

Geert Lernant, The French Joyce. Ann
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Introduction

The literary critics in the early seventies who predicted the imminent demise of literary theory have been proven wrong: theory and especially the poststructuralist and deconstructionist variety is alive and well, even after the controversy over Paul de Man's wartime writings. A cursory glance at professional journals or publishers' lists, a look at conference titles or symposium programs is enough to indicate the success of a movement that originated in France and that is associated mainly with the names of Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida. For reasons that need to be studied more closely, the adoption of this new paradigm has been more controversial and dramatic in the field of English studies than in those of comparative literature or French.

That the theoretical developments have reached the study of James Joyce and have, at least since the mid-eighties, acquired a considerable following, should be clear to anybody who has recently attended a Joyce conference or who has read recent books or articles on Joyce. In 1986, Harold Bloom distinguished in the introduction to a book that "gathers together a representative selection of the best criticism available on the writings of James Joyce" two American schools of Joyce criticism: the school of Ellmann and that of Kenner. But most of the essays in Bloom's collection represent "a new movement in Joyce studies, much influenced by current modes of criticism," and one essay, by Daniel Ferrer, is even poststructuralist and deconstructionist

(ix-x). In the proceedings of two Joyce conferences (Frankfurt 1984 and Philadelphia 1985) that were published in 1988 the poststructuralist Joyce is everywhere. In his introduction to *James Joyce: The Augmented Ninth*, Bernard Benstock writes: "In short, the Frankfurt symposium was marked by the dominance of new critical approaches to Joyce's texts in an area where more conventional readings had long dominated" (1988, 4), and this is quite clear in the rest of the volume. The same is true for *New Alliances in Joyce Studies*: in her introduction Bonnie Kime Scott concludes that "clearly, applications of recent theory dominate" (1988a, 15). In order to understand the impact of the "new" Joyce, we must first understand Joyce's exact role in the literary domain.

Few authors have been so important for modern literature and recent criticism as James Joyce. Hailed by contemporaries such as Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot and William Butler Yeats as the most important novelist of his day—Joyce himself seems to have agreed with that judgment—he was venerated by a younger generation of writers who flocked to Paris to catch a glimpse of the author of *Ulysses*, among them Scott Fitzgerald, who offered to jump out of the window as proof of his devotion (*JJ II*, 581). After World War II, *Ulysses* became a classroom classic and a paradigm for several new generations of novelists, among them Vladimir Nabokov, Thomas Pynchon, John Barth, Gilbert Sorrentino, and many others.

Theoreticians of literature have also remained interested in Joyce; when Robert Scholes, Northrop Frye, or Wayne C. Booth has a theoretical point to make, he turns to Joyce as a supreme example. This is the case not only in the United States, where so much of Joyce criticism originates, but also in Germany, where Max Bense and Wolfgang Iser have used Joyce's texts in the exposition of their theories of literature. Joyce also figures prominently in the German debates about postmodernism: in a recent book on the dialectics of the modern and the postmodern, Albrecht Wellmer describes *Finnegans Wake* as a work in which an aesthetic totality of meaning cannot be attained anymore, it is a postmodern work (1985, 67). In Italy, Umberto Eco has continued to refer to Joyce from *Opera aperta* (1962a) onward; and

even England, which had until the mid-seventies managed to keep itself aloof from continental theoretical fashions and from a too enthusiastic appraisal of Joyce's accomplishments as a writer, was confronted with a regular scandal over Colin MacCabe's doctoral dissertation which managed to combine both sins (1978). Maybe as a reaction, Terry Eagleton, not really an enthusiastic supporter of too much theorizing, has described *Finnegans Wake* as a touchstone for any literary theory (Eagleton 1983, 82).

France, where almost every recent theory of literature seems to have originated, has accomplished this modern theoretical reception of Joyce's works relatively late, but it has quickly made up for time lost. In just a few years *Finnegans Wake* became the most central piece of radical *écriture*, and in this book I will attempt to show where this sudden success comes from and how it developed out of the early reception of Joyce's work and out of the theoretical assumptions elaborated in the sixties and seventies. I am therefore more interested in influences than in the numerous similarities among elements in Joyce's later works and characteristics of recent critical writing that were studied by Stephen Tanner (1984). Central in this analysis will be the fact that Joyce's influence is not, as in most other countries, a purely academic matter; on the contrary, a lot of French academics have been reluctant to confront Joyce's work. The reception has been literary in the first place, from the support Joyce received from fellow-writers in Paris to the efforts by Michel Butor and Raymond Queneau to disseminate Joyce's works in the fifties and sixties and, finally, to his presence by means of allusions and quotations in the novels and poetry of the seventies and eighties. But the emphasis in this book is on the critical reception, not on the creative appropriation that accompanied it, and I only discuss Joyce's presence in novels or poems by authors who have also written on his work critically.

That Joyce has been adopted by the French as one of their own is not too difficult to demonstrate: Gallimard's prestigious series *La Pléiade* published one volume with translations of Joyce's early works and has announced a second volume with a new translation of *Ulysses*. This series publishes complete standard editions of more than a

hundred "classic" writers and philosophers, five of them German and only nine English or American: we find Joyce in the company of William Shakespeare, Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding, Charles Dickens, E.A. Poe, Joseph Conrad, William Faulkner, and Ernest Hemingway. Apart from this, nearly every word Joyce wrote has been translated and published, in most cases by Gallimard. France can boast the only complete version of *Finnegans Wake* in a foreign language, as the last event in a series of translations that also includes *The Cat and the Devil*, Giacomo Joyce, the *Letters*, *Critical Writings*, and Stanislaus Joyce's *Dublin Diary* and *My Brother's Keeper*.

My original intention in writing this study was a direct result of a culture clash. As an undergraduate my training was predominantly theoretical: Belgium, as a small country wedged between France, Germany, and England, has traditionally been very open to intellectual influences from abroad, and in the seventies this meant heavy doses of Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, Jacques Lacan, and Jacques Derrida (the first book-length study on Derrida and the first dissertation on Lacan were written by Belgians). When I began to read Joyce, I found in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* examples of the radical *écriture* the poststructuralist theoreticians were writing about. The problem was that I could find nothing in the American and English criticism on Joyce that came close to what I had read on Joyce in *Tel Quel*, and a one-year stay at University College in Dublin did not help matters much. So I decided to do for Joyceans what Jonathan Culler in *Structuralist Poetics* (1975) had done for American theoreticians of literature. It was clear to me that I belonged to a different paradigm from that of most Joyce scholars, and I started to read works on the philosophy of science in order to understand the exact nature of the difference between the American and the French Joyce because a nonpartisan perspective seemed to be necessary for what I wanted to achieve. Thomas S. Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* taught me that in order to describe a school, one can use extrinsic and sociological evidence when one introduces the notion of paradigm, which is "what the members of a scientific community share, and, conversely, a scientific community consists of men who share a para-

digm" (Kuhn 1970, 176). Since 1962, when Kuhn's book was first published, this definition still stands, and the term seems to have acquired a universal applicability. In any case, Kuhn did prove that the empirical and extrinsic ways of defining a scientific community are nontrivial, and it seems appropriate to try to apply these principles to a study of the history and evolution of literary criticism, and more specifically to a description of a critical school or method.

Kuhn distinguishes different ways of identifying a paradigm; first there is the geographical location. Scientists who share the same paradigm will work at the same institute, university, or laboratory as the inventor(s) or strongest supporter(s) of the paradigm. In literary criticism we could think of the Yale critics, the Chicago school, or the school of Constance. The name of a city is used only when it is not the intellectual capital of a country, in which case a group or tendency may be identified by the name of the school or its location (e.g., the Rue d'Ulm). A second distinctive feature may be the means of publication: often like-minded critics and theorists will start a journal or take over an existing one in order to disseminate their ideas: examples could be *Poétique*, *Glyph*, *Boundary 2*, or collections and series such as "Tel Quel," "Champ freudien" and "Poetik und Hermeneutik." A third criterion may be the presence at colloquia, the membership in professional organizations, and the subscription to journals. Lastly there is the network of quotations: members of the same group will quote and acknowledge one another's work and ignore or criticize that of others who do not belong to the group. Critics who belong to the same group, who share a paradigm, conform to the code of that group, which may even include a denial that there is such a group. This is less important for established members of established paradigms than for outsiders or newcomers who want to prove the seriousness of their allegiance to the new group or for the pioneers of a novel paradigm who have to establish its right to exist. In this, the introduction of a new critical approach resembles the efforts of an artistic generation to make a mark on their time, and sometimes the two even cooperate or coincide: one could think of the relationship

between Russian formalism and futurism (Medvedev 1976, 74) or of the co-presence of literature and criticism in *Tel Quel*.

What the members of such a community have in common, according to Kuhn, is a way of perceiving and/or describing the world, *world-versions* to use Nelson Goodman's term, *language-game* in Ludwig Wittgenstein's, *gestalts*, codes, languages. In a postscript that Kuhn added to a later edition of his book, he distinguished between the notion of paradigm as "shared example" and what he used to call paradigm, that which members of a scientific community have in common and which he now calls a "disciplinary matrix" (1970, 182). The latter can consist of four different components that function in different ways: the first are "symbolic generalizations," formal or formalizable definitions that can function either as laws of nature or as redefinitions of existing symbols. In the first case Kuhn expects a different kind of commitment from scholars since laws can be corrected piecemeal, and definitions, as tautologies, cannot (183). Theories of literature or criticism have few symbolic generalizations, and when they do have them, they generally belong to the second, most contested kind: an example could be Derrida's notions of *écriture* or *text*, which include a lot of phenomena that are not generally considered to be writing or texts. The functions of these symbolic generalizations can range from radical redefinitions of literature, poetry, or specific areas of inquiry to simple observations about a single writer, movement, work, or image. An example of such a "minimal generalization" is Paul de Man's observation that "figure" in "The Triumph of Life" can also have the meaning of the French word *figure* (1979), an idea that has been applied by other critics to other texts. A second component of the disciplinary matrix consists of what Kuhn calls "metaphysical paradigms" or models. The scholars' commitment to them may vary according to whether they are ontological or merely heuristic models, but they all serve the same purpose: "they supply the group with preferred or permissible analogies and metaphors" (Kuhn 1970, 184). A good example of this type of paradigm is Derrida's habit of punning on an author's name as he does in *Glas* (1974), where he points to the fact that Hegel mispronounced in French

sounds like *aigle*, eagle. The German poststructuralist philosopher Werner Hamacher does a similar thing in his introduction to an edition of *Der Geist des Christentums* (1978) when he runs Hegel's name through a series of more or less homophonous words; *Ekel*, *Igel*, *häkeln*, etc. Examples in literary theory could be the metaphor of *Horizontverschmelzung* (the merging of horizons) in post-Gadamerian hermeneutics, the comparison of text to tissue in Kristeva, or Jakobson's concept of literature as a code.

The third component of a disciplinary matrix is the paradigm as shared example, which seems particularly suitable in a study of the history of literary criticism and theory. Groups of scholars generally do not refer to purely theoretical statements about the aims and methods of their approach but seem to base their allegiance to a certain model on an individual reading of a single work. This also seems the case for the innovator himself: it is much easier to apply a new model to a specific text than to describe it in theoretical and programmatic terms. Obvious examples are the reading of Baudelaire's "Les chats" by Roman Jakobson and Claude Lévi-Strauss (1962), Jacques Lacan's reading of Poe's "The Purloined Letter" in *Écrits* (1966), and Derrida's interpretation of Plato's *Phaedrus* (1968a; 1968b). Thomas Kuhn argues that these concrete problem solutions supply the empirical content of the abstract laws and theories and that their prime importance lies in their role in the training of young scholars, who are first confronted with these concrete problem solutions and are then trained to recognize similar problems in reality and to apply the model by solving them in an analogical manner. This phenomenon may be linked to an insight into the nature of the reading process that has been applied to the reading of literature but strangely enough not to our reading of criticism itself. Wolfgang Iser writes in *Der Akt des Lesens* (1976) that reading is a selective process based on the horizon of expectations of each reader. One does not perceive and retain every segment of a communicated message, but one selects elements of the message that either conform to or differ from what one expected to find. We do not simply absorb Lacan's *Écrits* completely; we will read different sections with more or less attention depending on our previous knowl-

edge of psychoanalysis, on our opinion of Freud's work, on the stories we have heard about Lacan, etc. Our reading of theoretical writings and, more precisely in this context, of critical analyses of a text as shared examples, can be motivated in different ways, depending on the focus of our interest. If we read an analysis in order to learn more about Baudelaire's poem, Plato's dialogue, or Joyce's novel, we will read differently from the way we read when we want to find out more about Jakobson, Derrida, or Iser and differently again from how we read when we intend to apply their findings to our own reading of other literary texts. In the first case we will have the text to be analyzed constantly in mind, and we will compare the findings in the critical analysis to our own; in the other cases, we will have to conclude our reading with a digest of what we perceive as the critic's creed, a shorthand version of his ideas about literature in general and about strategies of reading texts in particular. When members of a community of scholars accept the same paradigm, the matrix has to be at least potentially concretizable: the members should be able to describe their agreement. This digest is by definition limited and may well resemble an entry in an encyclopedia or in a student's handbook. The same is true in religion: all Christians base their faith on the same book, yet their allegiance goes to a group of people who share a particular interpretation of the Bible, a perspective that can be concretized in articles of faith, catechisms, or other forms of digest.

This is precisely one of the difficulties in the case of poststructuralism, which is notoriously difficult to define and which owes some of its polemic power to that simple fact. Poststructuralist theory casts doubt on the very possibility of definition and stresses the violence involved in the process of naming. When they describe their own work, poststructuralist writers usually talk of an activity, a practice, and a rhetoric, rather than of a set of beliefs or doctrines. Panelists on the deconstruction panel at the Joyce symposium in Frankfurt carefully avoided the question of what their different papers had in common, either because they were too much impressed by Derrida's presence in the room or because there simply was no such unity of purpose. But it is clear that most readers of recent criticism will be able to

recognize poststructuralist writing when they are confronted with it, and I will propose here a number of different possible definitions.

First a diachronic one: as its name implies, poststructuralism follows structuralism. In 1966 and 1967, Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, and the members of the *Tel Quel* collective published a number of key texts in which they criticized the scientific and positivist tendencies in formalist structuralism. These critics and philosophers saw the scientific pretensions of formalism as part of the Western metaphysics from which they wanted to escape, and their new analysis often involved a critique of the earlier generation of structuralists, using their rhetoric against themselves: Derrida's reading of Lévi-Strauss is paradigmatic here (1967c). This diachronic definition finds confirmation in the German term *Neostukturalismus* popularized by Manfred Frank (1984); and in the career of single critics one can observe this break in the shift, for example, between Barthes's *Le Plaisir du texte* (1973), where he explicitly situates his present project outside of the science of literature as he had defined it in *Critique et Vérité* (1966).

Another definition could point to precursors, which is a strategy employed by Vincent Descombes when in his survey of French philosophy he claims that the postwar thinkers have remained under the influence of German philosophers—until 1960 of Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger; after that date of Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud (1979, 13). But Descombes immediately adds that the influence should not be thought of as absolute since, strangely enough, the major texts of these master thinkers have not been translated. This lack of availability of the primary texts has resulted in a "productive transformation" of their thought: "Let us not think that a work becomes authoritative because it is read, studied and finally found convincing. The opposite is true: one reads it because one is already convinced" (14). The absence in the list of Ferdinand de Saussure, the founding father of a structuralist linguistics and therefore of semiotics, is striking and would have been unimaginable if Descombes had been writing a couple of years earlier. This represents a mistake that is not uncommon in writers on recent French intellectual history. The im-

fact of poststructuralism has managed to obscure the formalist phase of structuralism, and it sometimes seems as if poststructuralism simply reacted against the dominant phenomenological and hermeneutic approaches. One of the themes that will emerge from this study is the dominance of Heideggerian themes in French antirationalist thinking, at least since Kojève's lectures on Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes* in the thirties (Hegel 1971; Kojève 1979), and precisely bridging the gap that separates Sartrean existentialism and poststructuralism, but this should not blind us to the structuralist/formalist phase of structuralism before 1968.

Reference to precursors or models alone cannot be enough: another example is the strange fate of Freud's work in France. Psychoanalysis failed to make much of an impact on French intellectual life before 1940, dedicated as the French were to clear and distinct ideas. The only exception was the surrealist movement, which attempted to bring into practice some of Freud's concepts. Lacan was among the earliest French Freudians; yet it is precisely on the basis of his version of Freudianism that *Tel Quel* will completely dismiss surrealism and its references to Freud. The view that poststructuralism is an heir to German philosophy should be studied from the perspective of German-French intellectual relations, which have always included an important political factor.

Another attempt at definition is essentially negative, but it does correspond to a self-understanding of the critics involved. Poststructuralist thinking is explicitly avant-garde and ambitious. It posits itself as a radical and revolutionary rejection of traditional criticism and the assumptions it is based on, and it sees itself as not just another methodology but the only way in which texts can meaningfully be read. Derrida, Foucault, and Lacan look for the kind of discourse that escapes the domination of metaphysics and logocentrism. With Heidegger, they all accept the end of philosophy as the basis for the elaboration of something entirely new. These *antagonistic* and *agonistic* tendencies, to use terms that have been developed by Renato Poggioli to describe the essential characteristics of the historical avant-garde (1981), force it to define itself not so much by what it is opposed to but

by the oppositional activity itself. This is clear if we look at what it is that poststructuralism reacts against: whether it is metaphysics, or onto-theology, logocentrism, formalism, phallocentrism, or simply the university as an institution does not really affect the arguments. This is most obvious in Roland Barthes, who wrote in his last book about his resistance against any system whatsoever: whenever he felt that his language would harden into a sociological, semiological, or psychoanalytical system, he "would gently leave and seek elsewhere" (1980, 21). Similarly, Lacan always managed to change his theory whenever it threatened to freeze into a doctrine, and the same goes for Philippe Sollers, who has even published a book called *Théorie des exceptions* (1986a), which seems to cover the same ground as what Roland Barthes called the *mathesis singularis*, the impossible science of the unique being.

The resistance to an intrinsic definition that we have observed mirrors the lack of agreement among critics and theoreticians about a definition of the very object of their study, and it is one of the most serious symptoms of the current malaise in the discipline. A definition of literature cannot use terms that belong to one kind of discourse because that would define the results of the study even before it has started. If it is my ambition to present work in one tradition to readers who belong to another, I must avoid using terms of either discourse. In other words, my definition of literature must be extrinsic, relative, and descriptive because if it were intrinsic, essential, and prescriptive, I would lose the possibility of comparing it with alternative definitions. Literature will therefore be defined here as the body of texts that are considered to be literature by the community of its recipients, a definition that is essentially sociological, since it is based on the observable behavior of a group of individuals. Most theorists of literature in the past chose the prescriptive path and have only mentioned the descriptive definition as a horrible example to be avoided at all costs. Friedrich Schlegel, for example, writes: "A definition of poetry can only claim what it should be, not what it in reality was and is; otherwise it might just as well read like this: Poetry is that which somewhere sometime has been called by that name" (Schlegel

and Schlegel 1970, 204). To return to the example of religion: the Bible exists independently of its Christian interpretations; if we want to describe the system of beliefs of one particular group of Christians, Methodists, for example, it would seriously hamper our attempts to be objective if we adopted a strictly Catholic point of view. We do not even need to know what the Bible means by and in itself: a careful observation of the behavior of the groups of people who claim they do is enough.

The early years of a paradigm constitute its most interesting phase, and it is especially fascinating to observe how a paradigm is introduced into another national or linguistic context. The success of poststructuralism in North America is a good example, especially since Americans have consistently relied on French culture to provide them with exemplary figures (Booth 1978, 327). Language is one of the important factors in the French connection: French departments are generally the largest foreign language departments at American universities, and professors of French and comparative literature have been crucial to the reception of structuralist and poststructuralist thinking.

The evolution from the first introduction of a new paradigm to its acceptance can be demonstrated in reference to the American translations of Derrida's books. *La Voix et le phénomène* was translated by David B. Allison and published by Northwestern University Press in 1973. In the preface, Newton Garner carefully articulates the differences between Derrida's approach and philosophy as it is practiced in Britain and in the United States. This edition still fits into the reception of philosophical hermeneutics: the translation is subtitled *and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*. Northwestern University Press had already published translations and books by Heidegger and Ricoeur. The covers of two other books by Derrida, published by the university presses of Johns Hopkins (1976) and Chicago (1978), respectively, boast a quotation of a professor from Yale: *Of Grammatology* from J. Hillis Miller and *Writing and Difference* from Geoffrey Hartman. The rest of the text on the cover of *Of Grammatology* stresses Derrida's importance in France and the "lively controversy" his work occa-

sioned in "the vanguard of European and American criticism." Although *La Dissémination* was translated by a young Ivy League professor of English literature and published by the University of Chicago Press (1981), the cover is different; apart from a brief biographical note on Derrida, it contains only a difficult passage from "Hors livre." Apparently by 1981 the prospective buyer of a book by Derrida did not have to be told what he would find or why he should buy the book. The prefaces to these translations also change from an introduction to Derrida's thought from the perspective of an American philosophical or critical tradition to a writing that increasingly adopts the Derridean style.

What I originally intended to do was to translate the new Joyce into the language of traditional criticism, much as Kuhn described the process in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*:

Briefly put, what the participants in a communication breakdown can do is recognize each other as members of different language communities and then become translators. Taking the differences between their own intra- and inter-group discourse as itself a subject for study, they can first attempt to discover the terms and locutions that, used unproblematically within each community, are nevertheless foci of trouble for inter-group discussions. (1970, 202)

It seemed to me that the lack of communication between the French and the traditional critics was not just due to an innate Anglo-Saxon rejection of difference and dissemination. In the proceedings of the Paris Joyce Symposium, I read between the lines that there was a genuine willingness on the part of American Joyceans to find out what the French were so excited about and an equally genuine unwillingness on the part of the French to offer that explanation. So I would be an interpreter.

But when I started to reread the French criticism of the sixties and seventies and to study the work that had been published in the meantime, I discovered first that the critics I was reading did not often mention other French critics' work and that when they did, they attacked each other vigorously. How could they be part of the same

paradigm? The role of *Tel Quel* seemed crucial, and it became evident that I could not simply describe the contours of a single poststructuralist Joyce. I would also have to write the history of a very turbulent phase in French intellectual life. The problem with this type of work is that, partly as a direct result of poststructuralism, *Ideengeschichte* or the history of ideas has been extremely unfashionable until very recently. This meant that I had very little secondary material to base my analysis on; there are no thorough studies of the reception of Heidegger's ideas in France or of Hegel's influence, although general statements about these topics and about real or imagined filiations between writers and philosophers abound. When I started the project, there were almost no biographies of the major participants in this story and next to no histories of structuralism, poststructuralism, or psychoanalysis in France. Since I did not have any informants within the French context, it also meant that I had to work purely on the basis of the texts published by the protagonists of the story so that Derrida's dictum "il n'y a pas de hors-texte" took on its own peculiar meaning for me. Although I was able, after a while, to see how the different lines in the battlefield had been drawn—who was quarreling when, with whom, and why—I discovered to my surprise that these enmities and conversions did not matter all that much for the practical criticism. The picture of James Joyce and his work that emerged from the writings of Hélène Cixous, Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, Philippe Sollers, and their followers was remarkably consistent, and there definitely seemed to be a paradigm after all.

My second discovery was, for my own point of view, more dramatic. Sometime in my first year in graduate school, I stopped thinking of myself as a part of the poststructuralist paradigm, and I have since found it much easier to analyze other people's conversions than to analyze my own. Since I cannot pretend that I believe my own position is entirely irrelevant to my handling of these texts, I cannot keep my own particular gestalt switch out of the discussion. One of the reasons was certainly overexposure: like all graduate students in comparative literature departments in North America, I read far too much theory, and I heard too many theoretical papers. It did not take long

to recognize recurrent patterns in the rhetoric, to read all the relevant books, and then to "do the deconstruction" as we used to say. Another factor had to do with the act of reading: in Dublin, in the absence of theoretical books, I had concentrated on Joyce's own works and on other novels of the period; since then *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* still seem more interesting than anything written about them. When I read French and American poststructuralists, I found it increasingly difficult to link their texts to Joyce's; when I could, Joyce very often came out saying something that however much I tried I could not find in the original. A close reading of an essay by Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe on the German poet Friedrich Hölderlin (1978) revealed the rhetorical ploys and the shallowness of some of this criticism, and in a course on Joyce I wrote a paper on Joyce's use of Dutch-Flemish language lists in which I discovered the *Finnegans Wake* notebooks and the perverse delight of applying old philology to an avant-garde text.

The change in my own perspective has made it necessary to make my disagreements with the theory and practice of poststructuralism explicit, but I hope that it did not affect my ability to present poststructuralists' work fairly. In the Joycean context my position had become precarious: more and more to be young, dynamic, and ambitious became synonymous with following Lacan and Derrida. Joyceans who shared my distrust of poststructuralism could not see why I still bothered to read and study deconstruction. Another traditionalist objection was one of relevance: if literature is the prime object of criticism, studying studies about literature and studies about studies about literature becomes progressively more frivolous and irrelevant. This objection is not simply a corollary of a more general antitheoretical position; it also betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of the reading process and of the acquisition of knowledge in general. If Kuhn and the theoreticians of reader reception are right, perception is never an innocent activity: an individual perceives the world around him in ways that relate to a large number of factors, some social and some personal. The social factors can, according to Kuhn, be studied by the philosophy and sociology of science, and I believe they can

also be isolated in literary criticism. If we find that the same phenomenon, in this case the work of James Joyce, is interpreted differently by two groups of scholars, a responsible student of Joyce cannot afford to ignore this fact. He or she will have to confront the alternative view; the other paradigm will have to be studied and decisions will have to be made whether it can be accepted or rejected. Before we can make such a decision, a full presentation of the French Joyce criticism is necessary, not only simply in order to understand the French paradigm, its sources and consequences, but also in order to comprehend one's own paradigm. It is only when we are confronted with a fully defined alternative perspective that we can really formulate and understand our own premises. This is precisely what could have happened when poststructuralism was introduced in Joyce studies. But it did not, and the reasons for this failure need to be addressed.

The Joyceans have had everything going for them. Most of them read French and quite a lot of them have taught in comparative literature departments where the impact of French theory registered ten years earlier than in most English departments. Every two years the James Joyce Foundation organizes a large-scale symposium in Europe, and most of the French poststructuralist thinkers have presented major addresses in Paris (1975), Zürich (1979), Dublin (1982), Frankfurt (1984), and Copenhagen (1986). Panels and workshops have been devoted to the new approaches and in Venice (1988) it was very difficult not to be confronted with a young man or woman who began his or her paper with the statement "What follows should be seen in the context of the epoch-making studies of J. Derrida (or J. Lacan)."

The first meaning of the word *symposium* in my *Webster's* is "any meeting or social gathering at which ideas are freely exchanged," but this type of *agora* or *forum* has in recent years degenerated into a marketplace, a Modern Language Association convention *extra muros*, the sole purpose of which seems to be to avoid an exchange of ideas at all costs. Against this notion of a free exchange of ideas, it could be argued that a symposium or an MLA convention really is a marketplace, a very deregulated exchange of professional prestige.

Untenured professors have to give papers at conferences, preferably abroad; the same is true for ambitious associate professors. Articles have to be written and published for professors to get tenure; books have to come out regularly if you want to become a full professor. The term *Joyce industry* really begins to mean something here. The number of publications on Joyce and the number of young academics at Joyce conferences suggest that Joyce still is a hot academic property. If we look at the kinds of panels that attract a large audience or the kind of paper that is likely to be published in the proceedings, the conclusion from a career-planning perspective is clear enough: at the moment, poststructuralism and feminism sell well. The choice involved is not trivial. On the contrary, it is of vital importance to the young academic, especially in the very competitive market of the eighties and early nineties: it can mean the difference between a good job and a lousy job or between a lousy job and unemployment. From this perspective the lack of reaction from traditional Joyceans to the poststructuralist challenge is equally understandable: a bad review from a senior professor can cost somebody a career. When one studies the evidence, the only conclusion can be that there seems to be a silent consensus on the part of both sides not to engage in a serious debate.

At the level of hiring practices, the field coverage model of departmental organization has made the adoption of new methodologies friction free (Graff 1987, 6-7). American universities answer the challenge of a disruptive new ideology by hiring one of its representatives, and the field coverage model ensures that the inevitable clash between conflicting methods or ideologies can be avoided:

The division of fields according to the least controversial principles made the department easy to administer but masked its most interesting conflicts and connections. To put it another way, the field-coverage principle enabled administrative organization to take the place of principled thought and discussion. (8)

The result for the students of these departments is dramatic since they are the ones who, individually, have to work out the discrepancies between the different paradigms they are confronted with during

the course of their undergraduate and graduate training; this is something that radically distinguishes students of the sciences from students of the humanities and that seriously qualifies the usefulness of the concept of paradigm in a study such as this. Few science students will ever be confronted with more than one paradigm whereas most graduate schools in the humanities will make a point of offering at least a survey course on the different methodologies. The whole purpose of graduate school seems to be that the student, at the end of his study, should be able to make up his mind and to choose one particular paradigm.

The presentation and critique of poststructuralist Joyce criticism that are offered in this book cannot but be contextual. Just as I do not think that it is useful to abstract Joyce's texts from the context in which they originated, neither can one read poststructuralist criticism simply as texts; it plays a specific role in specific sociohistorical conditions. A study of the American poststructuralist reception of Joyce still remains to be written, and my comments here and in chapter 5 are only introductory notes to an inquiry along the lines of the institutional critique of the academic study of literature that has repeatedly been promised by poststructuralist critics but that has been delivered by nondeconstructionists such as Gerald Graff and Michael Fischer.

It cannot be an accident that the only critic who has published a serious close reading and textual analysis of Joyce criticism is somebody outside the American academic context. Paul Van Caspel's *Bloomers on the Liffey* (1986) offers the kind of uncompromising, detailed criticism of specific readings of *Ulysses* that one would like to see more often in reviews of new Joyce books. The book's own reviewers seem to be rather nonplussed at what they see as the ungenerous nature of such a work, but I would argue that we cannot afford not to have such books and reviews. My own work is different, although I will at times show where misreadings or bad translations occur. But what interests me more is what the critics do with their (mis)readings and how different readings cohere. At the other end of the spectrum, this book also differs from books such as Suresh Raval's

Metacriticism (1981), which are concerned more with critical theory than with practical criticism.

In order to establish the context of poststructuralist criticism on Joyce, I offer in chapter 1 a survey of the early criticism in France and in the United States, Britain, and Ireland. The three most influential poststructuralist critics are undoubtedly Hélène Cixous, Jacques Lacan, and Jacques Derrida and in chapter 2 I look in detail at their writings on Joyce. Although these three thinkers have at least an ambiguous relationship with the French university system, their influence in the academy is incontestable, and in chapter 3, the major contributions of the academic poststructuralist critics are discussed. Chapter 4 is entirely devoted to the influence on Joyce studies of the members of the *Tel Quel* collective: Philippe Sollers, Julia Kristeva, and Marcelin Pleynet. In the mid-sixties this Parisian journal became the center of a radically avant-garde literary and critical practice, and Sollers became the leader of an unacademic and often antiacademic criticism that lived through and often anticipated the shifts and changes in the French cultural scene. In chapter 5 I discuss briefly the work of the American and British poststructuralist critics and in the conclusion I attempt to explain where poststructuralism comes from and why it could flourish in France.

TWO

Cixous, Derrida, Lacan

In the summer of 1968 immediately after *les événements* in May, Jean-Jacques Mayoux directed a doctoral dissertation by Hélène Cixous that was published as *L'Exil de James Joyce ou l'art du remplacement* and that still is, with Richard Ellmann's biography, the biggest book ever written on Joyce by a single author. Cixous, formerly Hélène Berger, heralds the beginning of a renewed interest in Joyce in France. Parts of her thesis had been published before in slightly different forms, and these were incorporated later in a rather haphazard way (Berger 1964, 1965, 1966; Cixous 1967b). The thesis itself is only loosely structured; although it clearly belongs to the general genre of biographical criticism, it does not have a strict chronological order nor does it focus on the individual works. Instead it looks at a number of different themes, usually autobiographical (the family, heresy), that it studies in detail both in the work and in the life of the author, who is usually referred to as "Jim" or "Jimmy." The biographical bias is explained in the preface:

The best way to get to know Joyce is to turn to the numerous and rich testimonies that are available today: the majority of studies, dissertations, guides or collections of essays, though often interesting, are nothing but additional glosses on biographical documents of an exceptional quality. (1968, 10)

And in the introduction Cixous writes that Stephen's analysis of Shakespeare's life by means of his writings gives the key to "a critical

method suggested by the author" (17). For Cixous, Joyce's life and work are consubstantial; his work is a copy of his life, his life is a repetition of his work. In this, she seems to belong to two traditions at the same time: that of the French *doctorat* (and the Sorbonne thesis with its emphasis on "the man and the work" in particular) and that of the Sartrean biography. One of Cixous's first reviewers calls the book "a swan song of the Sorbonne thesis at its best: objectivity and personal resonance, confident criticism and light presentation in spite of its 850 pages" (Cote, 10). The book does have the footnotes and the bibliography of such a critical work, and it has a reference to the supervisor's work in the introduction, but this does not explain David Thorburn's outburst when he calls it "Hélène Cixous's pretentious doctoral thesis" (1973, 306). This kind of reaction can best be accounted for by what is to an American critic the unsettling influence of existentialist biography exemplified by studies such as *Baudelaire*, *Saint Genet*, and *L'Idiot de la famille* and of Bachelardian thematic criticism. Cixous took from Sartre the emphasis on the earliest years of a writer's life, on his family, and on the society he grows up in: "At twenty-two, one can say that Joyce has lived his life and accomplished the ruptures he deemed necessary" (Cixous 1969b, 6). There is also the insistence on *l'autrui*: "Stephen knows from childhood that he is caught in the gaze of the other" (1968, 357) and the use of a Sartrean terminology. The book suffers from the same weaknesses as Sartre's biographies: although it is based on extensive research, it tends to be more a reflection of the author's preoccupations than of those of his subject or, as Germaine Brée puts it: "Intrinsic to Sartre's ontology, these criteria of judgment were extrinsic to the literary works under review. What they lost in objectivity, they gained in consistency" (1983, 154). This is observed repeatedly by Cixous's critics (Villelaur 1969, 10; Rossman 1973, 362; Van Laere 1970, 266; Thorburn 1973, 306f), and it is especially true in the references to Ireland, of which Thorburn writes: "Cixous's resources of condescension seem nearly limitless, and she is capable of judgments so patronizing and reductive as to move one beyond mere disagreement to a kind of melancholy awe" (307).

Another critique centers on her use of sources: like Sartre (and most French critics), Cixous reads the author's life as a novel. She relies too exclusively on Stanislaus Joyce's two books and on Ellmann, and this bias affects her portrait of Joyce's parents and his wife, Nora. This results in very schematic and doubtful judgments about people that would be perfectly acceptable if she had been dealing with mere characters in a novel: "Nora was a simple woman with a misty and sensual mind, like Gretta Conroy, like Bertha, Richard Rowan's young wife. Uneducated, unassuming, without ideas, her soul could be molded at will by him who dominates her" (Cixous 1968, 578). Cixous's book is still pre-structuralist; and in this I disagree with Thorburn, who sees structuralism as "the dominant influence." Cixous does not use "analytic techniques devised by anthropologists and linguists" (Thorburn 1973, 307), at least not in the main body of the text, and she clearly describes the structuralist approach as something that remains to be done (Cixous 1968, 11f). I would suggest that there are three sections in Cixous's book that were added later, maybe even after the defense of the thesis. These passages are different in both style and content: the appendix "Thoth et l'écriture," which was published separately in *L'Arc*; footnote 1 on page 207, singled out by Van Laere as a particularly dense passage (1970, 263); and "L'effacement des noms" (Cixous 1968, 321-41).

The first text is based on a number of studies about Egyptian religion, on *The Golden Bough* and especially on

the remarkable study by Jacques Derrida on the origin of writing. . . . This study is a critical analysis of Plato's *Phaedrus*, published as "La Pharmacie de Platon" in *Tel Quel*, No. 32, Winter 1967 (pp. 3 to 48), "this whole essay being itself nothing, as one will soon have understood, but a reading of *Finnegans Wake*" (note 17 on p. 22). (Cixous 1968, 841)

Cixous's "Thoth et l'écriture" is a hasty confrontation of Jacques Derrida and James Atherton, although its bibliography refers to quite a number of studies. But Cixous had already been accused of simply copying Jean-Jacques Mayoux' bibliography, including its mistakes (Villelaur 1969, 10). If we look closely at the list of studies Cixous

bases her analysis on, we find that Festugière, Morenz, and Vandier (the numbers 5, 6 and 7 of the bibliography) are also used by Derrida; number 3 ("The Apparition of Thoth in *Portrait de l'Artiste*") is used as a motto in "La Pharmacie de Platon" (Derrida 1968a, 19–20; 1972a, 95–96), which leaves us with only the *Wake* itself, James S. Atherton and, to a lesser degree, Clive Hart's *Structure and Motif in "Finnegans Wake"* (1962), which Cixous uses for its theory of the cross structure of the book. If we read Cixous closely, we find that most of her text remains very close to Derrida and is almost entirely made up of literal quotations, although sometimes they are not even accurate. Cixous quotes Râ's words, via Derrida, who himself is quoting Adolphe Erman (not mentioned by Cixous), but she misrepresents the pun. She writes: "The emblem of the 'ibis' (*hib*) is also a result of a pun on 'those greater than you' (*hob*)" (Cixous, 834), but *hob* means "to send" (Derrida 1968a, 23; Derrida 1972a, 101; Erman 1934, 65). Cixous's statement in the following paragraph that Thoth's modifications and his "supplementarity" are "linked to, caused by puns," finds no support in Derrida's text. When Cixous later cites from Plato's *Timaeus*, she identifies her quotation as "(p. 89)," without mentioning the edition (Cixous 1968, 836). In reality she simply copies the beginning of a longer quote in "La Pharmacie de Platon" in which Derrida uses the Stephanus references "89 a-d" (Derrida 1968a, 32–33; 1972a, 114–15).

When Cixous attempts to show the relevance of Derrida's insights to the Joycean oeuvre, especially to *Finnegans Wake*, she is considerably more successful in reading Joyce's critics than his own texts. According to Cixous, everything Derrida writes about the relationship between Thoth and Horus can be applied to Shem-Shaun. The relevance of Egyptian mythology and *The Book of the Dead* had already been studied in considerable detail by Atherton in *The Books at the Wake* (1959) and the function of the Shem-Shaun enmity for the structure of the book (Cixous, 834–35) is borrowed straight from Clive Hart's *Structure and Motif in "Finnegans Wake"* (1962). When Cixous refers directly to Joyce's texts, she disregards their context and offers very partial translations: "The right is for Shaun the Same, taken as 'Undivided reawli'ty' (F.W., p. 292), the 'cruauté indivise' of the 'Same

Patholic' (F.W., p. 611)" (836). The first quotation is not necessarily spoken by Shaun, and the translation suggests *cruauté*, which is absent in the original; the second quote is more than 300 pages away.

Cixous's conclusion is as clear as it is predictable: Joyce refers to Plato's analysis and has come to the same findings as Derrida. Joyce identifies fully with Stephen, Thoth, and Shem: "Here, Joyce, author of *Ulysses*, takes his distance from every form of paternity, theology, solarly [*solarité*] or truth associated with the word" (837). It is easy to prove that this section was written after the main body of the thesis: on page 520, Cixous refers to the notion of *pharmakos* but she mentions only one Norkhrop [sic] Frye's discussion of it in *Anatomy of Criticism*. Derrida himself had made the reference to Frye, but only in the second part of "La Pharmacie de Platon," (1968b, 27). This again proves that Cixous must have finished "Thoth et l'écriture" before the publication in *Tel Quel* of "La Pharmacie de Platon II."

The same goes for note 1 on page 207. In terms that resemble the Derrida of "Edmond Jabès et la question du livre" and "Ellipse" (1967a, 99–116, 429–36) or the Blanchot of *Le Livre à venir* (1959), Cixous defines the death of literature as the end of the idea of the Book as the continuity of the word and the development of something new in *Finnegans Wake* "in the interior space between the word that completes itself in its beginning (and that therefore eliminates its own history) and begins in its end." The section entitled "The Effacement of the Names," printed at the end of chapter 2, also deals with such poststructuralist concerns as the erasure of names, full writing, and the name of the father (Cixous 1968, 338–41).

This tentative presence of the new ideas in *L'Exil de James Joyce ou l'art du remplacement* is replaced by full-blown deconstruction in a short essay, "Joyce, la ruse de l'écriture," a reading of "The Sisters" later published as part of *Prénoms de personne* (1970c, 1974a). This essay is fully deconstructive: there are no more references to the biography or to the circumstances in which *Dubliners* was written. The biographical bias is replaced by a Lacanian interest in the *signifiant*, in the breach of the subject, and in metaphysics. This is reflected in Cixous's style:

Quest, odyssey, of which the hero is many people, question whose answer is never that which it could have been in the interrogation itself, question that does not offer an answer itself and that has as its answer the error of the answer and as its effect the eternal rebounding of the interrogation whose point of punctuation does not know anymore where to place itself, will not place itself anymore. (1970c, 420; partly in 1974a, 239)

Cixous also refers to a "subject that deconstitutes itself in the precise moment that it constitutes itself" (1970c, 420; 1974a, 239) and she claims that in "The Sisters" we witness simultaneously the appearance of limits between the conscious and the unconscious mind and the disappearance of these limits. Like other critics associated with *Tel Quel*, Cixous is fascinated by the materiality of language: "The discourse exhausts itself in its pursuit of a meaning and it butts against the occlusion of an Elsewhere situated there by an ancient tongue (g-k EuKlid, KateKhism, gnomon)" (1970c, 426–27; 1974a, 246). In reality of course the "g" in *gnomon* is silent, as Cixous knows because in a footnote she writes that the word can be read phonetically as *no man*. *Gnomon* is added to the list because "g" is, like "k", a velar plosive (*occlusif* in French).

When we look at the revisions this text underwent before it was incorporated into *Prénoms de personne*, we find omissions and additions. Apart from the correction of minor errors (but "Dedalus" inexplicably becomes "Dædalus"), we notice first of all the disappearance of the references to Kristeva and Barthes, which may well be a result of the break with *Tel Quel* in 1971. Secondly, the text becomes more doctrinaire: in *Poétique* there were still two different ways of reading Joyce, one bad, one good (1970c, 424). In 1974, the bad (reassuring) reading has disappeared (1974a, 244) and a brief analysis of the opposition *unheimlich/heimlich* is gone (1970c, 422). The additions also strengthen the deconstructive tendencies in the text: the introduction of the word *déconstruire* (1974a, 241), of the unclassifiable (245), that which escapes the *Aufhebung* (246), of a discussion of the propriety of proper names (252), etc. As a matter of fact, the whole "Ensemble Joyce" in *Prénoms de personne* could very well pass as the work on Joyce that Derrida himself never wrote. This is also evident in the

terms with which Cixous describes the process of rewriting in an interview with Christiane Makward, which is illustrated with a drawing of an Egyptian god who is identified as "Thor, the scribe": "Anyway it ["Joyce, la ruse de l'écriture"] is a text which is already obsolete, I reworked all that in *Prénoms de personne*. There I was working almost on the level of the signifier" (Makward 1976, 29).

Like Derrida's *La Dissémination*, which opens with a text called "Hors livre," the "Ensemble Joyce" in *Prénoms de personne* begins with a "Texte du hors" (Derrida 1972a, 9–67; Cixous 1974a, 233–37) and ends in the kind of creative lyricism with which Derrida closes most of his essays in this period. In her introduction Cixous establishes the theoretical framework of her political deconstruction:

all of Joyce's gestures, gestures of writing, of his biography, went in the direction of a world-wide challenging [contestation] of property-propriety in all its forms, imperialism, capitalism, the family, marriage, bureaucracy, formalism, psychoanalysis, paternalism and its counterpart maternalism, etc. (233–34)

She even sees Joyce as an analyst of phallogocentric discourse, and she believes that his work is "the grand opera of deconstruction" (236).

"La ruse de l'écriture" is incorporated in a first larger unit called "The Heresistances of the Subject." It sets out to show how the logocentric order "is subverted on all fronts and on all levels of the hierarchy" (237). The section on "The Sisters" is followed by a brief discussion of the name of the artist in which Cixous draws heavily on Lacan's concept of the *nom du père*, which establishes "in the Irish system" a link between the mother and God, who is also Death. Young Stephen can break out of this vicious circle only by "a work on the name of God" (257) and in this way also on his own name.

A third section deals with "Proteus," a chapter in which sound is essential: "one may be tempted by its incitement; by its breath which sweeps this space always same different, moving unmoving, beach-text, empty space between consciousness and the unconscious, but a constitutive emptiness" (264). In this chapter Cixous discovers a feminine style, "Here, the text, female, menstruates: the menstrual flux

which supplies the rhythm and which repeats it, and the reflux-repulsion of the male subject which that kind of blood assails" (265). Whereas Cixous does make a number of bold generalizations, her readings have been, until now, very detailed, and she has not misrepresented Joyce's words. She does make some mistakes: she writes that "'Circe' is undoubtedly the mark of Lucia Joyce in her father's text" (235 note 1), after having claimed in an interview that Lucia was introduced only late in her father's work: "It is only when she has become a troubled adolescent that she imposes her presence in *Finnegans Wake*. . . . The dates leave no doubt: Lucia's problems only appear after Joyce had finished 'Circe.'" Cixous then offers the theory that the chapter was written under the influence of hallucinatory drugs used to treat Joyce's eyes (1969b, 6-7). There is in *Prénoms de personne* no explanation for the adoption of a theory that she had explicitly dismissed five years before.

In the fourth section of "The Heresistances of the Subject," Cixous looks at Stephen's attitude toward his mother in the first chapter of *Ulysses*. He is simultaneously repulsed and attracted by his mother, who is also Dublin Bay (*la mer, la mère*), Dublin itself, and Death. It is the mother who makes the textual energies function: *Ulysses* is a "text of separation" (1974a, 271). The dying mother stands for "suffering, paralysis, the threat of castration, treason, History" (272) and is interiorized by the son and transformed into the textual corpus, while at the same time, as a castrating Penelope, she weaves and unweaves the body of her son. The fifth section pursues this psychoanalytical analysis with reference to "Circe," a schizo-text which involves "the power of the Other, of the Other Sow (*de l'Autrui, de l'Autre truie*)" (275). One of the major theoretical advances effected in this book is the turn to Freud, who had been wholly absent in *L'Exil de James Joyce*. In the interview just quoted Cixous had explained her reasons for this to a rather reluctant, incredulous interviewer:

If psychoanalysis wants to approach a work of literature, it must concentrate on the dark part which has escaped the attention of the conscious control of the creator. But in Joyce's work this part is minimal. Joyce is the opposite of a poet, he is very careful to eliminate the power of chance,

inspiration or the unconscious. You will not find a single uncontrolled metaphor in his work. (1969b, 7)

Cixous's new debt to Freud may explain why she writes that *Nothung* is Sigmund's sword (1974a, 275).

Under the next general heading "The Crucifiction," we find first the introduction to a bilingual edition of *Dubliners* by Aubier-Flammarion, entirely devoted to a reading of "The Dead." In that story Cixous identifies the two contradictory movements that also structure Joyce's other works: on the one hand the obstinate effort of the Subject that places itself at the center of the Universe, on the other hand the destruction and expulsion of the same Subject, "either as scapegoat (Bloom, Stephen), or by 'effacement,' by omission (Parnell), or by dissimulation and splitting (Shakespeare)" (290). The crucifiction is a machine that Joyce discovered in "The Dead" and that he perfected in *Exiles* and *Ulysses*; it is "the theater of provoked treason" (300), a concept for which Cixous refers to Marcel Mauss's "Essai sur le don" (1966) and Gilles Deleuze's *Logique du sens* (1969) and *L'Anti-Oedipe* (1975). It is from this perspective that she reads *Exiles* in the second section of "Cruci-Fiction." What Richard Rowan does to Bertha, Joyce does to his oeuvre: "The creator wants to be his other, the one who intends to ravish the creation" (306). Joyce wants to have his cake and eat it: he is God the Father, the executioner, and the Son, the crucified. Only in *Finnegans Wake* will Joyce reach some kind of a conclusion, there "the unlimited has multiple 'beginnings,' there is neither gain nor loss, only a kind of fleeting grace; and it is only there . . . that finally phallocentrism loses its hold" (311).

The last section, entitled "Trait Portrait of the Artist in his Other J'Aimot," is a reading of *FW*, 187.24-188.17. It is only here that Cixous loses all contact with Joyce's text; glossing all her misreadings and misrepresentations would take up most of the rest of this book. She follows the text closely and chronologically, offers possible constituents of the puns, translations, and notes. These notes consist of her own interpretations mixed with quotations from passages in the book; one example: "To each parallel signifier corresponds a change of the code which operates in the code, German [*allemand*], French, Lat-

in, the one illuminating [*s'allumand*] the other, and latin me that, et que ça s'ôte pour que ça transe de votre sens-crie à notre chance-son" (319) which is partly a translation of *FW*, 215.26–27: "Latin me that, my trinity scholar, out of eure sanscreed into oure eryan!" The translations and references are haphazard at best, Cixous thinks that échelle is "latter" in English (321); "Burn only what's Irish" is on *FW*, 447, not on page 446; "Brulobrulo" on page 117, not on page 175. Capital letters and punctuation marks are added or deleted indiscriminately. Hélène Cixous has managed to create here a *Finnegans Wake* in her own image, and the coherence and continuity of the passage from the novel that is explicated and of the book as a whole have completely disappeared from her account of it.

An evaluation of the Joyce section in *Prénoms de personne* depends on the sympathies of the reader: if one accepts the book's theoretical premises, it may well be considered a careful and rigorous application of the theories of Lacan and Derrida to the Joycean corpus. If one cannot accept these premises, this text reveals no new insights, it uses questionable translations, inaccurate quotations and shaky biographical evidence and tells one much more about its author than about James Joyce. This observation may be found in most reviews of the book, both in the ones that accept Cixous's general principles and in those that do not. Viviane Forrester writes that Cixous's novelistic instincts (*pulsions*) are freer and more immediate in her critical work than in her novels (1975, 6). Jean A. Moreau describes the references to psychoanalysis, linguistics, and phenomenology not as "intrusions," but as "polymorphous caresses," and he subscribes to Cixous's practice of creative appropriation: "the critical language is the code itself of love" (1975, 298).

The journal *Poétique*, which Cixous cofounded in 1970 and of which she still is a member of the editorial board, devoted its twenty-sixth issue entirely to the papers read at the section of the 1975 Joyce Symposium in Paris chaired by Hélène Cixous. She introduces the volume with a short text "Fort-Sein," written in the new Joycean and untranslatable idiom (*pèrepaixtuer le régime, au moment des id(é)es de Marge*). She quite correctly observes that the attention of the critics

collected in this volume goes "in the direction of a certain edge where the double—all/double or quits [*qui-tout-double*] of this text plays. Toward a certain Marge, a verge, a non-maternal femininity" (1976b, 131). Like most of Cixous's puns in this period, the title of this piece opens up an infinite series of echoes. First the Freudian/Lacanian *fort/da*, then the Derridean *seing* of *Glas* (1974) with its Hegelian and Heideggerian connotations (*Sein, Dasein, Seyn*), and then the French *sein, signe, fort, for, fors*, etc. The influence of the *Wake* on this practice must be clear and the style is even more pronounced in Cixous's own contribution to the volume. The beginning of the essay is very poetic (the repetition of *tandis que* and the long sentences) in a deconstructionist fashion that produces nonsensical sentences such as: "the insistence ends up producing its (non)-sense, i.e. its non-sense" (1976c, 240). Like the other texts in the volume "La Missexualité: où jouis-je" is a reading of pages 162–66 of *Finnegans Wake* and its theme is as simple as it is predictable; Marge is the young female who simultaneously fails to fit into the dominating system (family, history, digestion) and who makes it work:

The margin (not the mother) or femininity as the margin of History, which makes *His-story* waver and oscillate between its poles, revives and neutralizes in the same multiple game the opposition between opposition and sexual difference: hides-breaks [*cache - casse*] the myths with which the unconscious plays during the long slumber of History. (247)

This essay suffers from the same weaknesses as the last section of *Prénoms de personne*: the chronology and the argument of the text under discussion receive less attention than the development of the critic's own writing; quotations are used in a very idiosyncratic way. As a rule few references are given, although those to *Finnegans Wake* are given in italics; but then not all *Wake* quotes are printed in italics and some of the italicized sentences are not to be found in the *Wake*. Because Cixous continually produces her own puns, it is not always clear where a word comes from. Quotations are often inaccurate and translations misleading: when Cixous writes "Just as one will receive the message with more precision on *Finnegans Wake*, 239, history and

all its histories will cease to pass again under the same phallographic forks the day 'when the new Clitorines shall take their own powers and will be aimancipated'" (246), it is difficult to recognize the original: "When every Klitty of a scolderymeid shall hold every yardscullion's right to stimm her uprecht for whimsoever, whether on privates, whather in publics. And when all us romance catholeens shall have ones for all amanseprated" (*FW*, 239.18–21). The translation of single words is as fanciful and free (a "wop" is "a Mediterranean immigrant who lands in the U.S.A. in 1916"), and we can only conclude that this analysis clearly lies beyond the border that separates interpretation from creative reworking.

Hélène Cixous is not just an English professor at Paris VIII, first in Vincennes and now at Saint-Denis, and a Joyce critic; she is also a prolific creative writer and one of the foremost feminist theoreticians of her country. These last two activities also deserve attention, especially because her reading of Joyce's work and life has influenced both. But this is hardly the place to engage in an extended critique of French feminism, and I will just briefly outline Cixous's position and show some of the relevance of Joyce's oeuvre and her writings on that oeuvre for her project. With Luce Irigaray and, to a lesser extent, Julia Kristeva, Cixous is the most important French feminist thinker. She was involved in establishing the *Éditions des Femmes* and a Women Studies group at Vincennes. With Irigaray's *Speculum de l'autre femme* (1974) and *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un* (1977), Cixous's books and articles are considered central in the establishment of an *écriture féminine*. That the French kind of feminism differs from its American counterpart is clear for all parties concerned. Irene Finel-Honigman has juxtaposed the two in a short article in reference to the 1979 Barnard Conference on the "Theory of Difference" and the New York University Simone de Beauvoir Conference on "Le Deuxième Sexe—Trente ans après":

The Americans accused the French of arrogance, overemphasis on theory, and a tendency to engage in sterile word games. In response, the French attacked the Americans' supposed false liberalism, "humanisme épuisé," and their inability to absorb ideas beyond nineteen forties' existentialism

or to attempt to understand psychoanalytic or linguistic methodology and their relationship to feminism. (1981, 317)

American feminism is pragmatic and action oriented; the French women's movement is theoretical and aesthetic. Cixous's writings cannot be understood outside of the context of post-1968 Paris, just as American feminism is a direct heir to the civil rights movement in the United States. Cixous's approach to the feminist issues can be characterized in a number of different ways.

First there is the antihumanist stance that has been prevalent in France since the end of existentialism and that originated in the attacks on Sartre's humanist reading of Heidegger by Althusser, Lacan, Foucault, and Derrida (Spivak 1981, 167). It is clear that, in spite of her seminal influence in France and even more so, in North America, Simone de Beauvoir has suffered the same fate as Sartre (168). Secondly, French writing on and by women is indelibly marked by Lacan's psychoanalysis and its emphasis on the Name-of-the-Father and the Phallus. Again with Derrida (in "Le Facteur de la Vérité" [1975]), Cixous opposes Lacan's phallogocentric writing and opts for woman's difference (Derrida's *différance* plus sexual difference). As "the most Derridean of the French 'anti-feminist' feminists" (Spivak 1981, 172), Cixous sees woman as the exception, the exiled, the always other. This otherness is both negative because it is *excluded* by a patriarchal, logocentric discourse and positive because it escapes that determination: the female body, female *jouissance* are "the other side of language, an instinctual non-given, pre-name femaleness" (Finel-Honigman 1981, 318). French feminism's attention for the instinctual and the subjective has often resulted in a writing that is unabashedly autobiographical and self-centered.

The distinction between creative and critical writing disappears in the adoption of a concept of *écriture* that closely resembles the one developed by Derrida in *Of Grammatology* (1976): it is a powerful force of change and revolution; it writes what cannot be written, speaks the unspeakable, expresses the holes in language through which otherness can finally manifest itself. Here Cixous and her friends belong to

the mainstream of poststructuralist thinking since 1968, where a political and aesthetic revolution go hand in hand, where Mallarmé and Joyce meet Karl Marx. In the States it is this literary practice that has upset feminists most, although Cixous has found support in the "radical" fringe in French and Comparative Literature departments" (Spivak 1981, 165). Spivak finds it difficult to take seriously the claims about Joyce rising "above sexual identities and bequeathing the proper mindset to the women's movement" (169), but Verena Conley sides with Cixous's practice of creative reading and she even offers some additional puns to Cixous's reading of *Finnegans Wake* 162-66 (1977). French feminists have accepted Cixous's reading of Joyce and have acted accordingly in their own writings: Anne Bernard does not refer to Cixous at all, but she comes to similar conclusions about the role of Joyce's writing in the women's movement. Even more than the poets, the mystics, the romantic writers, the surrealists, and some recent philosophers such as Bachelard, Levinas, and Derrida, Joyce has expressed "the necessity to abandon the domination of male values in order to think and write 'womanly'" (Bernard 1980, 241). Basing herself almost entirely on Colin MacCabe (1978) and Richard Kearney (1980), who are themselves, as we shall see, greatly indebted to French thinking, Bernard writes that Molly represents "the positive and subversive values of the female principle that are repressed and alienated by the rule of the male logos" (Bernard, 242). Nicole Ward Jouve has attempted to confront Molly Bloom in "Tentative de greffe d'une colonne vertébrale sur Molly Bloom," the fourth and last part of her novel *Le Spectre du gris* (Jouve 1977). Only the middle section of this text, "Molly Bloom sens dessus dessous" refers directly to the final chapter of *Ulysses* and, probably, to the peculiar sleeping habits of the Blooms.

Cixous's own creative texts have been less marked by Joyce than one could have expected. Her first book, *Le Prénom de Dieu* (1967a), a collection of stories, is described on the cover as "simultaneously picaresque, fantastic, Kafkaesk and Joycean," but it is in reality a rather late example of the *nouveau nouveau roman*, with its I narrator, its puns, and its sparseness of details. *Dedans* (1969a), published a

year after the thesis, is a very personal and autobiographical statement that resembles the stories in the earlier book. *Le Troisième Corps* and *Commencements* were both published in 1970, and they continue the autobiographical project. We encounter Eve, the mother, Georges, the father. The first book is a creative reading of Freud's interpretation of Jensen's *Gradiva* and of Kleist's *The Earthquake in Chile*, the second reads Henry James and Freud's *Essays on Psychoanalysis* and develops much further the radical use of the Wakean *écriture* that will dominate later texts such as *Le Neutre* (1972b), *Tombe* (1973), and *La* (1976a).

As we will also observe in the creative writing of Philippe Sollers, the Joycean inspiration seems to diminish in the second half of the seventies. Although they still contain Wakean puns, Cixous's texts are now turning toward Shakespeare (Conley 1977, 74), and she seems to have found a more suitable model in the works of the Brazilian novelist Clarice Lispector (1925-77). In an essay in *Poétique* (1979b) and in *Vivre l'orange/To Live the Orange* (1979a), Cixous explains how and why she has discovered this new inspiratrix.

After 1979 Cixous returned to Joyce on only two occasions: once at the centenary celebrations in the Centre Pompidou, where she gave an impromptu performance that was published in the Joyce issue of *Les Cahiers de l'Herne*, and in a review of Philippe Lavergne's translation of *Finnegans Wake*. The Beaubourg lecture ("an intervention to a large extent improvised") opens provocatively with a reference to Clarice Lispector, "whose importance is certainly comparable, if not superior, to that of Joyce." From what she considers to be the primal scene in Lispector, Cixous moves on to the first two pages of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in which she perceives a similar confrontation with the father and the mother, between the subject and the Law. Dante, the anal mother, sets a test that the boy has to fail: his real mother sides with Dante and makes Stephen apologize in a phrase that for the first time gives the boy his proper name. In the test, which Cixous sees as an essential ingredient of every *Bildungsroman*, the lack of understanding on the part of the child is the necessary basis for a play on the signifier that will engender not only the artist himself but also his entire oeuvre, including *Finnegans Wake*.

In the review of the French *Finnegans Wake*, Cixous covers the same material but here she identifies which elements of the primal scene are relevant for *Finnegans Wake*: like the young boy in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, the adult writer is interested more in how words sound than in what they mean: the artist is "the stealer of signifiers, the skilled amateur of the Law because he loves the *sound of the law*" (1983, 429). *Finnegans Wake* is the phoenix of literature, and this bird of paradox appears on three different levels; on the level of Irish history, the Phoenix Park is the site of the two murders that led to the attacks on Parnell for having condoned the murders in his correspondence. The letter in *The Times* can be proven to be a forgery not because Pigott "wrote 'hesitancy' with double t" as Cixous claims (430), but because he wrote "hesitancy." Through this spelling mistake Cixous traces Saint Augustine's *felix culpa* and all its variations. On the mythological level the Phoenix is his own family, much like the incestuous Earwickers and even the book itself is autogenerative: it fails to begin or to end and it always already contains everything. On the linguistic level "the phoenix is the luminous metaphor of what is at work at the heart of the wakean signifier" (432).

With Michel Foucault, the two most influential figures in the French intellectual life of the sixties and seventies are undoubtedly Jacques Derrida and Jacques Lacan. They have left a mark on the writing and thinking of young French intellectuals that can be compared only to the influence of Jean-Paul Sartre on the preceding generation. By a remarkable coincidence the three thinkers asserted themselves just before May 1968, and they were immediately identified with the resulting radical intellectual movements by critics on the right and the left. Foucault published his bestseller *Les Mots et les choses* and Lacan his *Écrits* in 1966, Derrida *L'Écriture et la différence* and *La Voix et le phénomène* in 1967. Foucault became head of the philosophy department in the militantly *gauchiste* new campus at Vincennes, where the department of psychoanalysis, for all practical purposes, was run by Jacques Lacan. Echoes of Derrida's enthusiasm for the *événements* reverberate throughout his "Les fins de l'homme" (1972c). The right-

wing press at the time was quick to blame the nihilist philosophers and a number of recent left-wing critics agree. In their critical account of the thinking of 1968, Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut single out Foucault, Derrida, Bourdieu, and Lacan as the master thinkers of *La Pensée '68*, but the choice of Pierre Bourdieu as the representative of French Marxism in the sixties is misleading. Bourdieu never became a member of the French Communist Party in the fifties, and he avoided the radical movements of the sixties. Louis Althusser was much more central and influential, both in the fifties and in the sixties, especially in the poststructuralism that was introduced in the United Kingdom in the mid-seventies. It would even be possible to distinguish between the British and North American kinds of poststructuralism because there is almost no Althusserian influence in the United States at all. But the two thinkers who have been most influential in France, in Britain, and in North America are undoubtedly Lacan and Derrida: their writings have shaped poststructuralist thought and its American counterpart, deconstruction. Both are also readers of Joyce.

Jacques Derrida first read *Finnegans Wake* during a stay at Harvard in the midfifties (Hillis Miller 1982, 4). The first mention of Joyce in Derrida's published work can be found in the introduction to his translation of Husserl's "Die Frage nach dem Ursprung der Geometrie als intentional-historisches Problem," which is dated "July 1961." In a long discussion of the complex interplay between phenomenological reduction, history, and language, Derrida comes to a point where he distinguishes between two solutions for the problem of interiorizing the memory of a culture. Husserl's solution to this problem is clear: to submit the empirical language to a methodical reduction until one reaches "the actual transparency of the univocal and translatable elements" (1962, 105). An alternative is offered by a novelist (Derrida had already pointed to the resemblance between Husserl's theory of language and the poetic practice of Mallarmé and Valéry [58]), and the rival solution to Husserl's method would resemble what Joyce does:

a writing which, instead of excluding it between quotation marks, instead of *reducing* it, places itself resolutely *within* the *labyrinthian* field of a culture

that is *restrained* [enchaînée] by its ambiguities, in order to traverse and to assess as contemporaneously as possible the most profound historical distance possible" (104–5).

Joyce interiorizes the memory of a culture (in the Hegelian sense) by repeating the totality of the ambiguous itself, in a language that combines the greatest degree of synchrony with the greatest amount of power in each linguistic atom. Although Derrida does not mention any specific work in which this process is supposed to take place and although he does quote Stephen Dedalus's "History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake" from *Ulysses*, the description of the processes makes it clear that he is thinking more of *Finnegans Wake*. This early reference to Joyce's philosophical importance is not really developed here or anywhere else, but it is important because, according to Jean-Louis Houdebine, it was this mention of Joyce that made Philippe Sollers get into contact with Derrida (1983, 36; 1984, 184).

There are two more allusions to Joyce in *L'Écriture et la différence*, a motto for "Cogito et histoire de la folie," Derrida's early critique of Michel Foucault, and one with which Derrida closes his essay on Levinas: the two questions that are central in Levinas's work ("Are we Greeks? Are we Jews?") open a whole series of questions at the conclusion of Derrida's essay that ends in "What is the legitimacy, what is the meaning of the *copula* in that proposition of someone who may well be the most Hegelian of modern novelists: 'Jewgreek is greekjew. Extremes meet'?" (Derrida 1964b, 473; 1967a, 228). In a footnote the novelist is identified as James Joyce and the source of the quotation as *Ulysses*, and in the same note Derrida mentions Levinas's dislike of Odysseus but stresses Joyce's interest in Victor Bérard's theory that Odysseus was a Semite. He then places the quotation in its context:

It is true that "Jewgreek is greekjew" is a *neutral* and anonymous proposition in the sense abhorred by Levinas inscribed as it is on Lynch's headdress. "Language of nobody" Levinas would say. It is moreover attributed to what is called the "female logic": "Woman's reason. Jewgreek is greekjew." (1964b, 473n)

This linking of Joyce and Hegel had originally been suggested by Jean Paris (1957, 56) and has been elaborated since by a great number of critics, among them: Jacques Aubert (1973), Jean-Michel Rabaté (1982a), Alain David (1982), and Geoffrey Hartman (1981). But Derrida's use of the specific quotation from *Ulysses* is extremely questionable. By providing only the rudiments of a context ("inscribed on Lynch's headdress" is not the same as "spoken by Lynch's cap"), he suggests that this statement in some way represents Joyce's philosophical views, while in reality the statement is doubly suspect; first, most obviously, as a sentence in a novel, and, then, even within the context of the fiction. The chapter from which these words are taken ("Circe") deals with hallucinations and the words are spoken by a cap in answer to Stephen's thoughts about the link between poetry and ritual. The full text of Lynch's (or his cap's) reply is: "(With saturnine spleen) Ba! It is because it is. Woman's reason. Jewgreek is greekjew. Extremes meet. Death is the highest form of life. Ba!" (*U*, 15.2097–98). Lynch is mocking Stephen's metaphysics and denounces it as mystical hocus pocus. The two sentences Derrida quotes are examples of faulty reasoning, "woman's reason" or oxymoron. Joyce's loyalty to his characters is never unambiguous or outspoken, but it should be clear that Lynch is not a positive figure and that his utterances cannot in any useful sense be taken as an expression of the author's opinions.

The third brief reference to Joyce can be found in the famous seventeenth footnote of Derrida's "La Pharmacie de Platon I" on which Cixous seems to have based the appendix to *L'Exil de James Joyce*. This reference is less straightforward than she suggests: Derrida had mentioned the tradition that Amon-Ra was hatched from an egg, but that at the same time he is the origin of everything, therefore also of the egg. He then writes that it would be silly to ask the "trivial and philosophical" question about the chicken and the egg, "of a logical, chronological or ontological anteriority of cause and effect." This question has been answered "magnifiquement" by inscriptions on Egyptian sarcophagi that claim that Ra is *in* the egg. "When one adds that the egg is a 'hidden egg' (1968a, 17), one would have constituted [but also opened] the system of these significations" (1968a, 22; the

words between square brackets appear only in 1972a, 99). Footnote 17 reads in full:

Cf. Morenz, *op.cit.*, p. 232–233. The paragraph that ends here would have mentioned that this Platonic pharmacy also contains and annotates all of the text by Bataille, inscribing into the history of the egg the sun of the cursed part. The whole of this essay being itself nothing else, as one will soon have understood, but a reading of *Finnegans Wake*. (1968a, 22; 1972a, 99)

First we must note Derrida's characteristically unhistorical reading of Egyptian mythology, which finds fundamental logical contradictions where his sources note only diachronic and geographic variants. The footnote is much more complex than most of Derrida's readers have realized. The prime referent is Bataille, not Joyce; there is the reference to his *La Part maudite* (1949) and more importantly to a rather obscure essay of 1955 that has only recently been included in the edition of the *Oeuvres complètes* (1988), "Hegel, la mort et le sacrifice," and that is mentioned by Derrida not here but in an essay on Bataille published the year before (1967d, 29; 1967a, 379). There Bataille mentions Irish wakes as an alternative, gay reaction to death, and he refers to "Finegan's Wake" [*sic*] (1955, 39) as an example of this custom. Bataille also talks of coffins, but Irish not Egyptian ones. It is therefore quite possible that "this essay" refers to Bataille's text, not to "La Pharmacie" itself.

When one interprets the footnote as most of Derrida's readers have done, and Derrida himself is not an exception, it becomes highly problematic. One of the three mottos of the third section of "La Pharmacie" (*The Inscription of the Sons: Theuth, Hermès, Thoth, Nabû, Nebo*) is taken from *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, but neither in the rest of the section nor in the remainder of the essay is there any more discussion of Joyce. It is only when taken in the most general of terms—like Plato's pharmacy, *Finnegans Wake* problematizes writing—that the statement makes any sense at all, and in that case it does not really tell us anything we did not know before. That Derrida can hardly be seen as a reliable witness on Joyce is further apparent somewhat later in *La Dissémination*, when, in an unacknowledged

quotation from Robert Greer Cohn's *L'Oeuvre de Mallarmé: Un Coup de Dés* (1951, 109–10), the female principle in the *Wake* is described as a triangle pointing down (1972a, 367).

Joyce seems to become more and more important in Derrida's thinking in the seventies. The style and presentation of *Glas* (1974) owe a lot to *Finnegans Wake*, although neither the book nor its author is mentioned (see Hartman 1981, 2). For his introduction to a translation of William Walburton's *Essay on the Hieroglyphs of the Egyptians* (Derrida 1977), Derrida chose the title "Scribble" in reference to *Scribbledehobble* and

to *Finnegans Wake* which may well be the best reading guide, today, for an *Essay* of which one never knows whether it is signed by a theologian or by a theoretician of the code. Joyce would have said "for the greater glossary of code" . . . "Everyword for oneself but Code for us all. . . ." "Now Gode. Let us leave theories there and return: to here's. Now hear. 'Tis gode again." (1977a, 9)

These quotations, which Derrida found in the article by Jean-Michel Rabaté that he mentions in a footnote on the same page, are all taken from the *Wake* and are repeated verbatim at the end of the preface.

La Carte postale de Socrate à Freud et au-delà, too, would have been impossible without Joyce, but here he is also present in the text itself. In the semiautobiographical first part of the book, Derrida even describes a visit with Hillis Miller and Paul de Man to Joyce's grave in Zürich (1980, 160–61). He also explicitly links his discussion of the postal system with the dichotomy in *Finnegans Wake* between Shem the Penman and Shaun the Postman (154). Shem is H.C.E.'s heir ("which I translate in my own idiom as 'Here comes the person who will have me as a loved body'") who is also "YHWH declaring war by decreeing the de-routing (*dichémination*), by deconstructing the tower" (154). When he juxtaposes pen and sword by taking a number of quotations from pages 307, 3, and 211 of *Finnegans Wake*, Derrida is using Joyce to create his own opposition. He also writes:

And there, on page 307 of *Finnegans Wake*: "Visit to Guinness' Brewery, Clubs, Advantages of the Penny Post, When is a Pun not a Pun?" Op-

posite, in the margin in italics, the names, you know. Here "Noah. Plato. Horace. Isaac. Tiresias." (155)

Derrida's quotation is incomplete: there is a close connection between the names and the essay titles in the main body of the text: the first link is Noah's drunkenness; the link between "Clubs" and Plato might be the Academy; the next phrase refers to Horace's letters, "When is a Pun not a Pun?" to the etymology of Isaac's name; and Tiresias is mentioned in connection with a title Derrida omits: "Is the Co-Education of Animus and Anima Wholly Desirable?"

One hundred pages later Derrida prepares a lecture on translation and looks up all the references to Babel in *Finnegans Wake*, presumably with the help of Hart's *Concordance* (Derrida 1980, 257; Hart 1974). Derrida is again using the text for his own purposes and he does not seem to be much concerned with an elucidation of the *Wake*. He quotes the text only when it seems appropriate to his own special concerns; on page 255 he stresses that James=Jacques=Giacomo and he quotes the last line of *Giacomo Joyce*: "Envoy: love me, love my umbrella" (but without the comma), presumably in an oblique reference to his own *Éperons* 1978a).

The same process is at work in *D'Un Ton apocalyptique adopté naguère en philosophie*, where he juxtaposes the apocalyptic idea of the prophet who tells the members of his audience that only they are awake and all the others sleep, with the tone of the "veillée funéraire, of the *Wake*" (1983, 70), where at least the capital suggests Joyce's book. Like Cixous, Derrida gave a lecture at the centenary celebrations in Beaubourg in November 1982, which was also published in the Joyce issue of *Les Cahiers de L'Herne* (Derrida 1986), and which has been included by Derek Attridge and Daniel Ferrer in *Post-Structuralist Joyce* (1985). "Deux mots pour Joyce" opens with brief introductory remarks about the two words he will be discussing: "he war" (*FW*, 258.12) and these are followed by the distinction between the two "grandeurs" of the event of Joyce's oeuvre (Derrida prefers "event" to *oeuvre*, or *subject* or *author*). The first of these is in an "outrageously simplified" manner the grandeur of he or she who writes "to give, by giving, and there-

fore to give in order to forget the gift and the given fact, that which is given and the act of giving, which is the only way to give, the only possible—and impossible way" (Derrida 1986, 204–5). The second grandeur lies in Joyce's *hypermnesia*, which always already has in its memory everything that we, as finite readers, can ever bring to the text. We can only endure this when we remember that Joyce himself must have endured it: "He was its patient, and it was moreover his theme, or better his scheme" (205). *Finnegans Wake* is a "little grandson of Western civilization in its circular, encyclopedic, ulysean and more than ulysean totality" (206). Derrida claims that although he has never dared to write on Joyce, "every time I write, and even in the most academic pieces of work, Joyce's ghost is always climbing on board" (206–7). He explains that note 17 in "La Pharmacie de Platon" did indeed imply that the essay had already been read in advance by the *Wake* and that "Scribble" (1977a; 1979) refers constantly to *Scribbledehobble*. *Glas* (1974) "is also a sort of wake" and *La Carte postale* (1980) is "haunted by Joyce" (1986, 207–8).

Joyce's ghost in *La Carte postale* is especially associated with Babel and with the passage at the end of the first chapter of Book II in which "he war" appears. Derrida stresses the biblical echoes in the passage, somewhat to the detriment of the equally clear and genetically earlier presence of Egyptian references. He lists all the possible Hebrew, German, and French connotations of the two words, and he finds that this passage suggests the Hebrew God's confusion of the tongues at Babel. In order to establish this reading Derrida proceeds in ways that resemble Hélène Cixous's: he assembles references to "Babel" from all over *Finnegans Wake*, and he links his findings to his personal preoccupations:

And as in *Le Soleil placé en abîme* by Ponge, the red-haired whore is not far from the father, in his own bed she becomes one with him, "In My Lord's Bed by One Whore . . ." (p. 105). It is the long series that starts with "Thus we hear of, . . ." (1986, 212)

At the beginning of I, 6, after an opening prayer to Annah, Joyce lists the many names of her "untitled mamafesta." Half way through the

three pages of titles we find "In My Lord's Bed by One Whore Went Through It," with a pun that is more effective in Dublin dialect. Derrida has deleted the last part, probably because he wants to stress the becoming-one (*se confondre*) of the two and not the transient nature of the encounter in the *Wake*.

At the 1984 International James Joyce Symposium in Frankfurt, Derrida delivered a paper on June 12 that lasted two hours. The text was included in 1985 in *Genèse de Babel*, edited by Claude Jacquet; with "Deux mots pour Joyce," it became a separate book in 1987, and it was translated in the proceedings of the Frankfurt Symposium in 1988. Like Lacan at the Paris Symposium eight years before, Derrida spoke French. The audience was half German and half English-speaking, and the opening of the speech thematizes this confusion of tongues. Derrida's first two words are *oui oui*, which can be interpreted either as use or as mention and a decision must be made if we want to translate. From that moment on the text is punctuated by diversions and further explanations that continually break up the argument; Derrida compares this procedure to the circumnavigation of Joyce's texts, which is, paradoxically, the main theme of the paper. A second theme is autobiographical, and Derrida exhaustively documents the circumstances in which he wrote (or dictated) his text. In a third and closely related movement, Derrida links Joyce's text to a philosophical discourse and to his own earlier texts, which he opposes to the Joyce industry, the institution of Joyce studies. In *Ulysses* Derrida already detects the themes of postal difference that will structure *Finnegans Wake*. From the picture postcard and the telegram, the emphasis shifts to the telephone and Derrida claims that Bloom properly belongs to the telephone, that Bloom's Heideggerian *Dasein* (a chapter in *Sein und Zeit* is called *Der Ruf*; *anrufen* also means "to telephone") is an *être-au-téléphone*, a being-on-the-phone. Everything is always already there in *Ulysses*, which is an immense machine, and the James Joyce Foundation is an enormous telephone exchange. At the center of the exchange is Elijah who has the position YHWH occupies in Derrida's reading of *Finnegans Wake*: "All networks of communication, transport, transfer, and translation pass through him. Polyphony passes

through Elijah's programophony" (1987, 92). Derrida's reading of single words is as "strong" here as it was in "Deux mots": he reads German *ja* in "Elijah" and French *oui* in A.E.I.O.U. (see also Hayman 1987, 142), but the lecture contains a minor error that does reveal something about Derrida's way of reading Joyce and, since no one challenged it, about the Joyceans' implicit trust. Another reason for the lack of reaction from the floor may be the fact that neither the majority of Joyceans nor the numerous German students had enough knowledge of the subtleties of the French language to understand what was going on. On the blackboard Derrida juxtaposed Bloom's "I. AM. A." (*U*, 13.1258-64) and Stephen's "I, I am I. I" in "Scylla and Charybdis" and compared them to YHWH's self-definition from the burning bush in Exodus (see also the picture in *James Joyce Quarterly* 22 (1985), p. 211). In reality Joyce wrote, "I, I and I. I" (*U*, 9.212), and both in the French and in the English versions the error has been corrected.

Derrida's relationship with Joyce is complex. He has stressed that his interest in literature precedes his philosophical concerns (1983, 37), and the continuing reiteration of Joyce's name in all of Derrida's texts could be used as an argument for the importance of the Irishman in his thought; with the possible exception of Mallarmé, there is no other creative writer to whom Derrida has returned so often. The reasons for this interest have not changed over the years and there is a clear continuity between the earliest references and the more elaborate later analyses: Joyce's project is Hegelian and encyclopedic, and *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* are non-Husserlian attempts to encompass a culture. The only difference in the essays after *La Carte postale* is that this notion is translated in the terminology of electronic communication. Other aspects of Joyce's work that Derrida was bound to be specifically interested in include the privileging of the written over the spoken word (the impossibility of reading *Finnegans Wake* aloud); the deconstructive process at work in the *Wake*, its generalized undecidability, etc.

In order to evaluate Derrida's reading of Joyce, it is necessary to widen the perspective and to look closely at Derrida's hermeneutic.

The problems for such an exercise are obvious: Derrida is an extremely difficult thinker whose style continues to evade all easy identifications of a doctrine or a method. A superficial reading of the writings of some of Derrida's followers quickly proves that point and is, as I will show later, in itself a symptom of an important characteristic of Derrida's work. Although committed Derrideans will undoubtedly disagree, I believe it should be possible to distinguish between the general theory and the hermeneutic. It is clear that Derrida's practice of reading texts, on the one hand, and the underlying theory of interpretation, on the other, form an integral part of Derrida's general project and derive part of their validity from that project, but this does not mean, I hope, that the metaphysical end justifies all practical and tactical means.

In my doctoral dissertation (1984) I have tried to show that French thought was influenced by Heidegger and by an "existentialist" reading of Hegel from as early as Alexandre Kojève's lectures in Paris between 1933 and 1939. Although elements of Heidegger's hermeneutic had reached the public via critical texts by Maurice Blanchot, Paul de Man, and Emmanuel Levinas, Heidegger's radical later works and their application to a specific corpus were introduced in the practice of literary criticism by Beda Allemann's *Hölderlin und Heidegger*, which was published in a French translation in 1959. It represents the first attempt to isolate and present Heidegger's hermeneutic and to apply his critique of metaphysics to *Literaturwissenschaft*, to the study of literature. This genealogy of ideas, to which Derrida and his followers have always strongly objected (Derrida 1972b, 70–76) but which has been confirmed in France itself (Ferry and Renaut 1985), has the additional advantage of providing an explanation for the continuity of French thought between the existentialist fifties and the poststructuralist seventies.

Beda Allemann and to a lesser degree Jean Beaufret, Heidegger's most important French advocate and teacher of a whole generation of French Heideggerians (he was the original addressee of the *Letter on Humanism*), have outlined Heidegger's reading of philosophical texts and his attitude to poetry, more specifically to Hölderlin's work. Al-

Allemann's general thesis in *Hölderlin und Heidegger* is that the turn (*Kehre*) between Heidegger's early and later work is mirrored in a break around 1801 in Hölderlin's thinking that the poet has described as a *vaterländische Umkehr* (a national turn, but also a revolution or a conversion). Although the German Hölderlin critics and their colleagues in literary theory were not impressed, the book had a considerable success in Germany and in France, and it lies at the basis of the French Hölderlin revival in the late fifties and sixties.

Hölderlin et Heidegger: Recherche de la relation entre poésie et pensée is divided into four parts. In the first Allemann discusses the turn in Hölderlin's life and work; in Allemann's reading the poet believed that the Gods have abandoned man and that man has to complete the movement by turning away from God. This turn is accomplished in Hölderlin's madness and can be recognized in the paratactical quality of the later works. *Parataxis* is Adorno's term; Allemann uses *harte Fügung*, hard jointing, a term first employed by Norbert von Helmingrath, a student of Friedrich Gundolf and protégé of Stefan George whose edition of the later fragmentary texts by Hölderlin was used by Heidegger. In the second part of the book Heidegger's turn is analyzed and more specifically its relationship with German idealism, from which "Heidegger's thinking is separated by an abyss" (1959, 124). But the last half of the book is most relevant for our present purposes because here Allemann offers an exposition of Heidegger's manner of reading texts and of the difference between thought and poetry. With Heidegger, Allemann distinguishes between "to read one's own ideas into another text" and "a regression toward a more original point of departure," to that which is still unsaid by means of what is said (133). There are two realms, that of identity and difference and that of the Same. The first is the world of logical distinctions, of science; the second in which text and interpretation meet "leads necessarily beyond Metaphysics and the Logic that is inherent in it. The thinking of the poetic word is an essential part of the overcoming of Metaphysics" (135). Although what Hölderlin says as a poet is not identical with what the philosopher may attempt to say as thinker, "the one and the other may, in different ways, say the Same"

(Heidegger, quoted in Allemann, 135). Allemann defends Heidegger's interpretative reading practice: the etymological arguments because in earlier periods of a language's history words name with "a more elementary force" (146); language becomes language only when it is poetry (139), and poems or other texts always turn around a single central word (151). Although he concedes that from a philological perspective Heidegger's readings may be called violent, Allemann adds that their meaning can be looked for only in the aim of Heidegger's dialogue with the text, which is the opening of Being, the uncovering of the dimension of the sacred. It therefore does not make sense to argue that Heidegger destroys the poem's unity in order to replace it by his own coherence, because it is only possible "to see the poem as a creation and as autonomously coherent (the 'unity') on the basis of a previous objectification," which is always necessarily metaphysical (167).

In the last section of his book, Allemann identifies the implications of Heidegger's work for literary criticism and theory. As a science, the study of literature (*Literaturwissenschaft*) can only miss the mark; science is a part, if not one of the most essential manifestations of, metaphysics (244). But Heidegger does not simply leave the sciences for what they are, his preparation for thinking, for the leap out of metaphysics must also prepare for a way out of the sciences; in fact it must "retreat in science to gather momentum and then risk the jump toward a more original thought" (245). By its nature, science can only misunderstand and misrepresent the uniqueness of the sacred word and of the poet himself. The only form of criticism that could amount to anything is that which concerns itself with "the work itself," with the rhythm of the poem; with its vital power that "touches our own vital power, and speaks to it with a depth of contact and urgency that always comes first and that establishes all explicit understanding of the text" (277-78). It is this digest of Heideggerian ideas, together with the subsequently published translations of *Holzwege* and *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung* (both in 1962), that had an important immediate influence on all the protagonists in my story, on Foucault, on the Lacanian readings of the literary text, and even on *Tel*

Quel, which published Michel Deguy's translation of one of Heidegger's essays on Hölderlin.

The strange thing about Heidegger's Hölderlin is that he does resemble Derrida's Joyce; both philosophers are interested in language and especially in poetic language, both make abstraction from the historical and biographical context of a work, and both stress the singular position of the two writers in history in general, but especially in the history of metaphysics, which has, for both philosophers, Hegel and German idealism as its highest achievement. The words of the poet and the novelist are taken out of their fictional and poetic contexts and placed in a philosophical framework in which they acquire a radically different function. Whereas Heidegger has written careful and almost line-by-line interpretations of Hölderlin poems, Joyce occupies only the margins of Derrida's discourse, sometimes as a motto at the beginning of an essay, sometimes in a footnote or at the very end of the text; or Derrida isolates the tiniest fragment or even a single word. Derrida does not read Joyce's texts in the same way as Heidegger reads Hölderlin or even as Derrida reads Heidegger or Freud; Derrida evokes the Joycean text and conjures up Joyce as a tutelary god of radical *écriture*.

A critique of Derrida's hermeneutic can follow a number of different routes; first of all it can address Derrida's concentration on a single word that is supposed to contain the seeds of the text's self-destruction, *pharmakon*, *supplément*, etc. This technique also owes something to the psychoanalysis of dreams, but in a philosophical context Heidegger is a more obvious influence. Both philosophers have the same problems with their antihumanist hermeneutic; if humanism, metaphysics, onto-theology, logocentrism are indeed as powerful as Derrida and Heidegger claim, how is it then that some writers do manage to escape and that only the philosopher is equipped to recognize and describe their escape? The first question cannot be answered, except by referring to Hölderlin's madness as Allemann does. The second question, too, must remain unanswered, except for silly comments such as Heidegger's statement that he is the most appropriate interpreter of Hölderlin's "Der Ister" and "Andenken"

because his grandfather was born in a shepherd's cot in the upper Danube region at the time the poems were written: "The hidden history of language knows no coincidences. Everything is fate" (quoted in Pöggeler 1977b, 31). Over the years Derrida and Heidegger have developed a specific style, which is based on the hermeneutic described here. Its crucial components are the radical etymologies, the puns, the paradoxes, and the oxymorons that, in the end, become explicitly literary. Apart from the obvious question about the authority of the speaker/writer, there is another aspect that needs to be thought through to its logical conclusion, that of the untranslatability of this kind of discourse. This makes perfect sense within Heidegger's philosophy; when he uses etymologies or puns, he is going back to the more original and therefore truer meanings of the words; and when he writes in a Germanic, de-Latinized German, his reasons are very simple: his native tongue is simply a superior philosophical tool:

I refer to the special intimate relationship between the German language and the language of the Greeks and their thinking. The French confirm this to me time and again. When they start to think, they speak German; they assure me that they cannot do it in their own language. (Heidegger 1976, 217)

The same point was made by George Steiner who writes in an introduction to Heidegger's thought that this kind of philosophy is impossible in English, which is "natively hostile to certain orders of abstruseness and metaphoric abstraction" (1978, 19). Given his distrust of origins and the antinationalist atmosphere of the sixties and seventies, Derrida cannot be that clear, although the same chauvinistic mechanism is there when he hears *aigle* in Hegel or when, in his courses at Yale, he reads Schelling in French.

Like Heidegger's authority, Derrida's never comes into question; both philosophers do not argue, do not try to convince or refute. This is implicitly so in the whole French context; Jean-François Lyotard writes: "The consensus obtained by discussion, such as Habermas proposes? It violates the heterogeneity of the language games" (1980, 8). Again, Heidegger can be more explicit: "All contradicting in the field of essential thought is foolish" (quoted in Krockow 1958, 120),

and most of the followers of the later Heidegger seem to accept his special status vis-à-vis *Sein*, most explicitly David Caputo, who concludes a study of what he calls Heidegger's mysticism with the statement "One of the discomforting things about reading Heidegger's later writings is precisely the realization that the sort of thing that Heidegger does . . . is fully possible only to a few people. . . . It is an endowment, a gift of a higher order, a blessing" (1978, 263).

The width of the field of application of Derrida and Heidegger's thinking—all of Western philosophy from Plato until the present day—and the exceptional status of their own analysis necessitate an exception to the rule; if there were no exception, how could Derrida and Heidegger escape metaphysics/logocentrism long enough to describe it? As Paul de Man writes in an early essay, Heidegger's thought needs a witness ("One is enough, but there has to be at least one") and that witness is Hölderlin (1955, 807). I will not argue that Joyce occupies this position in Derrida's thought—after all there are too many other candidates (Artaud, Sollers, Mallarmé, Jabès)—but Joyce's work has the distinction of remaining a presence in Derrida's oeuvre from the earliest publication in 1962 to the present day.

Jacques Lacan's relationship with Joyce is not too different from Derrida's. His first reference to Joyce occurs in his "Le Séminaire sur 'La Lettre Volée'" in *Écrits*: "A letter, a litter, une lettre, une ordure. Somebody in Joyce's group (1) has spoken ambiguously about the resemblance of the two words in English" (1966, 25). Footnote 1 refers us to "Our examination [sic] round his factification for incamination of work in progress, Shakespeare and Company, 12, rue de l'Odéon, Paris, 1929." At the end of that book we find Vladimir Dixon's "A Litter to Mr. James Joyce," which was generally thought to have been written by Joyce himself (*JJ I*, 626; Lacan 1971, 3).

The same pun is mentioned in Lacan's article published in *Littérature* in 1971 as "Lituraterre." Although he found support in an etymological dictionary for this neologism, it started with "the ambiguity with which Joyce (James Joyce, I should say) glides from a letter, to a litter, d'une lettre (I translate) à une ordure" (Lacan 1971, 3). He goes

on to tell the story of Joyce's refusal to his "messe-hain" (maecenas + Mass + hate) to be psychoanalyzed by Jung and adds that Joyce could not have gained anything with it that he did not acquire by himself, possibly with the help of Saint Thomas. Neither here, nor in the *Écrits* does Lacan seem to be aware of the other meanings "litter" can have, except in the expression "faire litière de la lettre" (to neglect the letter) which describes Joyce's creative practice. Lacan's reference to the *Our Exagmination* volume is not accidental; he had been an active participant in the surrealist atmosphere of the twenties and was a regular visitor at Adrienne Monnier's bookshop (Roudinesco 1986, 119).

In June 1975 Lacan read the inaugural lecture at the Fifth International James Joyce Symposium in Paris. Of this lecture there are two versions, one printed in the proceedings of the conference, edited by Jacques Aubert and Maria Jolas in 1979, and the other published in 1982 by *L'Âne*, the journal of the new Lacanian movement *Champ freudien* after the dissolution of 1981. In the first version we find Lacan at his most idiosyncratic and even the title is a pun: "Joyce le symptôme," symptom + holy man (*saint homme*). Let me attempt to translate the first sentences:

Joyce the Symptom/Holy Man to be understood here as Jesus the Quail: it is his name. Could one expect anything but excitement/in-me [enmoi]: I name. That it makes a young man is a fall-out from which I can only draw one single thing. It is that we are men/zombies?

LOM: in French it says that which it wants to say well. One must simply write it phonetically: that is faunetically (faun . . .), by its own measure: the eaubscene. Write that eaub . . . [water] to remind oneself that the beau-tiful is nothing else. (Lacan 1979, 13)

In this stream of unconsciousness a few themes emerge: one may be tempted to suppose that Joyce is a Holy Man because he has pushed his art as far as humanly possible; but he is not, he "joyces" too much, his pride is too great. There is no High Road to sainthood, saints are exceptions, they even become saints by renouncing (canonical) sainthood. This makes Bloom a saint, too. The meaning of Joyce the Symptom lies in the fact that one man has dreamed of avoiding the human limitations and of giving the general formula of

the "S.K.beau." The surprising thing is that Joyce was able to do all that without having been psychoanalyzed first. The "S.K.beau" is one of those concepts of the late Lacan that are simultaneously all encompassing and used only in one context. I am not aware of any other text in which Lacan uses it. Here it occurs as *escabeau* (stool), also as *hiscroibeau* (*hisser*: to hoist; *croix*: cross; *croire*: to believe; *beau*: beautiful; *corbeau*: crow; etc.) and as *hessecabeau* (*escamoter*: to make away with, to juggle; *escarbot*: dung-beetle; *escargot*: snail; *escobar*: equivocator; etc.). As far as I can make out, it refers to the sum of limitations imposed on man by the fact that he has a body.

The text of the second version of Lacan's lecture (Lacan 1982) was established by Jacques-Alain Miller, "on the basis of notes taken by Eric Laurent." Lacan begins with the statement that he does not feel in top form. He takes the etymological dictionary and finds that *symp-tôme* used to be written as *sinthome*. Lacan intends not to parody the *Wake* but to show that Joyce's real name is *Joyce le symptôme*. Lacan recounts how he met the writer at Adrienne Monnier's and how he heard the first reading of the French *Ulysses*, a meeting that was accidental. *Finnegans Wake* was written by somebody who enjoyed writing it (Lacan uses the word *jouissance*, which also denotes sexual pleasure), but why did Joyce publish it? Joyce's structuring of the *Wake* with a cross and a circle (Lacan refers to Clive Hart whose *Structure and Motif in "Finnegans Wake"* [1962] he had borrowed from Fritz Senn for the occasion) and that which it produces, the ambiguity of the three and the four, reminds Lacan of his own Borromean knots, and he wonders how Joyce could have missed the notion of the *nom-du-père* that operates the knot of the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real. It is this paternal order that Lacan will study in his 1975-1976 seminars.

Of Lacan's seminars only a few have been published by Seuil, among them *Encore. Séminaire XX* (1975). In the fourth section of the third chapter, "La Fonction de l'écrit," Lacan writes, "the world is decomposing, thank God." With "world" he seems to refer to a unified worldview because he adds: "From the moment that you can add to the atoms something that is called a *quark*, and that that becomes

the mainstream of scientific discourse, you have to realize that it becomes something else than a world" (1975, 37). This is a reference to Joyce because the name of the subparticle was taken from *Finnegans Wake*. Lacan's point escapes me completely: he apparently believes that the naming of a new discovery via literature in some way endangers the scientific worldview. He then tells his audience to start reading, not Philippe Sollers ("he is unreadable, like me"), but Joyce:

You will see there how language perfects itself when it can play with writing. . . . The signifier begins to stuff the signified. It is because the signifiers are fitted in, fashion themselves, are telescoped into each other—read *Finnegans Wake* [sic]—that something is produced, which, as signified, may appear strange, but which is really that which comes closest to what we as analysts, thanks to the analytical discourse, have to read, the *lapsus linguae*. (37)

Jacques-Alain Miller, Lacan's son-in-law and his sole literary executor, jealously guards the publication of the seminars and the copies that do exist are circulated only among the very loyal few. *Séminaire XXIII (1975–1976): Le sinthome*, which followed the Paris symposium, has not been published in the regular series edited by Jacques-Alain Miller for Seuil, but a number of texts, "established by J.-A. Miller," did appear in *Ornicar?*. On 18 November, Lacan opens with a reference to the etymology of *symptôme*, to Philippe Sollers's statement at the Paris symposium that after *Finnegans Wake* the English language has ceased to exist and that Joyce's works can only be read as *l'élangues*. After a brief analysis of the creation story in Genesis (language belonged to Eve before Adam started to use it), Lacan writes that Eve, as *La femme*, is not mortal: "it is another name for God and it is in this respect that she does not exist" (Lacan 1976a, 5). Against Aristotle who tried to keep the singular out of his logic, Lacan defines woman: "woman is not whole [toute] except in the form in which the ambiguous takes away from our empty language [lalangue] its point in the form of a *but not that*, as when one says *all* [tout] *but not that*" (5). Lacan wants to begin with the *sinthomadaquin* (Saint Thomas d'Aquin), which is quickly followed by a *sint'home rule*. Like Lacan, Joyce is a

heretic, the heir of his father, *un pauvre hère-étique* (*un pauvre hère* = a poor devil) and a hero. Slowly the discussion moves to geometry and to Borromean knots, which represent the realm of the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real. The *sinthome* is the fourth factor or the father, because "perversion" is nothing but a "*pèreversion*," a version toward the father (*version vers le père*). Joyce is full of the father, and it turns out in *Ulysses* that Joyce must support by his art not only the father, but also his family, his country, and his race.

This mixture of unconnected remarks about Joyce and a very mystifying discussion of the Borromean knots will characterize all of the seminars in this series. On 20 January (1976e) of the following year, Lacan opens with the statement that his relationship with Joyce must resemble that of a fish with an apple; this is due to his lack of knowledge of English and Lacan therefore asks Jacques Aubert to take over (Aubert's presentation will be discussed in chapter 3). On 10 February (1976–1977a), Lacan describes his work on Joyce as an attempt to sweep away (*éponger*) the vast secondary literature from Joyce's work. Was Joyce mad? What is it that inspires his works? Lacan keeps turning around these questions: when he reads the "dirty letters" (edited by the "priceless Richard Helmann" [sic]) or when he asks Jacques Aubert whether Joyce thought of himself as a redeemer. Joyce's desire to be an artist and his obsession with his name are linked to the fact that his father had failed him. Not accidentally, Lacan's obsession with his name shows at the end of this session: he assumes that his audience will have had enough, *avoir votre claque*, even their *jaclaque* and he himself will only add *han*, "an expulsion of breath accompanying a violent action." A week later (1976–1977b), Lacan sees in Joyce's attitude to Lucia's illness a symptom of his own disorder, but the rest of the seminar is taken up by discussions of Borromean knots. In the seminar of 16 March (1977b) Joyce is not a central concern either. The text opens with the observation that nobody, not even Jacques Aubert, not even "un nommé Adams" who has done wonders in this field, has ever succeeded in finding a way of representing Joyce. There is no such way, "Joyce is an *affreud*. And he is an *ajoyce*." Lacan then moves to a discussion of the three dimensions—the symbolic,

the imaginary, and the real—and the way in which they are linked. Of these three, the real escapes all determination, “because the stigma of the real is to attach itself to nothing.” *Finnegans Wake* is a dream dreamed not by any particular dreamer but by the dream itself, which is what links Joyce to Jung’s collective unconscious.

Although his scope is more limited, Lacan’s interest in Joyce is similar to that of Derrida in that it tells us more about the interpreter than about Joyce or Joyce’s works. His views on Joyce do not differ too much either: Lacan keeps stressing the fact that Joyce was an exception, his work an encyclopedia that always already contains any of our commentaries. About Lacan’s knowledge of Joyce’s texts, Jean-Louis Houdebine has written:

Finally, the question is just this: has Lacan ever accepted to enter really, *personally*, into Joyce’s work? Personally, I don’t think so; saying this, I do not at all disregard the elements of grandeur in the disarray of a philosophy as important as Lacan’s before the works of Joyce. (Houdebine 1983, 44; 1984, 191)

This statement seems to suggest that Lacan never actually read the texts, and his repeated misspelling of the title of Joyce’s last work also points in that direction, but it is impossible to assess Lacan’s attitudes to Joyce without looking at his general theory of language and interpretation and it is necessary to elucidate this aspect of Lacan’s work before we can even begin to understand the different ways in which his work has been interpreted by his disciples. I will not deal with the details of the concepts Lacan uses (the relationship among the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real, the mirror stage, the *nom-du-père*, the Other), because these are less central to my present concerns than the thrust of Lacan’s hermeneutic itself. The implied theory of interpretation in Lacan’s thought is first and foremost Freudian in nature: language is communication, but a statement communicates on two different levels, there is first the manifest content—what the patient thinks he is saying—and secondly there is the latent content, in which something entirely different can be expressed. The analyst must listen carefully for irruptions of the unconscious within the

stream of conscious discourse: slips of the tongue, repetitions, displacements, etc. Lacan’s dictum that the unconscious is structured like a language makes this linguistic level all the more important, and he even describes the unconscious as “the discourse of the Other.”

One of the descriptions given by Lacan of what happens in the psychoanalytical session implies the silence of the analyst, but even then there remains some kind of interpretation of what the patient has said: “That which is central in the analytical discourse, is always this—to that which the signifier expresses, you give another reading than what it means” (Lacan 1975, 37). This implies a knowledge or competence on the part of the analyst that is lacking in the patient: an ability to hear what is left unsaid in what is said. It is also a good description of Heidegger’s manner of reading texts: there is a clear parallel between the theories of language of both thinkers. But we must look first at the influence of Kojève on Lacan’s thought. Anthony Wilden was among the first critics to point to this connection (1981, 192–96). Lacan’s theory of the constitution of the subject is based on Hegel’s master-slave dialectic, which was discussed by Kojève in the first chapter of his *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, and the idea of a negative quality of language (the word kills the object) is also Hegelian (Kojève 1979, 373–74). But Kojève’s reading of Hegel is not exactly a historically faithful analysis; it is a quite deliberate attempt to actualize Hegel’s thought and in particular, to introduce in the Hegelian discourse the philosophical innovations associated with the names of Marx and Heidegger. Marxism was important in the discussion of the master-slave dialectic because it is precisely the slave who attains self-consciousness, not the master; and Kojève even claimed at some point that Hegel had made a mistake and that not Napoleon but Joseph Stalin was the man marking the end of history (Pinard-Legry 1981, 110). This eschatological aspect of Hegel’s work remains central in Kojève’s interpretation, and it leads to a radical antihumanism when he suggests that man will simply disappear at the end of history: “What will disappear, is Man properly so called, i.e., the negating Action of the given and the Error, or in general the Subject *opposed* to the Object” (Kojève, 435). But the text of this note (dating from 1946)

was contradictory because according to Kojève posthistorical man would still have art, love, play. In 1968, in the second edition of his book, published shortly before he died, Kojève is even more radical:

One should have said that the posthistorical animals of the species *Homo Sapiens* (who will live in abundance and in complete safety) will be *satisfied* in function of their artistic, erotic and play-behaviour, because, by definition, they will be satisfied with it. (436)

They will even lose language and philosophy. Kojève adds that this posthistorical stage has already been reached: in 1946 he thought it already existed in the United States, but later he realized that it was only fully present in Japan (437).

The presence of Heidegger in Kojève's philosophy and especially in his reading of Hegel's *Phenomenology* is stressed time and again by critics who have written on this extremely influential philosopher (Wahl 1955, 99; Pinard-Legry, 112; Roudinesco 1986, 154; Wilden 1981, 193). This influence is clearly "existentialist" in that the emphasis is always on death, especially in Kojève's essay "L'Idée de la mort dans la philosophie de Hegel" in *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel* (1979, 529–75). Lacan seems to have borrowed from Hegel the theory about the constitution of the subject, the theme of the power of the negative in language, and the discussion of the *belle âme* (Wilden, 284–90). But there is also a direct link between Lacan and Heidegger in their theory of language (Wilden, 200–201): both see it as preceding man: *Die Sprache spricht*. This results for Heidegger in the opposition between an inauthentic language (*das Gerede*) and an authentic speech, which Heidegger identified in his later texts with the poet's word. The appropriate reaction to the latter form of language implies listening and replying to what language itself says. In the psychoanalytic process we find a similar distinction between what Lacan calls *lalangue*, the *parole vide* (or imaginary discourse) and the liberating full Word, *logos*, which is the real agent of the talking cure. The analyst listens to "lalangue" and identifies in it the full Word, a process that ends in setting the patient free.

A number of critics have analyzed this obvious similarity between

Heidegger and Lacan. Umberto Eco was, I believe, the first to do so in *La struttura assente*. If the unconscious is the discourse of the other, this other speaks in my place: "This Other who presides over parapraxes and over madness itself, just as over the movements of thought in an essay . . . , must be the Logos" (1968, 328). The origin of this idea and of the notion of *absence* is to be looked for in Heidegger: "Although he is not mentioned all that often in the course of Lacan's writings, Heidegger seems to be, more than Freud, the root from which the whole doctrine of absence grows" (339). When we then look at an article by Cornell Mihai Ionescu, "Heidegger 'traduit' par Lacan" (1983) we have to add first that Lacan indeed translated Heidegger (Lacan, 1956), although Ionescu does not seem to realize this. His article is important because it carefully examines the parallels between the two thinkers. Ionescu comes to the same conclusions as Eco: "What Lacan calls 'the universal discourse' really establishes the same trans-subjective system of truth as the 'logos' without authors of which Heidegger speaks" (Ionescu, 95). But whereas Eco had already claimed that "the recognition of man's dependence from something that finds its origin through its own absence, makes that it can only be reached by means of a negative theology" (339), Ionescu refers to the Eleusian mysteries and to John Chrisostomos: "Heidegger's thought and that of Lacan tend asymptotically towards such an apophatic horizon" (106). Similarly Catherine Clément writes: "Just as Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite was able to formulate a negative theology, Lacan defines a negative psychoanalysis" (1981, 167). Three other critics, two of them Heideggerians, find the same parallels between Heidegger and Lacan: William J. Richardson (1980), an important figure in the American Heidegger reception, and Samuel Ijsseling, who claims that Heidegger's unsaid closely resembles Lacan's unconscious because both seem to be primarily linguistic (1969, 287). H. Lang argues that the role of the subject is the same in Heidegger's philosophy as in psychoanalysis and in French structuralism (1977). As in the work of Heidegger and Derrida, Lacan's thought is founded on the assumption that literature *escapes*, that it offers privileged access to what is Other, immediate, nonmetaphysical, unconscious.

This is not the case for all kinds of literature; the three authors limit it to a restricted canon of works that include, in Derrida as in Lacan, the works of James Joyce. The exceptional status of these texts is beyond discussion; it is both a touchstone and a black hole (Schneiderman 1980, 43; Felman 1977, 199).

The problem with Lacan, as with Heidegger, is one of authority. We have seen that the analyst reserves for himself the right to interpret an utterance according not to what it says but to what it fails to say. In the same way as Heidegger, Lacan bases his authority on something outside his own self: the Other or the Logos speaks through the patient or the poet, and the analyst or *Denker* simply listens better than anybody else. If we do not accept this foundation of the thinker's authority, we have to look closely at what Lacan is doing with the texts because in that case his choices become arbitrary impositions: the unsaid is not something identifiable and definite. By definition the "unsaid" is everything the "said" is not, and any statement about it remains necessarily incomplete. Even if we accept that Lacan bases his authority on the unconscious itself, we can still question the analyst's personal authority. In accordance with a traditional Freudian psychoanalytical practice, a candidate must go through a training analysis, and he can only become an analyst when that is terminated. This has as a result that ultimately the authority of each analyst is based on that of Freud, who, alone, attained his position by means of self-analysis (with the silent help of Fliess). In Lacanian psychoanalysis this is not different: Lacan himself speaks of "the privilege which Freud's patients enjoyed in receiving its good Word from the very lips of the man who was its announcer" (1966, 291), and both friends and foes (Stuart Schneiderman and Sherry Turkle [1978] to name only two) have described the strict hierarchy of the Lacanian community in terms of the relative closeness to Lacan himself. In terms of power structures, Lacan was not an enlightened despot; his career is proof of his profound inability on the one hand to accept any authority above or beside him, and, on the other hand, to keep his disciples. The history of the different schisms and quarrels (sympathetically) documented by Schneiderman testifies to that. In his per-

sonal life, Lacan was a tyrant: "He was prone to making scenes in public, to being abrupt and rude, to expressing his amorous intentions toward women in flagrant ways" (1983, 12). By 1974 Lacan had acquired almost Napoleonic powers: Stuart Schneiderman tells the story of how Lacan simply took over the psychoanalysis department at Vincennes: nobody dared to intervene, not even the French government itself (41–43). If this is true of Lacan's private life and of his inability to keep his best students, it is equally true on the level of his theory. I believe it would be possible to argue that Lacan kept taking his theory one step further, losing some of his followers but winning others, and it would also be possible to show how the developments in his theoretical positions coincide with problems of authority (e.g., the appearance of the Borromean knots in 1973).

An important aspect of this problem of authority is the fact that Lacan hardly ever wrote anything: most of the essays in *Écrits* are really conference papers and seminars. Lacan was not a constitutional monarch either; the doctrine in the *Écrits* was not binding, at least not for Lacan. He was not even trying to communicate. In the "postface" to *Séminaire XI*, we read "When I wrote "Écrits" (writings) on the cover of the book, I wanted to make it clear that a writing in my sense is made not to be read" (Lacan 1973, 251). His reputation rests almost entirely on the *séminaires* and they remained at the center of Lacan's activity. The relationship he had with his students and collaborators is interesting in itself: when they came to conclusions different from his own or when they refused to adopt the new line, Lacan never engaged in a discussion with them. His commentary on ex-students or people with whom he had had disagreements is usually so indirect and so full of innuendo that it becomes almost impossible to understand except for the people who were directly involved. Some dissidents received an even more insulting treatment: Lacan delegated the punishment to a minor collaborator who speaks in his name. An example is Anika Lemaire's book (1970, with an introduction by Lacan), which was an attack on Laplanche and Pontalis; but the worst condemnation of all was that reserved for Deleuze and Guattari: Lacan simply ignored them completely.

His followers keep to his own interpretation of his authority. Stuart Schneiderman writes:

Lacan was in fact always true to his own rules, which were neither capricious nor arbitrary. They were based on a Law that cannot be comprised by rules of civilized behaviour, but that determines desire as the basis for action. (1983, 22)

The irony is that Lacan's theory is perfectly applicable to this situation. It is naive to presume that one analyst would be completely free of all feelings of transference. This notion becomes the central concept in François Roustang's attack on Lacanianism:

While they [the Lacanians] take their distance from Freud, or even, to put it differently, work out their transference with him, they are protected in this by an unanalyzed transference toward Lacan who plays for them the role of the guarantor and trustworthy interpreter. (1976, 36)

Roustang claims that every time a psychoanalyst or a theoretician pretends to know, all of psychoanalysis becomes religion once again (1976, 88) and this description of Lacan's power in religious terms can be found again and again. Cathérine Clément describes him as a shaman, a prophet, a "sorcerer driven by poetry and inspiration" (1981, 13), who teaches by means of an unconscious but efficient language (24); she finally compares his inability to communicate with that of Moses on Mount Sinai (25). This has nothing to do with organized religion, but with the impossible situation of a mystic (81). Clément, and others like her, welcome the final dissolution of the Lacanian movement as Lacan's break with an oppressive community of followers (Benoist 1980, 51), while the opponents, most explicitly François George ("The Lacanian doctrine is a Christianity which has taken a wrong turn" [1979]), also point to the effortless appropriation of Lacan's thinking by Christian theorists (Françoise Dolto and Gérard Sévérin's *L'Évangile au risque de la psychanalyse* (George 1979, 91 and 92-93; Dolto and Sévérin 1977). Lacan's followers even lose their own identity, a fact nicely illustrated in *Scilicet*, which published all but Lacan's own articles without giving the names of the authors.

The problematic status of Lacan's style is the same as that of Derrida's: it remains one of the prerogatives of the Master. When his followers apply it, it is regarded as either preposterous or ridiculous and most often both. Clément writes: "It is not too different from Lacan. A hair's breadth away. A century away. A rhetoric away. What one person, provided he's a poet, can allow himself to do, others can only imitate at the risk of ridicule" (1981, 47). I believe this is a central critique of both Lacan and Derrida's work: they do not offer a method that can be applied by others, precisely because it presupposes a willful authority over the text that most readers are apparently prepared to accept in Heidegger, Derrida, and Lacan, but not in anybody else. If we do not accept the authority of these writers, all relevance of the procedure disappears. It is only natural that a fundamental critique of Lacan always seems to originate outside of the sociological system he is a part of. The American sociologist Sherry Turkle has analyzed the sociological implications of Lacanianism in Paris (1978); and the German Christa Thoma-Herterich shows in her turn why Lacan is a "pure and original idealist" (1976, 141), and she sets out to identify the historical background of his thought "which today, because it recalls certain unpleasant historical memories, is not evoked anymore" (190). In her search for Lacan's intellectual ancestors, she comes to the conclusions similar to the one I have elaborated: Hegel, Heidegger, and Husserl as philosophers and further the poetical idealism of Baudelaire and Mallarmé and the symbolists in general. It is only when one approaches Lacan from the outside or when one genuinely wants to mediate his influence that one seems to find it necessary to look into his historical antecedents. Anthony Wilden's book (1981) is exemplary in this respect: he shows in considerable detail the influence of or similarities with Heidegger, Hegel, and Kojève, thereby situating Lacan in a framework that transcends the French context alone.