

PAPER MACHINE

Jacques Derrida

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So I *also* dream of living paperless—and sometimes that sounds to my ears like a definition of “real life,” of the living part of life. The walls of the house grow thicker, not with wallpaper but with shelving. Soon we won’t be able to put our feet on the ground: paper on paper. Cluttering; the environment becoming litter, the home becoming a stationery store. I’m no longer talking about the paper on which, alas, too little of my illegible writing is written with a pen; but the kind that just now we were calling “secondary”: printed paper, paper for mechanical reproduction, the kind that remains, paper *taken from* an original. Inversion of the curve. I consume this kind of paper and accumulate a lot more of it than I did before computers and other so-called “paperless” machines. Let’s not count the books. So paper expels me—outside my home. It chases me off. This time, it’s an *aut aut*: paper or me.³⁷

Another dilemma about hospitality to “paperless” people: who is the host or guest or hostage of the other?