

JACQUES
DERRIDA

WRITING
AND
DIFFERENCE

Translated, with
an Introduction
and Additional Notes,
by ALAN BASS

[illegible]

ROUTLEDGE



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Translator's
Introduction
ix

*Le tout sans nouveauté
qu'un espacement
de la lecture*

Mallarmé,
Preface to *Un Coup de dés*

“Par la date de ces textes, nous voudrions marquer qu’à l’instant, pour les relier, de les relire, nous ne pouvons nous tenir à égale distance de chacun d’eux. Ce qui reste ici le *déplacement d’une question* forme certes un *système*. Par quelque *couture* interprétative, nous aurions su après-coup le dessiner. Nous n’en avons rien laissé paraître que le pointillé, y ménageant ou y abandonnant ces blancs sans lesquels aucun texte jamais ne se propose comme tel. Si *texte* veut dire *tissu*, tous ces essais en ont obstinément défini la *couture* comme *faufilure*. (Décembre 1966.)” This note originally appeared appended to the bibliography of *L’écriture et la différence*, a collection of Derrida’s essays written between 1959 and 1967 and published as a volume in the latter year. A glance at the list of sources (p. 341 below) will show that although Derrida has arranged the essays in order of their original publication, the essay that occupies the approximate middle of the volume was actually written in 1959, and therefore precedes the others. Before translating the note—in fact one of the most difficult passages in the book to translate—let us look at what Derrida said about the chronology of his works up to 1967 in an interview with Henri Ronse published in *Lettres françaises*, 6–12 December 1967 and entitled “Implications.” (This interview, along with two others, has been collected in a small volume entitled *Positions*, Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1972.) Hopefully this dis-

cussion of chronology will serve to orient the reading of *Writing and Difference*, and to clarify why the essay that is in many respects the first one—" 'Genesis and Structure' and Phenomenology"—occupies the middle of the volume.

The year 1967 marks Derrida's emergence as a major figure in contemporary French thought. *La voix et le phénomène* (translated by David Allison as *Speech and Phenomena*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), a work devoted to analyzing Husserl's ideas about the sign, and *De la grammatologie* (translated by Gayatri Spivak as *Of Grammatology*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), devoted mainly to Rousseau's "Essay on the Origin of Languages" seen in the light of the history of the idea of the sign, both appeared in 1967, along with *L'écriture et la différence*. In response to Ronse's question about how to read these three books published one on the heels of the other, Derrida first says that *De la grammatologie* can be considered a bipartite work in the middle of which one could insert *L'écriture et la différence*. By implication, this would make the first half of *De la grammatologie*—in which Derrida demonstrates the system of ideas which from ancient to modern times has regulated the notion of the sign—the preface to *L'écriture et la différence*. It would be useful to keep this in mind while reading *L'écriture et la différence*, for while there are many references throughout the essays to the history of the notion of the sign, these references are nowhere in this volume as fully explicated as they are in the first half of *De la grammatologie*. Derrida explicitly states that the insertion of *L'écriture et la différence* into *De la grammatologie* would make the second half of the latter, devoted to Rousseau, the twelfth essay of *L'écriture et la différence*. Inversely, Derrida goes on to say, *De la grammatologie* can be inserted into the middle of *L'écriture et la différence*, for the first six essays collected in the latter work preceded *en fait et en droit* (*de facto* and *de jure*—a favorite expression of Derrida's) the publication, in two issues of *Critique* (December 1965 and January 1966), of the long essay which was further elaborated into the first part of *De la grammatologie*—our preface by implication to *L'écriture et la différence*. The last five essays of *L'écriture et la différence*, Derrida states, are situated or engaged in "l'ouverture grammatologique," the grammatological opening (*Positions*, p. 12). According to Derrida's statements a bit later in the interview, this "grammatological opening," whose theoretical matrix is elaborated in the first half of *De la grammatologie*—which, to restate, systematizes the ideas about the sign, writing and metaphysics which are scattered throughout *L'écriture et la différence*—can be defined as the "deconstruction" of philosophy by examining in the most faithful, rigorous way the "structured genealogy" of all of philosophy's concepts; and to do so in order to determine what issues the history of philosophy has hidden, forbidden, or repressed. The first step of this deconstruction of philosophy, which attempts to locate that which is *present* nowhere in philosophy, i.e., that which philosophy must hide in order to remain philosophy, is precisely the examination of the notion of *presence* as undertaken by Heideg-

ger. Heidegger, says Derrida, recognized in the notion of presence the “destiny of philosophy,” and the reference to the Heideggerean deconstruction of presence is a constant throughout Derrida’s works. (Indeed, the reader unfamiliar with Heidegger may well be mystified by Derrida’s frequent references to the notion of presence as the central target in the deconstruction of philosophy.) The *grammatological* (from the Greek *gramma* meaning letter or writing) opening consists in the examination of the treatment of *writing* by philosophy, as a “particularly revelatory symptom” (*Positions*, p. 15) both of how the notion of presence functions in philosophy and of what this notion serves to repress. Derrida arrived at this position through a close scrutiny of the philosophical genealogy of linguistics, especially the philosophical treatment of the sign. From Plato to Heidegger himself, Derrida demonstrates, there is a persistent exclusion of the notion of writing from the philosophical definition of the sign. Since this exclusion can always be shown to be made in the name of *presence*—the sign allegedly being most present in spoken discourse—Derrida uses it as a “symptom” which reveals the workings of the “repressive” logic of presence, which determines Western philosophy as such.

Derrida’s division of *L’écriture et la différence* into two parts, then, serves to remind the reader that between the sixth and seventh essays a “theoretical matrix” was elaborated whose principles are to some extent derived from the first six essays and are more systematically put to work in the last five. However, I would like to propose another division of the book, a division between the fifth (“‘Genesis and Structure’ and Phenomenology”) and sixth essays. My reason for placing the division at this point stems from what Derrida says about *La voix et le phénomène*, the other work published in 1967; like this latter work “‘Genesis and Structure’ and Phenomenology” is devoted to Husserl. In a “classical philosophical architecture,” Derrida says of the three books published in 1967, *La voix et le phénomène* would have to be read first, for in it is posed, at a point which he calls “decisive,” the “question of the voice and of phonetic writing in its relationships to the entire history of the West, such as it may be represented in the history of metaphysics, and in the most modern, critical and vigilant form of metaphysics: Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology” (*Positions*, p. 13). Thus *La voix et le phénomène* could be bound to either *De la grammatologie* or *L’écriture et la différence*, Derrida says, as a long note.

Where would it be appended to *L’écriture et la différence*? In the same paragraph of the interview Derrida refers to another of his essays on Husserl, his introduction to his own translation of Husserl’s *The Origin of Geometry*, published in 1962. He says that the introduction to *The Origin of Geometry* is the counterpart of *La voix et le phénomène*, for the “problematic of writing was already in place [in the former], as such, and bound to the irreducible structure of [the verb] ‘différer’ [to differ and to defer, or, grossly put, difference in space and in time] in its relationships to consciousness, presence, science, history and the

history of science, the disappearance or deferral of the origin, etc.” (p. 13). Derrida might have said that this problematic was already in place in 1959, for a passage from “‘Genesis and Structure’ and Phenomenology” poses the question of writing, again in relation to *The Origin of Geometry*, in the same terms employed in the 1967 interview, i.e., in terms of *writing and difference*: “Reason, Husserl says, is the *logos* which is produced in history. It traverses Being with itself in sight, in order to appear to itself, that is, to state itself and hear itself as *logos* It emerges from itself in order to take hold of itself within itself, in the ‘living present’ of its self-presence. In emerging from itself, [*logos* as] hearing oneself speak constitutes itself as the history of reason through the detour of writing. Thus it differs from itself in order to reappropriate itself. *The Origin of Geometry* describes the necessity of this exposition of reason in a worldly inscription. An exposition indispensable to the constitution of truth . . . but which is also the danger to meaning from what is outside the sign [i.e., is neither the acoustic material used as the signifier, nor the signified concept the sign refers to]. In the moment of writing, the sign can always ‘empty’ itself” If *La voix et le phénomène*, then, is the counterpart to the introduction to *The Origin of Geometry*, and if it can be attached to *L’écriture et la différence* as a long note, it seems that this would be the place to do so, for here the general conditions for a deconstruction of metaphysics based on the notions of writing and difference, and first arrived at through a reading of how the notion of the sign functions in Husserlian phenomenology, are explicitly stated. This would make *La voix et le phénomène* the sixth essay of a hypothetical twelve in *L’écriture et la différence*, but in the form of a long footnote attached to the middle of the volume.

Chronologically, of course, Derrida’s division of *L’écriture et la différence* is more reasonable than the one I am proposing. I offer this division, again, to help orient the reader who comes to *Writing and Difference* knowing only that Derrida is very difficult to read. Indeed, without some foreknowledge of (1) the attempt already begun by Derrida in 1959, but not presented until approximately the middle of this volume, to expand the deconstruction of metaphysics via a reading of Husserl’s treatment of the sign; a reading which always pushes toward a moment of irreducible difference conceived not only as the danger to the doctrines of truth and meaning which are governed by presence, but also as an inevitable danger in the form of writing which allows truth and meaning to present themselves; and (2) the constant reference to Heidegger’s analyses of the notion of presence, the first five essays of *Writing and Difference* might be incomprehensible. This is not to gainsay Derrida’s statement that the last five essays only are “engaged in the grammatical opening.” These last five essays *do* follow Derrida’s original publication (in *Critique*) of a systematic theoretical matrix for a deconstruction of metaphysics along the lines first laid out in the analyses of Husserl; this is why *La voix et le phénomène* comes first. Therefore, without setting aside the specific, individual contents of the first five

essays, one must also be alerted to their developing systematicity, a systematicity whose guiding thread is embedded in the passage just cited from “‘Genesis and Structure’ and Phenomenology.” The best way to follow this thread is to pay close attention to Derrida’s demonstrations—less and less elliptical as one continues through *Writing and Difference*—of how philosophically “traditional” some of the most “modern” concepts of criticism and philosophy are, for example in the references to Kant and Leibniz in the analysis of literary formalism in the first essay, “Force and Signification.”

The conclusion of this brief discussion of chronology with the metaphor of following a thread through a text brings us to the translation of the note originally appended to the list of sources in *L’écriture et la différence*. The translation is impossible without commentary, which will be placed in brackets: “By means of the dates of these texts, we would like to indicate [*marquer*: to mark] that in order to bind them together [*relier*: to put between covers the pages forming a work, originally by sewing], in rereading them [*relire*: *relier* and *relire* are anagrams], we cannot maintain an equal distance from each of them. What remains here the *displacement of a question* certainly forms a *system*. With some interpretive *sewing* [*couture*] we could have sketched this system afterward [*après-coup*; in German *nachträglich*. Cf. “Freud and the Scene of Writing” for the analysis of this notion.] We have only permitted isolated points [*le pointillé*: originally a means of engraving by points] of the system to appear, deploying or abandoning in it those blank spaces [*blancs*: Derrida’s analysis of Mallarmé, which was to be written in 1969, focuses on the role of the *blanc* in the text; see also the epigraph to this volume which refers to Mallarmé’s notion of *espace-ment*: “the whole without novelty except a spacing of reading.” For the analysis of the *blanc* and *espacement* see “La double séance” in *La dissémination*, Paris: Seuil, 1972] without which no text is proposed as such. If *text* [*texte*] means *cloth* [*tissu*: the word *texte* is derived from the Latin *textus*, meaning cloth (*tissu*), and from *texere*, to weave (*tisser*); in English we have *text* and *textile*. Derrida comments on this derivation at the outset of *La pharmacie de Platon* also in *La dissémination*.], all these essays have obstinately defined sewing [*couture*] as *basting* [*faufileure*: the *faux*, “false,” in *fau-fileure*, or “false stringing,” is actually an alteration of the earlier form of the word, *farfiler* or *fourfiler*, from the Latin *fors*, meaning outside. Thus basting is sewing on the outside which does not bind the textile tightly.] (December 1966.)”

The essays of *Writing and Difference*, then, are less “bound” than “basted” together. In turn, each essay is “basted” to the material of the other texts it analyzes, for, as he has stated, Derrida’s writing is “entirely consumed in the reading of other texts.” If one reads *Writing and Difference* only in order to extract from it a system of deconstruction—which has been our focus so far—one would overlook the persistent import of *Writing and Difference*. To repeat Derrida’s terms, these essays always affirm that the “texture” of texts makes any

assemblage of them a “basted” one, i.e., permits only the kind of fore-sewing that emphasizes the necessary spaces between even the finest stitching. In practical terms, I would suggest a “basted,” well-spaced reading of *Writing and Difference*. Instead of reading through the book as a unified, well-sewn volume, one could follow both its arguments and its design in a way that would make them more comprehensible by choosing any of the essays to start with, and by reading the major works it refers to. (I have provided all possible references to English translations of the works in question.) Derrida is difficult to read not only by virtue of his style, but also because he seriously wishes to challenge the ideas that govern the way we read. His texts are more easily grasped if we read them in the way he implicitly suggests—which is not always the way we are used to reading.

The question arises—and it is a serious one—whether these essays can be read in a language other than French. It is no exaggeration to say that most of the crucial passages of *L'écriture et la différence* require the same kind of commentary as was just given for a bibliographical note. Some of the difficulties can be resolved by warning the reader that Derrida often refers back to his own works, and anticipates others, without explicitly saying so; some of these instances have been annotated. This difficulty, however, is compounded by frequent use of the terminology of classical philosophy, again without explicit explanation or reference. I will indicate below *some* of the terms that appear most frequently in *Writing and Difference*; throughout the text I have annotated translations that presented problems for specific essays, and have also provided some references not provided by Derrida to works under discussion without specifically being cited. More important, however, are the general issues raised by the question of translatability. Derrida always writes with close attention to the resonances and punning humor of etymology. Occasionally, when the Greek and Latin inheritances of English and French coincide, this aspect of Derrida's style can be captured; more often it requires the kind of laborious annotation (impossible in a volume of this size) provided above. The translator, constantly aware of what he is sacrificing, is often tempted to use a language that is a compromise between English as we know it and English as he would like it to be in order to capture as much of the original text as possible. This compromise English, however, is usually comprehensible only to those who read the translation along with the original. Moreover, despite Derrida's often dense and elliptical style, he certainly does not write a compromise French. It has been my experience that however syntactically complex or lexically rich, there is no sentence in this book that is not perfectly comprehensible in French—with patience. Therefore, I have chosen to try to translate into English as we know it. Sometimes this has meant breaking up and rearranging some very long sentences. At other times it has been possible to respect the original syntax and to maintain some very long, complex

sentences. Some etymological word play has been lost, some has been annotated, and some translated.

These empirical difficulties of translation are, of course, tied to the question of the sign itself. Can *any* translation be made to signify the same thing as the original text? How crucial is the play of the signifiers—etymological play, stylistic play—to what is signified by the text? Derrida has addressed himself to this question in the second interview in *Positions* (entitled “Semiologie et Grammatologie”). The crux of the question is the inherited concept that the sign consists of a signifier and a signified, that is, of a sensible (i.e., relating to the senses, most often hearing) part which is the vehicle to its intelligible part (its meaning). Derrida states that the history of metaphysics has never ceased to impose upon semiology (the science of signs) the search for a “transcendental signified,” that is, a concept independent of language (p. 30). However, even if the inherited opposition between signifier and signified can be shown to be programmed by the metaphysical desire for a transcendental, other-worldly meaning (that is often derived from the theological model of the presence of God), this does not mean that the opposition between signifier and signified can simply be abandoned as an historical delusion. Derrida states: “That this opposition or difference cannot be radical and absolute does not prevent it from functioning, and even from being indispensable within certain limits—very wide limits. For example, no translation would be possible without it. And in fact the theme of a transcendental signified was constituted within the horizon of an absolutely pure, transparent and unequivocal translatability. Within the limits to which it is possible, or at least *appears* possible, translation practices the difference between signified and signifier. But if this difference is never pure, translation is no more so; and for the notion of translation we would have to substitute a notion of *transformation*: a regulated transformation of one language by another, of one text by another. We will never have, and in fact have never had, any ‘transfer’ of pure signifieds—from one language to another, or within one language—which would be left virgin and intact by the signifying instrument or ‘vehicle’ ” (*Positions*, p. 31).

The translator, then, must be sure that he has understood the syntax and lexicon of the original text in order to let his own language carry out the work of transformation. Again, this is best facilitated by obeying the strictures of his language, for a precipitate bending of it into unaccustomed forms may be indicative more of his own miscomprehension than of difficulties in the original text. In this respect, the translator's position is analogous to that of the psychoanalyst who attempts to translate the manifest language of dreams into a latent language. To do so, the analyst must first be sure that he has understood the manifest language. As Derrida says in note 3 of “Cogito and the History of Madness,” “The latent content of a dream (and of any conduct or consciousness in general)

communicates with the manifest content only through the unity of a language; a language which the analyst, then, must speak as well as possible." The discussion of terms offered below, and the translator's footnotes in the text, are an attempt to provide a guide to the "manifest" language of *Writing and Difference*. Like the analyst, however, the reader must let his attention float, and be satisfied with a partial understanding of a given essay on any particular reading. As the manifest language begins to become more familiar, the persistence of the *latent* content—what Derrida has called "the *unconscious* of philosophical opposition" (*Positions*, p. 60, note 6; my italics)—will become a surer guide, a more salient thread in the weave of these texts.

Derrida's terms. Wherever Derrida uses *différance* as a neologism I have left it untranslated. Its meanings are too multiple to be explained here fully, but we may note briefly that the word combines in neither the active nor the passive voice the coincidence of meanings in the verb *différer*: to differ (in space) and to defer (to put off in time, to postpone presence). Thus, it does not function simply either as *différence* (difference) or as *différance* in the usual sense (deferral), and plays on both meanings at once. Derrida's 1968 lecture "La différence" (reprinted in *Marges*, Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1972) is indispensable here. Throughout *Writing and Difference* Derrida links the concept of *différance* to his play on the words *totalitarian* and *solicitation*. He sees structuralism as a form of philosophical totalitarianism, i.e., as an attempt to account for the totality of a phenomenon by reduction of it to a formula that governs it *totally*. Derrida submits the violent, totalitarian structural project to the counterviolence of *solicitation*, which derives from the Latin *sollicitare*, meaning to shake the totality (from *sollus*, "all," and *ciere*, "to move, to shake"). Every totality, he shows, can be *totally shaken*, that is, can be shown to be founded on that which it excludes, that which would be in *excess* for a reductive analysis of any kind. (The English *solicit* should be read in this etymological sense wherever it appears.) This etymological metaphor covering a philosophical-political violence is also implied in the notion of *archia* (*archie* in French; also a neologism). *Archia* derives from the Greek *archē*, which combines the senses of a founding, original principle and of a government by one controlling principle. (Hence, for example, the etymological link between *archeology* and *monarchy*.) Philosophy is founded on the principle of the *archia*, on regulation by *true, original* principles; the deconstruction of philosophy reveals the differential excess which makes the *archia* possible. This excess is often posed as an *aporia*, the Greek word for a seemingly insoluble logical difficulty: once a system has been "shaken" by following its totalizing logic to its final consequences, one finds an excess which cannot be construed within the rules of logic, for the excess can only be conceived as *neither this nor that*, or both at the same time—a departure

from all rules of logic. *Différance* often functions as an *aporia*: it is difference in neither time nor space and makes both possible.

Ousia and *parousia* are the Greek words for being governed by presence; *parousia* also contains the sense of reappropriation of presence in a second coming of Christ. *Epekeina tes ousias* is the Platonic term for the beyond of being; Derrida has often used this concept as a stepping-stone in his deconstructions. *Signified* and *signifier* have been explained above. Derrida also consistently plays on the derivation of *sens* (meaning or sense; *Sinn* in German) which includes both a supposedly intelligible, rational *sense* (a signified meaning) and a vehicle dependent on the *senses* for its expression (the signifier). Further, in French *sens* also means direction; to lose meaning is to lose direction, to be lost, to feel that one is in a labyrinth. I have inflected the translation of *sens* to conform to its play of meanings wherever possible.

Heidegger's terms. While the concept of Being belongs to the entire metaphysical tradition, its translation into English has become particularly difficult since Heidegger's analyses of it. German and French share the advantage that their infinitives meaning *to be* (*sein*, *être*) can also be used as substantives that mean Being in general. Further, in each language the present participle of the infinitive (*seiend*, *étant*) can also be used as a substantive meaning particular beings. No such advantage exists in English, and since Heidegger is always concerned with the distinction between *Sein* (*être*, Being in general) and *Seiendes* (*étant*, beings) the correct translation of these substantives becomes the first problem for any consideration of Heidegger in English. (The verb forms present no difficulties: *sein* and *être* as infinitives become *to be*, and the gerunds *seiend* and *étant* become *being*.) I have followed the practice of John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson in their translation of *Being and Time* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962) and have translated the substantive (derived from the infinitive) *Sein* (*être*) as "Being" (with a capital initial) wherever it appears in this volume. However I have modified their translation of *Seiendes* (*étant*)—the substantive from the present participle—as "entity" or "entities," and have translated it as "being" or "beings." Macquarrie and Robinson, in fact, state that "there is much to be said" for this translation (*Being and Time*, p. 22, note 1). I feel that it is preferable to "entity" not only because, as they state, "in recent British and American philosophy the term 'entity' has been used more generally to apply to anything whatsoever, no matter what its ontological status" (*ibid.*), but also because "entity" derives from *ens*, the Latin present participle for the verb *to be*, *esse*. No one has been more attentive than Heidegger to the difficulties caused by the translation of Greek thought into Latin. The Latin inheritance of "entity" continues the tradition of these difficulties. Once more, we face the problem of the *transformation* of one language by another. There is one major exception to

the translation of *étant* by “being,” and this is in *Violence and Metaphysics*, Derrida’s essay on Emmanuel Levinas. The major work by Levinas under consideration in this essay, *Totalité et Infini*, has been translated into English. Since much of this work is concerned with Heidegger, I have maintained the translation of *étant* as “existent”—the solution chosen by Alphonso Lingis, the translator of *Totality and Infinity*—in all citations from this work. This translation is particularly problematical in that it tends to confuse the distinction (in terms of *Being and Time*) between the *existential*, ontological status of Being, and the ontical status of being. The reader is requested to read “being” for “existent” wherever the latter appears.

This brings us to another term, one from Heidegger’s later thought—that of *difference*. From the existential analytic of *Dasein*—man’s Being—in *Being and Time*, Heidegger moved to a contemplation of the *difference* between beings and Being in his later works. He calls this the *ontico-ontological difference*, and this idea itself is submitted to powerful scrutiny in his *Identity and Difference*. The title of this work alone should bring it to the attention of the serious reader of *Writing and Difference*; in the introduction to “Freud and the Scene of Writing” Derrida gives a brief indication of the importance of *Identity and Difference* to *Writing and Difference* when he speaks of “*différance* and identity,” “*différance* as the pre-opening of the ontico-ontological difference.” From *Identity and Difference* also comes the term *onto-theology* which characterizes Western metaphysics as such. Very roughly put, Heidegger analyzes the contradictions of the logic of presence which is forced to conceive Being as the most general attribute of existence (*onto-*), and as the “highest,” most specific attribute of God (*theo-*). *Logos* is the true verb: the *spoken* discourse in which the notion of truth governed by this onto-theo-logy of presence is revealed. Also from *Identity and Difference*, among other places in Heidegger, comes the concept of difference as it is inscribed in the “ontological double genitive,” i.e., the necessary fluctuation of the subjective and objective cases in order to speak of Being, which always means the Being of beings and the beings of Being.

From *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, the work which immediately follows *Being and Time*, comes the term “auto-affection,” which Derrida uses often, and which I have discussed briefly in note 25 of “‘Genesis and Structure’ and Phenomenology.” Briefly here too, “auto-affection” refers to the classical notion of time as a self-produced, infinite chain of present moments that also, as scrutinized by Kant and Heidegger, causes some problems for the traditional opposition of senses and intellect: does time belong to the sensible or the intelligible? From Heidegger’s extended confrontation with Nietzsche’s doctrine of the will comes the concept of voluntarism. Throughout *Writing and Difference* “voluntarism” must be read in its etymological sense of “doctrine of the will,” deriving as it does from the Latin *voluntas* (whence our “volition”). The French *vouloir*, to want, maintains its etymological resonances in more striking fashion

than do any of its English equivalents; Derrida plays on these resonances especially in connection with *vouloir dire*, which means either "meaning" or "to mean," but has a strong connotation of "the will to say." The concluding paragraphs of "Cogito and the History of Madness" develop this point.

Husserl's terms. The most important terms from Husserl are the linked concepts of bracketing, *epoché*, and the phenomenological reduction. These are carefully explained in sections 31, 32, and 33 of *Ideas* (translated by W. R. Boyce Gibson, New York: Macmillan, 1962). Husserl, following Descartes's attempt to find absolutely certain truths by putting everything into doubt, proposes to put between brackets (or parentheses) "the general thesis which belongs to the essence of the natural standpoint." This phenomenological "abstention" (*epoché*) prohibits the use of any "judgment that concerns spatio-temporal existence" (*Ideas*, p. 100). "Pure consciousness" becomes accessible through this transcendental *epoché*, which Husserl therefore speaks of as *the* phenomenological reduction. The relationship of this "pure consciousness" to "pure essences" is governed by *intentionality*, for all consciousness is consciousness *of* something, although again it is not a question of a relationship to a psychological event (experience) or to a real object. Sensory experience, the relationship to *hylé* (matter) contains nothing intentional for Husserl; it is intentional *morphé* (form, shape) which bestows meaning on sensory experience. The opposition of *hylé* to *morphé* (matter to form) leads Husserl to divide "phenomenological being" into its *hyletic* and *noetic* (intentionally meaningful; from the Greek *nous*, meaning mind or spirit) sides. The pure form of the *noesis* is in *noema*, which Husserl construes as the immanent meaning of perception, judgment, appreciation, etc. in the "pure," i.e., phenomenologically reduced, form of these experiences themselves. As much of *Ideas* is concerned with the theory of noetic-noematic structures, the reader will appreciate the inadequacy of these remarks.

Hegel's terms. The most important term from Hegel, *Aufhebung*, is untranslatable due to its double meaning of conservation and negation. (The various attempts to translate *Aufhebung* into English seem inadequate.) The reader is referred to Derrida's discussion of the term in "Violence and Metaphysics," section III, first subsection ("Of the Original Polemic), B, and to the translator's notes in "From Restricted to General Economy," where other terms from Hegel are discussed. The Hegelian figure of the "unhappy consciousness" is discussed in note 23 of *Violence and Metaphysics*, but there is also an important discussion of it at the beginning of "Cogito and the History of Madness." The unhappy consciousness, for Hegel, is always divided against itself; its historical figure is Abraham, the prototype of the "Jewish" consciousness for which there is an intrinsic conflict between God and nature. In many ways the theme of the unhappy consciousness runs throughout *Writing and Difference*. "Violence and

Metaphysics" is epigraphically submitted to the conflict between the Greek—"happy," at one with nature—and the Hebraic—unhappy—consciousnesses. Like all inherited oppositions, this one too is programmed by the logic of presence which demands a choice between the terms, or a resolution of the conflict. Derrida pushes the unhappy consciousness to its logical limits in order to bring it to the point where the division within it becomes irreducible. This occurs most importantly in the two essays devoted to Jabès, whose poetry interrogates the meaning of the Jewish, divided consciousness. This interrogation becomes particularly poignant for Derrida in its ties to the Jewish, unhappy consciousness as the experience of the (people of the) Book and Writing, for, as discussed above, these are the inherited concepts which are Derrida's central targets. Derrida has closed each of the essays on Jabès with the name of one of Jabès's imaginary rabbis: Rida and Derissa. In this way he alerts us to the "latent," philosophically "unconscious" impact of *Writing and Difference*: an expanded concept of difference through the examination of writing. Derrida's rebus-like play on his own name across this volume reminds us how unlike the Book this one is.

All Greek terms have been transliterated. Unless the English translation of a French or German text is specifically referred to, citations of texts in these languages are of my own translation. I owe a debt of thanks to Professor Richard Macksey of the Johns Hopkins University for the assistance he offered me at the outset of this project, and for his generous permission to revise his own fine translation of "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences." Most of the translation of this essay belongs to Professor Macksey. I consulted Jeffrey Mehlman's translation of "Freud and the Scene of Writing," which appeared in *Yale French Studies*, no. 48 (1972). And I have also profited greatly from the careful scholarship of Rodolphe Gasché's German translation of *L'écriture et la différence* (*Die Schrift und Die Differenz*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1972).

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