the undecidability of truth claims. What leverage the deconstructive method exerts upon the philosophical text, with its claims to objectivity, its suppression of the figural and tropological nature of language, is considerably weakened when deployed in the analysis of a mode of writing for which the perils of metaphor are - *ex officio* - a source of celebration. Indeed, it is often argued - no argument is itself more common today<sup>39</sup> - that in their analyses of the undecidable nature of literary language, American deconstructionists such as Hillis Miller, Hartman, and de Man have returned to a position not so radically different from the New Critical perspective from whence they emerged.<sup>40</sup> For all its ludic and abyssal qualities, American deconstruction can be viewed as the restoration of an *ethos* of reading no less textualist than the old New Criticism which it thinks to have left behind. In its habit of scrupulously close reading, in its suspension of the extratextual referent, of history, and - most importantly for our purposes - of the authorial subject, the school of American deconstructionists would seem not to have moved beyond formalism, but to have developed formalist reading to a unprecedented pitch of rhetorical and tropological sophistication.

Many objections, naturally, might be made to this recuperative reading of deconstruction in general, but insofar as the placement of the author is concerned, it is clear that the rhetors of Yale have made precious little advance upon American formalism. Intention and personality, and the whole host of epistemological problems they raise have been evaded by critical prescriptions not themselves noticeably different from those of the intentionalist fallacy and the personalist heresy. The absence of the author is taken for granted as though it belongs to the *vita ante acta* of contemporary theory. The movement against the author in the France of the 1960s therefore fulfils very much the same function for American deconstruction as

Wimsatt and Beardsley's formulation of the intentional fallacy did for the New Critics, in that it is taken as a well established theoretical *donnee* which leaves the critic free to pursue entirely lingocentric readings without regard or responsibility for what those readings exclude or short-circuit. Derrida, along with Barthes and Foucault, is invoked as though he has demonstrated and *achieved* the disengagement of the author from the text and from the critical field such that it is properly improper to speak of the author in our day and age. To argue or justify the death of the author is deemed trifling, otiose: these familiar arguments need no further recitation, it being the task of criticism to proceed in the knowledge of authorial disappearance, to rejoice in the hermeneutic opportunities that this disappearance has opened. The consequence of which is that the question of the author has remained relatively static in the Anglo-American tradition for nearly half a century. Virtually without interruption, from the time of Eliot to to that of the deconstructionists the dominant critical methodology has rested upon a dogmatic anti-authorialism.<sup>41</sup> No attempts to consolidate, revise or redefine anti-authorial theory have been made, nor has any decisive and broadly-based interest been shown in the project of authorial renewal.

### The Ghost in the Machine: Authorial Inscription and the Limits of Theory

Beneath and behind the continuing theoretical refusal of the author is a model of textual simplicity which seeks to keep "life" at bay. For the best part of the twentieth century, criticism has been separated into two domains. On the one side, intrinsic and textualist readings are pursued with indifference to the author, on the other, biographical and source studies are undertaken as peripheral (sometimes populist, sometimes narrowly academic) exercises for those who are interested in narrative reconstructions of an author's life

or the empirical genealogy of his work. The proximity of work and life, the principles of their separation and interaction are neglected by the representatives of "work" and "life" alike. Work and life are maintained in a strange and supposedly impermeable opposition, particularly by textualist critics who proceed as though life somehow pollutes the work, as though the bad biographicist practices of the past have somehow erased the connection between *bios* and *graphē*, as though the possibility of work and life interpenetrating simply *disappears* on that account.

Needless to say, work and life are not opposed, not even in the casual manner by which night is opposed to day. The principles of any such counterpoise are themselves impossible to imagine. Nor either is an author's life necessarily contingent, something which can be summarily extricated and reduced to a position of irrelevance or inferiority in the reading of a text. The grounding assumption of theoretical objections to "life" is that through appealing to the biographical referent, we are importing phenomena from one realm into another wherein it is alien, improper, incongruous. Yet, even whilst suspending reservations about this demarcation between life and an abiotic writing, what does a pure textualism or formalism do with a text which incorporates the (auto)biographical as a part of its dramaturgy, a text which stages itself within a biographical scene? A text, for instance, like Nietzsche's, which continually refuses the idea that his life can be jettisoned into a separate sphere?

In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche insists that his whole life, his entire oeuvre, are indispensable prelude to the text's unfolding. The supposed forcefield between his writing and his life is undermined at every turn, even to the extent that his books - critically reviewed by the author himself - become chapters of the Nietzschean autobiography, an autobiography that is to be found everywhere within those books. From the outset, the revaluation of values is an act of self-revelation, the "self-overcoming of morality through

truthfulness, the self-overcoming of the moralist into his opposite - *into me ...*".<sup>42</sup> To understand the Nietzschean philosophy, its texts declare, is first and foremost to understand and behold the man. Having interiorized the history of knowledge in such a profound and unsettling way, the forces represented by Christ and Dionysus (or any other "subjects" invoked by the text, Voltaire for example<sup>43</sup>) are at work within the autobiographical, philosophizing subject himself. By telling the story of his life, as he has done throughout his writing career, Nietzsche is telling the story of the overcoming, of the passage from idealism to affirmation, Christ to Dionysus. There is no telling life and work, text and subject apart - "Have I been understood? - *Dionysos against the Crucified...*"<sup>44</sup> - still less of cleaving one from the other in the interests of a more "rigorous" "proper" or "textual" reading. Any reading which ignores the theatricality, the autobiographical performance of the Nietzschean subject simply turns away from the text.

Of course it is not at all easy for a textual theory to take on the performance of a subject within his text, not only an awesomely complex and transgressive subject such as the author of *Ecce Homo*, but any subject who ardently inserts herself into her writing. It is problematic enough for tropes, rhetorics, narrative structures, signs to become objects of a critical science without theory having to confront the interplay between work and life, the shifting instabilities of their borders, the modes of inscription by which a subject appears in her text. Once an authorial subject is admitted into the theoretical picture of a text, that text becomes more difficult to govern and delimit, its identity, its separation from other entities is gravely undermined. The neat demarcations by which biography is separated from a literary or a philosophical text, or even from a general intertextuality are immediately under threat. We see, for example, what happens to *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* - a work hitherto offered only to immanent and thematic readings - when

Derrida reads Freud's dreams of legacy, his own troubled family romance into the formulation of a metapsychology.<sup>45</sup>

In the second chapter of this later, speculative, work, Freud recalls seeing a baby boy (in fact, and in principle, his grandson, but this is suppressed in the text) playing a game with a wooden reel attached to a piece of string.<sup>46</sup>

The game consists in throwing the reel out of his cot and then retrieving it with evident pleasure and relief, actions accompanied respectively by the exclamations *fort* (gone), *da* (there). Freud interprets this as an attempt by the child to negotiate his mother's absences, to create the illusion of her inevitable return at his will and behest. Throughout the account, the text adopts the neutrality of scientific description; the narrator is simply that anonymous, disinterested spectator who observes, and ventures hypotheses on the psycho-aetiology of the game. However, retracing, or rather reconstituting the text in terms of the Freudian (auto)biography, Derrida discovers multiple levels of subjective inscription: "... there are at least three instances of the same 'subject', the narrator-speculator, the observer, the grandfather ...".<sup>47</sup> And there is to emerge one further personae, the founder of psychoanalysis himself committed to ensure that the science of psychoanalysis should be his legacy, the inheritance of his daughter Anna, his grandson Ernst, his descendancy, that the analytic movement in general should be the legacy of his proper name, of the family name "Freud": "Just as Ernst, in recalling the object (mother, thing, whatever) to himself, immediately comes *himself* to recall *himself*, in an immediately supplementary operation, so the speculating grandfather, in describing or recalling this or that, recalls *himself*. And thereby makes what is called his text, enters into a contract with himself in order to hold onto all the strings/sons [*films*] of the descendancy. No less than of the ascendance. An *incontestable* ascendance."<sup>48</sup>

Reinscribed with its subject, the text becomes mysterious, overloaded, oneiric: underwritten by the name of Freud, the children of whom he has such dreams, those of his family and the destiny of the analytic movement generally, by the grandfather of the grandchild, by the jealous grand-father of psychoanalysis, *Beyond* becomes a rebus in which nothing remains simply constative, theoretical, in which what we think of as a work and a life lose the identity of their separateness, in which the force of desire, the Freudian *conatus*, unsettles any objectivity. The entry of the author, and the author's biography into the text multi-determines the scene of its writing, dissolves any putative assumptions that an author's life does not belong with his work, or belongs to it only improperly. Reading biographically is not a neutralizing, simplifying activity. So far from functioning as an ideal figure, from figuring as a function of Cartesian certitude, the author operates as a principle of uncertainty in the text, like the Heisenbergian scientist whose presence invariably disrupts the scientificity of the observation. More than any rhetorical solicitation, the re-entry of the subject into the writing disrupts its claims to objectivity, allows energies and forces that exceed and elude its reading in programmatic or linguistic terms. "A 'domain' is opened", Derrida writes, "in which the inscription ... of a subject in his text ... is also the condition for the pertinence and performance of a text ... The notion of truth is quite incapable of accounting for this performance."<sup>49</sup>

Critical theory, as we say, has shown itself no more capable of accounting for authorial performance, of negotiating the overlap of work and life, since all theory is finally predicated upon an idea of order and systematicity, a reduction of the idea of text to a clear uncluttered field, to a given whose genealogy is suspended. Though criticism can in practice read a text in terms of its tropes, rhetorics, words on the page, and also read in terms of biography, psychological dynamics, authorial inscription, and do so without ob-

vious contradiction, the propagation of a theory of reading and of writing which takes stock of all these virtualities is awesomely difficult to conceive. The question of the author tends to vary from reading to reading, author to author. There are greater and lesser degrees of authorial inscription, certain authors occupy vastly more significant positions than others in the history of influence, the attraction of the biographical referent varies from author to author, text to text, textual moment to textual moment. Each new act of reading itself presupposes a different or modified philosophy of the author. A theory of the author, or of the absence of the author, cannot withstand the practice of reading, for there is not an absolute *cogito* of which individual authors are the subalternant manifestations, but authors, many authors, and the differences (in gender, history, class, ethnology, in the nature of scientific, philosophical, and literary authorship, in the degrees of authorship itself) that pertain between authors - within authorship - defy reduction to any universalizing aesthetic.

Yet the promulgation of a textual theory can no more elude the question of the author than contain it: as we have seen, the essential problem posed by the author is that whilst authorial subjectivity is theoretically unassimilable, it cannot be practically circumvented. Gestures such as the death of the author, the over-prosecuted fallacies of intention and genesis, function as little more than defensive strategies against the essentially overdetermined nature of the text, an overdetermination which lays outside the compass of any extant theoretical programme or charter. The processes of intention, influence and revision, the interfertility of life and work, autobiography and the autobiographical, author-functions, signature effects, the proper name in general, the author-ity and creativity of the critic, all these are points at which the question of the author exerts its pressure on the theoretical enclosure. Such a programme of authorial reinscription may well be incon-

ceivable under the banner of literary theory; it could even be that since theory began with the exclusion of the author, the author signals the impossibility of theory. Certainly, in all events, the question of the author poses itself ever more insistently, not as a question within theory but as the question *of* theory, of its domains and their limits, of its adequacy to the study of texts themselves, to the genealogy and modes of their existence. And it does so in the manner of an interminable haunting, i.e. as that which theory can neither explain nor exorcise.

# Notes

## Introduction

1. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Poetical Works*, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912), p.298.
2. See Plato, *Timaeus and Critias*, trans. A.E. Taylor (London: Methuen, 1929), especially pp.38-39.
3. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Poetical Works*, p.296.
4. As Coleridge put it, in a formula that has lost little of its abstract sublimity: "The primary imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM." - Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. G. Watson (London: Dent, 1965), p.167.
5. Stéphane Mallarmé, "Crisis in Verse" in T.G. West trans. and ed., *Symbolism: An Anthology* (London: Methuen, 1980), pp.1-12: pp.8-9.
6. Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), pp.143-44.
7. Whether the work of Barthes Foucault and Derrida in the mid- to late 1960s is structuralist or poststructuralist is prohibitively difficult to determine, and, in any case, begs the question of how these two areas of contemporary thought are to be rigorously distinguished. The majority of the texts we will be dealing with in detail here are of a liminal nature, containing something of both phases but belonging entirely to neither. The movement for the death of the author would seem to occur at an indefinite point between structuralism and post-structuralism, as the culmination of a methodological *neglect* of the subject in structural analyses, and the beginnings of the poststructural insistence on language as the space of an infinitely abyssal intertextuality. The tendency in this thesis will be to put a certain emphasis on the structuralist elements in the thought of Barthes and Foucault, whilst treating Derrida's work in the 1960s as poststructuralist.
8. Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, p.142.
9. Roland Barthes, *Sade Fourier Loyola*, trans. Richard Miller (London: Cape, 1977), p.8.
10. Martin Heidegger, quoted in Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p.29.

11. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1970), p.386.
12. Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, p.142.
13. Michel Foucault, "What is an Author", trans. Josué V. Harari, in Josué V. Harari ed., *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp.141-160: p.143.
14. Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (London: Cape, 1975), p.140.
15. Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, p.144-45.
16. Naturally, there are exceptions, particularly in the phenomenological tradition within which the conception of the subject differs radically from traditional humanist ideas of generic "man". The phenomenological position will be discussed in the second and the fourth chapters.

### Chapter One: The Birth of The Reader

1. William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* in *Shakespeare: Complete Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1905), pp.820-845: p.822.
2. See Roland Barthes, *On Racine*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Octagon Books, 1977); *Criticism and Truth*, trans. K.P. Keuneman (London: Athlone Press, 1977).
3. Roland Barthes, *Criticism and Truth*, p.77.
4. Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author" in *Image-Music-Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), pp.42-48: p.145. All subsequent page references given parenthetically within the text.
5. For instance, without any further argumentation, Toril Moi writes: "...if we are truly to reject the model of the author as God the Father of the text, it is surely not enough to reject the patriarchal ideology implicit in the paternal metaphor. It is equally necessary to reject the *critical practice* it leads to, a critical practice that relies on the author as the transcendental signified of his or her text. For the patriarchal critic, the author is the source, origin and meaning of the text. If we are to undo this patriarchal practice of *authority* we must take one step further and proclaim with Roland Barthes the death of the author." Toril Moi, *Sexual / Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (Methuen: London, 1985), pp.62-63.
6. Cedric Watts, "Bottom's Children: The Fallacies of Structuralist, Post-structuralist and Deconstructionist Literary Theory" in Lawrence Lerner ed., *Reconstructing Literature* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), pp.20-35: p.28.
7. Paul Taylor, "Men on the Run and on the Make/Review of *Mensonge* by Malcolm Bradbury and *Saints and Sinners* by Terry Eagleton", *The Sunday Times*, 13 September 1987, p.59.

8. William Gass, "The Death of the Author" in *Habitations of the Word* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985), pp.265-288: p.265.
9. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Joyful Wisdom*, trans. Thomas Common (Edinburgh: Foulis, 1910), especially pp.167-169.
10. For Derrida's ideas on the transcendental signified see Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), *passim*.
11. Roland Barthes, *On Racine*, p.168.
12. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Joyful Wisdom*, p.276.
13. Roland Barthes, *On Racine*, p.170.
14. See Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, p.156.
15. See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, trans. R.W. Rortzel (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1973) for this conception of the dialogic author of the modern polyphonic novel. Some of the implications of Bakhtin's work for author-theory will be considered below.
16. Osip Brik, "The so-called formal method" in L.M. O'Toole and Ann Shukman eds., *Russian Poetics in Translation 4* (Colchester: University of Essex Press, 1977), pp. 90-91: p.90.
17. The phenomenological auteurism of Georges Poulet might be such a case in point. However, Barthes is not here concerned with specific instances, but rather with critical attitudes generally. The phenomenological position on the author will be discussed at some length in the second chapter and conclusion, where it will be argued that whilst the the transcendental subject of phenomenology is undoubtedly deist, it is more so in the manner of the *deus absconditus* than that of the omnipresent author.
18. "The Author, when believed in, is always conceived of as the past of his own book: book and author stand automatically on a single line divided into a *before* and an *after*. The Author is thought to *nourish* the book, which is to say that he exists before it, thinks, suffers, lives for it, is in the same relation of antecedence to his work as a father is to his child." - Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, p.145.
19. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Translator's Preface to *Of Grammatology*" in Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp.ix-lxxxvii: p.lxxiv.
20. The phrase "monster of totality" is taken from Barthes. See Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* trans. Richard Howard (London: Macmillan Press, 1977), p.179.
21. William Gass, *The World Within the Word* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1979), p.36.
22. Not only are the reasons given as to why Proust should be enlisted as a precursor of the death of the author tenuous in the extreme, but what is said of Valéry is patently an exaggeration. Barthes claims that "Valéry ... never stopped calling into question and deriding the

- author ... "- Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, p.144. As but one counter example: "The object of art and the principle of its artifice is precisely to communicate the impression of an ideal state in which the man who should possess it will be able to produce spontaneously, effortlessly and indefatigably a magnificent and marvelously ordered expression of his nature and of our destinies". Paul Valéry, "Remarks on Poetry" in T.G. West ed. and trans. *Symbolism: An Anthology* (London: Methuen, 1980), pp.43-60: pp.59-60.
23. Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (London: Cape, 1975), pp.211-12.
  24. See *ibid*, pp.210-211.
  25. Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Cape, 1976), p.27.
  26. *Ibid*.
  27. Roland Barthes, *Sade Fourier Loyola*, trans. Richard Miller (London: Cape, 1977). Originally published as *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* (Paris: Éditions de Seuil, 1971).
  28. *Ibid*, p.9.
  29. On the composition of Proust's *magnum opus* see George D. Painter, *Marcel Proust: A Biography*, 2 vols., (London: Chatto and Windus, 1967).
  30. See Oscar Wilde, "The Decay of Lying" in *Complete Works of Oscar Wilde* (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1948), pp.970-992.
  31. As William Gass says: "When an author devotes a great portion of a writing life to one work, as Dante did, or Spenser did, or Proust, then the likelihood that the work itself will begin to overwhelm and almost entirely occupy the arena of ordinary life grows great ... Proust's book became a second cork-lined room around him; Flaubert's letters reveal that his writing desk is both board and bed; the nighttime life of the Wake compensates for a failing sight." - William Gass, *Habitations of the Word*, pp.283-284.
  32. Boris Tomashevsky, "Literature and Biography" in Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomoroska eds., *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971), pp. 47-55: p.50.
  33. Michel Foucault, in Michel Foucault ed., *I Pierre Rivière, having slaughtered my mother, my sister and my brother...: A Case of Parricide in the 19th Century*, trans. Frank Jelinek (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975), p.209.
  34. Tzvetan Todorov, quoted in Ann Jefferson and David Robey, *Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction* (London: Batsford, 1984), pp.98-99.
  35. Paul de Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p.69.

36. On the theme of the "hospitality" of the critic see J. Hillis Miller, "The Critic as Host" in Harold Bloom *et al*, *Deconstruction and Criticism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), pp.217-53.
37. See Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (London: Cape, 1972).
38. Roland Barthes, *Sade Fourier Loyola*, p.9. All subsequent page references given parenthetically within the text.
39. Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (London: Cape, 1967), p.23-24.
40. See Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, p.146.
41. See Roland Barthes, *Sade Fourier Loyola*, pp.87-88.
42. Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, p.146.
43. Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, p.21.
44. *Ibid*, p.46.
45. *Ibid*, p.93. Indeed, it is a pity that Barthes did not develop the idea of logothesis further, at least to include Joyce, perennial exile, and the immense logothetic labour that is *Finnegans Wake*. See James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (London: Faber and Faber, 1939).
46. See Roland Barthes, *On Racine* especially pp.158-172.
47. Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, p.25.
48. *Ibid*, p.16.
49. Roland Barthes, *Michelet*, trans. Richard Howard (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), p.3.
50. Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Macmillan Press, 1977), pp.173-74.
51. Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, p.157.
52. See Stephen Ungar, *Roland Barthes: The Professor of Desire* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1983); Roland Champagne, *Literary History in the Wake of Roland Barthes: Re-defining the Myths of Reality* (Alabama: Summa Publications Inc., 1984); Annette Lavers, *Roland Barthes: Structuralism and After* (London: Methuen, 1982); Philip Thody *Roland Barthes: A Conservative Estimate* (London: Macmillan, 1977); Jonathan Culler, *Barthes* (London: Fontana, 1982).
53. See Tim Clark, "Roland Barthes, Dead and Alive", *Oxford Literary Review*, vol.6, no.1 (1983), pp. 97-107.
54. Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, p.211.
55. Tim Clark, "Roland Barthes, Dead and Alive", *op. cit.*, p.107.
56. See Boris Tomashevsky, "Literature and Biography", *op. cit.*, p.55.
57. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*, ed. John Clive (New York: Mentor, 1965), p.142.
58. This citation is quoted by Barthes without reference. There is, in fact, no "life of Loyola" offered by *Sade Fourier Loyola* for reasons given in the "Preface": "I have not attempted a "Life" of Loyola. The reasons for this is that I could never have written that "Life" in con-

formity with the *biographical* principles referred to in the preface; I lacked the significant material. This lack is a historical one, and I therefore have no reason to conceal it." - Roland Barthes, *Sade Fourier Loyola* p.11, n.5.

59. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (London; Cape, 1982), p.30.
60. *S/Z*, though it certainly marks the movement toward a poststructuralist or deconstructive approach, is still caught within certain structuralist presuppositions, *viz* its insistence that the literary text can be exhaustively reconstituted via the five organizing codes.
61. "Sade I" was in fact published the year before "The Death of the Author" was delivered. It appeared in *Tel Quel* 28 (Winter 1967) under the title "L'Arbre du crime".
62. Michael Riffaterre, "Sade or Text as Fantasy", *Diacritics*, vol.2, no.3 (1971), pp. 2-9: p.3.
63. See Roland Barthes, *Sade Fourier Loyola*, p.34, n.21.
64. Roland Champagne, *Literary History in the Wake of Roland Barthes*, p.97. There is no intention here to disparage Champagne's thesis, only to note that he cites in its defence a text which expressly contradicts the idea of the writer immortalizing his body. Let us not forget that Barthes actually says in "The Death of the Author" that writing is "the disappearance of the body writing" - Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, p.142. We will return to Champagne's point in the final section of this chapter.
65. See Philip Thody, *Roland Barthes: A Conservative Estimate*, pp.125-127.
66. Edith Kurzweil, *The Age of Structuralism: Levi-Strauss to Foucault* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), p.180.
67. Andre Gide, quoted in Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, p.93.
68. Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, p.143.
69. Roland Barthes, *The Grain of the Voice: Interviews 1962-1980*, trans. Linda Coverdale (London: Cape, 1980), p.348.
70. On changing historical attitudes to authorship see A.J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Scolar Press, 1984).
71. Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, p.174.
72. Émile Zola, quoted in John Hospers, *Meaning and Truth in the Arts* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1946), pp.146.
73. As indeed Barthes had done in his study of Michelet's history-writing, preferring to see it as "an organized network of obsessions" rather than as the depiction of any historical reality - Roland Barthes, *Michelet*, p.3.
74. See Jacques Lacan, "Seminar on "The Purloined Letter"", trans. Jeffrey Mehlman, *Yale French Studies* no.48 (1972), pp.38-72; Jacques Derrida "Le Facteur de Vérité", *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago and London: University of

- Chicago Press, 1987), pp.411-496; and Barbara Johnson "The Frame of Reference" in Geoffrey Hartman ed., *Psychoanalysis and the Question of the Text* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp.149-171.
75. Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, p.13.
  76. The phrase, "adding pitiful graffiti to an immense poem" is one Jacques Derrida uses to describe his own reading of Edmund Jabès. See Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p.74.
  77. Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, p.216.
  78. *Ibid*, p.211.
  79. *Ibid*, p.vii.
  80. Mikhail Bakhtin, quoted in Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), p.91.
  81. Mikhail Bakhtin, quoted in Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogic Principle*, trans. Wlad Godzich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p.106.
  82. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*, p.4.
  83. Naturally, many invaluable readings, and fine cultural and ideological insights were arrived at in this manner, but the justification for the structuralist interpretation lay in the power and originality of these readings not in the "truth" of the death of the subject.
  84. Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1976), p.315.
  85. The influential fictions of the South American magical realists may seem to *prima facie* contradict this general trend, but only on the basis of a concept of representation which has little if anything in common with the *ethos* of traditional realism.
  86. See John Hospers, *Meaning and Truth in the Arts*, *op. cit.*
  87. Roland Barthes, *On Racine*, p.171.
  88. Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, *op. cit.*, p.168. Originally published as *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1975). All subsequent page references given parenthetically in the text.
  89. Jorge Luis Borges, "Borges and I", *Labyrinths* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), pp.282-283: p.282.
  90. *Ibid*.
  91. *Ibid*.
  92. *Ibid*, pp.282-3.
  93. Mikhail Bakhtin, quoted in Tzvetan Todorov, *Mikhail Bakhtin*, p.52.
  94. Michel de Montaigne, *Essays*, trans. J.M. Cohen (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1958), p.235. For a peerless analysis of Montaigne and the autobiographical, see Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: the Representa-*

- tion of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. William R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), pp.285-310.
95. See Saint Augustine, *The Confessions of Saint Augustine* (New York: Pocket Books Inc., 1951).
  96. See James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in Harry Levin ed., *The Essential James Joyce* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963).
  97. On the role of time and memory in the autobiographical act see James Olney, "Some Versions of Memory/Some Versions of Bios: The Ontology of Autobiography", in James Olney ed., *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp.236-267. As Olney well argues, the situation of the subject within a timeless present serves to close any gap between the autobiographical subject of the utterance and the subject of the enunciation.
  98. Victor Shklovsky, "Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*: Stylistic Commentary" in Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis eds., *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, pp.25-57: p.57.
  99. Jacques Derrida, *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation: Texts and Discussions with Jacques Derrida*, trans. Peggy Kamuf and Avita Ronnell (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), p.44-45.
  100. *Ibid*, p.5-6.
  101. " ... style is always a secret; but the occult aspect of its implications does not arise from the mobile and ever-provisional nature of language; its secret is recollection locked in the body of the writer ... a kind of supra-literary operation which carries man to the threshold of power and magic. By reason of its biological origin, style resides outside art, outside the pact which binds the writer to society ... " - Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, p.18.
  102. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979). On the Nietzschean philosophy of the body see also *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and No One*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1961), pp.61-63. For Barthes's declaration of the Nietzschean influence, see *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes*, p.145.
  103. Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, p.17.
  104. See Roland Champagne, *Literary History in the Wake of Roland Barthes*, pp.79-101.
  105. *Ibid*, p.97; Roland Barthes, *Sade Fourier Loyola*, p.9.
  106. Gabriel Josipovici develops the elegant thesis that Barthes sought to create a Proustian work of art in later years, but was frustrated by his essential distrust of the world of signs. See Gabriel Josipovici, "The Balzac of M. Barthes and the Balzac of M. de Guermantes" in

- Lawrence Lerner ed., *Reconstructing Literature* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), pp.81-105.
107. Susan Sontag, in her introduction to Roland Barthes, *A Barthes Reader*, ed. Susan Sontag (London: Cape, 1982), p.xxxviii. See also, Susan Sontag, "Remembering Barthes", *Under the Sign of Saturn* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1980), pp.169-177.
108. Susan Sontag, quoted in Philip Thody, *Roland Barthes: A Conservative Estimate*, p.142.
109. Harold Bloom, *Agon: Toward a Theory of Revisionism* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1975), p.48.
110. See Oscar Wilde, "The Critic as Artist", *Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, pp.1009-1059.

## Chapter Two: The Author and the Death of Man

1. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1970). Originally published as *Les mots et les choses: un archéologie des sciences humaines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966). Page references will be made parenthetically within the text.
2. See Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Tavistock, 1967).
3. "Thought" here is used to denote the thought of the human sciences, and of the humanities in general. Foucault occasionally draws the sciences of mathematics and physics into his discussion of the Classical era, though, within his account of modernity, he is obviously not suggesting that the hard sciences partake of the epistemic (i.e. anthropomorphic) configuration.
4. See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp.340-41. *The Order of Things* began as an introduction to Kant's *Anthropology*, and this might explain in part why Foucault puts such undue emphasis on the anthropological in Kant's work. The anthropological concern is not to be found elsewhere in his philosophy. Indeed Kant is concerned to stress that this, his last work, is of a marginal and occasional nature, and to be regarded as quite distinct from transcendental idealism. See Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology From A Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. Mary J. Gregor (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974).
5. See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp.318-35. For a clear account of the anthropological doubles see Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982), pp.34-43
6. James M. Edie, "Sartre as Phenomenologist and as Existentialist Psychoanalyst", in Edward N. Lee and Maurice Mandelbaum eds., *Phenomenology and Existentialism*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), pp.139-178: p.142.

7. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p.xiv.
8. See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp.52-56.
9. "...the relation of all knowledge to the mathesis is posited as the possibility of establishing an ordered succession between things, even non-measurable ones. In this sense, *analysis* was very quickly to acquire the value of a universal method; and the Leibnizian project of establishing a mathematics of qualitative orders is situated at the very heart of Classical thought; its gravitational centre. But, on the other hand, this relation to the mathesis as a general science of order does not signify that knowledge is absorbed into mathematics, or that the latter becomes the foundation for all possible knowledge; on the contrary, in correlation with the quest for a mathesis, we perceive the appearance of a certain number of empirical fields now being formed and defined for the very first time. In none of these, or almost none, is it possible to find any trace of mechanism or mathematicization; and yet they all rely for their foundation upon a possible science of order. Although they were all dependent upon *analysis* in general, their particular instrument was not the *algebraic method* but the *system of signs*." - Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p.57.
10. No account is taken of the consideration that the formularies - Cartesian or Newtonian - for a science of order might be transposed onto the planes of general grammar, natural history, and the analysis of wealth, or at least, that the promptings toward such an order might derive in part from the Cartesian rationalism. While Foucault is unquestionably correct in saying that "this relation to the mathesis in general does not signify that knowledge is absorbed into mathematics" (*The Order of Things*, p.57), the relation itself - potent and hierarchicalized - remains between a primary mathematical model and a derived analysis within Foucault's very account itself. Nor is there any reason why the Cartesian mathematics and Newtonian mechanics should not have played a dominant part in the constitution of the classical science of order even if the subsequent empirical sciences are irreducible to mathematics and mechanism. Foucault seems here to be erecting a forcefield between mathematical and verbal discourses which would seem to contradict the cross-disciplinary coherencies of the epistemic continuum.
11. See René Descartes, *The Discourse on Method and the Meditations*, trans. F.E. Sutcliffe (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p.96.
12. *Ibid*, p.103.
13. *Ibid* pp.113-131. For a brief and clear account of this argument, see J.H. Hick *Arguments for the Existence of God*, (London: Macmillan, 1970), pp.79-83.
14. *Ibid*, p.162.
15. No adherence to the representational theory of ideas is to be found in the *Meditations*. It is speculated that Descartes might elsewhere

have subscribed to this theory, but no decisive evidence exists in support of this claim. For a statement of this contention see Richard E. Aquila's introduction to his *Representational Mind* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983). It may of course be countered that language is the one representation that Descartes does not seem to doubt, but the entire representational function of language is suspended within hyperbolic doubt. Only the performative (that is non-constative, non-representational) aspect of the *cogito* proposition - "I am, I exist, is necessarily true, every time I express it or conceive of it in my mind" - guarantees the existence of the meditating subject.

16. The ontological argument, which states, at its baldest - God is a perfect being, existence is a perfection, therefore God exists - makes no recourse to *a posteriori* judgments. Descartes also forwards other non-empirical proofs in the "Third Meditation", again refusing the Thomistic arguments that God represents himself to us in the world of appearances. See René Descartes, *The Discourse on Method and the Meditations*, pp.113-131.
17. Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. D. Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), p.1.
18. And, naturally, Foucault nowhere doubts that the thought of Descartes belongs to the Classical *episteme*. See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp.51-56.
19. Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p.305.
20. For a challenge to Foucault's presentation of the Renaissance see George Huppert's "Divinatio et Eruditio: Thoughts on Foucault", *History and Theory* 13 (1974), pp.191-207.
21. See David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), Book 1, Pt.IV, pp.251-263. Hume concludes: "...all the nice and subtle questions concerning personal identity can never possibly be decided, and are to be regarded rather as grammatical rather than philosophical difficulties. Identity depends upon the relation of ideas; and these relations produce identity, by means of that easy transition they occasion. But as the relations, and the easiness of the transition may diminish by insensible degrees, we can have no just standard by which we can decide any dispute concerning the time when they acquire or lose a title to the name of identity. All the disputes concerning the identity of connected objects are merely verbal, except so far as the relation of parts gives me to some fiction or imaginary principle of union, as we have already observ'd." (262) Herein Hume demonstrates that not only was the question of man at issue prior to Kant, but that it also admitted of severe scepticism long before Nietzsche, or Foucault, took arms against anthropologism.

22. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Selections from Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Stephen E. Whicher (Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1957), p.172.
23. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Joyful Wisdom*, trans. Thomas Common (Edinburgh: Foulis, 1910), pp.168-69.
24. David Carroll, "The Subject of Archaeology or the Sovereignty of the *Episteme*", *Modern Language Notes* 93, no.4 (May 1978), pp.695-722.
25. See G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of World History*, trans. H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975). For Hegel, the four ages of world history are: the Oriental, the Greek, the Roman and the Germanic eras. Interestingly, this last and final era is that of subjectivity. Foucault is always concerned to deny the existence of any Hegelian residues in his work, even going so far as to make the unconvincing claim that he has learned more about the nature of modern discourse from Cuvier, Bopp, and Ricardo than from Kant or Hegel - see Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p.307. Attentive readers of this text will note the recurrence of Hegelian (and Kantian) motifs, even if unaware that Foucault's great mentor was none other than the French Hegelian, Jean Hyppolite.
26. For Foucault, dialectic and anthropology are always "intermingled", arising together at the beginning of the nineteenth century and destined to disappear together at the close of the modern *episteme*. Consequently, the end of anthropology will be coincident with the end of dialectic. See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp.262-263.
27. For example, the Kantian transcendental subject met with strenuous opposition from both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. See Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, vol.1, trans. E.J.F. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), pp.413-534; Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), pp.267-271.
28. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and No-One* trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969), p.41.
29. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Francis Golffing (New York: Doubleday, 1956), p.177.
30. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p.236.
31. "Let me speak to them of what is most contemptible: but that is the *last man*... The earth has become small, and on it hops the last man who makes everything small. His race is as ineradicable as the flea-beetle; the last man lives longest." - Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Viking Books, 1966), p.23. I use Kaufmann's translation here in fidelity to *The Order of Things*' use of the phrase "last man". Hollingdale's translation is still less propitious to Foucault's purposes: "Behold! I shall show you the *Ultimate Man*... The earth has become small, and on it hops the Ultimate Man, who makes everything small. His

race is as inexterminable as the flea; the Ultimate Man lives longest." (46)

32. For example, see David B. Alison ed., *The New Nietzsche* (New York: Dell, 1977); Daniel O'Hara ed. *Why Nietzsche Now?* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); Stanley Corngold, *The Fate of the Self: German Writers and French Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).
33. In the earliest days of the anthropological era Marx was still able to declare that the subject is "the merest vapourings of idealism": "The individuals, who are no longer subject to the division of labour, have been conceived by philosophers as an ideal, under the name 'Man'. They have conceived the whole process, which we have outlined as the evolutionary process of 'Man', so that at every historical stage 'Man' was substituted for the individuals and shown as the motive force of history ... Through this inversion, which from the first is an abstract image of the actual conditions, it was possible to transform the whole of history into an evolutionary process of consciousness." - Karl Marx, *The German Ideology I* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1970), pp.84-85. Marxism, we recall, is said to have introduced "no real discontinuity", yet here, over a century prior, Marx announces the radical archaeological thesis that man is not an *aeterna veritas*, that he arose as the result of certain historical pressures. Such statements, and this aspect of Marxism, should prove invaluable to a work concerned with the emergence and the disappearance of man but for the fact that they entirely contradict the archaeological theses that man was born at the end of the eighteenth century, and that it was not possible to think beyond man in the nineteenth century. We might find some explanation here of why Marx is so rigorously excluded from *The Order of Things*, when in so many other of the Foucauldian texts he is presented as a great precursor of modern discourse. The concept of *episteme* might withstand the introduction of one meta-epistemic author, but the introduction of two thinkers who think beyond the universal conditions of discourse can only have the effect of critically undermining the integrity of these epistemological fields.
34. Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, p.278.
35. See Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1973), p.197. Even Foucault's later work on carceral and punitive institutions would seem to take its directions from the analysis in Nietzsche's *Genealogy of the origins of morality in torture and punishment*. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and The Genealogy of Morals*, pp.189-230.
36. Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p.33.
37. *Ibid*, p.38.
38. *Ibid*, p.165; p.196.

39. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock, 1972), p.209
40. For Deleuze's interpretation of Foucault, see Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Sean Hand (London: Athlone Press, 1988).
41. See Michel Foucault, "A Preface to Transgression", *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, pp.29-52; "Of Other Spaces", *Diacritics* vol 16, no.1 (Spring 1986), pp.22-27.
42. This paper was originally delivered to the *Société française de Philosophie* in February 1969 - see Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?", *Bulletin de la Société française de Philosophie* 63 (1969), pp.73-104 - a translation of which, by Donald Bouchard, is included in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice, op cit*, pp.113-38. A revised version of this paper was presented by Foucault at a conference at SUNY-Buffalo, and has since been translated by Josué V. Harari as "What is an Author" in Josué V. Harari ed., *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), pp.141-160. As Harari emphasizes, the difference between the two versions is important - see *Textual Strategies*, p.43 - and all references made parenthetically within the text will be to Harari's translation of this subsequent version. Recourse to the *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* version will be signalled in the notes.
43. Michel Foucault, "What is an Author", *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, pp.113-114. These remarks, which belong to Foucault's preamble to "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?" before the *Société française de Philosophie* are omitted in the later version of the paper, and therefore do not appear in Harari's translation.
44. See Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" in in Josué V. Harari ed., *Textual Strategies, op. cit.*, pp.159-60.
45. In locating the emergence of the founder of discursivity in the nineteenth century, however, we cannot but suspect that insufficient time has elapsed for powerful modifications or transformations to have occurred. Time may still surrender a dialectical materialism or psychoanalysis which encompasses and transcends the inaugural texts.
46. A certain local displacement of the author may well be at work here, for this paragraph - which forms part of the main text of "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?" as presented to the *Société française de philosophie* - appears in *Textual Strategies* as a particularly astute and intrusive editor's footnote! To compare with Bouchard's translation of the paper delivered to the *Société française de Philosophie*, see Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, p.136. Given its appearance in the original French text and in Bouchard's translation, it seems justifiable to treat the passage as though it belongs to the body proper of "What is an Author?".
47. Correspondingly, Foucault's exegetes have steered well away from this essay, just as they have passed over the presentation of a Delphic

Nietzsche as though it were of no consequence for a transindividual theory of discursive practices. Alan Sheridan makes no mention of "What is an Author?" in his *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth* (London: Tavistock, 1980); Pamela Major-Poetzl makes the solitary observation that it attests to the "effacement, even the destruction of the subject" - *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Western Culture: Toward a New Science of History* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1983), p.103; Karlis Racevskis claims that the essay has shown "that the author is a convenient explanatory device, an a priori principle with which we are able to domesticate a text for our own specific purposes" - *Michel Foucault and the Subversion of Intellect* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), p.39. Not surprisingly either, when the idea of the founder of discursivity is raised, it is in the context of Foucault himself. See Paul Rabinow's introduction to *A Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984), p.26; and Edward Said, who prophesies: "... it is as the founder of a new field of research (or a new way of knowing and doing research) that he will continue to be known and regarded. The virtual representation and re-perception of documentary and historical evidence is done by Foucault in such an unusual way as to have created for his evidence a new mental domain ..." - *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), p.191.

48. See Michel Foucault, "What is an Author", *Textual Strategies*, p.145.
49. See Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Marx, Freud" in *Nietzsche, Proceedings of the Seventh International Philosophical Colloquium of the Cahiers de Royaumont, 4-8 July, 1964* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1967), pp.183-200. It is to this paper that Maurice Gandillac alludes in the exchange quoted in the following footnote.
50. I offer a translation, made by my friend Triona Carey, of this exchange: "*Gandillac*: I myself am obliged to ask, in your hearing, which interpreters you would distinguish as the founders of discourse... If one allots them a unique category, situated somewhere between the scientific and the prophetic (and relevant to both), I am amazed to see neither Plato included, nor Nietzsche whom, you recently presented to us at Royaumont, as having exercised an influence similar to that of Marx and Freud. *Foucault*: I shall answer you - but under the rubric of working hypothesis, because once again, that which I have outlined to you was, unfortunately, no more than a plan of work, the identification of an area of work - in saying that the transdiscursive situation, within which authors like Plato and Aristotle are to be found from their time to that of Renaissance, is to be analysed: the ways in which one quotes them, refers to them, interprets them, establishes the authenticity of their texts etc, all of this definitely conforms to a system of regularities. I think that, with Marx and Freud, one is dealing with authors in whom the transdiscursive position is not to be superimposed upon the transdiscursive position of authors like Plato and Aristotle. And this

modern transdiscursivity must be described in distinction from the ancient transdiscursivity." - *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie* 1969, p.101.

51. Of course, it is of not of any material significance, in this context, whether or not Nietzsche is strictly speaking a founder of discursivity or a transdiscursive author, or whether he is to be located somewhere between the two - the fact remains that he will be there or thereabouts.
52. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979), p.88.
53. Michel Foucault, "Postscript: An Interview with Michel Foucault by Charles Raus", *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel*, trans. Charles Raus (London: Athlone Press, 1987), p.184.
54. Jorge Luis Borges, *The Aleph and Other Stories: 1933-1969*, trans. N. Di Giovanni (New York: Bantam Books, 1971), p.180.
55. Michel Foucault, "Prison Talk", *Radical Philosophy*, no. 16 (Spring, 1977), p.33.
56. Michel Foucault, *A Foucault Reader*, pp.76-100.
57. "Truly I advise you: go away from me and guard yourselves against Zarathustra! ... One repays a teacher badly if one remains only a pupil. And why, then, should you not pluck at my laurels?" - Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p.103. Nietzsche will say this many times, and in many different ways: "The philosopher believes that the value of his philosophy lies in the whole, in the building: posterity discovers it in the bricks with which he built, and which are then often used for better building..." - Friedrich Nietzsche, *A Nietzsche Reader* selected and trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), p.33.
58. "We have to remember... that the ancient conception of authorship was widely different from our own... A writer might even go so far as to assume the name of a great teacher in order to gain a reading for his book...". Arthur S. Peake, *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* (London: Nelson, 1919), p.902.
59. As Jacques Derrida says: "*The thinking of the end of man ... is always already prescribed in metaphysics, in the thinking of the truth of man.*" - Jacques Derrida, "The Ends of Man", *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1982), pp.109-136: p.121.
60. It is perhaps partly for this reason that Foucault maintains a scrupulous uncertainty as to whether we are still (at the time of writing) within the Age of Man, or are instead dazzled by the unaccustomed light of the coming *episteme*. This space between *epistemi* is the ideal point from which the archaeologist might speak for it frees him from the specific determinations of any particular configuration of knowledge. It is, so to speak, a lyrical *intermezzo* between rigid, prescriptive systems. Foucault's elusiveness on the epistemic stationing of the archaeological discourse has led Pamela

Major-Poetzl to postulate a fourth and contemporary *episteme* commencing in 1950, though she does so with no direct authorization from the text. See Pamela Major-Poetzl, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Western Culture*, pp.158-9; 191-195

61. And Foucault's style does everything to confirm the transcendental status of the archaeological author. He writes with an omniscient assurance, in tones peremptory and portentous; with what Roland Barthes would call the voice of God. Indeed, Edward Said makes the point that Foucault's voice is undoubtedly the "voice of an Author", though he sees no particular contradiction in an authorful and authoritarian discourse which recommends the anonymity of discourse. See Edward Said, "An Ethics of Language", *Diacritics* vol.4, no.2 (Summer 1974), pp.28-37: p.28.
62. On Nietzsche's perspectivism see Arthur C. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), pp.68-99.
63. And it is surely due in large measure to the Cartesian tradition that phenomenology should have exerted its greatest influence not in its native Germany but in France.
64. Michel Foucault, quoted in Pamela Major-Poetzl, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Western Culture*, p.9.
65. Indeed Dreyfus and Rabinow say that Foucault told them that this was its "real subtitle" - Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, p.vii. This view of *The Order of Things* as an allegory of the present told through the past receives a certain confirmation from Foucault himself. He later said: "...my book is a pure and simple fiction: it is a novel, but it is not I who invented it; it is the relation of our epoch and its epistemological configuration to a whole mass of statements." Michel Foucault, quoted in Pamela Major-Poetzl, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Western Culture*, p.19.
66. Also, following Dreyfus and Rabinow, we might read, for "Husserl", Merleau-Ponty: "Foucault's account of Husserl is similar to that found in Merleau-Ponty's Sorbonne lectures, 'Phenomenology and the Sciences of Man' ... Foucault's mischaracterization of Husserl's account of the cogito is, in fact, an accurate characterization of the thought of Merleau-Ponty." - Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, pp.36-37. Dreyfus and Rabinow suggest that Foucault "accepts" this reading, but it is doubtful that Foucault's misreading is quite as naive as they imply. They also say: "Husserl, in fact, holds to the end the view that Foucault succinctly characterizes and then implies he rejects, viz. that he 'revived the deepest vocation of the Western ratio, bending it back upon itself in a reflection which is a radicalization of pure philosophy and a basis for the possibility of its own history'." - *ibid*, p.37. With both readings available to Foucault, it is surely no accident that he decided upon the one

which serves to distance Husserlian phenomenology from the Cartesian *cogito*.

67. For an account of this controversy see Pamela Major-Poetzl, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Western Culture*, pp.8-11.
68. Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), p.53. The word, naturally, is "chess".
69. See, as two examples among many of Foucault's resistance to being categorized as a structuralist, *The Order of Things*, p.xiv, and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp.199-205. Foucault's statement that he did not once use the word structure in *The Order of Things* is to be found in the discussion following "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?": "... I have never, for my part, used the word structure. Seek it in *The Order of Things*, you will not find it there." - Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?", *op cit*, p.100.
70. Michel Foucault, quoted in John Rajchman, *Michel Foucault: the Freedom of Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), pp.35-36.
71. Julia Kristeva, "The System and the Speaking Subject", *The Times Literary Supplement*, 12 October 1973, pp.1249-50: p.1249.
72. See Michel Foucault, "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?", *op. cit.*, p.102.
73. "The artist was able to emerge from the age-old anonymity of epic singers only by usurping the power and the meaning of the same epic values. The heroic dimension passed from the hero to the one whose task it had been to represent him at a time when Western culture itself became a world of representations." - Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, p.73.
74. Jean-Marie Benoist, *The Structural Revolution* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1978), p.13.
75. Stephen Heath, "Comment on 'The idea of authorship'" in John Caughie ed., *Theories of Authorship: A Reader* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), pp.214-220: p.216.
76. Martin Jay, "Should Intellectual History Take a Linguistic Turn" in Dominick LaCapra and Steven L. Caplan eds., *Modern European Intellectual History: Reappraisals and New Perspectives* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), pp.86-110: p.89.
77. Charles C. Lemert, and Garth Gillan, *Michel Foucault: Social Theory and Transgression* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p.136. For another example of the over-hasty identification of authorial, transcendental and divine subjects see Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production*, trans. Geoffrey Wall (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), especially pp.66-68.
78. Immanuel Kant, *A Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1933), B 404, p.331.
79. Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, trans. William P. Alston and George Nakhnikian (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), p.xviii-xix.
80. Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, pp.31-32.

81. Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, second edition, revised and enlarged, ed. Wlad Godzich (London: Methuen, 1983), p.49.
82. *Ibid*, p.38.
83. E.D. Hirsch Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p.32.
84. *Ibid*, p.23; p.51.
85. *Ibid*, p.51.
86. Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, trans. and ed. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), p.147.
87. Michel Foucault, "What is an Author", *Textual Strategies*, p.159.
88. James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in Harry Levin ed., *The Essential James Joyce* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), pp.52-252: p.221.
89. Michel Foucault, "What is an Author", in Josué V. Harari ed., *Textual Strategies, op. cit.*, p.144.
90. Georges Poulet, in Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato eds., *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), p.145.
91. This autobiographical emphasis is to be found not only in the later work, but virtually right across the Nietzschean corpus. In the earlier period, for example, Nietzsche went so far as to ask: "Whither does this whole philosophy, with all its circuitous paths, want to go? Does it do more than translate, as it were, a strong and constant drive, a drive for ... all those things which ... are most endurable precisely for me? A philosophy which is at bottom the instinct for personal diet? An instinct which seeks my own air, my own heights, my own kind of health and weather, by the circuitous paths of my head?" - Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p.223.
92. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973), p.18.
93. *Ibid*, pp.19-20.
94. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Joyful Wisdom*, pp.333-334.
95. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, pp.267-272.
96. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Joyful Wisdom*, p.280.
97. Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism" in *Basic Writings*, ed., David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), pp.193-242: p.225.
98. *Ibid*, p.221.
99. *Ibid*, p.208.

100. Jacques Lacan, quoted in Karlis Racevskis, *Michel Foucault and the Subversion of Intellect*, pp.34-35.
101. See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 3 vols., trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Viking Press, 1986).
102. Michel Foucault, "Afterword: The Subject and Power" in Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, *op. cit.*, pp.208-226: p.208.
103. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p.328.

### Chapter Three: Misread Intentions

1. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976). Originally published as *De la Grammatologie* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1967). All page references given parenthetically in the text.
2. By the classic deconstructive period I mean the books and essays published (in France) in the 1960s. In what follows, unless otherwise indicated, the word "deconstruction" is only used to designate Derrida's work, and is not meant to extend to the movement in general.
3. For Heidegger the work of the pre-Socratics is irreducible to the frameworks of Western metaphysics, or as he calls it, the epoch of onto-theology. See, for example, Martin Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking*, trans. David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), *passim*. Derrida would appear to disagree with Heidegger here. Early in the *Grammatology* he declares that Western thought has "from the pre-Socratics to Heidegger, always assigned the origin of truth in general to the *logos* ..." - Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p.4. However, Derrida does not, here or elsewhere, convincingly explain why we should regard the pre-Socratic philosophy as necessarily logocentric.
4. On this difficult aspect of Heidegger's thought see L.M. Vail, *Heidegger and Ontological Difference* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1972).
5. Martin Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking*, p.50. Derrida quotes these sentences during the essay "Différance" collected in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982), pp.1-27: p.23.
6. Though *différance* is held to exceed ontological difference it can only do so through passing by way of the difference between being and beings. The ontological difference cannot, therefore, be circumvented. Rather it opens the way for the thought of *différance*. As Derrida says: "... to prepare, beyond our *logos*, for a *différance* so violent that it can be interpellated neither as the epochality of Being nor as ontological difference, is not in any way to dispense with the passage through the truth of Being, or to "criticize", "con-

test" or misconstrue its incessant necessity. On the contrary, we must stay within the difficulty of this passage, and repeat it in the rigorous reading of metaphysics, wherever metaphysics normalizes Western discourse ..." - Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, pp.22-23.

7. *Ibid*, p.22.
8. *Ibid*, p.66-67. Derrida had said much the same in *Of Grammatology*, pp.20-24.
9. "We must begin *wherever we are* and the thought of the trace, which cannot take the scent into account, has already taught us that it was impossible to justify a point of departure absolutely." - Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p.162.
10. "If I have chosen the texts of Claude Levi-Strauss, as points of departure and as a springboard for a reading of Rousseau, it is for more than one reason; for the theoretical wealth and interest of these texts, for the animating role that they currently play, but also for the place played in them by the theory of writing and the theme of fidelity to Rousseau." - Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, pp.99-100.
11. Jacques Derrida, quoted in Christopher Norris, *Derrida* (London: Fontana, 1987), p.144.
12. See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, trans. J.M. Cohen (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1953).
13. Jacques Derrida, "Cogito and the History of Madness", in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), pp.31-63: p.35. The impossibility of writing "a history of silence" is one of the criticisms Derrida makes of Foucault's history of madness. See Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Tavistock, 1967).
14. See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, trans. J.H. Moran and Alexander Gode (New York: Fredric Ungar, 1966).
15. See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*, trans. Maurice Cranston (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984).
16. See Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p.194.
17. *Ibid*, pp.193-194.
18. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Translator's Preface", to *Of Grammatology*, *op. cit.*, p.lxxxv.
19. *Ibid*.
20. See Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy", *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (London: Athlone Press, 1981), pp.61-171.
21. See Plato, *Phaedrus and the Seventh and Eighth Letters*, trans. with an intro. by Walter Hamilton (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973).
22. Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, pp.66-67.
23. *Ibid*, p.85.
24. See Plato, *Phaedrus and the Seventh and Eighth Letters*, pp.95-99.

25. *Ibid*, pp.136-141. Of this digression, Hamilton comments in an editor's note: "Some even of those who regard the rest of the letter as authentic have dismissed it as an irrelevant interpolation ..." (136)
26. Irene E. Harvey highlights the problem of Rousseau's exemplarity in an article entitled "Doubling the Space of Existence: Exemplarity in Derrida - the case of Rousseau", collected in John Sallis ed., *Deconstruction and Philosophy*, (London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp.60-70. She argues that "... Rousseau is a *mere example* on the one hand, a *superfluous addition* and in principle could have been replaced or substituted by anyone else in such a demonstration, yet on the other hand is a particularly *good example* - a crucial and critical choice, a unique individual, non-substitutable, and offering an *essential addition* in order to fill a void".(62) Harvey does not, however, argue a paucity of logocentric texts from this, nor does she connect the question of exemplarity to the question of the author, contending rather that the notion of exemplarity itself should itself be deconstructed.
27. These problems are still further compounded when we consider that the full title of the *Essay* is the *Essay on the Origin of Languages, which treats of Melody and Musical Imitation*, and that since it gives over a good part of its labour to discoursing on music, many scholars have concluded that this is its proper subject. As is to be expected, Derrida challenges this position, and spends a full twenty pages arguing that, in any case, Rousseau's thought on the origin of music is simply another expression of his thought on the origin of languages. (See Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, pp.195-216) That Derrida might be utterly persuasive here is irrelevant to our concern, which is simply to note the pressures which using one problematical text and one problematical author to exemplify an epoch exert upon the grammatological project.
28. For example: "... from the *Discourse* to the *Essay* the sliding movement is toward continuity. The *Discourse* wants to *mark the beginning* ... The *Essay* would make us *sense the beginnings* by which 'men sparsely placed on the face of the earth' continuously wrench themselves away, within a society *being born*, from the pure state of nature. It captures man as he *passes* into birth, in that subtle transition from origin to genesis." - Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p.253.
29. From Derrida's footnote to this claim, it would not appear "easy" at all: "... It is beside the point both of our projects and of the possibility of our demonstrating from internal evidence the link between the characteristic and Leibniz's infinitist theology. For that it would be necessary to go through and exhaust the entire content of the project ..." - Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p.331, n.14.
30. Once again, whatever novelty and impact we ascribe to Derrida's thinking on metaphysics is only to be determined via the extent to which he can be said to move beyond the Heideggerian critique. Just as *différance*, in a peculiar fashion, must be at once older than being

and younger than Heidegger, so too phonocentrism must be older than presence since, as Derrida says, Heidegger insists upon noting that "... being is produced as history only through the logos ..." - Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*. p.22. And perhaps even this grammatological position had always been implied within the Heideggerian critique itself. As Derrida says on the same page: "... after evoking the 'voice of being', Heidegger recalls that it is silent, mute, insonorous, wordless, originally *a-phonic* ...". It would also be possible, up to a point at least, to read the "voice" or "call of being" in Heidegger as an "arche-writing" which underlies and displaces the opposition between speech and writing. Such questions would need to be elaborated at considerable length, and distributed in terms of the vast Heideggerian legacy to deconstruction.

31. For instance, in an interview with Guy Scarpetta Derrida responds to the imputation that he has denied the subject by saying: "As you recall, I have never said that *there is not* a subject of writing ... It is solely necessary to reconsider the problem of the effect of subjectivity such as it is produced by the structure of the text ... Doubtless this effect is inseparable from a certain relationship between sublimation and the death instinct, from a movement of interiorization-idealization-*relève*-sublimation, etc., and therefore from a certain repression. And it would be ridiculous to overlook the necessity of this chain, and even more so to raise some moral or political 'objection' to it ..." - Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Athlone Press, 1981), p.88.
32. Harold Bloom, "Auras: The Sublime Crossing and the Death of Love", *Oxford Literary Review*, vol.4, no.3 (1981), pp.3-19: pp.18-19.
33. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p.160.
34. W.K. Wimsatt Jr, and Monroe C. Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy" *Sewanee Review* vol.54, no.3 (1946), pp.468-488. Revised version in W.K. Wimsatt Jr., *The Verbal Icon* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954), pp.3-18. An significant recent challenge to the New Critical view on intention has been made by Stein Olsen in his book *The End of Literary Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). See, in particular, pp.29-52.
35. See J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), and John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).
36. John R. Searle, "Reiterating the Differences: A Reply to Derrida" in *Glyph I* (1977), pp.198-208: p.201.
37. Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context", trans. Samuel Weber and Jeffrey Mehlman in *Glyph I* (1977), pp.172-197: p.192. This essay also appears in *Margins of Philosophy*, pp.307-330, but the *Glyph* translation is preferred in the interests of the continuity of the exchange. For Derrida's reply to Searle's reply, see "Limited Inc",

- trans. Samuel Weber in *Glyph II* (1977), pp.162-251. For Derrida's defence of his own position on intention see *ibid*, pp.191-218.
38. The models of intention Derrida deploys are not to be seen as purely intratextual reconstructions. Not only the *Grammatology*, but the vast majority of Derrida's readings patiently develop the pattern of an author's determinate meaning through full, unimpeded access to the oeuvre. In accordance with deconstructive insistence that no one mode of writing has any necessary privilege over another, the oeuvre is extended to include letters, early manuscripts, notebook entries, "immature" works, all of which inhabit the textual space on an equal footing. Indeed, quite against intratextualism, Derrida is to be found most often arguing for the continuity and inseparability of an author's various writings. For example, he resolutely resists the idea that there is any "turn" in Heidegger's philosophy. See, Jacques Derrida, "The Ends of Man", *Margins of Philosophy*, pp.109-136. In the same spirit see also the clearing of a continuous pathway between the two Freudian topologies in "Freud and the Scene of Writing", *Writing and Difference*, pp.196-231. The case could even be made that the ascription of continuous intentions to the authors he reads is a general characteristic of Derrida's work. The reconciliation of marginal texts to the body proper is also, of course, the operation performed upon the *Phaedrus* and the *Essay*.
39. See Michael Hancher, "Three Kinds of Intention", *Modern Language Notes* 87 (1972), pp.827-851. On Hancher's classification of intent, see J. Timothy Bagwell, *American Formalism and the Problem of Interpretation* (Houston, Texas: Rice University Press, 1986), pp.119-121. Bagwell's book is very useful on the history of critical attitudes to intention, and offers an interesting modern pro-intentionalist argument.
40. Given the density, and the mimicry of Derrida's prose, it is often necessary, however, to read very attentively in order to separate what is explicative and what is deconstructive in his readings. Occasionally, too, his commentators will confuse the deconstructive and the explicative phases of his critiques, as, for example, when Christopher Norris says: "Writing asserts itself despite Freud's will to restrict it to a figural and secondary status. As Derrida predicts, 'it is with a graphematics still to come, rather than with a linguistics dominated by an ancient phonologism that psychoanalysis sees itself as destined to collaborate'." - Christopher Norris, *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice* (London: Methuen, 1982) This is not, however what Derrida predicts, but what Freud predicts. As Derrida makes aboundingly clear in the succeeding sentence: "Freud recommends this *literally* in a text from 1913, and in this case we have nothing to add, interpret, alter." - Jacques Derrida, "Freud and the Scene of Writing", *Writing and Difference*, p.220.
41. This is the format of Derrida's arguments that Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche betrays the seminally counter-metaphysical directions of the Nietzschean project. See Jacques Derrida, *Spurs/Éperons*

trans. Barbara Harlow (London: University of Chicago Press, 1979). Curiously, but according to the same principle, Derrida also argues that Emmanuel Levinas's reading of Heidegger falsifies the original Heideggerian intent even, and especially as it feigns to move beyond the Heideggerian deconstruction. See Jacques Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas", *Writing and Difference*, pp.79-153. Similarly, Derrida's paper, "The Ends of Man" finds itself by no means in opposition to the thought of Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger, but is rather a carefully steered liberation of their thought from both the overly anthropological readings of both humanists like Sartre who sought therein justification for their own existential humanisms, and anti-humanists whose naively humanist interpretations of the work of these three thinkers made it all the easier to dismiss the phenomenological project. See Jacques Derrida, "The Ends of Man", *Margins of Philosophy*, pp.109-136.

42. As one example amongst so many, Derrida writes of Freud's notion of the unconscious trace: "Freud's notion of the trace must be radicalized and extracted from the metaphysics which still retains it ... Such a radicalization of the *thought of the trace* ... would be fruitful not only in the deconstruction of logocentrism, but in a kind of reflection exercised more positively at different levels of writing in general ...". - Jacques Derrida, "Freud and the Scene of Writing", *op. cit.*, pp.229-230.
43. In a classic, point-for-point statement of revisionist influence, Derrida explains to Henri Ronsboeche: "What I have attempted would not have been possible without the opening of Heidegger's questions. And first ... would not have been possible without the attention to what Heidegger calls the difference between Being and beings, the onto-ontological difference such as, in a way, it remains unthought by philosophy. But despite this debt to Heidegger, or rather because of it, I attempt to locate in Heidegger's text ... the signs of a belonging to metaphysics, or to what he calls onto-theology." - Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, pp.9-10. Doubtless we should read Derrida as Derrida read Heidegger, for the "signs of a belonging to metaphysics". No activity, at base, could be more faithful.
44. I adapt this formulation from the text: "What does Rousseau say without saying, see with without seeing?" - Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p.215.
45. On the dual meaning of *pharmakon* as both poison and remedy see Jacques Derrida, "Plato's Pharmacy", *op. cit.*
46. To reverse the priority of speech over writing is simply to reconfirm their opposition and to remain "irreducibly rooted in that metaphysics". See Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p.314.
47. J. Hillis Miller, "Deconstructing the Deconstructers", *Diacritics* vol.5, no.2 (1975), pp.24-31: p.31. Derrida, too, raises the possibility of a text that everywhere exceeds and incorporates any interpretation

that might be made of it, but he does so in the context of his polemic with Lacan: "... what happens in the psychoanalytic deciphering of a text when the latter, the deciphered itself, already explicates itself? When it says more about itself than the deciphering (a debt acknowledged by Freud more than once)? And especially when the deciphered text inscribes in itself *additionally* the scene of the deciphering?" - Jacques Derrida, "Le facteur de la vérité", *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp.411-496: p.414.

48. Which again reflects the convergence - noted in the previous chapter - of transcendently *auteurist* and transcendently anti-*auteurist* theories in a similarly idealized notion of the text.
49. As Paul de Man does in an otherwise superb essay, "The Rhetoric of Blindness" in *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, second edition, revised and enlarged, ed. Wlad Godzich (London: Methuen, 1983) pp.102-141. Intention does not appear by name in the essay, but that is plainly its subject. De Man claims: "Rousseau's text has no blind-spots ... There is no need to deconstruct Rousseau; the established tradition of Rousseau interpretation, however, stands in dire need of deconstruction ... instead of having Rousseau deconstruct his critics, we have Derrida deconstructing a pseudo-Rousseau by means of insights that could have been gained from the 'real' Rousseau". (141-2) We do not need to be constrained by the terms of de Man's argument here. Nothing obliges us to decide between the absolute deconstruction of Rousseauian intention and its absolute recuperation; a thoroughgoing comparison of the *Essay* and the *Grammatology* would doubtless reveal a pattern of partial deconstruction and partial appropriation. In a sense, we are again presented with the same absolute divide on intention that we sketched at the opening of this section. One which is further confirmed when we consider that a few years later de Man ventured an interpretation of Rousseau - written very much under the influence of Derrida - which took up a rigidly anti-intentionalist standpoint. See Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), especially pp.278-301. De Man's changing positions on intention and the author will be discussed in the conclusion.
50. Harold Bloom, *Kabbalah and Criticism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1985), p.104.
51. Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, p.14.
52. On the relationship between the Levinasian and Derridean notions of the trace, see Robert Bernasconi, "The Trace of Levinas in Derrida" in David Wood and Robert Bernasconi eds., *Derrida and Difference* (Warwick: Parousia Press, 1985), pp.122-139.

53. Derrida uses this phrase in describing the "subtle nuances" by which *différance* differs from Hegelian difference. See Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, p.44.
54. After Derrida's opening remarks, the essay "Différance" proceeds as a sequence of short readings of Saussure, Hegel, Nietzsche, Freud and Heidegger, with an important glance at Levinas. The essay itself, amongst other things, serves as the clearest testament of Derrida's influences, or borrowings. See Jacques Derrida, "Différance", *op. cit.*
55. Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, p.xiii
56. Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, p.6.
57. Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, p.32.
58. See Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination* pp.169-171 for the theatrical finale to "Plato's Pharmacy".
59. On the nomocentricity of Derrida's later work see Gregory L. Ulmer, *Applied Grammatology: Post(e)-pedagogy from Jacques Derrida to Joseph Beuys* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), pp.125-141.
60. See Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, trans. John P. Leavey and Richard Rand (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1986); *Signéponge/Signsponge*, trans. Richard Rand (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); and *Dissemination*, pp.287-366.
61. See Jacques Derrida, "Otobiographies: Nietzsche and the Politics of the Proper Name" in Jacques Derrida, *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation: Texts and Discussions with Jacques Derrida* trans. Peggy Kamuf and Avita Ronell (New York: Schocken Books, 1986) pp.1-38. See also Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card*, pp.257-409, for Derrida's interpretation of Freud. One of the main concerns in this latter work is to address the following question: "... how can an autobiographical writing, in the abyss of an un-terminated self-analysis, give to a worldwide institution *its* birth?" - Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card*, p.305. On the significance of Freud's proper name see "Freud's Legacy", *ibid*, pp.292-337. Elucidating his nomocentric interpretation, Derrida later said: "In writing *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud is writing a textual testament not only as regards his own name and his own family, but as regards the analytic movement which he also constructed in a certain fashion, that is, as a great inheritance, a great institution bearing his name. The history of the analytic movement has to deal with that. It is an institution that can't get along without Freud's name, a practical and theoretical science which must for once come to terms and explain itself with its founder's name. Mathematics, physics. et cetera, might on occasion celebrate the name of a great physicist or a great mathematician, but the proper name is not a structural part of the corpus of the science or the scientific institution. Psychoanalysis, on the other hand, has been inherited from Freud and accounts for itself with the structure of this inheritance.

I think that one must finally decipher his text by means of these questions: the questions of the inheritance, of the proper name, of the *fort/da* infinitely exceeding the limits of the text." *The Ear of the Other*, p.71. Derrida's rereading of Freud will be discussed in the conclusion.

62. See Jacques Derrida, *The Ear of the Other*, especially pp.4-19.
63. Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card*, back cover.
64. Christopher Norris, for instance, writes: "... it is pointless to ask who is *speaking* in any given part of this text, whether Hegel, Genet, Derrida *ipse* or some other ghostly intertextual 'presence'. For there is no last word, no metalanguage, or voice of authorial control that would ultimately serve to adjudicate the matter." - Christopher Norris, *Derrida*, p.64.
65. Jacques Derrida, in an interview with Irme Salusinszky in Irme Salusinszky ed., *Criticism in Society* (London: Methuen, 1987), pp.7-24: pp.22-23.
66. Michel Foucault, "Postscript: an Interview with Michel Foucault by Charles Raus", in Michel Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth: the World of Raymond Roussel*, trans. Charles Raus, (London: Athlone Press, 1987), p.186.
67. Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card*, p.194.
68. Jacques Derrida, *Mémoires: for Paul de Man*, trans. Cecile Lindsay, Jonathan Culler and Eduardo Cadava (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p.3.

## Conclusion

1. Sigmund Freud, *Art and Literature*, vol.14 of the Pelican Freud Library, ed. Albert Dickson (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985), p.60.
2. I am indebted to Sartre for this allusion. See Jean-Paul Sartre, *What is Literature?*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (London: Methuen, 1950), p.238.
3. On the ways in which Lacanian anti-subjectivism reinscribes the subject, see Eve Tavor Bannet, *Structuralism and the Logic of Dissent: Barthes, Derrida, Foucault, Lacan* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), pp.12-48. For de Man's reading of Rousseau, see Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke and Proust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), pp.133-301.
4. As Paul de Man argues in his work during the 1960s. See Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, second edition, revised and enlarged, ed. Wlad Godzich (London: Methuen, 1983), *passim*.

5. Roland Barthes, *Criticism and Truth*, trans. K.P. Keuneman (London: Athlone Press, 1987), p.77.
6. Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), p.140.
7. Roland Barthes, *Image Music Text*, p.142.
8. See Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1973); *Kabbalah and Criticism* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975); *A Map of Misreading* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1975); *Poetry and Repression: Revisionism from Blake to Stevens* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976). Perhaps unironically, Bloom's theory has thus far been without influence.
9. Wilde's dialogic essay "The Critic as Artist" remains the most elegant statement of the creativity of critical prose, as well as one of its finest examples. See Oscar Wilde, "The Critic as Artist", *Complete Works of Oscar Wilde* (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1948), pp.1009-1059. In recent times, the nineteenth century movement enacted by Coleridge, Wilde, Mallarmé, amongst others - that of moving from writing literature to writing an exemplary form of creative criticism - has been reversed. The process of beginning in criticism and writing one's way toward literature would seem to be an almost exclusively twentieth century phenomenon.
10. This applies not only to introductory works, but to more advanced criticisms also. See, for example, Annette Lavers, *Roland Barthes: Structuralism and After* (London: Methuen, 1982); Alan Sheridan, *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth* (London: Tavistock, 1980); Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986); Irene E. Harvey *Derrida and the Economy of Différance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).
11. See Geoffrey Hartman, *Criticism in the Wilderness: The Study of Literature Today*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980) pp.189-213.
12. *Ibid*, p.204.
13. *Ibid*, p.206.
14. See Jacques Derrida, "Edmund Jabès and the Question of the Book" in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), pp.64-78. Here Derrida describes his labour as that of "adding pitiful graffiti to an immense poem". (76)
15. Michel Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Rous- sel*, trans. Charles Raus (London: Athlone Press, 1987).
16. In what follows we will be concerned mainly with the effect of the death of the author upon American criticism, and in its deconstructionist modes in particular. However, much of what has occurred in America has been paralleled by the English critical scene, in that the anti-authorialism of Barthes, Foucault and Derrida has been utilized to facilitate a return to methods of practical criticism which bypass the issue of authorial subjectivity.

17. Georges Poulet, "Criticism and the Experience of Interiority" in Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato eds., *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), pp.56-72: p.72.
18. Georges Poulet, *The Interior Distance*, trans. Elliott Coleman (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1964), p.viii.
19. Paul de Man, *Blindness and Insight*, p.27.
20. *Ibid*, p.25.
21. *Ibid*, p.50.
22. See "Impersonality in the Criticism of Maurice Blanchot", *ibid*, pp.60-78.
23. J. Hillis Miller, *The Disappearance of God* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963), p.vii.
24. J. Hillis Miller, "The Geneva School", *Modern French Criticism: From Proust and Valéry to Structuralism*, ed. John K. Simon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp.277-310: p.282.
25. J. Hillis Miller, "The Literary Criticism of Georges Poulet", *Modern Language Notes*, 78 (1963), pp.471-88: pp.480-81.
26. J. Hillis Miller, *Charles Dickens: The World of his Novels*, p.ix.
27. See J. Hillis Miller, "The Geneva School", *op. cit.*
28. See Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato eds., *The Structuralist Controversy*, for the proceedings of this symposium.
29. See Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" in *The Structuralist Controversy*, pp.247-265. Also collected in Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981) pp.278-293.
30. See Paul de Man, "The Literary Self as Origin: The Work of Georges Poulet", *Blindness and Insight*, pp.79-101.
31. See Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Blindness" *ibid*, pp.102-141.
32. See Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading*, pp.133-301
33. J. Hillis Miller, "Ariachne's Broken Woof", *Georgia Review*, 31 (1977), 44-60: p.51.
34. Jacques Derrida, "Discussion" in Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato eds., *The Structuralist Controversy*, pp.265-272: p.271.
35. Jacques Derrida, "Structure Sign and Play", *ibid*, p.264.
36. Jacques Derrida, "Freud and the Scene of Writing", *Writing and Difference*, pp.196-231.
37. The phrase "region of historicity" is the one which Derrida uses to describe the situation of the participants and colloquists at the Johns Hopkins conference. See "Structure Sign and Play", *The Structuralist Controversy*, p.265. However, as has become apparent, the historicity of the French and Anglo-American traditions are by no means as convergent as Derrida presumes here.
38. Christopher Norris, *The Contest of Faculties: Philosophy and theory after deconstruction* (London: Methuen, 1985), p.223.

39. It is, of course, the basis of the current contextualist polemic against the quietist textualism of deconstruction.
40. In very different ways, naturally, but it is nonetheless plausible to see the freeplaying textualism of Hartman, and the austere, consequent textualism of de Man as divergent developments from a common basis in the New textual ethic of disengaging criticism from any direct social, historical and political issues in pursuit of the inherent ambiguities, and rhetorical features of literature.
41. Even the phenomenological *auteurism* of Poulet *et al* effectively sidestepped the problems of a subject's interaction with his texts by its wholesale and undifferentiated identification of the text with intentional consciousness.
42. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979), p.128.
43. "The name Voltaire on a writing by me - that really was progress - *towards myself*" - Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p.89. On the preceding page Nietzsche also claims that his writings on Schopenhauer are most fundamentally autobiographical, that the name Schopenhauer had functioned as another mask of Nietzsche.
44. *Ibid*, p.134. For excellent readings of the inscription of the Nietzschean subject in *Ecce Homo* see Jacques Derrida, *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation: Texts and Discussions with Jacques Derrida*, trans. Peggy Kamuf and Avita Ronell (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), pp.1-38; and Michael Ryan, "The Act", *Glyph II* (1978), pp.64-87.
45. See Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp.257-409.
46. See Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in *On Metapsychology: the Theory of Psychoanalysis*, vol.11 of the Pelican Freud Library, ed. Angela Richards (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), pp.275-337. See pp.283-87 for the recounting of the *fort/da* episode. In following Derrida's reading it is also very useful to consult Sigmund Freud, *An Autobiographical Study* in vol.XX of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1959), pp.4-74.
47. Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card*, p.311.
48. *Ibid*, pp.320-321.
49. *Ibid*, p.322.

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