

## Chapter Five: Conclusion

### Epistolary Inheritance: Post Card of Intellectual Legacy

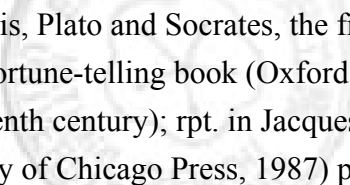


Fig. 1. Matthew Paris, Plato and Socrates, the frontispiece of *Prognostica Socratis basilei*, a fortune-telling book (Oxford: Bodleian Library, MS. Ashmole 304, fol. 31v, thirteenth century); rpt. in Jacques Derrida, *The Post Card* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) p. 251.

The epistolary texts compiled in “Envois” are written and transmitted in the form of the post card. One side of the post card, as displayed in Fig. 1, exhibits the confounding scene of Socrates sitting in front of Plato and seemingly writing something under Plato’s instruction or dictation. Such a scene could confound the reader at first sight, as it seems to reverse the familiar genealogical procedure of Western knowledge. The genealogy originates with Socrates as the predecessor, who is supposed to precede his successor Plato.

In “Envois,” through the role of the sender, Derrida reveals various ways of interpretations for the confounding scene. The interpretations are paradoxically presented through Derrida’s speculations on the scene of reversal and also on the conventional genealogy of knowledge. I regard the formation of these speculations as a process, in which

Derrida attempts to go beyond the restricted economy of the hierarchical connections in the line of genealogy. His way of going beyond is speculative, emphasizing “the fort/da of impulse and work, which is also the unfolding of a drama of which the end is concealed and unimaginable” (Loselle 1181). The act of speculation does not presume a culmination that may explain all the paradoxical subtleties and bring tranquility to the problematic. Instead, the act of speculation is continually evoked by the return of desire to observe its object from different points of view. Moreover, as the speculator, Derrida is also constantly conditioned to interact with his own speculations. Therefore, no determinate destination and intended receiver can be predestined in the play of speculations. The speculations are “cards on the table,” which “will throw themselves onto unintelligible remainders” (*Post Card* 175). In this chapter, I will elaborate on the speculations from four perspectives in the relationship between dictator and scribe, sender and receiver, creditor and debtor, and facteur and mediator.

### **Dictator / Scribe**

One of the speculations on the scene of reversal comes from an expert’s explanation, to whom Derrida consults:

But also the end of my delirium around S and p. Prose begins here, starting with the expertise of the doctor who comes to teach me how to read the card. I had called him in for a consultation and here is his answer [...]: “Dear Sir, your question can be answered quite simply. One has but to read the miniature verbally. Socrates is in the course of writing. Plato is beside him, but is not dictating. He is showing, with his index finger pointed toward Socrates: Here is the great man. With the left index finger he is drawing the attention of the spectators, who must be imagined more to the right toward the philosopher who is writing. Therefore he is rather subordinate, of lesser

size and with a more modest headpiece. Please accept my kindest regards.”

*(Post Card 172)*

In the scene described by the expert, Plato is an assistant who draws the spectators' attention to Socrates as the great man of knowledge. Plato is Socrates' follower, who humbly and obediently inherits his intellectual legacy. Between them, there is “the code which governs the gestures and positions in all this iconography” (172). The code linearly regulates the sequence of the intellectual genealogy. Since Plato is the successor who repeats Socrates' step, he must be subordinate when compared to the father of knowledge. In a similar way, the code of genealogy continues to seduce the following generations in a hierarchical relationship. As Derrida points out, the expert is also imprisoned within such a restricted way of seduction:

Moreover, the expert can be objective only in the extent (what an extent) to which his place is designated, assigned on the card, in the picture, and not facing it: a moment of the desire for objectivity, a tremor of the *epistēmē* whose origin regards you here in two persons. They are setting you, literally, and with a shake of the wand, on the way: know clearly, know clearly that, it must indeed be known, here is the truth of the picture, hold it close, the answer is very simple. Useless to lift up so many robes, it tears out the eyes.

*(Post Card 173)*

The linearity of genealogy sets later generations under the predestined truth guarded by Socrates and Plato as a couple. Their enchantment of restriction is ubiquitous and irresistible. Derrida exaggerates this restriction as an epidemic prevailing everywhere. Under the restriction, people keep paying the tax of debt to Socrates as the original predecessor and Plato as the assistant successor:

This is what tradition is, the heritage that drives you crazy. People have not the slightest idea of this, they have no need to know that they are paying

(automatic withdrawal) nor whom they are paying (the name or the thing: name is the thing) when they do anything whatsoever, make war or love, speculate on the energy crisis, construct socialism, write novels, open concentration camps for poets or homosexuals, buy bread or hijack a plane, have themselves elected by secret ballot, bury their own, criticize the media without rhyme or reason, say absolutely anything about chador or the ayatollah, dream of a great safari, found reviews, teach, or piss against a tree. They can even never have heard the name of p. and of S. [...] Via all kinds of cultural, that is postal, relays they pay their tax [...]. (*Post Card* 100)

Derrida's meticulous numerations mean to emphasize the penetrating influence of the heritage. People are haunted by the reputation of the inheritance. They may not be capable of elucidating its origin, but they get accustomed to its method of operation. Consequently, their mind becomes settled under the authority of inheritance.

### **Sender / Receiver**

To discompose the predominance of the origin as the truth, Derrida proposes to read the scene of reversal as displaying a reciprocal relationship between Socrates and Plato. Similar to the necessity of the other in epistolary exchanges, the reciprocity between them is a letter of inheritance in exchange. Both respectively interpellate each other as the absent other:

*Socrates*, the grandfather, knows how to write, he has a cigar in his left hand; little *plato*, the grandson, already serious as a pope, turns around him. He demands, commands, sends on errands: somebody has to throw the ball back, somebody has to return something to him, let him write or allow him to speak, perhaps over the top of the podium, the desk, the back of the armchair or over S.'s robe. (*Post Card* 41, Derrida's emphasis)

Example: if one morning Socrates had spoken for Plato, if to Plato his addressee he had addressed some message, it is also that p. would have had to be able to receive, to await, to desire, in a word to have *called* in a certain way what S. will have said to him; and therefore what S., taking dictation, pretends to invent writes, right? p. has sent himself a post card (caption + picture), he has sent it back to himself from himself, or he has even “sent” himself S. And we find ourselves, my beloved angel, on the itinerary. Incalculable consequences. (*Post Card* 30, Derrida’s emphasis)

Derrida suggests that when Socrates sends off his letter of knowledge, he presupposes an intended receiver to accept his message. The intended receiver may refer to the progeny who are interested in his system of thought. In addition, at the moment of sending, Socrates also expects a response concerning the message, which will make him continue dictating his intellectual letters. He has a dialogue with the receiver, who encourages him to present and respond to his own thoughts.

Corresponding to the sender’s reliance on the absent receiver, the receiver’s mind also anticipates what s/he will receive from the absent sender. Plato, as a receiver of Socrates’ heritage, not only repeats the sender’s message but also instills his own expectation in the reception. His expectation facilitates himself to become the sender of the letter of inheritance. In addition to adding his repetition of Socrates’ message to the genealogy, Plato moreover substitutes his construction of the knowledge for the tautology. In that case, he takes the predecessor’s place to become the sender of his own thought to himself. Plato is not a passive receiver. He owes the intellectual debt to his preceding creditor, but he further transforms the debt into his own legacy. Socrates, as the unattainable Other pursued by the later genealogy, may be subsumed as an object of desire under Plato’s interception of the dictatorship.

In their alternating roles between the sender and the receiver, Socrates and Plato rely

on each other as the object of desire, on which both respectively project their desire to construct their thought and their self. Derrida observes their inter-dependence as “their double and interminable reciprocal self-analysis”: “Combine, play with the *tranches*: S. in analysis with p.: which makes him write or permits him to write. S. analyzes p.: he listens looking elsewhere and without the other’s seeing he takes notes [...]” (*Post Card* 131).<sup>1</sup> Both Socrates and Plato necessitate the other to fulfill their jealous wish for constructing self-achievement. They respectively require the other to endorse themselves. The word “endorse,” meaning “to sign a check on its back” (Bass xx), illustrates well the scene of Socrates writing with Plato standing behind. Derrida speculates on the scene by describing the distance in the transmission of the letter of inheritance:

We see them, but in fact they doubtless never exchanged a glance, I mean a real one, lying one on top of the other, and if possible upside down. Neither seen nor heard, no relation between S. and P. Only dialogues, the dialogue of P., that the one, or the other, writes taking dictation from the other, who remains absolutely invisible, inaccessible, untouchable for him. No relation. It is too obvious [...] that S. does not see P. who sees S., but [...] only *from the back*. There is only the *back*, seen from the back, in what is written, such is the final word. Everything is played out in *retro* [...]. (*Post Card* 48, Derrida’s emphasis)

Plato stands behind Socrates because he can read his predecessor’s message only from the back in a retrospective way. Plato cannot represent Socrates’ thought without involving his own retrospective interpretations in the act of reading. Simultaneously, it is also with the possibility of the successor’s retrospect that Socrates is induced to speak his

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<sup>1</sup> According to Alan Bass’ note, the French word “*tranche*” at least has two meanings. One of the meanings refers to “the usual French word for a slice, as in a slice of cake” (*Post Card* 503, note 5). The other meaning is in “French psychoanalytic slang,” which refers to “the period of time one spends with a given analyst” (503, note 5).

thoughts. The word “endorse,” that is “*endosser*” in French (Bass xx). The word “*dos*” in “*endosser*” means “back” (xx). Therefore, the back and the endorsement are connected to reveal the necessity of Plato as the other sending his retrospective response toward Socrates from the back. The necessity of returning backward ensures Socrates’ act of sending and solidifies his thoughts. The indispensable return from the other is reinforced by Christopher S. Chang’s speculations on Plato’s act of writing from the back of Socrates. He evokes several possibilities: Plato may “write a letter to / for Socrates,” “write a letter on the back of Socrates,” “write a letter in back of Socrates,” or “write Socrates’ back” (9). In Chang’s elucidation, these possibilities imply that Socrates is not the singular sender of knowledge. Socrates is also the “receiver” (9), who receives his own message from Plato’s representation. Moreover, Chang points out that Socrates is also the “mediator / medium” (9), who serves as a halt in the genealogy of knowledge transmission. The unfixed positions of both the sender and the receiver reverse the self-evident “trajectory of a ‘combined’ emitter-receiver” (*Post Card* 199) in the conventional dictator-scribe relationship of the intellectual genealogy. The scene of reversal suggests the necessity of the other in any self-construction.

### **Creditor / Debtor**

To propose a more extravagant kind of Otherness, Derrida speculates on a paradoxical way of paying the intellectual debt by intentionally muffling the predecessor’s voice first:

Plato’s dream: to make Socrates write, and to make him write what he wants, his last command, *his will*. To make him write what he wants by letting (*lassen*) him write what he wants. Thereby becoming Socrates and his father, therefore his own grandfather (PP), *and killing him*. He teaches him to write. [...] He teaches him to live. (*Post Card* 52, Derrida’s emphasis)

As a successor, Plato has a secret wish to simultaneously absorb Socrates' heritage and get rid of the shadow of influence from his predecessor. Plato has the ambition to go beyond his dependence on the predecessor and to establish his intellectual career. In this sense, the scene of reversal reveals Plato's desire to conquer Socrates' position and become the dictator: "*Socrates* turns his *back* to plato, who has made him write whatever he wanted while pretending to receive it from him" (12, Derrida's emphasis). Under the pretense of being the passive and loyal receiver, Plato clandestinely endows himself with the right to actively send what he intends to construct through Socrates' name as the medium. Plato's wish may even be enlarged to the extent of intentionally killing the predecessor's name, as Derrida speculates, "Watch closely while Socrates signs his death sentence on the order of his jealous son Plato" (15). Plato may hope not only to dictate what he wants from the pen of Socrates but also to make Socrates sign his own death sentence. In this way, Plato's genealogical position will be legitimized and reinforced.

Plato's secret wish of eliminating Socrates' name arises from his anxiety of influence. Plato owes his intellectual debt to Socrates. As a result, before establishing himself as the creditor of the intellectual genealogy, Plato has to pay his homage to his predecessor. He is at first obedient under Socrates' dictation to inscribe and follow his speaking. Then, he wishes to escape from the shadow of Socrates' name to construct his self. However, Plato's escape does not mean to simply abandon Socrates' thought and to hereafter create a completely original kind of logic of his own. The process of avoiding the anxiety of influence is always paradoxical. On the one hand, the successor attempts to substitute his/her self-construction for his/her repetition of the predecessor's step. On the other hand, the successor inevitably shares the predecessor's legacy and envies the predecessor's prestige. Such a paradox constantly remains without a determinate finish. In one aspect, the debt of influence is requisite to self-construction, since "every 'production,' [...] of a concept or a system which is never without a name and an effigy, is also the emission of a



postage stamp” (*Post Card 200*). The act of producing always implies the responsibility of paying debts. It is similar to the postage stamp paid for the delivery of the letter. Derrida elaborates on this anxious necessity of paying the debt:

*The anxiety of influence* is born then in that in order to take a given course, in order to transmit or transfer a given message, you must in advance pay for the stamp, have it punched or obliterated, have yourself taxed for this or that, for Platonism, for example. The payment due does not fall only to the dead who are dead but to their name (this is why only mortals are nameable and one dies of the name itself), and nothing *simultaneously* happens to a name and its bearer. A master thinker emits postage stamps or post cards, he constructs highways with tolls: but contrary to appearances, no one perceives or receives a thing. (*Post Card 200*, Derrida’s emphasis)

The successor must pay the tax of the debt. Plato is aware of his indebtedness to Socrates when he attempts to let later generations similarly bear the credit issued by himself. The predecessor’s name still continually haunts its followers, even though the predecessor is no longer practically present to supervise them. The condition of indebtedness exerts a paradigmatic power that limits the successors under the predecessor’s influence.

In the other aspect, despite the powerful influence of the debt, the successor will still strive for his/her own space for articulation. To guarantee such a space, the successor intends to demarcate the boundary to distinguish himself/herself from his/her predecessor. Within the boundary, the successor deliberately maximizes his/her self-construction, whereas the predecessor is comparatively minimized. The successor pretends to bequeath himself/herself all the credit and receive all the debt. In this way, the successor is able to manage the power of sending and receiving to construct the self that meets the demand of his/her ambition.

In Temma F. Berg's analysis of Derrida's indebtedness to Lacan,<sup>2</sup> the deliberate disguise of the predecessor's name is a necessary step before the successor can confess his/her absorption of influence. Berg proposes that, in the essay "To Speculate on 'Freud'" (*Post Card* 257-409), Derrida "might respond to" (Berg 337) Lacan's concept of the *fort da* game to criticize the insufficiency of Freud's analysis. However, Derrida does not refer to Lacan as his creditor at the moment of borrowing that concept. Instead, it is not until the following criticism of Lacan in "Le Facteur de la vérité" (*Post Card* 411-496) that Derrida "face[s] Lacan directly when he endeavors to speculate with him" (Berg 337). In his criticism of Lacan, Derrida not only reveals his debts of analyzing Lacan's thought but also subverts part of Lacan's hypotheses by asserting his own different standpoint. In brief, Derrida defers his indebtedness to Lacan when he actually writes on the basis of that debt.

Berg explicates that the process of deferral is a necessary distance for the successor to construct his/her recognition of the debt and to further respond to the predecessor's influence. As in Derrida's case, Berg explains Derrida's deferral of paying his debts:

But, of course, he cannot respond so cursorily or flippantly to Lacan; he must make a more considered and elaborate return on his debt to the man who made it his life's work to revise Freud. [...] he does not acknowledge his debt to Lacan directly. Because he needs to clear a space within which to write, he puts Lacan's name *sous rature* for a short while, but in doing so he does not make the name disappear. (Berg 337)

Berg argues that it is required to acknowledge the debt through the act of putting the predecessor's name *sous rature*, that is, under erasure. The act of erasure provides space for the successor to differentiate his/her interpretations of legacy to create new possibilities. As Berg notes in Derrida's putting Lacan's name under erasure: "But to acknowledge all his

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<sup>2</sup> Temma F. Berg points out Lacan's analysis of the *fort da* game: "Lacan reads the *fort/da* game as the child's 'insertion' into the adult's symbolic order. Further, the game expresses the child's desire to overcome separation from the Other" (337). Berg suggests that Derrida may share a similar opinion with Lacan.

debts would be to stifle his own voice. He would not be able to send forth his own post cards, the *envois* we read” (338). Moreover, the act of erasure does not so much obliterate the predecessor’s name as preserve the name in “a kind of alternate presence” (338). When the name of the debt is put under erasure, the successor actually reinforces the legacy conveyed by the name in his/her own way of reappropriation. The influence of the inheritance is more deeply emphasized in the absence of its name. Its influence already prevails in its presence. Berg analyzes such a paradox: “The name of one of Derrida’s debts can be written, indeed underscored, by its absence. Absence and presence do not form a binary opposition. Each becomes the other’s possibility. The inscription written *sous rature* is inscribed all the more deeply” (338). The paradox of presence in absence obscures the hierarchical relationship between the predecessor and the successor, between the creditor and the debtor. The predecessor appears to be absent in the successor’s presence of constructing his/her realm. However, it is in that absence that the creditor is endowed with more significance.

This is why in “Envois” Derrida questions, “Who pays, in sum, the addressee or the sender?” (*Post Card* 21). To this question, Berg claims that “We cannot pay our debts. We must speculate with them. It is the only way to focus and thereby expand our vision. Nevertheless, despite our attempts to efface them, our debts will surface” (337). According to Berg, the successor cannot symmetrically pay the debt. The successor can only pay the debt in an unbalanced relationship with the predecessor. In the same manner, the debt is not to be completely eliminated. The trace of borrowing is always implied in the successor’s representation of the inheritance. To summarize, as Derrida admits, “*To borrow is the law*” (*Post Card* 384, Derrida’s emphasis):

*To borrow is the law. Within every language, since a figure is always a borrowed language, but also from one discursive domain to another, or from one science to another. Without borrowing, nothing begins, there is no proper*

fund/foundation [*fonds*]. Everything begins with the transference of funds, and *there is interest in borrowing*, this is even its initial interest. To borrow yields, *brings back*, produces surplus value, is the prime mover of every investment. Thereby, one begins by speculating, by betting on a value to be produced as if from nothing. (*Post Card* 384, Derrida's emphasis)

Borrowing provides the basis for further creation. In terms of the borrowing of legacy, the successor may find a differentiated way to redress and subvert the prejudices in the legacy. With a further step, the successor produces surplus value that is paradoxically induced from and beyond the borrowing. The surplus value initiates new ways of thinking, which may establish new foundations for the successor. Furthermore, the surplus value also replenishes the legacy. The connection between the predecessor and the successor is therefore not to be contrived on a hierarchy. Their connection can be only speculated in the confounding scene of reversal.

### **Facteur<sup>3</sup> / Mediator**

In addition to contending the importance of Otherness in the scene of reversal, Derrida wants to further go beyond the boundary limited in Socrates and Plato as a couple playing the “ventriloquism” (*Post Card* 341). He argues, “They are each a part of the other but not of the whole [*du tout*]. This is our lot, my love, nothing is to be hoped at all [*du tout*]. [...] p + S does not make any whole [*du tout*], is not all, makes perhaps a couple or an ego, or two, but not a whole at all [*pas tu tout*]” (132). Socrates with Plato as a couple does not interpret the whole complexity of the intellectual genealogy. Derrida draws the reader's attention to the couple's desire to inundate the whole line of genealogical legacy

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<sup>3</sup> According to Alan Bass' note, the French word “*facteur*” may be referred to as “maker, creator, agent, postman, factor, etc” (*Post Card* 356, note 4). In my application, I want to demonstrate that the epistolary *facteur* of the post card not only refers to the post carrier but also combines the meanings of maker, creator, and agent. In this manner, the *facteur* is also an active mediator, who receives, transmits, and sends his/her representation of the message on the post card.

with their predominant influence. This is the authority of inheritance:

*Plato* wants to emit. Seed, artificially, technically. That devil of a *Socrates* holds the syringe. To sow the entire earth, to send the same fertile card to *everyone*. A *pancarte*, a pan-card, a billboard that we have on our backs and to which we can never really turn round. For example, poor Freud, Plato, via *Socrates*, via all the addressees who are found on the Western way, the relays, the porters, the readers, the copyists, the archivists, the guardians, the professors, the writers, the *facteurs* right? Plato sticks him with his *pancarte* and Freud has it on his back, can no longer get rid of it. [...] it is then Plato who is the inheritor, for Freud. Who pulls the same trick, somewhat, on Plato that Plato pulls on *Socrates*. This is what I call a catastrophe. (*Post Card 28*, Derrida's emphasis)

The authoritarian power of legacy not only fertilizes the mind of later generations but also compels them to bear the irrevocable pressure of being confined in the managed line of tradition. The confinement is the catastrophic surveillance over the creativity of later generations. The debt to the predecessor must be extended and elaborated rather than be restricted in banal tautology. Contradictorily, although Plato wishes to kill *Socrates*' name for his self-construction, he strengthens his collaboration with *Socrates* for the sake of reciprocity. This way of fortifying the authority of legacy corresponds to Barbara Johnson's assertion: "In order for the circuit of the letter to end up confirming the law of the phallus, it must begin by transgressing it; the letter is a sign of high treason" (1977, p. 226). To strengthen the law of the phallus, the presence of the legacy, the circulated letter of inheritance is contrived to imitate a transgression and then is swerved back to the proper road of genealogy. Through this ostensible deviation, the authority of legacy may be reinforced due to the other in detour. The line of heritage is not to be threatened by the possible deviation, since Plato signs a contract with *Socrates* to guard their interest in

complicity:

This is their contract. Socrates signs a contract or diplomatic document, the archive of diabolical duplicity. But equally constitutes Plato, who has already composed it, as secretary or minister, he the magister. And the one to the other they show themselves in public, they analyze each other uninterruptedly, *séance tenante*, in front of everyone, with tape recorder or secretary. What happens when there is a third party in front of the couch? (*Post Card 52-53*)

With the bond of the contract, Plato intends to sow the seeds of Socrates' thoughts throughout the whole ground of Western knowledge. The scholarly succession is well arranged to preserve the original legacy. Their thought remains in the *séance tenante*, that is, in the continued session. The carriers along this line are permutated and assembled to continue the linearity without devious interruptions. In this circumstance, the carriers along the genealogy are reduced to become the *facteurs* with no ability to assess the inherited values:

And between the two, there never will have been any other choice for "me," any other place than the back-and-forth without interruption, without interrupter, between two forms of death. From one death to the other I am like the courier who bears the news, good news, bad news. He warns of the other death, seeing the one or the other come. Too lucid and almost blind, he goes from one wall to the other, recognizes the situation of the *meurtrière* in the stones and the cement of the fortification. The missive has been deposited in it. Thus he hastens to the other fortress: another *meurtrière*, without meeting anyone he deposits in it the message come from the other. He must not and cannot decipher it en route, he is only a *facteur*. (*Post Card 134*)

Socrates and Plato are the two fixed columns that range the whole scope of genealogy within their determination. Their collaborative inheritance includes all the

carriers of knowledge between two points of death, because the inheritance is solidified and sealed under the couple's protection. The authority of the legacy cannot be shaken or even collapsed. As a result, the carriers only serve to repeat and transmit the monopolized channel of knowledge. They are not entitled to decipher its crypt of production.

““Reproduction prohibited”” (*Post Card* 39). As a facteur, the carrier can only repeat the original message rather than reproduce it in other possibilities. Regulated under the authority of legacy, the facteur has no space to elaborate on divergent kinds of thoughts.

To breach the wall of the authorized inheritance, Derrida counts on the form of the post card as the measure against any ambition to settle down a determined authority. Thanks to the form of “reversibility” (*Post Card* 13) of the post card, the confounding scene on it can also be reversed for several times. The scene of reversal cannot be stabilized in one way of interpretation, nor can it stay in a decided condition. The scene of reversal still goes through the possibility of an interminable movement of reversal. In this process, deviation and interception are not regulated and marginalized. Rather, they inspire the facteur of knowledge to become an active mediator, who simultaneously receives the debt and sends response with surplus value to the creditor. The post card of inheritance that the facteur transmits is therefore susceptible to changes instead of being secluded in the limitation of submissively borrowing the legacy. As a result, Derrida claims that “letters are always post cards: neither legible nor illegible, open and radically unintelligible” (79). They are liable to be mediated and intercepted:

All the precautions in the world are taken in vain, you can register your *envois* with a return receipt, crypt them, seal them, multiply coverings and envelopes, at the limit not even send your letter, still, in advance it is intercepted. It falls into anyone's hand, a poor post card, it ends up in the display case of a provincial bookseller who classifies his merchandise by name of city [...]. Once intercepted [...] the message no longer has any

chance of reaching any determinable person, in any (*determinable*) place whatever. This has to be accepted, and *j'accepte*. But I recognize that such a certainty is unbearable, for anyone. One can only deny this self-evidence, and, by their very function, those who deny it most energetically are the people charged with the carrying of the mail, the guardians of the letter, the archivists, the professors as well as the journalists, today the psychoanalysts. The philosophers, of course, who are all of that at once, and the literature people. (*Post Card 51*, Derrida's emphasis)

The threats of interception and uncertain destination are “unbearable” (51) for most senders, particularly for those who send forth their inheritance to ensure their intellectual survival. Notwithstanding the anxiety about uncertainty and the desire for order, Derrida encourages the reader as both the receiver and the sender to preserve the sense of order in disturbing the stifled order. He inspires the reader as the *facteur* of knowledge to trace the possibility of order instead of proceeding the guarded line of order. The indeterminate condition of no definite destination forbids the reader to “regulate distances, keeping them or losing them” (5). It prevents the reader from becoming the bad reader:

Because I still like him, I can foresee the impatience of the *bad* reader: this is the way I name or accuse the fearful reader, the reader in a hurry to be determined, decided upon deciding (in order to annul, in other words to bring back to oneself, one has to wish to know in advance what to expect, one wishes to expect what has happened, one wishes to expect (oneself)). Now, it is bad, and I know no other definition of the bad, it is bad to predestine one's reading, it is always bad to foretell. It is bad, reader, no longer to like retracing one's steps. (*Post Card 4*, Derrida's emphasis)