

On the Name



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"The name: What does one call thus? What does one understand under the name of name? And what occurs when one gives a name? What does one give then? One does not offer a thing, one delivers nothing, and still something comes to be, which comes down to giving that which one does not have, as Plotinus said of the Good. What happens, above all, when it is necessary to sur-name, renaming there where, precisely, the name comes to be found lacking? What makes the proper name into a sort of sur-name, pseudonym, or cryptonym at once singular and singularly untranslatable?" Jacques Derrida thus poses a central problem in contemporary language, ethics, and politics, which he addresses in a linked series of the three essays. "Passions: "An Oblique Offering"" is a reflection on the question of the response, on the duty and obligation to respond, and on the possibility of not responding--which is to say, on the ethics and politics of responsibility. "Sauf le nom (Post Scriptum)" considers the problematics of naming and alterity, or transcendence, raised inevitably by a rigorous negative theology. Much of the text is organized around close readings of the poetry of Angelus Silesius. The final essay, "Khora, " explores the problem of space or spacing, of the word "khora" in Plato's "Timaeus." Even as it places and makes possible nothing less than the whole world, "khora" opens and dislocates, displaces, all the categories that govern the production of that world, from naming to gender. In addition to readers in

philosophy and literature, "Khora" will be of special interest to those in the burgeoning field of "space studies"(architecture, urbanism, design).

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