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Review article: The Aftershocks before the Earthquake* by Mihai Nadin

To the memory of Paul Rand and to Ari

Mal d'archive or, as the translation calls the book (with the obvious blessing of the author) Archive Fever, is not the same as Archive du Mal, or what it would have been in English, an Archive of Fever. Careful with French! Remember, mal de tête is headache; and one can get quite a few translating idiomatic expressions, for which Derrida is famous. We are in Derrida territory, a spiritual world of infinite nuances and distinctions that seem never to end. This is, after all, what defines deconstruction, an open-ended process continued in these lines of a book review, as it is continued in every instance of what semiotic jargon denotes as sign processes (semioses). There are many Derrida archives; or, if you please, there is a large Derrida archive that probably does not fit his definitions since, as it evolves, it is continuously re-defined, negated in some or all of its characteristics, including those that he so carefully defined. But at the same time, it is reaffirmed, as deconstruction itself is, as a process of incessantly undermining any and every referential anchor. On one of the World-Wide Web search engines, there was (on 29 June 1998, at 23:47 o'clock) a Derrida sub-archive of 5,461 pages. The data and number are relevant only as a testimony to the state-of-the-flux of all possible archives. (One month later, this sub-archive contained 5,506 pages!) The original archive, the starting point in Derrida's elaboration, probably reflected a desire and need for permanence, while the new archives, au contraire, are manifestations of a seemingly insatiable epistemological fervor augmented by search and retrieval technologies, while they are also continuously falsified by the same.

In one of the entries in this Derrida sub-archive (1995), a letter dated 10 July 1983, Derrida (or should we cautiously say the attribution is made to him, but in the absence of an archon, a guardian of the house of the archive, we cannot guarantee its authenticity) explains to Professor Isutzu (no guarantee of his identity either), presumably interested in a possible translation into Japanese of the French deconstructionist's work, that the word deconstruction „has interest only within a certain context, where it replaces and lets itself be determined by such other words as 'écriture,' 'trace,' 'différance,' 'supplément,' 'hymen,' 'pharmakon,' 'marge,' 'entame,' 'parergon,' etc.' He (or the person claiming to be

Derrida) goes on to say „By definition, the list can never be closed.“ The book I was chosen (or let myself be chosen) to review, adds 'archive' to the list. And although this is again a noun and not the verb, the reader will notice that Derrida is this time more into the implications of asserting something (his sentences) and into realizing the „interlinking of sentences“ than he has been in previous publications. It is not, by any means, a groundbreaking book, but it might prove to be more consequential for the broad Derridian project underway than some of those already in the „public domain“ of the intellectual jargon that their author so evidently influenced.

A context

A conférence prononcée, which is quite different from what others do when they 'give a lecture,' presented on June the fifth, 1994 in London, this text was soon afterwards published, first in French, of course. The French imprint came out at Éditions Galilée, 1995, in the Incises, a collection directed by Agnès Rauby. The colloquium that Derrida addressed was entitled Memory: The Question of Archive, and was held under the auspices of the French Société Internationale d'Histoire de la Psychiatrie, London's Freud Museum (known for so much infighting and squabbling), and the Courtauld Institute of Art. The original title of Derrida's text was Le concept d'archive. Une impression freudienne, i.e., The Concept of the Archive: A Freudian Impression. This title was later modified. I do not know whether someone suggested the change or Derrida undertook it because it better expressed his views. The context, although at this time not yet very telling, should help the reader of this review article understand in which way archive is inscribed by its author in that 'chain of possible substitutions' to which he refers in the letter to Professor Isuzu, which make up the process called deconstruction.

We have here an interesting nexus: Freud, an author whose life and writing seems of particular interest to Derrida; an event dedicated to Freud and his work, in particular in defense of the Freud archive; a subject – archive – of deconstructivist nature, since it has also the condition of process affected by its own implicit dynamics. The archive of the archive changes as we think about it, refer to it, try to define it. It is a typical relativistic situation: the observed and the observer could hardly be disassociated. But as I write these lines of a review article that, when read and interpreted, will in turn extend the situation well beyond my universe of thinking and expression, I also feed into the process possible future

links that will eventually generate new memories – and probably more pages on the Web. It is a breathtaking fall into the whirlwind of what Peirce called semiosis, and which in Derrida's thinking takes the shape of a fundamental pronouncement: „the incapacity of the word to be equal to a 'thought'“ (as Derrida expressed it in his letter to Professor Isutzu). But let us leave these broad predicaments behind us and get as close as possible to the many interrogations of the conférence that became a French, text that became an English text („Il faut traduire et il faut ne pas traduire,“ the translator, Eric Prenowitz, cites a sentence from Derrida), that became, among other things, an entry into a recommended book list in a program in musical education (Musc 230, Musics of the World, University of Maryland-Baltimore), and that became a subject of book reviews, this one included, and of many other traces (Web entries included), if not encrustations (to use a Derrida mot – encruster, to carve, p. 20).

In all fairness, with *Archive Fever*, we deal with an exemplary deconstructivist book review: Derrida writes about a book by the late Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Freud's Moses. Judaism Terminable and Interminable* (Yale University Press, 1991). The exceptional scholar of Judaism himself wrote what in first analysis appears to be a book about a book written by Freud: *Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion*. This in turn is a text with its own history (its own archive!), beginning in 1934, or actually 1896 (*Der Moses der Michelangelo*) when his father died, and ending after Freud made it to exile in England. One can say that this is the stuff from which the post-modern saga is made: Freud almost writing a novel inspired by Moses, whom he describes as an Egyptian who brought to the Hebrews circumcision („die Sitte der Beschneidung,“ as Freud calls it), and a monotheism derived from the worship of Aton (cult of the sun) instituted by Amenhotep IV (a.k.a. Ikhnaton). This Mose (a name that, according to Freud, means „the child,“ „das Kind“) led the Hebrews' Exodus and was eventually killed by them. Yerushalmi takes this novel that pretends to be a scholarly work (endowed with footnotes and references), and writes his own essay, of extreme erudite dedication (although he himself was accused of copying from others, in particular from David Bakan, 1991), but finishes the work in an imaginary dialog with the author. Derrida, poised to add yet another tower to the Gaudi-esque cathedral of his thoughts, ends up introducing the footsteps of Gradiva (footsteps as another archive) in a seemingly never-ending story.

For those who will read the background books – I mentioned Yerushalmi and Freud, but there are other books involved in the drama (by Derrida, by Jensen, by

Walter Benjamin) – Derrida's conférence is a pleasure to „read.“ For others, it is yet another of his exceedingly frustrating (one informed opinion in the Web archive I mentioned speaks of the „obscurity of the language, the foreignness of the accent“) interrogation of a metaphysical tradition from which he wants to separate, but which reclaims him sentence after sentence, pronouncement after pronouncement. (To this I shall return, not because of the grave implications of the statement, but rather to provide the arguments for it.)

In order to deal with the process called archive, Derrida goes to arkhe, commencement and commandment, that „coordinates two principles in one: the principle according to nature and history ... but also the principle according to the law...“(p. 1). The first is defined as physical, historical, or ontological – the reader will miss a bit more precision here; the other as nomological. From here on, after having stated that „The concept of the archive shelters in itself ... this meaning of the name arkhe'“(p. 2), we are in the well known dramatic scheme of deconstruction: Find a binary opposition and pursue it to its final consequence, the interplay that effectively erases the boundaries between them. The arkheion, „initially a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the archons, those who commanded,“ (p. 2) from which archive eventually derived, is defined at the intersection of the topological (the domiciliation, assigned residency, entrusting, consigning, through gathering signs) and the nomological (authority, order, law). In the thin air of abstraction, Derrida's discourse is extremely captivating. He is fully aware of the fact that „A science of the archive must include the theory of [its] institutionalization,“ or better yet, of its legitimacy, i.e., „the right which authorizes it“ (p. 4). This right is not abstract; there are always limits. These change, and their change is subject to a „deconstructable history.“ Here comes another observation that suddenly makes us aware of the direction in which Derrida sets his compass in this text: Psychoanalysis has not been foreign to the deconstruction of the legitimacy of the science of the archive. The coup de théâtre (this is not a quote, although Derrida uses this rhetorical formula as well) is that Freud's psychoanalysis is, for all practical purposes, the science – if we take Freud's word – or the hoax – if we take the word of his critics – or whatever one wants or feels entitled to call it, of the human archive. Freud's elaborations – again, regardless of how they are viewed or qualified – assume the archival nature of the being.

Without acknowledging this expressly, Derrida ascertains that the „Freudian signature“ – Freud the proper name, Freud the inventor of psychoanalysis?! – is

to be found not only on the Freud archive (trivial proposition), but hélas! „on the concept of the archive, and of archivization, ...on historiography. Not only on historiography in general, not only on the history of the concept of the archive, but perhaps also on the history of the formation of a concept in general“ (italics his, p. 5).

In keeping with the intellectual tradition of the Exergue (Gr. ex, „out of;“ ergon, „work“), Derrida provides himself the occasion to play with quotes, and he does so, consecrating a first part to Freud and a second to Yerushalmi. In the first, we learn that there is „...no archive without outside“ (p. 11); that „The archive always works and a priori, against itself“ (p. 12); that „The archive is hypomnesic.“ In the second, quoting the dedication that Freud's father, Jakob (Fried, by the way) wrote to his son – an episode that will require our attention – Derrida insists on „memorial“ and „reminder.“ In his words: „...the one and the other at once, the one in the other, and we have, perhaps, in the economy of those two words the whole of archival law: anamnesis, mneme, hypomnema,“ (p. 23).

And here is the place to make good on the announced intention to return to a statement saying in effect that in his interrogation of the metaphysical tradition, Derrida ends up reclaimed by it.

Jewish or universal?

Freud had a tough time putting up with his Jewish identity. He was not the first and will not be the last. For those who read Derrida's book, the correct assessment would be with his Judaism, as opposed to his Jewishness. For others, please be patient; after all, this style of jumping from premise to conclusion then back to interrogations is one of Derrida's trademarks, affecting this new publication as it has affected all of his texts. To second guess the many reasons that affected Freud's relation to this origin would only add to a never-ending sequence of speculations. The easy way out was early psychoanalytic analysis, and if this path was not beaten to its last shred, then I do not know of any beaten path (or what this expression is supposed to convey). Yet there is enough evidence in Freud's more than contradictory archive (there are parts still kept from the public) that he was aware of his own difficult and contradictory condition, and that he oscillated schizophrenically between extremes that seem almost irreconcilable. The Freud Archive in London, to which Derrida refers in the conférence, and which he supported through his presence at the colloquium, will

work, as we now know from the lecture, against itself. So will the subject that brought Freud into notoriety and, in the end, into the limelight of a never-ending drama, under the rhetorical title „Is psychoanalysis a Jewish science?“ Running away from his Jewishness, Freud bumped into himself, this time as originator of a discipline associated to an identity he did not want to have, but from which he could not flee.

Under the circumstances of war and fascism, an affirmative answer to the question „Is psychoanalysis a Jewish science?“ could only further the anti-Semitic fervor of those accusing him of representing a „disgraceful“ race. Today it might mean, depending from whom this comes and for which reason it is uttered, an opportunistic complement – after all, psychoanalysis changed the world in more than one way – or yet another anti-Semitic attack. But in final analysis, it would have little impact. From a strict semiotic viewpoint, such identifiers belong to the sign process of endless identifications that go back to families, tribes, city-states, ethnic groups, religions, traditions, you name it.

Infinite semiosis means only that semiotic interaction varies upon the context of the pragmatic constitution of the sign. But if the logic of such a semiotic definition that clarifies rather handily what it meant, what it means, and what it could mean that someone ascertains that psychoanalysis is a Jewish science is relatively clear, I am afraid that the implication for those involved is less than clear. Intentionality comes into the picture, and together with it, the broader context of motivations and understandings that affect the human being – a perfect Derrida theme. Meaning does not originate from those speaking or writing, but as we humans try to make sense of what we actually hear or read.

Eco would have had a ball writing on Yerushalmi's book, and we would have read a novel no less exciting than *The Name of the Rose* (still his best). Freud, after all, is caught in Yerushalmi's book in the semiotic web of lying in respect to his Jewishness. He claims not to know Hebrew; he claims a comfortable distance from the religion; he even goes as far as to revisit the „place of the crime“ through his successive writings on Moses – and each time, he leaves more „thought prints.“ The historian Yerushalmi deals in archival memory. Here, picking up on leads from others, he shows the reader the copy of the Bible that Freud's father used in teaching his circumcised son – a detail relevant to Derrida's approach as encrustation is (and the reader might put the two together now) – the lessons of the Torah. And here is his dedication, as the estranged son turns 35

(on 29 Nissan 5651, i.e., 6 May 1891), a melitzah, on the same book, but after it went through rebinding in leather ('a cover of new skin,' p. 23, where Derrida quotes from Yerushalmi), with fragments that the prodigal son should know by heart. We assume here what is called a shared code. This gift was nothing more nor less than a re-circumcision. Or at least, it was meant to be! And if we consider how Freud's book on Moses is interpreted – as a late repentance – it was successful. Historian-detective Yerushalmi wants to know whether in the perspective of time Freud would today accept what during his life he was not willing to accept: that psychoanalysis is a Jewish science. He expects Freud to confess, and promises to keep his confession to himself.

Derrida, enthusiastic (and rightly so) about Yerushalmi's dedication to the historic account, places the subject in a different perspective: there is always a tension between the archive and archaeology. Moreover, we will never find out what Freud, what every „careful concealer“ may have wanted to keep secret (p. 101). We are back in the territory of the metaphysical, in a mirrored image – and all the questioning, over many years and many oeuvres, reverberates in beautiful pages dedicated to what mal d'archive is: the need of archives. He writes: „At the moment when psychoanalysis formalizes the conditions of archive fever [remember, archive fever is the English equivalent of mal d'archive, MN] and of the archive itself, it repeats the very thing it resists or which it makes its object,“ (p. 91). One can wonder whether in the end the major question that Freud might have been asked to answer does not apply to deconstructivism: „Much will depend, of course, on how the very term Jewish and science are to be defined,“ (Yerushalmi, p. 100), in consensus with Anna Freud (cf. p. 43). This is for Derrida yet another of those undiscovered continents which he seems to look for while enjoying his intellectual cruises on the boundless ocean of what sign interpretation means and how it changes over time. The meaning in the act of concealment is where I find Derrida unfaithful to himself!

Identity

Discussing a book by Derrida makes for the need to avoid the terminology of those views he either ignores or has tried to prove counterproductive. Identité, obviously a Saussurian concept, necessarily enters into the subject. Each identité is an archive, no less than is circumcision – Derrida devotes (not for the first time) captivating pages to the subject, that is, an encrustation, a carving on the part of the body associated to the major human drive – the sexual. Freud dedicated his

own comments to the indexical sign of circumcision as he tried to identify himself with Moses. He noticed that those who do not practice it find it alienating; those who do feel elevated. Freud is factually wrong in describing how Moses' wife, a Midianite, saved her husband's life by circumcising him (pp. 33 and 57 of Freud's *Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion*). The episode, described in the Torah, refers to their son („Zipporah took a flint and cut off the foreskin of her son;“ cf. Exodus IV:25). He is also wrong in attributing circumcision to Moses' influence when, again, the Torah (Genesis XVII:14) mentions Abraham (actually Abram becomes Abraham as the covenant is spelled out: „Every male among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of a covenant between me and you“). We know that when facts stood in the way of Freud's pre-formulated conclusions, he would rather consider the facts wrong than change his ideas (case in point, the so-called killing of Moses). Derrida, for reasons I am not aware of, fails to report on this, although by the nature of his dedication to the dynamics of meaning, he could have derived very telling observations from it.

Within Freud's psychoanalytic elaborations, circumcision plays an important role in the definition of the tenuous father-son relation. As a marking (I repeat, indexical by its very nature), circumcision is „the symbolic Ersatz of the castration, which the Urvater performed on his sons“ (Freud, p. 142). As a „private inscription“ (p. 20), that is, encrustation, in Derrida's terminology, it is, however, part of the Freudian archive, so much so that the Philippsohn Bible that his father eventually gives to Freud as a gift in a „new skin“ is supposed to become a legacy: self-re-discovery of his authentic identity. It is a tough subject; it touches not only on psychoanalysis, but also on the broad subject of the semiotics of identity. Derrida defines the problem otherwise, again, not without a sense of drama: definitory is the relation between science and its own archive. Formulated in his words: „At issue here is nothing less than taking seriously the question whether a science can depend on something like a circumcision,“ (p. 46). Probably each science is, metaphorically seen, a circumcision of a sort, i.e., the affirmation of a new entity named in a ceremonial that dramatically marks (encrusts is almost pitiful) a new beginning.

Freud's reference to castration is not independent of his view that reason and progress of science are tied to the advent of the patriarchate, to Oedipus, his lifelong obsession. In other words, Freud makes the argument – and afterwards feeds the fire he set with its own coals. Derrida remarks, beautifully, that with the

possibility of surrogate mothers, prosthetic maternities, sperm banks, and artificial insemination, the male-dominated world of psychoanalysis based on the assumption of the unequivocal identity of the mother begs reconsideration. Yerushalmi, in turn, notes that although the father figure and the associated Oedipus complex have their degree of credibility, brothers – Cain, for instance – play a role that at times can equal or surpass that of fathers. Here I sense an important opening, coming from two intellectuals who do not question psychoanalysis but who are fully aware that in its original formulation, it is by necessity a dead end. Derrida acknowledges its role in deconstruction; Yerushalmi wants to see it identified as a Jewish science, i.e., as an accomplishment of this people. Still, the question, not at all new, remains whether it is indeed a science (Jewish or not), or something else all together.

In the psychoanalysis archive, a tremendous body of contradictory accumulation, with many episodes that seem to belong rather to fiction than to a strict application of knowledge to human psychology, support a never-ending interpretive effort. It is, even when clinically based and experienced, an embodiment of a dynamic sign system that feeds itself. Before renewed interest in semiotics became possible in the years after World War II, psychoanalysis was already practicing semiotics, but on a solipsistic foundation: If indeed a and/or b and/or c and... (whatever these assertions are; consider Freud, Alder, Jung, Stekel, etc.), then the implication to a psychological imbalance is necessary. And if not a and/or b and/or c, then we still assume them to be true, and the implication is the same whoever accepts it. World consumption of couch-time (probably at levels reflecting the highs of the stock market) reveals the enormous power of self-fulfilling prophecies. The semiotic mechanisms of reinforcement – from the quiet analytic method of its literate beginnings to the illiterate „expressive“ forms of freeing real or imagined frustrations in shouting or striking – are relatively easy to describe. They are at the foundation of the many varieties of homemade psychoanalytic procedures (the Rorschach test included).

Freud's genius is in the story. He turned a great Greek story (belonging to the mythical) into the underlying narration of an interaction replacing the lost human experience of self-constitution in the magical. All who practice „the story“ are co-authors of this never-ending search for oneself in the forever lost territory of the magical. It might well be that Eliza (Weizenbaum's computer program) was a first limited substitute for those in need of a dialog which is, after all, not a dialog, but an outpouring of the self in stories (real or fantasy). The Web psychoanalysis

takes the story further. It opens a horizon that was only marginally suggested in what Freud called *der Wunderblock* (in Derrida's text, „Mystic Pad,“ or „le Bloc Magique,“ both quite off the mark but intended to serve his arguments; cf. Derrida, 1967). That the semiotics of self-fulfilling prophecies applies to the destiny of the Jews – the chosen people – might be considered a coincidence, although Muslims consider themselves chosen as well, and to an even higher degree, that of authentic dedication. Nevertheless, semiotic reinforcement mechanisms, from circumcision to phylacteries, tzitzith, mezuzah, are part and parcel of living as a Jew within Judaism. The 'living archive' thus becomes an archetype.

But let's not be too hasty. Derrida himself, along his entire elaboration of deconstruction, is an example of what it takes to get to the arkhe of those many processes involved in interpretation.

Religion

Freud derives his thesis on the necessary character of religion from the foundation of psychoanalysis. *Totem und Tabu* (written in 1912) is probably a good reference here, also because it substantiates the hypothesis of the reconstruction of the magic in the mythic story that Freud made his own. He is not sure, or at least wants the reader to hear a voice of doubt, whether his thesis on religion applies to Jewish monotheism. Neurotic symptoms, his knowledge domain, are easier to describe and clarify than those repressed moments in the history of the human family that mark the individual. (Yerushalmi qualifies Freud's work on the role of the past as psycho-Lamarckism.) Being their own archives, individuals are subject to all that is peculiar to an archive, including self-destruction. Freud is willing, though, to see psychoanalysis as Judaism without God, as he also builds up, like a Derrida *avant la lettre*, the binary opposition Judaism-Jewishness. Judaism would refer to material truth; Jewishness, to historic truth. Yerushalmi, in his assessment, later sees Judaism as terminable, but Jewishness as interminable. (The title of his book contains „Judaism Terminable and Interminable,“ a theme obviously extending beyond his preoccupation with Freud and the identity of psychoanalysis.) Derrida continues the thought along his fundamental deconstructivist horizon: Jewishness can survive Judaism: 'It can survive it as a heritage, which is to say, in a sense, not without archive (*italics his*; p. 72). In his conception, Jewishness does not merge with Judaism, religion, or belief in God.

We have in these pages one of the most convincing arguments of a line of thought forever bearing Derrida's imprint. Here is one sequence: Freud sensed how the semiosis of identity evolves, in particular to this own Jewish identity; Yerushalmi comes with an argument *à rebours*: There is no Jewishness without hope. Finally, Derrida reaches a climax of argumentation – I quote only his concluding line (the reader will enjoy all of page 74) – „To be open toward the future would be to be Jewish.“

(Par hasard, my wife and I have been working, since 1993, on a book entitled *Jewish: Does It Make a Difference?* That I own in my archive a letter from Derrida refusing himself – not us, or the reader of the book still in work and in which I hope to be allowed to quote his answer from the book – the chance of making this point – maybe again – is as telling as Freud's own reluctance to acknowledge the marks left on him by the religious education, as limited as it was, that he had, or by religion in general. Or by the fear of revealing his identity, a locus of contradictions by its very nature.)

The uneasiness that many, Jew or not, feel in respect to religion – one of the most powerful semiotic systems we are aware of – can be explained, or deconstructed, in various ways. Since this English translation was printed in the series *Religion and Postmodernism*, edited by Mark C. Taylor, it is not irrelevant to look at it from the particular perspective of the legitimacy of the archive called religion. I chose this path in order to bring up what Derrida himself placed in a different context – what he calls the project of a retrospective science fiction: „MCI or AT & T telephonic [sic] credit cards, portable tape recorders, computers, printers, faxes, televisions, teleconferences, and above all E-mail,“ (p. 16). The analytic situation vs. the new communication technology is probably exciting, but moreso the integration of belief and believing, the underlying theme of this sometimes so personal book that one reviewer complained that the author speaks too much about himself (DuFresne, 1998).

Deconstruction is, as we know, transcended by the constructivist project. Whereas deconstruction, as the book shows, is dedicated to the archive corresponding to practical experiences of human self-constitution within a context dominated by communication in and through language (in particular, literate language), the constructivist project acknowledges, much more than Derrida does, that one cannot draw clear borders between expressing, describing,

and constituting. Within this horizon, to believe means to constitute oneself as believing, and in so doing, the material truth becomes as irrelevant as original sin or as the Oedipus complex, or as the many facets of a discipline focused on the individual's becoming. In self-constitution as religious, there is no room to entertain questions concerning the existence of divinity, messianic hope, and the nature of prescriptive rules, such as the Ten Commandments, or the strict rules of the Koran. And there is no need to justify. This is a pure Kantian island of the sublime. No different than a mathematical predicament, the constructivist project is the continuous rebuilding of oneself within a pragmatic framework of heterogeneity, decentralism, and lack of any hierarchical pressure. Therefore, the psychoanalytic archive, as one of many, continues to exist and diversify, including today the psychoanalysis of pets and remote psychoanalytic session on the Internet. It also continues, as Derrida predicted, to destroy itself. (Demythify is a dangerous word, but it cannot be avoided here).

The technology that Derrida mentions (and uses, as I learned that we probably work on similar laptops when away from our respective permanent academic addresses) is in itself irrelevant. The substrates (as he calls them referring to various forms of communication) are to be understood in their relation to the new forms of interlinking. By no accident, in the Derrida Web sub-archive one can read intellectually crude but not unintelligent reflections on Deconstructing Electronic Mail (Draft of September 22, 1996 by Robert E. Lloyd, an author who accepts to be flamed – yet another archival process), or on hypertext, i.e., a quote from Sherry Turkle (1995), who quotes a student: „The cards in a hypertext stack derive meaning in relation to each other. It's like Derrida. The links have a reason, but there is no final truth behind them.“ Again, it sounds crude, but religion turns out to be exactly that: 'links that have a reason!' But what does this have to do with archive, archeion, Jewishness, or psychoanalysis, or even moreso with the constructivist project of the new civilization? (More to follow on this new civilization.)

Yerushalmi states very precisely that Freud's book on Moses is actually dedicated to the dynamics of tradition. The analogy he draws between religious tradition and individual neurosis is completed by original thoughts regarding the relation between individual and mass psychology, Freud's question, „Wie die Juden zu dem wurden, was sie sind?“ [How did the Jews become what they are?] is repeated aloud and we learn that this question belongs to Freud's psychoanalytical biography.

Derrida actually ascertains that it belongs to the archive, and so we land at the dynamics of the archive, which one has to understand as part of the dynamics of change in general. „The three doors of the future“ that Derrida describes have inscribed over them a paradoxical affirmation: „the archive as an irreducible experience of the future,“ (p. 68), which for me, as a researcher in the category called anticipation (Nadin, 1991) translates as „the aftershocks before the earthquake.“ The last door opens with the promise to keep Freud's answer to Yerushalmi's interrogation private. The second door corresponds to the following sentence (repeated twice in the course of the conference):

Professor Freud, at this point I find it futile to ask whether, genetically or structurally, psychoanalysis is really a Jewish science; that we shall know, if it is at all knowable, only when much future work has been done. Much will depend, of course, on how the very terms Jewish and science are to be defined (pp. 70-71, in which Derrida quotes Yerushalmi).

In other words, concern for identity is followed by epistemic concern. The third door to the future brings us back to identity. Obviously, it is not a return to Peirce's Possible-Real-Necessary, but it is a synechistic cycle, the doors open one into the other, as to say Jewishness survives Judaism as a heritage, i.e., „not without archive“ (Derrida's italics) „even if this archive should remain without a substrate and without actuality,“ (p. 72). The theological implications of such a predicament go well beyond the framework of this review. Semiotically, we are in the territory of the ever-erasing reference, or maybe of the generation of pseudo-references (which some of Derrida's references are).

The part I would like Derrida to allow me to quote in the book for which he could not find time to answer is then the following: „The being-Jewish and the being open-toward-the-future would be the same thing, the same unique thing as uniqueness – and they would not be dissociable the one from another,“ (p. 74). But the dynamics of change is such that to know means to construct knowledge. We are at the historic juncture at which, to follow in Derrida's footsteps, the world becomes Jewish exactly because it has to be open to the future. There is no choice. Obviously, the world becoming Jewish (what a nightmare for all those who wanted and still want to exterminate them!) is at the same time the world becoming free of Jews, because, if everyone is Jewish then no one is a Jew anymore, the distinction falls into itself. (Remember, if everything is a sign, then

nothing is a sign because we could no longer define it!)

At the scale that humankind has reached today, practical experiences of human self-constitution are driven by the necessity to reach levels of effectiveness that make the archive not only obsolete, but impossible (cf. Nadin, 1997). The pragmatic context of this new civilization requires means of expression and communication that complement those associated to literacy. The visual already dominates as a means of expression and communication. Multimedia interaction is no longer a project but a presence that integrates us. Time is speeding up, or at least duration seems to contract to the extent to which what could have been archived has already entered a cycle of de-archivization, of self-destruction. When at the year 2000 we will face questions related to the shortsightedness of keeping track of time in the first generations of computers (the Y2K Problem, as it is identified), the problem of the archive will become one of synchronization. I am afraid that Derrida, who is willing to speculate on „geo-techno-logical shocks that would have made the landscape of the psychoanalytic archive unrecognizable for the past century,“ (p. 16) is not yet prepared to understand that structural characteristics of the medium of expression condition the very nature of the experience of human self-constitution, its pragmatics, and thus all that pertains to interpretation.

Our bodies are an archive. Accordingly, the projection of our biological endowment in the act of making ourselves who and what we are, is also an archival projection. The body remembers – every physician will tell you this and every acupuncturist take advantage of this fact – not unlike the mind, and not unlike the interaction among minds (cf. Nadin, 1991). The logic of the after-the-fact, decisive in every deconstructive project, takes second place to the logic of anticipation. I beg to differ fundamentally from Derrida's notion that 'there would be no future without repetition' (page 80). The shorter and shorter cycles in the dynamics of change do not exclude a notion of repetition, but in the lower étages (levels) of human practical experiences. Innovation today is grounded more in the energies that drive the self-destruction of the archive and make it an economic event rather than a cultural manifestation.

Too bad that Derrida could not pay the attention he felt he had to pay to the many political implications of the politics of the archive. The extermination of the Jews, as an instance of this politics, seems to me more telling than the perverse hide-and-go-seek of a Freud, the genial psychopath. But for that matter, many

other instances of discrimination could and should be continuously archived as we become part of the world that cannot reach its necessary levels of efficiency without effectively transcending its historic boundaries (for instance, by transcending tradition).

In a long and noble line of inquiry on the subject of how that what is becomes something else, Derrida defined not only his own conceptual space (where the nouns substitutable for deconstruction continue to accumulate), but also his own method. He is, after many thought that Heidegger was the last philosopher, another last philosopher, reclaimed by semiotics because in everything he does – literary studies, cultural investigations, scientific evaluations, political analysis, etc. – he openly identifies the semiotic substratum of his conception. Derrida is a fascinating writer, not a novelist like Eco, nor an essayist like Barthes; rather a hermetic playwright and poet, probably as important as Lucretius in writing a *De rerum* of semiotic interpretation, not exactly in hexameters, but quite clearly in a style diverging from that of other contemporary philosophers and semioticians. The characters that populate Derrida's writings are concepts. They have their own lives and are animated by the constitutive energy that brought them to expression. The props are real events, people, and history. Nature is substituted by ideas, and in the rich and varied gardens of thought, one hears Socratic dialogs on how from something, something else develops, unfolds, frees itself. Deconstruction is, after all, the doctrine of unfolding, as psychoanalysis is the doctrine of human expression as part and parcel of every individual's unfolding within a filiation dominated by the authority of the father.

Derrida is not the first and will not be the last to acknowledge the underlying semiotics of Freud's endeavor. But he is closest to its fundamental theme: self-differentiation projected into the life of signs, in particular, the dynamic constitution of meaning. I am not sure that patriarchal logic, i.e., the Greek story or the Hebrew story (if you follow Yerushalmi's analysis) dominates Derrida's universe. But I can hear in his unfolding oeuvre inferences affected by the patriarchal right (*Vaterrecht*). In the Postscript, the obsession with „a more originary origin“ (p. 97) brings up Gradiva, more precisely, her footsteps. It is a territory of „metainterpretive outbidding“ (p. 100, in a very powerful footnote), and here Derrida is at his best. Jensen's fiction, Gradiva, Hanold's delusion, Freud's infatuation with „marks left,“ and Derrida's final lines:

„With no possible response, be it spectral or not, short of or beyond a

suppression, on the other edge of repression, originary or secondary, without a name, without the least symptom, and without even an ash," (p. 101)

melt into the grey of an almost surrealistic image. To want to know, to make known, and to archive what at the same time is concealed – this is the short of the last interrogation that applies to Freud as it applies, apparently, to Derrida as well.

Heraclitus thought to know that all things are in flux (*panta rei*), and so does Derrida; but they might differ in what causes the motion and what the consequences of this intrinsic dynamics are. One is tempted to ask here, for the same reasons Yerushalmi and Derrida bring up the question of identity, whether deconstruction is a Jewish science (both Jewish and science still to be defined, of course), not because Derrida is its originator, rather because in considering the disproportionate commitment to interpretation of those who, rooted in Judaism or only in Jewishness, identify themselves or are identified by others as Jews. If psychoanalysis is a Jewish science, then everyone involved in it (practitioners and patients) bring with them an amount of Jewishness reflected in their psychological condition, in their psychological imbalance. Probably this sentence could likewise apply to deconstruction. Christianity is Jewish in more than one way; so is Islam, and so are the many dissident faiths that unfolded and keep unfolding from them.

Closing the circle

I have a difficult time qualifying the translation. Eric Prenowitz takes it upon himself to add a Translator's Note to the work. He is right that, „a translators task is giving up“ (p. 105). His dedication to the task deserves respect. It would be unfair not to consider it as one of the best ever attempted by those who have taken it upon themselves to provide an English version of Derrida's French hermetic writing. Still, it is so much Prenowitz – a distinguished intellectual in his own right – that it does not really sound like Derrida. Prenowitz kept some French phrases in the translation (Derrida used some English in the original French text), and I have no objection to this. But even those, in the new context he creates, sound different than in the original. What results is a new work, and I confess that at times I had to visit the original *conférence* in order to understand the translation. Encrustation is one example I took the liberty to dwell upon. The archivization, to quote a quote from Prenowitz, „produces as much as it records

the event“ (p. 17; see also p. 110). He is right that, unless we read the French original, „we'll never know for sure who's who or what's what.“ Too good to be good enough, if I might add, desirous of acknowledging Prenowitz's scholarship and command of language, but also of expressing the feeling that in forcing himself to be excellent, Prenowitz shortchanged Derrida. Too bad that in 100 pages, quite a number of typographical errors remained in the text (Gradiva becoming „Gravida“ is an unintentional blooper (one which some readers will smile at), but nevertheless a suggestion of an archive – pregnancy – probably as interesting as circumcision).

Any archive is the archive of something else, of someone else. For me, Derrida, whether he likes it or not, is part of the book that my wife and I are working on. His unfolding as a savant of a defined identity, in extension of Freud's dramatic unfolding, itself part of the archive embodied in the psychoanalytic story, is not unrelated to my own and to that of many others. These are all abductions, as every sign process is, and so is the fact that I was asked to review this book by editors who could not have known any of the details of my archive. Part of it is reflected in the dedication inscribed at the beginning of this review. The late Paul Rand, a professor at Yale University, a writer and artist, founder of modern graphic design in the USA, and semiotician by the nature of his work (he created identifiers for IBM, General Electric, and United Parcel Service, to name a few), wanted me to write a piece on deconstruction for his own book on visual communication. It was not to be. But I have the feeling that I am keeping a promise made to a genial artist who used to pray each morning. „It teaches me the humility of realizing that I am not the most important person in this universe,“ he revealed in a conversation that Derrida would have liked to be part of. This lesson might help Ari, the other person to whom I dedicate this writing, as Derrida himself found it appropriate to dedicate it to Yerushalmi, to his own sons, and to the memory of his father, „who is also called, as life itself, Hayim“ (p. 21) to realize the same, or who knows what else. Semioses are infinite, even for deconstructionists!

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