

# Richard Burt

## Putting Your Papers in Order: The Matter of Kierkegaard's Writing Desk, Goethe's Files, and Derrida's Paper Machine, Or, the Philology and Philosophy of Publishing After Death

But this very understanding was gained through the suffering of wanting to publish but not being able to do it.

—Søren Kierkegaard, deleted from the posthumously published *The Point of View on My Work as an Author*, 214

When we write "by hand" we are not in the time before technology; there is already instrumentality, regular reproduction, mechanical iterability. So it is not legitimate to contrast writing by hand and "mechanical" writing . . . . I began by writing with a pen. . . . For the texts that mattered to me, the ones I had the slightly religious feeling of "writing," I even banished the ordinary pen. I dipped into the ink a long pen holder whose point was gently curved with a special drawing quill, producing endless drafts and preliminary versions before putting a stop to them on my first little Olivetti, with its international keyboard, that I'd bought abroad. . . . But I never concealed from myself the fact that, as in any ceremonial, there had to be repetition going on, and already a sort of mechanization. . . . Then, to go on with the story, I wrote more and more "straight onto" the machine: first the mechanical typewriter; then the electric typewriter in 1979; then finally the computer, around 1986 or 1987. I can't do without it any more now, this little Mac. . .

—Jacques Derrida, "The Word Processor," in *Paper Machine* (2005e), 20.

This really is about the project of a Book *to come* and not about the book's being-*past* that we have just started speaking about.

—Jacques Derrida, "The Book to Come," in *Paper Machine* (2005a), 13.

Henrik Lund . . . noted where each pile, case, box, roll, folder, and notebook lay when Kierkegaard had died, for instance, "in the desk," "in the lower desk drawer," "in the left-hand case," or "in the second chest of drawers, B, in

the top drawer, to the left." And he took careful note of which pages, scraps, and slips of paper were found together with others. . . . One can see from the order in which the papers were registered that Henrik Lund had begun with the writing desk, starting with the compartment at the top and continuing with the desk drawers . . . altogether there are 154 numbers for the items found in the desk.

— Niels Jørgen Cappelørn et al., *Written Images: Søren Kierkegaard's Journals, Notebooks, Booklets, Sheets, Scraps, and Slips of Paper* (2003), 11.

"To edit" a book in the English sense of the term, means to prepare a manuscript, to establish a definitive version of its text, lay out its presentation—the intricate work of preparation, reading, copyediting, mockup—watch over the bringing into evidence of its identity, its propriety, its closing also, and just as much, in consequence, as its opening. More precisely still, it means opening, giving birth to, and handing over the closure of the book *as such*: its withdrawal, its secrecy, the illegibility in it that will never be divulged and that is destined for publication as such.

Jean-Luc Nancy, *On the Commerce of Thinking: Of Books and Bookstores* (2008), 28.

"It is my wish that after my death Prof. Nielsen do whatever is necessary with respect to the publication of the entirety of my literary remains, manuscripts, journals, etc. . . . This could perhaps be written in a letter to Prof. Nielsen with the heading, 'To Be Opened After My Death,' and the letter might be placed in the desk." The page was *neither signed nor dated* . . . . Was this nonetheless actually a *testamentary disposition*, a *last 'will,'* which in that case ought to be decently respected and which we ought to attempt to implement without hesitation?

Hans Peter Barfod, *From Søren Kierkegaard's Posthumous Papers, Volume Six* (1869). [1]

As a matter of principle, the book is illegible, and it calls for or commands reading in the name of that illegibility. Illegibility is not a question of what is too badly formed, crossed out, scribbled: the illegible is what remains closed in the opening of the book. What slips from page to page but remains caught, glued, stitched into the binding,

or else laboriously jotted as marginalia that attempt to trip over the secret, that begin to write another book. What is illegible is not reading at all, yet only by starting from it does something then offer itself to reading.

—Jean-Luc Nancy, "The Publication of the Unpublished," in *On the Commerce of Thinking: Of Books and Bookstores*, 27.

How many readers *Either/Or* has had—and yet how few readers it has truly had, or how little it has come to be "read"!

—Søren Kierkegaard, supplemental materials to *Either/Or, Part Two*, 447.

P.S. Roger Laporte has reminded me of a stormy encounter which took place five years ago. During this encounter (although I am unable to recount the occasion for it here) we found ourselves, for other reasons, in disagreement with a certain hermeneut who in passing had resumed to ridicule the publication of Nietzsche's unpublished manuscripts. "They will end up," he said, "publishing his laundry notes and scraps like 'I have forgotten my umbrella'". We discussed the incident again; those who were present confirm this. Thus I am assured of the story's veracity, as well as the authenticity of the facts which otherwise I have no reason to doubt. Nevertheless I have no recollection of the incident. Not even today. [\[ii\]](#)

—Jacques Derrida, *Spurs* (1979), 139, 141.

"The strange nature of posthumous publications is to be inexhaustible."

—Maurice Blanchot, "The Last Word," in *Friendship* (1997). [\[iii\]](#)

At the moment I leave "my" book (to be published)—after all, no one forces me to do it—I become, appearing-disappearing, like that uneducable specter who will have never learned how to live. The trace I leave signifies to me at once my death, either to come or already come upon me, and the hope that this trace survives me. This is not striving for immortality; it's something structural. I leave a piece of paper behind, I go away, I die: it is impossible to escape this structure, it is the unchanging form of my life. Each time I let something go, each time some trace "leaves" me, "proceeds" from me, unable to be reappropriated, I leave my death in writing. It's the ultimate test: one expropriates

oneself without knowing exactly who is being entrusted with what is left behind.

—Jacques Derrida, *Learning to Live Finally: The Last Interview* (2007), 32-33.

As for written or inscribed language, it appears in Hegel's text only in the most literal of ways: by means of the parabasis which suddenly confronts us with the actual piece of paper on which Hegel, at that very moment and in this very place, has been writing about the impossibility of ever saying the only thing one wants to say, namely the certainty of sense perception . . . unlike the here and the now of speech, the here and the now of the inscription is neither false nor misleading: because he wrote it down, the existence of a here and a now of Hegel's text is undeniable as well as totally blank. It reduces, for example, the entire text of the *Phenomenology* to the endlessly repeated stutter: *this* piece of paper, *this* piece of paper, and so on. We can easily enough learn to care for the other examples Hegel mentions: a house, a tree, night, day—but who cares for his darned piece of paper, the last thing in the world we want to hear about and, precisely because it is no longer an *example* but a fact, the only thing we actually get. As we would say, in colloquial exasperation with an obscure bore: forget it! Which turns out to be precisely what Hegel sees as the function of writing. . . . Writing is what makes one forget speech . . . the definitive erasure of a forgetting that leaves no trace . . . the determined elimination of determination.

—Paul de Man, "Hypogram and Inscription," in *The Resistance to Theory* (1986), 42, 43.

In this case the "What is?" question—"What is paper?"—is almost bound to go astray the minute it is raised.

—Jacques Derrida, "Paper or Me, You Know . . . (New Speculations on a Luxury of the Poor)," *Paper Machine* (2005b), 52.

There is always a closed and inviolable book in the middle of every book that is opened, held apart between the hands that turn its pages, and whose every revolution, each turn from *recto* to *verso* begins to fail to achieve its deciphering, to shed light on its sense. For that reason every book, inasmuch as it is a book, is unpublished, even though it repeats and relays individually, as

each one does, the thousands of other books that are reflected in it like worlds in a monad. The book is unpublished [*inedit*], and it is that *inedit* that the publisher [*editeur*] publishes. The *editor* (Latin) is the one who brings to the light of day, exposes to the outside offers (*edo*) to view and to knowledge. That doesn't, however, mean that once it is published the book is no longer unpublished; on the contrary, it remains that, and even becomes it more and more. It offers in full light of day, in full legibility, the insistent tracing of its illegibility.

—Jean-Luc Nancy, *On the Commerce of Thinking* (2008), 28.

This (therefore) will not have been a book.  
—Jacques Derrida, "Hors Livre," *Dissemination* (1983), 3.

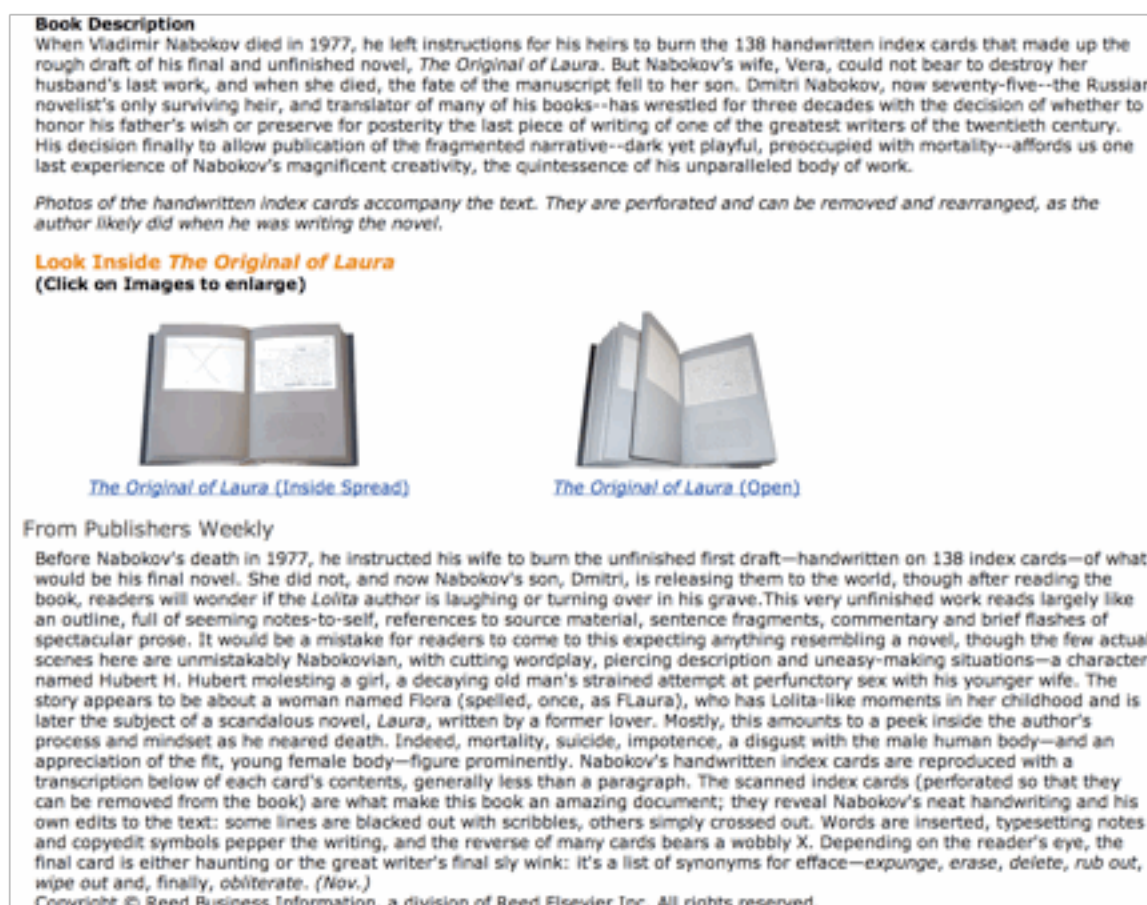
## Living / Will, Dead / On

This essay shall not be read. It is out of order, unpublishable, unreadable, a sack of papers of what appears to be a complete but unfinished manuscript dumped out on a desktop. What follows, then, is a series of items awaiting a proper inventory and cataloging and then a proper editing under the general title "Posthumography," a neologism meaning the genre of posthumous publications, "posthumology" being the study of the posthumous publication of literature and philosophy.

The "papers" are generally assumed to be posthumous, as, for example, in the case of the "Guide to the Papers of Paul de Man." Søren Kierkegaard's title *From the Papers of One Still Living* spells out the aberrant relation between a living author and the publication of some of his papers. Papers may or may not include diaries and correspondence in the forms of letters, postcards, printed out email, and correspondence may or may not be described as private or public. [iv] Papers are typically incomplete: manuscripts and letters often get lost before eventually being archived; other manuscripts are destroyed. Decisions concern what should be published (all, or only public parts) and when, who should be the editor (or editors), and how the publication of papers often concerns the ethics of publishing materials such as letters or scraps of paper that seem overly personal and embarrassing to the author, perhaps damaging his reputation; over time, access to the archive housing the papers often becomes increasingly difficult as the archive itself becomes a storage vault, less of the papers are permitted by the estate to be published, and the papers treated like works of art in a museum, facsimiles of letters no longer being simply documents but ways of attaching the text, in its apparent materiality, to the person of the author. When an author's papers (selections of them) are published, the editors tend to insert them into a story of the vagaries of publication (sometimes inventories are drawn up and the biography of the writer).

Posthumography raises a wide range of questions about the boundaries of publication and the emergence of philosophical and literary knowledge. Some questions are pragmatic: In what order, if any, have the papers been left by the author, and what does it mean for the editor to put them in order? How are the papers to be edited, arranged, and served to the reader as knowledge? Cooked with an extensive scholarly apparatus or left raw, the bare minimum of one? Chronologically or by topic? What do we do with papers left behind in various stages and shapes (drafts, sheets, scraps and other remains) when they are published as "archives," sometimes with facsimiles of postcards, letters, and pages of manuscripts and notebooks, some of which may contain deletions of passages, marginalia, doodlings, and other drawings made by the author? [v] Does editing change if the papers are left in different writing technologies when they are transferred from one kind of support (note cards, handwritten manuscript, typed manuscript, or computer document) to another (print and/or pdf)?

Some questions about posthumous publication are ethical: What happens if the author insistently tried to keep the works from publication? Are an author's efforts presumed to be an expression of what he wanted, or does publication necessarily mean positing what the author would have wanted? What constitutes evidence of a dead author's intention? A last will and testament? Paratextual evidence left in footnotes? Are some papers so private they should remain unpublished? Or are the papers of a dead man or woman public by definition? Still other questions concern the reception of posthumous publications: do readers connect the meaning of a posthumous text to the intention of the editor? In some cases, it would appear that the story of the editor cannot be divorced from the story of the posthumous publication. For example, Ernest Hemingway's grandson Sean Hemingway edited a "restored" edition of the posthumously published *A Moveable Feast* (2009), with a foreword Sean wrote. *The New York Times* excerpt from this version was published with a headnote explaining why this restored version was (supposedly) better than the "unrestored" edition (Rich 2009). Again, only decades after his father Vladimir Nabokov died did his son Dmitri see fit to publish his father's novel, written on index cards, *The Original of Laura* (2009), against his father's wishes. A journalist reports that "Vladimir Nabokov wrote the work on 138 index cards, which have been stored for the past 30 years in a bank vault in Switzerland, where Nabokov died in 1977" (Bloom 1999). *The Original of Laura* includes Dmitri's introduction and a full-scale facsimile of each note card (which may be punched out of the book by the reader, if he or she so desires) and its transcription in black type below it on each page, followed by the reproduction of the reverse of each note card on the following page; facsimiles of two open pages of the book may be accessed in pdf files on the Amazon.com webpage for the book (see Figure 1). In both of these cases of posthumous publication, the editor's personal motives to publish or restore a text are uncritically accorded more weight than is the usual paratextual foreword or introduction to shape the reader's reading of the published work.



(Figure 1)

The length of time Sean Hemingway and Dmitri Nabokov took to restore or allow to be published their grandfather's and father's works, respectively, raises another set of questions concerning the temporality of posthumous publication. What is the relation between the rhythm and speed of reading and the rhythm and speed of posthumous publication? Is a "complete edition" of an author's literary or philosophical works ever complete? How do you know when to stop posthumous publication? Or is posthumous publication, as Maurice Blanchot implies, impossible to stop because it is inexhaustible? [vi] And what are we to make of the publication and/or exhibition of intentionally damaged works? Some of Antonin Artaud's partially burned and pierced paradoxical "graphic works" (Derrida, 1996, 13) that constitute "une graphie des mots et des choses, voire a une graphie sans mot et sans chose [a writing about words and things in a writing in which neither word nor thing is seen]" (17) were exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in 1996,

against Artaud's expressly stated wish that no museum ever exhibit his works. In a lecture he gave at the MoMA exhibition, subsequently published as *Artaud le Moma*, Jacques Derrida (1996, 18) maintains that the works had to be "exposed, cruelly exhibited" in order to liberate their force. [vii]

Other questions about posthumous publication concern the archive, the manner in which papers have been stored, and the contraction of various strains of archive fever, the subsequent discovery or recovery of (in)complete and (il)legible papers: What is between the storage units and filing of papers during textual production or processing and their subsequent (non)publication in print or electronic form? Is there a maximum storage capacity requiring authors' to delete their files or throw away their papers to make room for more? Still other questions concern the limits of the posthumous: Is there a clear boundary separating posthumous publication from the publications of a living author? How does posthumography differ from cryptography? How might posthumous publication be related to mourning? Is it a kind of blocked mourning? If writing is always already linked to death, as Jacques Derrida has shown, to what extent is posthumous publication defined by the biological death of the author? Or are the kinds of problems that might seem to be specific to posthumous publishing (should all of the papers be published and how?) already more or less operative even while the biological author is publishing while still alive?

Some questions about posthumous publication are ontological. How are an author's "papers" to be differentiated from wastepaper, on the one hand, and works of art, on the other? [viii] Are an author's "papers" by definition leftovers, remainders that have an auratic value by virtue of their being a gift from the now dead author to an archive or to a friend? Does any such auratic value depend on whether the papers are stored on a floppy disc or handwritten on sheets of paper? What is the relation between the materiality of print and the status of an author's papers as an abstract category? And other questions bear on the relation between the storage of the unpublished papers and the storage of the published papers. We tend assume that that the archive is already given, that an author's papers can be retrieved at a library the same way books may be. Yet how are papers given even as they are left behind? What does it mean to open an envelope or a desk with a letter or papers in it? Is the envelope or desk the same as bookshelves, allowing one to open or close a book, or are such storage units different from the already open access bookshelves have? How do papers bear on Jacques Derrida's "archivology" in general and on the "secret" of the archive, in particular, the "ash of the archive" that can never be archived (see Derrida, 1996, 100)? How might the repetitions and deferrals specific to posthumology be structured by a "going-postal-posthumologicality" that disrupts and interrupts publication as such and that thereby deepens and extends "archivology" and the erasing repetitions of anarchivology by throwing light on the way no publication is never given, just waiting to be discovered, dusted off, and read? Are "papers" exterior even to a notion of the archive's remainder of the posthumous, a heterogeneous group resisting classification and that cannot be fully exteriorized or interiorized as public or private? What kinds of textual effects does this sort of remainder—posthumous publications constituting a kind of ash "to come" —produce? How might it, in contrast to Derrida's never present trace, un/structure what we call reading (of published works), even if, paraphrasing Paul de Man, we take reading to be the resistance to reading?

What sorts of calculations factor into what papers are determined to be worthy of posthumous publication? Consider, for example, Susan Bernofsky's introduction to Robert Walser's *Microscripts*:

Robert Walser . . . wrote many of his manuscripts in a shrunken down form . . . These narrow strips of paper covered with tiny, antlike markings ranging in height from one to two millimeters, came to light only after their author's death in 1956. . . . Unsure what to make of these tiny texts, [Carl] Seelig [—Walser's first literary executor—] published a handful of them as enlarged facsimiles . . . with a note describing them as "undecipherable," and then put them away for safekeeping. Now that Walser's position in the modernist canon has been so firmly established, with his popularity continuing to rise, it is difficult to imagine how it might have been possible for the discovery of his posthumous papers to have attracted so little notice. (2010, 9)

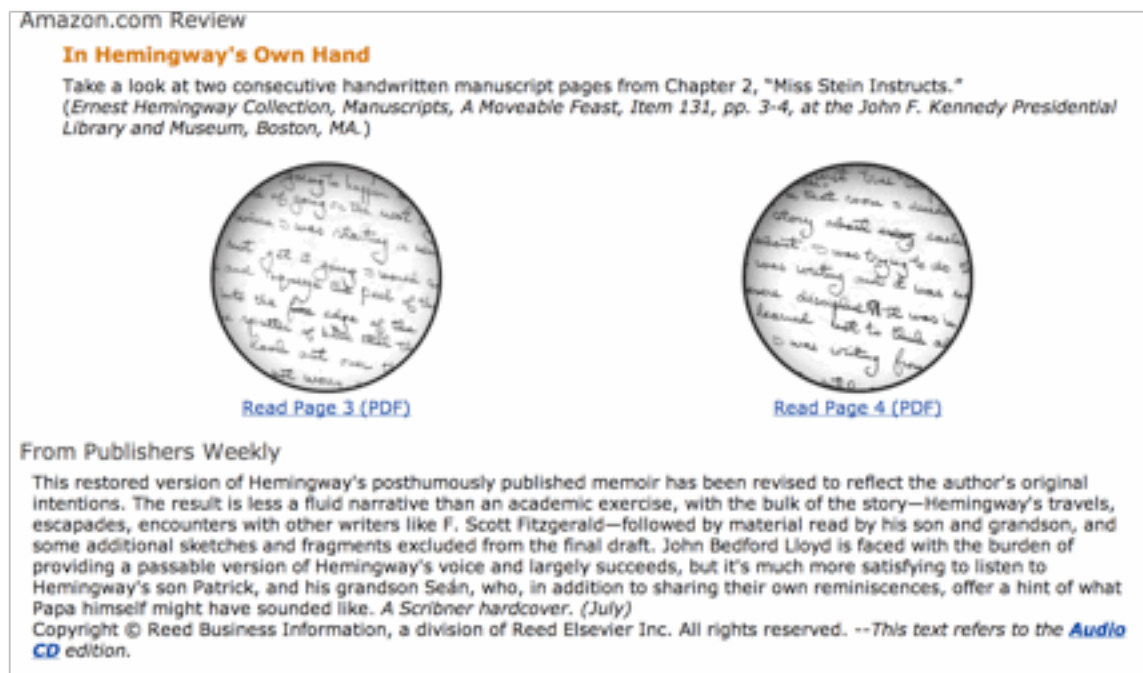
In the name of assigning the Walser texts an intrinsic and transparent literary value, Bernofsky inadvertently discloses while bypassing any reflection the kinds of calculations that go into determining what can be recognized as being worthy of posthumous publication: the symbolic value counts, to be sure, but only when it is sufficient—"firmly established" and canonical – to guarantee a publisher's return on the economic investment. Along exactly these lines, the editor of Ernest

Hemingway's fifth posthumously published novel, *True at First Light*, remarks in a parenthetical aside that "publishers in most European countries have paid record sums for a posthumous Hemingway" (Jenks 1999).

Nor, as I have said, do I think that my father or my father's shade would have opposed the release of *Laura* once *Laura* had survived the hum of time this long. A survival to which I may have contributed, motivated not by playfulness or calculation, but by an otherforce I could not resist. Should I be damned or thanked? But why, Mr. Nabokov, why did you *really* decide to publish *Laura*?  
—Dmitri Nabokov (2009), xviii.

## Post-ing-Posthumography

In the exploratory analysis of posthumography that follows, I focus on the relation between papers, posthumous publication, and writing storage devices in three cases: Kierkegaard's writing desk, Goethe's files, and Derrida's paper machine. Whether one decides to edit the papers with an extensive scholarly apparatus, or, as in the case of Georges Bataille's posthumously published *Unfinished System of Nonknowledge* (2001), not to do so, one assumes that the papers have been put in an order to be read, usually according to the author's presumed wishes. This ordering process focuses, that is, exclusively on filing retrieval, but on filing to put papers away, sorted or unsorted, sorted systematically or unsystematically. Posthumous publication is not, in my view, reducible to the more or less automatic retrieval of papers but necessarily involves their preparation for publication. Accounts of this preparation often link a story of publication, especially editing, to the device of the found manuscript, destroyed papers, and so on to be found, as we shall see, in both literature and philosophy and to detective fiction and the tools of its trade. For example, the Amazon.com webpage for Ernest Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast: The Restored Edition* (2009) includes links to two pdf files in the circular shape of magnifying glasses showing two manuscript pages, as if one were getting closer to the manuscript by clicking on the links. (See Figure 1.A) [ix]



(Figure 1.A)

Similarly, journalist Sara Corbett (2009) finds herself sounding like a writer of detective fiction when reporting on the publication of Carl Jung's *Red Book* (2009):

So for the better part of the past century, despite the fact that it is thought to be the pivotal work of one of the era's great thinkers, the book has existed mostly just as a rumor, cosseted behind the skeins of its own legend — revered and puzzled over only from a great distance. . . . A change was under way: the



book, which had spent the past 23 years locked inside a safe deposit box in one of the bank's underground vaults, was just then being wrapped in black cloth and loaded into a discreet-looking padded suitcase on wheels. It was then rolled past the guards, out into the sunlight and clear, cold air, where it was loaded into a waiting car and whisked away. . . . This could sound, I realize, like the start of a spy novel or a Hollywood bank caper, but it is rather a story about genius and madness, as well as possession and obsession, with one object — this old, unusual book — skating among those things. Also, there are a lot of Jungians involved, a species of thinkers who subscribe to the theories of Carl Jung, the Swiss psychiatrist and author of the big red leather book. And Jungians, almost by definition, tend to get enthused anytime something previously hidden reveals itself, when whatever's been underground finally makes it to the surface. . . .

The perhaps inescapable default to detective fiction arises in part because the preparation of posthumous publications almost necessarily involves not only errors (of the same sort as does any publication) but the loss of manuscripts in part or in whole. The publication of Jan Potocki's *The Manuscript Found in Saragossa* is particularly bizarre in the ways it refracts the found manuscript device in the novel. Potocki committed suicide in 1815 before completing the book. Written in French, only parts of it were published in 1805. What survives is a Polish translation published in 1847 based on a supposedly complete French copy that was subsequently lost. Sections of the original French-language manuscripts were later lost, but have been [back-translated](#) into French from a Polish translation that had been made in 1847 by [Edmund Chojecki](#) from a complete French-language copy, now lost. The "integral" edition of the book in French is now based on a mélange of manuscripts in French and the Polish translation (Radzizani 1989).

It should come as no surprise that stories of the release or recovery of lost manuscripts or never-published-until-now books like Jung's *The Red Book* serve as inept telephone operators, as does Corbett's account of the publication of Carl Jung's *Red Book* (2009). The day after her story appeared in *The New York Times*, a "Correction" was published, on "September 20, 2009" (Corbett 2009), pointing out that Corbett had misspelled the name of a street in two different ways and given the wrong location of a town:

An article on Page 34 this weekend about Carl Jung and a book he wrote about struggling with his own demons misspells the name of a street in Zurich where, before it was published, the book was held for years in a bank safe-deposit box, and a correction in this space on Saturday also misspelled the name. It is Bahnhofstrasse, not Banhofstrasse or Banhoffstrasse. The article also misstates the location of Bollingen, the town where Jung built a stone tower as a summer residence. While it is on the north shore of Lake Zurich, it is south of the Jung family home in Küsnacht. (Corbett 2009)

These errors of address did not escape detection by some of Corbett's readers nor the attention of her editor, even though the Jung leather-bound manuscript may no longer be stored at the address of the misspelled street in Zurich. Putting the original back in storage is not a part of the story. Posthumous papers are not dead on arrival as it were. They may never arrive *in toto*.

Let me be clear at the outset that I am not discussing storage devices such as writing desks in order to recover in the papers a supposedly original moment of production when pen hit paper or, alternatively, when the writer arose from his desk, finished with his work, but to show how the category of "papers" and the conditions of their publishability complicate while furthering a cultural graphology of (non)knowledge (incomplete, interminable, and unbounded). [\[x\]](#) Unlike physical matter, materiality – such as the paper Hegel says he is writing on in the epigraph above taken from Paul de Man – figures a resistance, a forgetting of writing and a stumbling block in reading in the living present. [\[xi\]](#) To imagine one has access to "materiality" in the sense of physical object, say to Kierkegaard's writing desk or to the hard drive of Derrida's computer or the typewriter ribbons of his typewriters, is to imagine oneself as the curator of a museum or library exhibition writing wall texts about now unused objects, not as a philosopher. [\[xii\]](#) Derrida's "Paper machine," like Paul de Man's "writing machine" is not a physical device like Sigmund Freud's mystic writing pad but a figure of what Derrida calls the "mechanicity" of writing: Materiality for Derrida and de Man is linked to language, media, rhetoric and is not reducible to physical matter. [\[xiii\]](#) There is no black box, then, when it comes to posthumous publication. [\[xiv\]](#)

What if the papers are not reducible to the material topography of the device in which they have been stored, whether a

desk or a computer? What then are the consequences of theorizing the different ways papers are or are not posthumously published (some posthumously published, some not; some papers are published relatively quickly while the papers of other authors drip out over decades)? Does preserving the text in different ways matter? Does digital posthumous publication (via transcription or scanning) make a difference to our understanding of publication in general apart from the fact that digital media allow for faster publication and wider modes of distribution? [xv] Coming from beyond the grave, does posthumous publication constitute its own kind of textual spectrality vis-à-vis the broader spectral effects that arguably haunt all texts? Similarly, how does posthumous publication bear on what Derrida regards in "The Book to Come" (2005b, 12; 17) as the inevitable resacralization of the secularizing book (whether printed on paper or virtually on a computer screen)? Considering the ways in which posthumous publications might constitute a specific kind of supplement calls for different ways of deconstructing distinctions that structure both the history of the book and the notion of the book to come: distinctions between material and virtual, a non living present and yet not dead, paper as immaculate, sacred, safe, and its underside exposed to deterioration and destruction as it becomes "bumf," English slang for paper that is the equivalent of toilet paper (Derrida, 2005b, 43).

Philologists and philosophers tend to assume that the process of filing and storing papers is relatively straightforward, a transmission from one reader (the author) to another (editor), a process of who will retrieve the files stored by the owner. [xvi] As we will see when examining E. R. Curtius's essay on Johan Wolfgang von Goethe's administrative practices, however, filing reverses the method of the philologist, which is about pulling something out of the archive: Goethe reportedly filed everything he wrote or received, including materials such as newspapers he no longer wanted to read. Similarly, the posthumous online publication of a letter Derrida wrote in 2004 to a Dean at UC-Irvine deals, as we shall see, with Derrida threatening not to file more items in their archive and with pulling items from an unspecified archive (Peggy Kamuf and Geoff Bennington were given this letter written by Derrida by . . . someone, or, they found this letter written by Derrida . . . somewhere). Putting one's own papers in order and putting another person's papers in order (disordered or ordered) depends on not filing, reshelving and storage as modes of reading, or what I want to call "close/d reading": if papers constitute an archive, the archive is not simply a box that cannot be opened, reprogrammed, closed, and then processed differently. Part of the "box" of the archive remains irreducibly closed even when it is open to access, requiring an ethics of paralinear close reading as resistance, from side to side. Instead of examining the non-linear textual processing involved in writing for publication (or not), philologists and philosophers focus instead either on the published papers or on paper as matter, materiality, or medium. [xvii] In both cases, the author's papers as such get folded, filed, boxed up and the process of filing and boxing goes unread.

This essay offers a series of close/d readings of moments in which the publishable furtively comes into visibility at the limits of philology and philosophy. The essay's larger aim, only announced rather than undertaken here, of this particular kind of microreading is to make possible an analysis of the biopolitics and biotechnics of the archive. [xviii] To understand what it means to have one's political papers in order, it is necessary to understand first what it means for an author's papers to be in order, especially when published posthumously; otherwise, a residual Cartesian and instrumentalist account of the materialism and technologies of papers may resurface in the reading of the archive in which the papers would be to the writer's body as mind is to body, paper being affected from the outside, closed or sealed and then opened or unsealed, like a bank vault cracked or a crypt broken open. [xix]

Awaiting the cataloguing yet to come of the following items, I should add that the items include transcriptions of various kinds of script on materials of various kinds of support or subjectiles: some items are typewritten in different fonts; some are handwritten in various calligraphies; some are stored in folders and envelopes in files; some are printouts; some are electronic files. The transcribed materials include papers of various quality and size: vellum, inlaid ivory, watermarked sheets, and Xerox paper. Facsimiles of some of these manuscript pages are available in an appendix. While the authorship is clear in all cases, none of the original items is dated, and only the electronic files are potentially datable.

As a control discipline . . . philology represents a store of established knowledge; to seek to supersede it . . . is without merit.

Paul de Man, "Heidegger's Exegeses of Hölderlin," *Blindness and Insight* (1983), 263-4.

I have tried to show that humanistic tradition is from time to time attacked by philosophy. It may suffer a serious setback from these aggressions. Many signs seem to point to the fact that we are faced once more with an incursion of philosophers, existentialists...

—E. R. Curtius, "Appendix: The Medieval Bases of Western Thought," *European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages* (1953), 592.

. . . this is why everything is now ready—until after my death.

—Søren Kierkegaard, supplemental materials to *The Point of View on My Work as an Author*, 189

Consequently it must be published. But if I publish nothing at present, I will again have the last card. "The Point of View" cannot be published.

—Søren Kierkegaard, supplemental materials to *Either/Or, Part Two*, 447.

Now add the thought of death to that little publication! If I were dead without that: indeed, anyone could publish my posthumous papers . . .

..

—Søren Kierkegaard, supplemental materials to *Either/Or, Part two*, 440.

### Item No. 1: Reading as Data-Processing (Written on a Scrap of Paper Found Enclosed in an Envelope)

In his essay "Romanticism-Psychoanalysis-Film," Friedrich Kittler begins with a discussion of literature and the Double and proceeds to make a critique of Otto Rank's essay in relation to the writing desk:

Goethe and Fichte, Jean Paul and Hoffman—Rank's historical memory extends back exactly one century. The question he never asks, however, is why the figure of the Double populates the literary record since then and only since then. Even if all psychoanalyses, which is to say dissections, of Romantic fantasies are correctly resolved, there is a remainder. Namely, the simple textual evidence that Doubles turn up at writing desks. . . . The question that no one asks, however, is why the Double turns up at the writing desk, of all places. (87, 88)

Kittler quotes an anecdote about Guy de Maupassant who, sitting at his desk, sees himself enter the room and dictate a story to him:

It is as though Maupassant plays his own psychiatrist in order to gain insight into the genesis of *Lui* and *Horla*, his own stories that deal with the Double. He reports of a hallucinated dictator at the desk, who subsequently passes into the archives of contemporary psychiatry and through them to Rank. (88) [xx]

The question that Kittler does not ask, however, is what happens to reading when literature becomes textual evidence. Instead, Kittler makes reading dispensable. "Proof" that doubles turn up around writing desks, he writes, "can be furnished quickly because one no longer needs to thumb through all the books. A re-reading of Rank's *Doppelgänger* suffices. All these ghosts of the writing desk are recorded." Kittler reads "rereading" as an archival operation: Rank has inventoried and stored items—literary passages—he cut and pasted into his essay, and Kittler turns Rank's essay into a card catalogue with all the passages searched and retrieved. In Kittler's hands, Rank becomes a search engine that has

turned up the relevant passages and recorded them. Reading is for Rank and for Kittler data-processing, taking stock of an inventory that in turn passes into the archive.

Though it depends for its force on the writing desk, Kittler's troping of Rank's discursive psychoanalysis as a collation and collection recording machine rather oddly passes over the relation between the writing desk and publication, the possibility that not only the author is split but that the dictated/written manuscript is split as well. For Kittler, reading disappears at the moment the writing desk appears, but not as desktop publishing: the story of getting the literary manuscript into print goes missing. [\[xxi\]](#)

By the late fifties (just about the time [Walter] Benjamin was being-rediscovered) a few young Soviet literary scholars began reading [Mikhail] Bakhtin's work with great excitement. . . . His readers threw themselves into the posthumous rehabilitation of Bakhtin with a true sense of mission. The only thing was, Bakhtin wasn't dead. He spent time in prison, but survived, and now taught at a provincial university. His writing, over the years, had been done mainly for the desk drawer. This internal emigration only enhanced a mystique that grew as word of his persona and history spread. Bakhtin was a legless amputee. He talked amid a cloud of tobacco smoke, his brilliance fueled by endless cups of tea. Besides the few essays and books available under his own name, he had co-written a number of works published by members of an intellectual circle around him in the twenties: studies on psychoanalysis, critical method and the theory of language. And then there was the fate of Bakhtin's lost masterpiece, a study of the *Bildungsroman*. During a paper shortage, he had been obliged to use the manuscript to roll cigarettes. A legend was born. The Dostoyevsky study was reissued, and the dissertation on Rabelais finally appeared in print. A new volume of essays was extracted from the desk drawer. By the time of his death in 1975, claims of Bakhtin's importance were swelling to enormous dimensions. . . . Textual scholars are busy rescuing Bakhtin's manuscripts — the unsmoked ones, anyway — from disintegration. Another volume of essays is being translated; so are the transcripts of taped interviews with Bakhtin, offering the closest thing available to an autobiography. In the meantime, we have *The First Hundred Years*, a book that makes the rereading of Bakhtin not one bit easier or less troubling, which is the highest praise I can think to give.

—Scott McLemee, "Bakhtin," *The Nation*, December 29, 1997

**Item 2. To Be Opened in the Event . . .** (handwritten on vellum in Gothic script stored in a canvas sack)

On the wrapper that contained seven letters [by Kierkegaard] was written: "After my death this packet is to be burned unopened. This information is for the sake of posterity. It is not worth four shillings."

— Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, *Written Images: Soren Kierkegaard's Journals, Notebooks, Booklets, Sheets, Scraps, and Slips of Paper* (2003), 109-10. [xxii]

Sometimes, when he desired total illegibility, Kierkegaard covered the text with a myriad of connected loops, done in ink, or simply smeared it with a piece of pencil lead so that it looks as if the paper is covered with a gathering of enormous thunderclouds. Naturally, ever since Kierkegaard's death, everyone who worked with the archive . . . wanted to decipher what is under the deletions.

— Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, *Written Images: Soren Kierkegaard's Journals, Notebooks, Booklets, Sheets, Scraps, and Slips of Paper* (2003), 103.

Why is the writing desk worth attending to, then? Because it is a container, a storage-device, that figures textual production and processing as a figure of containment, of (a fantasy of) archivalization as a containment of reading and, more interestingly, "close/d reading." I wish to link it to philological and philosophical questions concerning intelligibility and incomprehensibility (as opposed to "not reading" – not turning the pages, forgetting what you have(n't) read, or skipping the paratext—the title page, copyright page, acknowledgements, and so on—or misreading). As far as I am aware, despite their interest in writing devices such as the mystic writing pad, typewriter ribbons, computers, and various other writing machines, Derrida, de Man, Nancy and their students never thought to deconstruct the opposition between the publishable and the unpublishable; nor did they theorize the conditions of (un)readability in relation to the conditions of publishability. Despite a strong interest in deconstructing the book—the "book of the world" and the "book to come" in *Of Grammatology* (1974), his citation of a title of Blanchot's – *The Book to Come* – in an essay (Derrida, 2005a), the chapters on Mallarme's posthumously published *Le "Livre" de Mallarme* (edited by Jacques Scherer) in "The Double Session" in *Dissemination* (1981), Derrida does not deconstruct the philology of the book, or, more broadly, he does not deconstruct the history of the book, what Lefebvre calls "the coming of the book," the book in the ordinary sense. Derrida does not read, for example, the history of *Le "Livre" de Mallarme's* publication history or the editor's prefatory account of the book's editing. Similarly, despite his "Return to Philology" in *The Resistance to Theory* (1986), de Man does not theorize the philology of his own publication or of any of the writings he discusses. Derrida's "arche-writing" and de Man's "inscription" and "formal materiality" are similarly indifferent to their ontological status as manuscript and book or "book."

By mentioning these kinds of "not reading," I am not calling attention to a simple oversight nor even to a blind spot in deconstruction, an error or omission that may be corrected or filled in or the irreducible error that is constitutive of reading. The many citations from the editorial introduction and note to Jacques Derrida's posthumously published seminar *The Beast and the Sovereign* (2009) that follow as epigraphs below this item testify to just how prosaic and therefore inescapable *that* might be; rather, put in the most general terms, I am preparing a way to theorize "close/d reading" by calling attention to an irreducible antagonism between philology and philosophy when it comes to the reading, preparation and storing of papers in the process of textual production and publication. [xxiii] If philology demands that textual production be understood as a linearization and historical sequencing of a period of time that may

be broken into stages such as textual production first and publication second, editing first, then reading second, or biological life and death, deconstruction defines reading in part as the text's disruption of linearization, historical sequencing, and literary historical periodization. [xxiv] What Derrida and de Man call an "event" or "occurrence"—not to be confused with something that can be dated or measured in relation to empty homogenous time—happens when something is published: like Derrida's "arche-writing" and de Man's "inscription," the event and occurrence are indifferent to the specific material forms of phenomenalization; a philological distinction between manuscript and printed text and the pragmatics of editing that follow from it are immaterial to philosophy since neither bears on the deconstruction of the essence of writing, the mediality of language. [xxv]

I focus on a specific kind of non/publication, namely, of posthumous papers, because attention to it makes the boundary of publishable and hence close/d reading (re)cognizable as a phenomenonalization of writing in the ordinary sense that is particularly resistant to analysis. For example, the "Guide to the Papers of Paul de Man" (available online as a pdf; <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf6p30071t/>) makes "papers" shorthand for "posthumous papers" and has "no online items." In some cases, the "posthumous" tends to drop out from the title of later editions of an author's unpublished papers. Publishing an author's "Papers" in both paper print or digital print creates a variety of problems arising from the author's death, but the posthumous has to be understood not as a different stage of publication that follows a prior stage of publication when the author was still living. For even the first stage, if one wants to call it that, of lived publication is already double, a self-reflexive letting go or cutting off from one's life in advance of one's biological death. To paraphrase Derrida's comments in an epigraph above, as one writes, one is always putting one's papers in order (whether tidily or slovenly). Whether or not the author has left behind a last will and testament for the disposition or, sometimes, destruction of his literary remains, if someone else sees fit to publish your papers posthumously, he will perform many of the same operations when preparing them for publication that the author did when writing them—sometimes cutting and pasting the papers onto new sheets of paper to order them chronologically; sorting and filing manuscripts; storing the manuscripts in containers such as cardboard boxes variously labeled, even if not in the writing desk where they were found; eventually housing the already stored papers in a library or archive where new editors may come along and reorder the papers for a new edition. The literary editor/executor makes decisions with the intentions of the author – while still alive – in mind (not that the editor necessarily knows what the wishes of the author were or respects them). These decisions tend to be explained and justified with recourse to philological norms in the paratexts of posthumously published papers that may also involve a criticism of the flaws of earlier editions of those same papers.

A madness of decision-making cuts across philology and philosophy in the no man's land of textual production, processing, and printing, a land raided and temporarily occupied to determine the boundaries of the (un)publishable. As a kind of "unreading," close/d reading, as I define it, is not a synonym or equivalent of Martin Heidegger's the "unsaid" or "unthought," but a specific non-chronological event that nevertheless "shows" that the conditions of reading are inseparable from the conditions of publication, posthumous or not. More broadly, theorizing close/d reading necessarily means theorizing unpublishability, which, as I will show later in the essay, is not reducible to a linearized account of textual production as has been maintained by Lucien Lefebvre and Henri-Jean Martin, for example, in *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800* (1976). [xxvi] Kierkegaard's close/d reading is worth pursuing, moreover, because of the way it turns relations among aesthetic and ethical, or literature and philosophy, into a question of repetition: the unpublishable, even when set to publish, as would a manuscript in fair copy ready to be handed over to the printer, is "unreadable" because it falls short of both typological, figural reading of the sort analyzed by Erich Auerbach in his essay "Figura" and what Jean Luc-Nancy calls "typic" form:

The modes of stitching and binding, paper quality—tint, thickness, grain—also belong to that substantiality, as does the cover design, its colors, motifs. Sometimes its images, the external as well as internal typography, the design and size of its fonts, its format, composition, running heads, its recto pages, correction of every sort of typo, so many discrete (and discreet) traits, whose totality derives from nothing other than an idea or Character, a Typic Form that subsumes all typographies, and characterologies implied in the publication of this volume. (2009, 32-33)

**Item no. 3 Not Detecting Close/d reading** (printout on Xerox paper).

the verbal or the poetic simply because in 1828, passport photos, fingerprint files, anthropometric figures and data banks do not yet exist. Because proof of identity is impossible, each agrees to a definition of himself and then waits for the effect. . . . alcoholic episodes from the era of Romanticism become the indispensable scientific data of the present century.

—Friedrich A. Kittler, *Literature, Media, Information Systems: Essays*, 86.

Now, having seen through the contriving heart of that corrupt man, when I recall the situation, now, with my eyes opened to all the cunning, so to speak, when I approach that drawer, I feel the same way a policeman must feel when he enters a forger's room, goes through his things, and finds a mass of loose papers in a drawer, specimens of handwriting; on one there is a little decorative design, on another a monogram, on a third a line of reversed writing. It readily shows him that he is on the right track, and his delight over this is mixed with a certain admiration for the effort and diligence obvious here. Since I am less accustomed to detecting crimes and am not armed with a policeman's badge, I would have reacted differently. I would have felt the double weight of the truth that I was on an unlawful path. At that time I lacked ideas as much as I lacked words, which is usually the case. One is awestruck by an impression until reflection once again breaks loose and with multifarious deft movements talks and insinuates its way to terms with the unknown stranger. The more developed reflection is, the more quickly it can collect itself; like a passport officer checking foreign travelers, it comes to be so familiar with the sight of the most fabulous characters that it is not easily taken aback.

— Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or Vol. 1*, "The Seducer's Diary," 303-04.

In the same sense it could be said that his journey through life was undetectable (for his feet were formed in such a way that he retained the footprint under them—that is how I best picture to myself his infinite reflectedness into himself), in the same sense no victim fell before him. He lived too intellectually to be a seducer in the ordinary sense.

— Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or Vol. 1* "The Seducer's Diary," 307.

As I discovered, there were reams and reams of it. Endless snarls of words, sometimes twisting into meaning, sometimes nothing at all, frequently breaking apart, always branching off into other pieces I'd come across later on old napkins, the tattered edges of an envelope, once even on the back of a postage stamp everything and anything but empty; each fragment completely covered with . . . years of ink pronouncements; layered, crossed out, impenetrable, lucid, torn, stained, scotch taped; some bits crisp and clean, others faded, burnt or folded and refolded so many times the creases have obliterated whole passages of god knows what. . . .

--Mark Z. Danielwewski, "Introduction," *House of Leaves* (2000), xvii

"This be the very spot which Chrysostom mentioned, that his will may be punctually fulfilled. . . this is the body of Chrysostom. . . he perished by the cruelty of a shepherdess. . . as these papers would show, if he had not ordered me to the commit them to the flames as soon as his body shall be deposited in the earth. . . Ambrosio, while you commit the body of your friend to the earth, you ought not likewise to consign his writings to oblivion. . ." "I beg you not to burn these papers, but, to allow me to preserve some of them." Without staying for an answer, he reached out his hand, and took some of them that were nearest him, which Ambrosio, perceiving, said, "Out of civility, signor, I will content to your keeping what you have taken up; but, to think that I will fail to burn the rest, is a vain supposition."

--Miguel de Cervantes, *The History and Adventures of the Renowned Don Quixote*. Trans. Tobias Smollet, (1755 / 2001), 130-31.

In a justly celebrated essay, Carlo Ginzburg (1980) compares the detective methods of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes to those of Sigmund Freud and an art critic named Giovanni Morelli. All three men looked for clues, read closely, followed an investigative method that involved the reconstruction of a crime scene or a primal scene. Some critics might find it tempting to add philology to Ginzburg's list of detective methods on the grounds that editing involves a series of decisions made through inferences based on close reading and reconstruction in the form of emendation or of opening up the text by putting the manuscripts online – the case with Kierkegaard – praising the variants, even novelizing the author's (postulated) development or organizing his papers according to a developmental and chronological schema (see Cerquiglioni 1999). [\[xxvii\]](#)

When it comes to the publication of literature and philosophy, however, the detection- as-reading analogy for philology confronts texts that have already been "read" philologically; rendering papers as missing or destroyed produces literature such as Henry James's *The Aspern Papers*, the papers of a dead man named Zampano in Mark Z.



Danielewski's novel *House of Leaves* (2000), published as a bound book after first being published online, or rendering papers as found manuscripts as in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, or letters found in a library and then stolen as in A. S. Byatt's *Possession*, paper rendered as a letter hidden in plain sight read in Edgar Allen Poe's "The Purloined Letter." Nabokov's *Pale Fire* (1962) may be read as an allegory of about posthumography, including the rejection of constructively offered criticism (the editor Dr Charles Kinbote 's suggestions to the dead poet / author were not adopted by the author, to Kinbote's utter dismay). The poet John Francis Shade also burned his drafts. *Pale Fire* delinearizes literary composition (moving from drafts, to index cards, recopied index cards, to fair copy, to typescript, to annotated, published edition) and occasionally omits relevant material while adding irrelevant material For example, Kinbote remarks, after publishing some notes made by John Shade's daughter Hazel (who is also dead; see p. 183; 185), transcribed by Hazel's friend "Jane Provost," and then copied by Kinbote with Jane's permission, that "the notes continue for several pages but for obvious reasons I must renounce to give them verbatim in this commentary. There were long pauses and 'scratches and scrapings' again, and returns of the luminous circlet" (1962, 188). There is also a subplot about a character named Gradus and the transmission of "a bundle of precious family papers that the dusty had come across by chance in the files of a governmental office . . . two hundred and thirteen long letters which had passed some seventy years ago between [the] Mayor of Odevalla, and . . . [the] Mayor of Aros" (175; 176). In significant respects, *Pale Fire*, published during Nabokov's lifetime, parallels and anticipates Nabokov's posthumously published index cards as *The Original of Laura* (2009). As if imagining in advance the possibility of removing the index cards in *The Original of Laura*, editor Kinbote advises the reader of *Pale Fire* to cut up Shade's poem in relation to the notes and clip together the lines from the poem and the notes in order to avoid having to go back and forth, or alternatively to buy two copies of the book, with both open on the same desk, one to Shade's poem, the other to Kinbote's notes.

The self-reflexive use of these literary devices related to storage devices and lost manuscripts is by no means limited to modern literature. Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1755 / 2001) is a virtual encyclopedia of literary devices, all of which make a philologically finished edition of *Don Quixote* impossible: translations from an original Arabic manuscript; translation of a missing chapter in Arabic bought in a marketplace (95-99); translations of poems; found manuscripts; letters never transcribed; annotations and sonnets in the margins of pocketbooks (99; 223) and in the "first author Cid Hamet Benegeli['s]" "observation written on the margin, in the hand-writing of the said Hamet" (727); "literally extracted" stories (743); decomposed manuscripts (539); lost letters (261-62; 319); burned books and papers (75-83; 130-39); and so on. Some of the texts are unfinished, such as the galley slave Gines de Passmonte's autobiography (214-15) and Anselmo's suicide note (383). The novel's literariness is a function both of its philological self-consciousness and of its philosophical ironization of philology: repeated recountings cannot recover an original, complete version, correct errors in it, and emend what has been lost. Recounting a story in *Don Quixote* is always miscounting: the stories never add up because there is always another story (one more) to tell, retell, or transcribe. Cervantes mentions his own work *Galatea* in the preface to Part One, but he never finished it; it was published posthumously. Various storage devices such as portmanteaus, leaden boxes, pocket-books, and urban archives appear quite often in *Don Quixote*.[\[xxviii\]](#) Generated out of the more or less fictional remains of and left-overs of papers in the broad sense, literature is the territory over which philosophy and philosophy fight for over what it means to read.

That very night, the housekeeper set fire to, and consumed, not only all the books that were in the yard, but also every one she could find in the house; and no doubt many were burned, which deserved to have been kept as perpetual archives.

—Miguel de Cervantes, *The History and Adventures of the Renowned Don Quixote*.  
Trans. Tobias Smollet, (1755 / 2001), 83.

#### Item 4: Tabling the Writing Desk [\[xxix\]](#)

After my death no one will find even the least bit of information in my papers (this is my consolation) about what has really filled my life;

no one will find that which is written in the core of my being that explains everything, and which often makes what the world would call trifles into exceedingly important events to me, and which I, too, view as insignificance, if I remove the secret note that explains this.

—Søren Kierkegaard's diary, written soon after the publication of *Either/Or* (1843).

This new edition [of Kierkegaard's papers] is governed by modern philological principles regarding the establishment of a scholarly text from handwritten materials. This new edition thus attempts to preserve the archival *integrity* of the original materials, organizing them in a manner that respects the order in which Kierkegaard himself kept the documents.... *Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks* imposes no artificial timeline or categorical compartmentalization upon the materials.

—*Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks*, xi.

[xxx]

In a letter to me dated 11 August 1983, de Man projected a volume to be entitled *Aesthetics, Rhetoric, Ideology* that would have included the following chapters: . . . "Critique of Religion and Political Ideology and Marx" . . .

—Lindsay Waters, "Paul de Man: A Sketch of Two Generations," in *Responses: On Paul de Man's Wartime Publication*, ed. Werner Hermacher (Nebraska UP, 1989), n2. [xxxi]

Perhaps, now, you could tell us something about the book you are writing and about the "mysterious" chapters on Kierkegaard and Marx you mentioned in the lectures, and the frequent recurrence of the terms "ideology" and "politics" we have noticed recently . . .

—Stephano Rosso, "An Interview with Paul de Man," in Paul de Man, *The Resistance to Theory* (1986), 121.

"You will never understand—so we can stop now and all go home."

—Paul de Man, "The Concept of Irony," in *Aesthetic Ideology*, 164.

In the preface to *Either/Or*, the pseudonymous editor Victor Ermita hacks open his writing desk and its remnants go missing from the rest of his narrative. Similarly, editorial accounts of the publication of Kierkegaard's papers found in his writing desk do not mention what happened to the writing desk. It too goes missing. Not to worry. Not that you necessarily were, of course. In any case, Kierkegaard's writing desk still exists. (See Figure 1.B)



(Figure 1.B)

The desk is housed in Denmark's Royal Library and was included in an exhibition of Kierkegaard's manuscripts held in 1996 entitled "Kierkegaard. The Secret Note." [\[xxxii\]](#) A photo of the desk is now available on a Royal Library webpage that is based on that exhibition.

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You are here: > Home > The National Library > Features in Focus > Web exhibits > Kierkegaard Manuscripts > Two essays

**Kierkegaard Manuscripts**

- Manuscript Section 1 (1834 - 1845)
- Manuscript Section 2 (1843 - 1847)
- Manuscript Section 3 (1843 - 1855)
- Two essays
- The Secret Note
- The Primeval Writ Read by a Genius

**Kierkegaard's Contemporaries**

- Chronology
- Portraits of Søren Kierkegaard
- Alphabetical Title Index

## Søren Kierkegaard's Writing desk

### Kierkegaard's Manuscripts

In other words, we wish to show his writing, or at least a representative sample of it. For the same reason, without a quiver worthy of mention, we have chosen not to display the relatively few personal effects otherwise linked to Kierkegaard's life: his engagement ring, key ring, merschaum pipe and other such items which are all at the City Museum of Copenhagen where anyone can view them. Though no rule is without its exception - and especially not as regards Kierkegaard.

His writing desk, the place where the writing originated, the specific base for the blessed scratch of pen against paper is included. A few of the countless drafts for *The Point of View for My Activity as an Author* form a prelude to the selected pages of manuscript. The countless drafts of this work in which Kierkegaard explains the collective structure and aim of his works ask one to construct one's own viewpoint on the set of writings on which Kierkegaard constructed his.

(Figure 2)

The writing desk appears in the exhibition as an exception (it is the only one of Kierkegaard's personal items to be included) (See Figure Two). But it is exhibited not as storage device but framed by a text which enshrines it as the "blessed" origin of the manuscripts, a point of contact between pen and paper, close ups of facsimile manuscripts that render fragments of them legible. As the writing desk reappears (in a black and white photo), the story of the storage of the manuscripts goes missing.

One publishes for the public. "Publishing" doesn't mean divulging, nor is it a case of vulgarizing. It means blowing open the seals of an imaginary intimacy, of a privacy or exclusivity of the book. In the end, it means veritably to give to reading. Typography and page layout, printing, stitching or binding, packaging, window-, shelf-, or table-

display are what make up entry into the commerce of thinking.

—Jean-Luc Nancy, *On the Commerce of Thinking: Of Books and Bookstores* (2009), 29.

### Item 5: Close/d Reading (sheets in an envelope)

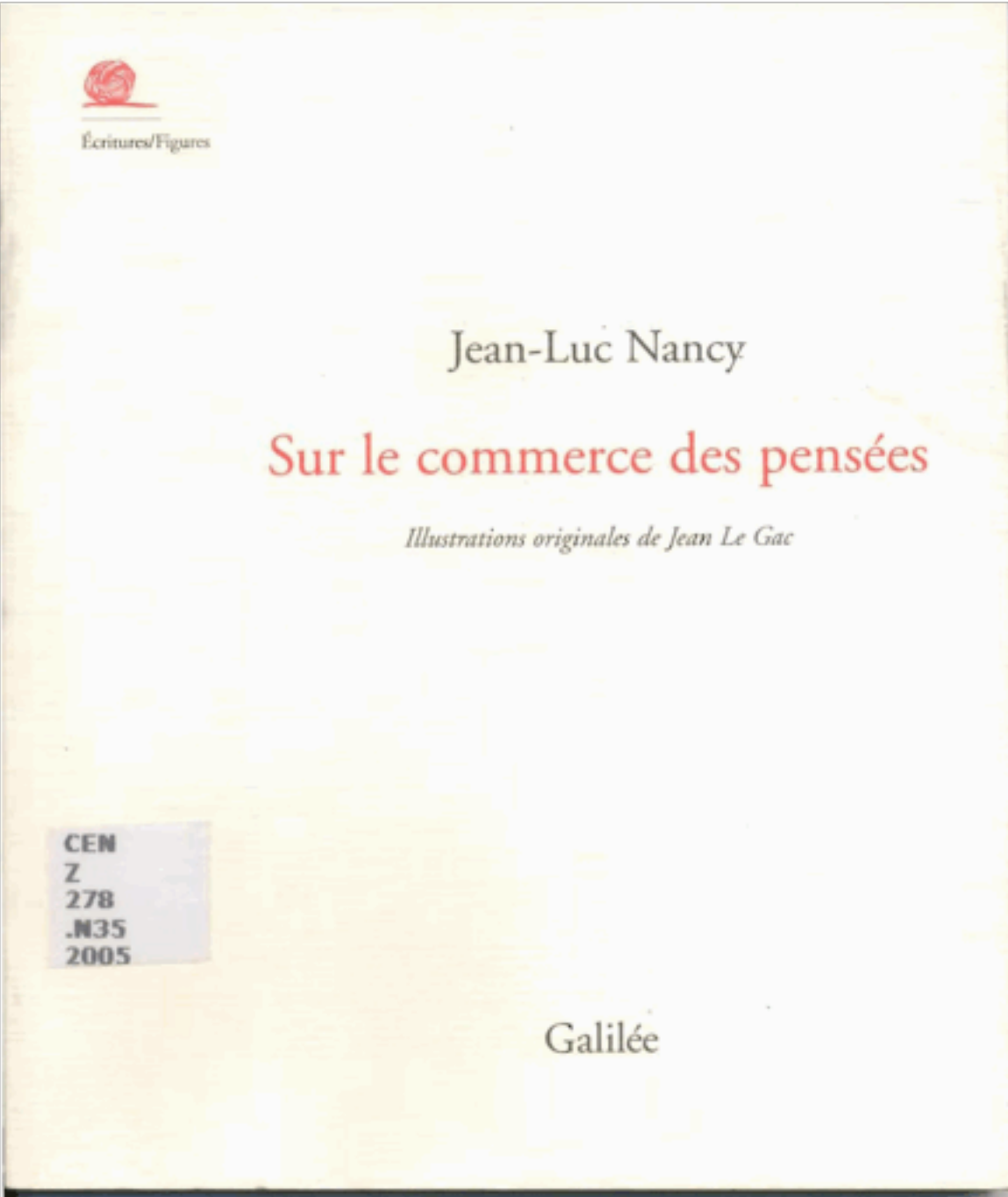
Jean-Luc Nancy productively refuses to reduce the open book to the moment it is literally opened by its reader. No, he insists, the opening of the book happens well before that moment:

The opening doesn't take place, as one might think, only when whoever has acquired it has returned home, into a reading room or study, or only once the purchaser sets about cutting the folded pages of the book (to recall a scene that has today become very rare). The opening of the book begins once the publisher sends the book to the bookseller, whether that takes place by an automatic distribution process by various kinds of information, publicity material from the publisher, reviews in newspapers, specialized bulletins, or by rumor and contagion. Curiosity, desire, expectations are being awakened. Promises, invitations, exhortations are being noted. (2009, 36).

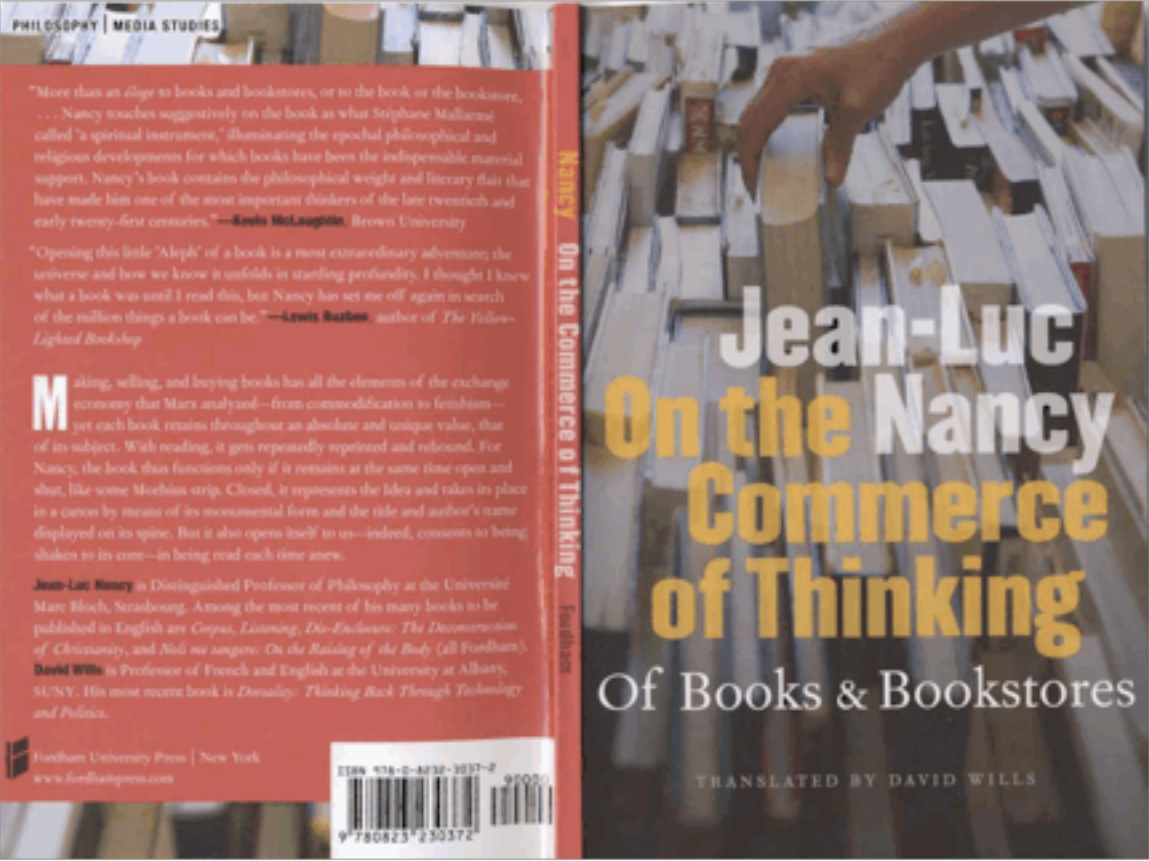
While welcome, Nancy's account of what it means to open a book is nevertheless quite limited in scope: he merely pushes back the opening to a process that begins with the book's distribution and what Gérard Genette (1997) would call its accompanying "epitexts" that follow a work's publication – paratexts that are not part of the published book (the "peritext," which includes the book cover, the copyright page, title page, notes, index, and so on). Nancy's metaphysics of the open and closed book follows from dividing reading from the illegible: "the illegible is what remains closed in the opening of the book. What slips from page to page but remains caught, glued, stitched into the binding, or else laboriously jotted as marginalia that attempt to trip over the secret, that begin to write another book" (27). Reading is thus cordoned off from publication, becoming the boundary from which reading departs: "What is illegible is not reading at all, yet only by starting from it does something then offer itself to reading" (28). Nancy's notion of the open and closed book thus remains a minor modification of the usual philological account of the relation between editing and reading, the former making the later possible. The book to come folds back into the history of the book that has arrived, that has been published.

Before returning to posthumous publication, it is worth taking a short detour to see how the question of the folding of the book in Nancy's *On the Commerce of Thinking* (2009) is developed in the English translation. The translator, David Wills, notes in his foreword (2009) some obvious differences between the luxurious French edition and the smaller, cheaper English edition his reader is hiding in his or her hands:

Yet another [thought], which brings me to my point, would have to raise the question of the book. First of all, obviously, such differences as that between the 18 X 21.5 cm. format and textured ivory laid paper ("watermarked with parallel lines from the wires on which the pulp was laid in the process of manufacture: opposed to wove;" Websters) of Nancy's Éditions Galilée text [see Figure 3], and the 5.25 X 8 inch trim size of this volume [see Figure 3A], and by extension the different forms of bibliophilia practiced here or there and that give rise to the different means by which the book is marketed, including, of course, online purchasing, and the success or failure of the bookstore—neighborhood or conglomerate—in preserving its niche as the preferred retail outlet for printed and bound texts. (2008, xiv-xv).

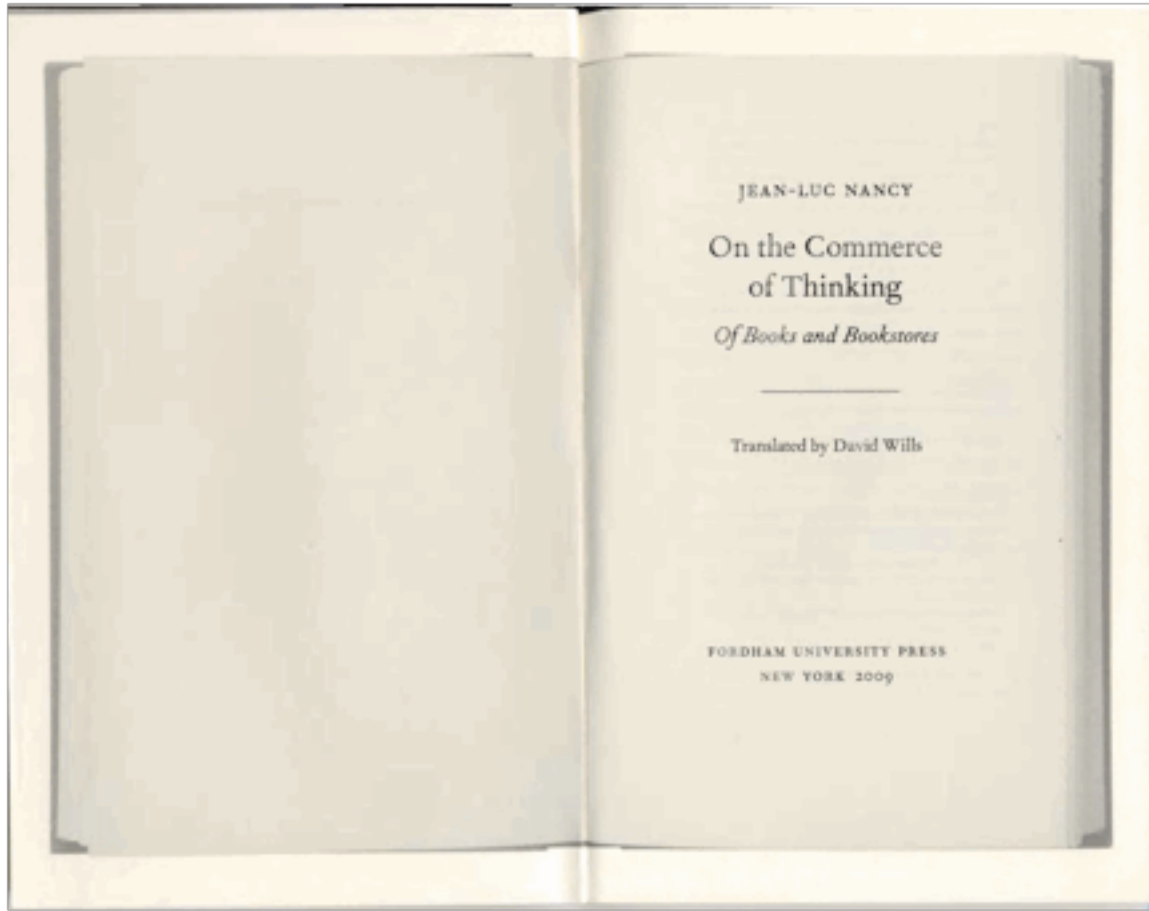


(Figure 3)



(Figure 3A)

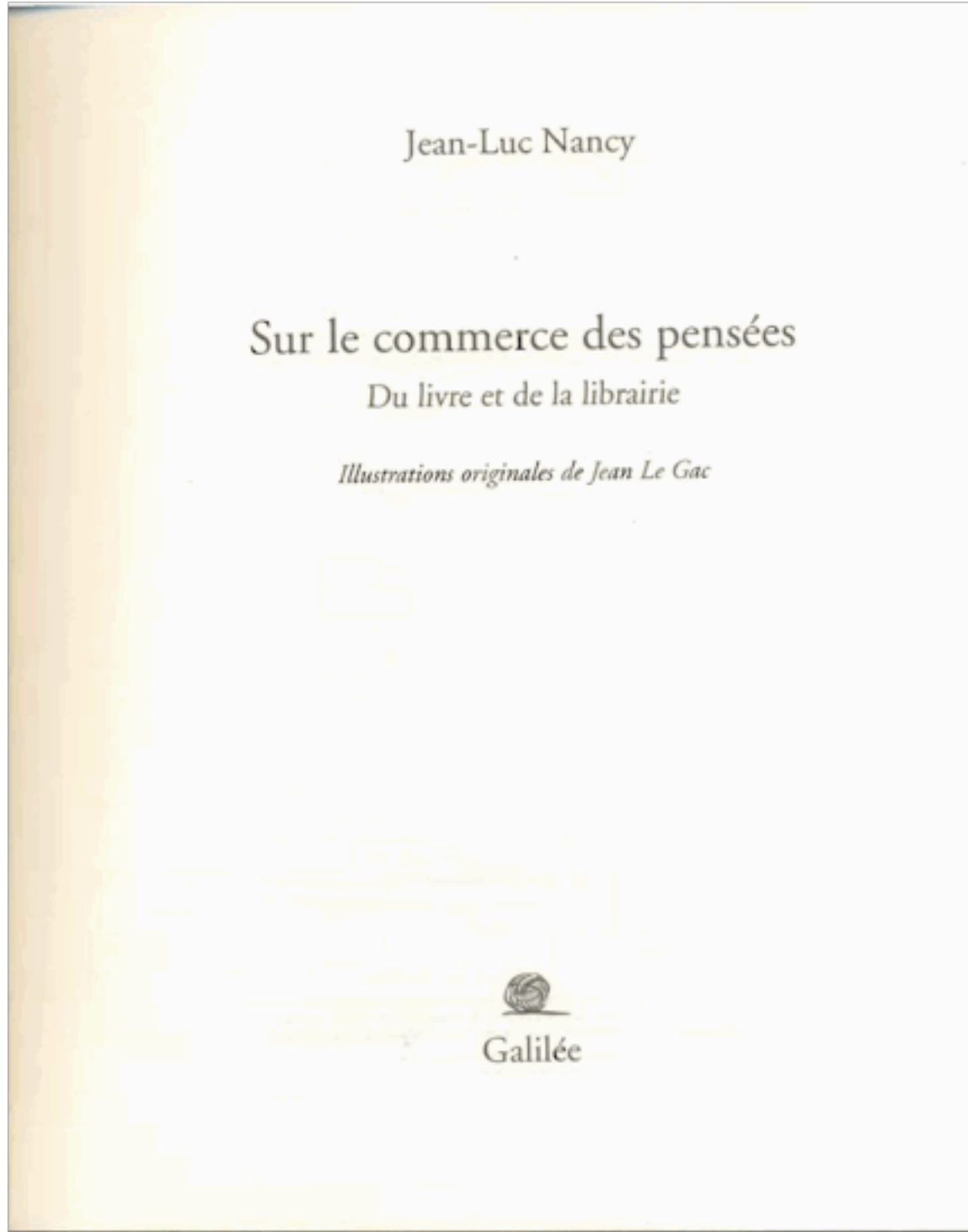
Yet to reduce these differences to a psychological pathology (bibliophilia) and to commodity fetishism is to confine the textual materialism of the book to the printing of alphabetic letters on paper, thereby ignoring the graphic design of the book and the way the opening of a book may be illustrated. The English translation prints the text on top of an image of an open book (see Figure 3B) and does not reprint the illustrations by Jean de Lac from the French edition, the first of which appears on the page facing the title page (see Figures 3C and 3D). The image in the French edition juxtaposes books on a bookshelf on the right half of the page with a scene of imminent violence and, it would seem, castration, on the other (one man points an arrow at another man's penis, his body only partially drawn in and lacking a head, left shoulder and arm; the missing right lower leg appears severed but bloodless beneath both men). Opening the book entails a possible blindness and fragmentation of the textual corpus.



(Figure 3B)



(Figure 3C. Facing title page)



**(Figure 3D. Title page)**

The same kind of fragmentation is evident in the image of the books on the bookshelf to the immediate right of two men fighting. Bibliographic information is missing in some cases. The book on the far left has a Spanish author and a French publisher but no title; the book to its immediate right is in English but its title and author are too fuzzy to make out, and the book on the far right lists only the author's name, Edgar Allen Poe, and may or may not have been translated into French. Only two French translations of two short stories by Henry James are legible, *The Beast and the Jungle* and *The Turn of the Screw*. Broadly speaking, we may ask: why does Nancy's account of open reading appear to require illustration in the form of male-on-male violence in progress or as serene page turning? [\[xxxiii\]](#)

**Item No 6: The Letter Enclosing / Enfolding the Letter in the Envelope**

It is not a matter of pulling meaning out of its envelope—for then it would immediately become good only for discarding—but rather of developing the enveloping as such; spreading it out, but by ceaselessly refolding whatever is deployed.

—Jean-Luc Nancy, *On the Commerce of Thinking: Of Books and Bookstores* (2009), 21.



In the preface to *Either/Or*, Kierkegaard stages—through a "literary device" — the problem of close/d reading in relation to the publication of found papers. [xxxiv] I will return to this preface later in the present essay. By attending to Kierkegaard's concerns with publication pseudonymously and not, including who should publish his works after his death, we can better appreciate how close/d reading follows from the impossibility of putting one's papers in order: as a (not always my)self-storage unit, Kierkegaard's writing desk does not contain or confine reading to allegories of reading that read reading as the resistance to reading published texts, on the one hand, nor reduce it to a mechanical operation of data-processing, on the other.

### Item No. 6A: Taking Inventory of the Archive as the Condition of Its Close/d Reading

On my computer I even have an item called a "Notebook," imitating the one you carry around with you, on which I can jot down notes; on the screen it looks like a box and I can turn its pages; they are both numbered and dog-eared. —Jacques Derrida, "Paper or Me, You Know . . ." (*New Speculations on a Luxury of the Poor*) *Paper Machine* (2005b), 46.

In their account of "the contents of the archive" in *Written Images* (2003), Niels Jørgen Cappelørn and his co-authors divide Kierkegaard's literary remains into six groups, the first of which is works that Kierkegaard published and the fifth and "major portion" consisting "of an almost unmanageable mass of loose papers that cannot be assigned to the categories of published writings, biographical documents, or journals. . . . These papers include torn-off notes, scraps and strips of paper, often only a word or two. . . . There are also lists of books to be read or books that have been read" (Cappelørn, 2003, 94). The last category "contains the remains of Kierkegaard's personal library." The organization of the archive into six groups has a divided logic: the first five categories are grouped according to the teleology of publication—we move backwards chronologically from published works to heterogeneous fragments of "papers." This teleology requires that Kierkegaard's library be given its own category, defined as books that Kierkegaard read (as if he did not read copies of his own writings in his library). Perhaps unsurprisingly, "these books now constitute a separate subdivision of the Kierkegaard Archive" (Cappelørn, 2003, 94).

In order to make Kierkegaard's papers readable, Kierkegaard must first be implicitly subdivided into writer and reader, his own writings separated from the writings of other authors. Through this discursive operation, what some critics would call the materiality of Kierkegaard's writing and reading practices becomes readable. The archivist turns Kierkegaard's papers and books into things: "among the more unusual artifacts are the sheets of blotting paper on which Kierkegaard wrote nothing at all but simply left the inarticulate remains of his writing process" (Cappelørn, 2003, 94). The sheets of blotting paper become a device analogous to Freud's mystic writing pad, a storage device for the remains of the remains, as it were. But if the "thinging" of papers makes possible a coherent topography of the archive, it also marks the limit of the readable (the articulated).

The more concretely the papers become things, the more unreadable they become as texts. Pointing out that it may be interesting to learn which books Kierkegaard had on his shelves and which editions, Cappelørn says that "it is especially those volumes in which he underlined or wrote notes that invite closer inspection" (2003, 97). Study of such marginalia has taken a central place in the history of the book. Cappelørn et al go a step further, however, and take a rather comic turn by getting hypermaterial, as it were: "the books in which he simply bent down a few corners, as was his wont, may be an alluring topic for particularly energetic researchers who have a penchant for daring hypotheses. Kierkegaard's dog-ears have not found their interpreter" (2003, 97). The humor here is rather complex: Cappelørn implies that no serious scholar would seek to interpret the practice of dog-earring as significant evidence of how Kierkegaard read; yet, unwilling or unable to explain why underlining should be any more significant to a researcher than dog-eared pages, Cappelørn includes the implicitly excluded dog-eared pages (in the implied off-limits of the "should not be read" / "will not be read") as remainders of the folds left by Kierkegaard's hands, much like the inarticulate sheets of blotting paper. The dog-eared pages remain in the realm of the potentially readable, and the "to be found" reader would also fall in the implied category of "to be found" writings, Kierkegaard's "drafts and manuscript materials that have been lost" (2003,

78). In making the entire archive readable by turning papers into material things, the authors actually expose, advertently or not, the limits of the readable. Folding gets folded up, left in the lost and found department of the archive. [xxxv]

But it was especially after the autumn of 1924 and during the final winter of his life that I really came to know him. . . . He had the 'weakness,' as he called it . . . to save packets of letters, some of them extremely intimate . . . , as well as bundles of notes, notebooks, and books begun and then abandoned (he had published very little). He wanted, before destroying them, to take one last trip among these ultimate expressions . . .

—George Dumezil, *The Riddle of Nostradamus: A Critical Dialogue* (1999), 4.

**Yet to be Numbered Item: The Coming and Going of the Book to Come: Writing Off the Desk (in pencil on blank pages inside the back and front covers of several books)**

We have forgotten to talk about the color of paper, the color of ink, and their comparative chromatics: a vast subject. That will be for another time.

—Jacques Derrida, "Paper or Me, You Know . . . (New Speculations on a Luxury of the Poor)," in *Paper Machine* (2005b), 53.

Let's not talk about the verbs *cut* and *paste* or *delete* that my software also includes. They have lost all concrete and descriptive reference to the technical operations performed, but these infinitives or imperatives also retain the memory of what has disappeared: the paper, the page of the codex.

—Jacques Derrida, "Paper or Me, You Know . . . (New Speculations on a Luxury of the Poor)," in *Paper Machine* (2005b), 46.

We won't tell the story of the subjectile, rather some record of its *coming-to-be*.

—Jacques Derrida, "Unsensing the Subjectile," in *The Secret Art of Antonin Artaud* (1998), 61.

Although Derrida often talked about telephone conversations, writing machines like the mystic writing pad, his computer, paper, pens, typewriters, pencils, and other writing materials, he did not discuss the desk. Derrida's neglect of the writing desk is not to be regarded as a fault, in my view. (The reader may have noticed that I have not talked about either my writing desk or my computer.) The disappearance of the writing desk from Derrida's "graphosphere" registers Derrida's own orientation to a future, a future that forecloses the future anterior of "the book that (never) did not (yet) arrive." In "The Book to Come," for example, Derrida discusses the book that came and went as an "era" that is coming to an end as publishing goes paperless: "texts, documents, and archives . . . are further and further away both from the support that is paper and the book form" such that finite texts are giving way perhaps to "open textual processes" (*Paper Machine*, 7; 8). Derrida poses the reading "to come" in relation to the archive, of a possible reading "to come" (*l'avenir* [the future] / *a venir* [to come]) and the secret as the ash of the archive, a remainder that cannot be archived, the figure

for an "impression," a contact between foot and ash leaving behind a footprint that can only be retraced, never recovered, only hallucinated as such through fiction since it never existed. Because he opposes arche-writing (the trace) and writing in the ordinary sense, Derrida tends only to talk about the impression, not the impressed (which gets radically compressed); he looks back from the present at "the no longer is," but from a future anterior perspective at something "that never was," at "the no longer was not," the "has not yet been," or the "not yet having been." [xxxvi] The boundaries of publication, including posthumous publication, never become an issue for Derrida since the metaphysical essence of the book to come has nothing to do with the writing that was in an empirical, material sense. By examining Derrida's textual rush to the future and packing up the past in an "era," the Foucauldian inflected "history" of "paper" "will have been a brief one" (*Paper Machine*, 42); or, more concretely, we may reread grammatology in relation to what will have become the expanded field of posthumography in which ash is one remainder among others of what goes unpublished or displayed to death.

### Item No. 6B Reading to the Finish: the Philology of Philosophy

Few thinkers have so many disciples who never read a word of their master's writings.

—Paul de Man, "Sign and Symbol in Hegel's *Aesthetics*," in *Aesthetic Ideology* (1996a), 93.

Yes, to read him that is the task. How shall we do that from now on?

—Jacques Derrida, *Mémoires: for Paul de Man*, 231.

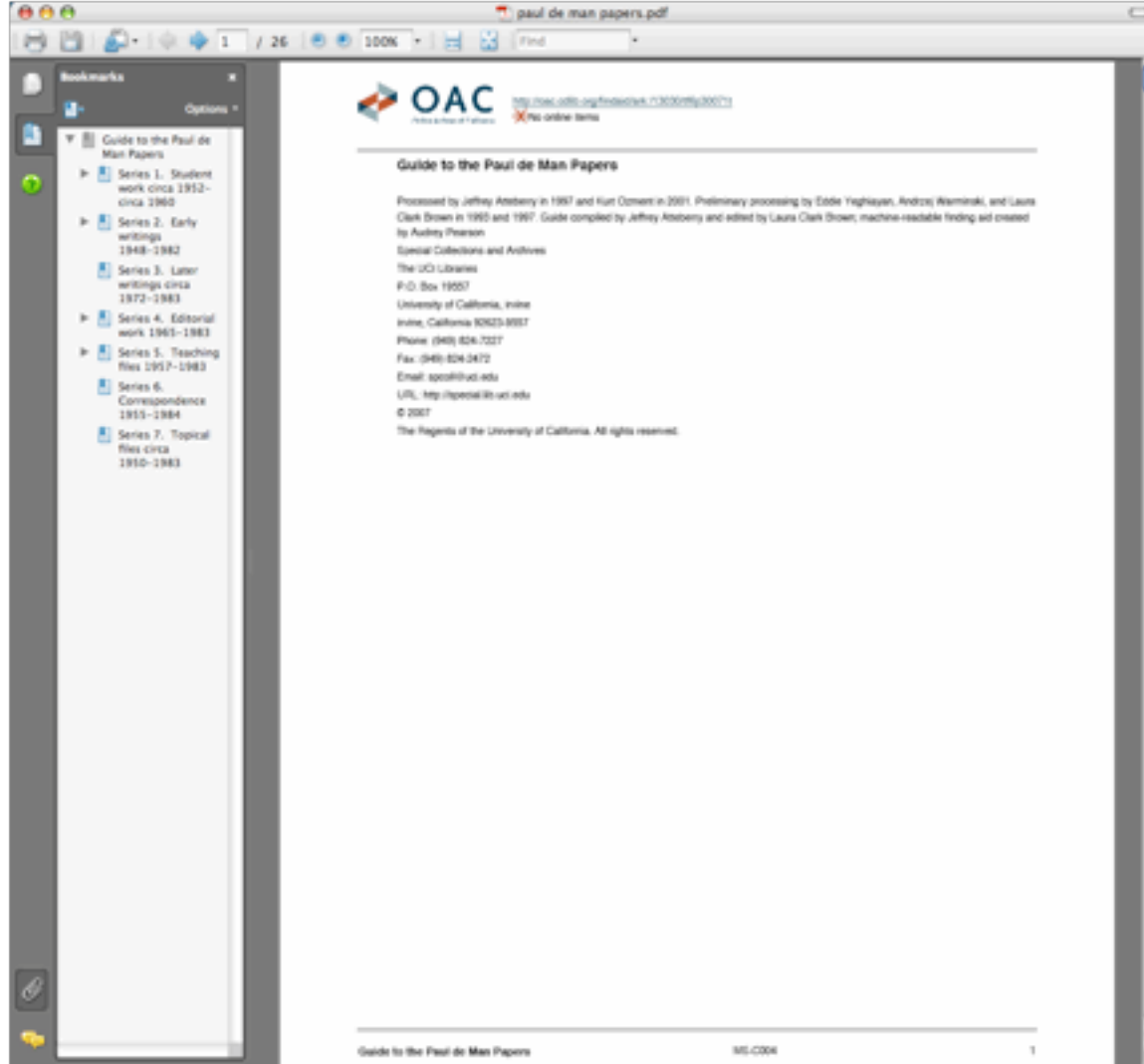
Before turning to Kierkegaard, I want to make clear how philology and philosophy share the same imaginary when it comes to editing and reading. I discuss first an anecdote about Auerbach after his death told in Stephen G. Nichols's essay "Philology in Auerbach's Drama of (Literary) History." I then turn to the Guide to Paul de Man's Papers, the preface to a posthumously published collection of de Man's essays, an introduction to the published proceedings of a conference at which a paper by Derrida was read that Derrida himself did not live to deliver, an exhibition at U.C. Irvine of some materials from the Derrida archive, the posthumous publication of a letter by Derrida to a dean at U.C. Irvine, and the posthumous publication of Derrida's seminars.

Stephen Nichols begins his essay with an unframed anecdote about a fantasy he had as a graduate student about editing Auerbach's papers:

I got to know Erich Auerbach rather intimately about three or four years after his death in 1957. . . . Auerbach did not seem to possess many manuscripts of his scholarship; we never found that one unpublished article or note that I fantasized turning up late on a winter's afternoon just before our ritual coffee. In my imagination it would have been unfinished and Mrs. Auerbach would naturally ask me to complete and publish it – *The Yale Review?* *The Kenyon Review?* In the way of oneiric musings I never contemplated the problem of language. Would I have translated it into English first? But there was nothing. What he had left were offprints carefully labeled *Handexemplar* and filled with notes in the margins, between lines, sometimes with interleaved pages of writing. These he obviously intended to republish as reworked articles. Others he would label emphatically: *Nicht wiederzuveroeffentlichchen!* It appeared that he spent a good deal of time reviewing his publications, less in order to modify the theoretical or methodological postulates than to argue particular points more subtly or, more often, to bring in new supporting examples. (1996, 63; 64).

The anecdote takes up nearly the first three pages, and, while delightful, leads the reader nowhere. Nichols breaks off and abruptly begins discussing Auerbach's published writings in conventional critical ways.

A similar set of philological assumptions serve as the basis for organizing the "Guide to Paul de Man's Papers." The papers are grouped implicitly according to published and unpublished, and the published group is subdivided explicitly into chronological categories (see Figure 4):



(Figure 4)

Of course dividing an author's writings between early and late was called into question by Paul de Man in his essay "Georg Lukacs's 'Theory of the Novel'" in *Blindness and Insight*, 51-69. [xxxvii] More prosaically, the three editors of de Man's posthumously published collection, *Romanticism and Contemporary Criticism*, all themselves literary theorists, state: "This volume contains material written by Paul de Man over nearly thirty years, between 1954 and 1981, but never published by him," one of which the *NYRB* "rejected for publication." The editors do not explain why de Man did not publish the other essays, nor do they explain why they are publishing work that de Man did not himself publish. Instead, they state that "the Gauss lectures and the papers on Romanticism have a determinable place in the context of de Man's work and development" (1993, vii).

To determine the extent to which philology and philosophy share the same imaginary about posthumous publication, we may turn to a series of examples involving Jacques Derrida. In his introduction to a special issue of *Discourse* (2008) devoted to Derrida, guest editor Dragan Kunjudizic tells a story that is even more marked by a fantasy of archival discovery, recovery, and reanimation than Nichols's story:

During 2002 and early in 2003, while working on an exhibit dedicated to the work of Jacques Derrida, I discovered the typewritten manuscript of an unpublished seminar, "The Concept of Comparative Literature and the Theoretical Problems of Translation," that Jacques Derrida held at Yale University in 1979-80. At the time of this discovery, I approached Jacques Derrida and asked him for permission to translate and publish this seminar, to which he, after some reluctance (reluctance due to his modesty and doubt that the seminar was publishable), agreed. At first, Derrida was even surprised to learn of its existence, which he had forgotten. I remember relaying this to J. Hillis Miller, who quipped, laughing, "Anyone else would make an entire career out of such a seminar and essay, and Jacques simply forgot about it!" One of the reasons why Jacques Derrida may have reconciled himself to its publication was that Eric Prenowitz, the translator of Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever*, agreed to translate it into English. In the spring of 2004, they actually met on a few occasions to clarify some parts of the manuscript and Jacques Derrida's handwritten notes and emendations. At the time of the conference at the University of Florida in 2006, after consulting with Eric Prenowitz, Peggy Kamuf, Hélène Cixous, and Geoff

Bennington, it was decided that a selection from this seminar would be read at the conference. That is how it was done: first in French by H el ene Cixous and then in English by Geoff Bennington. This is how Jacques Derrida has joined us in this event, and now in this publication, thanks to the generosity of Marguerite Derrida.

Derrida joined the event in this way, Kujudzic notes without saying so explicitly, because he was dead:

Jacques Derrida was enthusiastic and intrigued about the conference topic. I remember some telephone conversations as I tried to explain the title, where the quotation marks would go, etc., and as Jacques Derrida, with his always subtle sense of humor, tried to indulge me and figure out the exact title so as to go along: "Who? What?" I remember the fascination with which Jacques Derrida talked about H el ene Cixous's essay in *Ris-Orangis* in July of 2004, during our last encounter in person. And it is a stroke of good luck that its translator turned out to be Peggy Kamuf. However, illness prevented him from writing his own essay, and, ultimately, from joining us at the University of Florida in the Fall of 2006.

In contrast to Nichols's humanist account of Auerbach—witty, self-conscious, a touch melancholic—Kujudzic's heavily mediatized, telephonological account of the publication of Derrida's essay merges philology and philosophy into a testimonial of provenance from beyond the grave. Kujudzic lines up the (still living) presence of the author's intention (no need to dig it up since his translator of choice can check with him) with an eschatological connection to the author's presence at the conference (recalled by the reading of his paper after he is dead). The passive construction—"it was decided"—keeps Derrida on the party-line of de-parti-ng, his essay now waiting to be (re)read in posthumously published form as it is broadcast on the English-Only Channel of *Discourse*. At the conference itself, Kujudzic ended his introduction by playing a clip from the Kirby Dick film *Derrida* without explanation or comment, as if playing the film footage of Derrida were engaging his ghost in a s eance. [\[xxxviii\]](#)

Une charmante vieille dame, au telephone, demande si elle pourrait parle "au secretaire de G erard Genette." Si j'avais repondu "C'est lui-meme," je n'aurais fait que susciter une nouvelle question. Si j'avais avoue la verite—que "G erard Genette" n'vaait de scretatire—, j'aurais san doute horriblement d e cu la vieille dame. Je d eguisai donc . . . ma voix pour lui r epondre. . . . Apres quelques dizaines de secondes, et dans ma voix authentic, je me presentai comme "G erard Genette" lui-meme . . . .

[ A charming old lady telephoned to ask if she might speak to G erard Genette's secretary. If I had answered "speaking," I would have invited another question. If I had sworn the truth—that "G erard Genette didn't have a secretary—I would have horribly deceived the old lady. I therefore disguised my voice to call him . . . After half a minute or so, I answered in my real voice "G erard Genette speaking" . . . ]

—G erard Genette, "Secretaire," *Bardadrac* (2006), 387 [my translation].

#### Item 7: Yet To Be Named (Source Unknown)

Only the posthumous publication of a letter by Derrida revealed how extraordinarily fraught the archiving of Derrida's own papers at U.C. Irvine became shortly before he died. In defense of a colleague, Derrida threatened in a letter to the Dean to end all relations with UCI. One consequence would be the withholding of some of the papers he had not yet

turned over to U.C. Irvine:

Since I never take back what I have *given*, my papers would of course remain the property of UCI and the Special Collections department of the library. However, it goes without saying that the spirit in which I contributed to the constitution of these archives (which is still underway and growing every year) would have been seriously damaged. Without renouncing my commitments, I would regret having made them and would reduce their fulfillment to the barest minimum. I could no longer promise the work, devotion, and good will that I believe I have always demonstrated, wholeheartedly and enthusiastically, toward the operation of these archives meant for researchers who, from Irvine and from elsewhere, are already working there and could be working there more and more in the future—but always, as stipulated in the gift contract, with my authorization and after I have approved their request. This authorization would become increasingly selective and infrequent. (2010a) [\[xxxix\]](#)

Derrida's letter was published only after his death. It was a private, not an open letter.

Nevertheless, Geoff Bennington and Peggy Kamuf published it in 2008 on a website entitled "JacquesDerrida.org" [\[x\]](#):

These Web pages aim to help correct misleading and inaccurate press reports as well as unfounded speculations in the wake of the lawsuit filed by the Regents of the University of California against the Estate of Jacques Derrida. The lawsuit, now withdrawn, concerned the archive of Derrida's papers held at UC Irvine. Made public here are some of the documents relevant to the events that gave rise to the lawsuit and to the reports and rumors it spawned.

Bennington and Kamuf assign authorship to themselves while not exactly signing on, as it were: "The initiative for these pages was taken by Geoffrey Bennington and Peggy Kamuf and they are the sole authors of all unsigned materials posted here." Strange: authors but not signers. (See Figure 5)

## Jacques Derrida



**Site Under Construction**

[Documents on the UCI Archive Affair](#)

[Derrida seminars translation project.](#)

[E-Mail jacques-derrida.org](mailto:jacques-derrida.org)

(Figure 5)

Even stranger: While publishing posthumously Derrida's letter to put him on record, Kamuf and Bennington don't give the letter's provenance. It is not just any letter. The anonymous author of the Abstract in the Descriptive Summary of U.C. Irvine's *Jacques Derrida Papers* (2010) distinguishes between Derrida's public writings (included in the archives) from his private, personal writings (not included in the archive: "The more public side of Derrida is also well represented by notes, working drafts, final drafts, and other materials related to his vast published output. With the exception of the photographs, the collection contains no material that might be described as "personal," such as private correspondence"). If Derrida's letter to Cicerone (2010a), not an open letter but a private correspondence, is not in the UCI archives, then where is it? Bennington and Kamuf don't say, nor do they state how they obtained it. They do imply that they have permission to do so: "After Jacques Derrida's death in October 2004, his widow, Marguerite Derrida, was concerned to respect his expressed wishes concerning the UCI archive." We don't know how they know this, or if they are expressly following her wishes in publishing the letter or if she was following Derrida's wishes in giving them the letter, if she indeed did so. However, there is no letter from Marguerite Derrida to corroborate their claim about the widow's concern "after" Derrida's death.

Nor do Bennington and Kamuf publish a scan of Derrida's "original" letter to Dean Cicerone. Instead, they give transcriptions of the French original and the English translation. To be sure, Derrida's critics never included the equivalent of President Barack Obama's "birthers," and I don't by any means wish to bring the authenticity of Derrida's letter into doubt. Nevertheless, I bring up the scanned original because the faculty member at the center of Derrida's letter had organized in 2002, the year Derrida was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, "an extraordinary exhibition at the library on my archives around the theme of translation." The library exhibition was entitled *Derrida/Translating/Derrida*, discussed earlier in the present essay.

The philological and legal issues regarding the posthumous publication and provenance of Derrida's private letter, its

status as property, were not considered by Bennington and Kamuf, I think, because they seem to have thought that when published, the letter would reach its final destination, not to be confused with the addressee of the letter, who one assumes kept his copy in his files or threw it away. In finally arriving, the timing of the arrival apparently being beside the point, the letter would read itself, and Derrida's words, as revealed by his self-appointed apostles, would put an end to the controversy once and for all. Instead, the letter's publication opened up a new and even bigger can of worms regarding Derrida's role in a case that was settled out of court, after his death, at the expense of UCI and the faculty member Derrida says he is certain was innocent of the charges and was being punished unfairly. [xli]

As a possible legacy from what is above all called an event, *l'oeuvre* has a virtual future only by surviving or cutting itself off from its presumed responsible signatory. . . .

There you are. Pardon me for having spoken too long. I cut things off here, arbitrarily.

— Jacques Derrida, "Typewriter Ribbon: Limited Ink (2), ('within such limits')" (2001), 280; 358.

### Item 7A: The Bios of Philology (written in microscript in several issues of the *New Yorker* magazine)

We can advance our understanding of the genre of posthumography by clarifying the way the shared imaginary of philology and philosophy generates an antagonistic relation between them, each trying to overwrite and override the other's assumptions about textual production and processing. We turn now to the posthumous publication of Derrida's seminars, specifically to "General Introduction to the French Edition," "Editorial Note" and the "Foreword to the English edition" of Derrida's *The Beast and the Sovereign* (2009), the last seminar Derrida delivered but the first of a series of a projected forty-three volume series of Derrida's seminars to appear in print. In the second sentence of the "General Introduction," the editors split these posthumous publications from Derrida's publications while alive: "This edition will constitute a new part of his oeuvre, to be distinguished from the other books and other texts published during his lifetime or revised by him before his death, and with a clearly different status" (2009, ix). The editors of Derrida's posthumously published seminars always rely on a bio-teleology that makes sense of the works left unpublished before Derrida's death. There is a certain insistence that Derrida would have published the seminars, but a noticeable degree of uncertainty about what he would have done with them to make them publishable: "It is not certain that Jacques Derrida would have published the seminars as they stand: probably he would have reorganized or rewritten them" (2009, ix). On the basis of this "probably," the editors linearize the production and delivery of the seminars even more directly: "Our primary goal is to present the *text* of the seminar, as written by Derrida *with a view* to speech, to reading aloud, and thus with some anticipated orality and some familiar turns of phrase" (2009, xi, emphases in the original). Yet in the very next sentence, the editors rephrase their earlier point about what Derrida would "probably" have done with the seminars had he published them, in order to give their construction of Derrida's textual production a supplemental bioteleological direction toward writing: "It is not certain that Jacques Derrida would have published these seminars, although he occasionally expressed the intention of doing so, but if he had taken up these texts for publication, he would probably have reworked them, as he always did, in the direction of a more written text" (2009, xi). [xlii] Rather than take it upon themselves to do that work in his place (2009, 12), the editors effectively try to broadcast Derrida live, remove all interference, what they refer to in one case as "more or less telegraphic style lines of research to be explored" (2009, xvi), by dividing Derrida's works into posthumously published and published while alive, linearizing his writing process and dividing his seminars up according to the mode of (hand)writing in which he composed them. [xliii]

Yet residues of various kinds of interference remain in the published seminars. We might even say that various interferences are produced by the editors' efforts to abject aspects of the posthumous seminars in order to eliminate them. The editors project a complete edition of Derrida's works after they publish all forty three volumes of the seminars: "The complete edition of Jacques Derrida's seminars and lectures will give the reader the chance of an unprecedented contact with the philosopher's teaching voice" (2009, ix). As a "new part" (2009, ix), the seminars, "taken as a whole" (2009, xi), can be placed in a coherent topography of Derrida's entire set of publications: "Taken as a whole, but also in relation to Derrida's philosophical oeuvre, these lectures and seminars will constitute an incomparable research tool and will, we believe, give a different experience of his thinking, here linked to his teaching, which was always, both in France



and abroad, a truly vital resource of his writing" (2009, ix). One can easily understand how the editors might have given in to marketing pressure here and so adopted a rhetoric of "unprecedented contact," "incomparable," and a "new experience," but the rhetoric itself announces a Derrida to come that requires one to wait for the publication of all forty three seminars in order to be able to re/read Derrida (reading him now without the seminars is like watching a film on video on a cathode-ray tube on a 26" inch TV set as opposed to watching a film on blu-ray on a plasma 70" plasma flat screen TV set—the equivalent of reading Derrida with the seminars).

Operating on philological assumptions, the editors also decide what a text is, thereby permitting themselves not to publish what they regard as non-texts, or "off cuts":

On the typescript, at the end of each session, Derrida was in the habit of noting down in more or less telegraphic style lines of research to be explored. These "off cuts" are sometimes reproduced from one session to the next, sometimes modified and augmented. Given that they did not constitute a sustained text, they have not been included in this edition. (2009, 17)

As a result, the dialogues after the seminar are cut off, including Derrida's comments, without bothering to theorize what Derrida discussed as the writing machine's "cutting off" in "Typewriter Ribbon: Limited Ink (2)," 2001, 280; 318-19; 334-36; 345; 358. As the editors explain in their "Editorial Note": "Derrida left time for discussion with seminar participants. We have signaled such comments in the sessions, which, although they were recorded (but often in a technically deficient manner, with some voices being inaudible and above all difficult to identify), seemed to us to raise too many questions" (Derrida 2009, xv).

Yet there are footnotes in *The Beast and the Sovereign* allowing that there were discussions after the seminar available on the audiotape but that are not to be found in *The Beast and the Sovereign*: "We should like to remind the reader that there is no written version of the following pages. The ninth session is entirely oral, and has been transcribed on the basis of a recording of the session, which was in part devoted to discussion with the participants in the seminar, not transcribed here (see Editorial Note above, p. xv), 2009, 316. the last half hour of the session was devoted to discussion (Editor's Note 40 at the end of the seventh session, 2009, 205); the last half hour of the session was devoted to discussion" (note 1 to the ninth session, 2009)." These footnotes take on spectral form, tracings of what has gone missing in the transcription, questions asked of Derrida at the end of each of his seminars becoming "too many questions" (2009, xv) for the editors. [\[xliv\]](#) Because of the customary philological norms its editors have followed, *The Beast and the Sovereign* ends with an inadvertently ironic and melancholic tone. Derrida stops the thirteenth and last session with "That's all. I think it would be improper of me to prevent discussion today, so I'll stop here and hand over to whoever wants to speak" (349). Yet not even a footnote about the missing transcription of who said what is attached to Derrida's concluding remarks. [\[xlv\]](#)

### **Item 7A: When to Stop? (Missing)**

Some particular draft that was prepared or printed on some particular software, or some particular disk that stores a stage of a work in progress—these are the kinds of things that will be fetishized in the future. I already know writers who keep the first versions of an essay or poem on disk. . . . No history of technology has wiped out that photograph of Nietzsche's typewriter. —Jacques Derrida, "The Word Processor," in *Paper Machine* (2005e), 29.

### **Writing that was very heavy**

One day I agreed to drive the person I knew at that time only as Professor Derrida from his house to the Baltimore train station. He was leaving to spend two days in New York and give

a conference, probably at Columbia University. He was waiting outside with a fairly big suitcase when I arrived in my VW bug. When I began to lift his suitcase to put it in the backseat - since it clearly wasn't going to fit into the miniscule trunk of the VW - he told me to be careful not to strain myself while putting it in the car, since, as he put it, it was "a little heavy." It was not a little heavy but a hundred times heavier than heavy, and it took a superhuman effort to get it into the car. I thought to myself that for a two-day stay in New York, this particular French professor was certainly bringing a lot of things with him. He smiled, guessing what I must have been thinking, and explained that he in fact had very few clothes in his suitcase and what weighed so much were his books, his files, and most of all his typewriter, without which he never traveled anywhere. And if at the time, graduate students like me had very little, light portable typewriters, Derrida carried with him in his suitcase a real desk typewriter that was solid enough to withstand the constant onslaught of his writing. This is what it is to be an intellectual, a writer, I said to myself: he never travels without his library, his notes, or his typewriter.

—David Carroll, "Jacques Derrida or the Gift of Writing: When Something Happens" (2005), 63-64.

En février 1968, Paul de Man avait organisé à Zurich une rencontre internationale. . . . De Man avait logé tout son monde dans un charmant hôtel de la vieille ville, mais faute de place il nous avait serrés, Jacques et moi, dans la même chambre à deux lits. Jusqu'ici, rien d'alarmant; c'est au moment de l'extinction des feux que mon cothurne de'un soir s'avisa qu'il avait oublié son pyjama—mais non, heureusement, sa machine à écrire portable. Ceci compensant cela, il me demanda si le bruit de son travail risquait de me gêner. Sur ma réponse forcément conciliante, il occupa une bonne part de sa nuit, et de la mienne (pusique j'ai en un ses qui n'est pas le bon, l'oreille absolue), à taper, je suppose pour une autre colloque à venir, une communication dont, si j'avais eu l'oreille encore absolue et surtout plus exercée, j'aurais pu inférer le teneur de la sonorité, acoustiquement différenciée, des touches de son clavier.

[In February 1968, Paul de Man organized an

international conference in Zurich . . . de Man put everyone up in a charming hotel at the center of the town but, because there weren't enough free rooms, put Jacques [Derrida] and me together in a double room with two single beds. Up to now, nothing to be alarmed about. As I was saying good night to my companion for the night, I was advised that he had forgotten his pajamas—but not, fortunately, his portable typewriter. Out of consideration of me, he asked if the noise from his typewriter would disturb me. After I assured him that it would not, he occupied the better part of his night, and mine (it is perhaps not the best thing that my hearing is very good), typing something I supposed was for another colloquium to come, a communication in which, had I an even better and more highly trained ear, I could have heard the acoustically differentiated sonority of the tappings on the keyboard.]  
—Gérard Genette, "Colloques," *Bardarac* (2006), 78. (My translation)

Right on the cut sheet, one can see traces . . . of a dozen additional lines that have been effaced, but that remain as vestiges of the effacement. They remain, but as illegible traces. . . . This confirms the vulnerability of the effaceable object. The archive is as precarious as it is artificial, precisely in that very place where the signatory puts on guard, appeals, beseeches, warns against the risk of whatever might come along, as he says, to "annihilate this work" . . . . Sooner or later, virtually, the worst can happen to it... a dedication, of an "inscription," if I dare to cite it, of *Allegories of Reading*, dated November 1979: "Pour Jacques, en ineffaçable amitié, Paul" ("For Jacques, in ineffaceable friendship, Paul"). This "inscription" in ink was followed in pencil, by two last words: "lettre suit." Yes, "letter follows." You know at least something of the rest, the posthumous continuation. De Man dies four years later, in 1983, leaving us with the now notorious legacies for a virtually indeterminable "sooner or later."  
—Jacques Derrida, "Typewriter Ribbon: Limited Ink (2) ('within such limits')" (2001), 305.

### Item 8: Burning Derrida's Archive

In order to see how these philological operations with regard to the publication, or, more precisely, exhibition of Derrida's papers were in place even before Derrida died, consider an exhibition entitled *Derrida/Translating/Derrida* held in Spring 2002 at the U.C. Irvine library in conjunction with two conferences at which Derrida was speaking. The catalogue offers

the following description:

The Libraries' spring exhibit, *Derrida/Translating/Derrida*, celebrated the extraordinary scholarly career of Jacques Derrida, one of the pre-eminent philosophers and theorists of our time and one of UCI's most renowned faculty members. The Libraries' Critical Theory Archive in the Department of Special Collections and Archives is home to Professor Derrida's scholarly papers, from which the materials in the exhibit were selected. The exhibit revealed the creative process in Derrida's writings, from its inception on note cards, in scribbles and ciphers, into manuscripts, both handwritten and typewritten, and finally into galley proofs and published books. The further trajectory of his writing was traced as it is launched into numerous translations, interviews, and lectures presented worldwide by this most global and visible of philosophers. [\[xlv\]](#)



(Figure 6)

The format of the catalogue, called a "Checklist" and still available online, has exactly the same kind of format used for the display of the works of dead authors. See, for examples, the entries marked "beginnings" and the Post Card (figures 7 and 8):

## Beginnings, 1950–1965

Among the most intriguing manuscripts in the archive are Derrida's high school exams, some of which include his teachers' critiques of his exercises in English. "As regards language," one instructor admonishes the young student, "Your English is not idiomatic enough (if generally correct). My advice is: read a lot of English, pen in hand." Grade: 10 points out of 20. Another advises Derrida that he "must avoid the philosophical vocabulary (to mediate, etc.) ..." and further notes that "Your handwriting should be more legible." Grade: 12.5 out of 20.

Even more interesting are comments written by Louis Althusser on Derrida's preparatory exam for the official state examination called the *agrégation*. These comments, and the material that Derrida presented to Althusser, announce Derrida's distinct philosophical style, which Althusser found inappropriate for such an exam. The reader can discern, even in Althusser's well-intentioned remarks, an anxiety that Derrida's work, in its refusal to follow the beaten path, continues to present for traditional academia.

The material exhibited also includes Derrida's letter to the Director of the Ecole Normale Supérieure that accompanied his proposal for work toward the *agrégation de philosophie* on the topic of "Formal Logic and Transcendental Logic" in the work of Edmund Husserl.

30. Essay in English on Shakespeare, 1950.  
Holograph manuscript.

31. Essay in English on English poetry, 1950.  
Holograph manuscript.

32. Jacques Derrida at Lycée Louis-le-Grand, 1949 or 1950.  
Photograph.

33. Notes on psychology, 1952-1956.  
Holograph manuscript.

34. Induction, 1952-1956.  
Holograph manuscript.

35. Notes on Heidegger for work on Husserl, 1953-1957.  
Holograph manuscript.

36. L'inconscient, 1954 or 1955.  
Holograph manuscript written for Althusser, with his comments in response.

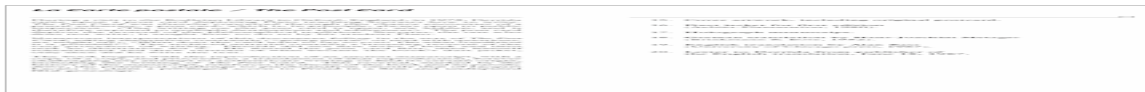
37. L'explication par le simple, 1954 or 1955.  
Holograph manuscript written for Althusser, with his comments in response.

38. Derrida and Althusser, 24 December 1981, Paris.  
Two photographs.

39. Letter to Directeur of the Ecole Normale Supérieure from Jacques Derrida outlining his proposal for his course of study toward the *agrégation* in philosophy, accompanied by the outline itself and other materials, 1965.  
Typescripts.

40. Proposal, notes, and syllabus for *agrégation de philosophie* course on formal logic taught by Jacques Derrida, 1965-1966.  
Holograph manuscripts and typescripts.

(Figure 7)



(Figure 8)

The *Checklist* follows commonplace philological notions of textual production based on quasi-theological, quasi-scientific notions of revelation, genesis, visibility, and dispersal [\[xlvii\]](#):

The exhibit revealed the creative process in Derrida's writings, from its inception on note cards, in scribbles and ciphers, into manuscripts, both handwritten and typewritten, and finally into galley proofs and published books. The further trajectory of his writing was traced as it is launched into numerous translations, interviews, and lectures presented worldwide by this most global and visible of philosophers.

Without comment, the exhibition excludes "personal" writings from the "trajectory" of the writings it "traced." Nevertheless, in his "Foreword" to the catalogue, a University librarian writes that the faculty member is qualified to curate the exhibition because of his close friendship with Derrida: "His many years of association with Professor Derrida as both friend and colleague have given him the necessary insights to craft an exhibit that will be illuminating not only to Derridean students and scholars, but also to others interested in understanding the development and contributions of the philosopher widely known as the most prominent proponent of 'deconstruction.'" In other words, the curator's personal relationship to Derrida is his best qualification for an impersonal exhibition. Tellingly, the exhibition did not include Derrida's *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (1996). There is no evidence of any Derridean "anarchivity" in the UC Irvine's library's exhibition of a selection of Derrida archives, no ash, no question about what Derrida "may have burned . . . what may have burned of his secret passions . . . burned without him, without remains, and without knowledge . . . without a name, without the least symptom, and without even an ash." [\[xlviii\]](#)

### Item no. 8A Packing It Up: The Un/Open Desk

The last of A's papers is a narrative entitled "The Seducer's Diary." Here we meet with new difficulties, inasmuch as A does not declare himself the author but only the editor. This is an old literary device to which I would not have much to object if it did not further complicate my

own position, since one author becomes enclosed within the other like the boxes in a Chinese puzzle.

—Victor Eremita, Preface to *Either/Or*, 8-9.

The archive today consists of Kierkegaard's literary remains, originally numbered by Henrik Lund; subsequently disfigured by a series of lacunae and a great many deletions, corrections, and additions . . . ; but packaged in a systematic order for which P.A. Heiberg is responsible.

Nonetheless, the archive still contains traces of Kierkegaard's own packaging, and it is clear that he took great pains to present himself to posterity in an orderly fashion.

—*Written Images*, 109.

The editors . . . placed the mass of booklets, books sheets, pages, strips of paper, and so on into semitransparent glassine envelopes. The envelopes were then placed in files, and the files were placed in . . . fiberboard boxes.

—*Written Images*, 108.

Barfod took the liberty of cutting up most of the volumes... Barfod's interference was not limited to cutting and pasting. While he sat there with the papers he made diligent use of his pen—on the papers.

—*Written Images*, 83; 97-98.

*The Point of View on My Work as an Author* must not be published, no, no! . . . The book itself is true and in my opinion masterly. But a book like that can only be published after my death. . . . But I must be careful about the idea of dying, lest I go and do something with the idea of dying in half a year and then live to be eighty-two. No, one finishes a book like that, puts it away in a drawer, sealed and marked: To be opened after my death.

—Søren Kierkegaard, "N.B. N.B. N.B." in *The Point of View on My Work as an Author* (published posthumously under Kierkegaard's name by Peter C. Kierkegaard in 1859), 174; 176.

We may advance our understanding of the genre of posthumography by returning to Kierkegaard's writing desk in *Either/Or*. [xlix] Kierkegaard stages the publication of his work (he waited five years to publish it [i]) as a problem of publishing an unknown, living or dead author's works in ways that anticipate, on the one hand, the very problems editors of Kierkegaard's own works have faced after his death, and, on the other, how to read Kierkegaard's works in relation to his authorship and editing, pseudonymous and not, as well as to the extreme care he took in deciding when to publish certain works so as to ensure he would not be misunderstood by his readers. [ii] After stating the thesis, that the outer is

not the inner, that the outer conceals a secret, which was hidden, the pseudonymous editor of *Either/Or*, Victor Eremita, begins the preface by telling a story about a writing desk in order to explain the "most curious manner" which put him "in possession of the papers I have the honor of presenting to the reading public" (4):

For the sake of order, it is probably best to tell first how I happened to come into possession of these papers. It is now about seven years since I spotted in a secondhand shop here in the city a writing desk that immediately attracted my attention. It was not a modern piece of work, had been used considerably, and yet it captivated me.

Eremita feels compelled to justify the purchase of the desk since its acquisition leads to his discovery of anonymously authored papers:

It is impossible for me to explain the basis of this impression, but most people presumably have had a similar experience during their lives. . . . My heart pounded when I went into the shop. I bought it and paid for it. This is the last time you are going to be so prodigal, I thought. In fact, it is really lucky that you did buy it, for every time you look at it you will be reminded of how prodigal you were; with this desk commences a new period in your life. Ah, desire is very eloquent, and good intentions are always on hand.

The desk has nothing to do with writing, however. Eremita moves the desk into his home where he can keep doing what he did with it before he bought it, namely, not using it:

The writing desk was set up in my apartment, and just as in the first phase of my infatuation I had my pleasure in gazing at it from the street, so now I walked by it here at home. Gradually I learned how to know its numerous features, its many drawers and compartments, and in every respect I was happy with my desk. (4; 5)

The only thing Eremita stores in his desk is money, and he accidentally finds the papers only when a drawer with the money in it is stuck and he needs to open it to get some money because he is in a rush:

I opened the desk to pull out the money drawer and take what happened to be at hand. But the drawer would not budge. Every expedient was futile. It was a most calamitous situation. To run into such difficulties at the very moment when the coachman's enticing tones were still ringing in my ears! . . . I was furious. . . . A hatchet was fetched. I gave the desk a terrible blow with it. Whether in my rage I aimed wrong or the drawer was just as stubborn as I, the result was not what was intended. The drawer was shut. And the drawer stayed shut. (5)

Rather than telling an open and shut story, Eremita tells a shut and open story leading to the discovery of an author's papers:

But something else happened. . . . A secret door that I had never noticed before sprung open. This door closed off a compartment that I obviously had not discovered. Here, to my great amazement, I found a mass of papers, the papers that constitute the contents of the present publication. . . . (6)

Because he has no time to read them then and there, Eremita repackages them in a pistol box after he empties out the pistols:

In the greatest haste, a mahogany box that usually contained a pair of pistols was emptied and the papers deposited in it. . . . My servant accompanied me with the mahogany box. (6) [\[iii\]](#)

After boxing up the papers, Eremita explains how he has edited them. He discovers that they fall into two sets of papers: there are two kinds of handwriting, two kinds of paper, and they have different contents, one on the aesthetic and the other on the ethical. Despite his extraordinarily diligent efforts, Eremita is unable to obtain any information about the identity of either author, so he refers to one author as "A" and the other as "B." And since there are no titles, Eremita supplies them, and divides *Either/Or* up into two parts and two volumes, one for A's papers and the other for B's papers.

Organizing B's papers is easy because they are made up letters that follow a sequence. A's papers are a different story:

I have let chance fix the order—that is, I have let them remain in the order in which I found them, without, of course, being able to decide whether this order had chronological value or ideal significance. The scraps of paper lay loose in the compartment, and I therefore had to assign them a place. (7-8)

A's papers are difficult to edit as well because A begins the last section, entitled *The Seducer's Diary*, by explaining that he has made "an accurate clean copy" of a "hurried transcript" he made of a bound volume he found in the unlocked desk of a friend: "One drawer stood open. In it was a mass of loose papers, and on top of them lay a large quarto volume, exquisitely bound" (303), that is the seducer's diary. "A" includes with the diary a "collection of letters" without dates from the woman who is the object of the seducer's attentions, but the letters are undated and possibly incomplete. "A" has "copied them and interleaved them in my fair copy" (310).

The "literary device" of the found papers employed by A and also by Kierkegaard through Eremita does not deliver what it promises, namely, some secret that might reveal the inner and shows how it is not the outer. The device, both literary and philosophical, unfolds through a turbulent dynamic that makes secrecy irreducible to inwardness and reading itself into a series of multiple (non)choices. Eremita ends the preface with a word to the reader in which he channels A and B and, becoming a ghostwriter or a dictation machine, reciting what they would say.

A presumably would have no objection to the publication of the papers, and he probably would shout to the reader, "Read them or do not read, you will regret it either way." What B would say is more difficult to determine. He perhaps would reproach me for something or other, especially with regard to the publication of A's papers, and he would make me feel that he had no part in it, that he would wash his hands. Having done that, he perhaps would address the book with these words: "Go out into the world, then; avoid, if possible, the attention of the critics; visit an individual reader in a favorably disposed hour, and if you should encounter a reader of the fair sex, then I would say: My charming reader, in this book you will find something that you perhaps should not know, something else from which you will presumably benefit by coming to know it. Read, then, something in such a way that, having read it you may be as one who has not read it; read the something else in such a way that, having read it, you may be as one who has not forgotten what has been read."

Both A and B deconstruct the distinction between reading and not reading: for A, the choice between reading and not reading *Either/Or* is a non-choice since the outcome will be to regret either; B opposes male and female readers, but then turns the reading of the charming reader into non-reading: "be as one who has not read it." Eremita then reiterates B's advice: "As editor, I shall add only the wish that the book may meet the reader in a favorably disposed hour and that the charming reader may scrupulously succeed in following B's well-intentioned advice" (14-15).

*Part Two of Either/Or* ends with a similar address to the reader on the topic of reading:

It is not, however, to tell you this that I am writing, but to send you a sermon by him that was enclosed in the letter. Not wanting to instigate your criticism, I did not wish to show it to you personally, but send it to you by letter so that it may make its impression on you in quietness. . . . Take it, then; read it. I have nothing to add except that I have read and thought about myself, read it and thought of you. (338)

In this case, the pseudonymous author turned reader presents a text that matches *The Seducer's Diary* in its placement in relation to a double reading. But the difference between the two readings, assuming there is one, by the author's own account adds nothing.

An author's situation can hardly be more desperate than mine; even a person under special censorship can still get his work to the point where it "may be printed," but my writing is always suffocated at birth.

—Søren Kierkegaard, *Prefaces*, 7.



I have never gone further than an introductory paragraph. Since this was of a general nature and in my view so successfully composed that it would be enjoyable to her if I were not the author, it crossed my mind whether I might not be able to win her to the enterprise by reading it to her. I was prepared for her to reject my offer. . . . Not at all. She received my proposal as kindly as possible; she listened, she laughed, she admired. I thought that all was won. She came over to the table where I was sitting, put her arm intimately around my neck, and asked me to read a passage again. I began to read, holding the manuscript high enough so that she can see to follow me. Superb! I am beside myself but am not quite through that passage when the manuscript suddenly bursts into flames. Without my noticing it, she had pushed the candle under the manuscript. The fire won out; there was nothing to save. My introductory paragraph went up in flames—amid general rejoicing, since my wife rejoiced for both of us.

—Søren Kierkegaard, *Prefaces*, 8.

### Item 9: Kierkegaard's Pre-Posthumous Papers

How Kierkegaard constructs his texts to be read as close/d will become even more apparent if we return, somewhat paradoxically, from his texts to their posthumous editing as told in *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals, Notebooks, Booklets, Sheets, Scraps, and Slips of Paper*. Under the section headed "The Disappearance of the Sealed Letter," the editors relate the story of Barfod's discovery of a slip of paper that may be Kierkegaard's last will and testament. The editors quote from Barfod's preface, which quotes from Kierkegaard's writing on a page Barfod found in packet no. 319:

"It is my wish that after my death Prof. Nielsen do what is necessary with respect to the publication of the entirety of my literary remains, manuscripts, journals, etc. . . . This could perhaps be written in a letter to Prof. *Nielsen* with the heading 'To be Opened After my Death,' and the letter might be placed in the desk." This page was neither *signed nor dated* . . . . Was this nonetheless actually a testamentary disposition, a last "will" . . . ? (30)

Barfod's indecision over whether the slip of paper is Kierkegaard's last will or not turns partially on the kinds of paper Kierkegaard wrote on (not just the absence of signature and date). The editors add that "the page or slip of paper that had been found—and it was really no more than that—was a small piece of thin writing paper, which had once been white but was now yellow and frayed at the edges, one of which had been carelessly torn off at an angle. It certainly did not look like a literary testament" (Cappelørn, 2003, 30). Barfod as editor effectively becomes a Kierkegaardian character, basing his judgment of the meaning of an unsigned and undated piece of writing on the kind of paper it is written on, just as Eremita divides the undated, unsigned papers into two groups based on the kind of paper the texts are written on in *Either/Or*: "The one was written on a kind of letter-vellum, in quarto, with a rather wide margin. . . . The other was written on full sheets of beehive paper with ruled columns such as legal documents and the like are written on." (Preface, 7)

It gets better. Barfod examined several sealed packets and letters the previous editor Henrik Lund had not inspected. He found among them a letter addressed to Rasmus Nielsen, but "he saw that the seal had been broken and that the envelope was empty" (Cappelørn, 2003, 37). As the editors of *Written Images* say without a trace of irony, Barfod was reduced to a quite unKierkegaardian "either/or": "One of two things had to be assumed: *either* that the letter in its final

form, after all, granted Rasmus Nielsen 'the right of publication,' or that, despite having been granted such right, Nielsen had not wished to take on the task" (37). In the preface to his edition of Kierkegaard's posthumous works, Barfod assumes that Kierkegaard had set the papers in order with "zeal to protect them against destruction and dispersal. There is evidence to the effect that he not only considered the possibility that they would be published at some point but also that he clearly assumed this would happen" (Cappelørn, 2003, 53). Yet Barfod is no better able to edit the posthumous papers than Victor Eremita was able to edit the papers he found in the secret drawer of his writing desk. Barfod, and, I would suggest, all editors of Kierkegaard's posthumous papers, are pre-programmed paradoxically by Kierkegaard's own publications to misread or not read the unpublished papers Kierkegaard left closed up in his desk in order to render them readable, publishable, marketable. [liii]

The end was that I promised not to insist on being an author. . . I . . . reserved for myself permission to venture to write "Prefaces." ... She accepted the proposal, perhaps with the idea that one could not write a preface without writing a book. . . .  
—Kierkegaard, *Prefaces*, 12.

#### Item No. 10: Sacking the Envelope: Curtiuser and Curtiuser, or, a Cabinet of Curtiusities (Canvas sacks)

It recalls what Goethe, again, already said of literature, even if it be *Weltliteratur*, namely, that is was "the fragment of fragments"  
—Jacques Derrida, *Demeure: Fiction and Testimony* (2000), 45. [liv]

Die ausländische wissenschaftliche Literatur der Kriegs- und Nachkriegsjahre ist mir bis auf verschwindende Ausnahmen nicht zugänglich gewesen. Auch die Bonner Universitätsbibliothek ist seit 1944 in folge eines Bombenangriffs teils unbenutzbar, teils verbrannt. Ich habe daher manches Zitat nicht mehr vergleichen, manche Quelle nicht mehr einsehen können. Aber wenn die literature 'das fragment der Fragmente' ist (Goethe), muss ein Versuch wie der vorliegende erst recht den Charakter des Fragmentarischen tragen.

[During the war and postwar years, I lost sight of foreign literary criticism after it vanished and was thus inaccessible to me. Also, as a consequence of an air raid in 1944, parts of the Bonn University Library were unusable or burnt. I could no longer check various citations or consult many sources. But if literature is "the fragment of fragments" (Goethe), an attempt like this one in particular must exhibit a fragmentary character.]  
— E. R. Curtius, "Vorwort," in *Europaisches Literatur und Lateinische Mittelalter*, 1947 (my translation; not translated in the English edition of 1953, which has a new foreword specific to it).

To file: (1) "I could . . . file," *break into* the figure in yet another way. Still by rubbing, to be sure, and scraping, but this time according to the obliqueness of the metal teeth, molars against millstones. But (2) the aggression which thus reduces the surface is destined to polish, make delicate, adjust, inform, beautify, still *save the truth* of the body in straining it, purifying it, from it any uncleanness and useless excrescences. The taking away of the unclean has the virtue of laying bare and catharsis.

—Jacques Derrida, "Unsensing the Subjectile," in *The Secret Art of Antonin Artaud* (1998), 140.

Having considered the figuring of the writing desk in Kierkegaard's pseudonymously published and anonymously authored *Either/Or*, we may now examine what happens when a philologist orders papers. In his essay "Goethe as Administrator," E. R. Curtius organizes Goethe's writing practices in relation to his filing practices. According to Curtius, Goethe carried out various kinds of business and legal tasks the same way he wrote his literary and scientific texts, namely, by filing them. Early in his essay, Curtius quotes a witness who wrote: "You will never find single sheets lying around in his presence; if they do not fit in anywhere, he will paste up a capsule out of a sheet of paper, write a heading on it, and not until then do they become (illegible)." Curtius linearizes this process as follows: "The transaction of business through administrative channels into several phases. Goethe begins with a schema." This is followed by a "draft," which is then "supplemented." Then the final "redaction" is "engrossed." The execution of a written decree is called "expeditions." An inventory is kept of all incoming and outgoing papers (63).

Curtius understands Goethe's auto-archiving practices not in relation to the "real" documents (his essay stems from his reading a recently published book of Goethe's papers, not from a visit to the archive) but in relation to Goethe's technical language and style. By adopting a philological method in organizing Goethe's papers, Curtius is able to reconstruct a narrative of all of Goethe's life in relation to certain models and techniques of "filing." Curtius "reads" Goethe's life and works by turning him into a museum piece, taking him out of a file cabinet of curiosities, as it were, by acting as a curator of a "museum of language and script", pointing out the "old-fashioned and amusing" style Goethe uses in his "administrative language. Agenda and exhibenda, regisitrandia and propopenda, Tecturen and Reposituren march past, so that it is a joy to behold" (65). Curtius interjects his own comments on Goethe's technical terms, using the metaphor of the "specimen" to single out one word, *loculamenta*, for special appreciation and analysis: "My greatest pleasure, however, is in the *loculamenta*. This word is a specimen of rare magnificence. I can verify its use only once. In Seneca and Pliny it means bookshelf, in Goethe the compartment of a filing cabinet" (65). By reading Goethe's administrative practice through "the prickly Latin words of Goethe's administrative language" (65), Curtius is able to string together lists and quotations from Goethe to show how he administered not only his papers but his life: "Goethe has long since ceased merely to administer affairs of state. He administers his own existence."

Goethe is in effect a self-filing system. In a letter he wrote to Schiller: "For that reason I have made files for myself and have had all sorts of published papers as I just happen to come across . . . entered into them; I also file what I see and observe as well as my conclusions of the moment. I then file the new information and instruction with the other documents, and so materials are obtained which ought to remain sufficiently interesting to me in future as a history of outer and inner events" (67). Curtius moves from a discussion of Goethe's use of the word "*loculamenta*" as a technical term for filing cabinet compartment, into a discussion of it as a metaphor that nearly overcomes the sublime (the Himalayas overshadow Mount Blanc, as it were), and then to Goethe's autobiographical account of his own filing practices. Goethe turns himself into a "repository of Goethe's repository" (66). One box can be neatly placed inside another.

Near the end of his essay, Curtius notes that as Goethe got older, he had a hard time keeping up with his own auto-archiving practices, and became reluctant to make decisions: "it became uncommonly difficult in his later years to make decisions. . . if quick decisions were unavoidable, indeed, if the instances demanding them piled up, he would readily

become sullen" (70; 71). Moreover, Goethe stopped reading his newspapers but he didn't throw them out either. Instead, he ordered his servants to tie them up and store them. And a developmental narrative produces problems for Curtius's inventive philological account of Goethe's self-administration. Curtius meets two stumbling blocks, the first of which is a missing Goethe lexicon.

The lexicon is needed to resolve a storage question: "Every system of registration implies accumulation and for that reason also requires a method of elimination," Curtis writes; "Mere 'reposition' is not enough. What has become superfluous must be disposed of." In Goethe's case, Curtius cannot decide what Goethe means by "dispose": does it mean reorganize or eliminate? "Since we still do not possess a lexicon of Goethe's vocabulary, I dare not decide, of course, which procedure is meant by the word "dispose" in the following entries: the destruction of documents or the dispatch of business" (71).

The other philological problem Curtius faces involves the material nature of a sack in which Goethe purportedly carried the manuscript of *Faust* written on scraps of paper. When quoting the anecdote about Goethe dumping the mss of *Faust* out of a sack, he pauses to translate the meaning of the word "sack" into its paper form. Curtius insists that the sack is not made of canvas but of paper, the sack being a "folder," a "pouch" or "capsule" serving as envelopes. [lv] In the Kierkegaard archives, there is a canvas sack now emptied of its paper contents. The question, then, is why Curtius insists that the "sack" was made of paper.

### Item 10: Derrida Mourning the Posthumously Published: Writing Off the Title

Can we imagine a book without a title? We can, but only up to the point when we will have to name it and thus also to classify it, deposit it in an order, put it in a catalog, or a series, or a taxonomy. It is difficult to imagine, or at any rate to deal with, a book that is neither placed nor collected together under a title bearing its name, its identity, the condition of its legitimacy and of copyright.

—Derrida, "The Book to Come," *Paper Machine*, 7.

The philological and philosophical questions raised by the posthumous publication of Derrida's letter to Dean Cicerone have also hitherto gone untheorized, as it were, because of the manner in which people write in relation to his biological death. There are several reproductions of manuscript pages in the French book entitled *Derrida* by L'Herne, a 628 page book containing some unpublished work by Derrida (most of which had been published in English, it turns out) and various eulogies. It's a strange publication, in that it came out in 2004, the year of Derrida's death. Since Derrida died October 8, it is possible that the book came out before his death. In any case, the book was compiled and edited with the event of its posthumous publication in mind before Derrida was dead.

We have already begun to see how Derrida did not read his own archivalization and the pre-posthumous exhibition of some its materials at UCI in 2002. In the wake of his death in 2004, Derrida's mourners have not read Derrida's "close/d reading" either. For example, in "Mourning Jacques Derrida," Judith Butler puts Derrida's writings in a conventional sequence, reading the "later" writings as acts of mourning:

Much of Derrida's later work is dedicated to mourning, though he offers his acts of public mourning as a posthumous gift, for instance, in *The Work of Mourning* published in 2001. There he tries to come to terms with the death of other writers and thinkers through reckoning his debt to their words, indeed, their texts; his own writing constitutes an act of mourning, one that he is perhaps, *avant la lettre*, recommending to us as a way to begin to mourn this thinker who not only taught us how to read, but gave the act of reading a new significance and a new promise. (2004)

Even as she uses *The Work of Mourning* as an exemplary case of how Derrida taught us how to read and to understand

reading in almost messianic terms, Butler closes down reading by making it seem to be an activity we all understand and do the same way.

## Item 12: (Floppy discs; notepads; backs of grocery receipts)

In my view, *The Work of Mourning* is a perfect text in which to reread Derrida's grammatology as posthumography because of the way its editing and publication, in two different translations, before and after Derrida's death, bears on the relation of its title and promise to posthumous publication and close/d reading. *The Work of Mourning* is not a translation of a book Derrida wrote and published in French but a collection of eulogies he published separately, collected, translated, and edited by American scholars. I will limit my discussion to Derrida's essay entitled ". . . . ." on a posthumously published essay by Sarah Kofman entitled "Conjuring Death: Remarks on the Anatomy Lesson of Doctor Nicolas Tulp (1632)" and the republication of the essay ". . . . ." as the "Introduction" to *Selected Writings: Sarah Kofman*, in which Kofman's essay "Conjuring Death" also appears (as the final chapter of the volume). The publishing and translation history has a rather odd chronology about it, but I will proceed in a traditional linear fashion, beginning with Kofman's essay. A headnote to the endnotes of that essay explains that it "was originally published in *La part de l'oeil* 11 (1995): 41-46." The editors of *Selected Writings* translate a note from the original French version of the essay that includes a story about its posthumous publication as a promise kept from beyond the grave.

Note from the editors of *La part de l'oeil*: "Sarah Kofman kept her word, as she always did. She had agreed to contribute to this issue of *La part de l'oeil* and had suggested analyzing the relationship between the body and the book in a painting by Rembrandt. Her friend Alexandre Kyritsos was kind enough to look for the manuscript and send it to us. Here it is, then, just as Sarah left it to us [the lost mss returns as a legacy, in pristine condition, even if she didn't send it]. From his conversations with Sarah Kofman, Alexandre Kyritsos related a few details that deserve to be recalled here because they are part of a history of this text and thus part of its reading and interpretation. [Now we get a quotation within a quotation]. 'Sarah emphasized that this painting of the cadaver and the book, both of them open and offered to the gazes of the doctors surrounded by objects situated in a play of light, offered, quite beyond the conventions of the genre, a representation of the scientific method. The book, a sum and source of knowledge, at once confronted and supported by materiality in experimentation, gives a new impetus to the discourse of science, its texts and its commentaries.'" (237)

The American editors translate and relocate the note at the same time as they recite it.

Before we turn specifically to Derrida's essay on Kofman's essay, I need to explain first how its reading turns on the way *The Work of Mourning* has been edited. In their introduction, the editors rather unsuccessfully explain what they and have not published in terms of a distinction they draw between Derrida's public and private writings. On the one hand, all of the texts in the book can be collected: "We hope to make even more apparent the ways in which the oeuvre or corpus of Derrida has, to cite Proust once more, come to resemble 'a huge cemetery in which on the majority of tombs the names are effaced and can no longer be read,' a cemetery where some of the names are nonetheless legible because of these acts of mourning and friendship, even if these names mask or refer to others that have long been obscured" (4). The editors admit in a footnote placed at end of this sentence that "Derrida might find such a claim highly problematic." But they refer to a citation – that they do not give in their footnote – by Derrida in an essay on Sartre to justify themselves: Derrida, the editors state, "has cited a similar phrase" to "the well-known phrase of Proust" (4) cited by Jean-Paul Sartre.

Yet in the introduction, at the end of the sentence that follows the sentence in which the editors cite Proust, they strip his description of a cemetery of the very question of readability so central to his sentence ("the names are effaced and can no longer be read": "volumes [of Derrida's oeuvre have been] worked over like a landscape, or, indeed, like a cemetery" (4). The Derrida cemetery simile called up by the editors remains fully legible, as the bolded names of the dead people in the table of contents and the seemingly unauthored gravestone-like biographies that buttress – even as they may confuse – the reader by disconnecting, through page layout and paratext, the authors from their essays. The Derrida oeuvre is not entirely open, but partly closed.

This totalizing move bizarrely depends not only on not publishing the "private" essays (which could easily be justified by

the fact that they have already been translated), but on not suggesting that the writings they have collected are remnants, not a finished cemetery, but an anti-cemetery, which requires that the book be read with the other writings on mourning they have not collected. But just what have the editors collected? They divide up what they again call these "very personal texts" (3) into those that may be collected without risking "a sort of morbid taste of shameless curiosity" and excluding from "this series of public texts about public figures those texts that mourn private figures, such as family members, even though [such] works have been published, and made public, and probably could not in all rigor be completely distinguished from these other texts of mourning." The editors say something peculiar here: they have not published all of Derrida's writings on mourning, omitting the more private ones, even after excusing themselves from doing anything shameful by publishing the other private ones because they have already been published previously. Here, the editors demonstrate their own repression of (un)reading in the illogic of their argument as it self-deconstructs in the prose that writes it out. It thereby writes some of the mourning texts out of the *oeuvre*, writes part of it over, in order to justify, through the cemetery simile, a reading of Derrida in terms of repeated moves and motifs in his essays. They make their book into a tomb rather than a cemetery. They are actually closing the book on Derrida by assuming they are writing a blank check, that Derrida's texts are unreadable because rereading is endlessly rereading and writing is overdrafting, an endless process of rewriting in which the published version is a "cut," an incision that hides the wound, not being footnoted in *The Work of Mourning*.

We may now turn to Derrida's essay on Kofman's essay. The most significant places in which the editors' introductory cemetery metaphor breaks down is in those places related to Derrida's and Kofman's essays. The editors do not give the source of a Derrida article they reference on Sarah Kofmann (p. 28), but do give it in footnotes on pages 166 and 170. The footnote on p. 166 both gets the title of the book wrong and cuts short the full title of the essay. And the editors refer to the translated book *A Sarah Kofman Reader* as published, giving the year of publication as 2001. The book they footnote is actually entitled *Selected Writings: Sarah Kofman* and was not published until 2007.

These kinds of prosaic editorial errors caused by unexpected publication delays are of course quite commonplace and are therefore passed over by readers and unmentioned by reviewers. In the case of *Sarah Kofman: Selected Writings*, however, something out of the ordinary is happening. Derrida does not give his essay on Kofman a title; the title is a series of dots in quotation marks ". . . . . ." Hence, the essay is not like a gravestone at all. Derrida begins his eulogy by discussing the various titles he wanted to give the essay but didn't. He writes off the title, as it were. The unentitled title calls attention to the way Derrida does not lay title to Sarah Kofman in speaking of her posthumously published essay. The title comes into play precisely because it mistitles. It disrupts the function of the introduction as frame as well as the assumed-to-be-given framing relation to the title of Kofman's essay (which is given in full in French on p. 170, which repeats some of what is given in the footnote on p. 168, but shortened in translation).

I utter [four vanishing points] or send them telegraphically, to cast them into the discussion like little dots, elliptical dots or throws of the dice.  
—Jacques Derrida, "The Book to Come," in *Paper Machine*, 25.

#### **Item 15: The Dead Reckoning of Close/d MicroReading (Microscript on the Inside of a Cardboard Box)**

Philology is warm, friendly, and outgoing, the ideal receptionist. She strives to be elegant, but the pressures of her job—long hours, unhinged callers, having always to be alert, listening, and understanding—keep getting in the way. A text is a human voice and, for a medievalist, the words spoken and words heard are from very far away.  
—Roberta Frank, "The Unbearable Lightness of Being a Philologist" (1997), 488.

This philological practice of close/d microreading emerged from the confusion I experienced when I was reading the

introduction to Jacques Derrida's *The Work of Mourning*. [vi] To make clear what I mean by "microreading" and how it relates to my double close/d reading of Kofman and Derrida's essays in what follows, let me depart from my linear exposition for a moment and take you on a detour. I can best explain the posthumography of Derrida's " . . . . . " via a story about how I came to write this essay even though that will involve some repetition of information I have already presented. Please trust me on this one. In the **"Editors' Introduction** [bold in the original]: To Reckon with the Dead: Jacques Derrida's Politics of Mourning," the editors, Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Nass (2001), mention Derrida's essay on Sarah Kofman entitled " . . . . . " without citing it in a footnote (as they do otherwise in the introduction) or giving the title of the journal and relevant information in the body of their text: "In a special issue of a journal dedicated to the memory of Sarah Kofman, Derrida recalls Kofman's comments on Rembrandt's painting *The Anatomy Lesson* in order to describe the very situation in which he and the others participating in the memorial issue have found themselves. Like the doctors attending the anatomy lesson, they are looking at books rather than the body, 'as if, by reading, by observing the signs on the drawn sheet of paper, they were trying to forget, repress, deny, or conjure away death—and the anxiety before death' (176). This, it seems, is the risk the living must always run" (28). I wanted to track down both Kofman's essay on Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson* and Derrida's essay on Kofman's essay, and I initially thought I would have to google the information to do so. But then I looked at the headnote at the bottom of the first page of the essay in *The Work of Mourning* and realized that the editors were citing Derrida's essay in their own edited book, page 176 of *The Work of Mourning*. But the headnote to the essay struck me as odd in its lack of specificity: "Reprinted, with changes, from ' . . . . ,' (168). What exactly were these unspecified "changes," I wondered? Since the editors gave citations both to another English translation of Derrida's essay on Kofman and to the "First French publication," I thought I would check these translations to see what had been changed.

Without realizing it, I was reading the introduction to *The Work of Mourning* as a philologist and detective in order to resolve my confusion. I then googled the title of the Kofman book given by the editor as "A Sarah Kofmann Reader," but the book did not turn up. I searched the same title online in the UF library, which didn't have it, then in the World Catalog, which also didn't have it. I then tried Amazon.com, and found a book entitled *Selected Writings: Sarah Kofman*. This was the book I wanted. I saw at a glance that the more recent *Selected Writings: Sarah Kofman* version of Derrida's essay was much longer than the one I had read in *The Work of Mourning*. So I double-checked *The Work of Mourning* version. My time as a comparative philologist served, the detective job ended now I had tracked down the "missing" – because mistitled and misdated – Kofman book. While double-checking *The Work of Mourning* essay, I realized that I had misread a typographical mark in it. The title of the essay is " . . . . . " The title is a non-title and begins with a discussion of the various titles which Derrida could have given his essay but rejected. In the course of the essay, dots in brackets appear as "[ . . . ]" several times. I had read these bracketed dots, perhaps stupidly, as Derrida's abbreviated citations of his own title, " . . . . . " I had read the various bracketed dots ("[ . . . ]"), in other words, as words, as part of Derrida's text, reading the editor's "[ . . . ]" in relation to Derrida's title, " . . . . . " I saw now that each "[ . . . ]" were ellipses the editors had inserted to indicate, very indirectly, that the "changes" to which they referred in their headnote were actually cuts they had made to Derrida's essay. (All of the other essays in *The Work of Mourning*, incidentally, are uncut).

I noticed that in *Selected Writings* (Albrecht, 2007), the editor gives the essay a new title, replacing Derrida's original " . . . . . " with the title "Introduction." There is no reference to the original French title in Derrida's *The Work of Mourning* (2001). There is no mention of Derrida's original title in *Selected Writings*. It is conspicuously omitted in the headnote to the "Introduction" – "The French version of this text was published in *Les cahiers du Grif* 3 (1997), 131-65, in an issue devoted to Sarah Kofman" (256). This is almost the same information provided in the headnote to *The Work of Mourning* version, the significant difference between the editions being that this one refers only to "the French version," not the "first French version," implying that there was only one French version. A kind of phantom citation effect was being produced here. Other versions not specified were mentioned in one headnote but not the other.

*Ghost-writer*. En 1962, j'essayais de convaincre Roland Barthes de recueillir ses articles, préfaces et autres essais alors dispersés, don't j'assurais qu'ils circulaient déjà en *samizdat*, comme les poèmes de Prévert avant la

publication du volume de *Paroles*. Pour des raisons obscures, mais ou pouvait entrer cette comparaison probablement malvenue, il résistait à une suggestion que je n'étais pourtant, je suppose, pas seul à lui faire. Je crus pouvoir vaincre cette résistance par cet argument, à mes yeux décisive: "Si vous étiez mort, quelqu'un devrait bien le faire à votre place." À sa grimace, je pus comprendre qu'il ne partageait pas mon opinion sur la qualité de mon argument, mais il ajouta aussitôt: "Si vous permettez, je préfère m'en charge moi-même." J'avais apparemment réussi à le convaincre en le choquant. Il se prétendait aussitôt tendit ensuite incapable de retrouver la trace de ses textes, et me proposa d'y contribuer, ce qui revenait en somme à simuler entre nous l'hypothèse fatale qu'il venait de repousser. Piqué au vif, je lui remis, un ou deux semaines plus tard, une liste lourdement lacunaire qu'il feignit d'approuver en me qualifiant de "merveilleux bibliographe" . . . au dernier moment il m'écrivait qu'il se sentait maintenant incapable de rédiger le texte, à imprimer en quatrième page de couverture, qu'on appelait au Sueil, délicatement, un rempli . . . Flatté de cette nouvelle mission, je m'exécutai de nom mieux. Toujours bienveillant, il déclara mon rempli "parfait". . . en 1964, un journal du soir publia un article de Raymond Ricard contre le *Sur Racine*. . . Barthes me demanda de rédiger . . . un brouillon de réplique. De plus en plus flatté, je produis . . . un sorte de premier jet. Il commença par faire quelques amendments . . . qu'il finit par sagement laisser tomber . . . l'article de Picard incita à donner lui même un réponse de fin qui ne devait rien à mon présumé avant-texte. Mon rôle de *ghost-writer* s'arrêta donc là, pour le plus grand bénéfice de chacun.

[*Ghost-writer*. In 1962, I tried to convince Roland Barthes to collect and publish together articles, prefaces, and other essays which I assured him were already circulating separately as *samizdat*, like Prévert's poems before the publication of his volume, *Songs*. . . I believed I could overcome his resistance with an argument that in my eyes was decisive: "If you were dead, someone would do it even better in your place." Seeing him grimace, I could tell that he did not share my opinion of the quality of my argument, but he added immediately: "with your permission, I prefer to take charge of it myself." I had



apparently succeeded in convincing him by shocking him. He then pretended to be unable to find any trace of his texts, and proposed that I contribute to the project, which simulated in our relationship the fatal hypothesis he had dismissed. Cut to the quick, I gave him a week or two later, a list so filled with lacunae that he feigned approval of my qualifications as a "marvelous bibliographer." . . . Always benevolent, Barthes declared my abstract [remplis] perfect. . . . Declared my filler to be perfect. . . . In 1964 an evening newspaper published an article by Raymond Picard attacking *On Racine*. . . . Barthes asked me to write the rough draft of a reply. More and more flattered, I produced a sort of first draft. He began to make some revisions but in the end wisely let it go. . . . Picard's article had incited him to write a response himself that in the end had nothing to do with the text that I had drafted. My role as *ghost-writer* ended there, to the great benefit of all.]

—Gérard Genette, *Bardadrac* (2006), 151-52; 153. (My translation)

## Item 16: Deadnotes

Most people might have stopped reading along these biographical lines as soon as they found what they were looking for, at the point they stopped needing to play detective. Confusion has been followed by clarification due to the reader's correction of the kinds of errors that are commonplace in all academic publications, some might think, especially in those of a writer as prolific as Derrida. So just start reading and be done with this "parareading" or double reading of the bibliographic paratext I've been doing. Ordinarily, I would follow this advice. As I read the essays by Derrida and Kofman, however, I found myself reading the essays while continuing to read the bibliographic paratext with them: I realized, as I double-checked-read them with each other, that I was reading them posthumographically. The non-titled Derrida essay I was reading begins by talking about titles as a symptom of how Derrida was being gathered up and split up in the translation of selected writings, a symptom the consequences of which could only be read if the essays were given a double reading of text and paratext (title, author, and bibliography).

Both versions of ". . . . ." are edited in different but similarly strange ways. The editors of *The Work of Mourning* write that "the title [" . . . . ."] was chosen after the talk was first given; it was originally delivered without a title. . . . Translated...for this volume. First French publication..." (2001a, 216). The headnote does not give the French title of the essay and does not explain who chose the title "Lyotard and *Us*;" Derrida, the editors of the French version, or the editors or translator of the English version in *The Work of Mourning* (2001a)? Near the very beginning of the essay, Derrida writes: "I shall not propose any title. I have none to propose. . . . Let us make as if, for us, the title had to be missing . . . ." (216-17). The title of Derrida's essay on Lyotard is at once there, at the top of the page, and not there: its having been missing also goes missing in the headnote. [\[vii\]](#)

Derrida's essay ". . . . ." in *The Work of Mourning* is reprinted and retitled as the "Introduction" (in English) to *Selected Writings: Sarah Kofman* (Albrecht, 2007), in its much longer and complete form but without the footnote in *The Work of Mourning* identifying its source. In the preface to *Selected Writings*, the editors refer to "Conjuring Death" without its subtitle (Albrecht, 2007, x), even though the table of contents gives the title and subtitle. "The volume introduction is translated and published by permission of Jacques Derrida." The introduction is not properly titled (it is a reintroduction of an essay originally titled ". . . . ." but is now given a title by the editors called "Introduction" to which they do not

refer as the "Introduction" in their acknowledgments (followed by "Editor's Preface," which ends "We encourage readers of this book to take as their guide Jacques Derrida's insistence in his introduction that we [quotation from the "Introduction," given without any page number] call it instead the "volume introduction" ("introduction" is not capitalized or put in quotation marks and is hence not a title at all, just a generic term). And the curious passive construction in the final sentence of the "Acknowledgments" makes it seem as if Derrida permitted himself to translate and publish the introduction.

Derrida had been dead three years when *Selected Writings: Sarah Kofman* was published in 2007. Yet the editors of *Selected Writings* do not cough up that information, nor do they acknowledge Jacques Derrida's death (they just point to Derrida's initials in relation to "juvenile delinquent"). The editors repress Derrida's readings of Louis Marin and Kofman as "posthumous / living"; they don't acknowledge the introduction as a posthumous publication, explain that they have given it a new title, or announce it as a restaging of reading Kofman's works more generally. In a similar way, the editors of *The Work of Mourning* (Derrida, 2001a) render the texts readable by comparing Derrida's "oeuvre" to a cemetery and appointing themselves the crypt keepers.

The point of my double micro-clos/e/d-reading of the paratext and text is not to fault the editors for publishing an unnecessarily obscure and confusing book, but instead to say that the book's "bad" editing, if that's what one wants to call it, is highly productive in throwing light on the genre of posthumography: it calls attention to what Derrida is doing and not doing in his essays with titles and the question of entitlement. Editing a collection of his works before his death and republishing a specific work from it after his death raise problems that may be theorized in terms of both biobibliography and thanatobibliography. Editorial headnotes intentionally or in error become "deadnotes," unmarked, unengraved, "grave" markers that cannot be processed, as it were, by editors, and that get forgotten by readers.

Bibliographic information about Kofman and Derrida goes missing in both books because this information would call attention to the hidden wound left in the text by cutting Derrida's corpus. Moreover, it blocks attention to Derrida's biobibliographic reading of the corpus of the dead person he mourns from the vantage point of the dead author's last text, finished or not, in relation to the now missing body of its author. The missing bibliographic information concerning a title in a book of Derrida's writings on mourning and in a book (re)introduced by a now dead person, Derrida, not acknowledged to have died, is symptomatic of a connection between mourning, the gift, and not reading, a connection that becomes audible precisely as interference, as a confusion the reader has to sort out and in the process understand better the evasion of reading as a philological evasion of framing.

Understood in terms of this kind of double (check, please) reading, suggests that the missing title of Derrida's Kofman essay in *The Work of Mourning* follows both from its unarticulated but nevertheless audible demand that it be read (even though Derrida doesn't read it) and from the unannounced, even ghostlier demand that the way it gets lost in translation (and replaced in the Kofman book, resituated as an introduction rather than as one of a series of essays) be read even more closely.

**Codicille.** Au fait, c'est le nom juridique, ou notarial, de ce qu'on appelle plus couramment un post-scriptum, et le choix d'un tel titre pour le présent livre [*Codicille*] désigné rétroactivement le précédent pour le présent livre comme un écrit déjà [*Bardadrac*], à son façon, testamentaire. . . . La présente entrée—que l'on peut lire comme une (nouvelle) sorte de préface intérieure, comme Laurence Sterne en a jadis glissé une entre deux chapitres *Tristram Shandy*. . . constitue donc un plaidoyer, ou au moins une excuse pour cet 'allongement' à ce qui était peut-être un livre de trop. Invité un jour à commenter moi-même, avec le léger recul convenable, le statut générique et la réception critique de

*Bardarac*, cet occasion m'a conduit à remettre mes pas dans mes propres traces, et de fil en aiguille à reprendre et prolonger le propos et le mode de disposition. Le thème autocritique initial—dont on trouve encore ici (par exemples aux entrées . . . *Peritexte*). . . quelques marques en forme de scories, collies, additions, corrections, repentirs, *afterthoughts*, résurgences, méandres accessoires, bras morts ou vifs—a donc tourné peu à peu en "suite" ou en "continuation" de ce qui peut on ne doit en principe être ni poursuivi ni continué —avec la sanction, bien connue des éditeurs, qui attend ce genre de pratique: quelle part du public des *Trois Mousquetaires* a voulu retrouver ses héros vingt ans après? L'improbable lecteur qui m'aurait suivi jusqu' à ce point aurait sans doute déjà compris que ce livre, spin off du précédent, n'est pas essentiellement destiné à d'autres que ceux dudit précédent—de même qu'on *post-scriptum* s'adresse rarement à qui n'aurait pas d'abord lu le texte que l'on affuble de cet après-texte.

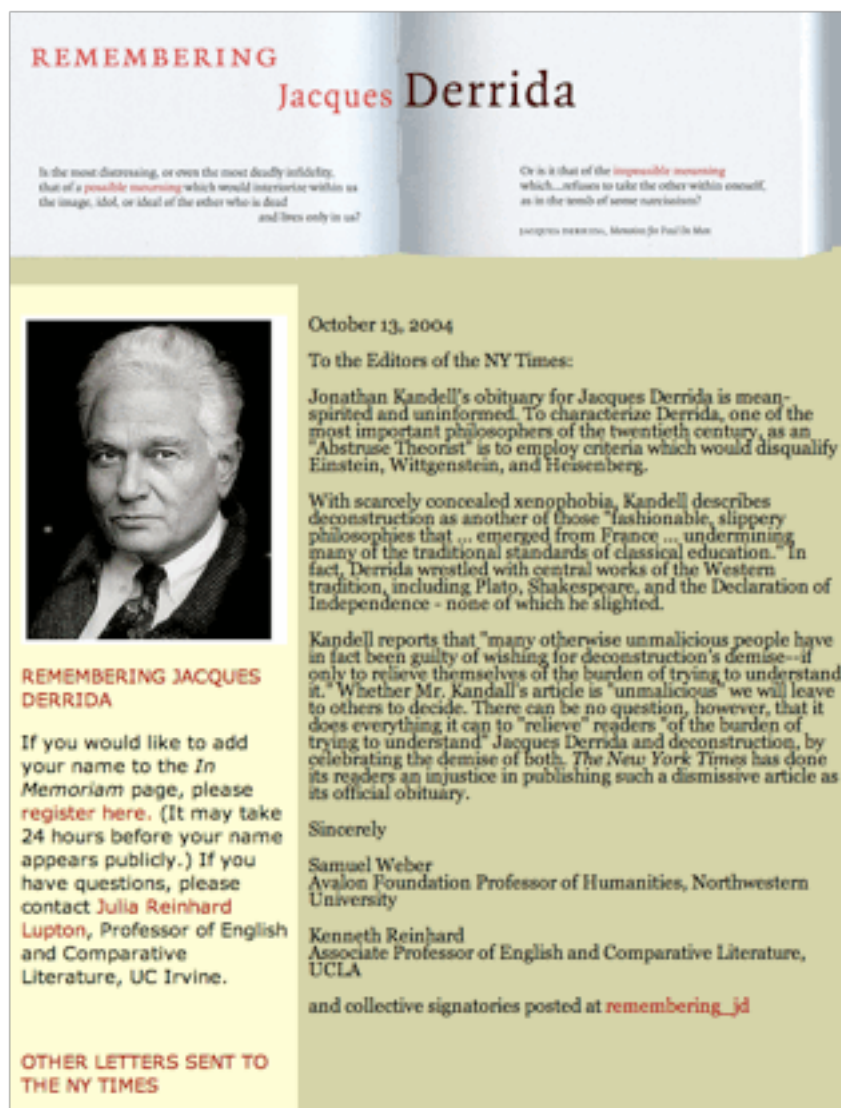
[Codicil. Actually, codicil is a juridical or notarial word for what is commonly called a "post-scriptum," and the choice of the present book's title [*Codicille*] refers retroactively, as it were, to the previous book, presenting the book already written before it [*Bardarac*] as if it were a testament. The present entry—which one can read as a sort of (new) interior preface, like the one Laurence Sterne slipped in between two chapters of *Tristram Shandy*, constitutes, therefore, a plea, or at least an excuse for this personal addition to what is now perhaps a book too much. Invited one day to comment myself on the genre and critical reception of *Bardarac*, I was led, with a suitably light detachment, to follow my own traces and with a needle and thread take up and extend the subject and style of that book. The initial autocritical theme—which one finds extended further here (for example, entries such as "*Peritext*") in the form of dross, scories, additions, corrections, regrets, *afterthoughts*, resurgences, meandering accessories, living and dead arms—and therefore turned little by little into a sequel or continuation of that which does not have the right in principle to be continued with the full knowledge and explicit permission of the editors, that comes with the practice of this genre: how many readers of *The Three Musketeers* wish to

return to their heroes twenty years after? The unlikely reader who has followed me this far will have doubtless understood that this book, a spin-off of the one before it, is not essentially destined to be read by anyone other than those who have read its aforementioned predecessor. Even so, a post-script is rarely addressed to anyone who has not already read the text wearing this ridiculously decked out after-text.

— Gérard Genette, "Codicille," *Codicille* (2009), 69-70. (My translation)

**Item 16C: Remembering the Guest Ghost of DerridaOnline: in the Red and the Black [lviii]**

The icon of a memorial website for Jacques Derrida constructed in response to a negative and, in the view of its critics, disrespectful obituary of Derrida in *The New York Times*, takes the form of a slideshow movie of a book turned open to its first page, providing a more dynamic version of the title page design of the English translation of the about-to-be-turned-by-the-reader title page of Jean-Luc Nancy's *On the Commerce of Thinking* (2009). See Figure 9.



(Figure 9)

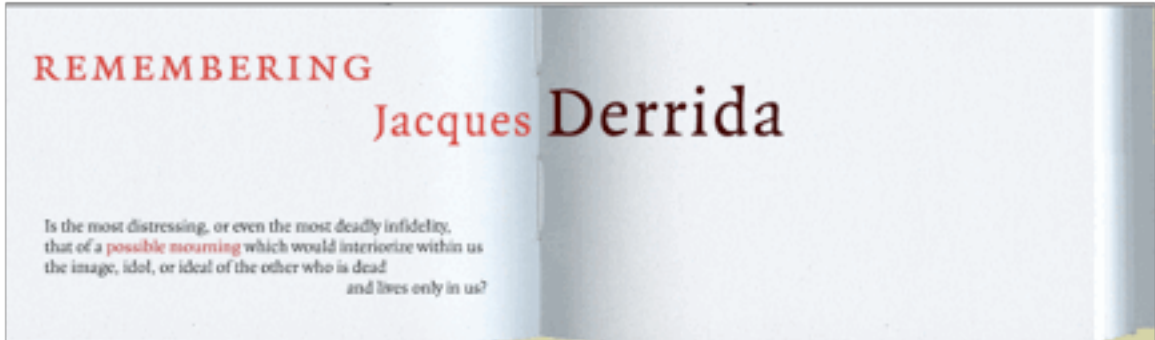
The words "Remembering Jacques" are written in a red font on the left page, and "Derrida" is written in a larger, black font at the top of the right page. "Remembering" is written in capital letters. "Remembering Jacques" remains on the book at all times, but an epigraph in red and black type fades in to the left page and then to the right and then entirely fades out before looping back to the start. The main text on the left page is in black with the words "possible mourning" in red while the main text on the right page is in red, the words "impossible mourning" highlighted in black. (See Figures 10-16)



(Figure 10)



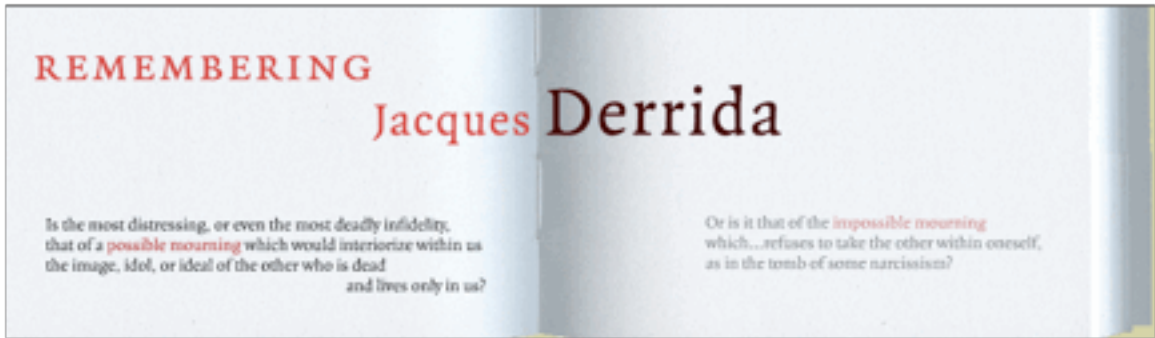
(Figure 11)



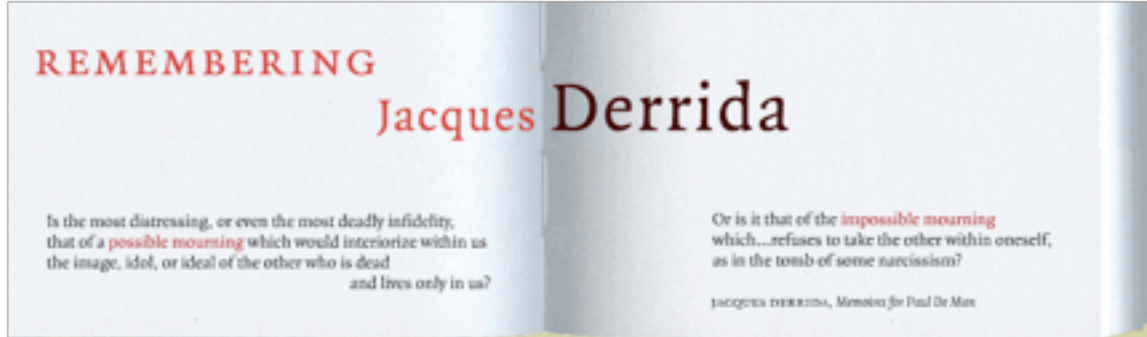
(Figure 12)



(Figure 13)



(Figure 14)

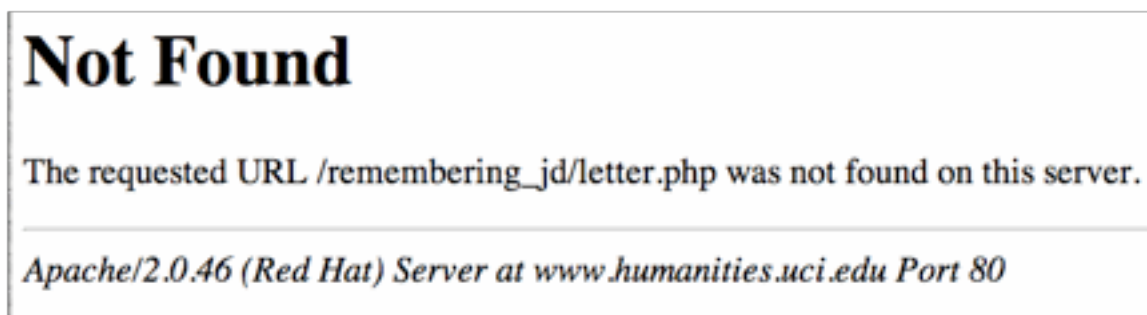


(Figure 15)



(Figure 16)

What kind of book is this slideshow movie modeled on? In some ways, it resembles a guest book that visitors would sign if it were printed on paper. Indeed, there are virtual websites for funerals where people do leave their comments (these often have to be scrubbed, however, as some people leave very negative comments about the deceased). And visitors to the Remembering Jacques website are invited to register: "If you would like to add your name to the *In Memoriam* page, please register here." But if you click on "please register here" you are directed to a "Not Found" webpage. See Figure 17.



(Figure 17)

There is a working link, however, to the "collective signatories posted at [remembering\\_jd](http://remembering_jd)." But the registration is closed, even though it seems to be open. You can't sign your name any more. Or are we to understand the quotation, broken up into two sentences on facing pages with the words "possible mourning" and "impossible mourning" as highlighting a kind of bookkeeping practice, or leaving Derrida in the re/a/d and the black? Is this Derrida's epitaph, his words on Paul de Man, now to be read as words about himself, the book serving as a kind of disguised grave(re)marker, in which Derrida gives an account of himself with instructions to the website's visitors about how he is to be mourned?

I don't think I ever was away from these problems, they were always uppermost in my mind. I have always maintained that one could approach the problems of ideology and by extension the problems of politics only on the basis of critical-linguistic analysis, which had to be done in its own terms, in the medium of language, and I felt I could approach those problems only after having achieved a certain control over those questions. . . . . So that now I

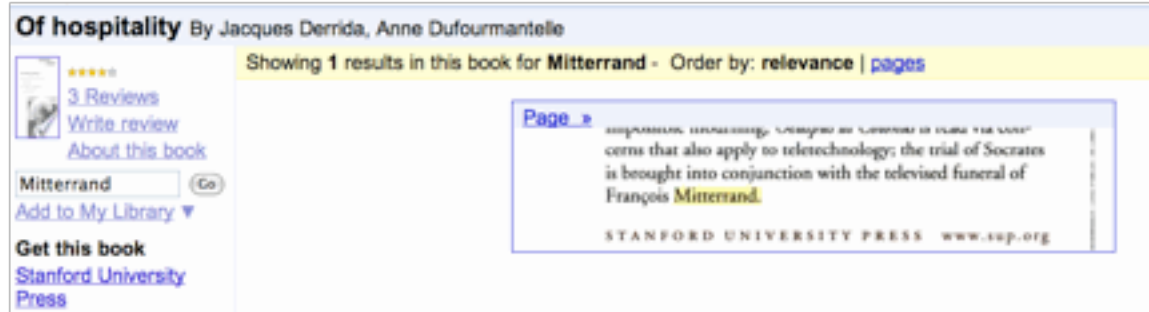
feel to do it a little more openly, though in a very different way than what generally passes as "critique of ideology." It is taking me back to...certain aspects of Heidegger, and I just feel that one has to face therefore the difficulty of certain explicitly political texts. It is also taking me back constantly to problems having to do with theology and with religious discourse, and that's why the juxtaposition of Marx and Kierkegaard as the two main readers of Hegel appears to me as the crux, as the problem one has, in a way, to solve. I have not solved it and the fact that I keep announcing that I am going to do something about it is only to force myself to do so . . . both in the case of Kierkegaard and in the case of Marx. It's taking me . . . back to Hegel and Kant, and I just hope I won't remain stuck in that. So I felt ready to say something about the problem of ideology, not out of a polemical urge. . . . What will come out of it, I just do not know because I do not work that way. What will come out, will come from the texts of Marx and Kierkegaard as I think they will have to be read. And they have to be read from the perspective of critical-linguistic analysis to which those texts have not been submitted. There has been very little on Kierkegaard along those lines and there has been even less on Marx, except, of course, for elements in Althusser, that, I think, go in that direction. But I look forward to seeing what I will produce and know as little about it as anybody else.

—Paul de Man, "An Interview with Paul de Man," in *The Resistance to Theory* (1986), 121.

### **Item 17: Derrida's Deadends? The Book That Almost Arrived? (Notes in a Shoe Box)**

Did part of a Derrida book go missing? Is there a later, complete draft that was not sent to press? Or did an ad copy writer get creative? These questions arise from a contradiction between description on the back cover of *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond* (2000) and the contents of the book itself. The ad copy describes the book's contents as follows:

"'Hospitality' is viewed as a question of what arrives at the borders, in the initial surprise of contact with an other, a stranger, a foreigner. For example, *Antigone* is revisited in light of the question of impossible mourning; *Oedipus at Colonus* is read via concerns that also apply to teletechnology; the trial of Socrates is brought into conjunction with the televised funeral of Francois Mitterrand." Surprisingly, however, there is no mention of the Mitterrand funeral in the book. I reread the book quickly but still could not find the purported discussion of the funeral. I then did an Amazon search confirming my conclusion that there is no such discussion. (See Figure 18)



(Figure 18)

Perhaps we have here a strange bibliographic case of a book that came D.O.A. If so, the case remains (un)open(ed).

"Here There

Open Book, Closed Book

Protestations

Here and there, we find the body and we find the book, the open and the closed book"

—Jacques Derrida, ". . .," in *The Work of Mourning*, 159.

At first I planned to stop immediately after *Either/Or* . . . Then I planned to stop with *Concluding Postscript*. Then I was going to end with *Christian Discourses*.

—Kierkegaard, *Either/Or, Part Two*, Supplement, 446.

Previously, after a certain number of revisions (corrections, erasures, cutting and pasting, Tippex), everything came to a halt—that was enough. . . . With the computer, everything is rapid and easy; so you get to thinking that you can go on revising forever. . . . The book is both the apparatus and the expiration date that makes us have to cut off the computer process, put an end to it. This stop-page dictates the end to us, the copy is snatched away from us—"Here now you must make an end of it"—and there is a date, a limit, a law, a duty, a debt. It has to be transferred to another kind of support. Printing has to happen. For the time being, the book is the moment of this stoppage, the pressure to switch off. The day is coming, will come, when . . .

—Jacques Derrida, "The Word Processor," *Paper Machine* (2005e), 24; 28.

*The Will to Power* is therefore not Nietzsche's book. It is a work fabricated by its editors and it is a false work. . . . Nietzsche was a victim of the inordinate interest we bring to works that come into our possession not by life, but by the death



of their author. How strange that the greatest literary glories of our time should be born of entirely posthumous works: Kafka, Simone Weil, Hopkins; or of works partially posthumous, as is the case with Hölderlin, Rimbaud, Lautréamont, Trakl, Musil, and, in an even crueller sense, Nietzsche. One would like to recommend to writers: leave nothing behind, destroy everything you wish to see disappear; do not be weak, have confidence in no one, for you will necessarily be betrayed one day.

— Maurice Blanchot, "Reflections on Nihilism," in *The Infinite Conversation* (1993), 139. [\[lix\]](#)

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My thanks to Craig Saper for his continued interest in our *Rhizomes* project and to Julian Yates for his many productive insights about deconstruction in our ongoing conversation. I would also like to thank Jean-Michel Rabaté for his advice on several of my French translations and for Peter Krapp for his advice on my translation of E. R. Curtius's Foreword to the German edition of *Europaisches Literatur und Lateinische Mittelalter* (1948). My thanks also to James Newlin for reading an earlier version of this essay and offering a number of astute observations for revision.

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## Notes

[\[i\]](#) Cited in Cappelørn 2003, 30. As far as I am aware there is no secondary literature on the topic of Kierkegaard's posthumous publication, just on his (pseudonymous) authorship and publication history.

[\[ii\]](#) "Proust's 'paperoles' were slips of paper, envelopes, or anything at hand, on which he wrote fragments that were then incorporated into his manuscripts." (Lévy 2010). It is hard to know how seriously to take Derrida. Michel Foucault does use the example of Nietzsche in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) – "A collection of texts can be designated by the sign of a proper name. But this designation ... is not a homogenous function. Does the name of an author designate in the same way a text that he has published under his name, a text that he has presented under a pseudonym, another found after his death in the form of an unfinished draft, and another that is merely a collection of jottings, a notebook? The establishment of a complete oeuvre presupposes a number of choices that are difficult to justify or even to formulate: is it enough to add to the texts published by the author those that he intended for publication but which remained unfinished by the fact of his death? Should one also include all his sketches and first drafts, with their corrections and crossings out? ... And what status should be given to letters, notes, reported conversations, transcriptions of what he said made by those present at the time, in short, to that vast mass of verbal traces left by an individual at his death, and which speak in an endless confusion so many different languages? ... the same relation does not exist between the name Nietzsche on the one hand and the youthful autobiographies, the scholastic dissertations, the philological articles, *Zarathustra*, *Ecce Homo*, the letters, the last postcards signed 'Dionysos' or 'Kaiser Nietzsche', and the numerable notebooks with their jumble of laundry bills and sketches for aphorisms" (1972, 23-24). It's not clear if Derrida is alluding to Foucault or not. In any case, this is a moment of close/d reading. On the value of the early notebooks, see Porter 2000. Porter does not address the philological issues of publishing Nietzsche's writings, however. See also the ad copy for the Cambridge edition of Friedrich Nietzsche, *Unpublished Writings from the Period of Unfashionable Observations*, Volume 11: "These notebooks represent important transitional documents in Nietzsche's intellectual development, marking, among other things, the shift away from philological studies toward unabashed cultural criticism."

[\[iii\]](#) Maurice Blanchot's brilliant essay is devoted to the publication of Kafka's *Complete Works*. See also Blanchot 1997 and Blanchot 1982. On the continuing controversy over Kafka's papers, see Bronner 2008. See also Blanchot's 2003

essay on Jacques Rivière rejecting some of Antonin Artaud's poems but then publishing them in the context of a narrative about their prior rejection.

[iv] Apparently self-evident distinctions between public and private are of course, anything but, as may be seen in the furor that followed the publication of Shesgreen 2009. In the headnote, Shesgreen writes: "I am grateful to M. H. Abrams for permission to quote from his private correspondence" (2009, 317). Shesgreen devotes a section of his essay to explaining how he gained access to Meyer Abram's papers concerning the publication of the Norton Anthology (2009, 299-302). Shesgreen frequently cites emails Abrams had had printed out by secretary as he did not use email. The mostly negative responses to Shesgreen's article that appeared in the following issue of *Critical Inquiry* as "An Exchange on The Norton Anthology of English Literature and Sean Shesgreen" were remarkable less because of their fierceness than because of they way to turned on the question of publishing part of Abram's papers, which included papers he did not write. Here are excerpts from two of the six responses:

V

M. H. Abrams

I had no intention to reply to Sean Shesgreen's "Canonizing the Canonizer" on the assumption that its defects were so glaring as to be self-evident ("Canonizing the Canonizer: A Short History of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*," *Critical Inquiry* 35 [Winter 2009]: 293–318). Since the article, however, has become the subject of public discussion, I feel that, as the protagonist in Shesgreen's narrative, I need to put on record my account of the relevant events. When, after preliminary correspondence, Shesgreen appeared at my office at Cornell in the spring of 2004, I did not hesitate, as a courtesy to a fellow scholar, to allow him full access to my files. And, at his specific request a few years later, I freely granted him written permission "to quote as you wish from my correspondence about the anthology" ... (Abrams, 2009, 1079).

VII

Stephen Greenblatt

Rarely do editors of literary journals confront ethical issues. You did, in deciding to publish "Canonizing the Canonizer: A Short History of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*" (*Critical Inquiry* 35 [Winter 2009]: 293–318). Sean Shesgreen asked M. H. Abrams, a giant of twentieth-century literary criticism, to let him see his personal papers from the time he shaped the first edition of *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. Abrams brought him a mass of private correspondence. But the papers Shesgreen first examined—the ones relevant to his inquiry—contained, for him, "nothing useful" (p. 317). Then he realized that Abrams (born in 1912) did not use email. Instead, his secretary printed out all emails sent to him. These included exchanges between other Norton editors and between these editors and the Norton staff, exchanges on which, as a courtesy, Abrams had been cc'd. These emails—"candid, forthcoming, and spontaneous" (p. 317)—Shesgreen set out to exploit. But he was reading other people's mail. "You have my permission," Abrams graciously wrote him, "to quote as you wish from my correspondence about the anthology" (p. 317). "My correspondence": Shesgreen knew perfectly well that Abrams was not referring to private correspondence written between others. But, by allowing himself some interpretive license—Malvolio calls it "crushing" the text a little to make it bow to his wishes—Shesgreen held onto what he needed. He wrapped himself, for good measure, in the legal doctrine of "fair use," presumably with an eye to the possibility of a lawsuit. (Greenblatt, 2009, 1083)

Greenblatt runs together two kinds of taboos regarding writing not intended to be published—first, reading other people's mail (ignoring the distinction between public—to be read—and private—not to be read—correspondence) and second, talking about authors' royalties. Shesgreen is interested, however, in quantifying rumor, corridor talk, a mode of speech (and writing, in the case of email or texting) that usually leaves no traces but that has to be processed if one is going to

understand writing in its institutional setting. Unpublished papers bear some similarity to this speech in that the distinction between private and public remains in place yet ceases to matter over time, as if the dead could be respected even when very personal letters written by someone like Martin Heidegger or Hannah Arendt are eventually published.

[v] See, for example, the wonderfully documented book on Walter Benjamin's archive by Ursula Marx, 2007.

[vi] On the acquisition of an archive of F. Scott Fitzgerald's unfinished screenplays, see McGrath 2004.

[vii] Derrida writes: "Pour se livrer a la force de ce coup, il faut exposer, je veux dire exhiber cruellement cette exhibition" (1996, 18). He clarifies more fully just what is being exposed, namely, the museological archive: "Pour les raison que j'ai dites, demeurance du coup redoublé, cette éternité expose le sort a l'archive muséographqie, mais cela, qui fut redouté par Artaud, n'a pas empêché celui-ci, justement, de dénocer le Musée comme l'instance maléfique, comme une conjuration qu'il fallait par avance contre-attaquer et contre-conjurer" (1996, 75). [For the reasons I have already stated, this enduring [demuerance] redoubled blow, this eternity exposes the records of the museological archive, not, as Atraud feared, to stop them, exactly, but to denounce the Museum as a malevolent example, like a conjuration that makes in advance a counter-attack and counter-conjuration. [My translation]

[viii] Notable modern artists who have made archiving an aesthetic practice include the painters Andy Warhol and Ray Johnson and the performance artist Marina Abramovic. See also Spieker 2007; and on the document turned into a work of art, see Vismann 2008.

[ix] See Rich 2009 for this account of the restored edition: "*A Moveable Feast*, first published in 1964, was edited by Mary Hemingway, the author's fourth and final wife. The last chapter of the book, 'There is Never Any End to Paris,' described the dissolution of Hemingway's marriage to his first wife, Hadley, and his affair with Pauline, the woman who eventually became his second wife. In that chapter, Hadley was the wronged innocent, Pauline the wily predator and Hemingway the regretful victim. But it turns out that Mary cut some sections in which Hemingway showed much more remorse, took responsibility for the affair and alluded to the happiness he felt with Pauline. Now, in a new edition of the book edited by Sean Hemingway, the grandson of Hemingway and Pauline, that material has been restored in a new chapter, excerpted here, called 'The Pilot Fish and the Rich.'"

[x] In the history of the book studies, a certain naïve materiality has been lodged in cultural studies, or material culture studies, focused on the "materials" of printing, even among the more sophisticated work such as Chartier 2008. For a cultural history of reading furniture, see Jovanovic 2009 and the much more comprehensive study by Schon 1987.

[xi] See De Man 1996 and De Man 1996a. Derrida comments that "though de Man does not do so himself, I would say that there is a materiality without matter, which, moreover, allies itself very well with a formality without form... and without formalism... De Man in his thinking of materiality it seems to me, is no more materialist than he is formalist" (Derrida 2001, 350).

[xii] Understanding the genre of posthumography entails rerouting Jacques Derrida's distinction between arche-writing (the trace) of grammatology and (alphabetic, linear) "writing in the ordinary sense" and opens up a broader analysis of boundaries of publication by making legible some extraordinary (perhaps so only because extraordinarily prosaic and hence illegible) aspects of "ordinary" writing. See Derrida 2005b.

[xiii] On de Man's use of the phrase "writing machine" and related metaphors, see de Man 1979 and de Man 1984, esp. 288. And see de Man's dense comments that "the materiality (as distinct from the phenomenality) that is thus revealed ... becomes a certain *there* and a certain *then* which can become a certain *here* and a *now* in the reading "now" taking place, is not the materiality of the mind or of time ... nonce of which exist, except in the figure of prosopopeia – but the materiality of an inscription. Description, it appears, was a device to conceal inscription. Inscription is neither a figure, nor a sign, nor a cognition, nor a desire, nor a hypogram, nor a matrix ... ." (1986, 51). To my knowledge, Derrida never mentions his writing desks. The cover illustration of Jacques Derrida's *The Post Card* shows Plato sitting writing at a desk while Socrates leans over his shoulder. It is not hard to imagine a Derrida museum, like the Freud museum, with his writing desks, his computers, his typewriting ribbons, and so on all on display. Derrida comments that "some computers will become museum pieces" in "The Word Processor," *Paper Machine*, 29.

[xiv] On the hard drive as a "black box," see Kirshenbaum 2008. In a footnote, Kirshenbaum bypasses de Man's notion of "formal materiality." Kirshenbaum does not consider the fact that black boxes are designed to be recovered only in the case of death, unlike hard drives, the contents of which may be retrieved at any time. For a different account of black-boxing as a metaphor for forgetting, see Latour 1988, 1-20, and Latour 1999: blackboxing is "the way scientific and technical work is made invisible by its own success. When a machine runs efficiently, when a matter of fact is settled, one need focus only on its inputs and outputs and not on its internal complexity. Thus, paradoxically, the more science and technology succeed, the more opaque and obscure they become" (Latour 1999, 304). In turning the black box into the verb "to blackbox," Latour assumes relatively simple hermeneutic oppositions of open and close box, revealed and hidden, visible and invisible. On the body as a black box, see: "We still don't know what happens in vivo," he [Lan Bo Chen] said. "That's why drug development is still so hard and expensive, because the human body is such a black box. We are totally shooting in the dark." He shrugged, "You have to have good science, sure. But once you shoot the drug in humans you go home and pray" (Gladwell 2010, 77). On the "magic black box," see Roch, 2010, 143-44.

[xv] See Catherine Liu's (2000) excellent article on Lacan's audiotapes and the editing of the *Ecrits*. Liu opens up Lacan's writings to much analysis regarding what is

and is not transcribed in the discussions that follow that seminars.

[xvi] For an important exception, see de Man 1983 where de Man respectfully pits Hölderlin's editors against Martin Heidegger's anti-philological and philosophical readings. "Once attention was awakened, it did not take long for the extraordinary work conceived [by Hölderlin] between 1800 and 1803 and mostly left unpublished, to be discovered. Norbert von Hellingrath undertook the preparation of the first critical edition, which was completed after his death in 1906 by Seebass and von Pigenot" (1983, 247). Friedrich Beißner subsequently edited a new critical edition: "This is a task now partially completed: under the direction of Friedrich Beißner, three parts of the so-called great Stuttgart edition have been published: all of the poetry, the letters, and the translations. It is one of the great achievements of modern scientific philology" (1983, 248). Although de Man gives the date of von Hellingrath's death in 1906, he does not give the publication date of the von Hellingrath edition (1913-16); similarly, de Man does not provide the full bibliographic information for the Beißner edition (1943-1985) up to 1982.

[xvii] Derrida has a brilliant though somewhat predictably paradoxical formulation of paper as "the basis of the basis *en abyme*": "When it is not associated—like a leaf, moreover, or a silk paper with a veil or canvas, writing's *blank white*, spacing, gaps, the 'blanks which become what is important,' always open up onto a *base* of paper. Basically, paper often remains for us the *basis of the basis*, the base figure on the basis of which figures and letters are separated out. The indeterminate "base" of paper, the basis of the basis *en abyme*, when it is also surface, support, and substance, material substratum, formless matter and force in force, virtual or dynamic power of virtuality—see how it appeals to an interminable genealogy of these great philosophemes" (2005b, 53). Rather than go from the paper in the singular to an author's papers in the plural, Derrida considers "papers" in the plural only as political documents, skipping over the category of posthumous papers.

[xviii] I undertake this project in my book in progress, *Shelf-Life: Close/d Reading and the Biopolitics of the Archive*.

[xix] See Derrida's comments: "paper has a history that is brief but complex, a technological or material history, a symbolic history of projections and interpretations, a history tangled up with the invention of the human body and hominization" (2005b, 42-43).

[xx] Kittler quotes from Otto Rank's essay "The Double":

Guy de Maupassant sat "one afternoon in 1889 ... at the desk in his study, his servant had strict orders never to enter while his master was working. Suddenly, it seemed to Maupassant as if someone had opened the door. Turning around he sees, to his extreme astonishment, *his own self entering*, who sits down opposite him and rests his head on his hand. Everything Maupassant writes is dictated to him. When the author finished his work and arose, the hallucination disappeared." (Kittler 1997, 87)

The two duelists must remain within the realm of the verbal or the poetic simply because in 1828, passport photos, fingerprint files, anthropometric figures and data banks do not yet exist. Because proof of identity is impossible, each agrees to present a definition of himself and then wait for the effect... alcoholic episodes from the era of Romanticism become the indispensable scientific data of the present century. (86)

[xxi] Archiving of papers via cutting and pasting continues to the present day. For example, the "Descriptive Summary" of the "Guide to the Jacques Derrida Papers" at UCI, listing Derrida as the "Creator," foregrounds clippings: This collection is comprised of manuscripts, typescripts, recordings, photographs, and an extensive clippings file documenting the professional career of Jacques Derrida... See <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf3q2nb26c/>. For an analysis of cutting and pasting in Germany in relation to the archive and WWI, see Heesen, 2006, 224-300. Derrida writes: "Let's not talk about the verbs *cut* and *paste* or *delete* that my software also includes. They have lost all concrete reference and descriptive reference to the technical operations performed, but these infinitives or imperatives also retain the memory of what has disappeared: the paper, the page of the codex" (2005b, 46).

[xxii] Kierkegaard's letters from Regine Olsen, his fiancée, were turned over to her. She burned her own letters and ordered that the remainder not be published until after her death. They were published after her death.

[xxiii] See Bayard 2007; On Derrida not being read, see "Sokal and Bricmont Aren't Serious," for example. Derrida complains "There is every reason to think that they have not read what they should have read to measure the extent of these difficulties. Presumably they couldn't. At any rate they have done it" (2007d, 71). Derrida makes similar complaints about nearly all the respondents to Derrida's *Spectres of Marx* (1994) in "Marx & Sons" (1999): "all of the contributors to this volume ... have not read me or wanted to read me—with the exception of Hamacher, and, perhaps Montag ... ." (244, emphasis in the original); in the same essay, see also 215; 220; 222-23; 230, 237, and endnotes 14, p. 263 and 21, pp. 263-64. On books bought and categorized at a bookstore, see Calvino 1979, 5-6. qAnd see also the wide attention given to the quite belated posthumous publication of Carl Jung's *The Red Book* (2009).

[xxiv] See, for example, *The Book Unbound. Editing and Reading Medieval Manuscripts and Texts*. Note the equation or coupling of "editing and reading" in the subtitle.

[xxv] To be sure, Derrida was a master of reading as a philologist. See "Acts" in *Mémoires: for Paul de Man* (1986), where Derrida discusses two versions of an essay by de Man, only one of which adds the reflexive pronoun ""(sich)" [itself] after the German phrase "*Die Sprache verspricht* [Language speaks]... as that which speech must add to itself in order to speak" (100):

This addition only appears in the essay's second version. I do not know if it is the correction of a typographical error. There was another in the same line. But this first version, which I read in the offprint that Paul de Man had given to me in September, 1976, said only *Die Sprache verspricht*. The last version, in *Allegories of Reading*, adds the word *sich*; but as soon as it does so the *self*, the relation that speech has with itself passes, if we can say this, through the *aporia* of a promise which never occurs, which never happens, but which cannot not occur; in other words ... the "sich" is itself ... deconstructed ... by the very *act* of the promise....It is significant that Paul de Man has added, from one version to the other, or on his proofs, this *sich* between parentheses. But even if he had not done this, nothing would have changed, since the *sich*, this last-minute signature, is itself affected by the *Versprechen*. A necessary and impossible promise, the *sich* lets itself be effaced by itself; it is promised to the effacement that it promises itself. From one version to the next, the title of the text also changed. I had read it under the title "Political Allegory in Rousseau"; I have rediscovered it under the title "Promises (*Social Contract*). ... a title is a promise, but it aggravates the *sich versprechen*. (100-101; 102).

See also Derrida's brilliant discussion of de Man's insertion of a "ne" in a quotation from Rousseau and "his omission of two little words 'deja vieux'" and the two very different title pages of the Geneva and Maltou manuscripts of Rousseau's *Confessions* (2001, 317-21; 337-39; 341-47).

[xxvi] See Derrida's highly illuminating discussion of paper as multimedia (2005b).

[xxvii] One might also add the historian to Ginzburg's list of clue followers and filers. See, for example, the account of Raul Hilberg's criticisms of Hannah Arendt's many substantive "borrowings" of his material (Popper, 2010): "Hilberg died in 2007, and among the private papers he left to the University of Vermont library is a box stuffed with materials about his scholarly antagonists. Folders filled with Arendt clippings occupy half of the tightly jammed container. There is also a brown accordion folder holding two crisp copies of each of the five issues of *The New Yorker* in which Arendt's study of Eichmann was serialized."

[xxviii] For relevant passages, see the following, among many others:

"But the misfortune is, that in this very critical instant, the author of the history has left this battle in suspense, excusing himself, that he could find no other account of Don Quixote's exploits, but what has already been related. True it is, that the second author of this work, could not believe that such a curious history was consigned to oblivion; nor, that there could be such a scarcity of curious virtuosi in la Mancha, but that some papers relating to this famous knight should be found in their archives or cabinets: and therefore, possessed of his onion, he did not despair of finding the conclusion of this delightful history, which indeed he very providentially lighted upon, in the manner which will be related in the second book (95-96); When the innkeeper took up the portmanteau with the books, in order to carry them away, "Stay, said the curate, until I examine these papers which are written in a fair character." The landlord accordingly pulled out a manuscript, consisting of eight sheets of papers, in large letter, *The Novel of the Impertinent Curiosity*. . . . if I like the novel, you shall give me leave to transcribe it." . . . Cardenio having taken up the manuscript, and begun to read . . . intreated him [the curate] to read it aloud, that the whole company might hear it. . . "Well then, said he, listen with attention, for the novel begins in this manner" (334; 335); But, the author of this history, although he inquired with the utmost curiosity and diligence, concerning the actions of Don Quixote, in his third sally, could never find any satisfactory and authentic account of them; only, fame hath preserved some memoirs in la Mancha. . . but, with regard to his death and burial, he could obtain no information, and must have remained entirely ignorant of that event, had he not luckily met with an old physician, who had in his custody a leaden box, which he said he found under the foundation of an ancient hermitage that was repairing. This box contained some skins of parchment, on which were written in Gothic characters, and Castilian verse, many of our knight's exploits. . . All that could be read and fairly copied, are those which are here inserted by the faithful author of this new and surprising history, who, in recompense for the immense trouble he has undergone in his inquiries, and in examining the archives of La Mancha, that he might publish it with more certainty, desires the reader to favour him with the same credit which intelligent persons give to those books of chivalry that pass so currently in the world. . . . The verses which were written in the first skin of parchment found in the leaden box, were these (535-536); These were all the verses which could be read; the rest being worm-eaten were delivered to an academican, that he might attempt to unravel their meaning, by conjecture (539); This task, we understand, he has performed with infinite pains and study, intending to publish them to the world, in expectation of the third sally of Don Quixote (539); He who translated this sublime history from the original, composed by its first author Cid Hamet Benengeli, says, that turning to the chapter which treats of the adventure of the case, he found this observation written on the margin, in the hand-writing of the said Hamet (727); We must wait for the second part [of Galatea], which he [Cervantes] promises, and then perhaps his amendment may deserve a full pardon, which is now denied: until that happens, let him be close confined in your closet (81); I have often said what I am now going to repeat, answered Don Quixote" (680).

[xxix] See, for example, the following self-description of the Kierkegaard Research Center: "The interdisciplinary research activity at the Centre is concentrated in two main groups and is perhaps best described as an ellipse with two foci. (1) One of these consists of researchers, whose work is centred in the field of Kierkegaard studies; (2) the other consists of philological researchers whose primary aim is the establishment of a new critical edition of Kierkegaard's works." <http://ddd.uab.cat/pub/enrahonar/0211402Xn29p165.pdf>

One group prepares the texts so that the other group may read them.

[xxx] Three of a projected eleven volumes in Danish have thus far been translated into English as of 2010, Princeton University Press (May 21, 2010). *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers Volume 2, F - K* [Paperback] [Søren \[Howard](#)

[V. Hong & Edna H. Hong, tr.\] Kierkegaard](#) (Author). Translation of portions of the 20 volume Danish work published 1909-1948 under title *Papierer*.

[xxx] de Man's rather long answer, cited near the end of the present essay, may serve as an example of a book intended to be written but never written. See also Ian Balfour: "At the time of his death, de Man was about to teach a seminar on Kierkegaard and Marx (via Adorno) ..." (1989, 9) and Melberg 1990, 71-87. On de Man's non-reading of Kierkegaard, see Norris, 1988.

[xxxii] The Round Tower, Copenhagen, May 6 - June 9, 1996, arranged under the auspices of The Søren Kierkegaard Research Center by Niels Jørgen Cappelørn and the Søren Kierkegaard Society by Joakim Garff.

[xxxiii] This question about Nancy's graphic design shows, of course, that the question of a text turned into an illustration or image is not confined to posthumous publication. Nevertheless, it would be worth exploring whether posthumous publications exploit specific kinds of designs. For example, the first note card to appear in Nabokov's *The Original of Laura* (2009, vii) just before the title page (viii), which appears on the left side of the next page, is also the last note card in the book (275), the only one on which Nabokov wrote on to be placed vertically and the text of which resonates as a kind of epitaph: "efface [circled], expunge, erase, delete, rub out, [a line scratched out and illegible], wipe out, obliterate." The transcription on p. 275 does not appear on the page before the title page, and the line that has been scratched out doesn't appear as such in the transcription. This framing note card also illustrates and puts into play the meaning of the novel's subtitle, namely, "*A Novel in Fragments*."

[xxxiv] See Thompson 1967 and Newmark 1997.

[xxxv] For an example of the ways in which attention to the materiality (understood as empirical, physical) of writing eclipses attention to writing itself, see Krell and Bates 1999. This book includes a series of wonderful black and white as well as color photographs taken at various dates showing rooms in which Nietzsche stayed or places nearby his residence. Yet there are not even index entries for desk, writing desk, paper, pen, manuscript, publication, book, calligraphy, and so on, much less any discussion of his writing materials. For a similar biography, see Sharr 2006. The life and works are given as by the genre of biography. For a brilliant and often hilarious account of editing posthumous papers as their destruction through their publication, see Thomas Bernhard's novel *Correction* (1979). And for a novelization of a lost philological method framed as posthumous editing, see Dumezil 1999. For a very different account of writing machines that approaches "biobibliography," see Friederich Kittler's discussion of Nietzsche's typewriter, "Nietzsche: Incipit Tragoedia" (1990), 177-205, esp. 193-96. There is a photo of the kind of typewriter (1888) Nietzsche used on p. 194. See also Paul de Man's use of the writing machine as a metaphor in "Excuses (Confessions)" and Derrida's discussion of de Man's notions of formal materiality and inscription (1986) and 2001, 277-360.

[xxxvi] See Derrida 1974 and Derrida 2005a.

[xxxvii] Criticizing the tendencies to condemn all of Lukacs's later writings and endorse wholesale his early writings, de Man writes: "The weaknesses of the later work are already present from the beginning, and some the early strength remains operative throughout" (52).

[xxxviii] Is there any connection to the presence of the author's intention (can you dig it up or make an eschatological connection to the author's presence)? See Avital Ronell (1989) on Alexander Graham Bell's effort to talk to his departed brother using the new technology of the phone – as an umbilical cord to heaven.

[xxxix] <http://jacques-derrida.org/Cicerone.html>

[xl] <http://jacques-derrida.org/UCI%20Affair.html>

[xli] Publishing the letter has arguably hurt Derrida's posthumous reputation. See the following articles in *Chronicle of Higher Education*: Bartlett 2007; anon 2007; and Bennington and Kamuf 2007. The most damaging passage in Derrida's letter concerns Derrida's prejudgment of the case in his letter to Cicerone:

Permit me to tell you as well: things are so serious that I advised my friend not only to defend his just

cause, with the help of an attorney and his colleagues, but also to initiate as quickly as possible a legal procedure against the persons and the institution that have undertaken, in such an unjust, ill-considered, gratuitous, and precipitous manner, to tarnish so gravely his personal and professional reputation. I dare to think and to hope that he would win this case and the judgment, quite rightly, would be severe and heavy in consequences for the guilty parties.

The above comments fall under what Derrida calls in his letter the testimony of certitude:

My testimony will be of two sorts: that of probability and that of certitude. But it is especially as concerns the certitude of what is called in French in time conviction (inner conviction) that I protest, with all the force I can muster, against this sinister scenario.

[xliii] While the classification itself is pragmatic, the Derrida editors overlook in adopting it the numerous instances in which Derrida writes about addressing the audience, includes references to the occasion of the delivery of what is now being read in print, as well as the numerous versions of the same publication. The number of works in which Derrida refers to the conference occasion in which he is speaking are too numerous to mention, but for two particularly interesting examples see both Derrida 2001, especially the discussion of the title of the conference at which he delivered the essay, the title of his essay, and two subtitles in his essay, and his frequent use of the word "apropos" and "a propos" throughout the essay, and "Force of Law" (Derrida 2002). The complicated publication history of "Force of Law" is not provided by the editor Gil Anidjar in a "note" to the version that appears in his edition (Derrida 2002), and hence there is no comment on the significant variations between the "final form" (2002, 228) published in *Acts of Religion* based on the "latest French edition in 1994" (2002, 229) and an earlier version of the essay published under the same name in *The Cardozo Law Review* 11 L. 919 (1990). Similarly, for the editors of *The Beast and the Sovereign* (Derrida 2009) to say that they "have kept all the signs of the seminar's orality" (xvi) is to ignore Derrida's own comments about "voice-writing" (2005b, 45).

[xliv] The editors also classify Derrida's lectures according to medium and chronology – handwriting, typewriting, computer processing – while uncritically making use of distinctions between oral speech and written text:

This material can be classified according to a variety of criteria. First, according to where the teaching took place ... second, according to the type of teaching... Finally—and, no doubt, most relevantly for the editorial work—according to the tools used: we have handwritten sessions from 1960 to 1970; typescripts, with manuscript annotations and corrections, from 1970 to 1988; electronic files and print outs from 1998 to 2003. (viii-ix)

[xlv] Similarly, a series of posthumous publications of Michel Foucault's lectures at the College of France is based on notes and audiotapes and does not include questions asked of Foucault nor his answers. See the "Foreword" to *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College of France 1978-79*, Ed. Michel Seneleart. Trans. Graham Burchell (Palgrave, 2008)

[xlvi] See Derrida's extensive remarks on the footnote in "Typewriter Ribbon: Limited Ink (2)," 296 and 347.

[xlvii] Checklist (pdf)

<http://www.lib.uci.edu/about/publications/exhibits/2002-spring-exhibit-derrida-translate-derrida.html>

[xlviii] Checklist (pdf)

<http://www.lib.uci.edu/about/publications/exhibits/2002-spring-exhibit-derrida-translate-derrida.html>

[xlix] *Archive Fever*, 101.

[l] All citations to Søren Kierkegaard's works are to the Princeton edition edited by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong.

[1] See *Either/Or, Part Two*, supplement, 416.



[ii] For example, Kierkegaard published *Repetition and Fear and Trembling* on the same day. He discusses his publication practices in a number of places, and among the most telling, in my view, are the pseudonymous appendix to Part Two of *Concluding Scientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, 251-300, as well Kierkegaard's signed appendix to the entire book, "An Understanding with the Reader," 617-630. In the prefaces to *Julie* (1997), Jean-Jacques Rousseau plays the roles of editor and author and does not tell the reader whether the book is fiction or true, or whether Rousseau is the author.

[iii] See Peter Fenves, *"Chatter": Language and History in Kierkegaard* (Stanford UP, 1993) on the secret and invisible ink in Kierkegaard's *From the Papers of a Still Living Author*.

[iiii] It gets even better. When his elder brother Paul went through Kierkegaard's desk in 1855 a few weeks after Lund accessed them, he found two sealed letters both addressed identically "To Mr. Pastor Doctor Kierkegaard. To Be Opened After My Death." The only difference between the envelopes is that the sealing wax of one is red and the other black (*Written Images*, 20-21). The letters inside the envelopes differed, however.

[liv] Is it coincidental or not that Derrida and E. R. Curtius both cite the same line from Goethe about "the fragment of fragments" and that Derrida mentions Curtius's "1948 *European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages*" (23), the German edition, in the text and the postscript of *Demeure* (2000, 23-24; 105), a book in which Derrida characterizes the last page of Maurice Blanchot's *The Instant of My Death* (a story that involves a Nazi execution of a Frenchman called off at the last second and a lost manuscript, and which reads as a fictionalized autobiography) as "a postscript. A sort of parergonal hors-d'oeuvre" (97) (even though neither the word "post-script" nor "p.s." occurs on the last page of Blanchot's text) and in which Derrida includes in the postscript title, "Reading 'beyond the beginning'; or, On the Venom in Letters: Postscript and 'Literary Supplement'" (104) with two citations, the first one from a *TLS* review critical of *Derrida for Beginners*, namely, "Beyond the Beginning," and the second one from two words of the newspaper weekly's title, "Literary Supplement"? Derrida's postscript begins with Curtius: "Curtius, thus. A brief allusion to Curtius, too brief, of course, gives me an opportunity to take up an insult" (104). Derrida says that the "venomous" *TLS* letter to the editor "has just been published" and that it takes as its "pretext another allusion to Curtius, even more brief, that I made more than thirty years ago in *De la grammatologie* (Minuit, 1967, p. 27). I devoted several lines then to 'The symbolism of the book, this beautiful chapter in *European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages*'" (104).

What does Derrida's citation of Goethe have to do with Curtius's citation, if anything? And what does Derrida's brief mention of Curtius have to do with his lengthy analysis of Blanchot's story? Viewed from a posthumographical perspective, Derrida's postscript may be understood to be a "postscript. A sort of," a specifically "literary supplement" to his text, rather like those "postscript. A sort of" he finds in the last page of Blanchot's *The Instant of My Death*. In the postscript, Derrida paraphrases the quotation from *TLS* before giving it italicized, in full: "'beginners' ... are not to be tempted to venture beyond the beginning of their reading ... : '*The worst fate in store for beginners here may be that they might be tempted to venture beyond the beginning*'" (2000, 105, emphasis in the original). The phrase "venture beyond the beginning" recurs three times in the last two pages of Derrida's postscript: "I really think – if they want to understand – that they must "venture beyond the beginning" (107); "But for this, yes, the reader will indeed have to "venture beyond the beginning" (107); "In order to escape obscurantism, one must, on the contrary, I repeat my advice, always, always "venture beyond the beginning" (2000, 108). The last sentence with the citation italicized is the last sentence of the book. Derrida is taking his critic's phrase, also occurring in the last sentence of the negative *TLS* review, and turning it against him, ending by making the repeated riposte with a typographic emphasis.

The force of Derrida's riposte remains quite cryptic, however. I have no wish to try to decrypt it either. I think we may notice, however, that Derrida gives his reiterated advice to "read beyond the beginning" in a postscript that begins with a precise history of publication: the "[*TLS*], May 2, 1997" and "(Minuit, 1967)" (2000, 104). In a book concerned with the irreducibility of fiction in testimony, Derrida makes the moment of publication crucial: "It is obvious that Blanchot is publishing this, I would not dare say at the end of his life, for he is describing for us the instance of his death when he was still a young man. But he is publishing it very late in his life" (2000, 55), indeed, fifty years, according to a letter Blanchot wrote to Derrida, after the event in Blanchot's story occurred, a letter Derrida dates exactly ("July 20, 1994") (2000, 82). "If I insist on these dates, and I often will, it is to recall what a date, that is, the event of signature, inscribes in the relation between fiction and testimony" (2000, 20). In a reading of *Demeure* I am unable to give here, I would

maintain that Derrida's account of testimony, survival, and technology already has the conditions of posthumography in play. In this case the remainder that remains [*demeure*] takes the paratextual form of a post-philosophical text (the post-script) in which Derrida performs a failure to defend himself as being caught between a precise publication history and a repetitive and finally rote recitation of the offending sentence.

[lv] The other key moment for Curtius is when Goethe's practice becomes "routine" (64).

[lvi] *The Work of Mourning* (Derrida, 2001) was subsequently translated back into French under the title *Chaque fois unique, la fin du monde* [*Each Time Unique, the End of the World*] (Paris: Editions Galilée, 2003).

[lvii] There is a similarly bizarre discrepancy between the references in the table of contents of *The Work of Mourning* (2001). The footnote to "Roland Barthes," the first entry in the table of contents, states that "the biographical sketches are by Kas Saghafi." And the last item of the table of contents is "Bibliographies, compiled by Kas Saghafi" (vi). In the preface, however, the editors thank Saghafi for "compiling the biographies and bibliographies" (2001, viii). "Biographical sketches" has been replaced by "biographies," and one verb is used for both biographies and bibliographies, namely, "compiled." Saghafi's authorship, his having written the biographies, disappears here with the semantic sense of the sentence paying the price (one does not compile a biography, one writes a biography). Similarly, the footnote to Saghafi's "biographical sketches" (2001, v) also avoids the verb "to write": the footnote states that the sketches "are by" Saghafi, not that they "were written" by him. The reference to "Bibliographies" in the table of contents, followed by a comma, pointedly excludes the writers whose bibliographies have been compiled. Something like "Bibliographies of the Writers Mourned by Derrida" would have made clear the connection between the bibliographies and the bibliographed authors. It would appear that the editors want to keep biographies and bibliographies on a par in order not to connect them and read them together as biobibliographies and thanatobibliographies. (See Lacoue-Labarthe 1998 on the impossibility of biography). Another kind of strange order: The table of contents is arranged without comment chronologically according to the year the person Derrida writes about died; each chapter has two titles, the first in bold giving the name, year of birth and year of death of the person (these are the "sketches" by Saghafi) and the second the title of Derrida's essay. The double titles have a double logic of organization. When two or more people die during the same year, the texts default to an alphabetical order rather than the date and month of death, in reverse in the first case (Louis Althusser comes last) of multiple deaths in the same year and in sequence in the last. Saghafi's bibliographies are arranged chronologically according to the date of publication and divided into publications and posthumous publications, thereby introducing a discursive marker separating the life span of the authors from the life of their publications.

[lviii] [http://www.humanities.uci.edu/remembering\\_jd/weber\\_reinhard.htm](http://www.humanities.uci.edu/remembering_jd/weber_reinhard.htm)

[lix] The story of posthumous publication of Nietzsche's notes as *The Will to Power* is underwritten by yet another story about posthumous publication of drafts of letters that Mme. Förster Nietzsche (Nietzsche's sister) claimed Nietzsche had written her (she destroyed the originals). Blanchot explains that "Mme. Förster Nietzsche . . . was capable of altering texts. . . . Nonetheless, to those who contested her right to speak for Nietzsche and to assume with regard to this thought the power of executive decision, she responded by presenting a whole series of letters in which her brother treated her as his privileged confidante. The originals of these letters had disappeared, but one could not doubt their authenticity. It was after her death, in 1935, that [Karl] Schlechta . . . threw light on this mystery by finding the drafts of some letters. The letters were indeed by Nietzsche, but were addressed to his mother or to Malwida von Meysenburg. This strange sister had thus appropriated the expressions of confidence that had not been meant for her in order to find in them the moral and intellectual guarantee she needed for her enterprise. She had destroyed the originals and touched up the drafts rather crudely. (Why had she not destroyed them? Doubtless because they authenticated the letters; an ink spot wasn't out of place, nor surprising on Nietzsche's part as his myopia made him clumsy.) (1993, note 2, 44-49); see also Blanchot's remarkable and lengthy endnote on Heidegger's comments on the publication of *The Will to Power* (Blanchot 1993, n. 4, 44-51).

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