

“Canopy of the Upturned Eye: Writing On Derrida’s Crypt”

Derrida’s cryptic text *Fors* performs an unconditional and deconstructive return to Freud’s work on mourning through what this paper suggests is a silent and radical inscriptive opening onto an ethics of sexual difference. The title alludes to Derrida’s play in *Points ... Interviews* with a homophonic *dés* and *dais*, dice and canopy, resonating chance with death in a “*dais de l’oeil révolué* {canopy of the upturned eye}” and a new work of mourning.

With this paper I aim to draw on Derrida’s writings that have addressed a relation between deconstruction and psychoanalysis, primarily in terms of *Fors*, Derrida’s forward to Abraham and Torok’s *The Magic Word of the Wolf Man*. This engagement implicates a number of concerns Derrida has engaged across a number of texts, concerns with the work of mourning, and a “beyond the mourning principle” of Freud; concerns with the ghost and the crypt, their relation and difference. And in the context of the crypt, concerns with a Nietzschean partitioning of the *revenant* and the *arrivant* in relation to sexual difference, that we have named, after Derrida’s *Spurs*, a “feminine operation.” And, finally, a concern with an ethics of the living-dead encountered in a deconstruction of psychoanalysis’s binary of introjection and incorporation in the work of mourning, such that a silent refusal we recognize in Derrida’s response to Emmanuel Levinas operates the logic of the crypt that keeps safe the other lodged in me, even from myself.

In discussing a “post-Freudian thinking of mourning,” Derrida suggests: “This carrying of the mortal other “in me outside me” instructs or institutes my “self” and my relation to “myself” already before the death of the other. ... I speak of mourning as the attempt, always doomed to fail (thus a constitutive failure, precisely), to incorporate, interiorize, introject, subjectivize the other in me. Even before the death of the other, the inscription in me of her or his mortality constitutes me. I mourn therefore I am, I am—dead with the death of the other, my

relation to myself is first of all plunged into mourning, a mourning that is moreover impossible.” (Points p.321)

F—D. In secret, in truth, it is Freud who signed his texts. Every one of them. At least, that is what we are led to believe, what he leads us to believe in. It will have been the restricted economy of a titular imperative to think the possibility of Freud after him, that would lead us to co-sign, to consign him to the Freudian archive, the living dead. Already twenty-six years ago William Kerrigan and Joseph Smith had suggested: “He reads Freud as Freud read himself and others—with an eye toward the contingent, the haphazard, the chance event or lapse. [...] overdetermination and chance are always co-implicated. Here is the place where Freud and Derrida meet. This is the point of Derrida’s deepest, though ambivalent, indebtedness to Freud” (viii-ix).

“An eye toward the contingent.” How does one have an “eye toward the contingent”? How does one plan for, record or recoup the chance event, even, more so, the lapse? It is true, psychoanalysis, that which Freud names, engages the impossible recoup of the irrecoverable. Deconstruction may never have reached that destination. Reappropriation or mourning-work, who would decide? We know there is more than a little debris from this band, this bind or stricture, a little breakage of the mirror, a little tolling for Our eye is towards nothing. It is “upturned,” immured. Our consigning of Freud after Derrida writes on the crypts and ghosts of psychoanalysis yet breaks in to nothing other than the canopy of this upturned eye. Our stratagems: the secret, the crypt, the ghost, the trans-phenomenal psychoanalysis of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, Jacques Derrida’s *Forcs*. Yet it is sexual difference that will be our question.

In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida, in the name of what we might call 'hauntology,' establishes a series of concerns that will have become ours: a respect for the ghost, the *revenant*, that complicates a metaphysics of presence through a spectral figure that is neither present nor absent, dead nor alive; a temporality of the *contretemps*, of a time-out-of-joint, of a time of a Freud after a Derrida, which is also the time of the *arrivant*, the future-to-come. We cannot avoid, as well, the final word of *Specters*, and the final note which quotes from Derrida's *The Post Card*: "Here Freud and Heidegger, I conjoin them within me like the two great ghosts of the 'great epoch.' The two surviving grandfathers. They did not know each other, but according to me they form a couple, and in fact just because of that, this singular anachrony" (196). "Within me," "they did not know each other," and they did not know him. Yet he is always already co-signed, two *surviving* grandfathers, two living on, suggesting there is no Derrida without them. There is also Nietzsche, the one Freud disinherited, the one to whom Heidegger devoted his most sustained effort. Derrida cites him in *The Ear of the Other*: "I am my father and my mother; I am my dead father and my living mother. I am their crypt and they both speak to me. They both speak in me so whatever I say, they address it to each other" (58-59). He then goes on to comment: "When it's a text that one is trying to decipher or decrypt using these concepts and these motifs, or when one is looking for a ghost or a crypt in a text, then things get still more difficult, or let us say more novel. I say a ghost *and* a crypt: actually the theory of the "ghost" is not exactly the theory of the "crypt." It's even more complicated. Although it's also connected to the crypt, the ghost is more precisely the effect of another's crypt in my unconscious" (59).¹

Derrida's "crypt" is an operation we will come to name 'Nietzschean,' that shatters a certain dialectical movement in relation to an economy which puts in play the living dead and does not permit any sublation of the cadaver. This 'living dead' is 'an irreducible doubleness' and 'split dialectic of the negative' of a divided self which the crypt alludes to, a self occupied by another's crypt in the unconscious. This ghost is decipherable at the level of language and,

more precisely, as languages themselves, bodies passing through a locus irreducible to sexual difference. Nietzsche says as much:

There, this is who I am, a certain masculine and a certain feminine. *Ich bin der und der*, a phrase which means all these things. You will not be able to hear and understand my name unless you hear it with an ear attuned to the name of the dead man and the living feminine—the double and divided name of the father who is dead and the mother living on, who will, moreover, outlive me long enough to bury me. The mother is living on, and this living on is the name of the mother. This survival is my life whose shores she overflows. And my father's name, in other words my patronym? That is the name of death, of my dead life. (54)

Here ex-ists an irreducible doubleness as Nietzsche names two laws, two sexes, life and death (53). These are laws between the dead father's signature, inheritance of concepts, as the law of proper names and the living mother, the one who hears-reads-interprets and is without proper name as the ear of the other that signs the text (51). Nietzsche's feminine operation is "survival as the ultimate addressee in the phantasm, because he writes *for* her" (53). Our hypothesis is that it/id, the feminine operation, marks all texts as the irreducibly doubling plurality of an address across what Nietzsche sites as the dead-father and mother-who-lives-on. Ultimately at stake in this exhumation with respect to an acknowledgment of a ghost as sexual difference are the consequences with respect to *them* becoming the signatories of the work. This would suggest texts are written *for*, addressed to both the living and the dead, singularly and, perhaps, always and in general.

2010 is a centennial year for psychoanalysis, perhaps one of the great centenaries of its myriad commitments to repetition. It was in 1910 that Sergei Constantinovitch Pankeiev, a young

and wealthy Russian, came to Freud for treatment, commencing what the Standard Edition suggests is nothing less than “the most elaborate and no doubt the most important of all of Freud’s case histories” (17: 3). Sergei appeared in February; the history was written up, finished, by early November. It was not published for another four years.² The case is titled “From the History of an Infantile Neurosis,” better known as “The Wolf Man.” Why does it hold such an esteemed place in Freud’s work? It was decisive for Freud to prove, against Adler and Jung, that the phenomenon of infantile sexuality exists. But more so, according to Nicholas Rand, the case shored up the three “cardinal tenets” of psychoanalysis as Freud invented it: the unconscious, infantile sexuality and the Oedipus complex (Rand lii). Abraham and Torok suggest something further. Contrary to the *Standard Edition*’s emphasis on the “extraordinary literary skill with which Freud has handled the case” (17: 6) in producing a work that “avoids the dangers of confusion and obscurity” (17: 6), Abraham and Torok stress something else: “Freud’s exposition is marred by an insidious incredulity” (Wolf Man 2). They emphasize what an astute reader would recognize as Freud’s own doubts about his statements. Moreover, they suggest that this ferment of “unconscious doubt” was itself productive of what appears to be an unrelated or “seemingly remote field of research,” “Mourning and Melancholia,” whose first draft appeared in 1914, the year of the case’s publication. Abraham and Torok read “The Wolf Man” neither as the shoring up of the origins of psychoanalysis, nor as that to be accommodated in the “late Freud,” but rather as a *contretemp*, what they call the moment of “isolation,” the “break” itself, neither as the early nor the late Freud. “The Wolf Man” is read with “Mourning and Melancholia.”

In *Fors*, the foreword to their radical re-working of “The Wolf Man” case, Derrida approaches directly the literary-mytho-poetic psychoanalysis of Abraham and Torok in order to deconstruct the works of mourning and memory, as the narrative of what never happened. Through a deconstructing of the crypt, Derrida addresses his spectral differences and theirs. In doing so, he strategically maintains an ethical distance from any explicit reference to the ghost, phantom or hauntology that positions their conceptual differences from his. Here we

attempt to maintain this difference, marked by silence, in recognition of the feminine operation of a living-on of spectral signatories, ghost workings not found within a crypt but founded on and structured by a crypt. This structure is a partitioning architecture, what we come to understand by Derrida's notion of "topological archi-text-tonics." In our reading of *Fors* we sign the differences (Derrida's, Abraham's and Torok's) with both hands: initially on a coincidence of what can never be comprehended but is always inscribed in the secret of the crypt as ghost work. And, then, with the other, there is the silent yet acknowledged refusal by Derrida as an ethical gesture, that marks out his approach to Abraham's and Torok's radical rethinking of the ghost in psychoanalysis. As Colin Davis suggests in *État Présent*, the core difference between the two *hauntologies* is to be located in the status of the secret:

The secrets of Abraham's and Torok's lying phantoms are unspeakable in the restricted sense of being a subject of shame and prohibition. It is not at all that they cannot be spoken; on the contrary, they can and should be put into words so that the phantom and its noxious effects on the living can be exorcized. For Derrida, the ghost and its secrets are unspeakable in quite a different sense. Abraham and Torok seek to return the ghost to the order of knowledge; Derrida wants to avoid any restoration and to encounter what is strange, unheard, *other*, about the ghost. For Derrida, the ghost's secret is not a puzzle to be solved; it is the structural openness or address directed towards the living by the voices of the past or the not yet formulated possibilities of the future. The secret is not unspeakable because it is taboo, but because it cannot not (yet) be articulated in the languages available to us. The ghost pushes at the boundaries of language and thought. The interest here, then, is not in secrets, understood as puzzles to be resolved, but in secrecy, now elevated to what Castricanno calls 'the structural enigma which inaugurates the scene of writing' (Cryptomimesis, p. 30). (379)

From a Nietzschean operation of the crypt and sexual difference, the hauntology of a patronym and a living-on, we engage *Fors's* secrecy on sexual difference. It strikes us as an enigmatic discourse opened through the structural haunting of Derrida's crypt, as the not-yet-formulated possibilities in/articulated in its text. This *arrivant*, this future-to-come—Freud after Derrida—is a going beyond of psycho-analysis toward differences (sexual, psychoanalytic, literary, philosophical) as a going beyond the work of mourning, as an “end” to mourning as such that would not throw up the ruse of an “end” as sublimated progression of a labor-without-end. He would want to keep safe, even from himself, pocketed deep, that possibility. His signatories, his co-signatories, F — H, are anything but the ear who signs without a proper name. Her signatures, mother(s) as the name for living-on, are without remains, his ashes, his secret, even to the grave.