

SUNY SERIES IN CONTEMPORARY FRENCH THOUGHT

David Pettigrew and François Raffoul, editors

DERRIDA AND JOYCE

Texts and Contexts

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determined breathing: "Yes, exactly" (5.310); 7. The "yes" of distracted politeness, as in "Yes, yes" (6.7); 8. The "yes" of emphatic confirmation: "Indeed yes, Mr. Bloom agreed" (6.542); 9. The "yes" of patent approval: "Yes, Red Murray agreed" (7.55); 10. The "yes" of insistent confidence: "Yes, yes. They went under" (7.568). This list is by definition open and the difference between monologue or manifest dialogue can also lend itself to all those parasitings and grafts that are most difficult to take entirely into account.

52. Closure is thus impossible. It poses new and destabilizing questions to the institution of Joycean studies. This is due to a variety of reasons. First, to those I just mentioned about the structure of a yes. Second, those pertaining to the new relation that Joyce deliberately and mischievously instituted—from a certain date—between the "prior-to-text" and the so-called completed or published work. He watched over *[veill  sur]* his archive. We know now that at a given point, aware of how the archive of the "work in progress" would be treated, he made it a part of the work itself and began to save rough drafts, sketches, approximations, corrections, variations, and studio works (I am thinking here of Ponge's *La Fabrique du Pr * [Geneva: Skira, 1971], or the manuscripts of *La Table* [Montreal:  ditions du Silence, 1982]). He thus deferred his signature at the very moment of the "ready for press." He has thus given to generations of academics, guardians of his "open work," a new, and in principle infinite, task. Rather than surrender accidentally and posthumously to the "genetic criticism" industry, he instead, one might say, constructed the concept for it and programmed its routes and dead ends. The diachronic dimension, the incorporation or rather the addition of variants, the manuscript form of the work, the "page proofs," the typographical errors themselves, indicate essential moments in the work and not the accident of a "this is my corpus."

"I am exhausted, abandoned, no more young. I stand, so to speak, with an unposted letter bearing the extra regulation fee before the too late box of the general postoffice of human life" (U 15.2777–80).

53. TN: In English in the original.

54. TN: See Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, trans. James Strachey, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 24 volumes (London: The Hogarth Press, 1953–74), volume 8, 143.

*The Night Watch*¹ (over "the book of himself")

translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas

"Aha! I know you, Grammer!"²

—James Joyce, *Ulysses*

Mallarm  . . . about Hamlet. He says: il se prom ne, lisant au livre de lui-m me, don't you know, reading the book of himself.

—James Joyce, *Ulysses*, cited by Jacques Trilling³

Chapter 11, which takes place in the dwelling of the Sirens, reproduces a fugue *per canonem*, complete with trills, semibreve, staccato, presto, glissando, martellato, fortamento, pizzicati.

—Jean Paris, *James Joyce par lui-m me*, cited by Jacques Trilling

. . . to read the effects of the text in a sort of polyphony, in multiple registers . . .

—Jacques Trilling, *James Joyce ou l' criture matricide*

In a word, in brief, as befits a preface, I will speculate about a working hypothesis, one that will remain for me, to be sure, the object of a risky choice. It is a deliberate selection that I intend to sign, a boldly assumed sorting out, a *tri*, I might even say an essay, a trial run, an experimental attempt, a *try*⁴ (a word that apparently has the same etymology as *tri*).

To what hypothesis am I referring? The author of this book, so well known and so well-versed in literature, psychoanalysis, music, and a few other arts, here proposes, he too, he first of all, to sort things out, to *trier*. My own *tri* would thus raise the stakes or speculate upon his own. For

Jacques Trilling would have proposed a *tri* or sorting out between the *mother* and *maternity*.

To distinguish between the mother and maternity, to sort them out [*trier*], to draw an infinitely fine but indivisible line between them, even when the thing seems undecidable—that, I would say, is Trilling's decisive gesture, his critical operation, his *krinein*. And this operation takes place at the very moment he reminds us of the inevitability or fatality for the one who writes, and par excellence for Joyce, of a certain matricide.

But here is the aporia that never fails to appear—and far from paralyzing the matricidal desire this aporia actually exacerbates it, begins by motivating it, and opens the way for it: if one distinguishes between [*trier*] the mother and maternity, it follows that one can dream of doing away with the mother, some particular mother, though one will never be done with the maternity of the mother. "One can always murder the mother," says Trilling, "but one will not for all that have done away with maternity. . . ."⁵ One can always attempt (or *try*⁶) to kill the mother, but the best one can do is succeed in murdering some particular mother or figure of the mother, while maternity itself, maternity in its phantasm, survives. And it—or she—watches [*elle veille*], the night watcher or night vigil, the nightlight or vigil light [*veilleuse*]. She—or it—survives [*survit*] and surveys [*surveille*]. Funeral vigil [*veillée funèbre*]. *Wake*.⁷ Maternity goes on, and will always go on, defying the matricide. One can kill the mother, yes, but one will never be done trying to be done with maternity, which, as a result, is never over and done with (an interminable analysis, therefore, since "one is never done killing off mourning"⁸). Maternity or the hounding of matricide. By chasing after matricide, by giving chase with such perseverance, one chases it away, deferring it and attempting to exclude it. Maternity is that which will never be done calling for and escaping impossible matricide. And thus impossible mourning. And it will never be done provoking writing. Watching over it and surveying it, like a specter that never sleeps.

The key witnesses here: Ulysses, Joyce, and a few others. Calling them to the witness stand, Trilling is able to get them to talk. In their own language. He interprets them in all their languages, and there are so many.

This *tri* or sorting out between the mother and maternity is at once inevitable and impossible. It condemns the matricide to impotence but also to the repetition of the murder, to the *attempted* murder in writing. We are given a demonstration of this in the course of an exercise whose musical virtuosity, to mention only this among its many virtues, consists most often in an oscillation, a beat, or, better, an accelerated vibration between adjacent but distinct notes. It is enough to have heard, as I once had the chance to do, Jacques Trilling play piano, whether alone or accompanied by the voice of Jacqueline Rousseau-Dujardin, and then to listen to a few

notes of this text, to have the word *trill* on the tip of one's tongue. This book plays like a trill.

My wish, however, goes beyond an invitation to the concert or to the voyage⁹: it is that one may return over and over to this masterpiece of Jacques Trilling, as I myself returned to it, for a second time, after a long period of latency and reflection, overwhelmed precisely by the art of *return*, by the polytropic and polyphonic multiplication of anamnesis (so many memories in one and so many other memories in oneself), as by an Odyssean nostalgia. Everything is here reinaugurated, indeed augured, through this anticipation in the interpretation of signs that is the hallmark of augurs. Everything is reinvented following in the tracks of Ulysses, the written tracks, of course. Those of Homer and, in a brilliant superimposition, those of Joyce. Then those of the author. Between the two voyages, the two Ulysseses, there is the daring of a psychoanalytic invention: the discovery of a law. Freud reread and disturbed by Trilling. Beginning, perhaps, by Jacques Trilling as a child, Trilling as a schoolboy. But the schoolboy knows how to listen to himself and knows how to read; he is a writer at school, and he is disobedient, a writer who knows everything but makes fun of the lessons learned, a schoolboy who has become a *scholar*¹⁰ and who ventures forth—self-analytically, as we naïvely say—there where he understands that we must no longer place our trust in accredited knowledge, in the canon, in consensual normality. For example, in Freud, in Oedipus, in parricide, in the name of the father, in the symbolic order and other reassuring stories of filiation.¹¹

I reread *James Joyce ou l'écriture matricide* (1973) with a sort of jubilation tinged with a melancholic fervor. This piece of writing watched over [*veillait*] the birth of a friendship. Jacques Trilling generously sent it to me more than a quarter of a century ago, no doubt so that I might recognize, among so many other things, a few complicitous winks, particularly with regard to the *Phaedrus* and "Plato's Pharmacy," not far from a nod toward our friend Héléne Cixous, who was already the author of the first great reading of Joyce in France. We had not yet met, Jacques and I (or as I would wish to say, as elsewhere, James and I). Joyce was our common friend, like a secret between us, turning each of us into a sort of *secret sharer*,¹² to cite the title of a novella on the spectral double, the novella of another foreigner who knew how to make English his own. "The Secret Sharer" is not only "a secret companion"—"un compagnon secret" (as the title of this story of Conrad has been translated into French); I would prefer to speak of an acolyte, a secret guardian, or else—for the syntax of the title, "The Secret Sharer," allows it, "secret" being at once a noun and an attribute, the secret of the subject who shares and the secret as the object shared, kept or guarded by the two of them—a guardian who knows how, in secret, to watch over the

secret that is shared: a secret partaker or sharer of the secret. I immediately expressed my admiration and gratitude to Jacques, and from that time on we never stopped sharing a sort of irony, always just a bit criminal, with regard to all the most frequented places, all the *commonplaces*,¹³ where so many crossings still seemed forbidden, unknown, in truth *unnavigable*. How could I have known that one day I would be entrusted with this formidable task: *to attempt*, after Jacques' death, to preface this work without, unfortunately, being able to avoid privileging an interpretation, a speculation, a hypothesis, *a try*,¹⁴ one that would risk betraying the inheritance, as if the truth could never but be betrayed by the inheritance, by the simple experience of the wake [*la veillée*], of legacy or filiation. Rousseau was keenly aware of this inevitability or fatality in the sorting out [*tri*] of letters. In the *Confessions* (XI) he confides that what troubled him most was "the want of a literary friend whom I could trust, in whose hands I could deposit my papers, so that, after my death, he might pick and choose from them [*trier*]."¹⁵

Unnavigable, I said. The unnavigable [*impraticable*] here becomes the very decor of this theater, the setting [*praticable*] for all the displacements of matricidal writing at work right here in *James Joyce ou l'écriture matricide*: the inventive clearing of a trail on the trail of another trail, following the trace of another trace, steps ventured at dangerous crossroads (between the reefs, I should say for this Homeric navigation), the risky crossing of an autobiography after Freud (an interminable self-analysis, if you prefer, the most tender, playful, teasing, the most implacable as well, the very school of self-analysis, that of a schoolboy who also reads "the book of himself"). All this boldly puts to work a very refined Joycean knowledge, one worthy of what is called in the academy a *Joyce scholar*—drawing so precisely, and so surely, from one of Jacques Trilling's mother tongues. And this knowledge is always put in the service of the revolution within the psychoanalytic revolution: the matricide rather than Oedipus, the matricide who weaves his ruses into the act of writing, a matricide who hounds the mother since he cannot have his way with maternity.

A certain Jacob is never very far away, all you have to do is go up a bit, toward the association of Freud's dream related to the death of Jacob Freud, his father: "we are asked to close ^{our eyes} _{an eye}."¹⁶

This association indeed calls for a reader who has set out with Telemachus-Stephen in search of paternity. But what is singular (for these two dreams of gazes and of light no doubt govern the very particular writing of the immortal *Interpretation of Dreams*) is that with Joyce light and the gaze appear above all to be scrutinizing maternity. It is by means of a detour through Hell, with Freud, that we have found, in Homer, the specter of a mother who has

died of love for her absent son. What is being questioned here is the link between the giving birth of writing and maternity (this latter being more or less absent from the *Traumdeutung*), that is, the ineluctability of birth, of the marked hour, always already inscribed, and what the association of the dream "Father can't you see I'm burning" implies about the desire for the child's death. For Joyce, the place for such a link seems unlocatable between shadow and light, the ghost of the mother and the absent father. . . . Stephen already assailed by the specter of the mother in Ithaca in Martello Tower. . . . The mother rises up again. . . . As if the mother's womb—which one always wishes to be without a navel—arose here and there throughout the entire book, an uncircumventable representation that language would run up against and turn around.¹⁷

You will have noticed—and I underscore this so as to justify my speculation—the *trill* of a rapid alternation between what denotes the supposedly real *mother* ("the mother's womb") and what connotes *maternity* (defined by "the ineluctability of birth, of the marked hour, always already inscribed").

One can already imagine the stakes of this *tri*—and its remainder, which will endlessly reanimate, which will always make rise up, as its leaven, as its ferment, the ineluctability or fatality of matricide: it is indeed possible to kill the mother, to replace her, to substitute one "womb" for another. This is more possible today than ever, though the possibility is ageless. But what is impossible to expunge is birth, dependency upon an originary date, upon an "act" of birth before any birth act or certificate. One can of course curse this act of birth, this act without act, this act before the act, this act before the first act. But the curse remains powerless, from Job ("Why did you bring me forth from the womb?" Job 10: 18) to Shakespeare—so important for Joyce and for Trilling, and right here in this text—to Baudelaire and so many others.¹⁸ There is a curse because in cursing one does no more than confess that some evil or some accursed thing has taken place, without any possibility of remission. In confessing, the curse confirms, repeats, reproduces, and makes endure that which it would like to repress. There is no sense in wanting to expunge this evil [*mal*] insofar as it remains the very condition for such a wanting. The wanting inscribes denegation within it: I do not want, I cannot want what I say I want: not to be born—or to die. Like suicide, matricide (the curse of being born) bears within it this contradiction. But far from paralyzing matricide, the contradiction motivates it. Compulsively, interminably—and writing comes to be inscribed in this repetition. It signs it and countersigns it. What appears *impossible* through this curse or malediction, but also through every blessing or benediction, through every -diction, is to expunge, contest, or even confirm the contingency of my being-born,

which always presupposes some denegation of being-born, and the simple thought of my virtual "not being born." Yet this impossible remains the only possibility I have of gaining access to the experience of existence, to the "I am," as well as to time, to the temporality of time inasmuch as it is always and first of all my time, my "living present." This access to the experience of the "I exist" is of varying intensity, no doubt, but the intensity is to be measured against that of an "I might have not been born"—which is presupposed by every "I should not have been born"—and against the correlative "I could die," which is presupposed by every "I should die."

How could one want not to be born? The curse of birth seals the powerlessness, protests against an irreversible *being-born*, an unforgivable, intransitive, unthinkable *being-born*: more or less, something other in any case, than a being or an origin.¹⁹ Matricide puts us on the path of a birth irreducible to all ontology, to all ontological or phenomenological thinking about originarity. Being born, the event of "being born," has *already* come in place of the origin. Not only is the question no longer, not only is it already no longer, "to be or not to be," but it is even too late for the question "to be born or not to be born." Too late, then, for the question. Yes, the question comes too late, *being born* has taken place, namely, what comes to me—in short, me—from the other. From the other me. Before me the other me. Who is, without being my double, another *secret sharer*. That is what is pursued, that is who is hounded, under the name of "maternity," through the attempted murder. The desperate attempt that races and races to the rescue, as in Conrad's "The Secret Sharer," to save what it loses, its other double. Out of breath after such a delay, that is the race of matricidal writing. Not its source, for it has no source, and for good reason, but its endless race. A race without end because without origin. Birth, being born (not the being born *nothing* or *from* nothing, but always the *being born from . . . or in two's*, me and before me the other me): this is neither the beginning nor the origin nor even, save the phantasm, a point of departure. A dependency, no doubt, but not an origin or point of departure. A generation, perhaps, but without origin. The word *generation* is big with all these ambiguities. It's a ventriloquial word.²⁰

Matricidal desire can thus become insatiable; it can oscillate, vacillate, vibrate very quickly, like a trill, between two notes, between the mother and maternity; but as we have already said, if it has any chance of succeeding with the mother, it cannot but fail, it cannot but persist, going from one failure to another, in its pursuit of maternity. On its shore [*rive*], without ever arriving there [*arriver*] or touching shore, without ever succeeding [*arriver à*] to touch it, if only to kill it. That is why—and those who write know this well—writing is a killer; one is never done with it. Even if the mother dies, even if a son kills her—for Trilling does not speak, it seems to me, of

the matricidal daughter, or at least he doesn't make of her the decisive or specific focus of his analysis, of an analysis concerned instead with "mothers of certain male writers"²¹—the mother reappears in maternity, and it is no doubt for this reason that Trilling must so often evoke the "specter of the mother," the "ghost of the mother."²² This spectrality would be what remains of a necessary but impossible tri or sorting out between existence and essence, between a (real) mother and an (essential) maternity, between a mother who appears and the appearing of this appearance.

The fact that Trilling insists on the son's matricide rather than the daughter's—in other words, on the desire or phantasm of the son rather than that of the daughter—does not prevent him from putting the difference between the sexes at the center of his analysis. Were one to follow, through all these learned meanderings, two decisive lexical elements or two intersecting guiding threads (on the one hand, "grammaire," "grammar," "grandmother," and so on, and, on the other, "to remake [*refaire*]: "to remake oneself," "to make oneself anew," "you will not do [*feras*] that again," "to remake oneself by oneself," meaning without the mother; "I want to be my own ancestor," said Freud), then one will come to understand that the murder of maternity *bears* in itself, so to speak, as one bears a child, infanticide. "Must we," asks Trilling, "in order to 'remake' (a word that bears the sign of desire . . .) go by way of the murder of the child?"²³ One speaks in English of a *rhetorical question*²⁴ when the answer "yes" is known in advance. Matricide forms a pair, so to speak, with infanticide. And since we are talking about a child who tries to kill his mother, the matricide-infanticide leads on to suicide. Carnage is the response to the "rhetorical question." The inflexible cruelty of the law that condemns Iphigenia to death, the virgin daughter as the potential for childbearing:

Sacrifice her while she is still virgin, only potentially childbearing (that is in fact what the name *Iphigenia* means). May this virgin womb remain forever virgin! That is what a womb that has given birth can never be again, no matter what one does. . . . Virgin womb or virgin white sheet, untouched by writing? Everything happens as if the maternal womb were the sheet already blackened beneath its surface by previous writings, the irrefutable proof of an engendering that is already that of the Other.

The two murders—of the virgin daughter by the father, of the mother by the son—reflect, as in a mirror, the impossible condition of the wish symbolized by the effacement of Troy: the center of gravity, the driving force of tragedy.

This effacement, placed at the heart of the polysemic tragedy, would be a response to the only assignable goal of omnipotence,

namely, to deny the only reality: the difference between the sexes. In the double murder are inscribed the limits that the child, on the one hand, and the mother, on the other, assign to desire. (Not just any child, a virgin, "Iphigenia": born in power.) In this writing, woman enjoys a special privilege: that of making colossuses.²⁵

If one translates "omnipotence" by sovereignty, or rather by the phantasm of sovereignty, one will conclude from this that the denegation of sexual difference is part of the program of sovereignty itself, of sovereignty in general. And the political stakes—among others—of such a thought would be difficult to circumscribe. Trilling in fact notes in passing: "Knowledge about the word [mot] is knowledge about the death [mort] of sovereign speech. . . ."²⁶

If one then follows Trilling's reading of the *colossus*,²⁷ here interpreted as a substitute for the penis and, especially, as a figurine of replacement, the child being the ideal example of this since it uses its voice to console the woman for "presence/absence," one will question a whole series of equivalences: the "psychoanalyst-colossus," the fusion of the mother with the voice of the substitute, here the son-writer ("Perhaps particularly 'consolable' mothers, . . . those sensitive to the fusion of their voices with the *phōnē* of the substitute, would be the mothers of such writers? As for man, he would not be able to give birth to such figurines . . .") and especially the couple *remake/grammaire*, which refers at once to desire and to the two murders to which a desire is destined, "to the all-powerful desire, to the murder of the mother and the murder of the child."

It is impossible to underestimate the spectral dimension of matricide. Spectral, which is to say, phantasmatic. In Greek *phantasma* also means phantom, ghost. This maternal spectrality is no doubt one of the privileged ways of gaining access to what "phantasm" is, and means. Before being the spectrality of the dead or murdered father (see the treatment of Hamlet by Joyce, by Freud, and by Trilling), spectrality is essential to matricide, that is, at once to the desire and failure of the murder, to an interminable *attempted murder*. For maternity always survives, by coming back, by returning to its haunts [*en revenante*]. It has the last word, and it remains vigilant, it wakes [*y veille*].²⁸ It is watchful [*veille*], this night watch, this vigil light, this nightlight [*veilleuse*], to use the word Trilling puts in capital letters ("*La Veilleuse*"!).²⁹ It never sleeps; it not only keeps watch [*veille*] over the survivors but keeps vigil for them [*elle veille les survivants*]; it surveys them and survives them because those who come after it are also dead children, children who are already, like it, in the process of dying. Yes, matricide forms a pair with infanticide. The specter of the night watch or vigil light is a phantasm that fantasizes, that phantasmates, transforming into phantasm everything that

would like to touch it. Maternity is generative of the phantasm as such, it is the genitor—I dare not say the mother—of the phantasmatic. And we will not be able to think this phantasmatic except by *departing from* it, or, more precisely, except by *parting from* it. And thus by risking to repeat here again an attempted murder.

"Phantasm" is what counts here. Trilling will have said this better than anyone: "What is seen-read [*vu-lu*], if not wished [*voulu*], up until now, is indeed a phantasm of the murder of maternity. . . . Perhaps, when it is a matter of writing, this death must be constantly denied in order for it to have access as it would wish to a rebirth."³⁰

If there were a denunciation here, it would not just be of the crime or the attempted murder, the hounding of the mother or of maternity; there would also be a denunciation, indeed a ruthless denunciation, of writing, and, above all, that of Joyce. The exorcism, the supplication, the conjuring away of the death or murder of the mother ("this death must be constantly denied") is a denegation. And just as we would be holding here the key to a logic of the phantasm, we would also be approaching, in the same step [*pas*], with the same not [*pas*], the essential mechanism of what is called "denegation." In the beginning, before the *logos*, before the act, there would have been this originary denegation, this denegation of origin, or rather the denegation of this *being born* [*naître*]. Writing, literary writing, writing of writing, the signature—which is always exceptional, always the signature of a law of exception, the writing of Joyce according to another exemplary privileging—such would be, in their respective places of generality or singularity, the paradigms, illustrations, symptoms, and *verifications* of the truth [*vérité*]. Of a truth that always betrays itself in the symptom, a truth-of-the-symptom that always betrays maternity in the phantasm. And thus spectralizes it. A betrayal of truth, an unfaithful faithful betrayal, which reveals by deceiving. This betrayal of the truth would be—and this is my reading hypothesis—matricidal.

I must give up in advance giving an account here. Each sentence is a treasure trove of metonymies and metaphors—so rich that we risk losing it in the abyss. It is a tropics, in truth, from which one never returns and which one can never get over. Its matrix is an odyssey without return. What Trilling says of the stratagems of writing, of the writing of Ulysses, of the *Ulysses* of Joyce, could surely be said of his own writing: "All the processes of writing are put to work in *Ulysses* with a desperate, unequaled, and deliberately inimitable virtuosity."³¹

I said Homer and Joyce. We must also say Freud and Joyce. Both exiles. There is only exile without return in this milieu of writing, "the exile of the psychoanalyst and the exile of James Joyce"³²—along with a few others. As for Jacques Trilling, he is the polyglot student of a certain

Monsieur Crevet, he of the vulnerable eyes whose name will watch over all the blind men of history, all those whose eyes have been gouged out [crevés]. And if Trilling reads *Ulysses* in English, if he himself lost his mother only a few months before discovering this book, this extraordinary story signs or rather assigns the name of Freud, countersigning and contravening in the name of Freud. Countersigning and contravening at once, faithfully, unfaithfully. Unfaithful: how can one not be unfaithful, always unfaithful, in the name of a more intense fidelity? For this is a psychoanalytic theory in narrative form, an autobiography whose author, Jacques Trilling, "reading the book of himself," will have sealed a theorem within. A sort of abbreviation or acronym incorporated into a knowledge. One will no longer be able to dissociate the body of the signature from the theoretical gesture, the singularity of the signatory from the formalization of a universal law.

The name of Freud thus becomes the name of an "imaginary father." Another sort of "legal fiction."³³ Before untangling all these tangled threads, Trilling in fact evokes the homonymy of patronyms. We all know what was said to Joyce when Jung wrote a nasty preface to the third edition of *Ulysses*: "There can be only one possible explanation. Translate your name into German."³⁴

Among all the threads [fils] and filiations of this patient weave, of this enormous Penelopean genealogical web, one would thus be able to follow, though this is just an example, a certain "Jewish question." At once with Bloom, at the heart of *Ulysses*, as we well know, and, at the navel of the analytic movement, between Freud and Jung. The author was not in a bad position to speak of this, and to untangle without mincing words everything that ties these threads [fils] together, for example, in that curious event that was Jung's preface to *Ulysses*. It was submitted to Joyce who replied: "Ridicule it by making it public."³⁵ Right in the middle of the book, then, certain pages revolve around Jung, pages that might draw into the knot or noose of a certain Jewish question the synchrony or, better, the historical systemy [système] between the analytic movement and the history of literature (Freud and Jung, Freud and Joyce, Joyce and Jung, etc.). (French surrealism locates a completely different place for this same co-incidence in misunderstanding.)

Perhaps this would be just one metonymy or one kind of knot among others. No doubt, but I would risk granting some privilege to this trinomial or this trilogy (Freud, Jung, Joyce) inasmuch as it becomes readable today, in France, only by virtue of a trilingualism. With a certain Jewish question exercising here, as it often does, a magnetic attraction, it is appropriate to insist both on the proper name and on music, without forgetting that Jacques Trilling was himself a musician or a musicologist.³⁶ In Europe, in the Europe of psychoanalysis and of literature, it is the same field of magnetic

attraction. Let me cite the following, and ask the reader to reconstitute what is woven and signed around it:

Nothing surprising in the fact that this diver for Zurich pearls, after a late denunciation, attributes the Hitlerian catastrophe to a revolution in writing, that is, to Joyce and Schönberg: "Atonal music, the enormous ripple effect of that abyssal work called *Ulysses*. There is already there, in *nuce*, everything that took on a political form in Germany."

It is hard to forgive Freud his weakness for Jung, a certain reverse racism that would have made him cling so tightly, he and psychoanalysis, to this fair-skinned Swiss . . . Aryan. Just as it is hard to forgive a father who has failed to defend a son fallen victim to the patriotic-religious schemes of a mother who also assured the order of repression with the help of Swiss-German mercenaries. . . . What must be denounced, and eternally taken back up to be taken to task, is a nostalgia for the infantile all-powerfulness of the ideal father, all-powerful, that is, without fault or weakness; a reaction, no doubt, to his own infantile romanticism, to flights of fancy, to military identifications: Hannibal, the Hebraic saga, the Irish saga, the maternal saga, echoes of fratricidal struggles, etc.

This titanic enumeration (in *Ulysses*, cited a bit earlier) recalls the Homeric catalogue: four hundred lines devoted to the catalogue of the ships in the *Iliad*, comprised almost exclusively of proper names, "which entails a veritable training of memory."³⁷

Memory of the proper name in general, that is, of a proper name that is not necessarily the name of the father—or the mother. As we know, this memory calls for what is referred to here as "training," namely, the mechanics of the "by heart." Mnemonics to the extent, at least, that the proper name remains aleatory and in-significant, a pure signifier, if you will, received or imposed at birth, by birth, before any possible choice on the part of the subject who bears it. This in-significant, non-signifying mark can then later, as we know, be reinvested with meaning or sense, and with common sense, opening the field to all kinds of interpretations, some of which can play the role of a mnemonic device or memory aid [*pense-bête*].

All this is well known, and has been explored by many of us for some time now, but in order to support my interpretation of the text of Jacques Trilling I would like to underscore this single trait: what remains of the in-significant, un-signifying, aleatory, pre-semantic mark in the proper name, and which thus entails some "training in memory," would be that which is connected to "maternity," rather than [*plutôt*], earlier than [*plus tôt*], the

mother and the father, the name of the father or name of the mother. Or it is at least connected—with or without umbilical cord—to a phantasm of this maternity, which, as we have been underscoring, is defined by Trilling as “the ineluctability of birth, of the marked hour, always already inscribed.”

I will return yet again to this possible-impossible *tri*, this necessary and forbidden sorting out, between the mother and maternity. But if I insist on the memory and survival of the proper name, if I sometimes seem to be playing in earnest on the name of Jacques Trilling in the languages that were his, it is not in order to offer an “interpretation”—something I would never do—of his name or his signature.³⁸ It is simply in order to distinguish at one go between *two stakes*: in order to recall, on the one hand, the importance of the proper name in general in this dramaturgy of matricide—of double matricide, or of an always divisible matricide, of the attempted murder that aims at both the mother and maternity but always falters or fails at this latter. But it is also in order, on the other hand, to recall something rather obvious. The text I am prefacing is, like the preface itself, signed. And my signature is only there—and I would wish it to be there, as much as possible, and in its own way, only in this way—to countersign that of my friend Jacques Trilling, whose surviving proper name could not but obey and at the same time illustrate in an exemplary fashion the law or the theorem that this work, *James Joyce, ou l'écriture matricide*, puts to work.

For who would dare to present himself as the authorized cartographer of this post-Joycean, post-Freudian odyssey? Such a pretension would be excessive, and thus indecent. My old indictment of the genre of the preface is here reinforced by an additional argument.³⁹ If it already seems difficult, in truth absurd and illegitimate, to preface a novel, as well as a philosophical treatise, how is one to introduce a signature? How is one to explain it? To give an account of it? “Signature” means first of all a *work [oeuvre]*, that is to say, the survival of a trace whose content can no longer be separated from the process of writing, from the singular, dated act or gesture, irreplaceable like a body, like a bodily struggle, untranslatable in the end, precisely as that which refers to maternity, to birth, to “the ineluctability of birth, of the marked hour, always already inscribed.” This is the case for every work worthy of the name. In an even more singular fashion here, beyond the patronymic name, the signature situates the place of a trace exempt from substitution. It can be read as an idiomatic writing, already big with certain other writings (Homer, Joyce, Freud, etc.). It thereby becomes inseparable from an adventure of interpretative reading that is itself unique, irreplaceable, untranslatable: the story of Jacques Trilling himself. By his “story” we should understand not only the abyssal manufacturing of his family story [*roman familial*] (“he who listens to himself listening to the

other, in search of a family story to be reconstituted in the very movement that relentlessly tries to reveal it . . .”⁴⁰) but the story of his formation or education (*Bildungsroman*), his years of apprenticeship as a schoolboy who lost his mother a few months before reading *Ulysses*, as a child who knew how to free himself in order to invent his signature through reading and writing, who left school without leaving it, the school of Crevet, of Homer, Joyce, Freud, Proust, and a few others.

I must thus renounce yet again trying to describe the richness of the “content.” The reader will discover it for him- or herself at each and every step. To hail the work, to bless the fortunate encounter with the signature (in short, the birth of Jacques Trilling), and everything that is thereby given to us, indeed that is destined for us, by an inventive writing capable of measuring up to the contingency of signifiers, names, dates, works, births, others, I will allow myself simply to privilege, and perhaps to force—please excuse me for this—what is to my eyes one of the major consequences, we might even say the major scale, of this thesis or this theorem, that is, of what remains formalizable beyond the proper name and the signature. For this I return to my initial hypothesis, to the essay (*try*⁴¹) or the *tri*, the sorting out, with which I began. That is, between the mother and maternity.

Two “logics” seem to me to contend with one another over Trilling’s remarkable demonstration. Two competing but also strangely allied logics, almost indistinguishable in their dynamic rhythm. One of them is classic, or more precisely “Freudian” or “Joycean.” Then Lacanian. And, in the end, commonsensical.⁴² While paternity would always be a problematic attribution, a conclusion reached through inference and reasoning (Freud),⁴³ a “legal fiction” (Stephen’s well-known phrase in *Ulysses*, cited in fact by Trilling⁴⁴), and thus a sort of speculative object susceptible to substitution, the maternity of the mother is unique, irreplaceable, an object of perception, like the “womb” we so often speak of as the place of conception and birth. The other logic, the one toward which I myself would risk leaning here, would subject the mother (I’m not saying “maternity” in Trilling’s sense of the word) to the same regimen as the father: possible substitution, rational inference, phantasmatic or symbolic construction, speculation, and so on. If today the unicity of the mother is no longer the sensible object of a perceptual certitude, if maternities can no longer be reduced to, indeed if they carry us beyond, the carrying mother, if there can be, in a word, more than one mother, if “the” mother is the object of calculations and suppositions, of projections and phantasms, if the “womb” is no longer outside all phantasm, the assured place of birth, then this “new” situation simply illuminates in return an ageless truth. The mother was never only, never uniquely, never indubitably the one who gives birth—and whom one sees, with one’s own eyes, give birth. If the word “maternity,” as it is interpreted and deployed

by Trilling, gestures toward the unicity of a mark and of a birth date that has already taken place, if there is, undeniably, maternity in this sense, then every determination of this maternity by the figure of a mother, indeed of a date, of an indisputable trace (this one and not that one), becomes the effect of a phantasm and a speculation. The mother is also a speculative object and even a "legal fiction." In the passage I am about to cite, and from which I have already taken a phrase, a passage whose argumentation and consequences I ask the reader to reconstitute with great care, it seems to me that these two "logics" cross or rather follow upon one another rapidly, as in a trill. Almost simultaneously, it seems at once necessary, urgent, decisive, but also impossible to decide, to sort things out [*trier*], between the mother and maternity. The mother can be replaced—or killed—and substitution, fiction, and thus phantasmatic speculation is possible. As for maternity, it would resist replacement, because birth, the date or the mark of birth, has *taken place*, undeniably, even if its determination is given over to calculation, speculation, or phantasm. Maternity thus cannot be reduced to the mother ("One can always murder the mother, but one will not for all that have done away with maternity"). But what are we to make of a maternity that would not be the maternity of a mother? And why necessarily associate with the maternity of the mother "the ineluctability of birth, of the marked hour, always already inscribed"? The reader will have to come to terms with this passage, the riskiest in the entire work, the boldest, the most trilled or trilling, the most *thrilling*,⁴⁵ fantastic, sensational, exciting, provocative:

If we have come to the *word* (grammar) it is because an appropriation had conferred upon the word "remake" a determining role in the theatricalization implied in every writing-reading. It is indeed "remake" that referred back to the *Oresteia*. In its place, in its time, is inscribed a reference . . . to tragedy where maternal language is the traitor on stage. But what, or whom, does one want to remake, to redo or do in? As we will never tire to point out, it is to remake oneself, or more precisely to wipe out any trace of the first fabrication . . .

(Responding to Midas, who is questioning him about Dionysian euphoria, the Silenus says: "Wretched race of men, child of chance and of misery! Why do you want to hear what will do you no good? You cannot attain this greatest of goods: not to be born, not to be, to be nothing . . .") In these lines—and the length of the citations attests to this—one can make paternity play all kinds of roles on the stage of the symbolic and the imaginary. But this does not seem to be the case for maternity. Each of us comes out of a mother's womb, from one womb and one womb only, and each is thus forever marked. Like a remainder, a trace that would resist and

exist a little more irreducibly than any other. With regard to this liminal representation of the biological, father and son are brothers, or, more exactly, sons. One can always murder the mother, but one will not for all that have done away with maternity, no more than with Troy, or the maternal language of desire.⁴⁶

Trilling seems at once to believe and not believe. He believes without believing in a discernible difference between a mother and maternity. What indeed would a mother be, how would one speak of her, how would one address her, without the presupposition of a maternity of the mother? And what would a maternity of the mother be, an essence of the mother *as such*, without a mother, without the singular, absolutely unique existence of a mother? If matricide is at once one and double, and thus forever frustrated, and thus always renewed, repeated, hounded (the lure of this dogged pursuit being sometimes the mother, sometimes maternity), it has to do with the fact that *there is* both the mother *and* maternity. As soon as one believes one has killed the mother, maternity remains—to be killed. Isn't writing a killer? Inversely, it is because maternity and the mother are one (maternity is the maternity of the mother, its essence and its "as such") that the matricidal pursuit remains the same and without end. Between the mother and maternity the ontological difference is *not*; it is not a difference between two (beings). This must be said, as we all know, about any ontological difference. There is thus no possible *tri*, no real sorting out, between the mother and maternity. And yet this sorting out is necessary, for maternity will never be reducible to the mother and this ontological difference opens up the possibility of a *tri* or a sorting out in general. That is, in just a couple of words, the *raison d'être* of interminable matricide: an *ontological difference* between the mother and maternity, almost nothing, nothing that is.

One would not kill, that is, what we call "kill," there would be no murder *as such*, without this nothing of a certain ontological difference. And without that which secretly links—an enormous task for meditation—this nothing of the ontological difference to the nothing of the phantasm. This nothing makes one return over and over again to the scenes of the crime in order to kill again what one believed one had already killed. The essence of the mother, her appearing *as such*, is maternity. Nothing, almost nothing. Nothing other, no one other, than the mother, a single mother. And yet maternity remains, and it keeps watch [*veille*], the Night Watch or Nightlight [*Veilleuse*]—absolutely indefatigable [*incroyable*]. Thus: like everything that is indefatigable, beginning with God, it does not appear as such, in its own light, in the light of its nightlight, except to the murdering desire to be done with that which is never over and done with. To be done, as Job would have wanted, with light itself. With what there was. To be done with the

trace of the trace, with birth itself. To kill oneself by killing one's birth, in other words, the maternity of one's mother. So as to entertain the suicidal illusion, yet again, of giving birth to oneself. On one's own, freely, to oneself.

—Yeah, right.

—Auto-parthenogenesis of a writing, for example, that would like to deny or—for this amounts to the same thing—to appropriate without remainder the entirety of one's heritage. One writes, but it would be necessary to do otherwise in order to redo or remake oneself. In order to be in the end, as Joyce would have wanted, "father and son of his works."⁴⁷ Even if it means running the risk—for who could deny it?—of finding oneself at the end of the road, at the moment of signing, done in [*refait*].

P.S. July 15, 2000. Take my word for it—Ulysses' honor. From Homer to Joyce, Ulysses will have been the hero of *James Joyce ou l'écriture matricide*. In *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins* (1991), I used and abused the "name of nobody" (*outs*), which Ulysses gives to himself or remakes for himself.⁴⁸

Why recall this here? It so happens that I am finishing this preface just after the meeting of the States General of Psychoanalysis.⁴⁹ I there spoke of a beyond of cruelty, a beyond of sovereignty, a beyond of the death drive—and thus a beyond of the beyond of the pleasure principle.

It is as if I had thought I could hear a silent lesson from Jacques Trilling, the one whose hypothesis I just advanced. As if I had said to myself, in short, yet one more time but once and for all, for good and forever: from now on, no more writing, especially not writing, for writing dreams of sovereignty, writing is *cruel*, murderous, suicidal, parricidal, matricidal, infanticidal, fratricidal, homicidal, and so on. Crimes against humanity, even genocide, begin here, as do crimes against *generation*.

Whence my definition of withdrawal [*le retrait*], my nostalgia for retirement [*la retraite*]: from now on, before and without the death *toward which*, as I have written elsewhere, *I advance*—to begin finally to love life, namely birth. Mine among others—notice I am not saying *beginning* with mine. A new rule of life: to breathe from now on without writing, to take a breath beyond writing. Not that I am out of breath—or tired of writing because writing is a killer. No, on the contrary, I have never felt so strongly the youthful urgency, dawn itself, white and virgin. But I want to want, and decidedly so, I want to want an active and signed renunciation of writing, a reaffirmed life. And thus a life without matricide. It would be a matter of beginning to love love without writing, without words, without murder. It would be necessary to begin to learn to love the mother—and maternity, in short, if you prefer to give it this name. Beyond the death

drive, beyond every drive for power and mastery. Writing without writing. The other writing, the other of writing as well, altered writing, the one that has always worked over my own in silence, at once simpler and more convoluted, like a counterwitness protesting at each and every sign against my writing through my writing.

If the *tri* or the sorting out between the mother and maternity remains at once ineluctable and illusory, if matricide becomes so inevitable [*fatal*] that it exonerates the one guilty of it, wouldn't one have to be an absolute monster of innocence to go on writing? A child? An ingénue? Better, an *innate* monster of innocence?

Is writing without matricide still possible?

I began with a wish. Here is another one, and it may always strike you as being pious, and little more than a pipe dream [*vœu . . . pieux*]⁵⁰: to write and kill nobody (signed Ulysses).

Jacques Derrida

Notes

1. TN: "La Veilleuse," the title of Derrida's essay, has a wide range of meanings in French that cannot be captured by one or even a couple English words. Capitalized in the Trilling text that Derrida is prefacing, the feminine noun suggests first of all a woman who keeps watch, who remains vigilant, who holds vigil—a "Nightwatchwoman" or "Waking woman." But a *veilleuse* is also a little candle or light that in certain Jewish families is kept lit for seven days after the death of a loved one. In other contexts, a *veilleuse* is a light or lamp that dimly lights a child's room at night—a nightlight. One also speaks of the *veilleuse* of an appliance, a pilot light, for example, which remains lit even when an appliance is off, or else of an appliance being *en veilleuse*, that is, illuminated or turned on but not fully functioning, in "standby mode." From these various contexts, we can see that the semantic kernel of the word suggests a keeping watch, a standing by, a remaining awake or vigilant when everyone else has forgotten or gone to sleep, a remaining lit or illuminated when all other lights have been extinguished.

2. James Joyce, *Ulysses* (New York: Random House, 1961), 595. TN: We have followed Derrida in capitalizing "Grammer," even though it is in lowercase in the edition of *Ulysses* cited here. The Gabler edition corrects this line to the reading found on the Rosenbach manuscript: "Aha! I know you, gammer!" (U 15.4581). The incorrect form appeared in all editions from 1926–1961.

3. U 9.112–15.

4. TN: "Try" in English in the original.

5. TN: Jacques Trilling, *James Joyce ou l'écriture matricide* (Belfort, France: Éditions Circé, 2001), 119.

6. TN: In English in the original.

7. TN: In English in the original.

8. Trilling, *James Joyce*, 50.

9. TN: Derrida is here playing on the title of Baudelaire's poem in *The Flowers of Evil*, "Invitation to the Voyage."

10. TN: In English in the original.

11. The law governing the relationship to Freud or the distance vis-à-vis him is rather complex. Most often it is out of fidelity to a Freudian inspiration, or even to Freud's own dissatisfaction, that Trilling moves away from the "imaginary father." For example, concerning identification, "a thorn in the side of psychoanalysis, the keystone of a theory that makes of the Superego the heir of the Oedipus complex. A concept that always left Freud dissatisfied" (Trilling, *James Joyce*, 61).

12. TN: In English in the original.

13. TN: In English in the original.

14. TN: In English in the original.

15. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Confessions*, ed. and trans. P. N. Furbank (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), 209.

16. Trilling, *James Joyce*, 92.

17. *Ibid.*, 93-94.

18. Even if he does not cite him, Trilling might well have been thinking of Job. The curse of birth brings condemnation upon the day, upon "seeing the day," upon giving birth or "bringing to the light of day." The curse is thus inspired by matricide, sometimes quite literally. What Job curses is phenomenality itself, life as visibility, the light of being. What must seek atonement, what must be redeemed by a sort of forgiveness, is light. And light begins with the mother. There was light, light took place, and thus remains inexpiable. "After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. Job said: 'Let the day perish in which I was born, and the night that said, 'A man-child is conceived.' Let that day be darkness! May God above not seek it, or light shine on it. Let gloom and deep darkness claim it. . . . Why did I not die at birth, come forth from the womb and expire? Why were there knees to receive me, or breasts for me to suck?'" (Job 3: 1-5, 11-12; New Revised Standard Version of *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*).

19. Trilling—and we will return to this—does not dissociate matricide from a certain infanticide. We earlier heard Job cursing his birth and the womb of his mother; let us now recall "The Blessing" (*Bénédiction*) that opens *The Flowers of Evil*. It is the Poet's mother, this time, who curses birth, the birth of the one who writes, that is, the birth of the matricide. And as in the book of Job, what experience signs is the inexpiable. Or rather the expiation of an inexpiable that has remained inexpiable: "When, by a decree of the sovereign powers, / The Poet comes into this bored world, / His mother, terrified and full of blasphemy, / Clenches her fists toward God, who has pity on her: 'Ah, why didn't I litter a nest of vipers, / Rather than give birth to this mockery! / A curse on that night with its fleeting pleasures / When my womb conceived my' expiation!'"

Everything should really be reread and cited here in the light of this matricidal light, including the response of the son, of the Poet, who has been turned in advance into an object of "mockery" by his mother and who himself blesses, but blesses evil, the flower of evil: "Be blessed, my Lord, who give suffering / As a divine remedy for

our impurities." Charles Baudelaire, *Flowers of Evil*, ed. and trans. Wallace Fowlie (New York: Bantam Books, 1964), 20-23.

Yes, everything should be reread and cited, without forgetting that this is, precisely, a poem, literature. It is thus the writing of a son who verifies matricide. He signs it and feigns to absolve himself of it in the very gesture whereby the poetic signature repeats the evil. The final blessing seals the crime and takes away any possible alibi from the attempted murder—which is already criminal. It makes of the inexpiable the condition of literature.

20. TN: "Ventriloquist" comes from the Latin *ventriloquus*, meaning "speaking from the belly," or, perhaps, as Derrida here seems to be suggesting, from the womb.

21. Trilling, *James Joyce*, 122.

22. *Ibid.*, 93.

23. *Ibid.*, 120.

24. TN: In English in the original.

25. Trilling, *James Joyce*, 120-21. With regard to the "virgin white sheet, untouched by writing," or to its being "already blackened beneath its surface by previous writings," one will recall *Inhibition, Symptom, and Anxiety*: "As soon as writing, which entails making a liquid flow out of a tube on to a piece of white paper, assumes the significance of copulation, or as soon as walking becomes a symbolic substitute for treading upon the body of mother earth, both writing and walking are stopped because they represent the performance of a forbidden sexual act" (trans. Alix Strachey, in Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 24 volumes [London: The Hogarth Press, 1999], volume 20, 77-175, 90). I bring up this quote only in order to indicate a possible connection between an Oedipal (patricidal) analytic and a matricidal analytic of writing. Not to mention the phantasm and taboo of virginity.

26. Trilling, *James Joyce*, 87.

27. See Trilling, *James Joyce*, 121. If the colossus is here placed on the side of the figurine of the child ("an ideal figurine since it is born with *phōnē*"), which is also to say on the side of the writer-son, earlier in the text (Trilling, *James Joyce*, 88 and following)—and there is no contradiction here—Trilling analyzes the colossus around "the substitute of the absent cadaver" and "the place of the deceased." "Is the colossus-book the colossus of the dead mother, whom one wished to be a virgin?" (Trilling, *James Joyce*, 92).

28. "Last word" is also the last word of Trilling on the subject of the last word. He recognizes in it (in order to give credence or not—I don't know how to decide this here—to a tradition that runs up to at least Hegel, but in a place where I believe one must be particularly suspicious of this tradition) the law of the mother as the law of the night, as opposed to the law of the Father as the law of the day: ". . . in the penumbra that follows the occultation of the lamps by the Nightlight or Night Watch [*la Veilleuse*]. If the Father's word makes of the day the law, that of the mother, who has the last word, makes of the evening the occult law, night language, *nighty language* [in English in original], whose silent listening is, like the foam left behind by the black vessel in the depths of the night, this fine, white wake inscribed on the sea, always perceptible, a sign of life, and, whether one be

a navigator or a pirate, a sign to follow" (Trilling, *James Joyce*, 123). That is the conclusion of the book.

29. "Like the child who had to sleep. Not in the collapsing darkness but, rather, in the penumbra that follows the occultation of the lamps by the Nightlight or Night Watch [*La Veilleuse*]" (Trilling, *James Joyce*, 123). With spectrality invading the entire field of his analysis, Trilling is hardly playing when he writes this about, precisely, *analysis*, which is always busy sorting out [*trier*] or triturating the undecidable in order to detect within it the crisis and the criterion of a secret decision: "A color that only analysis could then decompose *spectrally* as if condensing in some way love and hate, defeat and exile, English and Hebrew, life and death, the object of the murder and the lost passion" (Trilling, *James Joyce*, 42, my emphasis).

30. Trilling, *James Joyce*, 118.

31. *Ibid.*, 94.

32. *Ibid.*, 54.

33. TN: In English in the original.

34. TN: This story is recounted in Richard Ellmann's *James Joyce*, revised edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 628–29. The preface itself can be found in: Carl G. Jung, "Ulysses: Ein Monolog," *Europäische Revue* 8 (September 1932): 547–68, and is reprinted in Jung's *Wirklichkeit der Seele* (Zürich: Rascher, 1934), 132–69. English translation: "Ulysses: A Monologue," trans. R.F.C. Hull, in *The Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature*, vol. 15 of the *Collected Works of C. G. Jung* (New York: Pantheon, 1966), 109–34.

35. Trilling, *James Joyce*, 98.

36. Trilling reads always as a musician. For example, when he deciphers a love that "lets itself be read on two registers where the voice of love and the voice of death are woven together and respond to one another in an implacable counterpoint (and not a canon). The reading of such a score requires heart, the heart [*cœur*] of a musician, of a reader, an ancient chorus [*chœur*]" (Trilling, *James Joyce*, 68).

This recommendation follows a determining moment in the scansion of the analysis: the "lethal identification" of Joyce and his mother, who called the birth of her son "the most beautiful day of her life." The blind man, Joyce, "hates her to death [*lui en veut à mort*] for having abandoned him for her illness. It is necessary to kill her a second time, an unspeakable wish."

"En vouloir à mort à quelqu'un"—to resent someone or hate them intensely, to hate them to death; "vouloir du mal à quelqu'un"—to wish someone ill, to wish them harm. Who will ever translate these idioms?

37. Trilling, *James Joyce*, 99–100.

38. Permit me simply to note this: one can apply to the name of Trilling what Trilling says about the name of his teacher, Crevet, especially as concerns the consonants, which are "like javelins threatening the pale blue eyes of a rival (in literature) who has a certain knowledge (and whom the student also seduces)" (Trilling, *James Joyce*, 40). If "death and consonants are accomplices" (*ibid.*, 41), how can one not notice that in these two proper names, Crevet and Trilling, a single redoubled vowel (e, i) finds itself closely surrounded by consonants. Under surveillance. The consonants of death watch after [*veillent sur*] the vowel, and watch over [*surveillent*] the voice of their writing.

39. TN: On the preface, see "Outwork," DI 1–59/7–67.

40. The expression "roman familial" comes up regularly in this text.

41. TN: In English in the original.

42. TN: In English in the original.

43. I am thinking here, to cite just one example, of a note in *The Rat Man* that I devoted a great deal of attention to elsewhere (in a seminar on witnessing). What we find here in a very condensed form, I would argue, are the most salient limits and credulities of a certain Freudian discourse. Indeed, of its patriarchal phallogocentrism. Concerning "omnipotence," and especially concerning the penchant of "obsessional neurotics" for doubt and uncertainty (for example, regarding the length of life, survival after death, though also paternity), Freud notes (and I am just quoting him here): "As Lichtenberg says, 'An astronomer knows whether the moon is inhabited or not with about as much certainty as he knows who was his father, but not with so much certainty as he knows who was his mother.' (That makes already two errors by Lichtenberg, both accredited by Freud: the astronomer knows in all certainty *today* that the moon is *not* inhabited, but he could *today* doubt the identity of his mother. Freud continues, as he often did, after having found the approbation of Lichtenberg.) A great advance was made in civilization when men decided to put their inferences upon a level with the testimony of their senses and to make the step from matriarchy to patriarchy.—The prehistoric figures which show a smaller person sitting upon the head of a larger one are representations of patrilineal descent; Athena had no mother, but sprang from the head of Zeus. A witness who testifies to something before a court of law is still called 'Zeuge' [literally, 'begetter'] in German, after the part played by the male in the act of procreation; so too in hieroglyphics the word for a 'witness' is written with a representation of the male organ" (Sigmund Freud, "Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis," trans. Alix and James Strachey, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 24 volumes [London: The Hogarth Press, 1999], volume 10, 151–318, 233 n.1).

44. Even if paternity is founded upon a lure [*leurre*], upon an illusion that needs to be contested, it retains an incontestable privilege. But in the eyes of those who deem it indisputable (in short, without any possible illusion), the mother's maternity deprives the mother of this privilege. Simply "denouncing the lure or illusion of paternity" doesn't get you out of the system (Trilling, *James Joyce*, 118). "The lure or illusion of paternity is to be denounced," says Trilling himself (*ibid.*, 102), after a paragraph that seems to follow a Lacanian logic (a second birth at the time of entering a symbolic order governed by the name of the father, in short, by a "legal fiction" that would be reserved for the paternity of the father). This is the phallogocentric credulity of Freud we spoke of in the preceding note. A learned discourse on the mother's phallus or on the phallic mother changes little in this regard.

45. TN: In English in the original.

46. Trilling, *James Joyce*, 118–19.

47. *Ibid.*, 47–48.

48. *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 87–88, translation of *Mémoires d'aveugle: L'autoportrait et autres ruines* (Paris: Éditions de

la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1990), 88–90. Cruelty is named there: “. . . the ruse of Odysseus, who then drives a fire-hardened stake into his eye: a *single, unique* eye, a *closed* eye, an eye *gouged out*. By ruse rather than by force (*dolō oude biāphin*), and by someone who calls himself “Nobody.” The *mētis* of *Outis*: the deception that blinds is the ruse of *nobody* (*outis, mē tis, mētis*); Homer plays more than once on these words. . . . By presenting himself as Nobody, he at once names and effaces himself: like nobody, like nobody else—the logic of the self-portrait.”

49. “Psychoanalysis Searches the States of Its Soul: The Impossible Beyond of a Sovereign Cruelty,” in *Without Alibi*, ed. and trans. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 238–80, translation of *Etats d’âme de la psychanalyse: l’impossible au-delà d’une souveraine cruauté* (Paris: Galilée, 2000).

50. TN: Derrida is playing on the expression “*vœu pieux*”—literally, a pious wish, but, figuratively, a hollow or empty wish. Read as a noun rather than an adjective, *pieux* is the plural of *pieu*, a stake or sharpened stick of the kind Ulysses used to strike out the eye of the Cyclops.

II

RETURNS