

☐ Contemporary
Literary Criticism

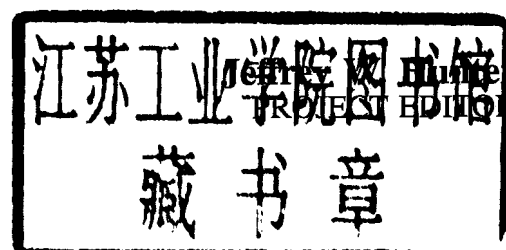
CLC

225

Volume 225

Contemporary Literary Criticism

Criticism of the Works
of Today's Novelists, Poets, Playwrights,
Short Story Writers, Scriptwriters, and
Other Creative Writers



THOMSON
★
GALE



Contemporary Literary Criticism, Vol. 225

Project Editor

Jeffrey W. Hunter

Editorial

Gabrielle Bussey, Kathy D. Darrow, Jelena O. Krstović, Michelle Lee, Thomas J. Schoenberg, Noah Schusterbauer, Lawrence J. Trudeau, Russel Whitaker

Data Capture

Frances Monroe, Gwen Tucker

Indexing Services

Laurie Andriot

Rights and Acquisitions

Margaret Chamberlain-Gaston, Sue Rudolph, Jessica Stitt

Imaging and Multimedia

Randy Bassett, Lezlie Light, Mike Logusz, Dan Newell, Christine O'Bryan

Composition and Electronic Prepress

Tracey L. Matthews

Manufacturing

Rhonda Dover

Associate Product Manager

Marc Cormier

© 2007 Thomson Gale, a part of The Thomson Corporation. Thomson and Star Logo are trademarks and Gale is a registered trademark used herein under license.

For more information, contact

Thomson Gale

27500 Drake Rd.

Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535

Or you can visit our internet site at

<http://www.gale.com>

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

No part of this work covered by the copyright herein may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, Web distribution, or information storage retrieval systems—without the written permission of the publisher.

This publication is a creative work fully protected by all applicable copyright laws, as well as by misappropriation, trade secret, unfair competition, and other applicable laws.

The authors and editors of this work have added value to the underlying factual material herein through one or more of the following: unique and original selection, coordination, expression, arrangement, and classification of the information.

For permission to use material from the product, submit your request via the Web at <http://www.gale-edit.com/permissions>, or you may download our Permissions Request form and submit your request by fax or mail to:

Permissions Department

Thomson Gale

27500 Drake Rd.

Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535

Permissions Hotline:

248-699-8006 or 800-877-4253, ext. 8006

Fax 248-699-8074 or 800-762-4058

Since this page cannot legibly accommodate all copyright notices, the acknowledgments constitute an extension of the copyright notice.

While every effort has been made to secure permission to reprint material and to ensure the reliability of the information presented in this publication, Thomson Gale neither guarantees the accuracy of the data contained herein nor assumes any responsibility for errors, omissions or discrepancies. Thomson Gale accepts no payment for listing; and inclusion in the publication of any organization, agency, institution, publication, service, or individual does not imply endorsement of the editors or publisher. Errors brought to the attention of the publisher and verified to the satisfaction of the publisher will be corrected in future editions.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG CARD NUMBER 76-46132

ISBN-13 978-0-7876-7995-8

ISBN-10 0-7876-7995-X
ISSN 0091-3421

Printed in the United States of America
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Preface

Named “one of the twenty-five most distinguished reference titles published during the past twenty-five years” by *Reference Quarterly*, the *Contemporary Literary Criticism (CLC)* series provides readers with critical commentary and general information on more than 2,000 authors now living or who died after December 31, 1999. Volumes published from 1973 through 1999 include authors who died after December 31, 1959. Previous to the publication of the first volume of *CLC* in 1973, there was no ongoing digest monitoring scholarly and popular sources of critical opinion and explication of modern literature. *CLC*, therefore, has fulfilled an essential need, particularly since the complexity and variety of contemporary literature makes the function of criticism especially important to today’s reader.

Scope of the Series

CLC provides significant passages from published criticism of works by creative writers. Since many of the authors covered in *CLC* inspire continual critical commentary, writers are often represented in more than one volume. There is, of course, no duplication of reprinted criticism.

Authors are selected for inclusion for a variety of reasons, among them the publication or dramatic production of a critically acclaimed new work, the reception of a major literary award, revival of interest in past writings, or the adaptation of a literary work to film or television.

Attention is also given to several other groups of writers—authors of considerable public interest—about whose work criticism is often difficult to locate. These include mystery and science fiction writers, literary and social critics, foreign authors, and authors who represent particular ethnic groups.

Each *CLC* volume contains individual essays and reviews taken from hundreds of book review periodicals, general magazines, scholarly journals, monographs, and books. Entries include critical evaluations spanning from the beginning of an author’s career to the most current commentary. Interviews, feature articles, and other published writings that offer insight into the author’s works are also presented. Students, teachers, librarians, and researchers will find that the general critical and biographical material in *CLC* provides them with vital information required to write a term paper, analyze a poem, or lead a book discussion group. In addition, complete bibliographical citations note the original source and all of the information necessary for a term paper footnote or bibliography.

Organization of the Book

A *CLC* entry consists of the following elements:

- The **Author Heading** cites the name under which the author most commonly wrote, followed by birth and death dates. Also located here are any name variations under which an author wrote, including transliterated forms for authors whose native languages use nonroman alphabets. If the author wrote consistently under a pseudonym, the pseudonym will be listed in the author heading and the author’s actual name given in parenthesis on the first line of the biographical and critical information. Uncertain birth or death dates are indicated by question marks. Single-work entries are preceded by a heading that consists of the most common form of the title in English translation (if applicable) and the original date of composition.
- A **Portrait of the Author** is included when available.
- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.

- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication date of each work is given. In the case of foreign authors whose works have been translated into English, the English-language version of the title follows in brackets. Unless otherwise indicated, dramas are dated by first performance, not first publication.
- Reprinted **Criticism** is arranged chronologically in each entry to provide a useful perspective on changes in critical evaluation over time. The critic's name and the date of composition or publication of the critical work are given at the beginning of each piece of criticism. Unsigned criticism is preceded by the title of the source in which it appeared. All titles by the author featured in the text are printed in boldface type. Footnotes are reprinted at the end of each essay or excerpt. In the case of excerpted criticism, only those footnotes that pertain to the excerpted texts are included.
- A complete **Bibliographical Citation** of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism. Source citations in the Literary Criticism Series follow University of Chicago Press style, as outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).
- Critical essays are prefaced by brief **Annotations** explicating each piece.
- Whenever possible, a recent **Author Interview** accompanies each entry.
- An annotated bibliography of **Further Reading** appears at the end of each entry and suggests resources for additional study. In some cases, significant essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights are included here. Boxed material following the further reading list provides references to other biographical and critical sources on the author in series published by Thomson Gale.

Indexes

A **Cumulative Author Index** lists all of the authors that appear in a wide variety of reference sources published by Thomson Gale, including *CLC*. A complete list of these sources is found facing the first page of the Author Index. The index also includes birth and death dates and cross references between pseudonyms and actual names.

A **Cumulative Nationality Index** lists all authors featured in *CLC* by nationality, followed by the number of the *CLC* volume in which their entry appears.

A **Cumulative Topic Index** lists the literary themes and topics treated in the series as well as in other Literature Criticism series.

An alphabetical **Title Index** accompanies each volume of *CLC*. Listings of titles by authors covered in the given volume are followed by the author's name and the corresponding page numbers where the titles are discussed. English translations of foreign titles and variations of titles are cross-referenced to the title under which a work was originally published. Titles of novels, dramas, films, nonfiction books, and poetry, short story, or essay collections are printed in italics, while individual poems, short stories, and essays are printed in roman type within quotation marks.

In response to numerous suggestions from librarians, Thomson Gale also produces an annual cumulative title index that alphabetically lists all titles reviewed in *CLC* and is available to all customers. Additional copies of this index are available upon request. Librarians and patrons will welcome this separate index; it saves shelf space, is easy to use, and is recyclable upon receipt of the next edition.

Citing Contemporary Literary Criticism

When citing criticism reprinted in the Literary Criticism Series, students should provide complete bibliographic information so that the cited essay can be located in the original print or electronic source. Students who quote directly from reprinted criticism may use any accepted bibliographic format, such as University of Chicago Press style or Modern Language As-

sociation (MLA) style. Both the MLA and the University of Chicago formats are acceptable and recognized as being the current standards for citations. It is important, however, to choose one format for all citations; do not mix the two formats within a list of citations.

The examples below follow recommendations for preparing a bibliography set forth in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003); the first example pertains to material drawn from periodicals, the second to material reprinted from books:

Miller, Mae. "Patterns of Nature and Confluence in Eudora Welty's *The Optimist's Daughter*." *Southern Quarterly: A Journal of the Arts in the South* 35, no. 1 (fall 1996): 55-61. Reprinted in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 220, edited by Jeffrey W. Hunter, 304-09. Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2006.

Aronoff, Myron J. "Learning to Live with Ambiguity: Balancing Ethical and Political Imperatives." In *The Spy Novels of John le Carré: Balancing Ethics and Politics*, 201-14. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. Reprinted in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 220, edited by Jeffrey W. Hunter, 84-92. Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2006.

The examples below follow recommendations for preparing a works cited list set forth in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 5th ed. (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1999); the first example pertains to material drawn from periodicals, the second to material reprinted from books:

Miller, Mae. "Patterns of Nature and Confluence in Eudora Welty's *The Optimist's Daughter*." *Southern Quarterly: A Journal of the Arts in the South* 35.1 (fall 1996): 55-61. Reprinted in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Jeffrey W. Hunter. Vol. 220. Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2006. 304-09.

Aronoff, Myron J. "Learning to Live with Ambiguity: Balancing Ethical and Political Imperatives." *The Spy Novels of John le Carré: Balancing Ethics and Politics*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. 201-14. Reprinted in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Jeffrey W. Hunter. Vol. 220. Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2006. 84-92.

Suggestions are Welcome

Readers who wish to suggest new features, topics, or authors to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions or comments are cordially invited to call, write, or fax the Associate Product Manager:

Associate Product Manager, Literary Criticism Series
Thomson Gale
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535
1-800-347-4253 (GALE)
Fax: 248-699-8983

Acknowledgments

The editors wish to thank the copyright holders of the criticism included in this volume and the permissions managers of many book and magazine publishing companies for assisting us in securing reproduction rights. Following is a list of the copyright holders who have granted us permission to reproduce material in this volume of *CLC*. Every effort has been made to trace copyright, but if omissions have been made, please let us know.

COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL IN *CLC*, VOLUME 225, WAS REPRODUCED FROM THE FOLLOWING PERIODICALS:

American Cinematographer, v. 81, October, 2000. Copyright 2000 ASC Holding Corp. Reproduced by permission.—*American Theatre*, v. 18, November, 2001. Copyright © 2001, Theatre Communications Group. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—*ANQ*, v. 17, summer, 2004. Copyright © 2004 by Helen Dwight Reid Educational Foundation. Reproduced with permission of the Helen Dwight Reid Educational Foundation, published by Heldref Publications, 1319 18th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-1802.—*Australasian Drama Studies*, v. 29, October, 1996. Reproduced by permission.—*Bomb*, spring, 2003. Reproduced by permission.—*Christian Century*, v. 120, May 17, 2003. Copyright © 2003 by the Christian Century Foundation. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—*Christian Science Monitor*, August 23, 2002; May 9, 2003. Copyright © 2002, 2003 The Christian Science Publishing Society. All rights reserved. Both reproduced by permission from *Christian Science Monitor*; (www.csmonitor.com).—*Christianity & Literature*, v. 54, autumn, 2004. Reproduced by permission.—*College Literature*, v. 26, winter, 1999; v. 27, fall, 2000. Copyright © 1999, 2000 by West Chester University. Both reproduced by permission.—*Comparative Drama*, v. 35, fall-winter, 2001-2002. Copyright © 2001-2002, by the Editors of *Comparative Drama*. Reproduced by permission.—*Contemporary Literature*, v. 40, winter, 1999. Copyright © 1999 by the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System. Reproduced by permission.—*Cross Currents*, v. 52, winter, 2003. Copyright 2003 by Cross Currents Inc. Reproduced by permission.—*Dalhousie French Studies*, v. 57, winter, 2001 for “Sun, Moon, and Stars: Cosmic Imagery in Michel Tremblay’s Works” by Ruth B. Antosh. Reproduced by permission of the publisher and the author.—*Essays in Criticism*, v. 48, April, 1998 for “Earth Writing: Seamus Heaney and Ciaran Carson” by John Kerrigan. Copyright © 1998 Oxford University Press. Reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press and the author.—*Essays in Theatre*, v. 19, 2001 for “Staging Memory, Staging Death: Michel Tremblay’s *Albertine, en Cinq Temps* and Edward Albee’s *Three Tall Women*” by Rachel Killick. Reproduced by permission of the author.—*Excavatio*, v. 13, 2000. Reproduced by permission.—*Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, October 20, 2004. Copyright 2004 *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. Reproduced by permission.—*French Review*, v. 71, May, 1998. Copyright © 1998 by the American Association of Teachers of French. Reproduced by permission.—*Hypatia*, v. 16, winter, 2001. Copyright © by Nancy J. Holland. Reproduced by permission of Indiana University Press.—*Journal of Modern Literature*, v. 28, fall, 2004; v. 28, summer, 2005. Copyright © Indiana University Press. Both reproduced by permission.—*Journal of the History of Ideas*, v. 66, January, 2005. Copyright © 2005 University of Pennsylvania Press. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission of the University of Pennsylvania Press.—*Literature & Theology*, v. 17, June, 2003 for “Heavenly Signs From Below: A Religious Reading of Michel Tremblay’s *Chroniques Du Plateau-Mont-Royal*” by Donald L. Boisvert. Copyright © 2003 Oxford University Press. Reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press and the author.—*Literature Film Quarterly*, v. 32, 2004. Copyright © 2004 Salisbury State College. Reproduced by permission.—*Literature, Interpretation, Theory*, v. 10, 1999 for “To Sing of ’98: The United Irishmen Rising and the Ballad Tradition in Heaney and Muldoon” by August Gering; v. 14, December, 2003 for “A Buoyant Migrant Line: Seamus Heaney’s Deterritorialized Poetics” by Andrew J. Auge. Copyright © 1999, 2003 OPA (Overseas Publishers Association) N.V. Both reproduced by permission of Taylor & Francis, Ltd., <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals>, and the respective authors.—*MLN*, v. 118, April, 2003. Copyright © 2003 The Johns Hopkins University Press. Reproduced by permission.—*Modern Philology*, v. 91, November, 1993. Copyright © 1993 by The University of Chicago. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—*Nation*, v. 276, January 27, 2003. Copyright © 2003 by *The Nation Magazine/The Nation Company, Inc.* Reproduced by permission.—*New Statesman*, v. 133, June 7, 2004; v. 134, June 6, 2005. Copyright © 2004, 2005, *New Statesman, Ltd.* Both reproduced by permission.—*New York Times*, October 25, 2004. Copyright © 2004 by The New York Times Company. Reprinted with permission.—*New York Times Book Review*, November 28, 2004. Copyright © 2004 by The New York Times Company. Reprinted with permission.—*PAJ: A Journal of Performance Art*, v. 22, September, 2000. Copyright © The John Hopkins University Press. Reproduced by permission of The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.—*Philosophy Today*, v. 46, spring, 2002. Reproduced by permission.—*Representations*, v. 90, spring, 2005 for “Crisis Between the Wars: Derrida and the Origins of Undecidability” by David Bates. Copyright © 2005 by The Regents of the University of California. Republished with permission of The Regents of the University of California,

conveyed through Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., and the author.—*Research in Phenomenology*, v. 35, 2005. Copyright © 2005 by Koninklijke Brill, Leiden, The Netherlands. Courtesy of Brill Academic Publishers.—*Romance Studies*, v. 31, spring, 1998. Reproduced by permission.—*Salmagundi*, fall, 1993 for “Seeing Things: The Visionary Ardor of Seamus Heaney” by Stephen Sandy. Copyright © by Skidmore College. Reproduced by permission of the author.—*Sewanee Review*, v. 106, spring, 1998. Copyright © 1998 by Jonathan Allison. Reproduced with permission of the editor./ v. 108, winter, 2000. Copyright © 2000 by David Mason. Reproduced with permission of the editor.—*Southern Review*, v. 36, spring, 2000 for “The Noble Mr. Heaney, Poet” by Sidney Burris. Reproduced by permission of the author.—*Spectator*, v. 296, October 30, 2004. Copyright © 2004 by *The Spectator*. Reproduced by permission of *The Spectator*.—*Style*, v. 36, spring, 2002. Copyright © *Style*, 2002. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission of the publisher.—*Theatre Research International*, v. 21, 1996 for “Québécois Theatre: Michel Tremblay and Marie Laberge” by Jane Moss. Copyright © 1996 Cambridge University Press. Reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press and author.—*Xcp: Cross Cultural Poetics*, no. 5, 1999. Reproduced by permission.—*Yale French Studies*, 1983, 1996. Copyright © Yale French Studies 1983, 1996. Both reproduced by permission.

COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL IN CLC, VOLUME 225, WAS REPRODUCED FROM THE FOLLOWING BOOKS:

Bowman, Martin, and Bill Findlay. From “Translating Register in Michel Tremblay’s Québécois Drama,” in *Frae Ither Tongues: Essay on Modern Translations into Scots*. Edited by Bill Findlay. Multilingual Matters Ltd., 2004. Copyright © 2004 Bill Findlay and Martin Bowman. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—Robinson, Christopher. From “Social, Sexual and Textual Transgression: Kostas Tahtsis and Michel Tremblay, A Comparison,” in *Greek Modernism and Beyond: Essays in Honor of Peter Bien*. Edited by Dimitris Tziouvas. Rowman & Littlefield, 1997. Copyright © 1997 by Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Reproduced by permission.—Salter, Denis. From “Performing Sovereignty: Michel Tremblay’s *Hosanna*,” in *Post Colonial Stages: Critical & Creative Views on Drama, Theatre & Performance*. Edited by Helen Gilbert. Dangaroo Press, 1999. Copyright © Dangaroo Press 1999. Reproduced by permission.

Thomson Gale Literature Product Advisory Board

The members of the Thomson Gale Literature Product Advisory Board—reference librarians from public and academic library systems—represent a cross-section of our customer base and offer a variety of informed perspectives on both the presentation and content of our literature products. Advisory board members assess and define such quality issues as the relevance, currency, and usefulness of the author coverage, critical content, and literary topics included in our series; evaluate the layout, presentation, and general quality of our printed volumes; provide feedback on the criteria used for selecting authors and topics covered in our series; provide suggestions for potential enhancements to our series; identify any gaps in our coverage of authors or literary topics, recommending authors or topics for inclusion; analyze the appropriateness of our content and presentation for various user audiences, such as high school students, undergraduates, graduate students, librarians, and educators; and offer feedback on any proposed changes/enhancements to our series. We wish to thank the following advisors for their advice throughout the year.

Barbara M. Bibel

Librarian
Oakland Public Library
Oakland, California

Dr. Toby Burrows

Principal Librarian
The Scholars' Centre
University of Western Australia Library
Nedlands, Western Australia

Celia C. Daniel

Associate Reference Librarian
Howard University Libraries
Washington, D.C.

David M. Durant

Reference Librarian
Joyner Library
East Carolina University
Greenville, North Carolina

Nancy T. Guidry

Librarian
Bakersfield Community College
Bakersfield, California

Heather Martin

Arts & Humanities Librarian
University of Alabama at Birmingham, Sterne Library
Birmingham, Alabama

Susan Mikula

Librarian
Indiana Free Library
Indiana, Pennsylvania

Thomas Nixon

Humanities Reference Librarian
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Davis
Library
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Mark Schumacher

Jackson Library
University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Greensboro, North Carolina

Gwen Scott-Miller

Assistant Director
Sno-Isle Regional Library System
Marysville, Washington

Contents

Preface vii

Acknowledgments xi

Literary Criticism Series Advisory Board xiii

Jacques Derrida 1930-2004	1
<i>French philosopher, critic, and educator</i>	
Seamus Heaney 1939-	90
<i>Irish poet, critic, essayist, translator, editor, and playwright</i>	
Neil LaBute 1963-	211
<i>American playwright, screenwriter, director, and short story writer</i>	
Michel Tremblay 1942-	242
<i>Canadian dramatist, screenwriter, autobiographer, librettist, and short story writer</i>	

Literary Criticism Series Cumulative Author Index 363

Literary Criticism Series Cumulative Topic Index 469

CLC Cumulative Nationality Index 483

CLC-225 Title Index 499

Jacques Derrida

1930-2004

Algerian-born French philosopher, critic, and educator.

The following entry provides an overview of Derrida's career through 2005. For additional information on his life and works, see *CLC*, Volumes 24 and 87.

INTRODUCTION

Derrida has been an extraordinarily influential and controversial voice in contemporary philosophy and critical theory since 1967, when he simultaneously published three important works: *La voix et le phénomène: Introduction au problème du signe dans la phénoménologie de Husserl* (*Speech and Phenomena, and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*), *De la grammatologie* (*Of Grammatology*), and *L'écriture et la différence* (*Writing and Difference*). While his theories deal primarily with philosophical issues, his critique of traditional Western philosophy as a "metaphysics of presence" has had an equally profound impact in the field of contemporary literary theory, where critics have appropriated his theories on language into the movement known as "deconstructionism." In addition, many scholars assert that Derrida's writing has consistently addressed important political, ethical, legal, and social issues, making him a key figure in fields outside of literature and philosophy as well.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Born to a culturally-assimilated Sephardic Jewish family in El Biar, Algeria in 1930, Derrida's childhood was haunted by the experience of anti-Semitism. A 1934 pogrom by Algerian Muslims inspired by events in Nazi Germany left 25 Jews dead and many more wounded. In 1940, the defeat of France by the Nazis brought Algeria under the control of the collaborationist Vichy regime which imposed anti-Semitic legislation. Jewish children were expelled from Algeria's schools and violence against Jews became officially sanctioned. Derrida recalled a teacher informing him that "French culture is not made for little Jews." He remarked later that these childhood experiences left him feeling profoundly alienated and hinted that they were formative influences on the central themes of his philosophy. At age 19, Derrida moved with his family to France, where he pursued advanced education, having earned

his baccalaureate degree in Algeria. Beginning in 1952, Derrida attended the elite École Normale Supérieure in Paris, studying with Michel Foucault and Louis Althusser among others. While a university student, Derrida was influenced by the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre, although he later repudiated Sartrean existentialism. In lieu of military service during the Algerian war of independence, Derrida returned to Algeria from 1957 to 1959 in order to teach French and English to the children of French soldiers serving in the conflict. By 1957 Derrida was planning a doctoral dissertation titled "The Ideality of the Literary Object" when he became immersed in the phenomenological writings of the German philosopher Edmund Husserl and shifted his attention to formulating a critique of metaphysics, the central branch of traditional philosophy, which consists of the search for the ultimate foundations of reality. In 1960 Derrida began a long-standing association with the avant-garde literary journal *Tel Quel*. Derrida taught for a year at the Lycée du Mans and then held a post as a philosophy professor at the Sorbonne for four years before joining the faculty of the École Normale Supérieure in 1964; he continued in this post until 1984. In 1967 Derrida published the three volumes of philosophy that established his reputation: *Speech and Phenomena, and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs, Of Grammatology, and Writing and Difference*. He served as director of the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales from 1982 on, and as a lecturer and visiting professor at many prestigious universities in Europe and the United States, including Johns Hopkins, Cornell University, University of California at Irvine, and Yale University. To acknowledge Derrida's contributions to philosophy, the government of France appointed him Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 1983 and Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur in 1995. The Association Internationale de Philosophie awarded him the Prix Nietzsche in 1988. Derrida was married to psychoanalyst Marguerite Aucouturier from 1957 until his death in Paris of pancreatic cancer on October 8, 2004. The couple had two sons. Derrida had a third son from an outside liaison.

MAJOR WORKS

Derrida first introduced his ideas about language and philosophy in *L'origine de la géométrie d'Edmund Husserl* (1962; *Edmund Husserl's "Origin of Geometry"*), which contains a lengthy introduction and a translation

of Husserl's 1939 essay "Die Frage nach dem Ursprung der Geometrie als intentional historisches Problem." However, Derrida's writing did not attract widespread notice until 1967, when he published his three seminal studies. *Of Grammatology* is Derrida's most extensive and conventionally argued presentation of his central theme that Western philosophy systematically portrays writing as the debased "supplement" to the voice, which is assumed to have more privileged access to philosophical truth because of its supposedly more intimate correspondence with thought itself. Utilizing the expository method known as "deconstruction," a form of close textual interpretation which analyzes the internal contradictions of philosophical discourse, Derrida demonstrates that Western philosophy's arguments against writing consist of metaphors and figures of speech—the very elements of rhetoric which philosophers since Plato have denigrated as unphilosophical. For Derrida, the metaphysical philosopher's inherently rhetorical argumentation betrays the desire for transcendental truth beyond the imperfections of language—a perception which Derrida expresses very succinctly in his famous statement, "There is nothing outside the text." Applying these insights in *Speech and Phenomena*, Derrida contends that Husserl's phenomenology—a branch of philosophy which seeks to establish the absolute foundations of human perceptions—relies on metaphors or allegories of the metaphysical belief that language (in particular, written language) is too contradictory and concrete a medium to embody absolute truth. *Writing and Difference* is a collection of essays on various seminal figures in the history of philosophy which further illustrates Derrida's method of deconstruction.

In 1972 Derrida again published three books nearly simultaneously. The most important of these, *La dissémination* (*Dissemination*), signaled a new direction in Derrida's work. While a large section of the book presents a critique of Plato's Doctrine of Truth, it begins and ends with a practical demonstration of Derrida's ideas on writing. Focusing on the concept of "dissemination," which refers to the inherent indeterminacy of meaning in language (due to the arbitrary relationship between words and the objects they signify), Derrida invents unusual words and sentence structures to demonstrate the fundamental instability and contradictoriness of philosophical discourse. The complexity of this "playful" mode of deconstruction reached its zenith in *Glas* (1974), which presents Derrida's discussion of the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and the French dramatist, novelist, and poet Jean Genet. The commentary is arranged in parallel columns—Hegel on the left, Genet on the right, with an occasional third in the middle—which modify and reflect upon one another. The typographical and etymological wordplay of *Glas* has led to comparisons with James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, which was written

in a blend of different languages. Critics, however, generally have not regarded *Glas* as a work of philosophical significance, beyond the fact that its format puts into practice Derrida's thesis that literary and philosophical texts are distinguished only by the structure of their metaphors and rhetoric.

Derrida's subsequent works, while not so extreme in their experimentation as *Glas*, continue to display his concern with conflating literary and philosophical modes of discourse. In *La carte postale* (1980; *The Post Card*), Derrida utilizes metaphors of postal communication to interpret psychoanalysis as a series of transmissions between a sender and a receiver in which meaning is mediated, detoured, and deferred by language. Moreover, the first section of *The Post Card* is composed as a series of fictitious letters which parody epistolary literature and flout the conventions of "serious" philosophy. *Éperons* (1976; *Spurs*) and *De l'esprit* (1987; *Of Spirit*) present Derrida's commentary on the German philosophers Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger, whom Derrida and many of his interpreters have cited as his primary philosophical influences. Derrida derived the term and concept of deconstruction from Heidegger's use of the German word *destruktion*, and Heidegger's definitive four-volume study of Nietzsche, in which he argues that Nietzsche's philosophy is both the culmination and "overturning" of traditional metaphysics, provided a model for Derrida's deconstructive readings of other philosophers. Derrida turned to an exploration of politics in *Spectres de Marx* (1993; *Specters of Marx*) and *Politiques de l'amitié* (1994; *The Politics of Friendship*). *Specters of Marx*, which was written soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall, comments on the present state and the future of Marxism, while *The Politics of Friendship* traces the history of friendship in relation to politics, noting that the future of politics calls for a new friendship that involves less exclusive systems of democracy. In *Donner la mort* (1992; *The Gift of Death*) Derrida uses an essay by the Czech philosopher and human rights activist Jan Patočka as a springboard for an exploration of religion, morality, and ethics. Within this text, Derrida contemplates the role of responsibility and sacrifice in death. A collection of letters, eulogies, and essays, *The Work of Mourning* (2001) celebrates the lives and careers of Derrida's departed contemporaries including Michel Foucault, Emmanuel Levinas, and fellow deconstructionist Paul de Man.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

Derrida's works have tended to incite passionately divergent reactions from critics. Philosophers oriented toward the analytical and logical positivist schools, such as John Searle, have refuted Derrida by arguing

that his championing of “indeterminacy” and linguistic freeplay leads to extreme forms of skepticism and nihilism. However, critic Christopher Norris has defended Derrida by pointing out that deconstruction is actually an exceedingly rigorous form of analysis and that Derrida’s understanding of philosophy as a rhetorically structured form of writing indistinguishable in its essence from literature has been espoused by numerous other philosophers, most notably Nietzsche. Derrida’s reception among literary critics has been no less contentious. Part of the controversy may be attributed to the casual linkage of Derrida’s name to the literary deconstructionists. Rodolphe Gasché has noted that Derrida’s philosophy does not concern itself directly with literary texts, and that literary deconstruction is actually an independent movement which has for the most part only loosely applied Derrida’s theories. David Bates, however, has argued that because Derrida addressed social, political, and ethical issues that are relevant to today’s society, it will be necessary to examine deconstruction through the lens of history in order to determine its true impact. Despite these debates, Derrida’s prominence in the history of philosophy seems assured. Philosopher Richard Rorty has argued that the lasting value of Derrida’s work rests in its critical analysis of traditional Western philosophy. Rorty concludes: “Having done to Heidegger what Heidegger did to Nietzsche is the negative achievement which, after all the chatter about ‘deconstruction’ is over, will give Derrida a place in the history of philosophy.”

PRINCIPAL WORKS

- **L'origine de la géométrie d'Edmund Husserl* [translator] [*Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*] (philosophy) 1962
De la grammatologie [*Of Grammatology*] (philosophy) 1967
L'écriture et la différence [*Writing and Difference*] (philosophy) 1967
La voix et le phénomène: Introduction au problème du signe dans le phénoménologie de Husserl [*Speech and Phenomena, and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*] (philosophy) 1967
La dissémination [*Dissemination*] (philosophy) 1972
Marges de la philosophie [*Margins of Philosophy*] (philosophy) 1972
L'archéologie du frivole [*The Archeology of the Frivolous: Reading Condillac*] (criticism) 1973
Glas [*Glas*] (criticism) 1974
Éperons: les styles de Nietzsche [*Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*] (philosophy) 1976
La carte postale: de Socrate à Freud et au-delà [*The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*] (philosophy) 1980

- De l'esprit: Heidegger et la question* [*Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*] (philosophy) 1987
Psyché: Invention de l'autre [*Psyche: Invention of the Other*] (philosophy) 1987
†*Limited Inc* (philosophy) 1988
Signéponge [*Signsponge*] (criticism) 1988
Mémoires de l'aveugle, l'autoportrait et autres ruines [*Memoirs of the Blind, the Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*] (philosophy) 1990
Le problème de la genèse dans la philosophie de Husserl [*The Problem of Genesis in Husserl's Philosophy*] (philosophy) 1990
L'autre cap; suivi de la démocratie ajournée [*The Other Heading: Reflections of Today's Europe*] (philosophy) 1991
Donner le temps [*Given Time*] (criticism) 1991
Jacques Derrida (autobiography) 1991
Donner la mort [*The Gift of Death*] (philosophy) 1992
La Fausse Monnaie [*Counterfeit Money*] (criticism) 1992
Aporias: mourir s'attendre aux "limites de la vérité" [*Aporias: Dying—Awaiting (One Another at) the "Limits of Truth"*] (philosophy) 1993
Spectres de Marx: l'état de la dette, le travail du deuil et la nouvelle Internationale [*Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*] (philosophy) 1993
Force de loi: le fondement mystique de l'autorité (philosophy) 1994
Politiques de l'amitié; suivi de l'oreille de Heidegger [*The Politics of Friendship*] (philosophy) 1994
Mal d'archive: Une impression freudienne [*Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*] (philosophy) 1995
Le monolinguisme de l'autre: Ou la prothèse d'origine [*Monolingualism of the Other; or, The Prosthesis of Origin*] (philosophy) 1996
Adieu à Emmanuel Lévinas [*Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*] (philosophy) 1997
Cosmopolites de tous les pays, encore un effort! (philosophy) 1997
Le droit à la philosophie du point de vue cosmopolitique (philosophy) 1997
De l'hospitalité: Anne Dufourmantelle invite Jacques Derrida à répondre [*Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*] [with Anne Dufourmantelle] (philosophy) 1997
Demeure: Maurice Blanchot [*The Instant of My Death, Maurice Blanchot; Demeure: Fiction and Testimony, Jacques Derrida*] (criticism) 2000
Le toucher, Jean-Luc Nancy: Accompagné de travaux de lecture de Simon Hantai (philosophy) 2000
De quoi demain: dialogue [*For What Tomorrow: A Dialogue*] [with Elisabeth Roudinesco] (philosophy) 2001
H. C. pour la vie, c'est à dire [*H. C. for Life, That Is to Say*] (criticism) 2001
Papier machine: le ruban de machine à écrire et autres réponses (philosophy) 2001
L'université sans condition (philosophy) 2001
The Work of Mourning (essays and letters) 2001
Acts of Religion (philosophy) 2002

- Artaud le Moma: interjections d'appel* (philosophy) 2002
Des humanités et de la discipline philosophique [Ethics, Institutions, and the Right to Philosophy] (philosophy) 2002
Fichus: discours de Francfort (philosophy) 2002
Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews, 1971-2001 (essays and interviews) 2002
Without Alibi (philosophy) 2002
Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida [with Giovanna Borradori and Jürgen Habermas] (interviews) 2003
Voyous: deux essais sur la raison [Rogues: Two Essays on Reason] (philosophy) 2003

*Derrida translated this work from the original German into French and wrote a lengthy introduction. The English translation is by John P. Leavey, Jr.

†This volume contains three essays, including "Limited Inc abc . . .," which originally appeared in the journal *Glyph*, no. 2, 1977.

CRITICISM

Nancy J. Holland (essay date May 1998)

SOURCE: Holland, Nancy J. "The Death of the Other/Father: A Feminist Reading of Derrida's Hauntology." *Hypatia* 16, no. 1 (winter 2001): 65-113.

[In the essay below, originally presented at a meeting of the International Association for Philosophy and Literature in May of 1998, Holland provides a feminist reading of Derrida's concept of "hauntology," looking specifically at the relationships between fathers and daughters and employing the works of August Wilson and William Shakespeare to support her thesis.]

Although Heidegger, deeply rooted in this tradition, repeats it, he also suggests a remarkable rearticulation of it.

Jacques Derrida

I was reading and writing about *Specters of Marx* when my father died. My father was not a typical father. (None are.) Ours was not a typical relationship. (None are.) What was perhaps most typical about our relationship was that, like many women of my generation who became academic feminists, I have always identified more with my father than with my mother (even now, as I mother my own children). When a colleague recently suggested, in jest, that we all address each other as "Doctor," my immediate response was that "Dr. Holland is my father" (something our culture tells us, by the way, that a woman says of her mother-in-law, who was supposedly given the same patronym at

marriage). As the word "patronym" might warn us, what is also most typical, if not simply tautological, about my relationship with my father is that it was of necessity more completely different from Derrida's relationship with his father than that of any other man could be. What then remains typical, or universal, if you will, in Derrida's recent discourse on death and patriarchy—"one that goes most often from father to son" (Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 1994, xviii)—and what will need to be acknowledged to be local, or specifically masculine, if you will, in that spectral encounter?

The hauntological discourse I wish to investigate is not the topic of any one recent work of Derrida's. Instead, it is complexly interwoven into several rather different discourses, all primarily elegiac in nature (if not in form): *Specters of Marx* (1994—dedicated to assassinated South African activist Chris Hani), *Aporias* (1993—"In memory of Koitchi Toyosaki," to the death of whose father Derrida also refers), *The Gift of Death* (1995b—which addresses not only Kierkegaard's "Eulogy on Abraham" but also the work of Czech philosopher Jan Patočka, who died under police interrogation in 1977) and *Archive Fever* [*Mal d'archive: Une impression freudienne*] (1995a—which discusses Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi's *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable* [1991] and is, "[f]or a reason that will perhaps become clear later," dedicated to Yerushalmi, but also both to Derrida's sons and to the memory of his father, "who was also called, as is life itself, Hayim" [Derrida 1995a, 20]). All of these texts evoke the same syntagms of death, the ghostly, mourning, duty, the performative, debt, capital, the F/father, messianism, Europe and Jerusalem; and also the same names, above all those of Marx, Freud, Hegel, and Heidegger. The same is true, of course, of much of Derrida's writing, but these works present a particular articulation of these themes/names that invites the question I intend to put to them: what becomes of the daughter in this hauntology, the daughter for whom both the symbolic and the literal F/fathers, and thus also the duties and debts they engender, are always simply Other, beyond any possible filiation or inheritance?

Derrida begins *Specters of Marx* by saying "*je voudrais apprendre à vivre enfin*" which Peggy Kamuf renders as "I would like to learn to live finally" (1994, xvii), noting, as Derrida implies, that the expression cannot be translated "because '*apprendre à vivre*' means both to teach and to learn how to live" (1994, 177). It is this "magisterial" locution, quite specifically, which Derrida cites as being passed from father to son, "master to disciple, or master to slave," but it is clear that the same applies to learning to live itself, which can be learned "Only from the other and by death" (1994, xviii). That it is the death of the father that is in question here can be seen in the fact that this text begins by

invoking, or conjuring up, Hamlet's ghost—as Derrida says of Marx's specter(s), both the ghost who haunts Hamlet and also, because Hamlet bears his father's name, the ghost of Hamlet himself, the dead father/king.²

A first rupture, and a first assertion: a father cannot teach a daughter how to live; he can only teach her the limits within which she must live. The fathers of daughters sometimes know this. In *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (Wilson 1988), dedicated to his own grown daughter, playwright August Wilson tells of Harold Loomis, who returned from seven years of forced labor to find his wife gone and his daughter Zonia in the care of her grandparents. His one fear, as he and Zonia search for the missing mother, is that the girl will grow up before his wife is found. "You growing too fast," Loomis says to Zonia when he tells her the lady at the boarding house will give her a bath. "Don't you get grown on me too soon" (30).³ Later, when told she must return to her mother, now a virtual stranger, Zonia at first clings to her father, crying, "I won't get no bigger! My bones won't get no bigger! They won't! I promise!" (91). A conjuring away of the ghost (of a chance) of an incest as old or older (and perhaps more real) than that Oedipal ghost that haunts Hamlet. The only possible promise, the only possible teaching, between father and daughter here is not to learn how to live, but how to remain in a state where such knowledge is not necessary.

Derrida knows this. He refers in *Archive Fever* (which also evokes Hamlet's ghost) to the arch-patriarchs "who do not cease to be surprised and to remain skeptical about the possibility that a daughter could speak in her own name." Does a daughter have a name of her own? The daughter in question is Anna Freud, who has been described as her father's Antigone, "as if there were no possibility of ever becoming Oedipus's Oedipus" (Derrida, 1995a, 31).⁴

At the same time, however, both August Wilson and Derrida maintain a certain diffidence toward the mother from whom, presumably, a daughter must "learn how to live finally." *Archive Fever* notes, contra Freud, that now "we know that maternity is as inferred, constructed, and interpreted as paternity," that is, that there is no natural mother (1995a, 34). *Specters of Marx* makes constant reference to the problems of translation inherent in a work written in French and delivered in English that addresses German texts—almost a meditation on the conflicted relationship to one's "mother" tongue, which is both the necessary source and the limit of thought.⁵ "Guaranteed translatability, given homogeneity, systematic coherence in their *absolute forms*, this is surely . . . what renders the injunction, the inheritance, and the future—in a word the other—*impossible*. *There must be* disjunction, interruption, the heterogeneous

. . ." (Derrida 1994, 35; his emphasis). There must be a mother, but she appears even in Derrida's text under the form of the "dis-" and the "inter-."

To the Christian message that his found wife offers him, Harold Loomis says, "I'm choking on my own blood and all you can give me is salvation? . . . I don't need [Jesus] to bleed for me! I can bleed for myself" (Wilson 1988, 93). The life that Zonia's mother has to teach her to live is a life that her father, at least, finds not worth living. Yet he has no choice but to surrender Zonia to it. This should come as no surprise. In speaking of Kierkegaard's discourse on Abraham in *The Gift of Death*, Derrida asks, "Does the system of this sacrificial responsibility and of the double 'gift of death' imply at its very basis an exclusion or sacrifice of woman?" (1995b, 76).

So how is the daughter, how am I, to learn to live finally? If not from the mother, who must be transcended (since, like Oedipus, Antigone can only return to the Mother/womb/cave at the price of her own death), and not from the father, who would not allow me to speak/live in my own name, from whom? From the father's ghost, perhaps, but we must be careful again of the ambiguity of this possessive (this double genitive, Derrida would say). There is an inheritance, after all, from father to daughter, in the West most often in the form of a dowry, but it is a three-part relationship, not the simple line of father to son or master to disciple, or even master to slave. *Specters of Marx* makes much of Hamlet's armored ghost's invisible ability to see—"We call this the *visor effect*: we do not see who looks at us" (Derrida 1994, 7). But what if the ghostly apparition that looks at us sees not we ourselves, we daughters as we are, but only its own ghost, the spectral image of what it wants to see, desires to see, must see when it looks at a female form?

A second rupture, a second assertion, perhaps only my own. The ghost who looks at me, the spectral Other I have internalized so thoroughly that in some sense it has become me, is not my father, or not only my father, but also my father's vision of the eternal, idealized Woman he would have loved—as he never could love my mother or my/self—the Woman, tall, dark, slender (this is intended to generate laughter when spoken in person) that I was meant to become for him. This Other is not even the father's mother, or the father's father's mother who, part Cherokee, was also tall and dark, but rather the ghost of the perfect image of the Imaginary female my grandmother, my great-grandmother once were for him/them. The ghost of a woman who never lived. From whom, then, am I to learn to live, finally?

For the son, there is always the opportunity, in Freud and at the margins of Derrida's reading of his texts, to exorcize the father's ghost, through obedience and/or

parricide. Derrida writes of the archive that "No one has shown how this . . . paternal and patriarchal principle only posited itself to repeat itself and returned to re-posit itself only in the parricide. It amounts to the repressed or suppressed parricide, in the name of the father as dead father" (1995a, 59-60). Hamlet's fault is that he cannot kill his father/uncle, his mother's lover, so the tragedy must lie in his failure and the corresponding expectation of the possibility of at least partial or symbolic success. Even Oedipus triumphs in a way over his parricidal fate, the event that dooms him—even he learns to live from out of the meaning of his father's death. A son's obedience, the exorcism by filial duty that would also be a parricide, is possible, Derrida reminds us in the text dedicated to his sons: "Freud had his ghosts, he confesses it on occasion. . . . He had his, and he obeyed them (Jakob Shelomoh [Freud's father], Moses, and a few others), as does Yerushalmi (Jakob Shelomoh, Sigmund Shelomoh, his Moses, and a few others), and I myself (Jakob, Hayim, my grandfathers Moses and Abraham, and a few others)" (1995a, 56).

But if one is haunted, not by the ghost of the father, but by the father's ghost, how could any salvation be conjured out of that? The ghost who speaks indirectly to Zonia in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* is a woman she has never met, Miss Mabel, the mother of Seth, the man who owns the boarding house. Miss Mabel speaks only to the boy Zonia plays with, but through him to an audience that knows Loomis must also learn the same lesson about leaving the past behind—a lesson Zonia cannot learn because she must be returned to the Jesus/ghost-loving mother. Polonius cannot save Ophelia, but can only shame her to madness and to death. Oedipus cannot save Antigone, but can only leave a divided heritage that means her death. Creon, like Polonius a substitute father, like Claudius a substitute king, cannot, or rather will not, save her, asserting instead his right as father/king to kill her, even if it leads to his own son's death—and that of the mother/wife.

The history of Western literature is, of course, a history of dead mothers and murdered daughters/lovers/wives (and August Wilson would not be an exception to this), but Derrida's texts evoke explicitly the relationship of father and daughter in this inevitable litany of gynocide. At the same time, Derrida's texts evoke the specter of another Other, an Other that would not be simply the father's ghost, simply another Hamlet, no matter how *unheimlich*. In *Aporias* Derrida echoes comments he has made elsewhere, notably in *The Gift of Death*, about the paradox of ethics and the decision: "Each time the decision concerns the choice between the relation to an other who is *its* other (that is to say, an other that can be opposed in a couple), and the relation to a wholly, non-opposable, other, that is, an other that is no longer *its* other" (1993, 18).⁶ Who would this third other

be? Not the wife/mother, the "better half" of the couple of opposition, nor the son, of whom one can at least say that he is his father's. Rather, this would seem to be the place of the daughter, who can neither be unambiguously declared to be the father's, since the line of inheritance runs from father to son (and in the West she is destined to become her husband's), nor can she be coupled with the father, for fear of another couple, Iphigenia/ Electra, which must be coupled both with Agamemnon and with Orestes/ Clytemnestra as the tacit third ghost of incest and matricide in the history which Derrida limits, a bit arbitrarily, to "theater or . . . politics between *Oedipus Rex* and *Hamlet*" (1994, 22).

And so Derrida also says, a few pages later in *Aporias*, "In another conference it would have been necessary to explore these experiences of the edge or of the borderline under the names of what one calls the body proper and sexual difference. Today, in choosing the theme of death, of the syntagm 'my death' and of the 'limits of truth,' to explore this subject, I will perhaps not speak of anything else under different names, but names matter" (1993, 21).⁷ My name, perhaps, which is my father's, and which I chose not to give to my children because it was not mine. The daughter would then be like the Marranos to whom Derrida refers at the end of *Aporias*—neither enough one's own to trust or include in the patrimony of full citizenship/personhood, nor enough other to exclude or to kill, an Other not one's own.

A third rupture, a third assertion, perhaps a familiar one. Derrida addresses more than once the unity in multiplicity of the specter: "If the ghost is disseminated everywhere, the question becomes a distressing one: where does one *begin* to count the progeniture? It is again a question of the head. Who is to be put at the head of all those whom one gets in one's head? . . . At the head of the procession comes capital, the capital representation, the oldest Son: Man," but later also "There is in sum, no doubt, but a single ghost, a ghost of ghosts . . ." (Derrida 1994, 138). Leaving aside the capitalized masculinity of all this, if the daughter's ghost carries within him the ghost of an Other who never lived, then he is neither one nor many, nor a couple, since what once lived cannot be coupled with an Imaginary that cannot live. Across a determinate abyss. One that threatens the simple "or" that both unites and divides Derrida's "feelings" and, perhaps, my own in a bracketed passage that shortly follows the above quotation. "(I insist that it is a *feeling*, my feeling and I have no reason to deny that it projects itself necessarily into the scene I am interpreting: my 'thesis,' my hypothesis, or my hypostasis, precisely, is that it is never possible to avoid this precipitation, since everyone reads, acts, writes with *his or her* ghosts, even when one goes after the ghosts of the other)" (Derrida 1994, 139; his emphasis).⁸ Non-sexist language run amok, as

if ghosts were interchangeably “his or hers” like the towels brides used to be given, along with patronyms, as wedding gifts. My mother had a set, well worn and well loved.

You can see a conclusion begin to take shape from out of the interwoven forms I have conjured up. As I have argued elsewhere (Holland 2000), at the very moment when Derrida attempts to say something, however partial and attenuated, about *the* ghost, he must at the same time recreate a tradition in which the Father/Ghost, and all that they represent, speak only to the Son. Unlike my maternal grandmother (the mother’s mother), whose Alzheimer’s-haunted specter appeared in my dreams for years after her death, my father’s ghost seldom visits me in person. Perhaps he rests more peacefully than she, more satisfied with the life he led as he was more satisfied in life—or perhaps he simply prefers to haunt my brother. Yet ghosts remain. That of Freud, perhaps. I worked hard to ignore *Archive Fever* when preparing this paper, for instance, knowing, as you do not, that my psychologist father spent many of my childhood years in psychoanalysis. All this is expected. “Inheritance is never a *given*,” Derrida tells us in *Specters of Marx*; “it is always a task” (1994, 54). But not *a* task, a single one. Always in all ways many tasks, tasks with forms as various as the forms of life, a mourning both terminable and interminable. Derrida knows this. “The specter weighs, it thinks, it intensifies and condenses itself within the very inside of life, within the most living life, the most singular (or, if one prefers, individual) life. The latter therefore no longer has and must no longer have, insofar as it is living, a pure identity to itself or any assured inside . . .” (Derrida 1994, 109). The question, then, is how to learn to live after all, how to survive.

OPHELIA:

I would give you some Violets, but they withered all
when my Father Dyed. . . .

Hamlet 4.5.181

Notes

1. For a rough definition/delineation of this term, see Derrida (1994, 51).
2. On the double meaning of “Marx’s ghost,” see Derrida (1994, 98).
3. An entire reading of these same texts of Derrida’s could be based on the divergence between European and African-American “hauntologies,” as Drucilla Cornell has suggested with regard to Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (in a paper presented at the 1994 meeting of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy).
4. Hamlet’s ghost appears in this text at Derrida (1995a, 29).
5. See Derrida’s commentary on Marx’s use of this concept (1994, 109-10), but also his own awareness of the problem, for example, in translating Shakespeare (19-20), in the genesis of *The Communist Manifesto* (104), and, at the very end of the book, in the production of his own work (176). Compare also the reference at Derrida (1995b, 88).
6. Compare “*Tout autre est tout autre*” (Derrida 1995b, 82-115).
7. Compare Derrida (1995b, 45).
8. Compare Derrida (1995a, 53): “Who wants to substitute him- or herself for Freud’s phantom?” Who indeed?

References

- Derrida, Jacques. 1993. *Aporias*. Trans. Thomas Dutoit. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- . 1994. *Specters of Marx: The state of the debt, the work of mourning, and the new international*. Trans. Peggy Kamuf. New York: Routledge.
- . 1995a. *Archive fever*. Trans. Eric Prenowitz. *Diacritics* 25 (2): 9-63.
- . 1995b. *The gift of death*. Trans. David Wills. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Holland, Nancy J. 2000. “In this text where I never am: Discourses of desire in Derrida.” In *Continental philosophy VII: Philosophy and desire*, ed. Hugh J. Silverman. New York: Routledge.
- Wilson, August. 1988. *Joe Turner’s come and gone*. New York: New American Library.
- Yerushalmi, Yosef Hayim. 1991. *Freud’s Moses: Judaism terminable and interminable*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Elizabeth Grosz (essay date winter 1999)

SOURCE: Grosz, Elizabeth. “The Time of Violence; Deconstruction and Value.” *College Literature* 26, no. 1 (winter 1999): 8-18.

[In the essay below, Grosz comments on Derrida’s work in her discussion of the ways in which the concept of violence is conveyed in intellectual and philosophical writing.]

I am interested in this paper in exploring the ways in which we may see violence both as a positivity and as the unspoken condition of a certain fantasy of the sustainability of its various others or opposites, peace, love, and so on. Rather than simply condemn or deplore violence, as we tend to do regarding the evils of war